

The Teaswell Incident

A 30 minute radio-play for 6 actors by Peter David Carter

Characters

- Inspector George Bainbridge
- Sergeant Jock Kelso
- Captain Elliot
- PC Wells
- Sergeant Hindmarsh
- Doctor Elizabeth Runcie
- Adam Hesslewood
- Reverend Horatio Hancock
- Mrs. Dawes
- Gilbert Swain
- Carmichael
- Moffat
- Phillip Hancock
- Spirit
- Rioter
- Waitress
- Matron

Nottingham City Police Station in 1925

We can hear sounds typical of a busy office.

BAINBRIDGE: Morning Wells. I understand the boss wants to see us.

WELLS: Inspector Bainbridge, Sergeant Kelso. He told me to show you straight in.

Wells knocks on the glass door.

WELLS: It's Inspector Bainbridge sir.

CAPTAIN: Show him in. George, good to see you. Is Kelso with you?

KELSO: Right here sir.

CAPTAIN: Good, good. Come on in, sit down. Thank you Wells, that will be all?

WELLS: Very good sir.

Wells leaves, closing the door behind him.

CAPTAIN: Now, what can you tell me about New Teaswell?

BAINBRIDGE: (**Thinking**) New Teaswell? Small mining town, just south of Worksop, with a remarkably successful football team I believe.

KELSO: Too right, they hammered County in a friendly last season. Didn't they have an earthquake the other day?

BAINBRIDGE: A minor tremor, late Saturday night.

CAPTAIN: Yes, well yesterday they had a triple murder, or that's what it looks like. I want you two to head over there and look into it.

BAINBRIDGE: What's the background?

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CAPTAIN: A young engineer by the name of Hancock went crazy and attacked a group of miners at New Teaswell Colliery. He killed three and left a fourth unconscious.

BAINBRIDGE: Where's this Hancock now?

CAPTAIN: No one knows. The attack took place underground. Apparently Hancock ran off into the darkness and no-one's seen him since.

KELSO: What do we know about Hancock sir?

CAPTAIN: Not a great deal. His Christian name is Phillip, he's 23 years old, a graduate of Manchester University and the only son of a local vicar.

BAINBRIDGE: Which church?

CAPTAIN: St. Oswald's. It's part of the old village. It's perched on a promontory overlooking the rest of the town. It would be quite picturesque if it wasn't for the backdrop of slag heaps. Anyway, like I said, I want you to drive over there and get to the bottom of it. Any questions?

BAINBRIDGE: Nothing that springs to mind. Jock?

KELSO: No sir.

CAPTAIN: Very well. I'll see you in a few days. Good luck.

New Teaswell: Outside the Station Hotel

Bainbridge and Kelso are in their car. We can hear the sounds of a busy high street.

BAINBRIDGE: Pull over here Jock. This is it, The Station Hotel. Not quite the Savoy.

KELSO: I've known worse.

BAINBRIDGE: I've known better. Why don't you park up and sign us in. I'll stroll over to the police station and let them know we've arrived.

KELSO: Shall I meet you over there?

BAINBRIDGE: No, I need a spot of lunch before we get to work. I'll see you in the hotel bar in forty minutes.

New Teaswell Police Station

Inspector Bainbridge is talking to the desk sergeant, Hindmarsh.

BAINBRIDGE: Inspector Bainbridge and Sergeant Kelso – that's K.E.L.S.O - that's right. We'll be staying at the Station Hotel.

HINDMARSH: Excuse me sir, Sergeant Kelso, that wouldn't be Jock Kelso would it?

BAINBRIDGE: It would. You know him then?

HINDMARSH: I served with him in France. He... He's a good man.

BAINBRIDGE: For God's sake don't tell him that.

HINDMARSH: Wild horses couldn't make me. Will there be anything else sir?

BAINBRIDGE: Yes, could you put me through to the Station Hotel; I want to have a word with our mutual friend.

HINDMARSH: Right away sir. **(He calls the switchboard)** Hello, this is Hindmarsh; put me through to the Station Hotel will you?

BAINBRIDGE: Here Sergeant; there's something queer going on in the market place, some kind of disturbance. What the devil? There's about a dozen young men knocking the hell out of each other. Quick, put that thing down, gather your men and follow me.

New Teaswell Market Place

We can hear the sounds of shouting and fighting.

BAINBRIDGE: You there, stop that at once.

RIOTER: Who the hell are you? Teaswell or Worksop?

