

Tears for a Butcher ©

By Michael Casey

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This is what I've written so far in Tears for a Butcher which is the follow on novel to The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker, God knows if I ever finish it. But IF I get a legal typist to type it , then maybe I will, or I could just record it. Let's see.

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A Nation Of Shopkeepers Book Two / The Butcher The Baker and The Undertaker book2 ©

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Michael Casey

Chapter One ...Mrs Murphy to the Rescue

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The next day found the street nursing a collective hangover , Mrs  
Murphy being the sole sober person . It was her soul and that of her  
infant grandchild which concerned her , so as usual she had got up and  
said her three rosaries before going to early Mass . In the afternoon  
little Shiela was to be Christened so Mrs Murphy at least was getting in  
the right frame of mind . Mrs Murphy did stop to light a candle in front  
of Saint Anthony as thanks for help in finding Jaswinda , after all wasn't  
he the saint in charge of lost things and you might call Jaswinda's  
kidnapping a form of being lost , lost from her parents and friends that  
is . Fr Shaw had privately offered the Mass up in thanks for Jaswinda's  
safe return , even he had felt humbled by Mrs Murphy's faith in God . He  
had noticed the lit candle by Saint Anthony's statue and the nod and smile  
Mrs Murphy had given to a poster of Mother Theresa of Calcutta . So united

in prayer the Mass was celebrated .

When the Mass was over and Fr. Shaw had taken the vestments off

he walked down the side aisle and sat on the bench in front of Mrs Murphy ,

leaning back he spoke to her .

"Well that was quite a night . I didn't have as much fun since the last

ordination I was at " , he said with a smile .

"It was grand , I'll agree with you there , BUT you do know that the food

we were "ateing" was for Shiela's Christening do " , replied Mrs Murphy as

she heaved her bussom indignantly .

"You don't begrudge Jaswinda and her family that do you ?" asked Fr. Shaw

trying not to smile .

"I do not , I enjoyed myself too ! It's just that Patrick doesn't seem to

do anything in the right order . I mean he fathered a child before he got

married , now he eats the food before the Christening " , sighed Mrs

Murphy .

"You don't mind being a grannie , I mean some women feel that they've got

one foot in the grave now that they are grandmothers " , said Fr. Shaw

teasingly .

"I do NOT , now that's the best thing Patrick ever did , and June is such

a nice girl . It was almost the will of God them meeting , fancy it being

her father who lent us that money all them years ago . Now we are one

happy family , APART from that mother of hers . I just hope I'm spared

long enough to see all my grandchildren grow up , I wouldn't want the

"English Grandmother" to influence them too much " , she rolled her eyes

at the thought .

Fr Shaw smiled broadly and tossed his head back , stiffling his

laughter out of respect . Mrs Murphy smiled too , noticing for the first time the small piece of paper stuck to Fr. Shaw's neck, she'd have a laugh at him too as well as herself .

"Is the work getting too much for you Father , not trying to cut your throat are you " pulling the piece of paper from his throat and holding it in front of him .

"Get away out of that , besides the Samaritans are ex directory around here" he replied .

"Well I'd better go home for some breakfast , I'll see you this afternoon with the "Pagan Grandparents" for the Christening " said Mrs Murphy as she gathered herself and her handbag up .

"You could always try converting them ,I mean their daughter is Catholic now " , said a deadpan Fr.Shaw .

"And how do I go about that " said Mrs Murphy as she put her gloves on .

"Well we don't have a statue like we have one of St. Anthony nor a poster

like the one of Mother Theresa " , Fr. Shaw paused, he could see Mrs Murphy

blush , she was embarrassed by her shows of faith .

"Don't you dare tell anybody " whispered Mrs Murphy as she fidgeted with

her bag .

"Anyway " said Fr. Shaw diplomatically " haven't you heard of St. Jude ,

she likes a challenge , perhaps the "Pagan Grandparents" would be right up

her street " a smile on his lips .

"St. Jude would be ringing the Samaritans then " was Mrs Murphy's reply as

she nodded towards the altar and headed down the aisle and out of the

church .

"Lord grant me faith " , said Fr. Shaw . Then he smiled, he knew the saints

would soon be bombarded with conversion prayers .

In the afternoon Mrs Murphy , Patrick and June and baby Shiela arrived for the christening . The "English Grandparents" were there too , that's to say June's parents Mr and Mrs Kemp . Mrs Kemp was dressed to the nines , with a big hat on her head and matching long gloves .Big Sid , Mark and Gillian , Percy and Sgt Mulholland and Mathew were also there , along with Amjit , Balbinda and Jaswinder of course .

"The Lord Save Us , if it isn't The Duchess of York Herself" whispered

Mrs Murphy as she walked up the side isle to the baptismal font . June had to look down at the baby and pretend to wipe its nose to save collapsing into giggles . Patrick just bit his lip , the pain would stop him laughing.

"I'll just go and say hello to "Annette" " , said Mrs Murphy before striding over towards Mrs Kemp .

"She's up to something " , whispered Patrick .

"I know , but what ? " answered June from behind her hand .

After a few moments they found out what . For Mrs Murphy returned all smiles , giving a knowing wink to Patrick and June , well that's how it seemed but in fact the wink was for the baby Jesus in the Virgin Mary's arms .

"You know you were going to call the baby Shiela , then have Annette as the middle name , after your mother over there " said a surprizingly coy Mrs Murphy .

"Yes , we decided that months ago ," answered a suspicious June .

"Well "Annette" agrees with me it would be better if the middle name be different , I mean Shiela Annette Murphy is a grand name , but the child might think one grandmother is better than another , what with her name coming second and that . Now we don't want favouritism do we . So



"Annette" thought that you could save her name for the next granddaughter

, which won't be long in coming , as you are such a loving couple after

all " continued Mrs Murphy .

Patrick blushed at this point , June just twinkled , Mrs Murphy was a

terror to be sure , but it felt alright , well as far as June was

concerned . Mrs Kemp saw Patrick blush and whispered to her husband .

"I bet she's talking about the next dozen grandchildren , and in a church

too . Well at least one will be called "Annette" , and NOT "Shiela

Annette" , she consoled herself with that thought .

"So what will the middle name be then ?" enquired a still red Patrick .

"Jude , of course , " replied Mrs Murphy .

"Jude , of course , " echoed June while pulling a face at Patrick .

"But she's the patron saint of " started Patrick .

"Hopeless causes , " finished June , who had recently finished a book on

the lives of the saints .

"Well it nice to see you're becoming a good Catholic , " smiled Mrs

Murphy beaming with pride .

"Us converts can teach you old ones a thing or two , " smiled June .

"But why Jude , mom ?" asked a puzzled Patrick .

"Well its a nice name , isn't it ? " she replied defensively before

walking towards Fr. Shaw who had emerged from the presbytery .

"What's she up to ? " said Patrick thinking aloud .

"Well you are a bit of a hopeless cause , or so my mother says " jested

June .

Fr. Shaw smiled when he heard what Mrs Murphy had to say , looking over

towards Mr and Mrs Kemp .

"Did you see that ? Fr.Shaw looked at mom and smiled , and he said

something too . It looked like" started already" . "

"I didn't know you were a lip reader . I'll have to watch out when I swear

at you in future " replied Patrick .

"Well only a bit , but what has she" started already" ? " continued a

an intrigued June .

"We can ask her afterwards , " was Patrick's reply , as he could see

Fr.Shaw was coughing and opening his prayer book , a sure sign that Shiela

was about to be baptised .

So with family and friends looking on , Shiela Jude Murphy was

baptised , Sgt. Mulholland and Mathew being her Godparents . Mrs Kemp

rolled her eyes at the sight , to her it seemed like two "King Kongs"

standing over a small bundle , which was baby Shiela . Mrs Murphy would

later explain how only Catholics could be Godparents for Catholic babies .

