Reset

It had been a trying week. Deirdre in HR asked me if I needed anger management after the incident with the jammed photocopier and I had been asked to leave the golf club after losing it on the ninth hole. I hadn't meant to snap the flagstick or beat my club into the green, but fifteen strokes to get out of the bunker and then to miss a two-inch putt...understandable I would say.

My wife's solution to any problem is to resort to the internet and retail therapy, and so a blood pressure monitor was pointedly bought for me, followed by a large box containing a metal detector. Apparently as the golf club was no longer an option this would get me out of the house and from under her feet. It sat unopened in the hallway for a couple of weeks, the box becoming increasingly battered and tattered with the kicks I meted out every time I walked past it.

"Don't be a grumpy old git," said my granddaughter handing me the phone number of a local detectorist group.

"We're meeting at Blackbird Farm this Sunday. Join us," said the voice on the other end of the phone.

It was a small group and they helped me to assemble and calibrate my machine before spreading out into the field, leaving me to myself. The headset muffled any sound. My eyes cast down; I slowly swept back and forth conscious only of my breath and the occasional meep of the machine. The sun soothed the tension from my shoulders and as though swimming underwater, I bathed in quiet warmth, moving smoothly and slowly searching for a flicker of silver or a glint of gold.

We stopped to eat our sandwiches. Someone handed me a tin of lager. They didn't talk much. I looked across the valley, over the dark still river and the sheep faintly bleating on the hill opposite. The newly mown bales of hay smelled fresh and sweet. Insects hummed in the hedgerow. A red kite called to its mate.

"How was it? Did you find a Saxon hoard, or an unexploded bomb? Anything exciting?" teased my wife. I scowled at her not wishing to admit that my haul consisted of two ring pulls, a bottle top and a corroded nail, but also a day of release.

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