

The Box of Chalk and Other Indiscretions.

Ten Tall Stories & Shorter Tales

Written by an Old Fool

BRIAN PARTRIDGE



Garage Press, 2019



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THE MYSTERIOUS REAPPEARANCE OF ABIGAIL THISSELEWAITE

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All she knew, of a certain, was that she had awoken, instantly, sudden as death.

The sleep had been both long and dreamless but now she felt her skin enlivened by the early morning sun and her ears filled with the urgent chatter of countless small birds. When she opened her eyes, they had the look of a decision made.

It was today at last. The day for the long promised, but much delayed, visit to her old school; that hoary old pile which had also been, for a short once upon a time, her happy home.

Shaking herself out of bed, she ran off into the day.



Standing before the entrance to the tree shaded driveway, Abigail had the feeling that this, somehow, was where she was meant to be. Looking about her, everything had a feeling of past familiarity. The thicket of trees was just as dark and mystery laden as she remembered with the sentry wood pigeon, somewhere unseen in the depths of the treetop, just as noisy. Nothing much, it seemed, had changed.

The old gate stood wide open as it always did in her memory's eye, but was also just as unwelcoming. Enshrouded in nettles and the over enthusiastic bindweed that mirrored the twisted convolutions of its rust iron bones, it was more a natural curiosity than man made artifact and had long since become welded into nature. She had no recollection of it ever having been shut.

An old signboard that in her day had proudly proclaimed the school's name, was now flayed of paint and only holding to it's place out of habit; while nearby, a shiny new plastic sign with poppy-red sans-serif letters and a slick, expensive logo arranged in an undoubtedly contemporary style, had been roughly screwed onto a recent brick repair in the old boundary wall. The establishment now had a bright new name and was evidently trying to keep up with modern ways. Abigail didn't know for certain but she thought that she didn't *quite* approve. 'Larklands' had been good enough for her; 'The Rigg Memorial Academy' was not much of an improvement.