Baby Shiela stayed asleep during the service , even when drenched , for

Fr. Shaw a baptism meant water and lots of it , no dabbing for him . Yet the baby slept through it , June had taken a tip from Mrs Murphy , namely a thimblefull of Irish Whisky in the baby's milk half an hour before the baptism .

Back at Mark's cafe the baby's health was toasted , Mark and Gillian having stayed up late to remake the eaten buffet . Jaswinda was looking at her future playmate , and trying to work out when little Shiela would be bigger Shiela , or big enough to play at any rate . Outside Amjit was pacing up and down the pavement in front of the cafe and barking , he wanted to be let inside the cafe .

"What on earth's that savage dog trying to do ? " said an alarmed Mrs Kemp.

"He's only saying congratulations , that's all , " said a totally

unperturbed Mrs Murphy . Who then went to the counter to return with the scraps .

"Jaswinder , do you want to feed little Amjit ? " asked Mrs Murphy , holding the plate out so Jaswinder could reach .

"Yes , please , " Jaswinder replied then with a hop and a skip , her one pigtail bobbing she dashed out to feed Amjit .

"Is it safe , he might harm her ! " said an alarmed Mrs Kemp .

"I don't think so , " said a smiling Mrs Murphy .

After an hour of festivities , the people began to disperse ,

Mrs Kemp was about to leave herself , when she leaned over conspiratorily and with a glance at Patrick whispered to Mrs Murphy .

"Shiela , it's Patrick's birthday next month and I was thinking of getting him a nice watch , as I noticed his old one is a bit worn out . "

"More like , knackered , I'm forever telling him to take it off when he's

humping big loads of flour and the like , but will he listen to me ? "

,replied Mrs Murphy shaking her head .

"Quite , but he's changed since he's married MY June , so if I was to

buy him a nice watch then perhaps he'll take care of it ? " said Mrs Kemp

trying not to sound condescending , but failing as usual .

"Oh , to be sure , he's a real man , now that he's married to YOUR June ,

but then isn't he the image of his father , MY dead husband in heaven

who's no doubt having a drink with the angels to celebrate his first

grandchild's baptism into THE CHURCH . " , smiled back Mrs Murphy as if

butter would not melt in her mouth , while glancing over with pride at her

own earthly holy family , namely her Patrick and June and baby Shiela .

"Well , you do agree with me he needs a new watch , I mean we don't want

to end up buying him the same thing do we ?" , said Mrs Kemo , flashing

her best smile .

"Yes , you are quite right "Annette" , and can you tell me where you got

those luvly false teeth from ? They are grand altogether , or did you just

soak them for a week in Domestos ? " , replied Mrs Murphy the butter still

not melting in her mouth .

Mr Kemp came to the rescue , and ushered his wife out of the cafe , giving

a wink to Mrs Murphy , behind his wife's back of course , he had a sense

of humour after all , but he was not totally stupid though .

"I just hope she gets him a stretch strap , otherwise he won't wear the

thing . Mind you the watch he's got now isn't too bad , he's superglued

the glass back in , it could last a while longer . " mumbled Mrs Murphy as

she watched the Pagan Grandparents go .

"What's this about a stretch strap ? " asked June as she placed baby

Shiela in grandma Shiela's arms .

"Annette ,wants to buy your husband a watch for his birthday next month ."

"He could do with one , he told me those Russian one's seem to last him

the longest , the sweat gets in the others he's tried over the years .

Besides the one he's got now has a horrid picture in green of a man playing

a lute , the man looks as if he's just came out of a concentration camp !"

"I've seen that , it could frighten little Shiela here when she gets

older" , said Mrs Murphy as she stroked the baby's nose .

"I just hope mom gets a stretch strap , he hates the others they dig into

your skin when you work , he likes wind up ones too , he said he'd not

have got his present one if he'd realised it was a battery one . "

"I'm sure she'll get a nice one , I mean now there's a real man in your

family , besides she probably fancies him on the quite . " said Mrs Murphy

as she played with the baby in her arms .



"You're an absolute terror , you are ! " laughed June .

"It might be true , I was reading it in the Readers Digest at the surgery

when I was at Dr. Quaringa's for my blood pressure tablets . It said that

some mothers - in - laws have a fixation for there son in laws . "

"Well I'll have to get my figure back quick , and then start to seduce him

again !" laughed June .

"You'll soon have a brother for Shiela if you do that , but at least with

two children to look after , then Patrick would be too busy to notice your

mother's overtures . " retorted a deadpan Mrs Murphy before looking up at

June and throwing back her head to cackle like a hen .

Patrick came over to see what was up . The two women in his life just

looked at him and resumed their laughter with fresh vigour . Then his

daughter joined in to .

"The sooner I have a son , the better , then at least I'll not be

surrounded by mad women " , said a slightly indignant Patrick .

June and Mrs Murphy just looked at each other again and laughed till they

cried . Patrick was bemused , so he repeated his statement . "The sooner I

have a son the better ! " June wiped the tears from her eyes , before

kissing him . "I'll only be too happy to oblige , if you can wait a few

weeks " , she replied as she patted her still swollen stomach . Patrick

blushed as red as the bottles of ketchup on the tables , Mrs Murphy just

swelled with pride and whispered to the bundle in her arms " Little

Timothy won't be long in coming , a year at the most . "

Patrick was still blushing as June kissed him again . Mrs Murphy then got

up and handed the treasure back to June , before snatching a kiss from

Patrick and leaving the cafe , she had other matters to attend to .....

Mrs Murphy had walked to the end of the street when , she had to

stop and shake a pebble from her shoes , leaning on a wall as she did so .

When something cold and wet shoved itself into the back of her leg she was

naturally frighten for a second . Spinning around she saw what it was .

"God blast you , the Devil carry you , Amjit you hairy thing will you

leave me alone . " She screeched at the innocent dog .

Amjit lowered his head , and offered his paw , so they could shake hands

and be friends again . It was then than Mrs Murphy noticed her umbrella ,

hadn't she left it in the cafe and Amjit had brought it after her .

"Sorry , Amjit , but you did frighten me . Here shake hands . "

They shook hands , then with a woof , and what could easily by mistaken

for a smile Amjit was off his tail high and proud . He too had other

business to attend to , if only he could remember where he had buried that

pig's head that Big Sid had given him , Amjit knew there was another meal

or two left in it , if only he could remember where he'd left it .

"Thank's again , Amjit " shouted Mrs Murphy after the hairy hound . Amjit

stopped to bark again , then with a burst of astonishing speed he was off

, he'd probably seen the Post Office cat and Amjit wanted to talk to that

moggie . It started to rain , and thanking Amjit with a "Bless Him" Mrs

Murphy opened her umbrella . She had hardly opened it when old Michael

pulled up in his taxi .

"Do you want a lift , I've earnt my diesel for the day . "

"Well could you take me to Weatherfield Rd ,the one by the Rover's Return

past the old clothing factory ? "

"Hop in , but why are you going over that way ? "

"Me and Mrs Lynch are looking after Mrs Powulska , she's still weak after

her operation , so we take it in turns to keep an eye on her . Her sister

is coming ower from Poland for a month , she will be here in a few days

so I've got to tidy the place up a bit . "

"I like the Poles they are a great lot , I was with a lot of them fellas

in the war , they are sometimes called the Irish of Central Europe , they

have suffered let me tell you . " said Michael as he moved up the gears

and sped off .

"Yes they did suffer , first the Nazis , then the Communists , but they

led the way for Europe to be free , and after all isn't the Pope himself a

Pole , so you can't beat that . " said Mrs Murphy her voice showing her

passion .

