



THE
STORY
REPUBLIC

Thirteen Jollifs & Other Stories

Tales of Liskeard, Looe & Polperro

JOAN THE WAD by Keith Sparrow

High up in the granite rock above the old fishing village of Polperro, lived a witch. Her name was Joan the Wad, and she used her witchy eye to watch over the comings and goings of the village.

She saw the fisherman riding their boats out to gather fish from the inky sea. She saw the gulls squawking and squabbling over scraps of crab and mackerel in the harbour, and she saw the lazy, insolent cats prowling among the lanes and narrows. She saw the old fishermen sitting in the shelter, and smelt their sweet pipe-smoke drifting on the breeze. She saw the holiday-makers beetling through the cafes and gift shops, posing for holiday photos and sucking in the fresh salty air.

All this she saw with her witchy eye. But Joan the Wad saw more than that. She could peer through the mists of time and see the multitude of ghosts, the ones that came before, the ones long gone and the ones yet to be.

She saw old Mr Jolliff, sat in his little rowboat up in the field, fishing for memories in the long grass.

She saw Madame le Farrier carefully laying out her elegant gloves and chiffon scarves in the shop window, fishing for customers.

She saw the notes of flamenco guitar floating up from the Three Pilchards, where Pedro and Maria were falling in love.

She saw a small girl, enviously peeping in the smoky windows of the Working Men's Club reading room, where girls were not allowed.

She saw Fred the Car Park in his Sunday best, waiting on the bridge for his date that would never arrive.

She saw the cats lick-licking up melting ice-cream from the cobbles outside Mynards Ice Cream shop, and she saw Diamond Lil polishing her glass ornaments, sparkling in the afternoon sun.

She saw the laughing girls as they ran to open the love barometer and dream their dreamy romances, and she saw the twisty-twiny shapes of young lovers embracing in the coosing market.

She saw the night shadows creep-crawl over the village, and the dawn sun glitter on the tide...

Perched in her little nook high up in the rocks, Joan the Wad saw all this and more with her witchy eye.

She watched, and as she watched, she kept the heart of old Polperro beating on through the years.

Polperro



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