
N O S T A L G I A

BY

RAYMOND TURNER

SHEPHERD
STREET
MISSION

SSM24

p 5878256

b/c 3010700385/752

SYNOPSIS

This story, "NOSTALGIA" is based on life in the north of England from the 1920's to 1936. The way of life as it used to be. Every terraced house with one cold water tap, a tin bath that was hung up in the back yard. The toilet at the bottom of the yard, a candle for the bedroom light, a stone hot water bottle, filled from the kettle that was heated on a coal fire in the kitchen, carbide lamps for pedal cycles, and the lamp lighter going round the streets lighting the gas lamps. The knocker up tapping on upstairs windows to awaken the sleeping factory workers, the sound of clogs pounding the pavement, trams rumbling through the town, street vendors selling most goods from a horse and cart, policemen wearing cloaks, the dawn of the wireless with the accumulator, the wrist watch, cement for building and chamber pots. All these things I have included and formed into a story of three lads growing up in the north and eventually getting married.

The main character, a Peter Nelson, bricklayer by trade, inseparable from his mates, whom the Gods smiled on, and who was given riches beyond his wildest dreams, and his parents, who survived the strikes and poverty to become nearly middle class. All the names in this story are fictitious, and the whole story is just "Nostalgia".

R TURNER

~~THE BROTHERHOOD~~
~~MINNESOTA~~ ~~HAVE YOU FOR SALE?~~ ~~?~~
NOSTALGIA

As I walked down our street in those faraway days, little did I realise the changes that were to take place, involving whole communities, and in some cases, the devastation created by these changes, aggravated the growing declension of a large percentage of the workforce heralding a new dawn of decay and desolation. The financial knights of the axe, decapitated our industrial ~~hhhhhhhh~~ strength leaving the population divided and resentful. All this for the micro chip. I can remember happier days, the street where I lived was a typical ⁱⁿ northern terraced house district or should I say, community, you knew and spoke to your next door neighbour and most of the residents who lived in the street. There were the Littles, Hargreaves, Smiths, Walkers, Joneses, I could name nearly all of them, we knew each other like the back of our hand. To continue, walk down the street about five o'clock on a Friday evening and you would see most of the womenfolk with clean pinafores on, standing on their front door steps, waiting for the bread winners to return from work, with their paypackets. During autumn and the winter months, a kind of fog would hang over the rooftops with all the chimneys smoking and, if you cared to walk ^{Further} along the street, you would notice a smell of disinfectant coming from the smiths lobby, further on, the walkers would be having kippers for tea, an errand boy would be delivering groceries to misses Little, someone had pea soup waiting, children playing round a lamp post, the gas light giving them a weird complexion, a dog trying to join in the fun barking and jumping up and down. On my way along the street, ^{I became} ~~it became~~ aware of a feeling of belonging, ^{and} my local knowledge being activated. I raised my hat to a passing lady, nodded to an acquaintance and crossed the street which was no bother in those days, motor vehicles were still a novelty and very noisy so there was no problem. A hail from a doorway further along the street attracted my attention "Weers ta bin, a thewt thed newer gereer, ar ta reet, aw bin angim on fur baat ten minuts." (We spoke that way to each other when we were together) Oh we're not late, I said, (one of my mates, Josh.) are we picking Bob up he asked as he stepped in beside me, we can call and ask him if he's coming although he doesn't like lantern lectures, I said, anyway we'll catch a tram. We proceeded to ^{his} Bob's abode and found searching for a collar stud, Why dunt ta keep em in a jar, Josh asked him, cos mi brothers pinched it furt rag fella, t ger a Wilson said Bob, ang on tho, al pinch one off mi dad, Bob eventually sorted himself out and off we went to catch a tram. When we arrived at our destination, (the fare being three half pence each, (old money)) We found that we had a good walk to the hall where the lantern lecture was being held, admission was a penny. We trooped into a room where a ~~number~~ number of people were gathered, we sat at the back on a form and waited for proceedings to commence. There was a fellow who had a beard, standing at the front of the hall and as the picture slides were shown, he was explaining about the way the work was done. here, I must mention that the subject was Slate quarrying, not of particular interest to us, but we wanted ^{it} something to discuss later, besides, it was supposed to be a cheap night out. Advertising was not very big business in those days so we took little trips away from town now and again, to find out what was going on, also we liked barn dances, held on the outskirts of town, besides, getting to know the local talent, (girls)

A square dance or two, the valets, the gay gordons, saint bernard walse and a lot more I picked up, watching and trying. All in all, we had a nice friendly night and afterwards we stayed behind and helped with the washing up and tidying the place up a bit, because of that, we got invited to supper in the farmhouse. I must say, I had a big surprise, there were large hams and sides of bacon hanging from the ceiling, a huge thick heavy wooden wellscrubbed table anice white cloth on, and in no time at all the table was laden with food I just dream about. There was a very big piece of cheese, lettuce, cellery, tomatoes, onions, thicksllices of beef, ham, black pudding and pieces of chicken. we all did justice to such a spread, then we thanked our hosts for a wonderful evening and a feast of a supper, Madge asked her dad about asking us to help with different jobs that had been neglected on the land, he replied that he dare not, because we were town lads and maybe wouldnt like working on a farm. After a short discussion we promised to give it a try. in our spare time,, I gave the farmer the phone number of our corner shop, explained what it was,, and told him that they would convey any messages as I lived only a couple of doors down, and ~~reminded~~ ^{Reminded} the farmer that the shop was open all hours. ^{this} arrangement worked very well, the three of us were often on the farm, Madge enjoyed my company and we got on very well with never a cross word or sulking, eventually, the farmer sold up and bought a farm down south, so we lost track of them. Pity. Occasionally, we would gather round a street corner by a lamp, lark arround a bit, but always finishing up, singing and harmonising, not too loudly because of the kids in bed, songs like Barefoot days, Its the ring your mother wore, no body ever complained, as a matter of fact believe it or not, folk used to open their front doors so that they could listen, some even came and joined us, Two little girls in blue was a favourite of Mrs Heap, the shop keeper's wife and she would come out of her little shop and beg us to sing it one more time. Bobs dad was a coal loader on the docks, they called it coal bunkering the steam ships, Josh's dad a winding master in ^a ~~the~~ cotton mill, mine was a blacksmith. the three of us were in work. Josh ~~was~~ an apprentice plumber not ~~to~~ quite out of his time,, Bob was a time served fully fledged painter, I was a brickies apprentice also not finished my time, we were all in the building trade. ~~Once~~ ^{Once} a week, the boss of the firm, would come along, stand by me and watch me working, after a few minutes, he would step foward, place a halfe crown on the bricks and say,, there you are young man,, very good, very good indeed, then he would walk away talking to the foreman. The foreman was a shouting man with a florrid face, he wore a bowler hat and was a church regular. HIS heart was in the right place though. On occasions, he would smell drink on a man and forbid him to climb any ladders that day, If any arguments or trouble deweloped, he would grab a pick handle, and lay about the culprits with gusto, if that didnt stop it, then he would sack ^{them} there and then and no taking them bsck no matter how good they were at their job. I've heard him singing in church, although he has a good voice,, he sings too loud and drowns out the sweeter voices, The firm I worked for had a steam wagon, it arrived on the site every Tuesday morning about half past eight,, it pulled a trailer as well and it had to be unloaded, there was sand, cement, flagstones, bricks, timber, pipes, guttering, tiles and slates. this all had to be checked by the timekeeper and the notes countersigned by the forman, if any shortages

4

Were found, the missing items were listed and I was sent to head office with a note demanding an explanation, the foreman would not ~~will~~ tolerate any short measures at all. He looked after his men and respected them, they in turn respected him and worked hard for him. I remember once when a chap broke an arm, he fell off some not very high ~~scaffold~~ scaffolding, every week that man was off work, the foreman collected one shilling from the men on site, six pence from apprentices and half a crown from his own pocket, this was handed to the man's wife personally by him. If the weather was bad, he would take men into the yard and give them a bit of something to do rather than lay them off. When armistice day came round, at exactly eleven o'clock everyone would down tools: all machinery would be stopped, everybody's headgear was off the foreman's bowler in his hand, two minutes silence was strictly held. As soon as he put his bowler back on, work started again, we worked one extra minute at midday and another at finishing time, woe betide any man not doing so, you can bet that the next time we were rained off or whatever, the ones that had not conformed to his wishes in regards to the minute extra ~~and he would be laid off for a week. Extension ladders were built by the men, the foreman was very fair and~~ would be laid off and no messing. AS things were in those days, the foreman was very a fair minded, a good man and trustworthy. Extension ladders were not thought of in those days either, I used to have to help moving them from time to time and if you didn't watch it they could be very awkward and downright dangerous, wheelbarrows were very heavy thick wooden ones, they had wooden wheels with steel rims or tyres, try using them in mud and slush. The labourers were generally big, strong, and nearly all Irishmen, they were built like a brick toilet, had a good sense of humour and a thirst to match. The usual garb, was, tough leather boots or clogs tied with string, (cheaper than laces) corduroy trousers (the legs hitched up just below the knee and tied with string) a good thick leather belt, a union shirt, old waistcoat, and a poachers jacket plus a hat or cap with a good neb, to keep the rain off. these men could start work in the morning (never late) and keep at it all day none stop except, for dinner break then they would get their billy cans, (ready brewed by the tea boy) take up their red and white spotted kerchiefs, open them out and take their butties, examine them to see what they had on them, make some caustic remark and bite into the thick rounds of bread and by gum, they were thick. You might just get about six of them out of a big loaf. If any fresh young bloods worked with them, and started going faster than they liked ^{DESCEND} they would ~~the chap~~ pass the word along slow down or the wrath of the Irish would descend upon him with great force and put him out of work for enough time to think about it, the chap would soon get the message. It was great to see new buildings going up beside the old property, it gave one a sense of achievement and satisfaction. I was finishing the coping on a high wall one particularly day, I looked across the road, ^{it was} a lovely hot summer's day, I saw a horse and cart, the cart was loaded with sacks of coal, there was a man delivering coal, he had ² the street grid up, and was tipping the coal down into a cellar. A man came along, spoke to the coalman, then, I saw the coalman jump onto the cart and start weighing each sack of coal he had left on the cart, he would have had about twenty sacks to weigh, he must have done a lot of sweating when all had been completed, the man gave him a slip of paper, he was a weight and measure man.

I recall scribbling on my slate in school about how tradasmen in the town had to pay local taxes ~~local taxes~~ for using the market; I didnt realise that the weights and measure people travelled the streets, I never saw them weighing bags of potatoes and the like. I knew about building inspectors takeing samples of mixed concrete and mortar and all that carry or

On an impulse,, I took a walk to town,, while waiting for my mates who were doing some spare time work at a house on the other side of town,, the annual fair had arrived in town so I thought I would go and see if there was anything different. The noise was deafening,, two women were holding a conversation as easy as you please irrespective of the noise, this intrigued me, so I mentioned it to Josh who told me that his dad explained it to him ,, it seems that, with the clatter and noise going on in the mill,, and women being perpetual gossips, they learned to lip read and thats what was going on when I saw them. Something else I have just realised is that, upholsterers,,used horse hair for stuffing settees and some chairs in recent years, also raffia was woven into chair bottoms and good furniture was french polished. Wood joints were dovetailed old fashioned glue was used for sticking most things, mass production hadnt got going properly then and cabinet makers were real craftsmen. What people called flocks were put in mattresses and the cheap bolster, but feathers and down, was used for the better type pillows and cushions. there were long handled warming pans for airing or warming the bed up and,, as I understand it,, night caps to wear to keep the head warm because nearly all bedrooms were cold at night. The chamber pot although never mentioned, was an important item for every household the saver of many a long walk to the loo,, imagine lighting a candle and having a nightcap on, nightshirt, ^{and} maybe slippers, and trailing to the back ysrd ,, the wind might blow the candle out and ~~there~~ ^{then} where were you,, groping in the dark, stumbling over this and that, and afterwards finding your way ^{to} back,,no,, the pot had its place under the bed and very handy it was too. there was a meat safe outside the house at the back, shaped like a rabbit hutch with a perforated or thin mesh on the door for air circulation,, fridges were not made for households then ~~nor~~ nor were hoovers.. Now what about the fire ranges in the kitchen,, a big fancy ~~with~~ black iron affair, highly polished. On one side,, a large door where the oven was, in the middle,, a raised portion with bars across and a type of metal bed for putting the fire in and on the other side just a little higher than the fire itself was a boiler with was heated by coals on the fire,, you had a kind of metal slide on it to block it off when it wasnt needed, above this were shiny metal racks for putting plates on ,, the whole thing was surrounded with fancy tiles and even the grate where the ash fell a few inches below was hidden by a fancy metal guard ,, the hearth, was tiled and surrounded with a kind of kerb just a neat fit round the tiles, and inside at one end,, stood a highly polished coal bucket or scuttle as it was called, on the other side, stood a tidy betty , a stand, fancy of course,, there was a poker a small shovell and a brush on this contraption and I musnt forget there was also a pair of fire tongues for picking up the coal . Some people even had a pair of very fancy bellows hung near the range so that they could liver up the fire if it became dull and needed a bit of a breeze to get it going. most of the fire ranges were cleaned with blacklead it was called Zebo or something like that, The very large kettles generally used on the fire ~~was~~ ^{were} also cleaned with the same stuff.

~~mothers loved to sit in them and~~

Nearly all families had a rocking chair,

~~Nearly all families had a rocking chair,~~ mothers loved to sit in them, put their children on their knee and rock them to sleep. Older folk, liked them to sit in and dream of their younger days,, awakening at meal time and complaining about anything they could think of at that ~~moment~~ ^{LITTLE}, that trait is still ~~is~~ an old persons privilage handed down from generation

to generation. The wireless was beginning to become popular and the crackling and peculiar atmospheric sounds could be heard coming from the front parlours of one or two of the better off households in the street. A little later wet batteries were used for electric power on which to run the wirelesses, these batteries or accumulators, had a limited amount of power then they needed charging up again, this operation cost six pence and took a while to complete so another one was loaned out at a price thereby giving the man in the shop,, a nice little earner. Talking pictures were

begining to catch the imagination of the people ,,it made a big difference to the pictures,, it seemed so exciting and people were flocking to see them,, forming queues outside the picture places,, long before they opened the doors. One or two rural dwellers still used carbide lamps on their cycles, the dry cell batteries had not penetrated the countryside just then, and countrt folk were very cautious,, relying on the tried and trusted ways before making any change whatsoever. Farmers with electric lighting were deemed to be very fortunate,, the big remote farms installed generators,, and also ~~had~~ had the telephone for business purposes. horses ,, faithful uncomplaining and reliable were still being worked on the farms and muck spreading was done by man. I rember ink being introduced into schools,, with little holes put into the desk for inkwells to fit in and then there was the inevitable ink

monitor in the class room,, getting the ink powder,, mixing it with water,, making a terrible mess and doling it out,, then you asked teacher for a new pen with the one you got, being cross legged. Blackbird,, and Waterman fountain pens became very popular, often being given as prizes,, and presents. Personal items like false teeth ,made of porclain with a vulcanite base, was all very well,, but rubber was getting scarce so an alternative had to be found,, an acrylic base was tried and found to be right

I understand that dentures are made of plastic today.. Now take carrier bags,, simple thick brown paper ones you could buy them anywhere,, nowadays,, there all plastic ones another thing ,, do you see many shopping baskets these days,, I went to a super market the other day,, just to count the shopping baskets being carried I counted just two. I was talking to Josh ^{a while ago} ~~the other day~~,, he asked me if I remembered when baths with hot and cold water ^{were} ~~was~~ first put in as standard in houses,, I had to tell him that I never gave it a thought Or when street lighting was changed from Gas to Electricity,, and when double decker buses replaced trams,, there is quite a lot that I have completely forgotten,, thats because I cant keep up with the changes today, they happen so fast and what is more,, the change doesnt last,, you just get used to the latest change and everything changes again,, anyhow,, I said to Josh, I managed with a tin bath by the fire in the kitchen, I also liked the big porcelain sink in the back kitchen it served us in our house very well over the years and nobody complained about it.

2

~~Sunday~~
Sunday

Bob, Josh and I, were strolling along one ~~street~~ afternoon, talking about our spent childhood, a remark by Bob, momentarily halted us in our tracks, he said, when I die, I think I'll be burned, what do they call it cremated I think, I thought the subject was rather morbid and told him so, he said well, I heard somewhere that the cemeteries are getting overcrowded so what can they do, anyway, I don't like graveyards they depress me. To change the subject I said, just imagine, coal used to be two bob a hundredweight bag and if you went for it yourself, you got it threepence cheaper. I know Josh said, that carpet in our front room, that Wilton, were only five guineas, it's about, nine foot by two foot six or maybe nine, I forget with, and Mrs Walker's has a ~~new~~ reversible bedroom carpet for the bedside, new from the shop in town for six and eight pence. Oh well I said, you know our front room, it's bigger than most, well, I said, I don't want to boast but that's four yards by three and it cost eight pounds ten brand new, I don't think mum bought it all those years ago to be walked on I think it was just to impress the neighbours. We ambled on watching some kids playing hop scotch, we had a go ourselves, making a mess of it as usual, but never mind it brought back memories. Buscuiys, were two old pence a pound, and on the market stalls, a rabbit, three pounds of carrots, three pounds of onions, and five pounds of potatoes, for as little as two shillings. Cycling offences were the main duties of the local police along with keeping an eye open for lost kids, and seeing that the pubs were closed on time, a few youngsters were chased now and again for playing football in the street. The bobby had a cloak which he could take off, twirl it above his head and throw it after someone running away from him, and it would land wrapped around that person's legs, bringing them crashing to the ground, not many got away from them in that situation. The fashion was then, pin striped suits, trilby hats or boaters in the summer, spats, a buttonhole, and the real dandys carried a walking cane with a fancy top. Crocodile shoes and handbags for the ladies and I never saw a lady eating while ^{she was} walking in the street. It wasn't unusual to see airships in the sky in those days either, and the passenger liners were steamships. The lifeboats were manned by men who had to row the boats, and in bad weather it must have been very hazardous. We stopped for a while to speak to the Hargreaves son and his wife who were sitting on the park bench drinking tea from a metal flask, a thermos, which kept the drink reasonably hot, and I noticed a brownie camera by them, I suggested that one of us took their photograph, young misses Hargreaves agreed instantly but asked us to be very careful, because it had only been bought a week ago, we promised and duly took their picture, I believe it turned out grand. Railway stations were grand affairs, very busy, with large milk churns standing on wooden bogeys waiting for the train, big brightly painted chocolate machines which worked every time, you put two pennies in the slot, a bar of chocolate wrapped in silver paper was revealed when you pulled the little drawer, you could also weigh yourself for a penny, and that chewing gum was available from machines, I for one wasn't struck with that stuff it made such a mess sticking things up. Oil lamps on the trains were positioned according to the type of train it was, for instance, one lamp at the top of the front just below the stack meant that it was a stopping train calling at every station and halt along the way, now one at each side over the buffers would be an express stopping at specified stops which were announced by a stationworker. there were different

Positions on the front of each locomotive, depending the type of train it was, slow goods, express parcels, the mail, and quite a few more assorted kinds. The railways were an engineering marvel, I could write a lot about them but then I would be missing out on the other things that have changed which I think people have not thought of. We three, Bob, Josh and myself often watched the railway signal lampman, going about his work, he had a small ladder with him and used it to reach the metal ladders attached to the larger signal gantries, he had with him also a big can of lamp oil, and other things with which to trim the lamps, he would climb onto the gantry, take the actual lamp out from its holder, blow it out, refill it, trim the wick, clean the glass lens, relight the lamp and replace it back into the holder, that done he would repeat the performance along the gantry, attending to each one in turn, he had to watch out for the signaller raising or lowering the signal he was working on, because of upsetting the oil can or getting trapped in the wires. There was more hustle and bustle when the boat train pulled into the station than at any other time, porters scurried along the platform looking for likely passengers with plenty of luggage knowing that their endeavours would be rewarded with a cash handout. Public houses were plentiful with practically each one serving their own home brewed ale, brewed on the premises, the basim taken from the top of the beer, was very good for clearing pimples, a kind of young man's complaint, Bob said it never helped him when he had them now Josh on the other hand swore by it. I remember my old lady, gave me brimstone and treacle, that cured me. Beer was about two pence halfpenny a glass and it depended which pub you frequented as to what you got used to. Iron Dukes were situated in certain ideal parts of the town, and for the uninitiated, Iron Dukes were urinals, so placed that when walking homeward after a night of supping, you could nip in and relieve yourself. The Ladies were few and far between I mean their toilets were, it being said that they didn't need them the same. Whenever a dispute arose about the age of certain individuals the family Bible would provide the answer, besides being the Holy book as such, it contained dates of birth, christenings, confirmations, deaths, and of course weddings. From that knowledge we could and did, work out the age of practically anyone out of the street. There would be a lock of hair, some pressed flowers, a text card or two and lots of little mementoes all reminding us of something or someone from the past, yes, those Bibles were the real history books of our lives. As the seasons changed, so did the activities of the children, in the streets were they played, Hop Scotch would be replaced with hoop la, kick the can by relieve-o, shuttle-cock and bat changed to skipping, there a child would hold a rope tied to a lamp post, a long rope mind you, and turn it, a child would jump in and start to skip, ~~first he would jump then another starts to skip~~, all the time singing a rhyme, then, ~~then~~ another child would join in then another and so on, if the rope was stopped through someone missing a skip then that child held the rope and the whole thing was repeated. There were other games played like leap frog and rounders, yo-yos came to be popular for a while like top and whip, and so things moved in gradual circles ever changing. Some Sunday nights, I would be asked by either Josh or Bob to go to their

9

House, for a sing song and something to eat, this we normally took turns with unless there was something special cropt up, all the houses in the street had a front room, the posh furniture and fittings were kept in there, it invariably had a piano in it as well. Highly polished, and some photographs stuck on top, music if required, was stashed inside the piano stool but most people that I knew, played by ear and vamped.

therewould be ,Bobs elder sister,, his mother,, Joshs auntie doreen and uncle george,, altogether about nine or ten of us would gather round the piano and we would try and harmonise, wewould carry on for an hour or twothen we would have a bite to eat and wait for one or two more friends to pop in after their wisit to the local, then we would get down to some serious scandal mongering and another song or two before going home. By the way, there was no need to lock your house up in those days, for one thing I dont think any one had a lot worth pinching, and for another, there were always neighbours watching out for each others property. Front parlour singing at weekend,, was a usual thing then,, you could walk along the street and hear people

singing, all ower,, thats how I picked up many a catchy tuneand I still know them to this day.. The pubs had singing rooms as well, and anyone could get up and give a turn if they felt like it, there was rarely trouble in or out of the pubs and landlords

always tried to ~~be~~ welcome members of the community. Musical instruments have changed over the years, take the PianoLa, where has it got to,, the Harmonium,, the melodian, the concertina, the pedal organ and other instruments,, its difficult to come across them today. The maypole dancing only appears once in a blue moon,,

Josh tells me that bones or nick-nacks are not played anymore and spoons along with mouth-organs and penny whistles are'nt heard any more. At one time you could buy

~~longways~~ tapers from the corner shop wich were used for lighting gas mantles, nowadays, the only thing you'll be likely to get is a blank stare . All front rooms or parlours,, had a lovely fronted open coal fire,, complete with surround and the mantelpiece over the top. photos of the family and relations gazed down at you while matches, and a clock that chimed, had their allotted places on show as well.

A fireside rug, Hand made,, and a beautifully designed one at that,, lay in front of ~~the fire, a rocking chair made of wood polished and a nice cushion on it~~

the fire, a rocking chair made off polished wood with a nice cushion on it that was tied with tapes to keep it from slipping off was placed on one side, on the other was a deep armchair with an animacassar draped on it, nearly always a lovely white one with some embroidery sewn in. A gate leg table stood in the centre of the room wich was carpeted and you wiped your feet before entering, there was a thick velvet cloth onthe table a brown or green one and it had tassels haggig round, flowers in a fancy vase dominated the centre of the table, and rush bottomed chairs were placed round it. against the wall opposite the fireplace stood a combined sideboard and cabinet,, the cabinet had glass doors and drinking glasses of different shapes and sizes could be seen inside as wellas a glass cake stand and bottle or two of spirits.. In a corner of this room was placed a what -not,, all glass fronted and glass shelves as well, there were nick nacks and figurines and best china displayed for allto see and standing in front of the window,, what else but the piano with a stool and on top, another vase of flowers.. (the piano I mean).

Most of the houses in the street had lace curtains at the front windows and blinds for pulling down at nighttime or as a mark of respect when a bereavement occurred. I have mentioned about the toilets which were in the back yard, they were the flush type but in the rural districts, buckets were used and once a week, council men went round at night to empty them and take the load to the sewerage plant, on one occasion, a man employed on that particular job, trapped his finger on a bucket, he cursed, shook his hand then stuck his finger into his mouth, forgetting what he was dealing with, his mates laughed and off he ran to wash his mouth out with carbolic. If you were unfortunate enough to be evicted, the workhouse was the next stop, those places had not changed since Dickens time, you were separated from your wife and children and this really did happen from time to time because of the tied cottage system operating in those days. The working navy, fared little better, lodging houses were not the cleanest or best of places to rest for the night, but as they said then, any port in a storm. Life was a battle but we fought the good fight and survived, we had to make our own amusement and organised our own leisure activities. Nowadays, its, Dont do this thats not good for you, your not allowed watch that, you must, you mustnot, you will have to wait for this that and the other, rules, regulations, directives, conditions, I think that people are being paid to think out obstacles and regulations just to keep us occupied signing forms and making things as complicated as possible so that we are kept under the heel of officialdom and bureaucracy.