BAINBRIDGE: What?

RIOTER: Get him lads.

A group of young men attack Bainbridge. Suddenly Kelso arrives and drives off the attackers.

KELSO: Get off! You wee nyaffs!

RIOTER: I'll smash your head in.

KELSO: Will you now?

Kelso punches the lead rioter on the nose.

RIOTER: Ooff. Bloody hell, you've bust me nose, you bastard!

The Teaswell Incident by Peter David Carter

KELSO: You're lucky I didn't break your bloody neck. Hey constable, over here, grab hold of this little prick will you. Y'all right there sir?

BAINBRIDGE: It's just my pride that's hurt. I thought I said I'd meet you at the hotel?

KELSO: Ach, you know me sir, I cannae resist a scrap.

BAINBRIDGE: Well thank you.

KELSO: Is that Lennie Hindmarsh over there? Stone the crows. Hindmarsh!

HINDMARSH: Kelso, you old so and so. When I heard you were in town I should have expected something like this.

KELSO: What gives? It's a bit early for a chucking out time punch up.

HINDMARSH: Teaswell are playing Worksop this afternoon.

KELSO: Oh I see.

BAINBRIDGE: Are incidents like this common Sergeant Hindmarsh?

HINDMARSH: Yes and no sir. Generally Teaswell's a pretty respectable place. A lot of Methodists you see. Having said that; the local lads do enjoy a fight on a Saturday night. Usually we just knock a few heads together and no harm's done. But, believe it or not; this is the third big fight we've had in as many days.

BAINBRIDGE: You don't say? Have you any idea of the cause?

HINDMARSH: Not a clue sir. A change in the weather?

BAINBRIDGE: When exactly did the first big fight take place?

HINDMARSH: Sunday afternoon.

BAINBRIDGE: After the tremor. Well Sergeant Hindmarsh, it looks like your lads have got things under control, so, if you don't mind, I think we'll leave you to tidy up. Come on Jock, let's get something to eat, being floored by a twenty year old works up quite an appetite.

Station Hotel

Bainbridge and Kelso are just finishing their lunch. We can hear the sounds of a quiet hotel dining room.

BAINBRIDGE: Good God. That was indigestible.

KELSO: You should have had the shepherd's pie. You mentioned the tremor when you were talking to Hindmarsh; you don't think it has anything to do with those fights, or our murders do you?

BAINBRIDGE: You never know. Damp weather makes my bunions ache, so who knows what effect an earth tremor might have on someone, we are but animals after all.

KELSO: So, what's the plan for this afternoon sir?

BAINBRIDGE: I'm going to wander over to Old Teaswell and have a chat with the Reverend Hancock. As for you Jock, I'd like you to go to the Queen Victoria Infirmary and interview Adam Hessewood, find out what he remembers.

KELSO: Adam Hessewood?

BAINBRIDGE: The young man they pulled out of the mine.

KELSO: The one that got away?

BAINBRIDGE: Quite. After you've finished there, head over to New Teaswell Colliery and have a poke around.

WAITRESS: Was everything to your satisfaction gentlemen?

KELSO: Lovely.

BAINBRIDGE: Yes, er, very nice thank you.

Queen Victoria Infirmary

We can hear hushed sounds typical of a quiet hospital ward.

DR. RUNCIE: Sergeant Kelso. I understand that you'd like to speak to Adam Hesslewood.

KELSO: Yes er Doctor Runcie. Inspector Bainbridge feels it will help our investigation.

DR. RUNCIE: I dare say, although I'm not at all sure it will help Hesslewood.

KELSO: Was he badly injured?

DR. RUNCIE: Not physically, mild concussion, a few cuts and grazes, but he has been greatly traumatised by the experience. I shan't prevent you from speaking to him, but I must insist that you tread gently. If he becomes too agitated I will have to stop the interview.

KELSO: You're the Doctor.

DR. RUNCIE: Here he is.

KELSO: He's only a boy. How old is he?

DR. RUNCIE: Seventeen. Excuse me Sergeant. Mr. Hesslewood, Adam, this is Sergeant Kelso; he's a policeman, from Nottingham. He'd like to speak to you about the accident.

During the interview Hesslewood speaks with an occasional stutter.

HESSLEWOOD: Pleased to meet you Sergeant Kelso.

KELSO: Hello son. I was hoping you could tell me what happened on Monday morning.

HESSLEWOOD: What would you like to know?

KELSO: First off, what were you doing in that part of the mine?

