**29 DON’T LOOK NOW**

I can’t imagine why, but at the time I thought it would be funny. Childish pranks had been a recurrent feature of my friendship with Eddie since – well, since we were children. Arguably, as we creaked into our fifties we should have left it behind, and yet we never quite managed to.

I knew Eddie was an avid Daphne du Maurier fan and wouldn’t pass up the opportunity to see a new print of “Don’t Look Now” at the local fleapit. So we made our arrangements to meet there and go for a drink after the film. That done, I had some additional arrangements I needed to make, to which Eddie was not party.

“Wee Soupy” was the nickname conferred on our friend Martin Campbell when we were all at school together, and since as an adult he barely reached five foot tall, it had become his nickname for life. I rang Wee Soupy and explained the plan to him. He’d never seen the film, and certainly hadn’t read the original story, so I spent much too long trying to explain it all to him before asking in frustration, “Look Soupy, will you do it or not?” to which he replied, “Aye, go on then, why not.”

I couldn’t find a child’s red anorak in any of the charity shops and had to buy a new one, but I had a plastic knife from last year’s Halloween costume that I could use. I met with Soupy, handed him his outfit and explained the plan.

“Seriously Kev,” he said with a gravity he rarely displayed, “Should you two not have grown out of this sort of caper a long time ago? Honest to God, there’s wiser chewing grass.”

“Just be there by the canal at half ten, Soupy. We’ll be walking past then on our way to the pub.”

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As Eddie and I left the cinema, he started to cool on the idea of going for a drink and I started gabbling reasons why we should.

“Jeez Kev, all right, all right. I’ll go for a pint. Fix your tights, man.”

As we reached the canal, I felt oddly nervous and struggled to make conversation. I began to doubt just how good an idea this actually was. We arrived in silence at the agreed point on the canal path, and as arranged Soupy leapt from the bushes, plastic dagger in his hand, shrieking with an unearthly howl which even I found disturbing.

“Watch it Kev!” Eddie shouted and pushed me back with one hand. With the other he drew from inside his jacket an enormous machete and without hesitation he began to slash repeatedly at the small figure in the red anorak, who fell to the ground, screaming.

“Eddie! Eddie! It’s Soupy! Stop!! It’s a joke!”

Kev stopped and turned, a broad smile on his face. Soupy stood up and pulled the red hood down to reveal his own smiling face.

“I know it’s a joke Kev, and it’s on you,” Eddie said, drawing the plastic machete across his throat.

They dissolved into laughter.

“You two…,” I spluttered “…are so bloody…childish.”

**END.**