



# Portfolio

Elizabeth Griffiths

## Argument

*By Elizabeth Griffiths*

“Ah, Samantha, what a pleasure it is to have you with us once more, would you care to take a seat?”

“Yes, thank you Alistair.” Samantha strode over to the empty chair at the far end of the hall and perched on the edge. “And can I just say how wonderful it is to be back, I look forward to hearing about what you’ve all been up to since I’ve been away.”

“I’m sure you do. Remind us Sammy dear, where is it exactly you’ve been these past few months?” An eyebrow arched in silent challenge.

“I’d rather not discuss it at the moment if you wouldn’t mind Clarissa, the recent moths have been a terrible strain, and my health isn’t what it was.”

“But of course, we wouldn’t want you to over exert yourself now would we?” Clarissa looked around the assembled group with narrowed eyes; no one met her gaze.

“Yes well quite. Now if we could please get down to business?”

“Why certainly Jerald, now all of the pleasantries are out of the way. What’s on the agenda for this evening?”

“First is the issue of the Christmas fair: although traditionally held at Morton Manor, due to some recent domestic issues of a legal nature, Lady Morton has requested that we find an alternative venue for this year’s festivities. Any suggestions?” Jerald glanced from face to face, his eyebrows raised.

“Oh how terrible, it just won’t be the same anywhere else, and it’s been so long since I’ve seen the Mortons!”

“Yes such a travesty Sammy, how will you manage without your yearly dose of Lord Morton’s famous ‘organic produce’?”

“I was only suggesting that any other location would simply not have quite the same feel as the old manor house, I just can’t imagine the fair somewhere else.”

“Since you feel so strongly on the issue, perhaps you would consider hosting the fair yourself. I can’t think of anyone more qualified to hold the event, giving your experience in the field, and just think – it’ll give you a chance to re-establish yourself in the community – the best thing after such a lengthy leave of absence.”

“Why yes! That would be splendid Samantha, oh please say you’ll do it.”

“While I appreciate the enthusiasm Catharine, I’m really not sure that I have the time and resources necessary for such a grand and anticipated event. Are you sure there isn’t somewhere more appropriate to hold the fair?”

“Nonsense Sammy, we’ll all be there to lend a hand, it’s not as if we’d stand by and watch while you crash and burn.” The two women exchange thin smiles before turning back to the head of the table.

“That’s settled then; the Christmas fair will be held at Wisteria Lodge on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> of December. Next is the matter of parking around the village green.”

## **Morning Dew**

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A drop of water sat in a perfect sphere upon the fine hairs which covered the surface of the large flat leaf. Smaller beads surrounded the central dewdrop, framing the fragile jewel in a halo of refracted light. The delicate globule rolled slightly from side to side as the gentle breeze moved the leaf in slow rhythms, drawing shallow arcs in the crisp air as it wafted back and forth. Clinging tightly to the pale underside of the leaf was a tiny tree frog, its large eyes staring unblinkingly out at the bright clear morning.

Spider webs glistened in the pale light of dawn as droplets rolled slowly down the silky strands towards the wiry architect, who stood poised in the centre. Slight vibrations travelled swiftly through the skilfully woven threads, alerting the maker to a movement close by – breakfast was served. As the seconds passed, a small insect, flying in erratic movements, drew near to the concealed trap which hung suspended between the thin branches of a young sapling, ready to ensnare its prey. In a sudden movement, the prize was snatched away from the beckoning palps and into the gaping maw of the victorious amphibian. Denied its meal, the spider retreated back to its lookout post, ready to receive the signal of approaching sustenance.

Blades of grass beneath the lace-like webbing bowed down under the weight of the collected dew, touching the damp soil in silent homage and allowing the orbs to slip down the sleek length, and then seep into the open pores, ready to receive the tribute. Slight figures emerged from the disturbed earth, moving as one in a flow of viscous oil, engulfing the quivering foliage in its path. Each individual was in perfect sync with every neighbour, allowing the vast colony to perform great feats, which no singular being could have achieved alone. Even a path blocked by a shallow pool, proving fatal to any lone ant which attempted a crossing, could be forded by the combined strength of so many minds working as one. As the sun rose further into the clear sky, waves of steam began to rise from the lofty canopy of the vast forest, collecting in tumultuous billows which rapidly blocked out the bright yellow light, before releasing their contents to the distant globe. Large droplets fell in devastating showers, destroying months of painstaking labour with every impact. Life retreated into dark hollows, dry and safe from the destructive nature of the life bringing liquor. Deep puddles quickly began to form in areas where the trees had not taken root, rapidly turning the dark soil into a deadly quagmire.