My friends and I often watched our local football team, the matches were well patronised with feelings often running high but there was no violence and the language was never obscene, crowds were well behaved and dispersed quietly after the match. There were no parking meters or yellow lines, no traffic lights and tramcars ran pretty frequently. Traffic wardens, one way streets and the roundabout came with the rolling tide of motorisation, electrification, modernisation, and fast food. ~~At one~~ At one time a child could be smacked and chastised, for being naughty, but today you endorse the rules forced upon us by the powers that be, let them run riot, get away with being downright rude and cheeky, then when they get older they graduate into yobbos and muggers. Respect for older people is now officially gone along with manners and curtesy. Whilst waiting one day for Bob to get washed and changed, Josh, who was with me at the time, complained about his buttons on his trousers always coming off at an awkward moment, I said to him, well get some bulldog buttons on, go to the corner shop and buy a card now, while we are waiting, it only takes a minute or two to put them on, good idea he said I never thought of that. Off he went, purchased the necessary, slipped into Bobs doorway and put them in place, just then Bob emerged, whats going on he demanded, oh I was putting some bulldog buttons on my pants Josh said well Bob replied you might have come in at least, cos what if some mosey parker saw you like old misses Burns, she's always peeping through her curtains, if we watched them moving many a time the nosey old devil, I said well at least Bob, you wont get anybody going in as shouldnt, anyhow, Lets get going. It was early Saturday afternoon, Josh had to go into town to pick up some new bike and brace overalls for work.

11
We sauntered into town,, crossed the road past a couple of waiting tramcars,, and walked round a horse and cart being loaded with donkey stones, boxes of dolly blue and firelighter and onto the pavement. people were everywhere,, coming and going about their business Josh entered an old established drapers, asked the woman behind the counter to let him see some bib and brace,, she knew exactly what he wanted,, opened a sliding cupboard took three pairs from a shelf and handed them to Josh, is them what your looking for young man she said,, they'll do answered Josh, what size do you think I'll be asked JOsh well now let me see she said try them for size and handed Josh a pair Josh put them up against his body ,a bit big these missus he said ,, yes I know but you must allow for shrinking if there not right bring em back and we'll change em for you said she,, right them wrap em up missus an I'll take em. Josh paid the lady and out we went. Now lets see ,Bob said,, have we to have a look round while we are here,, why not ,,I replied and at the same time,, we'll get one of them new fangled safety razors,, and some hair cream as well chipped in Josh I've nearly run out,, the items were purchased and we wended our way back to my house.. Mum had put a good spread on for us and asked me if I had got my doorkey,, I said I had and not to wait up because we were going to a barn dance that didnt start til late, but we might go on the market first, to see the boxing. After helping to clear away and wash the dishes,, we set off towards the market. On the way, we called in at the corner shop,, Misses Heap sold everything except the kitchen sink, Carters little liver pills, Sloans linament, Wintergreen For chapped skin,, Gobb stoppers,, uncle Joes, mint balls home made treacle toffee,, dolly mixtures,, sherbert with a spanish stuck in the top and when you sucked up the powder went right up your nose,, she sold ~~sarsaparilla~~ sarsaparilla wine gums, and sticks of licorice like twigs and when they were chewed they had a certain flavour I can't describe,, you could also buy,, jelly babies,, and caramel toffee,, if you bought a whole slab you got a little metal hammer with wich to break it .That shop was a little gold mine, but they were far from skinny,, they were always the first to give to charity,, and never forgot the childrens party at christmss time or any street party that might crop up. One of my favourite walks took me past the place where beer barrels were made ,I loved to watch the coopers ringing the barrels and the speed at wich they work The farrier was fascinating to watch as well,, the way those big shire horses and the Clydsdales so placid and patient waiting there to be shod and what magnificent beasts, Easter Mondays were spent on the parks,, dancing round the band stand and having fun watching the younger generation egg rolling and getting lost or messing themselves their mothers so embarrassed and wondering where the nearest toilets were, I felt sorry for them. The three of us wandered over to the river bank to watch the antics of the lads in the boats with their girl friends and making fools of themselves ,, one minute gliding along, the next spluttering in the water asking to be pulled ashore soaking wet

One evening, the three of us were meandering round the streets killing time,, Bob stopped,, listen he said,, somebodys getting some stick,, we listened,, sure enough some one's laying the law down, I'll bet its that new copper,, Josh started walking a little faster,, let's find out whats going on he said. we carried on to the end of the block,, turned the corner into a side street then stopped,, there he was, the law,, in allhis splendour shouting and beating the air with his pointed fingure in front of a group of scantily clad kids, they looked scared and wanted to escape from his tirade of threats but he held them there in his sight and we could see, he was enjoying it. It turned out that they had been playing, kick the can,, not football wich was forbidden. Instead of first of all getting to know the lads, he just berrated them and told them that he was the law round here and they had better know it,, they would do as he said,, and like it. The young constable had his back to us and did'nt see us,, his byke was leant' against a lamp post and Josh put his hand to his lips and motioned to the lads to keep him talking,, we quietly wheeled his byke out of sight just back round the corner and ssipped it up a nearby lobby closing the door on it. We took ourselves off walking quickly , after a short while, we turned back and strolled towards where we first saw the policeman,, a couple of kids were still with him,, they knew the score,, anyway,, the policeman was very upset,, it seemed that some lousy devil had pinched his byke. He approached us and asked us if we'd seen a big black byke with lamps on and a carrier on the back. No, we said but we were always willing to help the law,, how on earth did you come to loose it we asked, c~~h~~he said I caught young buggers playing football, and glanced towards the two lads, Did you take their ball, Bob asked, no, they had a can,, In that case I said they might have been playing kick the can,, there is a difference you know, ~~m~~ difference to me, Josh said the sargent never bothered them before, I'm not the sargent he snapped I'm on this patch so watch it. Bob was getting a little fed up with the copper's attitude, he said well,,if you want to get on round these psrts, you might want a brew or shelter ,or maybe want a pee,, well, theres plenty of houses that would welcome you but you'll have to change your attitude otherwise it can be extremely trying for you round these parts, toomany dark alleys and lamps not lit,, I hope you understand, we're not threatening,, only trying to help and, before you say another word, lets all get looking for your byke before sergent butler starts on his rounds. The policeman looked a little worried at the reminder about sergent butler, I guess your right he said anyhow I want some mates round here cos as you say you never know. At that ,one of the youngsters said that he rember^{ed} seeing a man with a big blackbyke but it was when mister policeman was shouting, I watched him he might have hid it to pick it up later I know,, said Bob,, lets all spread out and look in every lobby and corner we can,, you never know it might turn up. We split up and wandered into the street where the byke was hidden,, eventually we sent one of the kids into the lobby where the byke was hidden , out he came in triumph,, is this it sir, asked the boy , lets have a look at it ,,I, and everythings right on it thank God, the thankful scuffer's face lit up. Josh ever one to siez an opportunity said, now constable, just in time before sergent Butler comes, I think the little chap deserves a reward dont you.. Witha grunt,, the policeman put his hand in his pocket and forked out a penny each and gave one each to the boys..

Just remember lads, no football he said as he rode away. Josh turned to Bob and said, better ask your dad to have a quiet word with sergent Butler to tell that copper, not to be so eager before he gets himself in Lumber round our end. Bobs dad and sergent Butler were in the same Lodge. One day, there was a knock on our door, I opened it, stood facing me was a smiling, fat, little tinker, and a good day to you sir he said, any pots, pans or kettles to mend, broken umbrellas to fix, I do them all and dont charge the earthmister. Mum, I shouted, you know that spud pan you wanted mending, an that gamp I fetched you from wigan, well, he's ere now, mum trotted to the door. Just hang on a minute, I'll go and fetch them she said after weighing him up, off she went returning a couple of minutes later with the articles needing repair, I'll give you half a crown to mend them both she said, done he said, he took them and returned within the hour with both pot and gamp mended. Mum was pleased, she gave him a pint of sergent major tea and a large slab of cake wich he accepted with thanks, when he had handed mum the pint mug back she paid the msn and after thanking her he promised to return in about six months, then off he went whistling. Josh came round a few days later with a small hand made cart wich was really a set of pram wheels with a wooden box fastened to it, in the box he had put a couple of shovels and an old stiff brush. Come on he said, we've got three funerals to go to he said, dad's running short on his allotment, I understood alright, we were going coddymucking, (shoveling horse droppings into the cart then taking it on to the allotment. The first was at saint Marks, that was just round the corner, there were people in black, getting into the carriages behind the hearse, four in all so we had to wait untill they moved off before we could begin, eventually they moved away, we collected about half a cartload then proceeded to saint Judes parish church, their funeral had been and goneso we brushed up the manure that was laying there and by then we had nearly a cart full. On the way to the next place it being a fair walk we dropped lucky, the dray men had just delivered a load of hops to a big tavern and had dropped quite a pile in the road so we picked it up and the cart was brimming full. It took us twenty-five minutes to get to the allotment and unload it, Josh's dad offered us money, this was instantly refused, well, what are mates for. When I got back home, it was, dont you dare come in here stinking, go through the lobby into the back yard, I'll put the bath ready, and throw something over the line to hide you, you can come in when you've cleaned up and got fresh clothes on, and dont forget to rince the bath out when you've done and hang it back up. There was no arguing with mum, she was the boss in her own domain and had earned that right. Getting up on Monday morning lighting the fire putting the boiler on, rolling out the dolly tub, getting the passer, the mangle had to be wheeled in from the yard, then she got the washing soda, dolly blue, the scrubbing board and the white winsor block of soap. It took all day to do the washing then she would put the sheets on the line to give them a good blow, then the cieling rack would be lowered in the kitchen that was filled and the two clothes maidens would be filled. Besides all that our meals were always ready on time, and the washing up done the house was always clean and tidy. Now and then I did the errands for her and when possible turned the mangle for her.

Tuesday was ironing day, Mum used the kitchen table to iron on, an old thick blanket was folded to fit the table top then an old seat put over that, both these items had to be clean so that washed clothes were not soiled again. The iron was big and fairly heavy, it was hollow and there was a shutter on the end that could be raised and lowered there were two metal flat ingots, shaped to fit inside the smoothing iron which were placed in the fire so that they were red hot, one fit into the hollow part, the shutter was closed and after a short while the iron became hot enough to use, when it went cool it was taken out and the second one inserted and the first one put back in the fire, this method was repeated until all the ironing was completed, I must the linen was first placed into a bowl of starch so that when ironed it became rather stiff and smooth. there was a knack to this and only an experienced person like Mum could obtain the best results. Mum was a very proud woman and liked nothing better than to see her menfolk dressed well and smartly turned out, with as she put it the manners to match, My Mum would never argue with us, she would give you a fourpenny one first and if that didn't cure you the rolling pin would, she would not tolerate foul talk in the house and answering back to your elders was just not on in front of her. Later in life, Mum's eyesight got poor so she went up and bought a pair of specs from the town store she managed quite well with them or so she said. When Dad came home from the forge, he would freshen up, have his tea, take a few minutes rest then he would pick up his chewing tobacco from the mantle piece, get a bit of brass out and go to his local for a jar or two and a game of darts, a couple of hours later he would get back home, sit by the fire and have a natter with Mum, exchanging gossip and discussing domestic affairs then he would retire to his bed. his local was a typical working men's pub with sawdust on the floor, spittoons or cuspidors laying about the floor and a brass rail surrounding the bar about a foot off the floor to put one foot or both if you were sat on a bar stool, now, the rightful place for the cuspidors was behind that rail to protect them from being knocked over. On the way home from work one day, I came across five or six women with their children standing round a steam engine which was standing on the road, ~~attached~~ attached to the engine was a large kind of vat, it had a fire under in a cradle, fumes were billowing out of the vat, the children were encouraged to inhale these fumes (melting tar) to benefit them, it seemed that they had or had had, Whooping cough and it was believed that tar fumes inhaled, relieved them somewhat. this particular affliction was as bad as Diphtheria, both a scourge on our society, and a vast number of casualties at each epidemic, caused alarm and despair in our community. Cigarette cards were the means of stimulating boy's interest in so very many subjects, If you could name it, you could find it on a cigarette card, a coloured picture on the front and the necessary information on the reverse side. They were issued in series of fifty cards to a set. In the posh cigarettes, silk flags of all nations were found, regimental badges and that type of thing was also done in silk, I would like to get my hands on some today. Boys collected all sorts of different things I collected real cap badges, and fastened them to a broad leather belt that I had swapped a top and whip for, now I often wondered what happened to that article.

~~14a~~

My friends and I, would go up into my bedroom on a wet day after school and play with some of my toy soldiers and a big home made fort I had,, when we got bored,, we would get the cigarette cards out and build pyramids with them,, towards tea time, mum would shout upstairs, Bobby,, Joshua,, do your mothers know where you are,, if not, nip home and tell them before they come looking for you. Peter,, (that is my name,,) what do you want for your tea, do you want a dripping butty or,, some rolly polly left from dinner,, no mum, thanks but some treacle tart if theres any left, and mum,, yes Peter, can I have some Perri-winkles later,, we'll see soon we'll see when your dad gets home,, and that was the way of it. If I happened to develop a cough,, I was ~~dosed~~ dosed with raspberry vinegar or ^{given} ~~I was~~ Scots emulsion,, I didn't mind that at all because they were not bad to take and I was a piece of chocolate afterwards. There were many tricks we would play on people who were in our eyes, snobbish,, you could always tell the men who worked in offices,, they all wore suits with drain pipe trousers,, bowler hats, and carried satchells or small cases held between the handle- bars on their bykes, they ~~were~~ rode past with their noses in the air and if we were playing in the roadway they would shout at us while ringing their bell shift you little brats.. We encouraged them to ride down another street simply by placing two rows of felt nails about six inches apart on the road then run and hide and wait and watch,, a man approaches,, shouts at some kids further up the street then, cycles towards our part of the street, then it happens,, PoP ,, Flump,, flat tyres oh what a shame and him late for work as well,, his boss wont like it still, he should look where he's going,, serve him right. That was one back for the street,, teach them a lesson. tricks like that were only for extreme cases others got off lightly by having to negotiate small obstacles ^{like} ~~like~~ for instance,, a cardboard box or cans of water placed here and there. There was one bad tempered chap who visited the pub at the bottom of our street, he would curse and swear at any youngsters who happened to be playing on the pavement in his path, One day,, we posted lads up the street to watch out for him coming for his pint, when we got the tip, a load of marbles were placed in the doorway of the pub then off we went to hide and watch. Sure enough, up comes the man ^{sliding} along plonked his feet on the marbles and dived into pub head first, then we heard such a clatter and off we scarpered,, we all kept out of his way for a bit after that. A woman who lived in our street didnt like children playing near her front door, the kids then used ^{to tie} ~~her door~~ a piece of string to her door handle then onto the next door, then knock, the open next door would shut with a bang when the woman opened her door, then, her next door neighbour would start nattering about noisy neighbours then an argument developed,, the kids would look on and laugh like billyo and be happy she was being blamed,, how very naughty of them. Young Freddy Soames got one over on Josh one time,, he knew very well that ~~was~~ ~~primarily~~ Josh did some jobs on the side to make a bob or two for himself,, so, Fred told Josh that misses Barns of twenty one duke street,, wanted him, to see him about a job. Off went Josh to the house,, taking with him what he thought might be required,, he knocked on the lady's door,, she opened it,, hello she said,, come in, the lady was an evangelist, and holding a meeting in her house right then, Josh was flabbergasted, well he said, I'll come back later she said,, oh no she said you must come

108 14B

In, I know you Josh Wilkinson, your a good singer and we need somebody as can sing, now come on lad and give us the benefit of your voice. Poor Joe, there he was, standing with a bunch of bible bashers and singing from songs of praise while misses barns of twenty one Duke street played her concertina, Oh Happy band of pilgrims.

When Josh emerged, he was a little upset to say the least. He knew the score did our Josh yes sir. it happened that Fred hadnt been wed long, he lived about half way up the same street as ourselves, a nice chap but inclined to take the micky out of us at every opportunity, Josh asked his boss at work if he could finish early one Tuesday, so, with permission, Josh nipped home, got his aunt doreen to write a note for Fred, asking him to go round to his mother who wanted him to look at som furniture with her right after work before the shops shut. Now fred's mother lived a distance away on the other side of town, that left the coast clear for Josh who knew Fred's wife quite well. At tea time Josh knocked on fred's door, out came his wife, after greeting her, he told her that Fred had to nip to his mother's to look at some furniture before the shops shut, he'd have his tea at his mother's and rather than it spoil he asked Josh who knew her to convey the message and he could if he wanted have his tea. Ofcourse Josh come in, its just about ready, sit yourself down and tuck in. Josh just did that, I think that Josh was satisfied after that, honour restored and all that. Now and again, Josh would be passing house were someone he didnt like lived, if that persons cycle was leant against the front parlour windowsill, he would unscrew the valve on the back tyre and let most of the air out and say, that'll keep him happy, that was Josh all over. He didnt like the tally man so his byke was one that got the treatment, then. He reckoned that policemens bykes were fair game and if a carter left his horse and cart outside a pub, and Josh got the chance, He would gently unhook the horse and lead it to the next pub wich was never far away and tie it to the lamp post outside, he would say, that'll teach him to sup and leave the poor horse outside. We stood watching men laying wooden blocks down by the town hall one day, the three of us, the blocks were in place of cobbles I must say, they were nice and smooth to walk on and the wagons were a lot quieter when going over them, This Bob objected most strongly, because he said, they should have put them round the hospital first, that would have been worthwhile, never mind the nobs in the town hall. He had a right barney with one of the officials who threatened to call a policeman, Bob stuck his ground and when the official promised to bring the matter up at the next council meeting, Bob calmed down and told the official not to forget as he (Bob) would be watching closely. We went to have some fun at a political meeting one night, any particular side of politics didnt matter to us, we just went, as others did to have a laugh, the meeting was under way when we trooped in, the platform was occupied by three or four middle aged gentlemen, one was on his feet letting it be known that he had been to India, Australia, Canada, Bulgaria, a voice from the middle of the hall said, I'll tell the what mate, this bin a bloody long Ta Ta, at that the audience burst out laughing, another voice shouted, tha wants tu get back on thi Ta Ta, well, that was it, we piled out of there pretty quick, because we had promised our parents we wouldnt get into arguements about politics and we didnt. Bob, was asked if could paint a bread van for the local baker and paint the lettering on, it was getting near to the prosessions

19 14c

The Baker had an empty shed which he could use and, he would buy the paint and other stuff needed, if Bob would do it. Bob was a house painter but, he said he would give it a go. He would do it in his spare time, and at weekends. He asked Josh and me to help him. The van was literally taken apart, the shafts,

Wheels, doors, the shelves from inside and everything possible. First job was cleaning and stripping the old paint off then, rubbing down and smoothing the woodwork. that took us nearly a fortnight then, Bob began painting, he certainly was good at his job, this was his first coach painting job so he wanted to be sure and make a real effort. It was a challenge to him that he couldn't turn down and the number of coats of paint (no spraying then) well, I stopped counting then, the varnish, coat upon coat, it was never ending, I only know that my finger ends were red raw with rubbing, rubbing and more gentle rubbing but, when the job was completed, oh, what a transformation, Josh asked his dad for a load of spools or cops of cotton for dusters, they were shaped like topedoes, about six or seven inches long, first, a small stick in the bottom was extracted, then you pulled the end off and kept hold of it, making circular motions with your hand still holding the cotton cop in your other hand and slipping it off, a little at a time until the whole cop had unwinded then in your hand you would have a nice clean fluffy soft duster. these were a godsend because we needed that many of them. Waxing was the next step, after waiting until the varnish was dry properly. The real wax was used, none of those substitutes, it had to be the real McCoy, now that sorted the men from the boys, talk about hard work and getting it just right, It took us two whole days to finish the job properly but, when you stood back and looked at it, it was out of this world, a real bobby dazler. The baker was over the moon He brought his family and a lot of his friends to see it, he was so moved that he gave Bob an extra fiver and insisted that he took it, and Bob, the look in his eyes said it all, he was the proudest man ever but he said, although it was really a work of art, it was much easier by far painting houses. After the Whit Monday processions, we always went to the fair which was held on the market square. there were the usual stalls, hoopla, darts, the rifle range, the cocoa nut shies where we always came away with a cocoa nut. The large swing boats known to us as flying Mary Annes, that went higher than a kite, never failed to make some people sick, they never learn, and the bumping cars which were new attracted a lot of customers, we soon tired of that noise and smell so we would wander off towards the canal and watch the barges of coal going by being towed by a very slow gaited horse, the bargeeswife singing and playing an accordion or using strong language to her supposedly no good husband. Those things stick in the mind just as the swans do, the way they glide along looking from side to side then it was head down and bottoms up searching for anything edible in the canal. In the agricultural districts just before Christmas, I think the term is Michaelmas, the farm hands all around that district, gathered for what was termed swearing in day. The farmers would meet and discuss hiring terms with the hands for the next year, when a bargain was struck, a farm hand would be bound for a year to that particular farmer. Of course, word went round who was good to work for and live with and who was difficult

15

My Aunt Daisy lived in the country, I decided to visit. My friends Bob and Josh, accompanied me for the ride, we were very much together during our youth, our motto being, share and share alike. The cottage where she lived was built of wood and stone and supported a thatched roof that overhung the house so much that it nearly touched the ground. As we rode round a bend in the narrow lane, the postman past us on his byke, I noticed that he had a bundle of rhubarb, wrapped in newspaper sticking out of his front carrier. Auntie had some mail, I said, at that moment, the cottage came into view. Nothing more was said till we reached her front gate, because her geese were creating such a noise. We passed through the gate, dodged a couple of apple trees, skirted passed the cackling geese and just as we arrived at the front door, it opened and my aunt stood there. She was smiling a welcome, quite delighted to see us and invited us in. The cottage stood in its own plot of land, there were latticed windows, that could be shut and bolted at night, and the front door was of thick solid oak with a thick round twisted black iron handle. Her sitting room was a delight to behold, with trinkets figurines and nick nacks dotted around, a big rocking chair was to the right of the fireside just on the edge of the hearth rug, on it a well worn cushion on which her barred cat slept. A log fire was burning in the grate, the copper kettle was on and we were motioned to sit down on the chaise-longue, ~~and~~ ^{AUNTIE} auntie went to bring some real country fare for us to eat. The cheese came from the farm next door, so did the ham she gave us, then, home made lemon cheese followed with apple pie and real cream. We ate a hearty meal and thanked my aunt for a splendid meal then offered our services for washing up but she would have none of it and told us to be still. On her return to her sitting room, she asked about the family and how I was getting on at work, I replied that I was enjoying my work, I had a good boss and would soon be a proper fully fledged bricklayer with just a few more months to go till I was twenty one, and come of age. My aunt was pleased as punch and told me to remember to visit her as soon as I could when I was of age, and not to forget to bring Bob and Josh along, she said that she had something special lined up for them. Dusk was nearing and we wanted to start back so we first of all took two metal buckets into her garden ^{and} down to her well, took the large wooden pail with the rope attached, drew her fresh water for her, and put the filled buckets down beside the sink. Josh, noticed that she had a broken pump on her sink, he asked my aunt if he could take it and get it repaired, Auntie said, if you can repair that, you'll be a good un, well, said Josh, If I cant, then nobody can. We took it away with us on our departure, a piece of it on each of our carriers on our cycles. We thanked Auntie again, waved goodbye and rode home, but not before Aunt had made a nice parcel up for mum. When we got back to our street, Bob stopped, he asked me if my dad could make a new part for auntie's water pump, I dont know, I answered, but I'll certainly ask him and, if its not possible, I will try and buy a new part myself. Thats fine, said Bob and when its put back together I'll personally do it up and paint it. Josh said, yes, and I, will have it working properly and lets have it back as soon as we can, I dont like to think of your Auntie carrying water like that, its not good enough. I thanked them both and off we went home. I tackled dad, the next day, he told me to leave it with him, he came back home that

