

What if the experts are right?

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March 29 is looming. It's a Friday in case you were not aware. I suspect there will be Brexit parties. Or wakes. And for the record, the lights are unlikely to go off. At least not in mainland Britain. But they might in Northern Ireland. Because it is dependent on the Republic for power. And no one knows whether that power can be supplied after 11pm that evening.

Or rather, some experts doubt it can be. Some pragmatists think that despite that it will be, although they are not sure how. And most people in the UK as a whole don't give a damn.

I think the last have three reasons for thinking this. The first is that this will happen to someone else, so who cares?

The second is the belief that someone will sort this out. No one can be sure who, but someone will. Because they always do, whoever they are.

And the third is that the experts are wrong. That's because they always are, supposedly.

But suppose they aren't wrong? Suppose this time they are right.

And suppose that this time no-one will sort it out, because sorting things out requires someone to know the framework of rules within which they operate, and no one will know them any more.

And sure, I mentioned Northern Ireland, and to most people in the UK that is a remote and decidedly foreign country. But problems will be hitting the rest of the UK sometime soon after. Quite what they will be; who knows? I do not, precisely. But will there be gridlock in the event of no deal? The answer is yes. I can say that simply because no one will be sure what they can and can't do on either side of borders. And that will be enough to create the mess.

To this degree I am sure the 'experts' are right.

And I am sure that prevailing assumption that someone will quickly sort it out is wrong.

Just as I am sure that most people will not have prepared for this eventuality.

So I do predict chaos. Not because anyone will want it. Or plan it. And some will try to prevent it. But it will happen anyway. Because chaos is what happens when the rules are suspended.

And in this case we are playing with people's lives. And their well-being. And their food. As well as their livelihoods.

I know it is assumed that the experts are wrong. On Brexit we all want to make that assumption. And past evidence suggests we should. Usually things turn out OK.

But no one has tried suspending all the rules before. And no one has, most especially, done so with no clue at all what to put in their place, for all practical purposes. This will go wrong. You don't have to be an expert to see that. You just have to understand that rules exist to prevent the chaotic scenario we are creating. That's all anyone needs to know. The rest follows.

It makes the closing scene of Blackadder seem positively optimistic to appreciate that.