In the bright sun of the early afternoon, the two tents and large parked lorry made an incongruous sight behind the Ferry Boat Inn but drinkers lazing at the tables or sitting on the lush grass of the hillock outside soon turned their attention to other things. Inside the larger tent, Madeleine and Stubbs were busy recording data from the monitor, which they’d had to take inside after it proved just a little too unusual for the locals and they had started to gather around, muttering.

“We could have chosen somewhere a little quieter,” moaned Stubbs.

“Oh, do shut up Stubbs. You just keep repeating the same old things and they are not in the least bit interesting. Now, let me see.”

He passed her a printout sheet and she nodded “Yes, yes; this is definitely the place. We are sure now, aren’t we Stubbs?”

He nodded “I think so..”

“Blithering idiot. You *think* so. Look at these readings” She shoved the paper into his face.

“But” he began following her round the small tent “We don’t know what it is yet do we? I mean, it could be an earthquake or….”

“I’m not interested in your petty theories, Stubbs. I don’t pay you to think; if I did then you wouldn’t have earned any money yet.”

“But this could be something big- you said so yourself. You said; this could be one of the greatest scientific discoveries ever.”

“I know what I said and I don’t want you repeating it to anyone - do you understand?”

“We should have told the boss you know; if this is really as big as you say, we might need his help.”

“Stubbs; do you not think I have everything planned out?”

He lowered his head deferentially.

“If we can gather enough information, we will find out what it is,” she continued “ and then we can tell the director. In the meantime, you just have to keep your mouth shut and your eyes open; do you think you can manage that? ”

“Eyes open, mouth shut. Yes, I can manage that Dr Hawk,” he replied through gritted teeth. Then a thought seemed to strike him, “But… what if the thing we find is dangerous or something? What do we do then on our own?

“Stubbs, don’t alarm yourself. If whatever is down there is dangerous then don’t you think the villagers will be grateful for our help? They’ll flock to assist us I’m certain of it.”

“Well….” He looked a little happier.

“Stubbs” she said in purring tones and placing a secure hand on his shoulder, which made him flinch a little, “You see we have the best interests of everybody at heart. We are the real friends of the earth!”