Same night with the part in perfect condition. I asked him about the cost, the cost son, he said, the cost, not family son, never family, I'm glad to do it for her, she's worth it. son and don't forget it, right son, "yes and thank you dad," Oh, glad you brought it," "I owe your aunt son, she's done ~~me~~ many a good turn in the past so let that be the end of it." I took the part to Josh that same night, he was surprised to get it so soon, that's a good do, I'll get cracking on it now, so both of us went to Josh's where he had a small shed built in his yard, he had the thing in bits and did this and that with it, then, he asked me to help to put it together, after a struggle, it was assembled, how can we try it I asked, that's easy said Josh,, "we'll take it to the pub and ask Joe, ~~the~~ the landlord) to lend us an open barrel, he will cos he owes me a favour, the landlord, duly obliged,, we humped the pump down the cellar, filled a ~~barrel~~ barrel with clean water and inserted the pump, We yanked the handle,, nothing happened,, I looked glum, oh dont fret so, said Josh,, its my stupid fault, I forgot to prime it, silly of me, he poured water down it, yanked the hanle and hey presto, water came out alright, all over me, drenching me and the floor. Josh laughed,, you wont need a wash now Pete, at least you can show Bob it works,, we both of us laughed,, cleaned up the spilled water, thanked the landlord,, emptied the water from his barrel and humped the thing to Bobs. . Bob could'nt believe it,, so soon, he said,, and why not, asked Josh,, you know us Bob, when we set our minds to it, things move and quick,, Your telling me, replied Bob,, Geoff,, he called, get your things out of the shed. I'm going to use it right now. young geof scampered off and took his bits and pieces out of the shed, ^{and} thanks ~~geof~~ ^{Bob} he said,, when I've done this job, you can use it again, righto said geof and off he went to play. Come on you two, dont keep a good man waiting, theres lots to do and you can start now, Bob said, Josh, strip it down, lets dry it off, and start rubbing it down. The job took us a couple of days to rub down, then Bob put some filler on it, that had to be rubbed down with wet and dry, when it was smooth enough for Bob,, he put a flat coat of paint on, gently rubbed that then another flat coat, that was gently rubbed then he said, I'll use some special three quarter gloss for finishing, then we'll see how it looks. ~~the~~ ^{the} job completed, was a master piece in itself,, there was as yet no grease put on it because,, we had to cart it back to my aunts and we didnt want grease on our ~~clothes~~ clothingso it was carefully wrapped in dusters made from some cotton cops we got from Josh's dad,, and stored ~~untill~~ ^{until} the next weekend when we would return to my aunts with this nice surprise. Bob and I agreed to take the pump between us because Josh had some tools to take so that he could assemble the pump and attach it to the main stem that was sunk in the ground under the sink. Early on the following Saturday morning, we journeyed forth to my Aunt's abode,, we had to stop and rest twice, because of the weight we were carrying but nevertheless,, we arrived in good time to get the job done. Aunt ~~we~~ saw us coming, from her bedroom window,, she had just been cleaning the inside off her windows, What brings you here she asked,, tho, I'm glad to see you again, but why so soon,, Aha auntie I said,, we have a surprise for you,, the two of them have mended the pump and are going to put it back working for you in no time at all. Josh had his overalls with him and donned them whilst we were talking,, he took his tools into aunties back

17

Kitchen and dived under the sink,, He fiddled about for a bit then emerged and^{and} said, Have you two got that thing together, we had 'nt because he first had to put grease on it. Josh apologized and put grease on the working parts, inside the pump first,, then he assembled it and we took it to the sink for him,, Before he connected the pump to the well pipe,, he took a coupling and some sealer from his tool kit, placed them on the floor poured water into a funnel which he had put into the top of the well pipe until the pipe was nearly full, then, put some sealer round the top and clamped the bottom half into position, then he asked Bob and I to lift the pump into the hole by the sink,, then place the pump into position in the top half of the coupling, hold it steady there until he had secured it tight then he told us to let go. the pump was then ready for operating,, a drop more water in the top and the pump was working fine.. Josh then fixed an extra bracket on the stem of the pump so that it wouldn't break so easily again. My aunt was so happy she kissed Josh and Bob and wept a little with joy. they both refused money and sat down to a jolly fine meal after^{which} they both insisted they did the washing up.. After that, we thanked auntie,, she reminded me again about visiting her with Josh and Bob when I was twenty one. Once again auntie^{along} made parcels up with honey, lemon cheese, farm house cheese, home grown herbs and rhubarb, then waved us off with a shout of, take care now boys and come again any time. going down the road, Josh said, p Pete, your auntie's alright,, I like her and what's more,, any time she wants a job doing, just shout, that goes for me too, said Bob, thanks lads I replied that makes me feel great, I'm really glad. Sometimes, when things got a little slow or quiet, the three of us got a good laugh out of watching known drunks emerge from their watering holes and attempt to move away from the premises. different styles for each of them, one put his feet down as though he was climbing stairs another would take his hat off and bow low to a horse then step back giving it a wide berth stagger a couple of paces then go back and repeat the process,, attempting to get on a cycle was hilarious to watch,, eventually, man and machine ending in the gutter the man trying to sing Nelly Dean or something. Two chaps not too drunk would come out leaning on each other and each demanding that he was going to take the other home, then they would set off stumbling on each other and going the wrong way, or try to get back into the pub,, whereupon the landlord would shoo them off and set them on the right course for home,, they in turn, would turn round and go the opposite way. The horses knew exactly what to do when their drivers came out, they waited until they^{men had} scampered on to the wagon then off they went towards their yard. We often followed them knowing them, and where the horses^{were} stabled,, when the horses reached the yard,, the man^{rolled} off the cart, and staggered into^{his} place leaving the horses and carts outside, we would then unharness the^a horse,, lead it to the trough for a drink then put it in the stall in the stable,, Josh would then insist that a wheel be taken off^a the cart and hidden in the stable,, thereby giving the carter something to wake up to, before starting work again.. We liked animals and if we saw one being ill treated the person responsible was rewardedⁱⁿ in kind by one of us,, there being no time to inform anyone, we just tried to put matters square and leave^e a message loud and clear.

The large turnip type watches and chains with fobs, of one discription or another were leawing the fashion scene making way for the more sophisticated watch, worn on the wrist or adapted to adorn a ladies dress. Men were wearing pluss fours and buckled shoes, they ~~were~~ met at ^{the} ~~the~~ end of the leg by a good lenth stocking whih was turned down just below the knee where the pluss fours started,, elastic garters were worn to keep the stockings from sliding down the leg ~~to prevent them from slipping down~~ like a concertina.

Shooting enthusiasts,, still wear that same garb today,, alongwith deer stalker hats and the dickens likecapcs. Hansom cabs and Landauscan still be found but^{only} in sea side resorts and occasionally in a show,, Tramcars have all but gone as well,^{as} charabancs. A lot of people enjoy brambling,, personally, I would prefer muck spreading,, It stinks,, but at so much a score spread,, pluss a good farmhouse meal thrown in,, who cares about stink except perhaps mum when I get home. I enjoy working,, in a field,, with no one breathing down your neck all~~the~~ time and nattering away,, I could work as ~~fast~~ ^{fast} as I liked the more I did, the more money I got,, Imight get a few birds for company but they didnt talk, so I was left alone with my thoughts. One sundy afternoon, my two friends and I went on the park not a great distance from our street, the park was packed with hundred's of children all in their sun~~day~~ best, there was a band playing hymns and the^{CHILDREN} made sure they were heard,, the sound was terrific, we were told that it was the sunday schools Jubilee, something to do with a Robert Raikes, I reckon that he must have been the founder. All the kids received a medalion to pin on their clothes and were ~~nt~~ ^{nt} proud of them. Something went wrong in the cotton trade,, so,, dockers,, teamsters,, weavers, winders, warpers,, and spinners as well as warehousemen, All were put on short time. Keeping a household going was very difficult, Folk were granted tick, or goods on the slate, ~~now~~ to help to pay for that ,, they had to resort to the pawn shop,, first it was small things like, figurines, small ~~trinkets~~ trinkets and valuebles,, then as the depression went on, furniture and carpets were pawned. ^{Agitate} of assisted passages for emigration was announced by the government,, many families took them up and off they sailed from powerty, and England, some went to America, to Canada, Australia and New Zealand, I understand ~~that~~ some progressed and established themselves in commerse some made the grade in industry, other imigrants have made their name in other fields like tradesmen and shopkeepers, and the best of luck to them all. To save a bit of brass,, Fridy night shopping was the thing to do,, you see,, the butchers ,, fishmongers,, and fruiterers,, practically gave their stuff away just before closing,, rather than letting it go off, Saturday was a special day and stuff had to be as fresh as possible for the Saturday trippers from out of town,, some stalls sold their stuff a bit cheaper late on but the main bargains were as I said on Fridy nights. Good timekeeping was a must in my early life, the milkman with his float, milk kitting round the streets, the postman ~~and~~ walking his round, the burial society colleater, all came regularly at their regular times in fact you could set your clock by them. Tea time was a nightly ritual, front doors opening,, female voices shouting in the arteet, Joseph, tea time, Emily ,, Emily, then a louder voice starting low and ending in a high pitched shrill Emily,, then wheres that girl got to,, george comes running up the street, George y, have you seen

19
Our Emily's She's in A mme Hazgraves house misses Banks,, do you want me to fetch her,
Yis george if ya would, tell er, er tays go ing kewd. then after a while the sound of
rumring on the pavement,, then more,, there would be six or more children dashing home
for their tea. All doors would be shut for about ten minutes,, peace and quiet, then,,
first ^{one} child, then another, and so on , mostly congregating round a lamp post and larking
about having a bit of fun for an hour or two before the calling started again this time
for bed. Every night, seven nights a week the same carry on. You would hear children's
voices disappearing into the house saying something like, Mum, I dont want tripe an
onions, or, can I have some syrup on me butty mum that jams empty, inta jar mum, eh mum.
Cow heels, tripe and onions,, trotters,, black puddings,, kippers,, sheeps head,, pea soup
made with ham shank, dumpling stew, roolly poly pudding and custard ,, bread pudding and
spotted dick, All good northern fare as they used to say,, that'll stick to your ribs.

Poor old Bob,, he dropped a right clanger,, It came about thisway. He,, being a jolly
good man at his job,, was sent down south to do a special job, (one of his bosses pals,)
Bob thought right,, hotels are expensive so, he got digs. He did the job,, plenty of
overtime so, Sundy night, he arrived back home so that he could get back on his regular
job on Monday morning. He felt a bit itchy and it wouldnt go away, anyhow,, he mentioned
to Josh and I about this continuous dilemma so we suggested he went to the doctors,
the three of us went and we waited for him, when it came his turn. He walked in,, after
about two minutes, we heard howls of laughter coming from the doctor in the surgery,
Bob came out a short while after, his face was crimson , whats up, we said, Bob was
~~very~~ embarrassed, he didnt like to tell us , Josh wrapped nothing up and said,, have
you been with a woman and caught something, Oh no said BOB,, well out with it said
Josh,, Bob spluttered that he had to go to the chemist and buy some blue unction,, shave
himself below his navel and have a very hot bath then apply this unction, Oh said
Josh laughing, man, he said, it means changing all your clothes and dont forget your bedding
your mum will have to know, and better tell your dad so that he can take precautions
and your toilet seat will have to be disinfected all because you didnt go into a hotel
I bet next time you'll book into one eh, or would you rather chance it and get another
dose of crabs. Bob did what was necessary and bought himself some new clothes. We didnt
broach the subject again. A street party was organised for, Oh I fofget what, ^{we've} had
quite a few over the years,, but everyone that could do, chipped in. The landlord at
Dads local gave a ~~ke~~ barrel of his home brewed ale,, the baker sent a vanload of stuff
like cakes, bread, meat pies and some special home made ginger snapps. misses Heap from th
the corner shop sent boxes of jelly babies and a half box of aniseed balls besides
a box of penny bars of chocolate,, other mums and dads brought out plates and cups becid
spoons and a cou=le of the ladies got cracking cutti ng the bread and making sandwiches
there was potted meat, tinned salmon , boiled ham, corned beef, cheese, and brawn,,
Jelly, custard, trifle, and those bottles ~~had~~ (had a glass marble inside) of lemonade and
sarsaparilla together with dandelion and burdock. Everybody kept their eyes on their own
crockery and cutlery,, Large tea urns were borrowed from the mission hall as well as
trestle tables, and forms, then we obtained a roll of blank printing paper, touse as a
table cloth, about sixty ~~or seven~~ ~~ma~~

Or more people sat down on a warm and lowly afternoon. Sergant Butler and the local Beat Bobby were invited, two landlords, and parish priests from both faiths attended. That in itself was an achievement because bigotry and narrow-mindedness existed everywhere. The ^{main} thing was, the street, and togetherness, our picture was featured in the town newspaper with the caption "Malt Street shows the way to Unity". The Brownie cameras were brought out when the two Priests were sat next to ~~each other~~ ^{and} shaking hands, the local constabulary imbibed from the barrell before departing, leaving us to carry on reaffirming our loyalty to our street. A young boy, slipped a few sandwiches under his jersey for his dog, and the two priests were given cakes and pies that were left, to distribute to the needy. Everybody mucked in to help clear the street, the tables and forms were returned to the mission, that left the street clear for fun and games for everybody especially the children. The ice cream cart came round and we made sure that every child plus a few adults, had a cornett or wafer. the children had a whale of a time, shouting, screaming, dashing to the side of the street for pop and sweets, and of course, one or two being sick, the latter being swilled away instantly. When the kids tired, and started to nod off, their mothers packed them off to bed leaving the street cleared for singing and dancing. Concertinas came out along with fiddles and a mouthorgan or two and the music began. During a lull in the proceedings, now and then, the barrell of ale, was attended to, so that one or two of the men, shirt sleeved by now, braces hanging by their ⁱⁿ sides, were stomping up and down with their wives while the rest of us were clapping in time with the music and making the most of it, when the singing started, all the old songs got a good airing, like Show me the way to go home. On mother Kellys doorstep, Nelly dean, comrades, and a host of others, the barrell getting lighter and lighter untill eventually, only sediment was left. That being the case, people began to drift away and it only left the last rights to end a memorable day and that, was rolling the empty barrell back from wence it came. To day, if a party was held in the street, I wonder how many Bye laws we would be breaking, how our neighbours would react and how long it would be before the police would receive a complaint, and be sent to break it up. There would be the possibility of unwelcome visitors coming down the street on scooters or motorcycles creating utter chaos and using not a little violence, no, those days are long gone, more the pity.

When someone died, who had lived in the street, it was customary to draw the blinds or the curtains on the day of the funeral, untill the cortage had gone, Every house in the street contributed towards a floral tribute. The glass panelled hearse drawn by two beautiful black horses with black plumes on their headgear and stepping so sedately were a sight to behold though a might sad to see, I must say, the closed hansome cabs behind, with their drivers in top hats, made the whole thing so somber and mournfull I never liked to see them, and I always breathed a sigh of relief when they had gone. Cremations were still only being thought of then so the cemetery was the ultimate destination, they were kept a lot better than ~~what~~ they are today.

The corner shop, open all hours and personal service, was the centre of the grapevine,

If you required anything at all, it was there, you could get tick, information, a listening ear, a shoulder to cry on and if you were well known, they allowed you the use of their telephone even to taking messages for you occasionally. sometimes a child would enter the shop with a couple of empty bottles, now misses Heap, the kindly old soul who had our corner shop, knew very well when bottles were taken from the back of her shop, because when an empty bottle was returned, she would place a small mark on it so that she knew whether it had come from her yard or not, If the bottles were hers she would take the bottles and the child to the back, replace the bottles warn the child that if it happened again the policeman would go to their House and take them away. then she would ask the child how would it be if she went round to the child's house and stole something from their House, after which she would make the child promise not to do it again, give them a couple of sweets and send them home.

Late Saturday night, Sunday, ~~and~~ if you knocked on the door when they did shut, they opened the door and served you with whatever you required. The things or goods that they had on sale are hard to find today. Donkey stones, Zebu blacklead, gas mantles, condis cristall^s candles, wax tapers, baking powder, minor cigarettes and other brands, ^{like} star and drum.

Butter was cut from a huge slab and cheese was cheese, not processed just local farm made cheese, and butter came from the farm as well. Bob or Josh often bought parched peas to share at night, we didn't care much for chestnuts or snig fray (youngeels) they were eaten more down round London. Occasionally, mum would prepare muffins or pikelets, (crumpets) or perhaps potatoe cakes at suppertimes but they lay heavy when I went to bed. The chimney sweep came round every so often, because it was important to have the chimneys swept regularly otherwise, your chimney might catch fire, then you would have the whole street out complaining about soot being everywhere.

My dad, was a dab hand at mending clogs and shoes, he has saved us many a bob or two when he got his last out, I think that practically all the families in our street had one, just like we all had a storm lamp hung up in the toilet in the back yard so that in winter, they didn't get frozen pipes then bursts, ~~in the winter~~. I don't know why, but in the summer months, my dad would come home as black as the fire back, Mum would have the tin bath ready for him in the back yard shed, along with a change of clothes, she said that he brought fleas home with him then, so, he had to bath and change every night before she let him in the House, Dad never bothered about that because he had to wash and change in any case every night. I've never seen hands as big as my dad's and he was as strong as an ox, I have watched him lift carts and turn them upside down so that he could work on them better, Mum said that one day two men had an argument with dad in the pub, he just picked them both up, one in each hand and threw them both out into the street without getting a sweat on. I have noticed that when he is out, people treat him with respect, I am very proud of that. Outside our House, just to the right of the front door, four or five inches from the wall and about three inches off the ground, we had a scraper shaped like a square YU, Dad made it and put it there specially so that mud or snow could be scraped off ^{your} footwear before you entered through the front door into the house. Dad's mates saw this contraption so they asked him to make

Themome, befor long, ~~there~~ was one outside the pub, my mates ^{dads} had one each,, and a few of ~~his~~ mates got them as well, you could tell who ^{dads} mates were, and where they lived by the scapers outside their houses. Now, Bobs dad was also dirty when he arrived home from working in coaldust, he had to go up his lobby into his backyard and do the necessary before he entered his house. As I have mentioned before,, Joshs dad used to take spools of cotton home from work, after taking the cotton off the spool in one continuous piece,, he would flip it all together and there you had a nice soft duste or wiper,, Josh always kept one handy for his best shoes so that he could get a nice shine on them. Bob scrounged a few now and then to use as wipers for painting and when we did that bread van job,, they truly were a godsend. My dad liked them for his work as well, so that Joshs dad was always in demand in our circle. We three were growing up rapidly,, ^{and} visited the nappy (barber) onme every fortnight,, Josh asked for a shave from time to time and the barbers apprentice would get a pot of lather ready, then he would tuck a cloth under Joshs chin and hand over to the barber,, the barber would then ~~stop~~ ^{stop} his cutthroat razor,, dip it into boiling water, by then the apprentice had torn some paper into squares, and placed one on Joshs shoulder, then, holding JOShs face up under the chin with a finger, he, the barber, would slide the razor down each side of Joshs face , wipe the razor onthe paper, and continue the operation on JOShs face and neck. With the job complete, he would then put a hot towel on Joshs face, Josh would rise, wipe his face, hand the towel back to the apprentice and pay him ~~and~~ telling him to keep the change , Josh would be helped into his coat and away we would go. The three of us shared a set of draining rods and we have dealt with a lot of blocked drains in our time,, we did try sweeping chimneys but we made too much mess so we left them to the professionals . Can you imagine the work that went into changing a tyre on a motor car in those days,, taking the wheel off was easy there being only one nut to unscrew, but a damaged tyre,, well. I understand tyre lewers and a lump hammer had to be used . What went on or how the job was accomplished,, I honestly dont know although I dare say that whoever did the job,, sweat plenty .

The great long trench coats they wore when driving kept them reasonably warm but,, I wonder how many got ruined stepping in and out of those contraptions,, when there was mud mire, and slush about. The northern folk,, after a struggle, won the right to have a weeks anual holiday every summer,, this was called the waikes week, how it got that name,, I can t recall but all the major industrial towns in the north picked their own dates for the holidays. Savings clubs were set up by the workers themselves and the Friday they stopped work for the weeks holiday,, the money each individual had saved,, together with their wages ,, enabled them to take their families away from the industrial environment,, and get some seaside or country air according to their wishes Saucy postcards were sent to friends and relations just to prove where they had been, and the ~~and the bread van job~~ ^{Just} was used to back that proof up. The seaside in general,, hasnt the brownie cameras were

changed all that much, for instance, the deck chairs or the attendant, with their ticket machines and leather pouches ,, band concerts on the

Promenade, Gospel missions, donkey rides, oyster bars, shrimp stalls, punch and Judy, icecream, beach hawkers selling sun glasses, buckets and spades and little paper flags to put on top of sandcastles. Have a stroll along the prom, you find ~~an~~ icecream cornets plopped on the ground, horse muck left by the horses standing in lines, attached to their open carriages or tandaus, awaiting customers, and if you care to ~~have~~ have a sandwich, somewhere on the front, then all you get is a taste of the local sand.

Far be it for me to knock the seaside, as a matter of fact, I love it, All that I am trying to do is tell what I remember of the places I have been to with my parents.

Bob, Josh and I, preferred going to Scotland round the Lochs, and we liked to go fishing there. The three of us have each caught the big one that got away, so, that makes us just like the rest of the fishing fraternity, but one day, just once, we will bring home the big one. I remember one time on Holiday in Glen Coe, For once the weather was fine and warm so we arranged a spot, amongst some trees and decided to sleep there just for that night, all was quiet, the hooting of an Owl, disturbed Bob, then Josh decided to wander off and relieve himself, after a short while, he returned, shook me and whispered, hey pete, listen, I grunted what, listen he said, I sat up and listened then I heard it, the wierd wailing sound, Bob sat up, He laughed, whats so funny I said Oh said Bob, you ~~remember~~ ^{remember} that woman we spoke to about breakfast tomorrow, yes, well, I said, Bob laughed on a bit then said, well she told me to take no notice of the noise, its only a Jamie Mac phie a wee bit tipsy, trying to play the pipes, he does that now and then. Josh was a bit annoyed being disturbed and he said, I'll give him a couple of minutes then I'm going up there and stuff em up his backside and he can blow them from there. It didnt stop, so Josh got up. He said, are you coming, Bob said I suppose so if its only to carry you back. The three of us walked toward the noise, it was pretty dark and the more we walked the further off the sound seemed to go, we stopped, lets get back I said, we've left our tackle and who knows might pinch it. We all about turned and loped back towards our spot, just in time, two chaps were rumaging through our things, Josh made a sign to us to spread out and creep up, this we did, then we closed in on them, First, Bob collared one then raised his fist and held it in mid air, it turned out that they were the local constabulary. Explanations on both sides were ~~ace~~ accepted and after a little natter, the police withdrew and told us that they would confiscate the pipes till morning and left us to sleep for the remaining hours of darkness. About half past eight the following morning, the police brought the offending piper to us, he was small and rotund, they knew him well and regarded him as a nuisance but harmless enough and all he was doing last night was traipsing round in circles. We thanked the officers for their help and explanations, they accepted, went off and we went for some breakfast, the poor Jamie went off for something, his mouth he said was full of feathers and a wee dram or two would fix it. We told him a lie, we said, or at least Bob did, that we were members of the society for the abolition of drink in Scotland, and we expected him to attend our forthcoming gospel meeting. Off he went a little shamefaced. The lady who gave us breakfast, laughed until she cried when we told her the whole story, especially about the police nearly getting Cobbler and the bit about our supposed gospel meeting.

A young lady invited the three of us to a birthday party, she was an old school friend of ours and a bit of a tom boy...She would play with us after school then come to our house for tea and wait for her father to take her home, but that only occurred when he worked the day shift. Her dad was a policeman, when he was on night duty, the girl would go home from school and by the time he went to work at night, her mother, who also worked, would be home. Since leaving school, the young lady had moved house, her father getting a beat in the rural district on the outskirts of the town, We thought about getting there and decided to cycle instead of using the tram because the tram terminated about a couple of miles short of where we wanted to go. After a bath, I dressed into my best Sunday suit, polished my shoes, put some hair cream on then I asked mum if I would do, she reminded me about taking a handkerchief, and gave me a small package for Susan, that was the girl's name. Dad hardly ever used his bike but I never took it without his permission anyway I dare not. On this occasion, he told me that I could use it, and to take the tools and a puncture outfit just to be on the safe side. The front and back lights were working perfectly, I put dad's cycle clips on and picked up my little gift (a silk headscarf) then I went to meet my two mates. Trust Josh to come up with something different, he had borrowed a tandem because Bob's bike needed a new back wheel, it happened that his brother had smashed it into a gate and forgotten to tell Bob so hence the tandem. All was ready and we set off. The tandem raced ahead and was soon out of sight, I stopped, got off the bike and waited, sure enough, back they came, I pretended to have just been blowing up the back tyre, they stayed with me after that in case I had a puncture, well why not. We arrived in plenty of time and were welcomed by Susan, she was happy to see us and gave us each a big kiss, her dad was home and he led us straight to Susan's mother who in turn greeted us with affection and enquired after my parents. That night, we had a whale of a time, the food was good the company good and there was a punch bowl filled with a delicious fruit cocktail, yes we enjoyed ourselves tremendously, and Susan was so happy, then she opened our presents, my mum had given her, a beautiful brooch, Josh gave her a powder compact, and Bob had given her a sketch portrait of herself he had done by a student artist that Bob knew from night school and I must say she was very pleased with it. Like always, when you're enjoying yourselves, time seems to gallop by and we had to say goodbye. Susan and her parents saw us to the door, we looked for our bikes, they had vanished, stolen. Susan's dad said not to worry, he would take us in the dog cart. He hitched up Susan's pony in quick time and, waving farewell to Susan and her mum, after thanking them for a lovely and enjoyable evening, we set off at a nice trot towards home. I must mention that the oil lamps had to be lit on either side of the dog cart because that was the law. About a mile and a half up the road, we came across a couple of youths being sick under the hedge, we stopped, then we saw the bikes, are you two alright Susan's dad asked, Oh yes, came the reply, just a bit queasy they said, are you walking, I asked, No they answered, I'm on my bike and my mate has his tandem, that was enough for us, we hopped out of the dog cart in a flash and examined the bikes, yes, they were ours alright, after a few questions, the youths owned up.