As Mrs Murphy left the taxi , Michael who'd just had 10

minutes on the persecution of the Catholic church in Poland was numbed by

the outpouring . "Is it really true , they built a church themselves cos

the government built the town without one . And that in Albania they shot

a priest dead for baptising a baby ? "

"Yes " was Mrs Murphy's simple reply though her eyes betrayed her anger and passion .

"The Bastards , I fought a war for them , what are they afraid of ! "

"The Baby Jesus " mumbled Mrs Murphy as she walked away .

"Let me know when your Polish friend arrives , I'll drive you to the airport " shouted Michael after Mrs Murphy . She just waved in acknowledgement , her mind was elsewhere .

Mrs Murphy did the vacuuming , and dusting for 2 hours before stopping to make cup of tea for herself and a hot meal for Mrs Powulka . She propped Mrs Powulka up in bed , before putting a tray down in front of her , she watched as a still weak Mrs Powulka ate .

"So which part of Poland , does your sister come from ? " asked Mrs Murphy as she sipped her tea .

"Oh the south , a little place , a university place , its called Cracou "

Mrs Murphy's cup clattered against the saucer , she put her tea down for

fear of dropping it . To her it was as if a trumpet had sounded to herald

the entrance of an angel .

"That's where the Pope comes from !" she jabbered .

"Oh , of course , he babtised my sister's children . This food really is

good , you could almost be a Pole , Mrs Murphy . " replied Mrs POWulska as

she ate heartily . Mrs Murphy finished her tea fast , she'd have to give a

final sheen to things before she went . After all wasn't a friend of the

Pope's coming . She had seen the Pope in Coventry , sneaked in with the

handicaped thanks to Fr. Shaw , but now to meet with a friend of the Pope

, Mrs Murphy hadn't been this excited since her confirmation .

Mrs Murphy took it upon herself to meet Mrs Powulska's sister at

the airport . On the drive in Nanska the sister , told an awe struck Mrs

Murphy all about "Carol" , which was what the Pope insisted his old school

chums call him , his reasoning being that's what his mum called him , so

they must call him that too . Michael cocked half an ear to the

conversation , after all it wasn't often that he had a V.I.P. in the back

of his taxi . Mind you he had had the odd Lord Mayor or two who did think

that they were important , Michael knew from his own experience that the

really important people tended to be the quiet ones , they knew that they

were the guardians of gifts , however bizarre or seemingly useless , yes

the truly important people were the quite ones that was for sure , ask any

old taxi driver mused Michael as he pulled up outside Mrs Powulaska's .

"Thank's Michael , come inside for a cuppa , I'm sure Nanska will not

mind . " chirped Mrs Murphy .



"Yes, Shiela is taking the words from me . " continued Nanska who was now as a sister to Mrs Murphy . The sisterhood of the faith , was a bit of a benign conspiracy . A pair of rosary beads and pictures of grandchildren in a bag and there you had it , instant sisterhood no matter what nationality , it was the mothers that gave birth to faith , and it was meer men that said the Masses . The Pope himself knew that , that's why he insisted on being called Carol by Nanska and all his old school friends .

Inside the tears flowed into the tea , Polish words and songs rang out from the heart to the heart , there in central England , Mrs Murphy looked on , she knew that but for the miracle of Poland breaking the chains of Communism , this happy scene would never have happened . It was at times like these that a good Irish drink was called for . So reaching into the bottom of her black bag , she produced Poteen .

"Will you take some in your "Tay" ? ", she said but without awaiting an answer she was pouring it .

"What is this Poteen ? " asked a curious Nanska , sitting up straight and straightening her hugh , black clad bussom .

"Vodka " was Michael's reply , repeating the word in Polish , it was one of the few words of Polish that he could remember from the war , the others words he knew were certainly not fit for ladies such as these .

So tentatively sipping at the cup , Nanska tried her fortified tea .Her face changed colour then slowly changed back again , rather like traffic lights changing , only traffic lights don't breathe heavily and fan their mouths with their hands .

"It's good " said Nanska with a tear coming down her eye .

"It's fresh if I'm not mistaken " added Michael who was a bit of an

authority on these things .

"It was made three weeks ago , Sgt Mulhollands family send it over "

mumbled Mrs Murphy a tear now coming down her own eye .

So the three ladies and an old taxi driver got quietly and quickly drunk

, on tea strengthened with Poteen . Michael even remembered a whole song

in Polish that he'd learnt . It's wonderful the power of good alcohol , it

brings back the memories to the old and banishes the cold of loneliness .

As for the song , it was as bad or as good as the one Mrs Murphy had sung

at the do for the childrens's home . The two Polish women laughed till

they cried , Michael sung it even louder and was made repeat it seven

times , and all the time he hadn't a clue for the life of him what he was

singing ....

The next day Mrs Murphy took Nanska on a trip around town to show

the sights , Mrs Murphy really liked flashing her bus pass like a police man , in fact Starsky was her favourite . The two ladies stopped off for a cuppa at a little cafe by the bus station . Behind them was a park and a wood , it reminded Nanska of home .

"I feel at home here , with these woods , with a friend by my side " , she squeezed Mrs Murphy's hand , as she gazed towards the woods .

" We have woods like that back home , when I was in service in the hotels in Killarney I used to walk in the woods . Its nice to see something so tall and strong reach up to the sky and grow . Then you have the low branches with their leaves leaning down and touching your hair . It always gave me a thrill . " said Mrs Murphy as she followed Nanska's gaze .

"It was such a thrill , the soft earth underneath the trees , the bouncy ground , the squirrels chattering away and jumping like acrobats from tree to tree , the magpies too , oh it was all so grand , just think what its

like to be young ." continued Mrs Murphy in between sips of tea .

"It was the closest we got to sex ." smiled Nanska

"Yes , I suppose you are right - then we realised trees are more

dependable than men ." laughed Mrs Murphy .

They laughed together , a shared love of trees , a shared faith , a shared hope , they laughed as only the old can laugh , they laughed at themselves .

"Come on , let's walk in the woods " said Mrs Murphy jumping up and nearly knocking the table and chairs over .

A smiling Nanska , eagerly joined in this nonsense , oh to be young again , youth was wasted on the young , they wasted so much time , life is for

living and loving and hoping , not sitting around and saying " I'm Bored"

all this went through both their heads as they strode towards the wood .

Not that they actually strode , in their hearts they did , but they

progressed towards the woods arm in arm .....

They must have been in the woods for a half hour , before Mrs

Murphy felt the call of nature . So making hissing noises , and gestures ,

she ushered Nanska on , while she did a country pee . This is how Mrs

Murphy described crouching behind a tree with her dress held up about her

head so she could let nature take its course . It was while nature took

its course that it happened . A fact of human nature to be precise ,

greed . Nanska was mugged . Mrs Murphy heard the screams and came running

, or rather huffing and puffing with her drawers still not fully pulled up

"What's up ?" she demanded as she rearranged her underwear .

"A bandit take my bag " was Nanska's reply as tried to contain her heaving

bussum , such was her shock and heart rate .

Mrs Murphy looked feverishly around her hoping to see the mugger , but

there was no chance . So taking Nanska's hand to comfort her , Mrs Murphy

led Nanska out of the wood . On the way out they found Nanska's handbag ,

there was a trail of Nanska's possessions .

"So we are lucky after all " said Mrs Murphy trying to console Nanska .

"Yes , but he did frighten me , he pushed me to the ground " replied

Nanska as she crouched about picking up her belongings .

"Bad sest him , the divil carry him , if ever I catch him , I'd tan his

bare arse ," said Mrs Murphy as she struggled about picking up Nanska's

belongings .

