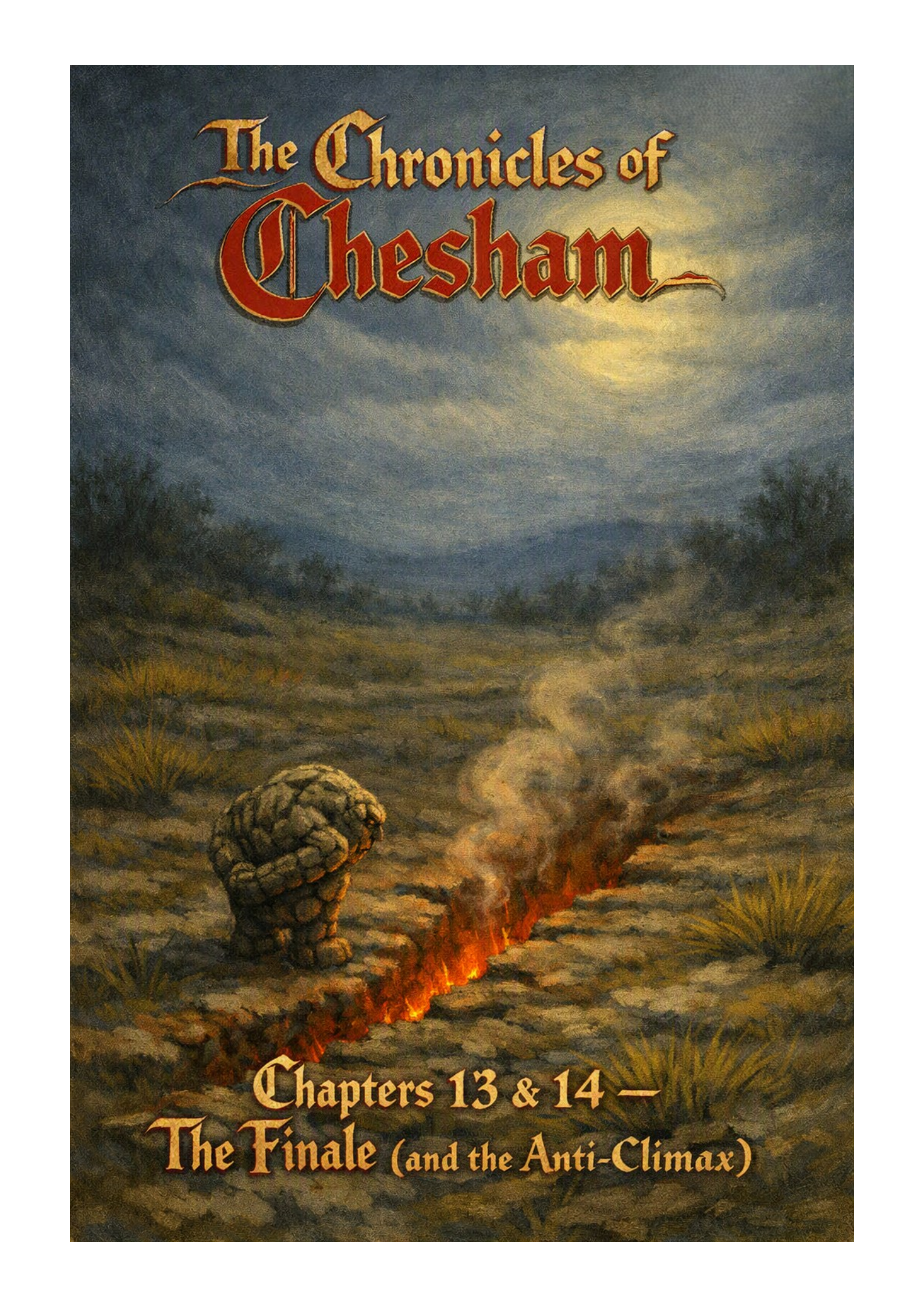




The Chronicles of Chesham

Chapters 13 & 14 —
The Finale (and the Anti-Climax)

CHAPTER THIRTEEN – THE ENTERING HERBERT’S HOLE

Jake was inspecting the ground, his little stony hands held behind his back as he peered into the hole.