HESSLEWOOD: The earthquake on Saturday night opened up a new tunnel. Mr. Sampson wanted to explore it first thing.

KELSO: Mr. Sampson?

HESSLEWOOD: The chief engineer.

KELSO: I thought Hancock's the engineer?

HESSLEWOOD: No he's Mr. Sampson's assistant. We was told to go and help them.

KELSO: Who else was there?

HESSLEWOOD: Me, Mr. Sampson, Mr. Hancock, Joe Armstrong and Frank Donaghy.

KELSO: So, you all went to the new tunnel with Mr. Sampson, what happened next?

HESSLEWOOD: We was right inside the tunnel. Mr. Sampson were showing us some fossils he'd found when we heard this loud rumbling, then, all of a sudden like, the roof collapses and blocks the mouth of the tunnel.

KELSO: Was anybody hurt?

HESSLEWOOD: No, there were a lot of dust, but after it had settled we saw that we was all alright. We was quite shook up, but Mr. Sampson said not to worry and that we'd be rescued right soon.

KELSO: So there you were, trapped in the tunnel, waiting to be rescued, then what happened?

HESSLEWOOD: The tunnel filled with fog.

KELSO: Fog? Do you mean a thick gas?

HESSLEWOOD: No, it were just like fog. And then...

Hesslewood hesitates

KELSO: Go on.

HESSLEWOOD: I heard a voice.

KELSO: Whose voice? Was it Hancock?

HESSLEWOOD: No, it were the rocks.

KELSO: Sorry, did you say the rocks?

DR. RUNCIE: Sergeant.

KELSO: What did the rocks say son?

DR. RUNCIE: Sergeant.

KELSO: Adam, what did the rocks say?

HESSLEWOOD: **(Yelling)** Find me! Free me!

DR. RUNCIE: Sergeant Kelso, I insist you stop.

KELSO: Pipe down woman.

DR. RUNCIE: How dare you speak to me...

KELSO: Doctor Runcie, I know your man's upset, but we're trying to solve a triple murder here and find a missing man to boot. **(Hushed)** For all we know Hesslewood might be the killer.

DR. RUNCIE: That's ridiculous.

KELSO: I would not presume to tell you how to do your job and I would ask you to extend the same courtesy to me. I have a few more questions and then I'll leave you in peace.

DR. RUNCIE: I won't allow it.

KELSO: You have no choice. Adam, what happened after you heard the voice?

HESSLEWOOD: Mr. Hancock, he went crazy. He attacked us, with a pick axe. He hit Mr. Sampson in the chest. He killed him. We tried to stop him, we tried to hold him down, but he were too strong, he threw us off like we was little kids. He kept screaming, "You won't kill me, you won't kill me."

KELSO: What happened to you? How did you get away?

HESSLEWOOD: I don't know. I were so shocked I stumbled backwards and banged me head. Next thing I know I'm in the back of an ambulance.

KELSO: Thank you Adam. You've been a great help.

DR. RUNCIE: Nurse, see to Mr. Hesslewood. Sergeant, I find your behaviour deplorable. You may rest assured that I will be complaining to your superiors.

KELSO: As you wish Ma'am. By the way, did you find any evidence that Hesslewood had inhaled toxic gas?

DR. RUNCIE: What?

KELSO: Toxic gas.

DR. RUNCIE: No.

KELSO: Thank you. That'll be all. I'll see myself out.

St. Oswald's Church Vicarage

Inspector Bainbridge and the Reverend Hancock are sitting in the drawing room. We can hear the sound of a clock ticking, a fire crackling and tea things rattling as Mrs Dawes the housekeeper comes in.

REV. HANCOCK: Thank you Mrs. Dawes. Leave the tray please. I'll serve myself.

MRS. DAWES: Very good sir.

REV. HANCOCK: How do you take you tea Inspector?

BAINBRIDGE: Milk and two sugars please.

REV. HANCOCK: There you are. Now where were we?

BAINBRIDGE: You were telling me about your son.

REV. HANCOCK: Yes of course, Phillip. He was such a thoughtful boy. Absolutely captivated by steam engines you know, and history, trains and the Romans. He found it hard to decide which to study at university.

BAINBRIDGE: And which did he choose?

REV. HANCOCK: Steam engines of course, or, to be precise, engineering.

BAINBRIDGE: And that's how he came to work at New Teaswell Colliery?