"I have everything now , he must have thrown it down when he realised my

money was Polish kind . Sadly I miss the gold cross and chain that The

Pope gave me . " sighed Nanska .

Mrs Murphy's ears pricked up as she heard this , nobody , no cheeky

spotty youth was going to steal from her friend , she'd catch this

"person" if it was the last thing she did . Her head raced with anger , as

the two of them continued out of the wood , towards the bus station . Now

how would Starsky deal with this she wondered , then she wondered was

St. Anthony the one for muggings too , after all she wanting help in

finding that cross . She was awakened from her thoughts by the

"Chugg,chugg" of Michael's taxi .

"Jump in ladies , where to ? " he said quietly , as his head had not

recovered from the night before .

"You better go to Mark's , WE have been mugged . " said Mrs Murphy .

At Mark's , Mrs Murphy and her soul mate , were the life and

soul of the inquest into the mugging . Concerned looks , and dire threats

of what they'd do to the culprit were the order of the day . Patrick his

hands covered in flour came running .



"Are you alright , are you alright ? " he said , scouring his mothers face

for signs of harm .

"Of course , I am . Only the spotty faced monster made me wet my knickers"

"You were that afraid ? " said a worried looking Patrick .

"Don't be so soft , you overgrown egypt , I was taking a country pee ,

when I heard the fuss , then in my rush I wet my knickers ." said Mrs

Murphy with a look that said "What kind of idiot have I for a son " .

"So we've wet the baby's head last week and now your knickers this

week ! " said Patrick who couldn't resist the chance of a joke .

"I'm not too old to tan your bare arse , Patrick ! " snapped Mrs Murphy

before she saw the funny side and started to shriek with laughter .

"I'm going to catch that cheeky monkey , I don't mind my knickers getting

wet , it's just that Nanska a visiter to our country should not get

treated like that , it ruins the reputation of the place , they'll think

we are all totally uncivilised . " Mrs Murphy sounded more than indignant

, she had that look in her eye . Then by way of afterthought she added

"Besides , the little bastard stole a cross and chain given to Nanska by

the Pope himself ! "

Patrick knew it was definately a waste of time trying to persuade his

mother that she hadn't a chance in hell of finding the mugger . He looked

about the cafe trying to think of something useful to say . Outside Amjit

barked and put his nose to the window .

"Well Amjit can help you , " said Patrick trying placate his mother .

"Well I'll take him home with me then . "

The next few days Amjit found himself under house arrest at Mrs

Murphy's . She was training him with the aid of a hurling stick and ginger

nut biscuits , if he had a soul Amjit would have sold it for a ginger nut

biscuit , wasn't Patrick the same only Rolos were his weakness . Amjit was

a clever dog already , but Mrs Murphy didn't quite trust him as he had

ran after a squirrel while saving Jaswinder . She was an old woman she

didn't want to be attacked while scouring the town for the mugger . Amjit

already knew English and a bit of Indian but now the Gaelic were to be his

command words . Mrs Murphy did not want anybody to know what was coming .

"Well , you seem to know your stuff , so we'll go for a walk in the woods

then ."

Walking in the woods was a joy for Mrs Murphy , a harsh word

in Gaelic was all that was needed when Amjit started to trot , having seen

a squirrel ahead .That and the odd ginger nut .She thought she'd only have

to walk into the woods and then the mugger would come out with his hands

up , but neither life nor love is like that . The first thing that Mrs  
Murphy came across seemed to be a body , she couldn't quite see so she  
sent Amjit ahead , just in case it was dangerous . Amjit crept ahead and  
sniffed at a white rounded thing , his cold nose touched it . There was a  
startled scream , followed by a girl's laughter . Amjit had disturbed a  
pair of natural lovers . Mrs Murphy brought up the rear , averting her  
eyes from the naked lovers .

"I'm sorry if my dog disturbed your husband at his "Work" , " the  
laughter in her voice , hadn't friends of hers done the same fifty years  
ago in the woods of Killarney , in a crowded house a wood can be a thing  
of wonder and recreation if not procreation .

"He's only my boyfriend !" came a laughed reply from the girl , while the  
boy blushed .

"You should only do that if you know , he'd be a good father to a baby !"

was Mrs Murphy's moral retort her eyes averted still .

"Oh , he will be , I want lots of children , we are just getting some practice in , " was the final remark before the girl got the boy to carry on with a job well done .

Mrs Murphy was going to say something more but then thought of Patrick and June , so she just laughed and laughed , they were true lovers just like her Patrick and June , so what if they were early starters . And they wanted lots of kids , anybody who loved children was ok in Mrs Murphy's book .

Further into the wood teenage children were swinging from a rope tied to a tree . When they saw Amjit they scattered , screaming "Police" . They had been playing truant from school , the sight of an enormous dog had only meant one thing to them - Police . It took Mrs

Murphy a while to realise this . Then she realised she had a new problem

now , how to make Amjit invisible .

Mrs Murphy thought long and hard on how to make Amjit invisible , it would be easy if she was Paul Daniels the tv magician , but she was just a poor widow woman , as she insisted to her son every time she wanted to extract a favour . Saint Francis was roped in to help but this only gave partial success , what was needed was something to slow the hairy beast down . Mrs Murphy even thought of attaching the old last to Amjit's collar , she ruled this out though , something much heavier was needed , something that would make Amjit slow down and so make him keep his distance and so be invisible . Then while watching the tv she saw a blacksmith , a light went on in her mind , now an anvil would be just the thing to slow Amjit down . It was then that Saint Francis spoke up , she couldn't be so cruel to a dumb animal especially after he had saved

Jaswinder . The picture of Mother Theresa looked down the wall and said

"have faith ".Mrs Murphy looked at Amjit lying at her feet like some form

of long haired rug and smiled her own saintly smile , they were only

thoughts , meer passing pagan clouds . She threw Amjit a ginger nut , the

"rug" awoke and caught it , licked his lips and wagged his tail ; he liked

her , it amused him how she threatened him with a hurling stick , he let

her think she was in charge , after all he really would sell his soul for

a ginger nut .

The door bell rang , Saint Francis had sent a helper , no last

this but a human anvil who would really slow Amjit down , it was Mathew .

Mrs Murphy smiled , those saints really loved playing games with her ,

they could really drive her to distraction , yet they always came through

in the end , even though if sometimes they puzzled her despite her

fathomless faith .

"Hello Mathew , come in I'll make some fresh tea , I've a favour to ask you " , she said casting a sideways glance at Mother Theresa on the wall.

The next day Mathew and Mrs Muphy were on the street , a trail of ginger nuts seperated them . The plan was for Mrs Murphy to call Amjit and make him advance slowly along the street , picking up the ginger nuts one by one , Mathew was the braking device to prevent Amjit wolfing down the lot . This did the trick , as Mathew was heavier than any last or anvil .

"Follow " commanded Mrs Murphy from up the street . Fifty yards away Amjit eagerly obeyed , why shouldn't he after all , wasn't there a trail of ginger nuts in front of him , he was only a dog , albeit a very large and hairy dog , but he wasn't stupid . The pavement was a bit wet and slippery after the early rain , and such was Amjit's pulling



power that if Mathew were wearing skis he could have water skied along the pavement , but since Mathew wasn't then that wasn't a possibility , but it was a near thing . Amjit proceeded up the road after Mrs Murphy licking his lips all the way , now this was fun he thought , even if he did have to drag Mathew after him . After half an hour the supply of ginger nuts was exhausted . Jaswinder came skipping out with a couple of packets of ginger nuts , her father like everybody else on the street had been watching with interest . So patting Amjit hello and goodbye Jaswinder skipped away , her mission had been accomplished . Amjit again followed Mrs Murphy at a distance , still weighed down by Mathew , to be honest Amjit was getting bored , even though it was his duty to do Mrs Murphy's bidding , it would be a shame to waste all those nice ginger nuts wouldn't it ? "Now lets see if he'll do it without the bribe , " yelled Mrs Murphy

to Mathew . So Amjit followed her at a distance , almost inventing pavement water skiing at the same time as he dragged Mathew along . Amjit followed three times without reward . "Well he seems to have learnt it then doesn't he ? " beamed a happy Mrs Murphy . Only to be disappointed immediately , Mathew had let go of Amjit , so a disgusted Amjit dashed off. It wasn't fair was it , Amjit had been tricked , he had obeyed out of duty hadn't he , the ginger nuts had nothing to do with it , it was the principle , wasn't it ?