“Why is it called Herberts Hole?” Asked Jake of the rest of the crew.

“Nobody knows,” said Jeff, slightly disappointingly.

They were looking at a slash in the ground, some ten feet in length, with what appeared to be two ridges either side, every now and then it would expel gas with a sound that was familiar to the gang as being similar to the side effects of a bad pint.

And then there was the smell, a smell so bad that even a Natterfright would think twice before going near it.

“We are going to need to go in there, aren’t we?” Questioned Ben, and said aloud the thoughts of his comrades.

The words of Dave the Bastard were ringing in Richard the Half Goblins ears.

“When you get to the hole, don’t bugger about, hold your breath and jump straight in – no one really knows what is on the other side but I lost a dog in there once and have never seen it again.”

Richard sighed, “We are just going to have to go for it aren’t we!” And much to the surprise of everyone in the group, he pinched his goblin nose, ran forward and did the kind of bombing jump that would later be outlawed in all public

swimming baths in Chesham (after they had been invented), whatever next? Smoking? Heavy petting? No manners whatsoever.

Rich disappeared from view and moments later a large puff of green cloud burped from the hole, as if it had consumed him. Everyone else looked around, until Ben pulled the cork out of a sneakily concealed flagon of ale, took a few glugs and after throwing it to Frank ran forward and dived into Herberts Hole, shouting “Geronimooooooooo”.

One by one, using their own artistic flare (and a little ale each from the flagon) they entered the whole. Jake tip toed in, Mick jumped upright in like a pencil, Frank pushed Bob in and each and every one of them took the plunge.

On the other side of the whole, as the gang were making there way into the unknown, Rich the half goblin was experiencing the “other side”. He had effectively jumped into rear end of an ancient creature, and was now flying through a dark internal intestine – the wrong way for the ancient creatures liking I should add.

Herbert was in fact a gigantic, magical creature from another world, that had crash landed into the countryside near Chesham many centuries ago, getting quite stuck. The Gods had watched this event and found it rather funny and so had rather cruelly left the immortal Herbert stuck in the ground to get on with things by himself. Over the coming years, the

ground had shifted and grown around him making him even more secure in the ground and the crater he had created upon impact was barely noticeable apart from his giant sphincter that was there for all to see.

The sphincter that the shouty Wednesday crew were now jumping into.

Richard squelched and wriggled his way through the dark spongy tunnel, and he could hear the others squelching along somewhere behind him, until he entered a large dark opening, he poked his way through and found himself standing on fleshy surface, with a grim, dark, odorous liquid sloshing around at his ankles.

One by one the team emerged into the opening, until all of them stood in a spongy circle, the floor undulating under their feet.

“What is this?” Said Jake, as Ben found some matches and lit a small torch. As the room lit up, there was quite a sight.

For a start, all of them were covered in a revolting, brown sludge. They were not aware that they had just climbed the wrong way up a ancient monsters digestive system, and they were in fact just covered in Well you know what it is.

Secondly, as they looked around and saw the drips from the fleshy ceiling dropping onto the floor, and as they did one of the drops hit Timmy on the hand.

“Ow, that burns like a night with Tamara the Showgirl,” complained Timmy.

Then it dawned on Jeff, “we’re in a stomach!”

Jeff was not world renowned for his diplomacy, he once asked a leper whether he could move out of his way and take his rotting stinking limbs with him, and when asked by one of the local bar maids if their bum looked big in their latest outfit, he did not say anything but just made oinky noises like a pig. Honesty was problematic sometimes.

The stomach statement did cause a mild panic amongst the group, nobody particularly wanted to be digested today, and if they had known it’s name, certainly not by a gigantic alien being called Herbert (what a way to go).

Then, Ben had a brainwave (it does happen!).

