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Imports Exports

by Martin Bourne

“Alright Burt, ready for another rip-roaring night at the airport. All those people flying to exotic destinations and here we are getting ready to shunt crates about.”

“You say that every night Ern, but I think you like the humdrum. Anyway, you’ll be pleased to know that we’ve not much on tonight. Just two consignments,” said Burt, a rotund man in his fifties, who was at that time standing in front of the heater with his right hand through the slip pocket of his overalls rummaging as is the wont of some middle aged men.

“What are they then” said Ernest, who was watching Burt’s right hand activities with suspicion.

“Well, the one over there on the right won’t be giving us any bother coz it’s a body in a coffin, and on the other side is a mobile prison cell with a prisoner who’s got a bit of a chill. Oh, I forgot there’s also some dogs who are going into quarantine.”

“I love dogs me. I’ve got two big dogs at home.”

“They say Ern that love is after all a selfish thing.”

“Who says it?”

“I think it was a quote by a chap who is long dead.”

“Just like the fella over there in the box eye. Gives you the shivers a bit though don’t it.”

“Don’t you worry about a thing. We are in for a cushy night. Look out over the runway there, it’s just like daylight with that full moon. Beautiful ain’t it.”

“Yeah.”

“Howl-howl-howl.”

“What the bloody hell was that Burt.”

“I think it’s coming from the prison cell Ern. Go take a look.”

Ern walked over to the cell and peered through the peep hole in the door, “Burt, did you say that the bloke was a bit sick.”

“That’s right Ern.”

“Well, I don’t want to cause a problem or anything but there’s a bloody big dog in here.”

Burt joined Ernest, “he doesn’t look happy does he?”

“I’m not surprised, poor thing locked in a cell like that. I reckon the prisoner has escaped and one of those quarantine dogs has got out and wandered in. We’ll have to put him back.”

“You be careful,” said Burt who had decided to hide behind Ernest.

Ernest opened the door to the cell and the inmate approached.

“Hello boy, here’s your uncle Ernie come to let you out. Now lets see what I’ve got in my pocket for a good boy” as he fished out a dog biscuit.”

“Ahh, look, he’s wagging his tail. That’s it now sit down for uncle Ernie and you can have the treat. No snatching now, take it nicely.”

“He bloody near had your hand off then.”

“Nonsense, all dogs respond to a bit of TLC. Quick take off your belt so I can tie it round his neck and lead back to the quarantine area.”

“Well, I’m glad that’s over,” said Burt.

“Me too. By the way, who is that bloke in the cloak standing over there hogging the fire?”