

asked if I had a cat at home, and I replied that yes I had had but she got pregnant too young, and died of an abortion. Not exactly polite conversation then, if it is now. Also I swore a lot. Doc was a great swearer, so that is where I got the idea probably. Doc always swore in an amusing way. After a row at home once, where my mum obviously thought she needed to protect me, I remember Doc yelling in reply, "She is not a bloody paragon of every bloody virtue, you know".

Then suddenly Kingsbridge was not a safe place at all. I have since been told that this could not possibly be true, but I can only tell you what happened. I was probably about eight by this time, the school was at the opposite end of the town to the Edwards home, and I walked to and fro. One day on my way home up the hill there was the terrific noise of very low flying aircraft, and then gun shots clattering around. I don't think there could have been many people around because I have no recollection of people screaming, or running or being hit or anything. I rang a bell and knocked on the nearest door and asked if I could come in to safety, they let me in, and I stayed there until fetched. The result of this little episode was that both Janet and I ended up in Gabberwell. There we both took the opportunity to have mumps or measles, or both. My mom nursed us in their double bed.

My mother was a very good storyteller, and to keep us entertained during the measles period she told us long stories that had a new episode every day. She would later tell how she was not allowed to polish off any characters, however bad they were, no one was allowed to die; she would eventually end up, she said, feeling quite giddy, in an absolute tangle of all sorts of queer creatures. To this day I can remember an ogre called Uglisome. He, of course, was only ugly on the outside, and all loving kindness within.

I was one of those kids that get delirious with high temperatures - no Panado syrup for fever back then. My bed would always swim around and my mother had to sit on it to keep it steady! Then there were always lots of little creatures capering around. We - I suspect she - made up poems about them like this one:-

When I was in bed with measles,	my room was full of little weasels,
they ran round and round my room	and mummy chased them with a broom,
then they jumped upon my bed,	and all my little spots turned red.
Amazing the things you remember.	

Then came the time that I went to the village school - gas mask in hand. It did not go too well with me there, partly because of the "Miss Bee-Ann" business, partly because I spoke differently, lived in the 'house up the hill', and because I had not started there at the same time as the rest. Children being charming creatures, I got myself spat upon and the like. Never in my life have I learned anything as fast as I learned to speak with a broad Devonshire accent.

We were taught by a Welsh woman. A Miss Durrell and a member of the Labour Party. In those days much the party of the have-nots. However, she later married a wealthy farmer, her politics changed abruptly and she became a revered member of the Conservative Party. She taught at that school for a long time, and I am sure adequately. You know I can actually remember the time when that good lady was teaching fractions and I thought to myself that that was hard and I was not going to bother to learn that stuff, thus lazy mindedness commenced, and has always been a problem.

I had one good friend - ginger headed Dina. We had great times together Dina and I. We had a 'faraway tree', and got into many scrapes. We also had this friend, an old lady as mad as they come. She called us her 'little darlings' and we would go and drink dreadful tea with her. She was always in long skirts, and a bonnet. She had piercing black eyes, lots of whiskers, and most of the kids were scared of her. Neither she nor her house smelt too kosher. I remember later, when children from the cities were evacuated to the country and people came to collect some at the