“Mick, have you still got the tiger nuts and liquorice sticks from the pub?” Ben enquired with some urgency.

“Yes, I took load of them – I need them for my oh well never mind.” Mick trailed off.

“Drop them in the stomach, that will get him going,” Ben was deadly serious.

“You can’t do that,” Frank interjected.

“Why not?” Asked Ben.

“Because he will shit us out the way that we came,” Russ explained.

“I’ve got an idea,” Richard the Blacksmith stepped forward. Everyone paused.

“All of you now, one liquorice stick, one tiger nut each – do it now.” Rich commanded and everyone looked at each other and then realised the game. They all ate at once.

It took seconds, Russ was first, his eyebrows started to waggle, and he pointed a finger at Bob, who pulled his finger and the most enormous fart emitted from Russ (who was trying very hard not to laugh). Bob turned to Ben, and also offered a finger, and Ben did pull with a great sense of urgency and an even bigger fart was brought to the air. One after the other, fart, fart, fart, fart, fart, fart. And it was beginning to work, the smell was unbelievable, days and days of the finest ale mixed with liquorice and nuts hit the air, and the chamber began to tremble and contract.



More farting, over and over, and the chamber began to violently shake.

Timmy looked over at Bob, and shouted “It’s not enough, you need to lose the Grocs.”

Bob was simultaneously most put out but understood the instruction and flicked a groc up into his hand and dipped his toes into the liquid. His sweaty, stinky, groc clad feet that still had traces of Natterfright on released their pungent odour. That was it.

All of the walls of the great cavernous stomach gripped hold of the crew and they were shot upwards through another fleshy tube towards a large opening where one by one they fell some fifteen feet out onto a stony floor, one by one, as they landed on top of each other (Bob at the bottom obviously) and finally with the great weight of Rich the Blacksmith falling on top of the bundle. Herbert had thrown them up, and a large craggy, stony face and mouth could be seen retreating backwards to the walls of the giant cavern they were now in and returned back to rock, until it was disturbed once more.

Among much moaning and aching, Russ put a hand out from somewhere within the mountain of bodies, and felt nothing but space, he retreated backwards, afraid of falling and then he saw where they were.

They were in an enormous cavern, on a ledge about the width of five men, that overlooked a giant abyss.

Nothing but blackness, and no way of seeing where the abyss led. Russ concluded that they had been fortunate to land where they did, a few feet forward and they all would have plummeted to their doom.

As everyone extricated themselves from the pile and stood well back from the abyss, it was clear that the cavern was lit by magic torches embedded high up on the sides of the rock, and although there must be a ceiling, it was hidden in the darkness above, a reflection almost of the darkness below.

Some distance across the other side of the cavern, way across the dark abyss, there was a glowing green circle, magic of course, that looked about the same size as the egg that Bob was carrying in his pocket.

“I wonder how we get it over there,” Ben wondered out loud. And then, a voice that was familiar to most of the crew sounded, it was the voice that had started the quest, and brought them all there.

“I AM ISFET, LORD OF CHAOS, BRINGER OF IMBALANCE, MASTER OF DESTRUCTION AND RUINER OF EPIC NIGHTS OUT...”

“I don’t like him already,” remarked Ben.

“SILENCE, YOU MUST CROSS THE ABYSS AND PLACE THE EGG OF ARTEFACTS INTO THE HOLE OF RESTORATION..”

Russ giggled at this, “hole of restoration, god sake..”

“SILENCE, YOU MUST CROSS ONE BY ONE BUT IF ONE OF YOU DOES NOT MAKE IT ACROSS THEN I WILL DESTROY CHESHAM AND ALL THAT LIVES IN IT....”

“But why?” Frank shouted into the darkness.

“IT’S WHAT I DO!” and with that the Egg of Artefacts (really!) rose from Bob’s pocket and flew across the abyss to hover slightly in front of the green lit hole.

At the same time, dozens of rock platform floated up from the abyss and now hovered like stepping stones in the middle of the air, in fifteen broken lines across the dark and deadly drop.