REV. HANCOCK: After a fashion. When Beatrice, I mean when my wife died, Phillip had just graduated. He had often expressed his intention to travel to South Africa.

BAINBRIDGE: But a sense of filial duty persuaded him to remain by your side?

REV. HANCOCK: For the time being. He could see how lost I was.

BAINBRIDGE: And what happened to his interest in history?

REV. HANCOCK: It is still there, undiminished. Indeed, since returning to Teaswell he has become quite fascinated by the history of the parish. He spends a great deal of time in the church and the caves beneath.

BAINBRIDGE: Caves?

REV. HANCOCK: There is a network of caves beneath this hill, one of which contains a pool known as Tyr's Well.

BAINBRIDGE: As in a well filled with tears?

REV. HANCOCK: A common misapprehension. It is actually named after Tyr the Anglo-Saxon god of war, although it was a holy place long before the Mercians came to our shores. Both the Romans and the Ancient Britons before them venerated the pool. One might say that Tyr's Well was already ancient when Stonehenge was still on the draughtsman's board.

BAINBRIDGE: Fascinating. And what does your son do when he is down there?

REV. HANCOCK: He makes drawings of the many paintings and inscriptions that cover the walls. He has also carried out several small archaeological investigations.

BAINBRIDGE: Digs do you mean?

REV. HANCOCK: Yes.

BAINBRIDGE: Are the caves open to the general public?

REV. HANCOCK: Sadly no. For centuries, local men would drink from Tyr's Well when they went to war. They believed that doing so would enable them to fight with greater courage. However, this 'pagan' practice was stopped just after the Crimean War by one of my more evangelical predecessors.

BAINBRIDGE: I take it that you disagree with his decision.

REV. HANCOCK: Inspector, if we were to purge Christianity of all pagan influence we would have to ban both Christmas and Easter and, I dare say, Shrove Tuesday. The men who visited Tyr's Well on the eve of battle, were oblivious to the fact that the pool from which they drank was once dedicated to a pagan god, just as most people today are unaware that Easter itself, the greatest feast in the Christian calendar, is named after the pagan goddess Eostre. We must not despise the beliefs of our ancestors Inspector, even if we have outgrown them.

BAINBRIDGE: A surprising opinion for an Anglican minister.

REV. HANCOCK: What is God, but truth Inspector? And what were our forefathers striving for, if not that?

BAINBRIDGE: So, have you thought about reopening the caves?

REV. HANCOCK: Heavens no; I am tolerant of practises that have their ultimate origin in pagan belief, but I have no intention of reviving them once they have died; I am an Anglican minister after all. Besides which, closing the caves seems to have had little effect on the fortitude of my parishioners. Before you leave, take a look at the new war memorial inside the church – I think you will find it quite revealing.

BAINBRIDGE: I will. May I see your son's bedroom now?

REV. HANCOCK: Of course. Mrs. Dawes will show you the way. If you will forgive me, I have a sermon to prepare and I don't think I...

BAINBRIDGE: I completely understand. Thank you for giving me so much of your time.

REV. HANCOCK: Inspector Bainbridge, find my son. He is such a dear boy. I am certain that when the truth is known, it will be found that he is innocent of this terrible crime.

BAINBRIDGE: I will do everything in my power.

Phillip Hancock's Bedroom

MRS. DAWES: Master Phillip's bedroom's sir.

BAINBRIDGE: It has a grand view of the church. What are these things here; let me see, six stone arrow heads, a bronze knife, a rusty spear head is it? And ten, eleven, twelve musket balls? Quite a collection.

MRS. DAWES: I believe Master Phillip found them in Tyr's Well.

BAINBRIDGE: Ah yes, the archaeological investigations. Now what's this? A sketch book, so these are his pictures of the caves. My word he's a good artist. Look at this one, it's so lifelike. It shows a man standing in a forest, but he's got antlers like a stag, and those eyes, they're so real.

SPIRIT: Find me. Free me.

BAINBRIDGE: What's that?

MRS. DAWES: I beg your pardon sir?

BAINBRIDGE: Did you say something, just now?

MRS. DAWES: No sir.

BAINBRIDGE: I could have sworn... Never mind, I think I've seen enough here. Could you show me the church and the caves now please?

MRS. DAWES: Yes sir, if you wish. I'll just fetch the keys.

St. Oswald's Church & Tyr's Well

We hear the sound of Mrs. Dawes unlocking the church door followed by Bainbridge and Mrs. Dawes' footsteps echoing in the church itself.