In the cafe Mrs Murphy had a well earned cuppa while she treated Mathew to a banana milk shake . Where had that turncoat Amjit got to , just when she thought he had learnt his lesson .

Amjit too was having a break , he'd dug up a favourite bone and was chewing on it , pondering on the morning's fun as he sucked the marrow from his bone . It was while Amjit was chewing that he had an idea , but

he finished his bone first before he put his idea into action .

"I've got an idea Mathew , what if we gradually reduce the amount of ginger nuts , then even that stupid dog will understand , "

sighed Mrs Murphy , who was tired and feeling her age .

"Like Barbara Woodhouse did on the telly last night do you mean ? "replied

Mathew as he blew bubbles into his milk shake . Mrs Murphy realised what

an old fool she had been and it was Mathew of all people who had made her realise this .

"Come on then , I'll try and whistle the devil back to us , " she said as

she leant on the back of a chair to lever herself up .

Outside Amjit was sitting with his lead in his teeth , his tail

was wagging , he was pleased with himself and the bone he'd just eaten no

doubt . "Your stomach not full enough is it ? " scolded Mrs Murphy . Amjit

just barked and skipped in front of her just like a puppy . "You better grab him , before the rascal runs away . " Then in front of them they saw the fruits of Amjit's chewing the cud or rather chewing his bone . Along the pavement placed at intervals were fragments of bone ! Amjit thought Mrs Murphy had ran out of bribes , so he had supplied his own , in readiness for more fun .

"You'd teach this grandmother to suck eggs wouldn't you , " she again scolded , as Amjit jumped about like a very excited puppy .

"But I thought we were just teaching him to follow you at a distance , and how can a dog suck eggs , or do you mean carry eggs like Police dogs can do , like I saw on - "

"Barbara Woodhouse last night , " interrupted Mrs Murphy . She looked at Amjit and then Mathew , then she smiled , some would call them dumb animals yet both had shown her a thing or two . There was no doubt in her

mind , St.Francis was making a fool of her . She shook her head then she  
let the laughter out , at her age she had no time nor need of anger ,  
laughter was all she wanted , that and to die in her sleep and to convert  
the pagan grandparents of course . The shopkeepers who had again been  
keeping half an eye on proceedings came out to see what was the cause of  
all the laughter , Mathew having started off too , a braying echo of Mrs  
Murphy's earthy laugh , Amjit barking for joy too , which would soon start  
off all the dogs in the neighbourhood . A look along the street to see all  
the bones soon explained things . So the whole street joined in the  
laughter . When sanity returned Amjit proved that he'd already mastered  
the trick of following at a distance . If the truth be know , Amjit had  
worked things out pretty soon , but he hadn't the heart to admit it to  
poor Mrs Murphy , besides it was great fun , if she wanted to leave ginger

nuts along the pavement then he wasn't going to stop her . After all a dog was man's and old ladies' best friend .

Mrs Murphy resumed her search of the woods with her newly trained Amjit , but to no avail . So she went and had a bun and a tea from the cafe in front of the wood . It wasn't fair , she'd spent all this time and energy ,not to mention wasted prayers and still no sign of the mugger.

While Mrs Murphy was having simple fare , on the other side of town Mrs Annette Kemp was treating herself to Black Forest Gateau washed down by real coffee and cream all served by pretty young girls in uniforms similiar to those Mrs Murphy had worn fifty years ago when in service in the hotels on the lakes of Killarney . Mrs Kemp was pleased with herself , she'd just bought Patrick his birthday present , a very nice Rolex with clasp strap . So pleased was she that she had the watch on her table so she could admire it while she had her gateau and coffee , and

she of course congratulated herself on her good taste , if only some would rub off on Patrick . Then she smiled to herself , hadn't he married HER daughter , so if that wasn't good taste , then what was ? She overlooked the fact that some of her "friends" would have called it a "Shotgun Wedding" ; but now that SHE was a grandmother those kind of "friends" could go to hell as far as she was concerned , in many ways she was already like the other grannie - Mrs Murphy .

Outside on the street somebody else was admiring the Rolex , a spotty faced youth with a skateboard under his arm , a "class war" badge on his jumper , next to a gold cross held on with a safety pin . As far as the spotty youth was concerned here was one of the enemy , flaunting wealth , that one watch would more than pay for a years poll tax , that's if the spotty youth didn't feel poll tax was immoral . Not that stealing

was immoral , for that's was what he was about to do .

Mrs Kemp finished her gateau , had a last sip of her real coffee , then she put the Rolex away , into a dainty carrier with Rolex on it . She floated outside , with the air of the Queen Mother about her , she was happy and content , it had been a nice morning , a very nice morning . So when a sneering spotty faced youth shouted in her face grabbing her precious cargo she was to taken aback . She just couldn't comprehend the situation , it was like stealing one of the three gifts from one of the three kings , or slapping an angel's bum and asking for a bit of slap and tickle . It happened to other people but never to you , it was as likely as a man breaking into the Queen's bedroom . It just did not happen . Then Mrs Kemp's face fell , it had really happened and to her , just as it had happened to the Queen , even the Queen .

"Stop thief , catch that little BASTARD ," she screamed . She hailed a



taxi and ordered "Follow that skateboard . " Only the taxi driver laughed

"It's too late for April Fool's Missus . " This really annoyed Mrs Kemp ,

being called "Missus" , and by a taxi driver . So she ordered him to take

her to the street , her daughter at least would give her some sympathy ..

"So you see the spotty creature grabbed the bag and made off on

his skateboard , I doubt if he could tell the time , unless it was on one

of those horrid digital watches , so why on earth should he steal a

"Timepiece" like the Rolex ? " mused Mrs Kemp to her daughter , as she

sipped her tea in Mark's cafe .

"So Patrick won't be getting his birthday present then ? " said June , who

was holding her mother's twitching hand , the shock only now sinking in .

"No , he'll have his watch , no little hoodlum is going to ruin MY plans

after all , Patrick is family now . Though you will come with me to the

shop to buy him another , I wouldn't feel safe on my own ."

June looked at her mother , she suddenly seemed old and vulnerable , the

hard real world had never dared encroach on Mrs Kemp , and now there she

was holding June's hand , looking vulnerable , June was the mother and her

mother was the little frightened child .

"Of course I will , but you need not go to the expense , after all it is

the thought that counts , " concern in both her eyes and voice .

Outside there was a screech of brakes ,as three orange VW vans pulled up .

Out jumped eight Indians in turbans and saffron coloured robes , long

swords dangling by their sides . Behind the Indians came Mrs Murphy , like

an honour guard they heralded Mrs Murphy into Mark's cafe .

"Nine teas , please , and some cake too , " flashed a pearl white smile .

Mrs Murphy sat down , her boys surrounding her . It was only then that Mrs

Murphy noticed a crestfallen Mrs Kemp .

"Are you alright ? You look down today , Annette , " Mrs Murphy enquired .

"Mom was mugged , just a while ago , " answered June .