“CHOOSE YOUR PATH, CHOOSE YOUR PERIL.”

The voice then stopped, and Richard the half goblin stepped forward, “we are going to have to jump across these stones – I will go.”

And with no thought for his own personal safety, Richard leapt onto the first stone in front of him, hovering over the darkness. It held his weight and although it was only a foot wide and three feet long, he balanced. The next stone was a gap of some six feet away, it was quite a jump to make with the run up but Richard pressed on and jumped to the next one, it wobbled slightly, but held his balance and looked around at the rest of the crew stood back on the ledge, Richard gave them a thumbs up over his shoulder and turned back to make a leap to the next one. If he made this one then he would have another ten to do but he was getting into his rhythm and he leapt forward

again.

Tad unfortunate this one, as he leapt through the air, he was actually smiling a tuskly smile to himself, he was really good at this, and in this moment of euphoria he did not see the grapefruit sized rock that was being shot across the abyss towards him. Timmy saw it and shouted out “Be careful, they are trying to shoot you in the ...”

“Ugh,” grunted Richard as he was hit full pelt in his nobgoglin and was thrown backwards from the platform and off into the abyss, the gang could hear him screaming for ages as he fell. They looked at each other. Mick spoke first.

“Right fellas, we have got to do this or we have had it anyway – let’s all go at the same time, surely they can’t fire at all of us, and if one of us makes it then we might be able to save the others.”

To say that this got a luke warm reaction from the rest of the gang would have been some understatement, but they understood the gravity (you bet they did) of the situation and lined up against their respective platforms.

“On three ,ready?” Mick got them set, “One, two, three – go!” Mick’s idea had been pretty decent but was based on a few missing facts, one they didn’t know where the rocks were being fired from, they didn’t know how many people or what was firing and they didn’t know if all of the platforms were safe,

apart from that it was brilliant.

They leapt across to the first platform, everyone was safe apart from Bob, who was a little unlucky (fancy that) and lost his footing jumping across and simply just fell into the abyss, he had managed to grab the platform with his hands and was now just hanging at first base trying not to drop to his demise (don't you hate that when it happens!).

Timmy was making very good progress, he had leapt across four platforms in not time at all, and just paused for a second to size up the leap to halfway, then blam, a rock fired across and straight towards his prized turnip. One blood curdling scream later, Timmy was falling into the abyss.

Richard the Blacksmith, although larger, was actually surprisingly agile and was also close to the halfway point when a rock fired towards his head. He ducked as best he could but forgot about his antlers that were securely tight to his head and the rock clipped one, and knocked him off balance and into the darkness below, shouting something that sounded like "Anchoooooorrrs".

Mick was hit in the helmet, which turned it around at a funny angle so he was unable to see and he too slipped off into the abyss. In quick succession they fell, Russ, Ben, Jake, Jeff until there was just Frank and Bob.

Bob was still trying to get back on his first platform, and had one leg up and was trying to swing the other one onto it to get

back on top. In the meantime, Frank, with moves that really quite belied his years, was only two platforms away from the egg of artefacts, when a small boulder was fired towards his ankles. Like some sort of gladiator, Frank jumped straight in the air, avoiding the shot but it continued to go past him towards the unfortunate Bob, who was just about on his knees on this first platform when the boulder hit him straight in the face and knocked him back to clinging onto the rocky ledge once again. Frank turned to look back and started laughing at Bob, which was a shame because a second rock had been fired whilst he laughed which caught him square in the stomach and knocked him into the abyss too, shouting “That’s your fault Boooooooooooooobbbbbbb,” as he tumbled to his doom.

Now there was only Bob, it was not lost on him that he had not had much luck of late and now he was in charge of saving everyone. Even he didn’t like the odds.

He brought himself back onto his first platform, and he looked down at his Grocs.

“Come on, we need to do this or we won’t be able to go to the pub ever again,” and as he made his self-motivational speech, he noticed a small button on the side of his Grocs, on each sole, that he had never seen before. He reached down and pressed each one on his sandal, and a slight sparkle started to emanate from the soles of his shoes, this was magic at work.