We were very thankful to see our bykes again so we didnt press charges and asked Susans dad to sort the matter out. He told us to be on our way, that it would be wise to leave everything to him. We thanked him, retrieved our bykes, and rode off. The odd letter was received from Susan, and later, I heard that she was trying to join the force herself, I hope she made it, I happened to bump into Susans dad sometime after Susans party, he was promoted to sergent and was going to work in the midlands which meant that they would have to move again, we had a bit of a natter and I took him home to see mum and dad. He told us then that the two rascals who had taken our bykes that night, were caught again another night, he locked them up for the night and had them in court the following day, they were both fined three pounds each with a warning that they would be sent down if they appeared in court again. Mum put a good spread on for the sergent who asked her and Dad to visit them before they moved, he said he would pick them up at the tram terminus if they let him know the day and time of their visit. They went a week later on a Saturday afternoon, I had my tea at Bobs before we both went to pick Josh up to go to town for the night out. One whit weeknd, ^{I and} the two mates of mine, decided to visit a mining village a few miles to the north of the town where we lived, it so happened that Bob had a cousin living there who was a deputy or something, this meant of course that the cousin was like a charge hand down the mine. Whit Monday morning, we got up early, packed a good baggin, (lunch) put it in the ^a ~~saddl~~ bag with the tools and puncture outfit, tied a waterproof coat round the crossbar and so prepared, we set off for this isolated village nestling at the foot of mountainous slag heaps, refuse from the bowels of the earth. The approach roads to the village were signposted with warnings of road subsidence, Nearing the village, we noticed that the place seemed deserted, it wasnt, of course, just having ^a ~~in~~ days holiday for whitsun. As we looked upwards toward the slag heap, we noticed the pylons lined up like sentinels stretching from the pit head with the huge wheel sticking out, to the very top of the slag heap, and running along them, thick wire cables with large buckets attached, I understand that these were used for carrying the slag from the pit to the top of the slag heap, to be tipped out, and it was an endless rope so that the buckets kept going round and round when the mine was working. Once in the village, Bob made enquiries as to the whereabouts of his cousin Luke kershew, we found him by his pigeon loft, at the end of his allotment, he had just finished planting potatoes. After a look of ~~r~~ecognition and a word of greeting, Bob introduced us, and Luke accompanied us to his home. We were met at his door by ^{his} wife who already knew about us, strangers were uncommon in that village, so we were noticed as soon as we arrived. ~~We~~ were lucky because Luke had just been elected to chairmanship of the miners' lodge, so he had a bit of standing in the community and as we were his guests, everything was honkey dory. We explained that we had our snaps, baggin, lunch, call it what you will, with us but he insisted that we stay for our dinner, we didnt want to offend, so we had the midday meal with him and his wife and he told us that he had to go to inspect the mine, (safety ragulations,) it was his turn on duty. We asked if we were allowed to accompa^y him, he replied that with permission from the pit manager it could be arranged.

26

From

The pit managers house was a short distance away from the willage so, Luke telephoned from the shop and received permission provided that the senior deputy was informed, that part was easy because, the chief deputy was also on duty with Luke at the same time. One single person was never allowed down the shaft alone, there must always be two or more at the same time for safety's sake. The two deputies took us to the lamp room and said, Listen very carefully lads, first off, all cigarettes, matches, lighters and tobacco, leave it here, put safety helmets on and take a lamp each, this we did, now, they said, keep together, and mind what we say, and if we say jump, then you jump, and quick, got it? we all agreed then climbed the iron stairway to the pit shaft, we got into the cage, a bar was put across, then the cage door shut. The next thing I knew, the cage descended at a terrific speed, my backside seemed to meet my neck, then we arrived. The cage slowed just enough before it reached the bottom of the shaft then settled slowly on the ground. When we stepped out, it was like entering ^{into} another world, the surrounding area was very spacious and well lit, with lamps all over the place, there were store houses, ponies in stables, small tramlines going all over the place, great big wide tubs, smaller tubs which the miners filled at the coal face, there were sprockets (short metal bars like spindles for acting as breaks for the bogeys (the smaller tubs) if they were on a gradient, of which there were many, the men slipped a sprocket through a wheel, to jam the wheel and slow the thing down and so prevent an accident. we walked part of the way through a tunnel, it was shored up with wooden props and the two deputies, one leading the way, the other bringing up the rear, examined and probed here and there with rods and shone their lamps up and down the sides and the roof of the tunnel. Little side roads led off here and there into small chambers, these they called places, were the men worked with pick and shovel. In some places we observed drill holes in the coal face ready for the shot firers to plug with dynamite, in some places, the men had to work knee deep in water to get the coal, in others, they had to crouch, some places were just over a foot high and some men would work on their bellies for most of the shift. the different levels in that pit, and all honeycombed with places just like a rabbit warren all had to be supplied with fresh air so that the pit had to have all sorts of craftsmen working below ground, and on top as well. Lets try and think of a few, as well as the actual face workers (colliers) there would be, joiners, carpenters, pipe fitters, tracklayers, horsemen for the pit ponies, blacksmiths, then they got electricity so they needed electricians, there were the labourers, weigh machine operators, the winding operators, ^{and} cage operators, I could mention many more, all in all, the mine and its workers are a very skilled organisation, ^{it is} dangerous and very hard work so, I have the greatest respect for them. I know, now that I have seen some of it at first hand. Youngsters climb up to the top of the slag heap, they take an old sheet of corrugated tin with them, bend the ends up a little, then sit on it and shut down the slag heap just like on a ski slope, I would have liked to have tried that. There were about forty or even fifty houses in the willage, they also had a public house, a miners hall and a working mans institute, then there was the small clinic, a couple of shops, a chapel, and a doctors house and surgery combined plus one or two more

Small buildings, a fire appliance shed a chemist, undertaker, policeman and a school. The miners used a Glenny lamp which perpetually blinked, the miners using this lamp, could and in some cases did develop a blink just like the lamp, an affliction of that kind was very embarrassing, but I don't think there was treatment for it nor compensation.

When the miner went on shift, he often took with him, along with his bait and bottle of cold tea or water, a jam sandwich, this, would be left in the bait tin for the whole shift when the shift was over and the miner returned to the surface and went home, he would then take the sandwich out and give it to his child. By the time the miner had done his shift, the jam would be soaked right through the bread and I understand that the kids really went for them because they tasted far better than sweets. There are no toilets down a mine ~~and~~ the miners must rely on tolerance and discretion and try not to offend their workmates. The tragedy is that when a mine is finished, worked out, has given all it ever possessed and can give no more, it is abandoned for ever and in some cases, sealed up. THOSE MINES, could be converted into workshops, bomb shelters a few made into underground schools and hospitals, even living accommodation could be made attractive, with all the modern technology at our disposal and the poverty coupled with the unemployment situation, demands that someone somewhere, realises that fact and soon. A riot or great outcry is perhaps too serious a situation to contemplate but because as individuals, many people have profited from the purge of the welfare state, and the removal of the code of ethics that were essential for commerce and trade, They yearn for the return of the Victorian age. It will look to be returning, for a while, then, the pendulum will slowly swing back again, but not before many of us have tasted the bitter fruit of destitution and pathetic misery. Our country, this England, has become the clearing-house for the world. All our industry and manufacturing ability has gone, along with any profit making concern the nation had, but that is not all, we are members of the European community and how we live and work is decided by eurocrats and up to now, our second class nation, is fast becoming a member of the so called third world. A short time after the next auction of our national assets, and the financiers have taken their dividend from the proceeds, what will be left.

I was told by Bob's cousin that there are different methods of hauling gear in the pits, one particular system is essential for the DRIFT mine, that is the mine that has no need of a shaft, you walk down and you may have to ride on a small train because your place of work could be three or four miles underground. At the Portal, (the mouth of the mine) the bogies are filled then attached to an endless steel cable, now this cable must be inspected daily, if the cable snapped can you imagine the devastation, havoc and carnage that would be let loose, that steel cable would be first of all like a giant whip, then it would swirl and wriggle like massive twisted metal ball, smashing and squashing all and sundry in its path until it jammed blocking everything, air, water pumps, the lot. The rescue would be panic stations. In some places, the mine is like a very lofty cathedral the roof is so high and the shapes and contours are magnificent and look positively beautiful. When the coal is brought to the surface, it must be graded, washed and weighed then put into wagons for shipment.

I can recall an unusual event that happened some time ago, my friends and I were in a tavern having a well earned drink of home brewed. A stranger approached Josh and pushed a leather bag onto him, before Josh could react to the situation, the chap was off. Well, I said to Josh, arnt you going to open it, he did, the pouch contained a number of scraps of paper with titles on them, he looked bewildered, what in blazes is this he asked, Bob laughed, now Josh, have another look at the names on those papers, Josh took another look, then it dawned on him, ofcourse, there names of horses. But what does he want giving them to me Josh asked, it did seem funny so I asked the landlord about it. The landlord replied that the man was a bookies runner and slipped them to Josh to hold for a while, because the cops were after him and that pouches contents was the evidence they were after, without it the cops could not prosecute. Josh asked the landlord to accept it, oh no said the landlord Ive got my licence to think of, Bob asked the landlord for a drawing pin, why, he asked, well, said Bob, you dont know us do you, so give us a drawingpin and well stick this under this bench and when the chap comes back, you can tell him where to look for it. the landlord agreed, so the pouch was put under the bench, we drank up and moved out. A week or so later, we read of a man, Ronald Simms, fined one pound for street betting, we guessed as much. The three of us didnt know the first thing about betting, never being interested, and whats more, we had better things to do with our brass. Kite flying was a well practised hobby those days, people made their own as often as not, even box kites, today, they are few and far between, dads took their children out into the park, or open spaces, to fly them and at the same time, let the kids have some fresh air, it did them a power of good. One of my favourite pasttimes was to get hold of Comic Cuts or the beano or Chips something like that, have a good read, then swap them for another one and so on. Now Bob liked his Hornby trains, we would play for hours on wet weekends in our schooldays, Josh on the other hand liked making little tanks or whatever, the idea was, you get an empty reel, or bobbin from a sewing machine, the end of a candle, take the wick out of the candle, leaving a hole, then you serrated the two ends of the bobbin, you got an elastic band, only a small one, you threaded the small elastic band through the bobbin fastening one end, took the end that was pushed through the bobbin, threaded it through the hole in the candle, stuck a match stalk or cherry stick through the end to prevent the rubber band from coming out, and there you had a tank. You wound the end with the stick, round and round till it was very tight indeed, held the whole thing in your hand untill you put it down, then let it go. It would slowly unwind itself, and move along, if you put a thin book down, it would climb over it and proceed untill it it wound down. then, you could rewind it and start off again but, if you had two or more you could have races or battles. the three of us have fought many battles in our house along with my soldiers and my fort. I miss the silent films like, Tom Mix, Buck Jones, Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, all those films you could go and see, sometimes for the price of a couple of jam jars. believe it or not, and you got a stick of spanish or a sherbert with a tube of spanish stuck in it so that you could suck the sherbert out then it went right up your nose and made you cough. those were the days.

There was one thing I noticed years ago about smog and fog, it was that anyone driving a horse and cart, homeward bound, invariably let the horse go its own way and found that they never got lost on the way. The only problem was, guiding the horse round corners and gateways because of the width of the cart or wagon. One thing though, if the horse took fright and bolted, which was possible but highly unlikely in fog, then, there was trouble with a capital T. The tramcar, because it ran on lines, never stopped running because of fog, just like trains never stopped, nevertheless, people often got lost because of inefficient gas lighting of the streets and, insufficient local knowledge. No one liked to stop and talk to a stranger in the street especially in thick fog so, not many folk ventured abroad on a foggy night unless it was necessary. The streets being deserted, left an eerie feeling walking the still quiet streets and alleyways, and the occasional noise of a flushing backyard toilet told you that you were in the vicinity of dwelling houses. I don't see any of the old type bathchairs with the single wheel in front, a long handle attached to the wheel and stretching along, over the top to the person sitting in it, the part where the person held it just like the handle of a garden roller, the long bath shaped contraption made of cane, in effect, a wicker basket.

A lot of things have quietly succumbed to the creeping onslaught of modernisation leaving only antiques, heirlooms and memories with an occasional glimpse of the past, at some auction or sale. Many a Monday, I would be dodging lines of washing on my way home from work, sheets, pillow cases, bolster cases, ladies under garments billowing in the wind like the sails of a windjammer and I could always tell who would be darned later in the week, by looking at the stockings blowing in the wind. My mum had a sewing machine that was attached to a small table that was raised or lowered accordingly, it had a wheel on the side with a tiny handle on it, she turned the handle to work it and she was very adept with it. Any dressmaking she required, she would nip round to Bobs mum who had a larger machine that worked by a treadle which was a few inches above the ground under the machine so that you placed your feet on it and pressed it like a pedal this in turn being coupled to the wheel of the machine gave you your wheel hand free to work with whatever you were sewing. When I pass a school today, I can't help noticing that the pupils always seem to be forever on the move, from one part of the school to another how they get time for actual lessons is a mystery to me, I am sure that in most cases, the teachers could change classes instead of the pupils trotting up and down. If it takes thirty children three minutes to change classes, and, some change every lesson, then I think that a better system could be arranged to eliminate all that time waisting.

I liked only a few subjects when I attended school, my brain refused to accept the rest, like for instance, religious instruction, I mean knowing who begat whom and the psalms, (apart from one or two) plus a lot of the old testament was boring to a young lad and how could it help him when he went to work. I know that history knowledge was a little useful in some respects but the dates and the different kings all with the same name, confused me and was so boring and of no interest to me then I couldn't concentrate or remember any of it. I picked up the basics of technical drawing but what use is it today with millimetres and centimetres, a directive from Europe.

Now, the endearing term you hear in our part of the country, is, ,, Luv,, any child, ^{or} girl. ~~is~~ is addressed that way by men and women , such as , ello luv or hiya luv or maybe ado luv, yes luv, no luv, all that sort of thing, it means nothing passionate or anything like that, its just our way. In the northeast, they use the term, honey, and that is their way of addressing their folk. I wonder why children attending school, are never taught the real value of money. They all understand what it is used for, and that you cant get very far without it, but, they never get to know how to manage it or stretch it. Children leaving school today, think that they are grown up and want to try and live that way, forgetting that respect and thrift are two of the main characteristics required ^{Just} like cleanliness and godliness . A vast majority of teenagers sponge or scrounge from their parents and sometimes, they have to be refused, this in turn often causes tension and unfortunately, in some cases leads to theft. They like to be dressed like others ^{S.O.F.} the same age group forgetting that quite a few with their outrageous hairstyles disadvantage them when looking for employment. most parents today dont know where their offspring go in the evenings or even what they get up to, and a lot couldnt care less. If parents would sometimes talk to their children about the real world and what it can and cannot do for the children personally, and how to avoid the pitfalls in this modern society of ours which they are so eager to join, we may in the end, save one or two of them from becoming violent and ignorant jobboes. The fact that we need social workers in our society today is an indictment of way past governments have misgoverned our country and I see no escape from this dilemma for years to come. During the latter end of winter, Josh was very busy mending burst pipes and installing hot water systems in houses. the idea Josh said, was to fit a ~~metal~~ copper , tank at the back of the fire with an inlet valve for cold water from the mains pipe ^{to} a large cistern upstairs, the inlet valve allowed water from the cistern into the boiler , this was heated and returned to the cistern via an outlet valve, from ~~there~~ ^{there} to a tap over the slop stone and with a bath installed in the house, you could have a hot bath, instead of the tin bath next to the fire, and without any one intruding. Josh lost me about half way through that explanation. Bob walked in and Josh went through it all again for Bobs benefit. The nights were drawing in, mornings were a bit parky and the smell of wintergreen wafted across our nostrils from boys with chapped knees who passed us in the street. Bonfire night was not far off and kids were scrounging round for any thing that burned, a bonfire was taking shape on spare land at the back of our street. Boxes, sofas, old stained mattresses,, tailors dunnys,, fish bassets and numerous other items were piled up ready and waiting for the torch. One irate old lass, was scolding a group of youngsters, it seemed that her toilet door had been snatched out of her lobby, it was put there for the joiner to repair, then rehanged , anything that wasnt nailed down was fair game to these lads because they were after the biggest bonfire in the area, no matter what. The dogs and cats didnt like it one little bit, neither did the horses for that matter and we three , by then, young men,, took it upon ourselves to keep an eye on the goings on of some known young pranksters who were not averse to throwing a firework by a horse, just to see what it would do.

31

HALF

My mum said, I was a rice pudding addict, I ~~was~~ agree with her,, I loved the thick creamy sweet, and when the dish was empty , I always got to screepe the dihh,, that was the best part,, you know, all that stuff stuck round the side,, it tasted better than toffee, I used to relish it. Pea soup made with a ham shank and an onion put in to kind of bring th the flavour out, I generally left the table fit to burst and then I would have to sit and relax for about an hour. With Monday always being resurrection day , that is , the meat left over from Sunday dinner,, was put on the table, along with spuds, cabbage and carrots, I liked to nip to the chippy two blocks up the street and get myself, fish, chips and peas, that cost sixpence, the peas were nice and mushy and the fish had that nice crispy batter and it was always well done, I can't stand half cooked food. Mum told me about the chip shop in Hudson street, thats five streets away, she said that their fish walked across the pan on stilts,, because she once went for a fish supper there and the fish nearly made her sick because it was practically raw. Josh's mum, is an expert at baking Parkin, its a kind of ginger cake made with ~~whole~~ ^{OAT} meal flour ^{and} now what else she puts ^(Bunnaek) in I couldnt say ,, I only know that every time she bakes some, Josh brings Bob and I a generous piece each and it goes down a treat the following day at snapp time. I have a cousin Ivy,, a thin gangling type of girl with freckles, she's not a sour puss by any means, but she is rather shy. One day, my mates and I took a tram to the house were she lived with my aunt Beth and Uncle Ted,, the place was a small holding really, they had hens, geese, a couple of goats and three or four pigs as well as a pony and cart.. Ivy spotted us entering their gate and came to meet us,, after the usual greeting and introductions,, we strolled to the house. Uncle Ted was busy cutting wood, he made part of his living out of selling firewood,, the rest of it he managed by making deals.. he would go to auction marts,, buying and selling a few sheep or maybe calves,, they were nearly always left on the cattle market premises, he would sell to butchers and the odd farmer but not having the facilities to take them home,, (for one thing he didnt have the space for them) and for another, he never bought if he didnt have a buyer, he would have to go at night to water had feed them, and again the following morning before supervising their departure. aunty Beth was cleaning out a hen cabin,, a big stout woman with arms enough for two,, she had mousey coloured hair , and when she walked in anywhere,, it was a case of,, heres my busom, I'm coming behind, if she had a mind to cuddle you, you got lost and had to fight for breath . For all that,, she liked to crack a joke and was newer subdued when dealing with men. Josh made a mistake when he took his cap off and stood withit inhis hands behind his back,, one of the goats quietly walked behind him and started eating his cap,, at first, he was startled then he tried to snatch the cap back ,the goat wouldnt part and a struggle began,, Aunt Beth shrieked with laughterand shouted for Ivy to fetch a bucket with a few oats in it,, Ivy grinning away, brought the bucket and went forth stretching her arms out holding it . The goat dropped the cap alright but stood on it and put its head inside the bucket Ivy rescued some of the cap and we all fell about laughing our heads off meanwhile,, the other goat,, being inquisitive, turned up ,, didnt like the look of Bob and chased him into

The nearest shed, he just got the door shut in time .I didnt hang about,. I made for the house with Ivy , Josh came next with my aunt~~ie~~, and Uncle Ted,, with his bowler on the back of his head, waistcoat open, was shooing the goats into a nearby empty pig sty. That took some doing because Aunt~~ie~~ Beth, said that they had a mind of their own, about five or six minutes later, the task was accomplished and poor old Bob was let out and he looked sheepi accompanying uncle Tsd to the house.Over tea and home made pork pie, followed by Ivy's fresh baked apple and raspberry tart, things looked a little rosier and we thanked them for their hospitality then it was time to go . Bob shook me a little when he asked my aunt and uncle if he could visit again soon, they both answered in the affirmative and Ivy blushed so right away I guessed that Bob liked what he saw, but then, Bob didnt bother about a few freckles and he was rather long legged himself. In the tram on the way home, Bob said to Josh and myself that if a girl can bake like Ivy , then she ought to be in her own shop selling the stuff. I agreed and Josh said,, yes and you could do to cultivate her charms as well eh Bob, Bob blushed and replied that Josh was jumping the gun a bit but yes why not, she was a pretty girl and he was going to ask her out when he went there again, and why not ,said I ,, provided she says yes and my Aunt and Uncle dont object , actually, I think that you will make a good couple but dont try to be bossy with her,, she gets enough of that at home. The tram rumbled to a stop at our ~~termini~~ terminus, we got off and the conversation was changed until we got to our street then Bob said,, listen fellas, if you dont mind, please keep it to ourselves for now and we'll see how it goes eh, we both nodded and that was the end of our conversation for the night,. I caught up with Josh the next morning going to work, he had forgotten to tell me that his firm (the one he worked for), had got the plumbing contract to supply four houses on the site that I was working on, are you putting baths in as well I asked , thats right he replied, and if the job is good then we might get some more, thats fine I said,, Off he went when we reached the site, I'll see you at dinner time I shouted after him, he waved and went round a corner towards some houses that were already roofed . At dinner time (mid Day) Josh and I met and sat outside in the sun to have our sandwiches, we swapped ~~one~~ I took one of his cheese and onion, ~~AND~~ I gave him one of my German sausage, I shared my billy can of hot tea with him because otherwise, it would have meant Josh scrounging some hot water from somewhere else and by the time he had brewed up, the starting whistle would have gone. We talked of Bob and wished him well ,, then I asked Josh about finding a decent girl, he told me what his dad said to him about the subject, If you want a good girl, the girls who are in service are the best house keepers and if they can cook, thats a bonus, but if you find one willing to wash your vest and socks, then your on a winner. Now how many lasses are there round here to fit that bill I said, well, what about farm lasses,, thats alright except then it'll mean a lot of travelling Josh answered ~~AY~~ but she might be worth it I said, we'll go scouting and have a good squint . The whistle went so off we went each to his own. Finishing time came round I went to pick Josh up but he had to work on to get a job done , the corporation was going to connect the water supply up and put the stop cocks in and the fire stand pipe connections down ready, so ,one part of the plumbing job had to be ready.