"Jesus , Mary and Joseph it's an epidemic . Didn't somebody have a go at

me , only a few minutes ago ! "

"What , somebody tried to mug you , dear God , Shiela what's the world

coming to ? " a startled Mrs Kemp replied .

"Oh , I'm ok the mugger just pushed me to the ground . You see the bus

conductor was in a funny mood so he wouldn't let me take Amjit on the

bus , so the poor dog had to walk the two miles home on his own . Then

what with the dirty bus windows I couldn't see where I was and got off at

the wrong stop . So this young lad jumped out at me . But luckily my boys

happened to be passing so they jumped out of their vans and chased him

down the street . I think he got the fright of his life , mind you he's a

very fast runner , he just tucked his skateboard under his arm and ran

like he'd just seen a banshee , " Mrs Murphy gave glowing looks to her

boys .

"Well , when we saw Mrs Murphy we were going to give her a lift , as it

was we ended up saving her from God knows what ," said Amajit the one with

the pearl white smile .

"This is Amajit , and these are his brothers , Bamajit , Camajit , Damajit

,Hasajit ,Jamajit , Nanajit and the little one is Pamajit , " said a

proud Mrs Murphy as if they were her own sons , and in fact she would love

them to be sons of hers . For they were all fine strong lads , only they

were sons of India and not of Kerry .

"And how did you you get to know such fine young men , " asked Mrs Kemp

forgetting her own indignatities , for Amajit had the looks of an Indian

screen idol .

"She stopped me from walking under a bus when I was a child , so it is my duty to honour her and treat her as a mother , " said Amajit flashing his smile straight at Mrs Kemp . Mrs Kemp very nearly swooned , a smile like that had never been given to her , never . Mrs Murphy winked at June , wasn't this proof of what she had said , Mrs Kemp was after a toy boy , and if Patrick was unavailable then Amajit would do fine , very fine .

June looked at the ceiling and bit her lip , Mrs Murphy was a rogue to be sure . Amajit his smiling over , snapped his biscuit in two , and sipped his tea . His brothers forming a kaleidoscopic imitation of him , as to the echo they in turn snapped their biscuits and sipped their tea , if there had been music it would have seemed like ballet or even opera .

"The lads are off to the Temple for a do , these are not their street

clothes , " answered Mrs Murphy seeing a question form on Mrs Kemp's lips.

"Speaking of which we must be off , " said Amajit looking at his Rolex ,

his action rippling out to his brothers as they in turn looked at their

Rolexes . So rising like a wave , with Amajit its crest the Khan brothers

were off , just pausing long enough to nod at Mrs Murphy , and for

Amajit's final smile to Mrs Kemp . So with a screech and three puffs of

exhaust , the VW vans with the Khan's in them disappeared . Though Amajit

would never disappear from Mrs Kemp's mind .

"He's such a nice man , and were they all wearing Rolex watches ? "

wondered Mrs Kemp trying to appear nonchalant . Mrs Murphy again winked at

June before answering .

"He's a nice lad , so are his brothers . They are worth a few million now

I suppose . Working sixteen hour days does have its rewards . They've

just bought the old pressing works , to expand their clothing business .

They have one sister too , but sadly she's a spastic , they love her to

death , they are building her a bungalow of her own , next to their  
parents house , so she can be independent . It's nice that , they are nice  
lads . The youngest boy is having a year off before he goes to Medical  
School , he's going to go to Birmingham because its the best . "

" I am impressed , " replied Mrs Kemp raising her eyebrows .

"You'll be impressed more when I catch the mugger , " intoned Mrs Murphy .

Two days later Mrs Murphy had dragged a reluctant Nanska to the  
woods , not in a last ditch hope to catch the mugger , they would be  
more likely to uncover a teddybears' picnic than that , no , to quell any  
lasting fears Nanska may hold for woods . They were of course accompanied  
by Amjit , whose presence would strike fear into The Hound of the  
Baskerville's , Mrs Murphy had more than prayers to be her guide .

"I'm very sorry we haven't been able to catch that mugger ,it really is

such a disappointment to me . Three old woman all attacked by one spotty

youth . I don't mind it happening to me , nor do I miss the fancy watch

that my son's mother-in-law lost , its just that you a guest in our

country , and not to mentiopn a friend of the Pope's should not be treated

like this , " said Mrs Murphy shaking her head , as if it were all her

fault .

"You do your best Shiela , he have the luck of the Devil , and he run so

fast as you tell me , " replied Nanska placing a consoling hand on Mrs

Murphy's .

They carried on walking through the trees , the veins in the leaves

looking like outstretched hands , begging hands , just as Mrs Murphy's

heart was begging the saints to help her and her Polish soulmate . Amjit

stopped and sniffed the wind . The woman looked , ahead of them a man

was relieving himself against a tree , Amjit began to growl softly , that



was one of his favourite trees , he'd often marked it , what was a mere  
man doing to his tree . Mrs Murphy was on the point of scolding Amjit when  
she noticed first the man's arm . He was far away , but she'd seen eight  
Rolexes the other day and to be sure that was a ninth . Then Nanska  
pointed , wasn't there a skateboard propped against the tree . Amjit's  
growls erupted into one bark , this made the man turn to see where the  
sound came from . It was the worst thing he could have done .  
"Bandit , " screamed Nanska slightly shocked at seeing the mugger again .  
"He'll be wetting his knickers now , " shouted a delighted Mrs Murphy .  
Before she could shout "Skither his Arse" Amjit was off , he knew that man  
wasn't nice , how could he be , he'd used his tree , and he wasn't even a  
nice bitch , just a mere man . Amjit howled , the birds scattered , the  
squirrels raced up trees , the mugger peed on his own leg , caught himself

on his zip , and then ran like a bat out of hell . Only it would be no use  
for a hound of hell was on his tail , no longer the creeping , the slow  
the steady Amjit as bribed by ginger nuts , but the hound of hell , or  
rather God's Animal making a good impersonation of a Hell's Angel . As the  
mugger ran he could hear a jangling , this was Amjit's name tag , his our  
lady of Lourdes medal and his Indian holy man medal , it formed a kind of  
clanging or bell ring , and for whom did the bell toll , the mugger of  
course . It was while the mugger was running for his life that he  
interrupted the young couple , the naked lovers who used the wood to  
create life , in fact he fell over them . Seconds later Amjit placed a  
cold nose on a bare bum , it was his way of asking which way did he go .  
Without bothered to pause , a finger pointed the way , Amjit sped off  
barking his thanks . Amjit was beginning to think what a good runner this  
mere man was , then he caught up with him . So teeth first Amjit said his

hellos .

"We better try and catch up with him then , " said Mrs Murphy .

"Do you think your dog is fast enough ? " pondered Nanska .

A scream rang out through the woods , as if answering Nanska'a doubts , it

was followed by excited barking . The ladies looked at one another and

laughed . So picking up the discarded skateboard they made their way

through the woods towards the source of the screams . On their way they

came across the naked lovers . Mrs Murphy averting her eyes dropped her

son's business card beside them saying "If you need a flat give my son a

ring . " Her son's flat above the bakery had been empty since he built

his house , so to save the lovers from catching cold she left the card .

Meanwhile Amjit had let his quarry go , not so he could spit the

taste out before biting the mugger again , but more because it was fun to

let him go .Then he'd have to catch him again ,first Amjit ran away before

reappearing teeth first , rather like a toothpaste commercial , only one

with much more bite . The mugger was cowering on the ground squeezed into

a ball when Mrs Murphy and Nanska arrived .

"Amjit leave him be . As for you young man stand up ! " commanded Mrs

Murphy , having the full authority of Amjit's teeth at her command .

The man stood , he looked scared , not to mention tattered and bleeding ,

Amjit had enjoyed his blood sport .