“Oh my gods,” gasped Bob, “I didn’t know these were Grocs Air Max!”.

He took a run forward and jumped to the next platform, landing with ease and with just enough time to swerve his body as a rock came firing towards him. He ran and jumped forward again, but this time jumped so high that the rock being fired at him passed clean beneath his heels. He ran again, but this time leapt diagonally, flying high through the air like a gazelle, his lovely hair was now flowing in the slipstream of this athletic master class, and the creatures firing the rocks could not keep up.

This way and that, he leapt and twisted and turned, a forward flip over two rock projectiles, and now the aggressors were firing two, three rocks at a time but to no avail – Bob was on fire, leaping this way and that, hair swishing like the glorious tail of a peacock behind him.

And then he was there, the final leap on the final platform, he could see the egg and the glowing green hole. He knew what to do.

“I am no longer Bob the Unlucky, I am Bob the hero, saviour of the town, shiny god with lovely hair,” Bob shouted, and then he leapt, and as he did so three rocks were fired at him.

The first hit him square in the face, with so much force that in slow motion it knocked him into a backwards flip, until the second hit him square in the buttocks, causing him to continue

to spiral in the air in a complete loop until the third one hit him, fully and completely in those poor battered crown jewels of his but incredibly he landed back where we had jumped from, bleeding from the nose, with bruised buttocks and a battered sausage but he was still standing. A voice could be heard in the background, “God sakes Cecil, this bloke is

unstoppable,” and with those final words Bob leapt for all he was worth back towards the egg, which he grabbed mid air with both hands and hurled into the, erm, into the, you know, er hole of restoration.

A bright light shone so brightly, that all he could see was white, and then flashes and Bob felt himself floating in the air. And as he did, one by one he saw the crew floating with him, Richard the Half Goblin, Timmy the Orc, Mick the Watchman, Ben the Merchant, Frank the Merchant (retired), Russ the outsider, Jeff the Engineer (and definitely not a wizard), Richard the

Blacksmith, Jake the Golem – oh joy of joys what was this?

“I know!” came a voice out of nowhere as everyone floated through the heavens together.

“DOB?” Bob exclaimed.

“Yes!” Said DOB, you have saved us all and we are being transported back to the pub.”

“Hoorah,” everyone shouted together as the world began to spin around and around and then everything went dark.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN – THE ANTI-CLIMAX

And so all of the Shouty Wednesday Crew were in the saloon bar, crammed around the tables and enjoying their ales, the fruits of their labour and a very interesting journey indeed.

Dave the Bastard was sat in his chair, growling at the incredible noise that was being made by the gang, as they drank to their hearts content in celebration of their success. DOB was putting some more logs on the fire.

“A toast,” declared Ben, holding his cask of ale high in the air (and spilling a bit), “To all of the Shouty Wednesday Crew, and our very own Bob – who may not be that unlucky anymore!”

Everyone cheered, apart from Bob, who had accidentally spilt half of his ale on the crotch of his trousers and looked like he had just had a very unfortunate senior moment in his pants. Then he decided to leave it and raised his ale, he would probably have got them wet somehow later anyway.

“Be ready for lock down tonight,” warned Dave the Bastard, “the change is forecast for this evening, so make sure you silly buggers are ready.”

And Dave the Bastard was right, the change happened to Chesham every now and then, when the ground would shift, and where new buildings and places and people would suddenly appear, and new and different tales would be ready to be told. And as the ground began to shift, and the buildings

began to change, the George and Dragon emerged on the high street, a new drinking hole, the Red Lion, The Tavern, and new people too – who knows, one of them might even be you.

Thank you for reading, I hope you have enjoyed it and if you would like to see another series then please let us know at info@chroniclesofchesham.com

Thank you to all of the people I have made fun of and all of the venues in Chesham involved.

Russell Barr

red, and occasionally belching natural gas into the ether.

They had found Herberts Hole.