

***The Letter***  
©Roy Ingamells

I'm old now and feeling as decrepit as the wet June morning outside; I thought the sun always shone in the south...someone exaggerating again.

However, I will have to get ready for my Monday ration of exercise to keep these old bones working. Table Tennis is my Monday morning infusion of energy expending effort. I'll wait for the post; I've usually bought something that I've already forgotten about and get a surprise when it comes. I mutter to myself, "Oh I remember; I bought it on Amazon."

Ah, there's the letterbox going. I expect it will be a load of brightly coloured leaflets and brown envelopes, most of which I drop in the recycling bag. I pick up the assorted colourful jumble. "Mm, as I thought. Oh, no; there's a white one."

I plonk down and study the writing. I recognise the curly twirls, but these only come at Christmas. I look outside at the blue June sky. I slit it open and draw out the scented pink paper. This is Evey all over, not that she'll thank me for calling her that; it has to be Evelynne or Lynne; call her Evlynne and you'd get your tongue cut out. She's all curly twirls and pink paper. I begin to read; it's a short letter.

Dear Tinklebell,

Do you remember me calling you that? When was it, 1959? You were 18 and I was nineteen. You were in the Rover scouts and I was in the Rangers. We all used to get together for Rover/Ranger meetings, as far as our parents concerned, but which was an excuse for a big party.

It was at one of these where you and I had an 'Across a crowded room' moment. I fell for you like an anchor in water; totally submerged. You came across to talk; you were fair and handsome beyond belief. You walked me home that night and stole a kiss on the doorstep. We began walking out, and that was so significant in those days.

The following Christmas Jack Cooper's mum said she and Dad would be out and he could ask friends in for a party, and all the R and R's turned up; no uniforms, just one big get-together. How many of us were there, forty? Do you remember, Tinklebell?

\*Gee do I remember! And a real firecracker she turned out to be.\*

There were bodies all over the house, snogging and showing more leg than was good for them. But you, Tinklebell, coaxed me into one of the bedrooms.

\*I did not; she dragged me in. Not that I was unwilling.\*

We quarrelled later and I stormed off. The manager at work had always been sweet on me, and at the New Year party he asked me to marry him, yet again, and I did. My daughter Zoe was born seven months later, although I've never told you. Two months early, Tinklebell.

We are both getting on now. I've had a stroke on one side and I can't drive now. But as I have never been to the south of England, Zoe is going to bring me for a two or three weeks' holiday and I thought we might call on you. Tinklebell, I really do think you should meet Zoe. Before it's too late.

Love, Lynne

I put the letter down. Oh my god! I'd better steer her away from Fridays; that's when my daughter Jane comes.