

THE SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS

Mum had told us numerous times not to play football in the garden; it damaged the plants and our slide tackles and kicking divots ruined the lawn apparently, although what was the garden for if not having fun in? Swingball was really boring after a bit and Sammy was useless at it. We were too old now for silly swings and climbing frames and the baseball hoop was only fun for a few minutes of shooting.

So it was, on that cold, February morning that we were playing the cup final at Wembley – Liverpool against Manchester United – with MU (me of course) in the lead by four goals to nil when it happened. I dribbled the ball round the budding, rhododendron bush; through the ramshackle, wooden trellis and sprinted down the lawn for a shot at goal where Sam stood, arms outstretched. As my right foot connected, my left foot slipped from under me and I got right under the ball lifting it high into the air as I banged onto my bottom on the lawn.

It was like watching a slow-motion film as Sam and I – mouths agape – saw the ball arc into the air, sail over the fence and into the upstairs window of our neighbours' house. The trouble was, the window was closed! The sound was terrible – a sort of crash, following by the clinking and tinkling of glass shattering and raining down onto the windowsill.

“Quick! Let’s hide! They’ll n ..n.. never kn..n..ow it was us.” Sam stuttered.

“You idiot! Of course they will,” I shouted back whilst getting to my feet and trying to think what repercussions might come of this dreadful deed.

At that moment, my neighbour screamed; a sound as awful as that of the breaking glass and frightening similar in that like a firework it burst upon the sky and then sparkled and flashed as it slowly died away.

It was time to face the music. Putting my arm around Sammy’s shoulders, I marched him inside reassuring him as we went,

“Don’t worry Sam, this one was all me. You’ll just cop it for playing football in the garden.”

He was a sensitive boy, my brother, and tears were already sliding slowing down his cheeks like drops down the window pane. He couldn’t help it; he was just someone who felt things deeply, had a vivid imagination and thought things through a lot. I on the other hand thought mostly about myself and like to get on with things without delving too deeply.

“Mum er, I’ve got something I need to tell you, Mum,” I began but got no further as, at that moment, the front door bell rang furiously and continuously.

What happened next soured relations between ourselves and the neighbours until they moved last year; not that that mattered much to myself and Sammy. What we cared more about was the pocket money that went towards replacing the window and the fact that the lawn was replaced by paving stones!

THE SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS – QUESTIONS

1. Why was football not allowed in the garden? (2)
2. What activities were on offer? (2)
3. Where were the boys playing their 'cup final'? (1)
4. What simile is used for watching the ball break the window? (1)
5. Are clinking and tinkling good verbs for the glass breaking and why? (1)
6. What might the boy have been thinking as he sat on the lawn watching the glass break? (3)
7. What does the boy mean when he says, "You idiot! Of course they will."
8. Why does the author compare the sound of breaking glass and the neighbour screaming to a firework? Explain your answer. (3)
9. What figure of speech is, "It was time to face the music." and what does it mean in this context? (2)
10. Compare what we find out about the two brothers and their characters. (3)
11. What were the results of the accident? (3)