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In Plain Sight

by Martin Bourne

“You’re surely not going to go?”

“Why shouldn’t I?”

Gerald’s wife stirred her tea and reserved her puzzled expression for the swirling brown liquid.

“But Gerald, why on earth would you want to go to a works do at a company from which you retired two years ago, and furthermore you couldn’t stand the people when you were there. You always said you were worn out by the place and thankful when the weekend rolled around.”

Gerald stood and ambled across the kitchen using his carefully rehearsed older man walk. He stopped at the sink and looked at the flowerbeds which had taken up most of attention for the last two years. He considered his answer.

“I know I used to moan about them but, well, you know how it is, I worked there for 30 years and I suppose a chat and a drink, well, you know they weren’t all bad.”

“Who?”

“Who what?”

“Who?, who wasn’t all bad, you didn’t seem to have a good word about anyone.”

“Jacobs, Philipson, they were ok.”

“What just those two, nobody else. Seems pointless going if you’re just going to speak to two fellas? Who is organising this thing anyway?”

“Perks.”

“Bloody Joe Perks. Good luck with that then. You always said he was a waste of space. Didn’t you say he was always an idiot when you were away at conferences and he was there?”

“I know, but anyway I don’t have to speak to him.”

“When is it?”

“Friday.”

“Well make sure you don’t drink too much.”

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“Hiya lads.”

“Oh hi Gerry, didn’t think you would come, the bus will be outside in a couple of minutes, don’t miss it,” said Ron Jacobs.

Gerald went up to the first floor, to his old office. He waited a while looking around. This room was Perks office now. He looked from the window and saw them all piling onto the bus. He heard the door open behind him.

“There you are my love,” said Perks.

Gerry turned.

“Joanne, at last. I’ve missed you these past two years.”

They embraced and looked forward to their evening. Together again.