"You can take off that watch for starters , and empty your pockets , "

continued Mrs Murphy .

In the woods behind them ,the lovers now clothed watched the proceedings ,

it appeared very strange . Two old ladies and a very big dog making a man

strip . For Mrs Murphy decided he might be hiding something so she had the

spotty man strip to his underpants , she was sure Starsky would have done

the same thing , so it must be right . While the man shivered , Mrs Murphy

searched the clothes . After a while she got up from her crouching

position , in her hand she held a cross , Nanska's cross .

"The one Carol give me , you are a detective Mrs Murphy ," beamed a

grateful Nanska .

Amjit barked his praise too , his tail moving like a windmill in a storm .

Mrs Murphy then turned her attention to the mugger . Behind in the trees

the lovers edged forward , they could sense the coming storm .

"So you think you're a bigshot attacking old ladies , and WIDOWS like me

and honoured visitors to our country do you ? " blasted Mrs Murphy .

"Well don't think you're too old to have your bare arse spanked , " she

continued with her Kerry accent getting stronger by the second .

"Turn around then drop your pants mister , " she was trying to sound as

hard as Starsky . She was getting worked up now , in fact she dropped her handbag , the contents spilt everywhere . While she gathered up the contents of her bag the mugger dropped his pants , he'd never live this down . But worse was yet to come , for amongst the spilt contents of Mrs Murphy's handbag was superglue , used to fix her favourite beads . In a second a wicked idea was formed in Mrs Murphy's mind . She grabbed the skateboard , squirted the glue onto it , then used it to spank the mugger.

Only one spank , then while Amjit barked his approval she held the board to the muggers behind .

"There you are , now see how dignified you feel , about the same as your victims who you leave sprawled about ! " screeched a triumphant Mrs Murphy as she took her hands from the skateboard , which remained stuck to the mugger's behind . Nanska was silent for a second before bursting out laughing , the old ladies hugged each other as they continued laughing

till tears formed in their eyes .As for Amjit he saw a friend ,another dog

that is to say , so with a bark of farewell he ran off to play . The

mugger made his retreat , with the old ladies laughing him farewell .

When the laughing was over the ladies continued walking out of

the woods , the lovers broke cover to run after them .

"Excuse me , but this card you gave us you weren't playing a joke or

something were you ? " asked the girl .

"Not at all , in fact we are going back that way now , so if you come with

us on the bus you can see my son about it ? " relied Mrs Murphy as the

last trace of her laughter faded , leaving just slightly curled up lips as

evidence of her revenge in the woods .

"My car is parked by the bus station , we'll give you a lift . By the way

we saw what you did to that man , it was very funny , " said the man .

"Bad cest him , he was a mugger , I don't think he'll be mugging old

ladies anymore , " said an indignant Mrs Murphy .

Back on the street in Mark's cafe Mrs Murphy held court , telling

and retelling the story . Everybody thought she was right to turn the

tables . When Patrick and June came in Mrs Murphy held up the Rolex before

throwing it at her son .

"There's your birthday present from your mother-in-law , I retrieved it

from the mugger , Amjit helped of course , mind you he's gone off after

some lady dog now . "

"It's nice , very nice , pity its not a stretch strap though , " said

Patrick as he examined the Rolex .

"Well as it happens I stopped off at Jimmy's , so here's my present for

you , " Patrick's mum then threw a stretch stap at him .

"Thank's mum , you were always practical , though it used to be boiled



sweets you threw at me . "

"Oh June come here I've a favour to ask ? " continued Mrs Murphy still

basking in the afterglow of fame . The two then conferred , before June

looked at Liz and Keith before laughing , then with a nod of her head June

consented to Mrs Murphy's idea .June edged up to Patrick and gave him a

lingering kiss on the lips , making him blush , he hated being kissed in

public . He knew June was up to something , but what was it ?

"Patrick I have decided , or rather we have decided " she began .

"You and me ? Decided what ? " interrupted Patrick .

"Me and your mother , that we , " continued June , pausing to plant

another smacker on his lips . Patrick blushed again , and looked at the

floor in an effort to hide those blushes from all in the cafe .

"To finish ,we , and this time I mean you and me are going to rent out the

old flat to Liz and Keith over there , " she kissed her husband again to

press home her point .

"I suppose it is a waste to let it go empty , " observed Patrick trying to

appear in charge of the situation .

"Yes it would be . Besides we don't want Liz and Keith to catch a cold ,

oh and by the way I think we should have a walk in the woods next month ."

Patrick could see the glint in her eye , he did not understand but June

was good at explaining .....











Tears For A Butcher ©

By Michael Casey

Chapter 2

Old People's Home ©



Now an old people's home is a thing of mercy and patience, the elderly go there to spend their final years, to find comfort and peace. A good home has caring staff who understand the elderly and their needs. Some old people never get any visitors, the staff are their family, or you may have one resident who has more visitors than all the rest of the residents combined. Whatever the case may be a home for the elderly is exactly that, a home with a capital H for HOME.

Now Percy's occupation meant that he visited Old People's Homes more than most, when the time came for the elderly to go to meet God it was Percy who collected the body and did the final duties for the deceased. The home owners used to corral the pensioners in the day room while Percy sneaked in to collect the bodies, it is an upsetting thing to know one of your number had gone to meet their maker, so Percy did his duty while trying not to upset anybody.

Now on this occasion at The Happy Valley Rest Home as Percy collected the body with Andy he saw somebody at an upper window banging on the window, then the old woman pushed something out of the window. It was a note with a message scrawled in pencil on it. Percy was going to ignore it but something made him think twice so once he had placed the deceased in the back of the private ambulance he went back to collect the note. Now this note was going to make waves, big waves and chance Percy's life too.

When they got back to the street Percy sat in the office and put the paper on his desk. Sitting down he began to read it, the old lady said "help I'm starving and it's so cold in here always, please help before you'll be taking my body away."

"What's up pop?" asked Andy.

"Read it for yourself," replied Percy as he turned the paper around on the desk.

"That's not right, but what if she's just a bit senile," Andy replied.

"You could be right, but we need to find out the truth," sighed Percy.

"Ok, pop, why don't you go to the café to have a talk about it, I'll start preparing the deceased," said Andy.

"Good boy," said Percy as he strode away to the café.

Percy repeated what he'd read on the note, Mark and Gillian were shocked, the elderly should be loved not starved and froze to death. George and Brownie arrived with the latest gossip, but hearing Percy's news they were shocked.

"Bastards," said George.

“Bastards,” said Brownie.

“Bastards,” said Gillian.

“Bastards,” repeated Mark.

“But what are we going to do?” asked Percy.

There was silence all around, then Brownie had an idea.

“Me and George are going undercover, I’ve seen it on tv, Esther Rantzen and Panorama do it, so me and George will do it,” she whispered.

Percy looked shocked but she was determined so he was wise enough to say nothing.

“But we have to protect you while you are undercover, so you’ll have mobile phones and we’ll ring you at regular intervals, or just text cos it’s quieter.” said Gillian.

“We can pretend to be window cleaners and we can slip you messages, and you can have a digital camera to get evidence,” added Patrick who had happened by.

“That’s a good idea,” replied Brownie.

They spend the morning discussing how George and Brownie would be spies like 007 James Bond, sandwiches were made and eaten, they had to try and think of everything. Once the camera was full of stills and movies they could drop it out of the window into the flower bed and if nobody was looking Patrick could throw a 2nd camera back up to them, it would only take seconds. They did forget one thing despite all the planning. How would they get George and Brownie into the old people’s home in the first place.

