

TEN WORD TALES No. 10

All the Difference

by The Story Spinner

CHAPTER 4



Over the days before the Best Bookshop Award lots of people told Miss May they hoped she would win, even a friend who worked at the Big Book Bonanza, which was a large bookshop in the neighbouring town, and also a finalist. Every time someone said, *Thank you. You really helped me love reading*, Miss May felt happy but mystified. She was happy, not because they were paying her compliments, though that's always nice, but because they told her so many stories of books they loved or books that helped them or books that gave them ideas. She was mystified because she still did not know what secret friend had suggested *The Bookworm* and given her name.

Mr Clare kept on telling her details of the banquet. Each course sounded delicious but the dessert choices sounded best of all, a crisp pastry parcel filled with apricots, ginger, orange and almonds, or a mound of strawberries, including tiny wild strawberries (Mr Clare's favourite), all served with cream. It sounded amazing.

On the day of the celebration dinner, Miss May carried on as normal, to keep herself calm. When she shut up the shop she felt a bit trembly. Nicki and Vicki gave her hugs, two gingerbread men (for courage) and said they would see her later. They were going to be her guests. She dropped the usual parcel into the postbox. At home she had a bath, a cup of tea and one of the gingerbread men; she climbed into her silky dress, added a silver necklace and set off to the Majestic.

Between courses there were speeches about books, speeches by authors, speeches by publishers and bookshop owners. At last it was time for the Award. Each finalist had a recommender except Miss May. The chairman, Mr Chesterfield, stood up. "This is unusual but our last speech recommending a Bookshop and Bookseller is not here in person because he lives on a South Sea Island in, well, the South Seas, but he is with us tonight on Zoom....."