On my way home, I bumped into Tony Hood, an old school mate, he was round our way looking for Bob. Misses Heap from the shop had told him to wait for me because I would be on my way home from work and I could find him or take him to see Bob at his house. I told him that after I had taken my bag home and seen my Mum, I would take him. I nipped into our house, dumped my bag, told Mum what I was about, and showed Tony where Bob lived. I told Bob I would see him later then returned home to wash off and get my tea. When I went to Bob's later, Tony had just left and Bob was having his tea, he asked me in to wait while he finished then, explained Tony's visit. It turned out that Tony had got a job at the new shop just opened in Vat street, that being the next street but a fair way from where he lived, he decided to move. He found a house for rent near to the shop and was going to move in the next week. He (Tony) wanted it decorated and painted inside and out because he was getting married in a month and he wanted it ready for then but he might as well move in quick and get cracking, instead of travelling every day. Bob then asked if me and Josh could help, I told him I would help but it would be better if he asked Josh himself. Josh knocked at eight o'clock and I went and let him in, Bob asked him about the job and Josh nodded then said that if he had to work overtime, then that came first, and if Tony needed any plumbing doing, he would do it at the right price. Bob had the necessary gear, ladders, brushes, and so on and, provided Tony gave him a key to the house, he would start weekend. Friday night, we started, Tony was working late in the shop, we let ourselves in and the first thing, Josh checked the water taps and pipes, he found a couple of bursts and knocked them up as a temporary measure, Lead pipes are easy to knock up but they still needed mending properly later. After that, he checked the gas pipes with some very soapy water, no bubbles appeared so the gas was turned on for lighting, we went prepared with a new gas mantle from Misses Heaps. Bob was busy scraping the walls and I got a fire going and found some old wood and a few cinders in the back yard. The chimney wanted sweeping so we let the fire die out and made a mental note to take our draining rods and a brush top the next time we went. Tony came in later and was pleased we were there, he had some fish and chips with him, they smelled good, so after he had eaten them, I gave him one and six and sent him to buy us some. When he came back, Bob asked him what colour scheme he wanted and about what kind of paper for the walls, then he advised him to have the ceiling papered and Josh reminded him to get a new toilet board, I told him that we would sweep his chimney before we started painting or papering, because of the mess it might make and he agreed. The subject of his fiancée was brought up by Tony himself but he needn't have bothered, A knock on the door and she was there, we all looked at her, there was no need for introductions, we knew her very well, she happened to be Sargent Butler's daughter and after a peck on the cheek for Tony, she smiled and said, I hope you don't mind lads, it was me who asked for you to help out, I knew you would, I wanted a proper job doing here seeing I'm going to live here and I know that when it's finished, it'll be like a little palace. Thankyou lads for helping, The moneys no object, we've been saving up. Josh said, Well Dora, if I'd have known it was you, I'd have brought some new taps and put them on for you, anyway I'll buy some from work, wholesale, and put them on for you as a

Wedding gift. Thats smashing ,, Tony said,, and while were at it,, would it be possible to make that back room upstairs into a bathroom,, I know Dora wants one and it will be paid for Isnt that right Dora,, Tony asked her,, Oh,, luxury, Dora smiled,, Josh said that he would ask at work about it and get plans and permission, if they, in turn, asked their landlord and got it in writing.. They both laughed at that ,, Dora beamed and said,, thats easy,, cos my dads the landlord,, he owns three houses in this street.. He got left some money from old Ben butler, the fellow that used to come round with his horse and cart, selling cleaning stuff like soft soap, Jayes fluid,, donkey stones you know the stuff,, oh Eye chipped in Bob,, I once got some sugar soap off him and a pumice stone,, as a matter of fact, Im still using the stone,, Ill be using it here as well but I must say,, the old chap must have made a bob or two then. Oh yes, Dora said,, he didnt drink or smoke or chew,, but he had a bad stomach,, he was ^{for} never taking Bi carb,, and he couldnt Half Helch,, did you know that he was my dads uncle ,, Well now, I interjected,, isnt it a small world,, Dora said, you lot are the salt of the earth,, thats why he let me ask you to do this for us.. By the way Tony,, Josh grinned, you owe me Two big stackies,, ^(For MARBLES) and an iron bobber,, the last time we played at school, I beat you and you never paid up. WE all laughed at that, Dora said, would the three of you settle for an invite to the wedding, and not just at night, the whole she bang,, Josh said jokingly,, I thought you'd never ask but youve got yourself a deal, right lads, right we chorused . The work went smoothly and rapidly,, Josh got permission to install a bath in the back room but had to have another plumber with him because of the work involved,, there was the fire back to take out to make room for a boiler,, a cistern to install,, pipes to fit and lag as a precaution against frost ,and while all this was going on, we swept the chimney,, and decorated the upstairs ,, made sure the windows were alright, painted the bannister and skirtingboard on the stairs then papered the walls on the stairway, one or two brass stair rods were missing so Dora, bought a dozen new ones . One night, Dora surprised us by bringing a gramophone and some records on the back of her byke,, she stood it on a box and stuck a handle in a hole in the side then turned it untill it wouldnt turn any more. A record was placed on the revolving part then a small needle about half an inch long was incerted into the side of a watch shaped thing with a type of ear trumpet sticking out. A little lever was pushed foward on the machine,, and the record started to rotate,, then the needle was put gently on to the edge of the record a scratchy sound emerged then,, music burst forth,, quite a pleasant sound really,, this sound continued as the needle worked its way to the centre of the record then it stopped. It had also wound down so that it had to be re wound for every record, there were two side for each racord , Dora had brought five records so that there were Ten tunes in all we all thought it a mafvelous contraption and it was kept going all the time we were there. Of course the work had to go on , we kept at it every night after work, and at weekends untill the whole house was complete d in side. Josh and his mate , a chap called Roy put the bath in, and the hot water system in with new pipes, the lot, Dora, wanted to try the bath so she lit a fire , got some coal, (delivered that afternoon,) and waited It wasnt long before we heard rumblings and noises comming from the pipes ,, thats alright

Josh said, its the air in the pipes , it ll clear. He went to the back kitchen sink and turned on the hot water tap, after a bit of gurgling and splutting,, the water came gushing t out nice and hot. He went all round and checked everything,, found it working to his satisfac tion,, and gave Tony the bill for the job completed. Tony showd it to Dora who said, are yousure thats the right price, why , asked Josh, only that it s not as much as we reckoned,, Tony replied, Oh, the job was cost price,, but if I could give Roy a couple of quid, he ll be more than happy. Tony paid Roy his couple of pounds there and then, Roy,, after thanking them both, was as happy as a dog with two tails and went out whistling That leaves the front to be done, Bob said,, but I'm stuck for a ladder. Ill mention it to Joe Reed, himas mends gutters,, he owes me one, I built his backyard wall up for him I said, but well only get it Saturday afternoon and Sunday and it will have to be back in his yard on Sunday night. Right Bob said, thatll do me fine, I only want it to get the t top part done, Saturday cleaning the gutter and stuff, and flat coating,, Sunday morning finishing it off, then I can use my own shorter ladders for the rest. Joe obliged and the long ladder ^{was} used,, Once again the work went smoothly,, Bob was satisfied with it and when the job was all finished,, we handed the key back to Tony,, told him we would settle up anothe dsy, and left him to his house and putting furniture in. Sargent Butler went round to inspect the property a few days later, what he saw, delighted him, he called round to Josh's House to talk about lodge matters. to Josh's dad and mentioned about the job to him. He said that anytime we wanted, he had some jobs he wanted doing at our liesure and he would see us right financialy,, he was in no hurry like our last job,, but if we did them Half as good, as that job he would be quite happy. Josh thanked him and said He would see him at his daughters wedding the next weekend, sargent Butler was smiling as he said ,, and dont forget to bring those twomates of yours along,, I owe the three of you and I wont forget. The Wedding was at ST Judes, and the bride wore white. Walking down the aisle on the arm of sargent Butler, her father, she saw us and gave us a fleeting smile,, Tony fidgeted and the best man, Andrew Pringle, kept moving his feet from side to side just slightly, untill the service began. During the service, the congregation ^{SANG} two hymns, O Worship The King, and Jesu Lover Of MY Soul,, and after the ceremony the photographs, and then the bride and groom ^{got} into the waiting landau , but not before the bride had kissed the local chimneysweep, it being an old tradition from way back,, then on to the Oddfellows Hall in town for the wedding breakfast. The landau took the happy couple for a ride round the ^{ed} town before arriving at the Oddfellows Hall so that all invited guests were in their allotted places round the tables, to our surprise, we were only four from the brides father , in fact, next to Josh's dad. When the couple entered the room , as they walked to the head of the table, everyone clapped to the time of their walk untill they reached the table. We had a hearty meal, well served and on hot plates as well,, then the toast and one or two more after that. Speeches were given with a little mirth thrown in and a few messages were read out, then the curtains parted and on the stage was the most gorgeous three tier wedding cake I have ever seen, compliments of ^{the} new shop where Tony worked, There was a recess of about one hour in ~~which~~ which the bar stayed open and one or two of sargent Butlers men imbibed but only under his watchful eye, then everybody formally

Met the bride and groom, when it came to our turn, she kissed us all and thanked us for attending, and we wished her every happiness and told her that she knew where to find us anytime she needed us, and the same went for Tony, she thanked us again and moved on.

The dancing started with the bride and groom first then sargent Butler with Josh's mum and his dad with misses Butler, after that quite a number joined in. The dancing halted for about ten minutes later so that we could see the couple off on their honeymoon into the landau, home to change, then the railway station and away to Scotland for a week. Sargent Butler came over to us and asked us to join him at his table, Josh looked over and spotted his mum and dad, reluctantly, he came with us and after a word in his mother's ear, she smiled and nodded then Josh sat down next to her. Sargent Butler didn't beat about the bush, he asked us outright, now lads, how much is the damage, there's the paint, paper, bits and pieces, and your time, added all up, I think that ten pounds a piece should cover it eh, Josh and Bob expected six pounds each with me asking for two but he insisted and he was genuinely quite pleased to pay it. We thanked him and told him that we were glad to do it and his other offer would not be turned down, but we would wait a little while first and have a rest. Yes, he said well the jobs are always there and start when you're ready there's no need to tell me when you want to start, all I want to know is when you finish one house and start on another. If you can't find me and you have a problem, see my Dora and she'll see I get to know, alright lads, off you go and enjoy yourselves. We thanked him and moved off, On our own, I insisted that they got two pounds each from me I made them take the money, especially Bob, because he had put the money up for the painting. They both thanked me and said it called for another drink, so, three shandies were bought, (we thought it sensible) and the night was young, also, Josh's parents inhibited his normal style he felt that he was a child again in front of them and it wasn't going down too well. I approached the sargent and Josh's parents and asked to be excused we were leaving, us being a bit tired, and we wanted some fresh air, they said not to worry, they understood and why, and look after Josh for them, I promised, I went back to my mates told them the news and out we went. Josh breathed a sigh of relief and remarked that he felt as if he was under their feet and didn't want to spoil their night and he was sure that they in turn didn't want to spoil his, feeling embarrassed was an uncomfortable feeling. He loved his parents and he knew they would do anything for him but young men going social with mums and dads was just not his cup of tea. We walked slowly homewards it would be about nine o'clock and as we passed a pub doorway, we saw two little urchins set in ~~the doorway~~, they looked starved and were wearing only a short vest each, nothing else, Bob stopped, crouched down by them and asked them where their mummy was, he knew of course, he picked one up and told Josh to get the other, Josh did, good grief he said, how much do you think they weigh, feathers man just feathers, Bob was on a campaign now, he said, somebody's going to sit up for this, let's get them to the police station and complain. We did, when we got them to the station, the sargent said that he would see to it that they got a hot drink and a bite to eat, and let them sleep a bit till their mother turned up, then he would charge her with child neglect and frighten her, and if she laid a finger on them, well molesting a child was a serious offence.

ivy

Bob thought it about time he visited cousin ~~and~~ and he told me so, I agreed with him and told him to go on his own, Josh and I might cramp his style so it would be better if he went alone but not to forget to give them my regards and I'll see them soon. Bob promised, he set off on his byke on the following Saturday morning just before dinner time,, the ride would take him just over an hour. Josh and I went to the local football match and saw a good game played to a draw,, just after half time,, a man came round the ground selling razor blades,, another with papers and shouting,, All the winners and half time scores,, people were buying them to look at the racing results and to find out how other teams were getting on,, another fellow came round selling cough tablets in bags and he used to throw the bags right to the person in the crowd buying them no matter how far back the person was and that person somehow always caught them. After the match, We had our tea at Joshs house then we wandered round the market for a while then did a spot of window shopping to pass the time a bit , later we went into a pub ordered a pint each of home brewed then sat down and joined in the sing song. we enjoyed ourselves and on the way home enjoyed some fish and chips eaten out of the paper. I said goodnight to Josh and went home,, my parents were not at home so I wrote a note telling them that I was in bed,, and I had put the Kettle on the hob for them. The next morning, I was awakened by the church lads brigabe marching round,, their bugles sounded a bit off but the drums were keeping the beat all together so that was something. As I was dressing, the Salvation army band paraded past with their flag flying in the breeze and the tamborines trying to outdo the band, they have a pretty good band as a matter of fact,, and when they are engaged to play at functions like garden parties or parading with some church aniversary round the parish, they can play a lively march or two. As they passed by, the two uniformed ladies street collecting, knocked on our door and received the usual three pennies and off they went,, still knocking on every door. Josh came down and had a pint pot of sargent major with me , I told Mum that I would be back for my Sunday dinner , Josh told my mum that he would be expected home as well otherwise,, my mum would have put a place out for him. Just as we were going out of the door,, dad called,, Peter, I answered,, he said,, take a big jug and go and see Robin at my local,, go to the outdoor sales,, he'll fill it for you,, and you two can have one tellhim I'll be down tonight and I'll pay him thenand I want that jug full when you get back,, right dad I said. I went into the back kitchen and got two jugs,, a large one and one a bit smaller then I joined Josh on the step,, and we strolled to the local. Robin was just opening up,, he asked us what we wanted,, I explained,, he understood because I had done the errand so many times on Sundays. He said , the first ones on the house, then filled two half glasses, we thanked Robin and drank his health, when the glasses were emptied, I said, we'll have two more Robin please, Dads paying when he comes in tonight. The glasses were refilled and we took our time drinking them,, after about three quarters of an hour I said to Josh, I'd best be getting back,, I'll see you about Two or just after,, Josh nodded and I nodded to Robin , he went through the bar to the outdoor department and came back with my jugs well over half full,, now, I could take them home without spilling a drop and Dad would be happy,, and there was enough for Mum as well.

Our Sunday dinner was nearly always , Roast Beef, Yorkshire pud, Roast potatoes,, boiled Potatoes,, and a couple of veg ,with gravy,, then there was pudding , Jam Sponge and custard or something similar. After my dinner,, I waited about ten minutes, then I had a pint of tea, I liked my brew. I made it a rule to let Mum sit down after dinner,, I cleared the table, then did the washing up and dried the pots as well,, that was my good deed for Sunday and I know that Mum appreciated it. It was just gone five past two when I was ready to meet my mates and go for a stroll on the park and weigh up the talent, I met them coming up the street and I looked at Bob and said, Well, how did your date go,, Bob smiled and said, better than I expected,, First I stayed for tea, then I plucked up enough^h courage to ask her parents if I could take her out,, they said yes but be back before midnight,, we went to the film show in town and had fish and chips after in a cafe. I've got permission to see her again and she said that she s looking foward to it. Nice work Bob I said, but remember what I said about bossing her,, she wont like that. Bob nodded and said, no dont worry,, I dont want to loose her,, dam it,, I've only just met the girl. We ambled on passing misses Parry's house, as usual, she was sat in her doorway on a stool,, smoking a clay pipe,, a wollen shawl round her,, and her black and white cat was perched on her shoulders. As we passed,, we said , owdo and she smiled, pulled her pipe out and waved it at us, we passed on. We entered the park near the river . Josh decided to sit on the grass, there was a notice that said Keep off the grass, Bob pointed it out to him so he got up and said, that wasnt there before was it , I said, well, I neversaw it before, it must have just been put there, so whats special about this grass asked Josh, I suppose there's some reason , we walked a little further on and came to a bench, it was vacent, so, we sat down. Bob spoke of the forthcoming Co-Op field day,, all the food and coffee was free and there would be games and prizes to be won and other free entertainment,, he wondered wether he should ask Ivy to go with him. I told him that I could arrange it that my aunt and uncle could come to our house for tea, they couldnt stay long in any case because they had to feed their stock so, he would be free with Ivy,, all afternoon and evening,, Bob agreed with me and said it would be just the job,, if it worked. I replied that dad would like that,, him and aunty Beth and Mum always had a good laugh when they were to gether and knowing aunty Beth,, an opportunity like that would be jumped at. Josh got up and yawned,, bending his arms over his ^{head} and stretching,, he said,, I must find some talent for then, I've got my eye on one of the nurses I met at the hospital when I was working there last week, shes a smasher, now it all depends what shift she 's working,, I'll ask her tomorrow when I go I've a job to finish off. If the answeres yes,, that leaves you Pete, I replied that I would be with someone that day and silently prayed that I would be. We strolled on and as we passed a couple of women,, mother and daughter,, I recognised the daughter as the one who served me regularly in the chipy. I said hello,, to her, is this your sister, well,, it works every time,, her mother smiled,, hello young man she said,, this is my daughter Sarah, and your name is ,, Peter I said,, but I still think you look like sisters, the mother was really lapping it up,, no she said no , I am her mother,, the daughter Sarah said he comes in the shop Mum,, he's one of our regulars,, yes, she said, thats right,, now

g Remember, Fish chips and mushy peas Mondays,,

am I right, a bricklayer by trade I understand. I said that I was, Sarah's mother asked me to walk with them a little, she wanted to talk to me, I obliged. It turned out that she wanted the back wall of the shop highering so as to give them more privacy, I explained that first of all, the council must decide that and plans must be submitted before an answer can be given in view of the houses at the back, however, I would see into it for her and let her know as soon as I could. Josh and Bob had walked on ahead when they saw that I was in conversation with the two ladies,, so I excused myself, said cheerio and stepped out to catch up with them. There was a definite spring in my step as I joined them and before they could say anything, I said to them, thats my date fellas,, I hope you approve,, they were dumbstruck. Sarah is a lovely girl, good natured and kind, I know that, I have cause to remember very well. A friend of mine who worked in the town-hall, sorted the job out for me,, it took three weeks,, then he came to me with the necessary permission and so, I informed Sarah's mother who asked me to do the job as soon as it was convenient, that was what I was waiting for. I told my foreman at work who said it would be alright in my own time,, but he would supply the bricks and mortar and I would pay a nominal fee for them so that his books would ^{be kept} ~~keep~~ in order. It only took me a couple of hours,, so the following night,, I pointed the rest of the wall. The bill for the bricks and mortar,, I gave to Sarah's mother, when she asked me about the rest I asked her to forget it but she insisted that I took a couple of pounds for myself. I took a deep breath then I said,, that I would accept the money provided I could spend it on Sarah on a night out, thats iff Sarah would like to,, she smiled and said,, why dont you ask her yourself,, your big enough,, I thanked her and went to Sarah who was getting ready to open the shop, I asked her point blank,, and her reaction was one of happiness, I thought you'd never ask but yes please, I would love to she answered. Her mother came into the shop to unlock the door,, she was smiling Well Sarah she said,, will you or wont you oh yes ~~Mummy~~ I'll be happy to but what about helping in the shop,, I spoke up then and said,, on your half day will be fine, but maybe Saturday afternoon first, then a night out on your half day, how does that sound, thats better still she said then I dont need to leave ~~mummy~~ on her own in the shop. After a few weeks, I told my parents about my feelings towards Sarah,, they both knew the shop and Sarah,, and I was instructed to bring her to tea the next Sunday, I mentioned about Sara's mum being left on her own so Dad said, bring her as well it will be nice that for your mum they can have a good natter. Sarah and her mum came on the Sunday,, we had a good tea,, Mum used her best china and silver tea pot,, and I noticed that my parents eyed them up and was very pleased with what they saw. Sarah insisted that she and I do the washing up so that our parents could talk together for a while,, that finished,, I said that we might go out somewhere to which Sarah's mum said she would get off home,, nonsense my mum answered,, stay here and keep me company until they get back then Peter can see you both home after you've had some supper. Thankyou,, that will be nice Sarah's mum said,, Dad remarked that he was going to his local and wait for him to get back, he would be an hour or so .. Sarah and I went out for a while and talked, just the usual stuff, like, what did she think of my parents,, and what could she tell me about her mother's reactions. The answer to both questions was that she wished that she had met them socially sooner, yes she liked them both and told me I was a very lucky man. She could tell that her mother was enjoying the visit and would be looking forward to my parents visiting her soon.

We got back just as dad was opening the front door, we walked into the parlour together, I could see that Dad was in high spirits, not tipsy, just a couple of degrees under so that meant, a bit of fun or a game or two of cards or dominoes, I could hold my own at these games because I had played with the best of them at work so I was quite happy, now Mum was taught by my Dad so she ^{knew} ~~was~~ to play, It surprised me to learn that Sarah and her Mum often played together at whist or domino drives making it unnecessary to teach them the games. Dad said, Mum you pick the game Mum replied everybody happy with dominoes, we all answered yes, so, out they came. they a good set made of Ivory, and my Dad was proud of them. Sarah won the first game, my Mum the second, then, I took over and won the rest. Its a good thing that Dad and Sarah's Mum were good losers anyhow, we only played for a bit of fun then Mum said, come on supper time, and asked Sarah's Mum to help her make a few sandwiches which we tucked into, Dad insisting on his pint pot of tea not the small cup he had at tea time. A couple of weeks later, Mum was laid low with influenza, Dad was upset, but Sarah's Mum took over the cooking and cleaning Sarah herself, did our washing and ironing so Dad and I were very grateful and we bought them each a Fur Hand muff, and a big bunch of flowers with Mum's blessing. They both came and went when they pleased, but never interfered when Mum was busy cooking or anything like that, they both knew that two women in a kitchen did not work, so before they did anything, they always asked Mum first, that kept their friendship and they grew to like each other immensely. Dad went to the shop one night, as he was ordering fish and chips for Mum and himself, (he would always wait his turn and pay like other customers) a couple of youths entered, they had been smelling the barmaid's apron, they wanted serving right away, Dad said now lads, behave yourselves and wait your turn, they both laughed at Dad, and tried to push him out of the way, Sarah's Mum said come on lads behave or get out, they called her an indecent name just as I walked in. I heard it and at the same time my Dad picked them both up, shook them and said apologise you scum or I'll tan you both, they kicked Dad and that did it, he went red, picked them both up again took them outside, put one lad on the floor in the road put his foot on him to hold him, ripped the other lad's pants down and gave him four clouts with the flat of his hand dropped him, picked up the other lad, and did the same with him, stood them up and marched them back into the shop and shouted, now, will you apologise and loud enough for the whole shop to hear, they did, then Dad said, if I catch you round here again, you'll be sorry and that's only a taste of what's in store, now, git. Off they scampered like a couple of rabbits. To Sarah's Mum he said, any more, just send for me, he nodded to me, then said goodnight and walked off home. Sarah's Mum, didn't know what to say for a minute, then she said to me, thank god for your Dad Peter, but my, isn't he strong. All I said was, a blacksmith has to be, but doesn't it come in handy sometimes, Yes she said, and I'm grateful, will you thank him for me, Now I said that I can't because your both coming to supper tomorrow night and you can thank him yourself then, Oh yes she said, I had forgotten about that anyway, go through, I'm just serving these two girls then that's it, I've sold out. I went through, Sarah was busy making their supper and expected me so that I could eat with them, she gave me a kiss and whispered

I do love you Peter,, and I love you Sarah,, I said. Her Mum came in a few minutes later,, whats for supper Sarah,, she asked,, Will cold ham and pickles do or cheese or would you prefer faggots in onion gravy,, it wont take more than a few minutes. Sarah's Mum picked the faggots in gravy,, right said Sarah,, I'll just pop them in the oven,, stoke the fire up a bit then it'll be about ten minutes,, just then, the grandfather clock in the passageway,, chimed ,a quarter to midnight. Sarah's Mum looked at me and said,, Peter,We're going away for three days next week,, we're going to my mother's,, she lives in Bristol,, keep an eye on the shop for us will you please while we're away,, certainly I said,, I Hope your Mothers alright,, I do'nt know, thats the trouble,, we've not heard from her for a considerable lenth of time, and thats not like her,, anyway we'll find out when we get there,,she replied. Sarah looked crestfallen,, I knew then that ~~she~~ it was news to her^{too},I said,Sarah,, dont fret yourself,, remember,, absence makes the heart grow fonder and all that,oh,, she gave me a wry smile and her Mother said,, Sarah darling,, I wouldnt go but you know how it is with your grandma,, and dont forget, she's nearly ninety,, Yes Mumy she said,, I'm sorry,, but it will be such a wrench being away from Peter. This made me feel a little embarrassed. I told her that I could be at misses Heaps shop for quarter past five every night if she cared to telephone then,, oh no Peter ,Sarah's mum said,, use ours,, as a matter of fact,, I'll give you a number to ring,, you might be a while getting through but if you wait,, you will,, she wrote a number on a writing pad and said, I'll leave it here by the phone and in any case,, Sarah will ring you,, theres no doubt about that is there darling,, no Mumy,, none whatever,, I promise Peter, she said. After supper, I stayed a little longer, then reluctantly,, I kissed Sarah goodnight and left. The night before Sarah and her mother left for Bristol, Sarah's mother gave me a key to the shop,, on the shop window, she put a big notice saying that the shop would be closed for three days. Sarah and I lingered a little longer than usual that night and I had to remember my work the following day so that I did'nt become too passionste,, eventually,, I said goodnight and went home. After I had eaten my tea,, the following night,, I told my parents what was happening, so that they knew, and if my mates came round,, would they send them to the chipy,, I would be in. I just arrived in the shop when the phone rang,, it was Sarah, after exchanging greetings,, she told me that her Granny had had a stroke,, just a mild one so that she couldnt write to them and it was a good thing that they went . Her Mum was alright and managing but somehow,,someone would have to stop and look after her Granny,, I told her that together we would work something out and not to worry. Bob and Josh Knocked on the door,, I let them in. They both started talking at once,, woa, hold it I said, now them whose ^{first}, Josh started you know that nurse I've been dating Pete,, he said,, I have met her once ^{I said} ~~with you~~ when we went to that open day at the hospital,, well, said ^{Josh} ~~both~~, she's passed her exam,, now she's going in for another then she can get to ward sister and thats more money,, very good I said, is there something else,, not just now he answered,, Bob looked sheepish at me and said,, I've thought of getting engaged to Ivy,, I'not sure but you know how it is,, I might have to get weedi. it just happened Pete,, one of those things. I told Bob that I hope it didnt spoil our friendship and he seemed relieved,, will you be having a party then I asked,, I might stand a drink or two but, if I'm getting married,, I'll skip it and wait till the wedding,,he said.