BAINBRIDGE: So this is the new war memorial? I can see what Reverend Hancock meant. Military Cross, Military Cross, D.S.O, D.S.M, four, five, six Military Medals, there's even a V.C. I've never seen so many medals on one memorial.

MRS. DAWES: Yes, they did us proud.

BAINBRIDGE: There's an E. F. Dawes up here.

MRS. DAWES: My son Teddy sir. He were killed at Loos.

BAINBRIDGE: I'm sorry. I lost my eldest in Palestine.

MRS. DAWES: It is a terrible thing.

BAINBRIDGE: Aye, you're not wrong. Now, where are those caves?

MRS. DAWES: Over here sir. The entrance is underneath this trapdoor.

We hear the sound of the trapdoor being unlocked and opened.

BAINBRIDGE: A stone staircase. Look how worn the steps are.

MRS. DAWES: Do you mind if I stay here sir? The steps are very steep and my knees aren't what they were.

BAINBRIDGE: Of course not. Pass me the torch will you?

Bainbridge begins to descend the staircase.

BAINBRIDGE: This is incredible. It looks like it's been carved out of the solid rock. Here's an inscription: 'Deo Marti et Victoriae'. That's Latin alright, carved by a Roman legionary I'll warrant. No wonder Hancock loves this place.

Oh, here's the bottom. Now, let's have a look around. My word, I've never seen anything like it. It's remarkable; the walls are literally covered in paintings. Here're some men fighting, they look like Romans alright; and here're some hunting a wild boar and; hang about, is that a woolly mammoth over there? Just how old is this place?

What's through here? A pool, so this is Tyr's Well itself. It's smaller than I thought it would be. The water's crystal clear. **(Bainbridge feels the water with his fingers)** Warm.

Hello, a painting like the one in Hancock's sketch book - the queer fella with the antlers and the strange eyes.

Where did this mist come from? It's so thick? Mrs. Dawes can you hear me?

SPIRIT: Find me.

The Teaswell Incident by Peter David Carter

BAINBRIDGE: Who said that?

SPIRIT: Free me.

BAINBRIDGE: Mrs. Dawes? Where's that bloody staircase. Mrs. Dawes where are you? Hang about, the mist's dissolving. What? Where am I? Where the hell am I? I must be dreaming. I'm in a forest. I'm in a bloody forest. Something's coming. It's crashing through the undergrowth. It must be huge. Here it comes...It's, it's that man again. He's gigantic.

SPIRIT: Find me. Free me.

BAINBRIDGE: Who are you? What do you want?

SPIRIT: I am life and the love of life and the fear of death. Find me. Free me.

BAINBRIDGE: No, it's not real, it can't be. Help! Help! Somebody help me...

Bainbridge faints.

St. Oswald's Vicarage

Bainbridge is lying on the drawing room sofa. We can again hear the sound of a clock ticking and a fire crackling.

BAINBRIDGE: Where am I?

KELSO: It's alright sir, you're in the vicarage.

BAINBRIDGE: How did I get here?

KELSO: Mrs. Dawes heard you shouting, then everything went quiet. When you didn't reappear she climbed down and discovered you laid-out on the floor. So she fetched the Reverend Hancock and together they dragged you back here.

BAINBRIDGE: What are you doing here?

KELSO: They telephoned the station and Hindmarsh contacted me. So what happened?

BAINBRIDGE: I'll tell you back at the hotel. Reverend Hancock I am very much obliged to both you and Mrs. Dawes.

REV. HANCOCK: Are you sure you're well enough to leave? You are welcome to rest here as long as you wish.

BAINBRIDGE: Thank you, but no. I'm feeling much better. I'm pretty sure it was just something I ate; that dreadful piece of liver eh Jock?

KELSO: Aye, if you say so sir.

The Station Hotel

Bainbridge and Kelso are sitting in the bar. They have been discussing the day's events.

KELSO: Let me get this one. What'll you have?

BAINBRIDGE: Another brandy.

KELSO: So, what do you make of Hesslewood's statement? Quite a coincidence, both of you hearing the same words.

BAINBRIDGE: Most likely just that, a coincidence; but what if you're right about the gas, what if the tremor did release some kind of poison?

KELSO: Wouldn't it affect everyone?

BAINBRIDGE: It might, but don't forget, both me and Hesslewood were in enclosed spaces.

KELSO: True.

