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The Employment Agency

by Richard Rewell

London, 1957. Winter

I had just been de-mobbed from the RAF after two years of national service in Malaya.

I was sitting opposite Jocelyn Snaresbrook the proprietor of the *Slave4Aday* employment Agency. Behind me a gas fire hissed pretending to throw out heat as I shivered in my RAF issue overcoat. The place was a freezing, dingy slum, making Glasgow's famous Gorbals look like a genteel leafy Surrey garden suburb.

I was looking for someone to help in my new enterprise. And *Slave4Aday* were as cheap as chips. Well, 1957 chips that is.

Snaresbrook's agency had a poor reputation and was so low in the national employment agency rankings it was almost subterranean.

It was propped up by Snaresbrook's wife, Daphne an obscenely wealthy woman who had so much money the World Bank actually came to her for loans.

"You're looking for someone you'd train as a surveyor you say Richard. Not had one of them. Had a stuntman once though. Sadly, he'd lost his way and grew immensely fat. I think his bottom was so huge it had its own gravitational pull. Probably not quite what you're seeking, said Snaresbrook. Even had a soccer player too. Thick as a brick. No maybe two, no three. No make that a hod full."

"Could a traffic warden do a bit of surveying Richard?" continued Sanresbrook, "Got one looking for a job. Horrible bugger. Demonic. Absolutely evil. He was so nasty even the SS would have refused him entry. There's the cleaning lady, bit clumsy mind.

She's done more damage in homes around London than the Luftwaffer did during the Blitz. Whoops no. Placed her already up at the hospital. Theatre sister."

"What?" I said in horror, but Snaresbrook ignored me.

It was getting very dark in Snaresbrook's office, which could be gloomy even if you had all the lights on and the earth acquired another sun. However, now it was as dark as an Eskimo's winter.

"Could we have the lights on?" I asked.

"Darkness is cheap Richard, to quote Jean Paul Sartre."

"Dickens actually," I said.

"Dickens. Of course, I forgot about him. Bert Dickens the writer. Sadly, not that good. Books written, four. Total sold, thirty-one. He was as useless as a concrete parachute."

"Look Mr Snaresbrook I think I'd better go."

"I'm getting close to finding the right person for you," said Snaresbrook. "Here's one. No. Possibly not. Useless as a cart without a donkey. An usherette: scared of the dark. Lasted two performances. But wait. Europa!" said Snaresbrook.

"Eureka?" I said in an attempt to correct him.

"Outside on the left Richard. Be careful how you pull the chain."

I placed my head in my hands.

"I've found him. Says he'll do anything. Been a milkman, insurance clerk. But wants to be an actor. He must be joking. He's got as much chance of being an actor as a pork sausage has of being the Queen. I'll get him across to you tomorrow. He's Scottish, but he's quite nice."

"What's his name," I say lunging for a pen old enough to have been used by King John to sign the Magna Carta.

"Steve Connally. No sorry. Sean Connally...sorry, Connery."