It was my turn to speak, both lads knew me well enough to know that I had something to tell them, Josh said, well spit it out then. Pete, is Sarah preggy or something, oh no, I said nothing like that, its just that she's had to go to Bristol with her mum, her granny's had a mild stroke but they're supposed to be back in two more days but one of them will have to stay on to look after the old dear, she can't be left to fend for herself. No problem said Bob, Ivy will stay and help out, I know it, I'm sure that your aunt will let her, and I can nip in and peel a few spuds, I thanked Bob and said I would ask my parents the best way of ~~go~~ ^{going} about the situation. Josh asked if he could help in any way, I suggested that we all come in our working togs the following night and give the place a going over. Bob was delighted with the idea, it would occupy his mind and take it off his little problem, Josh said that he didn't like cleaning but he would check over the chip range and make sure that everything was working well, that was fine by me so we all agreed to start on it the next night. I locked the door after they had gone and started cleaning the chip range. It was very greasy so I lit a fire and got the water heated up in the boiler attached to the fire, while I was waiting for it to warm up, I nipped home and explained the whole lot of news to my parents, my Dad said to Mum, can you find time at dinner to help out, we can have what there is going at tea time and I'll nip over, buy a pie or something and have a pint at dinner while your busy like that, anyway, they're nice people, look what they did when you were badly, of course your right Dad Mum said, I'll help out as much as I can. That was fixed then so I was cheered up a bit and after that, and I went back to the shop to do some cleaning. I had just taken a pan so that I could scoop some hot water from the boiler when the telephone rang again, Sarah's Mum was on the line, she asked me if I could help out at night just until her mother was better, or something could be arranged. She said that Sarah would be returning the day after tomorrow, would it be possible to pick her up at the station at half past six and take her home, I replied that she could sleep at our house in my room and I would sleep at Josh's for the time being, I used to sleep there sometimes when I was younger so that was no problem, and Josh's mum was one who always welcomed me and my Mum would look after ^{SARAH} her. Are you sure that that will be alright, Sarah's Mum asked, I told her that everything was fixed up, I have already spoken to my parents about it and she will be getting plenty of help, my cousin Ivy and my Mum will help her out and Bob will be here peeling potatoes so there's no need to worry, Dad will keep his eye on things for you so I'll be there at the station and pick her up, Sarah's mum rang off then and I went back and got on with some cleaning. I packed in at a quarter to ten and went home so that I could have a word with my parents before they went to bed. Mum was banking the fire up prior to ~~going~~ going upstairs, Dad was just about to light the candle but put it down when he saw me, I explained about the phone call I had from Sarah's Mum, and my Mum and Dad said that it would be best if I slept at Josh's when Sarah came but I must eat at home, Josh's Mum had enough on as it was, that was alright by me. Things have a habit of evening themselves out in the end and Josh would welcome me and his parents were always glad to have me anytime. The lads turned up the following night and got cracking, the chip range was spotless, Josh had checked it over as well, a little bit of work had to be done

To the flue,, he soon put that right but it meant that I had to do a bit more cleaning up after him. Bob had cleaned the ceiling and the walls,, the counter was spotless and the saltpots and winagar bottles cleaned and refilled. We found a new roll of white print paper so we left it ready to be cut into handy pieces,, Ivy could do that for starters when she arrived,, the door,, window and floor still had to be done but it could wait until everybody had gone, then I would clean them. I asked Josh to nip on his byke for something to eat, he said not because his Mum was coming with a dish of hot pot with a crust on and I would have to find some plates and spoons,, I asked what it was all about,, He said,, wait and see. The telephone rang,, Josh grabbed it off the hook and said,, Hello, this is Josh here, who's that,, eh, you'll have to speak up I can't hear you,, Oh he said,, ang om,, al pur im om,, Josh winked at me and whispered,, its Sarah,, I took hold of the phone and said Pete here, yes,, Sarah laughed then said hello darling,, Josh having fun as usual,, yes love I answered,, then I told her what we had done and were going to do and I asked her where the plates were, she giggled and said, I can't wait to jump into your bed that rather startled me,, but she said,, no, no,, then laughed I didn't mean it like that Peter,, I mean knowing I'm not alone in the house,, I'll be able to sleep at night and not be scared,, anyway Peter darling,, you'll be waiting for me wont you,, I do miss you,, yes my love and I miss you too,, I'll see you tomorrow then sweetheart bye now bye darling. I put the phone down and went to get some plates,, when I returned,, Josh's Mum was in with a large bisin of hotpot,, it looked delicious so I said,, where's the pickles Josh,, Josh smiled and said,, coming now,, he clapped his hands and his girlfriend appeared,, she came in with Josh's Mum and had hidden behind the counter,, in her hands she had a large jar of pickles, she was smiling,, she put the pickles down on the counter and held out her hand,, I'm Irene Bradley she said,, I'm a nurse at the hospital,, I took her hand then said,, hello, I'm Peter I said I'm very pleased to meet you,, Peter who she said,, Peter Nelson I said,, I'm a bricklayer and I'm one of Josh's friends I said looking at Josh. He smiled turned to Bob and said,, you've met our Bob of course he and Pete are my busom pals. In trodutions over,, Josh's mum said, come on now, dont let this get cold, we all just plonked our selves down anywhere and tucked in. Josh's Mum joined us,, we aught to have got a knife to cut the pastry but spoons did the job. while we were eating, Irene spoke about all the friendly people hereabouts and Josh said,, its easy when its practiced all your life,, you'll find that out as soon as you come here,, its the only thing you haven't to pay for,, well,, nearly. We finished the hotpot and thanked Josh's mum,, she in turn got up and said,, well I must say,, this place is lowely and clean, Now our Joshua,, dont keep Irene out too long,, she needs her sleep, all them hours she works,, right Mum, Josh shouted as she went through the door. Irene grimed and said,, your Mum Josh, I think she's lowely,, so am I Josh replied,, it runs in the family,, I want to tell these two about us,, Irene said,, well I wanted to but go on then,, no its alright you, you tell em Josh said. Oh dont keep us in suspenge Bob said, what is it,, Irene said,, its like this,, my parents are on their way home home from Germany, they have taken a house not very far from here in Larkhill road,, you know near the new motor car works,, well,, Mum wants it doing up ready for when they get here in six no,, seven weeks. The solicitor came to see me yesterday and

Asked me to sign some papers,, I told him to wait untill my Dad comes back because I didnt understand half off what he was talking about. Josh said,, Irene's Dad owns that toffee factory in Eden Place and he's been on business,, their other house was sold to the Arkwrights who own broadcroft mill,, so thats it. We can do some work there starting next week,, Irene said that if we need cash for stuff to do the job she'll get it for us,, but it must be done right like our last job. Bob said,, it was no worry for him because he was thinking of starting on his own anyhow,, his firm wanted him to work only four days a week for a while and he was'nt happy with that in view of circumstances that might develope,, Josh himself was quite competant for any plumbing job nowand he was eager to chance going on his own,, that left me in a bit of a fix,, I did'nt want to let the lads down but I had other fish to fry as it were,, so all I could promise was that I would give it careful thought,, apart from that I will help out when I could,, they could understand the situation and were satisfied that I would'nt let them down. Irene was quite happy with what she heard and said that Josh and Bob could go and have a look at the place as soon as she got a key from the solicitor,, possibly sometime tomorrow. By the way boys, I hope my revelations dont hinder our friendship in any way,, after all,, I am trying to make my own way in the worldand I did find it a little lonely untill Josh came along.. Bob and I reassured Irene that our friendship with Josh went too far back for anything to destroy it and if josh had a girlfriend,, then that was fine,, she was a friend of ours aswelland make no mistake about it. That right Josh! Josh said,, yes and that goes for me too. I said that I must finish cleaning the shopso that when Sarah got back tomorrow night,, everything would be nice for her and she could open up the next day.. Bob had asked Ivy and her Mum and they agreed,, and Ivy would sleep at Bob's in their spare room,, Josh said that he would bring Irene to meet Sarah and Ivy,, later inthe week when thingshad got settled, I told him that would be fine but Irene wanted to stop a little longer to help to clean up,, I told her not to bother I would manage but she insisted and stayed untill the job was completed. afterwards she said,, do you know that cleaning is good for the soul and you can work your worries away. Josh said,, Irene love, I do hope you'r not a bible thumper,, Who me,, Irene said,, good lord no,, what makes you think that,, Oh I see,, good for the soul youmean,, Dont worry Josh my dear, I'll have you singing in the chior in no time while me and your two mates are having a crafty pint at the local,, Josh smiled, he was having his leg pulledand he knew it. Well he said,, are you ready now misses mop,, yes Irene answered' goodnight all, see you all again soon,, Josh said so long lads,, see you tonorrow,, Bob said cheers,, take care, then the door shut. Bob, I said, does Auntys Ruth know about Ivy,, no, he said,, Ivy's making sure first,, then if so, I'll marry her,, if not, we'll get engaged and wait a bit,, save up a bit more, as you know I have a bob or two but I would like to start on my own and then we'll see what happens. Now Bob, I said,, what are mates for,, if you run a bit short I'm always sound for a bob or two as you well know,, we've been going to the bank together since our school days so you'll have no problem,, thanks Pete he said,, but you know me, how often do I borrow its generally the other way round,, not with you or Josh, but there's a couple in this street who owe me a few quid on the quiet and I think I've seen

The last of it. Who said anything about lending. I'm the only person who knows how much I can spare, and how many times have you said to me ,, mates are mates,, not like relations, you dont have to love them ,,but I would'nt do without mine,, no Bob I would'nt lend you a penny, I'd be very pleased to give it you though, provided of course, nobody ,,and I mean nobody else got to know about it. If you had to get married, I could be a silent partner if you preferred it that way but I'll leave it to you,, now, lets leave it at that for now.. Bob was silent for a moment then he said,, I don't know what to say Pete,, except thanks pal.. I could see he was overwhelmed,, so I said,, what time are you bringing Ivy, he said I'll bring her tomorrow first about eight-o'clock if its alright with you,, just to introduce her to Sarah and while I'm at it ^{Pete} Bob, I think Sarah's a smashing girl. Well, I said, I love her Bob and thats all that matters to me,, oh and don't forget either way whatever is going to happen what I said before, I mean that,, not even the girls ,,right,, right Pete he said. Its time I looked up now Bob so I'll walk part way with you if you'll hang on a sec,, I'll just get the key,, I checked the fire and the windows then the back door ,,everything seemed to be in order so I joined Bob on the step then looked the premises. As I walked homeward I asked Bob if he would do me a favour,, name it Pete he said, I explained how difficult it would be to choose between Josh and myself ^{for} his best man if he decided to get married,, so ,, although I would deem it a great honour,, I would be happy if he would pick Josh,, in any case, he's the one who would liven the ~~proa~~ proceedings and I would help him out where he needed it. Bob said,, listen Pete ,, Josh got in before you so I want you to toss for it and to make it fair,, any of the three lassies can toss the coin, hows that. I thought trust Josh, I might have known he'd think of it first.. I said to Bob, yes that seems right ,, by then we had reached his house as he took his key out, I said goodnight Bob, see you and Ivy tomorrow night ,, yes goodnight mate he answered the next minute I was alone and thinking of Sarah. Walking slowly home, I met the local Bobby on his rounds, I mentioned that the chipy was empty so would he keep an eye on it for a while,, he told me that sargent Butler had told him all about it and in any case, he liked young miss Sarah and he hoped that we both would be verry happy together. I thanked him and said that when we got married, there would be two special invitations for him and sargent Butler,, that put a smile on his face but I said, it wont be for a bit yet and he replied that waiting was second nature to him I said, officer,, I think your a good man and so does the whole street,, we think a lot of you, you might get some stick now and again but on the whole, we have great respect for you, now if you'll excuse me I'm off to bed, work in the morning, so I'll say goodnight, goodnight Peter he said and walked on shining his lamp in doorways and back ginnels I reached for my key as I put a foot on the door step, the house was in darkness, as I entered the hallway,, Mum called downstairs,, Peter,, yes Mum,, have you locked up, just now Mum, why, when you come upstairs, bring us some bi carb will you and a cup of water yes Mum I answered,, I'll not be a minute.. I lit a match and put it to a taper then lit the gas lamp,, then I searched in a cupboard and found the bi carb ,, went into the back kitchen and took a cup from the draining side of the sink held it under the tap and put some water in it , the light from the kitchen was enough for me to see what

I was doing, besides, I knew where everything was so I Didn't knock anything over,, I took the things up to Mum who had lit her candle and I didnt foget the spoon I knew she would need, As I entered the room, my Dad lifted his head from the pillow and said alright son, I said, alright Dad,, Mum took the things I had brought her, thanked me then they both said me goodnight I answered and closed the door . My room felt a bit cold as I entered and lit my candle,, the window was open about six inches so I closed it , I sat on my bed,, took my shoes off ,slipped them under the bed and got undressed,, put the blankets and sheet back shook my pillow up a bit then got into bed. Sarah had given me a photograph of herself, a kind of portrait ,. I picked it up ,, looked at it then kissed it and stuck it back up on the dresser , pulled the clothes back over myself and settled down to sleep. Seven sharp the next morning, I awakened automatically,, I yawned,, stretched my arms out then I waited,, Mum would be shouting any minute for me to get up and get down stairs, Peter,, Mum shouted up from the bottom of the stairs,, head cocked on one side and a hand on the bannister rail,, Peter are you up,, yesMum I'll be down in a tick, Mum, yes,, wheres my overalls, down here son,, I've put a patch on for you,, thanks Mum, I'm comming now,, by that time I'd got dressed andwas on my way down in my stocking feet,In the kitchen, I spotted my overalls, Igrabbed them and got into them, found my boots and slipped into themthen I went into the back kitchen and swilled my hands and face,, dried myself then sat downat the table,, Dad entered then ,, morning son he said morning Dad, Mum, I said thanks for patching my overalls Mum,, eat your breakfast son she said, we had porridge,, two boiled eggs and toast therewas some marmalade as well, Dad had some, but I never bothered, while Iwas eating my last piece of toast, I pushed back my chair and faced up my working boots.. that done I drank the last of my tea and got up ,, thankyou Mum I said I'll be back at ten past five, I'm going to pick Sarah up at the station,, if you dont mind Mum,, I'll bring Sarah back here first Mum , then have my tea with her. It so happened that Bob's parents were away at that time and Mum had left word with them to tell Bob to drop in for his tea as well,, so while waiting for Sarah and I to arrive,, Bob could go home and wash and change first,, after his tea he could go and collect Ivy, and take her to the shop. Sarah and I would be there by then,, Mum said All that had been arranged because she knew me better than anybody and sheunderstood what I would say. As I was leaving our house ,misses Heapcame trotting up the street,, yoo Hooo Peter she called,, I went to meet her,, misses Heap, I said, you can run faster than me but what is it love,Peter she said ,, Sarah's comming up from Bristol and she's bringing some heavy luggage,, can you arrange for a carter to pick it up and she said take it to your house, its heavy and delicate but you must get somebody to help,, thats the message Peter I thanked misses Heap and kissed Her on her cheek,, I said, misses Heap ,,never leave the shop,, I dont know what I'd do without you and thanks again. misses Heap, beamed,, Oh Peter she said,, you are a nice man,, I must get back though,, misses Evans has just gone in and you know how noseiy she is,, and off she went trotting back to her shop. That put me in a quander,, if I ran I might catch Josh before he went to work,, some times he was late setting off. Yes thank God,, he was just leawing ,, I whistled, he knew my whistle,, he looked round I wawed motioning^g him I wanted him,, he came towards me,, what is it Pete

I would't stop you Josh but I want your help,, canyou come with me after work ,, Sarsh phoned me up this morning to say that I've to take a horse and cart and pick up some heavy ~~stuff~~ stuff she's bringing back with her,, she said as I have to get a lift so how about it,, Josh said ,, right Pete,, I'll be at your house at quarter past ,, see you I must dash,, so long Pete,, thanks Josh,, so long I called after him, he waived and hurried on to work.

My next problem was a horse and cart for this evening,, I thought about it while going to work. Who,, perhaps I would think off somebody when I was working. I was leaving my tea ^{can} in the works cabin when the whistle blew to start work,, the foreman shouted,, Peter, Mister Spenser want a word come with me,, I accompanied him to the office,, we knocked and walked in, the owner of the firm was waiting for us,, now Peter he said,, I want you to go to my house and renovate my two gate posts,, as you know,, they were built up off brick, well, my daughter has a new motor car,, one of them new Riley things,, the silly girl has knocked one ,, it wantsputting back and I want a good job doing,, now it means that you might as well point the other one while you're at it ,, make em look alike if you see what I mean Peter. Yes, I understand mister Spenser,, I said,, the foreman said,, four and a half hours should do it Peter so ,, cwd om now,, I want a good job doing, the best,, I've got the stuff ready for you and my cook knows you're coming she'll see you get you're dinner and a brew at ten so when the jobs finished,, come to the house and tell me,, I'll have a look at it ,, if its to my satisfaction you can go home, if not then you'll have to do it sll over again till it is right ,, understand,, the big boss had spoken,, yes mister Spenser I said. I went out of the office and collected my gear and the necessary tools then off I went,, I got there about ten to nine and began dismatling the gatepost right away,, at five past ten,, sure enough,, the cook,, Mildred came out with a pint off tea and a big piece off fruitcake,, I thanked her and said is he in yet,, Mildred answered yes,, he's always back for his tea, thankyou Mildred I said,, I'll just nip up and see him, I want a word. I walked to the house with her and was shown into his study,, yes peter what is it he asked,, well sir I said,, I was thinking, how about me making the gateway wider while I'm at it,, that way ,,it should'nt happen again but if you think not then I'll get back and carry on,, good idea Peter,, ~~X~~ Listen Dad,, lets go down and I'll let you know by how much. He finished drinking his tea then we went down to the job,, after a little thought,, he turned to me and said,, hm,, yes lad,, two feet further,, what do you think,, I said no sir ,, because ,, if you make it too wide,, it would mean new gates and ,, if I may say so,, you're daughter might go too fast in and out that is if you make it too easy for her,, how about ,, fifteen inches sir, thats dam good thinking young fella I know exactly what you're driving at,, yes make it fifteen and dont forget, A good job and Peter ,,yes mister spencer,, cook'll tell you when dinners ready, then off he strolled back to the house thanks mister Spenser I called he acknowledged with a wave of his hand and disappeared into the house . I got on with the job. dinner time came,, late mine ,,thanked the cook and went straight back on the job, half past three saw me doing the other gate post ,, pointing and titivating it up ,, then I was done, I cleaned up round it then went to the house and asked the boss to inspect it, he came out ,, measured up and declared that he could'nt have done a better

Job himself. he was satisfied and showed it by giving me five shillings and telling me to nip off home,, I touched my cap and thanked him then I turned and walked away. Hold it young Peterhe shouted,, Elsie can run you home ,, she 's going your way so just hang on for a minute. I waited then she came round the corner in the car which was damaged on one side where the runni ng board was that was the passenger side,, she stopped and said, You Peter ,, yes miss I said ,, well Peter, you'llll have to ride in the back behind me,, get in, I opened the rear door behind where she sat ,,threw my stuff in and jumped in. She could drive alright,, but it was a good job there was nothing coming the other way,, her steering, was a little erratic to say the least.. I was glad when we reached our street end and asked to be let down ,, she stopped the car and I got out,, I touched my cap to Her and thanked her,, she gave me a big smile and a wave and drove off. I said to myself, phew,, what a driver,, then I picked up my things and went home. The was a breeze blowing and I caught the sound of the townhall clock chiming a quarter past four as I entered our house, Mum said Hello son what brings you back so early,, I explained to Mum as she made me a pint off tea,, she said that Josh nipped in at dinner,, and had something to eat then said something about a horse and cart,, he's got one to go to the station with you he said,, can't think why though,, I explained to Mum what had transpired that morning,, then I said Mum, if you dont mind,, I'll move the Hall stand just in case it is something awkward to bring in,, good idea son she said,, Your Dad 'll be back in any case to help you so I'lll have all the tea ready for when you get here oh and Peter,, yes Mum I said while makeing for the back kitchen, I want a quiet word with you,, I turned back into the kitchen,, what is it Mum I said,, well now, she said,, whats wrong with Ivy,, your aunt Ruth's been and tells me that Ivy 's been sick every morning, you know what that means dont you,, Well Mum I said, dont you think that's between Bob and Ivy, Mum, I want you to know that Bob told me about it and asked me to say nothing because he wants to tell aunt Ruth himself and ask if he can marry her as soon as they can. Oh said Mum, well in that case, I wish them the best but if you think I should say nothing then I'll crack on I dont know as yet. I went to Mum and kissed her ,Mum I said, you re a very understanding Mum and I love you. I ll tell you this Mum, Sarah wont be pregnant when I marry her, thats a promise Mum, now afterwards , who knows, Mum smiled at that and said, Peter, in a way I'm glad that Bob's marrying Ivy, it'll be the making off her,, now go and have your wash my son and I love you too. Quarter past five on the dot,, Josh was at the door knocking, I said see you Mum and jumped on the cart beside Josh, Josh made a noise with his mouth and we moved off to the station, I checked for his lamps,, yes they were there.. As we trotted along,, I said to Josh,, I am grateful but how did ,I got no further,, I'll explain if you'll give me chance,, now listen, Irene saw me in a shop at dinner,, I was buying a pie I asked her if she wanted one she said yes,, that was why she was there, so I bought her one. I got talking and mentioned about a horse and cart I wanted for tonight,, she took me to the toffee factory and spoke to the manager, straight away he offered the loan of this ,, I have to have it back for eight and his stable man will see to it then, so we're alright,, now Irene said that any

Chance of a fish supper tomorrow night would be acceptable, and it would be a nice way to meet both girls. Why not I said, anyway, give the stableman this ten bob when you get back Josh and tell Irene, a fish supper anytime she wants one, well Josh you know that, I'm certain Sarah and Irene will be good friends and Ivy too. We arrived at the station and secured the horse to a hitching rail and waited for the train from Bristol, it was three minutes late arriving. when it pulled in, I looked for Sarah, we saw each other, she smiled and waved to me, I waved back and went to help her down from the compartment, have you got transport she asked as she threw her arms round my neck and gave me a lovely big kiss, Yes I said, as I kissed her again, I've missed you darling I said, yes I know sweetheart she said, lets get the luggage out of the van shall we, I nodded but what is it I asked, Oh You'll see she said, come on, and led me to the guard's van. I want two porters please she said, so the guard touched his hat and said, yes miss, right away miss, and hurried off to find them. In no time at all the guard brought two porters to the guard's van and said, here you are miss, thank you guard she said and gave him something, he touched his cap again and said thank you very much miss, then he entered the van with the two men and brought out a big chest put it on a trolley and went back into the van, this time, they staggered out with a long box, printed on it in big black letters were the words, with care, glass, fragile Sarah said, please do be very careful wont you, they were, they wheeled the two pieces out to the waiting Josh. Josh came forward and said, Hello Sarah, kissed her as bold as brass stepped back and said, welcome back miss Sarah. Sarah liked that and said thank you Josh, that was very nice of you, Josh blushed, now Pete you wouldnt begrudge me that would you, I smiled and said, you're a very well mannered man Josh, I like that, you deserved it. The trunk and the long heavy box were carefully placed on the wagon, Sarah felt in her purse then pulled out a ten bob note, gave it to the porters thanked them and they in turn, touched their caps and sauntered off with the trolley. Peter, Sarah said, can you hold my bag and wait for me for a short while, I want to go to the ladies room, its a long way from Bristol, of course darling, you go, off she went, it was getting dark so we lit the three lamps on the cart, the red one we hung at the back, when all was ready Sarah was back, I helped her on to the cart and sat her between Josh and I. As we rolled forward Sarah said, Josh please do be careful, dont trot the horse I'm frightened of this in this box breaking, Josh said dont worry Sarah, we'll walk, and we ambled on to our house. Dad and Bob came to the door and carefully took the large box off the cart and into our stable, Sarah said to Dad, please mister Nelson, can you open it with great care Dad said he would try, we brought the trunk in and set it in the kitchen, Mum was there and warmly welcomed Sarah, asked her to sit down and put a cup of tea in her hand, Sarah was grateful, she looked up and smiled when she heard Dad, Mum He shouted, come and look, what a beauty, Mum went and shrieked with delight, well I never she said, new er in all my life have I seen such a lovely thing, Dad came into the kitchen and said what on earth can we do with that, Sarah said, Peter, come and look, we went and when I saw what it was I stood there open mouthed, Sarah kissed me and said, my grandfather made them, this

Was his favourite, Mum asked me where I wanted it to go, Its too valueable to leave lying ~~are~~ arround so I thought ,, well Peter love,, you wont mind having it here will you,, I mean Oh I dont know how to put it ,, well,, you do love me dontyou Peter,, Sarah, Sarah Isaid,, ~~of~~ of course I'll marry you if you want me ,, but lets not rush things eh,, I kissed her ,, she said ,, I want to get married in about, three or four months Peter please, then thats settled I said, now, not a word to anyone yet,, in three weeks ,,we'll officially get engaged does that suit you,, oh yes Peter darling,, that's just right and thankyou, oh no I said ~~that~~ thankyou darling . We went back into the kitchen, Mister and misses Nelsom she said,, that is practically priceless ,, I hope you wont mind it being here,, that grandfather - clock is what I did value most apart from my mother,, now ,,I hope you dont mind but ,, Peter and you now come second after my mother so what better place to bring it to instead of it lying in storage, covered over with an old bit of rag. Dad went to Sarah and said,, ~~So~~ Sarah , come here and let me hug you ,, Mum said, Sarah,, you can live here as long as you want ,,I love you too. Sarah went over to Mum and put her arms round her and kissed her, after a big hug from Dad then, Mum said,,lets Have our tea. Bob all the while was keeping in the background,, I put my hand on his shoulder and said,, come on my mate,, after tea you can bring Ivy to the shop,, we can have our matter then,, Bob smiled and whispered,, its on ,, I said I see, well Bob, be happy, things will be alright, you'll see.