“The Love of Money is the Root of All Evil,” quoted Percy his eyes lighting up. “Those people are only interested in one thing, MONEY. So if we turn up with a couple of senior citizens and 2 months fee for their care, in cash, then George and Brownie will be on the inside with no questions asked.”

“I always said you were clever,” smiled Brownie as she gave Percy a peck on the cheek.

“So who delivers the parcel?” asked Brownie

“Smiling Paul, of course. I know he’s a changed man since China entered his heart, but even he’d admit he still looks a bit mean” ventured Percy.

Smiling Paul thought it was a great joke and he’d bring Catherine along too, because she looked so young and beautiful, and with him looking so seedy he’d suit the part as an ungrateful son dumping his parents. Smiling Paul insisted on donating the money in readies, he thought it would all be great theatre. Catherine thought they should respect him more but Smiling Paul just kissed her in front of Percy then bending down on one knee he said “Will you marry me?”

Catherine was shocked, Chinese never kiss in public, then she burst into tears and got to her knees besides Smiling Paul. "Of course I marry you, then we can have a harvest of children, you do want ½ half children?"

Smiling Paul began to cry now, it was all too much, a wife and children, if he believed in God he would have sung a hymn or he did not know what. Luckily God did believe in him, Smiling Paul was the Lucky One an urban legend who had won so much money but gave it all away to help the Chinese restaurant business of his friends. This legend was widespread in Shanghai and all of the rest of China.

But now the Lucky One was being rewarded with the greatest gift of all, LOVE. Percy smiled and walked away, he had tears in his eyes, God really did work in mysterious ways. Percy would have to get his poetry book out and read a few verses while this mood was upon him. God is good, God is good.

To be ready for their undercover trip George and Brownie filled their suitcase, they were full of energy bars and bottles of Lucasade and a teas made and bottled water. There were also several pairs of unisex long johns. The final thing were rape alarms, both of them had one hanging around their neck, if all else failed they were to pull the string and Hairy Amjit would bark and everybody would come running to the rescue. Everything seemed ready, George and Brownie had a final night in their own bed before "Operation Undercover", then at 10am after a good breakfast their mission would begin.

"We are going to be acting, so don't be upset at our behaviour," explained Smiling Paul.

"It Ok luvver," replied Brownie.

In silence Smiling Paul drove to the Old People's home, Smiling Paul was driving Jimmy's golden car, it was all part of the plan. When they got there Smiling Paul and Catherine started snogging, George had to get the suitcases out of the boot himself. They were bloody heavy thanks to all of Brownie's preparations. Brownie gave laser looks at Smiling Paul, she'd give him a good slap when this was all over. When they got to the doorstep Brownie rang the doorbell and gave George a peck on the cheek.

Smiling Paul and Catherine carried on snogging, to be honest it was not method acting, not they were going to be married they felt they should give each other their all. Two fat sisters opened the door of the home.

"What do you want," said fattie no.1

"Yea, we're busy watching Neighbours," said fattie no.2

At this point Smiling Paul dragged himself away from Catherine, blowing her kisses as he did so.

"You have old folks here," asked Smiling Paul looking at his love in the car.

“Yea, read the bleeding sign,” said fattie no.1

“Here, you can have these two,” replied Smiling Paul as he reached for his wad.

Throwing a few thousand at the fatties, Smiling Paul jogged to his car and carried on snogging.

The 2 fatties fought over the money, they just gestured at George and Brownie to follow them. That was their customer service, if they worked at proper place both would be sacked on the spot. George and Brownie struggled with the bags. The two fatties went back to their tv, shouting to George and Brownie they would be in room 3 upstairs.

Smiling Paul and Catherine resumed their snogging, lust will out. He floored the car, it was like a volcano about to erupt; so when he got home he hand braked turned and parked the car. Then he and Catherine ran up the stairs. She was going to be married to a great man, The Lucky One, and he was all hers. The bed would have broke, only they didn't get that far, they made love on the fur rug at the bottom of the bed. He was hers and she was his, Smiling Paul cried as they made love, he was so happy, he didn't deserve her, she cried too, she did not deserve him. So they consoled each other, they climbed into the bed and consoled each other, until the bed broke. There was a lot of consolation to be had that day, and both gave it willingly, they wondered how their kids would look. Totally Eastern or totally Western, or ½ half, genes are strange things. It is said that the writer Michael Casey wanted Eastern looking children, but they look Western but with fabulous hair. So Smiling Paul and Catherine just laughed and left it all up to God and genes, as they made love for the 5th time.

Meanwhile George and Brownie had struggled upstairs only to see their room. The mattress was covered by a torn and dirty duvet, it was disgusting. Brownie looked around there was one armchair with a spring hanging out and a very old rocking chair near the window. A wonky set of drawers were in the corner, it had been painted white to hide how bad it was but the paint was peeling off it.

“Right, you put the kettle on, I'll sort out the bed,” ordered Brownie.

“Yes Sir,” joked George.

When Brownie had replaced the duvet with one they had brought, they had tea, sitting on the edge of the bed.

“Another fined mess you've gotten me into,” said George as he flapped his tie like Oliver Hardy.

“This place is a tip, and its so cold,” observed Brownie.

“What're we going to do then?” wondered George.

Brownie put down her tea and got into bed fully clothed.

“Seems like a good idea to me,” said George as he too got into bed.

So there they were in bed and it was only afternoon.

“Do you think we are like John and Yoko?” laughed Brownie.

“No we’re better than them,” replied George.

So they joked and laughed and as it was a 15tog duvet they fell asleep. When they awoke they were too hot so they took their clothes off and went back to bed. Now was it the spirit of John and Yoko, or was it Smiling Paul and Catherine’s lust dust being sprinkled on them nobody would ever know. But they decided that a platonic marriage was no long good enough. So starting slowly, ever so slowly, they renewed and remembered how it was in their youth; memory is a great thing and once it is awakened it is like a tidal wave. They made love just like John and Yoko did, only they were from Old Forge and Singing Anvil, but just as the hammer beats on the anvil keeping a steady rhythm, so did they, for a full 2 hours.

George and Brownie were a bit peckish so they decided to get dressed and go look downstairs, it must have been teatime by then, so they’d try the home’s tea. They were in for a shock when then went down, the fatties had been drinking Bailey’s so the supper was not ready, they were fat and snoring.

“Bloody useless,” said Brownie.

“Worse than useless,” echoed George.

They went into the kitchento see what was there, Old Mother Hubbard was there, Brownie sighed.

“There’s a few left overs,” said George hopefully.

Brownie went and counted the residents, 7 including themselves.

“I hope you like omelette she explained.

So George chopped and diced everything in sight, his training in the Army Catering Corp came rushing back to him, then he threw six eggs in.

“We’ll all be farting all night,” joked Brownie trying to raise moral.

“But at least the farts will keep us warm,” observed George.

So the 7 residents had an omelette.

“That’s the best meal we’ve had in a month,” observed one.

“Them fat bitches just eat all the food themselves, they just give us rubbish,” added another.

“Well eat up fast before they wake up,” said George.

Smiling Paul and Catherine were a little tired but very happy, Catherine had heard stories about English people and Smiling Paul had heard stories about Chinese people, but now they knew everything about each other, in the Biblical way. Their love would be eternal, and Smiling Paul would give odds of 7/4 on she was pregnant, but she was happy, she had waited and she'd made him wait till today and now this was the climax, well several of them. Love had conquered all, and broken the bed into the bargain, but there would be children, Catherine was so happy as she lay there beside him, her head on his shoulder. In China she could only have one child, but here with her hero she could have as many or as few as she wanted. It was great, no Chairman Mao in the bedroom, just her and her hero, she was so happy so she rolled on top of him, six was her lucky number after all, and who was Smiling Paul to refuse. Six of the best, six of the very best.