BAINBRIDGE: Besides, some people might be more sensitive to it than others. I love crab, but my wife's allergic to it, makes her sick for a week.

KELSO: So that's the theory we're working on, that you, Hesslewood and presumably young Hancock were all exposed to some kind of poisonous gas?

BAINBRIDGE: It's a possibility, but to be frank, it looks brutally simple what happened. Hancock went mad and attacked his workmates. Hesslewood heard Hancock screaming, but in his confusion mistook it for some kind of supernatural voice.

KELSO: And what about you?

BAINBRIDGE: Like I said, it was probably just that dreadful piece of liver.

KELSO: Mmm.

BAINBRIDGE: What did you find out at the colliery?

KELSO: I spoke to the manager, Gilbert Swain. Funnily enough, following my chat with Hesslewood, I asked him about toxic gas. He said that he wasn't aware of any, but that I really needed to speak to Moffat the geologist to get the full picture.

BAINBRIDGE: Did you actually get down the mine and have a look at the scene?

KELSO: We were just about to when I got the call from Hindmarsh about you.

BAINBRIDGE: We'll head there first thing tomorrow morning. Right, I'm going to turn in. I'm shattered.

KELSO: Sleep well sir.

New Teaswell Colliery

SWAIN: Sergeant Kelso, good to see you again.

KELSO: Likewise. This is Inspector Bainbridge.

BAINBRIDGE: Mr. Swain. Mr...?

SWAIN: May I introduce Mr. Carmichael, the owner of New Teaswell Colliery.

CARMICHAEL: Delighted to meet you Inspector. Swain here told me all about your visit and I simply had to pop along and meet you. Swain, organise some tea for the Inspector, there's a good chap.

SWAIN: Er of course...

BAINBRIDGE: Don't trouble yourself Mr. Swain. If it's all the same to you Mr. Carmichael, I'd like to take a look at the crime scene as soon as possible.

CARMICHAEL: The game's afoot eh?

SWAIN: Inspector, Sergeant, if you'd like to follow me we'll get you kitted out.

Below Ground

We can hear the sound of the colliery lift.

SWAIN: Here we are gentlemen, mind your step.

CARMICHAEL: Yes, it's as black as coal down here eh?

BAINBRIDGE: How big is this colliery?

CARMICHAEL: The shilling tour eh?

SWAIN: 200' at its deepest; we employ 800 men and produced 200,000 tons of coal last year.

CARMICHAEL: Not too shabby eh? We'd like to keep it that way please Inspector.

SWAIN: Ah here's Moffat our geologist.

CARMICHAEL: Morning Moffat, or is it midnight eh? We've brought Inspector Bainbridge with us; he wants to chat to you about our little spot of bother.

BAINBRIDGE: Really Mr. Carmichael. I'd hardly describe a triple murder as a little spot of bother.

CARMICHAEL: No of course not. Anyway, we'll leave you in Moffat's capable hands. I have to get back to Nottingham for a luncheon with some clients. Come along Swain.

SWAIN: Best of luck Inspector.

MOFFAT: What can I do for you Inspector?

BAINBRIDGE: I'd like to see the crime scene. A natural tunnel I hear. Is that unusual?

MOFFAT: Unusual yes, but far from unheard of. The coal seam here runs through limestone and, as I'm sure you're aware, limestone contains many faults. Having said that, I've never come across such a long and well-formed tunnel before.

KELSO: How was it formed?

MOFFAT: Part of an ancient subterranean river I should think.

BAINBRIDGE: Hesslewood mentioned seeing a thick white mist in the tunnel just before the attack – do you think that could have been some kind of toxic gas?

MOFFAT: Gas is an ever present danger down here so I can't rule it out, but I've detected absolutely no trace of it so far. I suspect that what Hesslewood actually saw was the dust settling.

BAINBRIDGE: What if I were to tell you that I saw a similar mist yesterday afternoon in the caves beneath St. Oswald's Church?

MOFFAT: That's very interesting. Well, I'm not saying that there couldn't have been some kind of mist, after all the rock here is extremely wet, but of course, just because you saw a mist, it doesn't follow that Hesslewood did, and even if he had, it doesn't mean that it was toxic.

BAINBRIDGE: So is this it?

MOFFAT: Yes. As you can see, Saturday's tremor caused a large section of the wall to collapse revealing the tunnel behind it.

BAINBRIDGE: Was the second fall, the one that trapped Hancock and the others, caused by another tremor?

MOFFAT: No, the first tremor must have weakened the rock. There's no danger now though, we've shored it up soundly.