We sat down to a good tea and Bob then showed no sign of worry,, he ate a hearty meal. Sarah gave Dad the key to unlock the grandfather clock and showed him how to wind it , it struck every quarter then on the hour it belted forth , just like the town hall clock. Dad really loved it .. The washing up done, Mum took Sarah to my room and showed her where to put her ~~things~~ things, Dad and I had taken her trunk upstairs,, I left a box of matches for her by the candle and said I would buy her a new fangled lamp tomorrow,, so she could find her way upstairs or whatever. Bob had gone so when Sarah came down again, I took her to the shop,, We just opened the door and Bob and Ivy came in,, Sarah looked round and was amazed ,, the place being so spotless,, she said,, I didnt expect all this,, this is marvelous it really is,, we introduced her to Ivy who I said was my favourite cousin, then Bob said ,,we've decided to get married in four weeks. I asked her parents tonight and they agreed ,, right Ivy ,, thats right Bob,, Ivy said,, so lets celebrate this weekend shall we, Mum's putting a spread on,, so I hope you can come on Saturday,, and mind the goats, right Bob,, I'll say said Bob,, I'll buy you an engagement ring before then tho ,, Sarah said,, oh,, How nice, I like going to weddings,, Ivy said, Sarah, would you mind being a bridesmaid,, Sarah looked at her and said yes, I would like that very much well said Ivy,, you see,, I live out of town so to speak and contact with other girls of my age group is difficult so I have no what you would call close friends its a matter off not being able to get into town easy.. Sarah said,, well if you are going to help me tomorrow,, we will get to know each other better and I'm sure ,,we'll get on very well. Now, let me see,, I have a new pinny somewhere that should fit ,, I'll get it out in the morning,, can you be here at ten o'clock,, yes Ivy said and I'll do my best for you,, I wont let you down, you'll see,, well,, nice meeting you Sarah, see you tomorrow then, ta ra, ta ra Pete,, see you, so long Sarah love,, see ya Pete,, ~~I said~~ ^{Bob. Said. said} hope so Bob

When they had gone,, we locked the door, Sarah said,, lets have a cup of tea,, theres no milk Is said,, oh no she said, then she said,, I'm just going upstairs to change,, I said,, now dont Sarah, ~~said~~ because , that would be tempting fate,, so go upstairs and get your things and take them to our house,, sarah love I do want you but I mus'nt,,it would'nt be fair to ~~pe~~ you and I know that you want me but lets keep our promises to our parents if you can,, oh Peter, I do want you but your right,, anyway I will have to be helped,, I 'll admit to you now, I've never been with a man ever before,, so when we get married, will be time enough.. Sarah my darling, I've never been with a woman in that sense before so we both will learn as we go on once we are married,, Oh Peter darling, youare a dear and I love you all the more for it. Sarah was still talking as she went upstairs I stood waiting at th e bottom,, Peter she called, come up here a moement please,, I hesitated,, come on she said so I went up slowly,, in here she said,, I walked into the room,, it had that cosy look about it , what do you think she said,, nice I said very nice,, well she said,, I have no secrets Peter and you may as well know that I am just liwing for the day but I must behave myself and I promise Peter, I really do. she collected her things and put them in a case,, you can come into this room any time my love and I wont mind provided you stay as you are now a gentleman .Thankyou Sarah I said you know that tonight , my bed is yours, and I will be at Josh's,, come on, I'll take you home sweetheart,, Sarah kissed me again passionately then said, you're good for me Peter darling,, come on then lets go.. we went downstairs checked round then locked up behind us as we went out. Mum was waiting when we got in and said that I mus'nt forget to come for my breakfast in the morning and to pick up my bait tin and tea can and,,I had to come home to get changed in any case ,I said yes Mum and then I went to Sarah ,, kissed her goodnight said goodnight to Mum and went out locking the door behind me. Josh was waiting up when I knocked on the door,, Hiya Pete come in he said,, same room,, Dad and Mum's in bed want a drink or owt,, no thanks JoshI answered, he was dying to know ~~to know~~ what was in that wooden crate. I told him to try and guess,, give me a clue he said oh alright I said as I slumped down in his Dad's big high back chair,, em now let me see,, yes I said, it speaks for itself,, eh, Josh , after a second or two he said, I know,, a stuffed gorilla,, no Isaid try hard think, what do you hear when the wind's blowing this way,, Oh ,I,, em,, a,, town allclock,, he said to me,, well done I said to him now think,, got it said Josh, a grampa ticker an a big um at that eh and right Pete,, thats it I said and tomorrow you will see why sarah was so anxious about it, its so beautiful believe me, any way, tomorrow, you'll see for yourself,, Josh pursed his lips together and silently blew,, no wonder she asked us to go steady ehhe said. Josh yawned, stretched then said, I'm just going to the back yard, I'll not be a minute ang on. Josh went to relieve himself ,he came back fastening his fly buttons, after rinsing his hands under the tap, he grabbed a towel that was hung up by the kitchen sink dried his hands and came back,, Pete he said, when you go to bed, Mum told me to tell you to be careful,, she's put a mouse trap under the dressing table,, it seems we have a visitor probably come ina bag o coal or some at, I, Isaid might a done,, if I ear a click later on ,a'll fetch it in for ya tu play wi, save ya suckin yer thumb,, Josh laughed any way I'm off

~~N.P.M.~~ Pete he said and went to bed, I FOLLOWED.

Josh's Mum was up and about when I got downstairs the next morning, I wished her good morning and told her not to make me anything as Mum would be getting breakfast ready, she said right Peter, but just go and give Joshua a shake before I went, I did that and Josh sat up oh mornin Pete he said, tell Mum I'm having my tea at your house tonight, see you Pete right Josh I said see you for tea tonight then, I withdrew and went back downstairs, I passed his message on and his Mum said, that Josh, he does like liver and onions tell your Mum Pete and just mention that I'll be round about ten about her new curtains, I said I'd be back at night, and went off home. I opened the door and walked through to the kitchen, I could smell bacon, morning Mum I said, shush she said, dont waken Sarah, let her sleep on a bit, the poor lass is bound to be tired, yes Mum I replied, where's my working togs, I put them on this chair, in the oven lad, they'll be nice and warm by now, thanks Mum, I'll change in the back kitchen out of the way, you'll do no such thing Peter Nelson, if you have something your Dad has'nt, then you should be in a side show,, and whats more I 've seen you enough times naked not to bother seeing you change, so get on with it then come and have your breakfast. I changed quickly then sat down and had my breakfast. Time I was on my way Mum I said, thanks, I'll just get my bait tin and Billy can, see you tonight, oh and Josh is coming for tea, alright son, I'll be helping at the shop at dinner with Ivy, ta ra h then lad and take care. I was out of the house and on my way to work,, Tony came towards me, grinning like a cheshire cat,, hiya Pete he beamed, guess what, Dora told me last night, I'm going to be a father,, isn't that great Pete,, I congratulated him, asked him to give my love to Dora,, said that I'd drop in to see them shortly and carried on to work. The foreman met me on the site,, mornin Pete lad he smiled, mornin Boss I said,, anything wrong I asked, no he said just come to tell you that your wages have increased another five bob, what d'ya think of that then he asked, gee, thanks boss I said,, that's great, how can I thank you, he smiled and said Pete lad, just dont go tellin it about,, you've earned it lad and from now on, you'r next to me, if I'm ever off, you're in charge so today,, I'll show you the ropes, you'll get your money just the same, even if you dont lay a brick, now the first thing is, as the boss always says,, a brew first thing to collect your wits as it were, then round the site putting right whats wrong,, listening to what the men have to say,, never forget to call them by their first name and last but most important smell their breath, any body with a strong smell of drink, two chances,, either keep them on the ground,, or send them packing,, no matter how good they might be because,, your in charge and it only takes one slip then you're in trouble,, Have you got all that Pete lad,, yes boss I said. From now on,, you call me Sam, I said,, yes boss I mean Sam, he smiled at that and said come on, lets have that brew.. We both entered the hut,, the tea boy had brewed up for me as well so we sat down,, Sam opened a drawer and pulled out a large roll of paper, know what this is Pete he asked, I looked,, unrolled it then said, its a blue print of the site I said,, yes but can you understand it he asked,, of course I said, thats one thing I learned at night school, right he said. After a few more questions he was satisfied, we drank our tea and moved out,, we strolled round the site I noticed a couple of planks with wet clay and mud on them I said, Hold on Sam, I

Said, thats not right is it,, he looked, now watch he said, we stood and waited,, a chap came trundeling along from the scaffolding with an empty wheelbarrow and down the planks right over the wet clay, slithered a little then carried on, Sam said hang on, not yet, the chap eventually returned with with a pile of mortar in his barrow,, going up the plank, he slipped down a couple of feet when he wheeled onto the wet clay,, undeterred, he tried again, no, he couldnt make it, Sam said to me,, deal with it, I approached the man and said iff you clean the plank, you'll manage better,, he looked at me, Sam hid behind some bricks he watched, the mansaid,, I can't be bothered cleaning planks, sod it, I said, so you'd rather ^{WASTE} ~~waste~~ company's time trying to get over it eh, "whats it to you anyhow," I said, well I dont like to see time wasting and, more important, I dont want any unnecessary mishaps, whats more still,, when your boss isnt about, I'm in charge, now, get that cleaned off or get off the site which do you want.. The man said sorry, I didnt know,, I said, clean it off now, and never ever go on a plank like that again, if your off work,, how can you keep your family with no money coming in,, use your head man. the man said yes your quite right, I'm sorry, it wont happen again, he got a shovel cleaned the plank and I was glad to see, he put some grit on the plank.. I turned away and went towards a group of men who were argueing about the depth of some foundations they were digging. Whats the trouble here I asked,, are you in charge an Irish mawwy asked me,, if not,, be about your business I said,, when the boss is'nt here, I am in charge so whats the problem, these fellas say this trench has to be only eighteen inches,, an I say two foot six because theres no decent bed for concrete or bricks,, look for yourself mam, I said,, come with me, and we'll have a look on the plans.. Sam had followed me and still kept out of sight but as we entered the cabin, he came in and said, carry on Pete dont mind me,, the Irish man and I looked over the plans for that particular house, it was two foot six so with that, the Irishman went back and the digging went on. Sam sat down and said,, theres more in it than what people realise, isnt there Peter,, I answered in the affirmative,, then he said,, mister Spencer told me to start you on this Job and see how you got on,, I must say, I'm impressed Oh I said, Sam,, your the one who started me on at this firm,, and you taught me all I know, and I'm just doing what you showed me, and I'm very gratefull,, He came over and said, Well Peter,, im a months time,, I have to start on another site,, and I have to see that somebody competant takes over,, Now, your on a months trial and iff mister Spencer approves,, then you take over the lot here,, you'll make mistakes but if you ask advice from me or the boss,, you'll get it and we'll back you up all the way.. If you take the job as foreman Peter you'll be paid as one,, you must act as one and treat the men well be fair but not soft and watch out for any fiddling,, dont allow it, and sack anybody you catch.. You will be told by mister Spencer that you can hire or fire but be very careful, iff you think you need men hire them and when things get slack you must fire some, its not nice but that is what you 're paid for and you cant afford to be sentimental now, thats the Job, you've seen some of it and theres plenty more, up to now, I think you will make a good foreman but above all things Peter,, for God's sake, dont let it go to your head or let it get you down. Now, its your turn to have a say,, right, I said, I will probably come to you for advice from time to time and I know I'll get it, right,, iff I can make improvements will I be allowed to iff I ask mister Spencer first.

Peter he said, you dont need to get permission to improve the job or make it more ippicient just do it ,, remember,, Builders are always pressured, its a cut throat business so any labour saving dewices or new ways that come up, let me in on it so that I can benefit as well, certainly Sam, you'll be the only one though I have as a matter of fact been reading the papers that come out and when they get their act together, I'll be one jump ahead of them never fear . Well Peter ,, my job now, is to help you through this month then its all yours, do you think you can cope he asked ,, I'll give it a dam good try You can bank o n it Sam and its all thanks to you I wont let you down Sam I said,, one last word on the subject Peter lad, get yourself one of them little stiff backed books and use it for everything like a diary then, if something happens one week and it crops up agsin you're ready for itoh and keep your eye on that dammed steamwagom he's a rum blighter if ever there was one as you well know,, yes Sam you're right, and I will. We both spent the rest of the day touring round the site and making decisions and giwing advice to apprentices ,, I personally tried to memorise their first names, a difficult task because there were about thirty men on the site and I was interested to notice their reactions when they learned of my promotion because that gave me an insite as to how they would perform when I took over permanently. I asked Sam about one or two of the men,, he replied that they were good workers but a bit inclined to grumble so if they got threatened with the sack at the first inclination of bother, they would know that I brooked no argy bargy and they would soon buckle down to work. Mister Spencer walked round unexpectedly in the afternoon and spotted me showing an apprentice how to put the string line over his work and working to it,, I stayed untill he got it true and plumb then I knocked it away and made him do it again, when he did it again right, I repeated process and made him do it again but a little quicker I watched him carefully for a while then left him ,, as I turned round,, I spotted a chap mixing concrete on a board, I watched and saw that he was putting too much sand in the mix, I went up to him and told him about it he told me to p--- off he'd been mixing concrete like that,, all week I told him, no more,, then his mate came down the scaffolding and asked what the trouble was, I explained who I was and to stop work,, I was going for the boss,, well fetch him they said,, Sam came and played up, the whole weeks work had to be taken down and made good.. the two men who knew better,, were skimping the cement so t that they could pinch a bag without it being missed,, I pointed this out to Sam who sacked them on the spot,, Mister Spenzer had been watching and came up to ask what the trouble was,, Sam explained in detail and he said that it was a good thing the building inspectors were not round,, the whole site would have to have been shut down till the whole lot had been tested,, thanks Peter ,, you've prevented a big catastrophe,, keep it up lad, you're doing fine . Now I think a nightwatchman would be as well from now on, get hold of old Gawin, we've had him before and he'll come tonight ,, He has a ferocious beast of a dog,, and those two will be back I know so we'll be ready provided I giwe Gawin the tip. Old Gawin Parker liked to sit by a Brazier smoking his clay pipe and brewing up,, he could send his dog off round the site and know that any one hanging round would either move or get bitten . Sam agreed and sent the tea lad to let Gawin know.

When the boss, mister Spenser, had gone, Sam said, my word Peter, that was a close one eh, now you see how easy it is to fiddle, I'm beholden to you lad, theres not much I can teach you, if you want, he looked at his watch, hm, quarter past four, you can pack in for today I'll see you tomorrow, and tell that Dad of yours, I'm glad he brought you from school to work for us and don't forget to tell him that you're the new foreman on this site, and by the way, when this site is finished, you will still be a foreman and no doubt will be offered another one somewhere, right Sam I said, thank you, I'll get my gear and scran. As I walked off the site, the two sacked men were waiting for me, they came at me from either side, I took my lump hammer out and said, come on then, I waved the lump hammer, they both had clubs and came at me, I kicked one on his knee, he let out a yell of pain, at the same time, I warded off a blow from the other chap, it stung a bit and that made me very angry, I tipped my bag from my shoulder, it dropped to the ground then I just charged the fellow, we fell to the ground and my fist smashed into his mouth, blood spouted from him, I hit him again then I smashed a backhand on his face he groaned I got up, looked round for his mate, he was limping towards me with his club raised, I snatched the club from the man still growing on the ground and met the other man striking at his arm holding the club, I put some force behind my blow as I connected, I heard a crack, he dropped the club and yelled you've broke it, he ran off holding his arm, I turned to the other man who was just getting up off the ground, he cried out no no please no more I'm sorry, he put his hand to his face touched it then looked at the blood on his hand, I stood in front of him, grabbed the front of his shirt and shook him, I said, nobody ever puts a hand on me without being sorry now, if I ever so much as see you round here ever again, I really will thump you and next time I'll not just play with you now git and run and take your mate to hospital, his arm's broke, you're just lucky. The man ran after his mate, I took a minute to calm myself, picked up my gear and walked home, what I didn't know was that the tea boy on his way home saw the two men attack me and watched fascinated as I set about them. I got home and said nothing about it, Mum asked me why my jacket was so dirty, I said that it had been on the ground and left it at that. Mum told me that Sarah was at the shop with Ivy, and at dinner time, the place was packed. Josh came in and said, now then Pete alright, ello misses Nelson, am I a bit early, you're alright Josh lad sit yourself down, teas in the pot, help yourself, Pete, yes Mum I answered, put the big plates out, your Dad 'll be in presently, just then the clock struck five, Josh looked at me, was that it then said yes I said, come on, lets show you, a voice from the kitchen said, and keep your maulers off it, I've polished it, dont worry Mum I said I'll chop his fingers off if he does, Josh laughed, he whispered, just like them two unfortunates who attacked you, know, I said, Tea boy walking home saw it all, said one fella lost some teeth and a lot of blood, the other got a broken arm, I said, Shh, If Mum got to know she'd do her nut, yes he said out loud, it is grand is that we went back into the kitchen and sat at the table, we heard Dad talking to Mum, she was saying, well, its not like him at all, We'll find out Dad said, they both came into the kitchen, Dad said Pete, have you been fighting, I said yes and no Dad, he told me to explain reluctantly, I explained what had happened first at work then on my way home, he said,

Im that case son, I agree with you though Idont like that sort of thing,, it gives the street
 a bad name you know, I'm sorryDad, Mum ,,but ,, I had to or get battered by two men with clubs
 I dont think they'll bother me again, I'm sure they wont som Dad said, he turned and gave me
 a sly wink, then I breathed a sigh of secret relief, Dad wasnt angry.. Josh meanwhile had
 kept quiet he knew when and when not to speak, Dad asked him if he knew about it ,, only
 what the tea boy off Pete's site is telling everybody he said,, I see Dad said well, Lets
 forget it and have our tea shall we, Mum, yes Dad, lets have us tea eh,, and give Pete an
 extra helping,, he needs to keep his strength up,, two at a time eh,, hm good for you Pete
 lad. Josh smiled then tucked in to his tea. After tea,, I said to Mum and Dad,, please
 sit down,, I have something to tell you thats important,, Must I get the whisky out som
 Dad said,, nothing like that Dad,, its just a little matter about work,, for God's sake
 Pete, out with it man,, oh well,, I said,, I've been promoted ,, in a month's time,, I'LL be
 the foreman,, Sam's going on another site then so him and mister Spencer have decided
 to train me for a month then I get the job,, foreman's pay as well. Mum said ,,oh well
 done Peter love I'm very proud of you,, Dad said,, well son,, just keep your head dont let
 it get swelled or else you'll have me to deal with,, I know you wont let me and your Mum
 down son, just the same ,, dont stand any nonsense but be fair right som,, I nodded.
 Josh congratulated me and said , do you hire and fire as well Pete,, oh yes I said, but
 I'll only take on the best but I gave him a wink and he understood. Mum said, Pete,,
 your jacketneeds cleaning up Illdo it when you go to the chipy to see Sarah later.. no
 Mum thats not fair to you,, I said, I'll brush it before I go to bed leave it,, you've
 enough to do..I went into the back kitchen and had a good wash, meanwhile, Josh who had
 been helping Mum with the pots was drying his hands, he said ,, leave me that jacket,,
 I'll brush it now,, while you get changed mister foreman,, then you can clean my shoes,,
 I threw a wet cloth at him, he ducked and it landed in Dad's face,, he looked up and
 remarked that the next time Josh ducked to make sure that nobody was in the way,, then he
 got up and lifted Josh bodily to the sink and threatened to put his head under the cold ta
 tap. It was all in fun and as Josh was let down he laughed and said ,, thats two pairs
 of shoes to clean Nelson Lad,, I'll get you for this. Things calmed down after that,, I got
 changed then josh and I went to the chip shop, Ivy was just wrapping the last order up
 when we walked in, What will it be lads, she said without looking up,, oh just a smile from
 you my girl Josh said, she looked up and shouted Sarah,, there's two funny looking blokes
 here,, they want to see the owner,, Sarah came out and saw us, she stopped and said ,, yes,
 I think your right Ivy,, now I wonder what they're after, I said,, can I see the boss please
 I've something of importance to give her,, Sarah said yes,, come this way sir ,, and led me
 into the sitting room, there,, she kissed me and said oh Pete darling, I'm glad you've
 come,, I've missed you then another kiss and a big hug. Well I said ,, how 're you coping
 she said grand Ivy's a treasure she can cook too,, we stopped here this afternoon and she
 cooked us a lovely meal,, I'm glad she's here and your Mum bless her helped out at dinner
 so we managed fine. Bob's been and done plenty off potatoes and the fish arrived this
 morning in good time,, cod and hake and a bit of haddock, the pie man came late but
 we managed alright I put the peas on before Ivy came,, everythings gone grand today

Listen Sarah I said, I have something to tell you Oh she said,, is it about that fight I heard about, they said that a foreman off the building site was attacked by two men with clubs he broke one mans arm and the other lost some teeth, so I heard in the shop,, yes darling I said, but one thing they didn't tell you was that that foreman was me,, what, she said, with a catch in her voice, you Peter ,, yes I said, me, and no, I'm not hurt, and yes, I got promoted today, and I get foremans pay. Sarah said, If I'd have known it was you Peter darling, I would have come straight round to see if you were alright, I'm so glad you're not hurt, she kissed me again,, to be made foreman Peter,, thats something,, wait till I ring mother tonight she will be pleased,, she likes you a lot Peter so you are really very Honoured ,, mind you, she just loves your parents,, they made her feel like she belonged , not just a visitor. Josh came through and said,, excuse me but can I present, Miss Sarah and mister foreman, Irene, who got the job off fixing that broken arm you so kindly presented her with,, Irene came in then and kissed Sarah then said to me ,, that kind of man was put in his place in the hospital, I told him that if he didn't behave himself,, I would personally see that he got his other arm broken,, Josh would have obliged with pleasure I know,, right Josh love,, Josh nodded and smiled .. Well, Sarah said,, I must see that Ivy is alright, Oh no said Josh I left her wrestling with a big fellow I think his name's Bob or Robert or something well I think she's winning so she'll come in when she's good and ready,, by the way Sarah, the shop's locked up so carry on courting everybody, me too I hope. Irene approached Josh, she said quite seriously,, Josh darling, how about starting on the house I'm getting worried it wont be ready, I said well,, this weekend,, we can all go and start can't we,, Bob walked in and said , listen everybody,, Ivy and I are going to get married as you all know,,so, a little celebration tonight at our house,, nothing big you understand but, that will come at the wedding, and by the way Ivy's having two bridesmaids Sarah and Ivy now, are we going to start the house for Irene this weekend ,we all said why not yes we will. Sarah said well,, in one hours time , I must open the shop again,, no problem said Bob, we men will let you have some tea in peace then we'll be back to help out but try and get through early , although I'm stopping up a bit longer tonight,, dont forget were havin a small party, I've got plenty in and Ivy's Mum and Dad will be there my younger brother's staying at his pal's tonight so lets get cracking,, see you later girls eh, right said Ivy,, see you later. Walking to Bobs, Josh said that he had a weeks holiday to come so he would take it next week and get on with the house, Bob had decided to terminate his job with his firm because of certain disagreements he was having so I said I would find an opening if he wished but, at work,, no favours.. He looked at me and Josh explained that I was the new foreman, Bob congratulated me and said,, that would be the only condition he would take the job but first, he would like to try on his own, freelance, but thanked me for the offer, I told him that the job would be there if he wanted it and I would only take men on who were good at their job. We arrived at Bobs and said Hello to my aunt and uncle they were merry then, so things got going with a swing , Bob's Dad had borrowed a gramophone and a lot of records and had brought a crate of home made beer with him and Bob had got a barrel from the local there was gin and sherry, and port, besides plenty of food,, my Mum and Dad were coming over and so were Joshes that meant a full house and plenty of fun.

My mother went back to the shop in time for opening so that Ivy could come to her party because, Mum thought it only right and proper,, I decided to go with her and see that everything was going smoothly, we were a few yards from the shop when we heard such a commotion, four youths were giving the girls a bad time, but Irene up till then was holding her own with them, my Mum waded in smacking their faces and shouting at them,, they started their antics with her,, that was enough,, I got hold of the nearest one and threw him out through the door,, a second youth,, a big lad aimed a kick at me and I just managed to dodge it,, I grabbed him by the throat then lifted him bodily and held him with one hand,, he started gasping for breath, I dropped him on the floor, then I put my foot on him,, the other two young lads,, stopped and stared with their mouths open, I just pointed to the floor and said, down, on your knees,, they were down in one, I lifted the one on the floor to his knees,, now,, I said turn out your pockets,, while they were thus engaged, I told Mum to watch them, I went towards the youth outside who started to run, he ran right into Josh who had decided to follow us, he stuck his foot out and the youth went sprawling,, Josh picked him up and brought him to the shop. He looked the situation over,, made the youth kneel with the rest and rushed over to Irene and said,, which one's responsible,, by then other customers were coming in I ignored them and said to the fourth youth, come on, empty your pockets,, he did, now I said,, where are you from, not round here,, Dryden street said one,, we're very sorry mister only,, and glancing at the one who had been gasping,, his brother was hurt this aft,, and got sacked and said is girl wer in eeyer so we cum tu get back,, Oh I said,, did he send you, no sir,, only we dint mean it omist mister.. Well I said,, I've a good mind to send you back without your britches,, now,, I turned to Sarah who had watched Mum and I sort them out,, Oh she said,, no damage,, except for the salt and vinegar bottles,, how much to replace, I asked,, about nine pence each she said but,, I stopped her by raising my fingers,, now,, I said again,, are you all willing to pay for them yes they said,, I counted seven shillings between them I took four,, I said I'm letting you off lightly,, but if I spot any of you round this way you or your brothers,, again you wont half be sorry,, have you had a good look at them Josh he looked hard at them, they cowered under his gaze,, right he said,, there's always somebody watching round here so if you're caught, its your own funeral, got that,, and I'm not as gentle as him,, he cocked a thumb at me.. Now he said, if you're wearing a belt,, take it off, come on come on before I kick the living daylights out of you,, hurry up, they quickly took string from round their pants, are you wearing braces he snapped mmo ssir one stammered, then you can all stand up, they did Now he said apologise to the ladies they did, again he said and let me hear you this time, they apologised louder right he said dont be surprised if the copper comes to your door later, I know where you live so think yourselves lucky you've got off lightly this time, now beat it, sharp,, they went out holding their pants up then ran as fast as they could up the street. when they'd gone,, my Mum and the girls started laughing and said thanks for coming, now lets get back to business. The customers only came in dribs and drabs so,, Ivy was taken to Bob's with Josh, and I went into the kitchen and waited,, Sarah came in and said,, thanks love you were great and your Mum,, the best,, My Mum's going to be proud when she hears whats been going on.