BAINBRIDGE: My goodness, it's impressive.

KELSO: It's big enough to drive a train through.

BAINBRIDGE: How far does it go?

MOFFAT: Hard to say, a quarter of a mile at least. I didn't want to explore any further until this frightful business had been dealt with.

BAINBRIDGE: Have you found any trace of Hancock?

MOFFAT: Afraid not. He must have run off down the tunnel. Lord knows what's become of him.

BAINBRIDGE: Thank you Mr. Moffat. If you have no objection, Kelso and I will take a wander down the tunnel, see what we can find.

The Teaswell Incident by Peter David Carter

MOFFAT: I wouldn't go too far, I'm not sure how stable the roof is down there.

BAINBRIDGE: Don't worry, we'll be careful.

We hear the sounds of dripping water, crunching stones and echoing footsteps.

BAINBRIDGE: Well, what do you make of it Jock?

KELSO: Remarkable. The floor's covered in pebbles; it looks just like a river bed.

BAINBRIDGE: And what about these fossils? There must be thousands of them.

Hancock appears further down the tunnel. We hear the sounds of rocks crunching.

BAINBRIDGE: What's that noise?

KELSO: It came from further down the tunnel. Look, there's someone standing there.

BAINBRIDGE: Hancock, is that you? My name is Inspector Bainbridge; I'd like to speak to you.

HANCOCK: You won't kill me?

KELSO: He's off. Do we follow?

BAINBRIDGE: Come on.

Bainbridge and Kelso chase Hancock down the tunnel.

KELSO: Stop sir.

BAINBRIDGE: What is it?

KELSO: Look, a cavern. It's huge.

BAINBRIDGE: I can't see Hancock.

SPIRIT: Find me. Free me.

KELSO: What's that? Shine your torch over their sir.

BAINBRIDGE: It's just a pillar of rock. My God.

KELSO: What wrong?

BAINBRIDGE: That fossil near the top of the pillar, it looks just like the thing I saw in Tyr's Well.

KELSO: The man with antlers?

BAINBRIDGE: Yes. Look, there's his face and his chest and his arms and, look, his antlers. It's like he's trapped inside the rock, like he's trying to force himself out. He's in agony.

KELSO: Look out, it's Hancock.

Hancock appears out of the darkness and charges towards them screaming.

The Teaswell Incident by Peter David Carter

HANCOCK: You won't kill me!

Hancock hurls himself at Bainbridge. We hear sounds of fighting.

BAINBRIDGE: Argh my leg. Get him off.

HANCOCK: You won't kill me! You won't kill me!

Kelso pulls Hancock off Bainbridge and pins him down.

KELSO: I've got him. My God, he's stronger than he looks. Quick sir, pass me the handcuffs.

BAINBRIDGE: The cavern's filling with mist.

KELSO: Inspector, the handcuffs. I cannae hold him.

BAINBRIDGE: What?

KELSO: The handcuffs sir.

BAINBRIDGE: Oh yes, here you are.

Kelso handcuffs Hancock

KELSO: Right you, stay put. You alright sir?

BAINBRIDGE: He's here.

KELSO: Who is?

BAINBRIDGE: Him.

KELSO: Holy Mother of God, I can see him standing next to the pillar, he's like a ghost, no, like a motion picture, flickering.

BAINBRIDGE: What do you want?

SPIRIT: Free me!

BAINBRIDGE: How? How can we free you?

SPIRIT: Free me!

BAINBRIDGE: Jock, what the hell do we do?

SPIRIT: I am life, and the love of life and the fear of death.

KELSO: Aye, I know you alright sonny Jim. I lived with you, cheek by jowl, for four blood-soaked years.

SPIRIT: Free me!

KELSO: Do you no' remember me? I did some dreadful things in your name.

SPIRIT: Free me!

The Teaswell Incident by Peter David Carter

KELSO: And one or two good things. Let's no' forget those.

SPIRIT: Free me!

KELSO: But mostly terrible.

SPIRIT: Free me!

KELSO: Mind, you kept me alive, I'll say that for you.

SPIRIT: Free me!

KELSO: You already are, you bloody bastard! You always have been. You always will be.

We hear the sound of cracking and rumbling as another tremor begins.

Through the sounds of rumbling we begin to hear the distant sounds of battle.

BAINBRIDGE: Jock! Sergeant Kelso! It's another tremor.

KELSO: What? Aye. Come on, let's get out of here.

BAINBRIDGE: Argh, my leg, I can't put any weight on it.

KELSO: Tripe man! Move it, now!

BAINBRIDGE: I can't.

KELSO: Then I'll bloody well drag you. Come on!

HANCOCK: You won't kill me.

KELSO: You too Hancock. On your feet, run!

As Kelso drags Bainbridge and Hancock back down the tunnel, the sounds of rumbling increase.

KELSO: Moffat! Moffat! Help!

MOFFAT: Good God, the entire roof's coming down. Hurry man.

We hear the sounds of crashing rocks as the roof collapses.

A Hospital in Nottingham

BAINBRIDGE: Good afternoon, I'm here to visit Sergeant Kelso.

MATRON: Yes of course, he's in the small ward at the end of the corridor.

BAINBRIDGE: Thank you, I know the way.

Bainbridge opens the door and clears his throat to draw attention to himself.

The Teaswell Incident by Peter David Carter

KELSO: Inspector, who let you in?

BAINBRIDGE: Well it's good to see you recognise me this time. You're two weeks late for work.

KELSO: I thought I deserved a holiday.

BAINBRIDGE: How's that thick skull of yours?

KELSO: Still there, must be, hurts like hell.

BAINBRIDGE: I've brought you something for that, here, get this down you.

KELSO: Rum! Just what the doctor ordered.

BAINBRIDGE: It most definitely is not.

KELSO: **(He drinks)** Man that's good. You havenae got a fag?

BAINBRIDGE: Here you go. You'll get me thrown out you know.

KELSO: **(He takes a drag)** That's bloody marvellous. Now, what's been happening in the land of the living since half of Nottinghamshire landed on my head?

BAINBRIDGE: Don't be so dramatic, it was only 10,000 tons of coal.

KELSO: Is that all? **(They laugh)** What's happened to Hancock?

BAINBRIDGE: He was never going to stand trial. The poor sod's mind's broken. Right now he's under observation at Saxondale.

KELSO: How's his father taken the news?

BAINBRIDGE: As well as can be expected. He's taken some comfort from the knowledge that his son wasn't responsible for his actions.

KELSO: And you believe that?

BAINBRIDGE: How can I doubt it? You were there. You saw him.

KELSO: Aye. So what did you put in your report?

BAINBRIDGE: I told the truth. I described exactly what happened. I said that in my opinion we were all suffering from hallucinations brought on by an unidentified toxic gas.

KELSO: How did they react?

BAINBRIDGE: Moffat agreed that it was a possibility so they accepted it, pending further investigation.

KELSO: Further investigation?

BAINBRIDGE: Not our mob. Some scientists from London are going to carry out tests all around New Teaswell.

The Teaswell Incident by Peter David Carter

KELSO: They won't find anything.

BAINBRIDGE: No?

KELSO: You don't really believe it was all a hallucination do you?

BAINBRIDGE: (**Carefully**) What I feel and what I believe are two different things. I know what I saw and heard and I admit that it seemed real, but then it would wouldn't it? That's what hallucinations do. Rationally though, I cannot accept that there's some, some being, some spirit trapped, fossilised at the bottom of a Nottinghamshire coal mine, the very idea is madness.

KELSO: It's different for me I suppose, I don't have to write reports.

BAINBRIDGE: So you think it was real?

KELSO: Like I said, I've met him before, in France, in every filthy dug out I cowered in, in every stinking patch of ground I fought for, in every whore-house in Amiens...

BAINBRIDGE: Jock you're tired...

KELSO: Don't treat me like a child George.

BAINBRIDGE: I'm sorry. You were saying; you've seen him before?

KELSO: Not as such. I've felt him, inside me, in my veins, behind my eyes, raging. He gave me the strength to do what I needed to do to stay alive. When I saw him in the cave I felt my blood boiling in the same old way and I knew it was him.

BAINBRIDGE: And who do you think he is?

KELSO: Life of course, and the love of live, and the fear of death.

There is a pause, during which we can hear a distant clock chiming.

BAINBRIDGE: Half two. I'd better get back to the station or they'll be sending out a search party.

KELSO: It was good of you to come sir.

BAINBRIDGE: No, it was my pleasure. Get well soon, we need you.

KELSO: Aye, like a hole in the head.

They laugh.

BAINBRIDGE: You saved my life Jock, Hancock's too. I won't forget that.

KELSO: Ach well, we all make mistakes.

The End.