Irene came into the kitchen and said, I mus'nt fall out with Josh, my word, he's fierce and forceful, I said yes but only when its needed and newer with a lady, Josh was brought up with me and Bob and you can ask Mum anything at all about us, we look after our own in this street and try to be decent with everybody, and expect the same in return. Irene liked what she heard, I could tell, Her eyes lit up and she smiled then she said, oh by the way Pete, we tossed a coin and you lost, your best man. Sarah said, Pete darling, I took the liberty of introducing your mother to Irene, I think they'll get on nicely come on Irene, lets get back if you want to help, and Pete, be a dear and make us a cup of tea please would you, I promised and put the kettle on. I brewed the tea in the teapot I found in the back kitchen, it was upside down on the draining side of the sink, I first put hot water in like Mum did then, when the pot was warm, I emptied it, put four spoonfulls of tea in, poured boiling water onto the tea and slapped the lid on, then, I went into the shop, Mum was serving a solitary customer, Irene was getting the change for a ten bob note, the customer was Dora, hello Dora, I beamed at her, Tony told me, congratulations, Mum, Sarah, Irene, meet Dora, You know Dora Mum, sargent Butler's best girl, you know Tony her new husband, they're going to have a baby, isnt that nice, Mum smiled at Dora then, introduced Sarah and Irene, after a few words of woman's patter they let her go so that the chips would'nt get cold. I said that the tea was brewed and getting cold, I would mind the shop, if anyone came I would give them a shout. they went into the back and had their tea, Sarah came out and said, Peter, I've poured you one put your own sugar in, I'll be locking up now, I know its early, but lets get finished for tonight, I've to phone mother yet and then you can take me to Bob's for about an hour or so, is that alright with you darling, yes, thats fine I answered, how can I help, lock the door and put the blind down first then while I'm checking the till, if you would'nt mind love, rinse the cups for me will you. I locked the door and drew the blind, then I went into the kitchen and had my tea, Mum said, come on Irene I'll walk you to Bobs, its only down the street a ways, Irene said, well I' like to freshen up a bit first if you'd care to wait a minute please, Mum said sure Irene, I'll brush my hair too while I'm waiting, she shouted, Sarah, yes came the reply from the shop, can I tidy up a bit please, Sarah said yes love, go to my room, take a candle up the stairs when you get to my room, first on the left, light the oil lamp then you can see better, ~~thanks~~ ^{thanks} love she said Sarah said, Irene you go up as well love, I'm checking the till, Oh misses Nelson, can I please leave the takeings in your house, I dont want to leave them here, you newer know. Mum answered in the affirmative, thanks Sarah said. I had rinsed the teapot and cups and went into the shop, Sarah was just finished counting and started putting the money into a leather bag, Peter darling, put this in your pocket for me will you, she gave me the bag. She had her back towards me, I put my arms round her and kissed the side of her neck, she said, I liked that Peter darling, I let her go, I was getting rather passionate so I told her so and she said, I'm sorry darling but a promise has been made and must be kept, I really am so sorry Peter love, when we're married, it will be right and it is so hard to wait I know but We'll get through dont worry. Mum and Irene came down ready to go so Sarah said she had to phone her mother then get ready before she could go but she would be as quick as possible Mum and

Irene said, see you there then. Mum turned round to me and said, now son, look after Sarah wont you, I knew what she meant, I said looking straight at her, I promise Mum,

Mum understood me as well, so she said ta rah then see you later, yes Mum, I said. I locked the door behind them, Sarah went to the telephone, after about two minutes, she was talking to her Mum, the conversation lasted about ten minutes then Sarah put the phone down, Mother's coming back next week, grandma's much better and she's going to live with my aunt Molly, (Mum's sister) Grandma wants to go, and aunt Molly lives in Dorset so Mum has to sell the house and furniture, she can keep what she wants so we might need the cart again Peter but its aunt Molly's idea, and she is well off so we'll see what's what when mum gets back, yes darling, I said, now will you get ready, they'll think we're not coming. I'll only be a couple of minutes love, give me a kiss first, I kissed her and said, now why did I make that promise, she laughed and said, I told you it wont be easy, never mind Peter darling, I wont tease you just wait a couple of minutes, I'll be ready, first though, I must go, off she went to the back, when she returned she washed her self and went upstairs. Sure enough, she was down in a couple of minutes. After a quick check round, we left the shop secure and went to Bob's. Uncle Ted and aunty Beth were both exceedingly merry and we were both pressured into dancing Sarah with Uncle Ted, and me with aunt Beth who by the way was squeezing me into her ample bust. I managed to come up for air as the record stopped, I quickly excused myself and went into the back yard, Ivy came out and said, Peter, I want to talk to you, go ahead I said, well, what I want to know is, she said, has Bob been with any one else before me, Ivy love I said, the three of us have larked around with girls but never in the way you mean, mind you, tempted a few times yes, but we have always stopped before it got that far, anyway, A question like that is'nt very nice especially about one of your best mates is it, Ivy, besides, why do you ask, she said that she thought not, but wanted to be sure because after all she was going to marry him and would rather find out now than later. Ivy I said, if you've got a problem, Bob is the kindest and most understanding man you're ever likely to meet, Take it from your cousin Peter, and have you ever known me to tell you a lie Ivy, no Peter and thank you shall we go in now, I said, you go in Ivy love, and whisper to Sarah to join me, alright Peter, she said and went back in. I moved towards the doorway so that I could be seen, Sarah came out and said, are you alright petal, Oh yes darling I answered, I just wanted your company for a while and to talk, oh, she said, I wanted to talk as well so go on love you first, right I said, Sarah, I think we can get married at the same time as Bob and have a double wedding, how do you feel about that then, Peter, Peter darling, you must be a thought reader, that is precisely the thing I wanted to discuss with you but, lets not answer right now, Its too important for a snap decision so, lets talk about it tomorrow when we are alone in the shop, I have something very important to give you as well, so my love, let's enjoy the party eh, Hey you two, lets be having you, its time for eating come on, before that Josh scoffs it all, Irene came running out followed by Josh, both were laughing and as they joined us, Irene gave Josh a lowly kiss and linked her arm in his then squeezed him and said, I do love you Josh.

We all trooped in together,, straight into the kitchen,, the table was stacked with all sorts of goodies to eat,, I took a pork pie, Josh a roast beef sandwich , Sarah a chicken leg and Irene, some boiled ham,, not the sort you can see through oh no,, thick enough to taste between two slices of home baked bread,, Irene asked for some mustard, Josh reached over the table and picked it up for her ,gave it to her and said, you really dont need mustard Irene my sweet,, you're hot enough,, Irene jokingly gave Josh a kick and said Josh,, please,, not in front of people,, they might jump to conclusions,, Josh winked at Sarah whom said,, I wont say names but I know somebody who's ~~now~~ so cold as well ,. I said, who, my Dad,, I know, he's sweating,, he's just been having a knees up with Mum and aunty Beth,, look at him now,, knocking that ale back,, its like pouring it down a sink,, Sarah said ,no silly,, not your Dad, his son,, Oh I said,, I see,, Irene laughed and asked Josh for some sherry,, Sarah wanted Gin with lemonade, how that tasted I would'nt like to say,, Josh and I settled for a glass each of home brewed. Bob came over and asked Sarah to dance,, Sarah looked at me, I nodded winked at Josh and said to Irene, come on, lets show them how it should be done. It was a charlseton or whatever, anyhow, everybody stopped and watched and clapped, then Dad and aunt Beth tried it, and what a good laugh we had,, aunt Beth's bust nearly came loose from their moorings,, she only laughed louder, Uncle Ted tried it and fell down: he tried again and fell on Mum ,. she picked him up ,kissed him and sat him in a chair. the fun and games went on and Dad said,, No work for me tomorrow,, thats for sure,, Mum said I'll have an extra half hour as well,, Sarah said, Oh no misses Nelson,, I'll get up,, I have the fish coming first thing and other people to see,, you stay in bed, I'll get up and have Peter's breakfast ready for when he comes and I'll get the milkman, how many pints do you get ,. two and a half tomorrow Sarah,, I make a rice pudding ready for teatime . Sarah said that she was tired and would I take her home, she thanked everybody for a good time, I finished my drink then said to josh, not to make a noise when he came home, I hoped to be asleep by then, I walked over to Ivy kissed her and said⁶ her and Bob, I'll see you both tomorrow , I thanked everybody and took Sarah to our house. When we got in, I gave Sarah her takings and told her to put them away for the night in one of my drawers she thanked me and said, Oh Peter, I love you so much it hurts,, tomorrow, we'll talk, she yawned and said, I'm ready for bed,, its been quite a day, Has'nt it Peter,, I said yes darling.it certainly has, now, you go to bed and I'll lock up. she went to the back first, came back, washed her hands and kissed me good night then she took the new light I had given her,, and went to bed, I looked round and went to the front door, Mum was just coming in, I had turned the gas light low and when Mum came in, I turned it back up again,, Mum shouted Are you alright Sarah, No answe so Mum said, I'll just pop in before I get into bed, I said yes Mum. and kissed her, then I left and made my way to Josh's and to bed..The next morning,, I was at our house in good time for breakfast and a little smooth with Sarah before going to work, in any case,, just then,, I was'nt doing any hard graft, Sarah was preparing ,, eggs,, tomotoes and sausages with fried bread and toast and of - course,, my pint of tea. I never noticed last night but Mum was given some boiled Ham for my bait, Sarah had got it all ready so all I had to do was change and have my breakfast.

Sarah reminded me it was half day closing, she was going into town with Mum, was there anything I wanted, I mentioned that I could do with some new soap and some more of those new blades for shaving, I also wanted one of them not too big, stiff backed books and a pencil, an H, B, one to go with the book, it was for foreman's notes, because there were so many things to think about and new ideas kept cropping up so if I jot them down, I could look them up when I needed to. Sarah came over to me as I was drinking my tea, Peter, she said, can you and me have a night on our own in the shop, we have'nt been alone for ages. I said, I would'nt mind that at all, no one to interrupt us or bother us, I 'd like that very much love, then that s settled she said, I'll tell your Mum and Ivy, you can see Josh and tell him and that should fix it, I agreed then I kissed her and set off for work. Now at work, we had a lime pit, the usual thing on a building site, lime mixed with the right amount of sand and water made mortar for brickwork and to me, the lime seemed to be rather low in the pit, I noticed this and mentioned it to Sam when I reached the hut, he had noticed it as well, he said that the only thing he could think of was, the steam-wagon driver and his mate were on the fiddle, lets set a trap he said, he does'nt know about you yet so I've got the notes here, and it says, three dozen bags, lime etc, I'll bet he only leaves thirty, he'll have them stashed somewhere or dropped them off on the way we'll see when he arrives this morning, now, will you help to unload a few things, then he'll wont guess your the Foreman, then if he's short, the next time the wagon comes, it'll have a new driver. The wagon arrived later that morning. I went to help to unload, I took a few pipes off then helped with the bricks, cement was next, then the lime, I said, how many lime driver, he said, on my sheet it says thirty I said right, I helped with a few, I said to the timekeeper, how many on your sheet Jim (Jim Knowles) Jim said, well I got the sheets off the driver he brought them, it has thirty on, I said its funny, theres usually thirtysix, I said you're six short driver where are they, He said, my sheet is right, I should know, I brought them, anyway, mind your own bloody business I'm in charge here. I said, do you think so driver, he said I'm sure so, go and see Sam if you like, anyhow, Sam has'nt time to check every bloody thing I bring, well I said I have and your six bags off lime short, how many times is this, the time keeper said, in my book, we've had thirty bags the last six times, this is the seventh, right driver, the driver said my sheets are the same anyway, clear off, your nowt to do with it, Sam's in charge, Sam came strolling up pretending to be taking no notice, the driver shouted Sam, shift this nousey bugger off my back will ya, Sam came up, who, he said do you mean Peter, the driver said yeh if thats his name, on my sheet, I've got thirty bags of lime the same with Jimmy's Sam said, did you bring the time keepers list, the driver said that he always did, then, Sam produced his own papers out of his pocket, pretended to look at them and said, do we always have thirty bags timekeeper, Jim said, this is the seventh time, well said Sam, I'm going to Myers farm later, so if you've nothing to add to that, I'll see you in court for theft, It so happens that Pete's uncle who I know well, told me he had seen some bags of lime there the last time he was down that way with a couple of sows, when he asked about them, old Myers told him he got them dirt cheap from a steamwagon driver. You're the only one ^{found} ~~found~~ these parts now, cos everybody else

Has these ere motor lorries so what have you been up to eh. The wagon driver and his mate finished unloading, Sam went to see mister Spencer, Mister Spencer was upset and wanted proof, Sam gave it to him, the wagon driver and his mate were not taken to court they were sacked. Two new wagons or lorries, were purchased one was put under the direction of Sam, to be used when and where he wanted, the other, was based in the yard and was for me to use at my discession when I took over the running of the site at the end of the month.

Wages are private matters between employer and employee so, thinking I had been overpaid, I went to the office and asked to see the boss, the girl Sandra was a bit stuck up and told me to wait, never informing him that I was wanting to see him, he came out of the office and saw me, hello Peter he said, do you want to see me, he said, yes please if you've got a minute, go right in Peter, and dont wait for her, she'll keep you hanging about all day, in future Sandra, if Peter comes in the office, he comes straight in, no hanging about, he has'nt time to wait and He wont bother you with your work but he's your boss as well, I wont be a minute Peter,, sit yourself down, I'll be back, I went into his office,, he was'nt long before he came back.. when he sat down, he shouted Sandra,, yes mister Spencer she said, two cups of tea please and dont be long, right sir,, right away, that Sandra she wants pulling down a peg or two, the stuck up bitch, now Peter, what is it lad, I told him about my wages, he looked at me and said Peter,, I'm getting on a bit sa you know, I said, yes sir, but your still twelve pennies to the bob and no one can better you at this job,, thats right my lad now, these wages are right I approved them myself,, but more important,, I want you to go home and think seriously about, are you ready for this, I want you to learn allyou can about the firm and I'll be taking you to meet different people who matter, and one or two rogues as well, so that you know them, them in a years time,, I would like you to sit in this chair and take over for me, but,, not a word to anyone, well, your folks maybe and I understand that you'll be getting married in the near future,, that will be a good thing in this job it keeps you on the straight and narrow.. now Peter, let it sink in and let me know by Monday next, your answer^{re}

I was flabbergasted to say the least, I did'nt know what to say for a full minute then I said do you mean manager or what, yes he said, thats it for a start then maybe a partnership before I get too old and the firm goes to the dogs.. I dont mind telling you Peter,, this firm is my baby, I built it up and I'm dam proud of it, I dont want it to become just a little tin pot affair, I want it to grow and I think your the man to make it grow..

Alright Peter, now think over what I've said carefully and ask your parents then if the answeres yes I'll be relieved and ,we'll get down to somereal learning. Now, where's that

kkk Sandra with that tea, there was a knock on the door Sandra entered,, your tea she said and put two cups down on the desk corner. Sandra I said, what, she said,, A young nice looking lady like yourself should have the manners to match, and dont forget, in future they dont cost you anything, and by the way Sandra, do you like your job yes she said

I do, then I said please be more polite especially when I'm about, dont foreget,, there are one or two young ladies would like this job so please in future, act like a nice young lady as I'm sure you are,, got it ,she said yes sir I'm very sorry, it wont happen again I promise you may I be excused now sir I said certainly Sandra and thankyou for the tea.

I think that solves that little problem sir, I said when Sandra had shut the door, he beamed at me and said, now you know why your pay has risen sharply Peter, I like to pay on results that little scene was something I never dreamed of seeing, now you have the natural talent for this job but tell me was that just to impress me or to put Sandra in her place, Sir I said, the only way I can impress you is with my work and that is what I intend to do sir, whatever my position in this firm sir, I intend to do my best, after all, if the firm does well the workers do well and that keeps the womenfolk in their lives happy, if the women are happy, the men work better I learned that from my good teacher Sam. Peter the more I talk to you the more I learn about you so, I want you to bring your young lady one night next week I'll let you know which night and we'll dine at home, by the way, we call it dinner mister Spencer said, now, if you'll excuse me, I'll just finish off here and be on my way home. I thanked him and shut the door behind me, I turned to Sandra, and said, Sandra, mister Spencer was annoyed with your attitude before, now in future, please treat him with respect, I'll be in and out quite a lot from now on but don't let it worry you, the situation remains the same and your jobs safe provided you are pleasant and respectful right, yes sir she said, please don't call me sir, mister Peter will do. I went out, back to the site, Sam was working on his little book, right Peter he said, yes thank you Sam I said, anything you want I should do, you might go round the site and check the cambre on that new bit of roadway between the new houses that have just been roofed will you Peter lad, I'm not so sure its right, Paddy Kilshaw seems to think its too much on your right going down from here, the plans are there check them first will you, I did and wrote the correct measurements on a piece of paper, I went up to the road and called Paddy over, Paddy I said, help me with these measurements please will you, we checked it carefully and found it correct, yes sur he said, now that be an optical illusion that be sur, I come across it only once afore, but that be right if the surveyor's done his job right, that can be checked, but its getting late on so can I have it confirmed in the morning, I said certainly Paddy, and thank you for your help. Paddy was pleased I had asked him, I could see it in his face, I said, by the way Paddy, I'll send the surveyor round tomorrow and you see him for me, keep the other men working then come up and let either me or Sam know the result and don't put anything else down until your satisfied that its right, I must go now Paddy, see you tomorrow, he touched his cap and said yes sur I got that sur I'll see you tomorrow, night sur. I got back and Sam was counting out some money Peter he said, give me five shillings this week will you, one and six for the tea and a shilling for our accident fund, then theres two and six for Jack ~~Woods~~ Woods, you know, the chap who's off work, both his nippers have whooping cough and he's nowt in at home, I went round this morning and its a pityful sight I paid up and said here Sam, give him an extra two shillings, Sam was booking it down, no Sam I said, don't book it just give the man the money, I hope it helps him out, he is a good worker, Sam said thanks and put it with the rest of the collection, I'll take it round on my way home he said, theres over five pounds now, thats more than he gets when he's working, well I said, he'll need it SAM, ay lad he will that, I'll be glad to give it him. It was home time so I told Sam I was going, he said, Put some decent clothes on in the morning, I think the boss wants you to spend the day with him so he tells me, now don't

Let the firm down, I mean, you'll be having a drink and that so be careful eh, I promised and said, goodnight Sam. I got home to find tea ready and Dad was washing himself, Hello everybody I said, Hello Peter, Mum said, Sarah's gone to get some sugar from the corner, she'll be back in a minute, I said righto Mum, Dad I called, poof whew, here son, Dad said, shaking himself with the towel in his face, he came into the kitchen drying the back of his neck, Ineeded that he said to wake me up a bit, I've had a good snooze thisaft, and I 've just had a cold swill to wake myself up a bit, now son he said, problems, not as such I said, then Sarah came in, Here's the sugar she said, oh did I interrupt something I'm sorry, not really I said, Hello love, Hello darling she said carry on with what you were saying, I said you may as well all hear what I have got to say, I think its important Well, spit it out son Dad said,, Mum shut the oven door and sat down,, I repeated my conversatt with the big boss,, they were all impressed and I mentioned about putting some better clothes on tomorrow, to go with him, after I said,, I want you to think about it over tea then tell me what you think.. Tea was started, we had Hotpot with a crust on top and the usual cabbage and pickles and beetroot, then rice pudding, Mum said, Sarah made the Hotpot, Peter, what do you think, Oh I said, not bad, a bit more-ish though I'll have some for supper if you have any left, Sarah smiled and said, you liked it then Peter, I nodded, while the pudding was being served out,, Dad said, Peter, if your haveing the Hotpot for supper, I'm having this dish to scrape after,, Oh Dad, I said,, I generally scape that,, but Dad, if you have it, you'll have to wash it up for Mum after,, in that case son he said,, I'll think about letting you have it, provided you and Sarah do the whole lot while I discuss about what you said before, with your Mother, right son, Sarah, we both agreed. Sarah and I were just finishing the pots when Dad and Mum came in,, Peter, Mum said,, yes Mum, I said,, you need a new case to put papers and things in, and Dad says you need a new wallet,, we're both proud of you and wish you every success,, try and remember who you are, and we both no you wont let it go to your head,, Mum,, Dad,, thank you,, and I do promise, I will never let it go to my head,, I will try very hard to be myself and newer forget my upbringing or my friends. Sarah came foward kissed me and said, Peter, promise me you'll newer change, alright Sarah, I said thats a promise. Mum brewed another pot of tea and Dad called Sarah and I into our front room, (the parlour) he said sit down and tell me about your intentions,, well Dad, I started, but Sarah started talking,, mister Nelson, Peter and I have talked about getting married, we are considering the same time as Bob and Iwy, we have'nt made our minds up yet, that about right Peter, thats right Sarah, I said. Now listen you two, Mum and I got married when Mum was three months gone,, that can be checked have you, I said, no Dad honestly, we promised and thats how it is, Sarah said mister, Dad said Sarah love I'd prefer you to call me Dad while you're here unless, Oh no Sarah said thats fine by me and I'm sure my Mum wont mind so Dad it will be from now on and Mum for Peter's mum, I'll call mine mother anyway,, she prefers that to Mum. I was going to say, that you have mine and Mum's blessing to marry when you want, but please give us a bit of warning, then, we can arrange a few things Dad said as he filled and lit his pipe.

Sarah told him that we were going to the shop tonight to discuss it, we would let him and Mum know what we were going to do later. Mum entered and asked Dad if he wanted the fire lit lighting, he said no, he was taking her out tonight, sargent Butler and Josh's Dad had invited them to the lodge tonight, they were having a do and a dance after so they might as well go. I left Sarah talking to my parents while I went to wash and change, it didn't take me long, when I got down stairs, there was a knock on the door, then Josh walked in, he just came to tell us that he was seeing Irene at the hospital and would be home early tonight so if I was late, check to see if he was in bed, if so lock up, Right Josh I answered, see you, right he said and went. I called Sarah, she came out of the parlour and said ready love, I nodded she said, you'll turn into a donkey if you keep on nodding. Pet We both shouted Ta rah mum, Dad, see you later, right came the reply, take care now, yes, I replied, then off we went. We got to the shop and let ourselves in then locked the door.

As we entered the kitchen, Sarah said, wow, its chilly in here, I'll light the fire, it was ready laid so we put a match to it then put the blower up for a bit, to make it take hold quicker, it soon got going I took the blower away and put it in the back yard, it had got very hot so that was the best place for it. I got back in the kitchen and Sarah had gone upstairs, I waited, she came down after a few minutes and said, all the goings on of late have made me start early Peter, anyway, when Mum notices tomorrow, She'll know I'm not pregnant, now, lets talk, first though, shh, listen she whispered. I distinctly heard the clink of bottles, I crept to the back kitchen window and spotted a small boy handing bottles over the wall, he was standing on two crates, another crate by them to make a step, I went back, I whispered to Sarah to let me get to the ginnel first then open the door and shout, they'll not expect me and I'll bring them back to the shop.

I crept round to the ginnel, they both had to come out the same way, it was a cul-de-sac, I heard Sarah open the door and shout, a few seconds later, the boys came running out. I stopped them and said, come along with me, they had four bottles each, empties of course we went back into the shop, the boys would be no more than seven or eight, they lived in the next street, I frightened them by pretending to ring for a policeman, the boys cried, I explained that to steal anything was very wicked so the policeman had to come and take them away and lock them up. We made them put the bottles back and made them promise not to do it again, then I said, well now you have a job to do and that is from now on, if any bottles are missing in future, I'll be round to your houses with a scuffer, and next time, he will take you away so that means, you will have to guard them bottles, if anybody comes to pinch any, you come and tell us right away, that is when you're playing out, have you got that, they both nodded and said yes mister promise, I said well in that case, here's a whole penny each to pay you to watch out for us now off you go before the policeman comes, I think I can hear him, go on be off with you both boys scampered off as fast as their little legs would let them. We locked the door again and went and sat down. Sarah kissed me and said thanks darling you were marvelous with those lads, I said I think I'll get some barbed wire for that wall top, that should help to keep them off, Sarah said, yes alright love, I want to talk about us Peter, Oh

Yes of-course darling, I'm listening, Sarah said , how about ~~two~~ ^{Four} weeks then get married I said, Sarah, are we marrying on the same day as Bob and Ivy, she said I think so Peter, Ivy's letting me know tomorrow when she comes to the shop so, will that be alright with you, I said, I'll have a word with Bob then we'll compare notes eh, I think that will be the best idea she said, so thats settled then I said, for now she ~~is~~ ^{said} next comes all the hustle and bustle, invitations and so on, oh and Peter darling, it means going to see the vicar and going to church for at least three Sundays and hearing the banns read out, yes, I know dear I⁺ said, all that will be arranged. Now, all important question Sarah my I love, where do you want to live, I mean for now, later we'll have our own place, well she said, thats difficult, where do you, I said wherever you are my sweet, but I think our parents will decide for us. I'll tell you what though, any arguments and we're away but I don't think there will be, knowing our parents,, Sarah agreed and said, it doesn't matter really does it, I said no not really,, in any case,, its only a hop, skip,, and jump between the two. ^{Sarah said} We'll have a big family discussion when my Mum gets here next week we'll sort a few things out then, shall we,, Sarah looked pensive, then she added, oh Peter, mother should be ringing anytime now but before she does, I've got something to give you apart from this, then she kissed me again I must say I liked it very much. She went to a drawer in the sideboard opened it and brought out the most beautiful solid gold hunter watch I have ever seen. Sarah gave it to me with a kiss and said mother gave me permission to give you this my sweet,, it was my fathers,, he died years ago, so that shows you how much mother likes you,, oh but Sarah darling I said,, this is well, I can't describe it , is'nt it beautiful, I mean are you sure ,, I am both proud and honoured and maybe a little bit undeserving of such a magnificent watch and does your mother really approve, oh Peter darling, of course she does and I am so pleased, will you wear it when we get married, she asked , now what do you think sweetheart, I said, anyway, please put it back safe for now and I will, treasure it all my life, I kissed Sarah again and said thank you, then the telephone rang. Sarah's mother was so busy talking poor Sarah could'nt get a word in edge ways, I winked at Sarah and took the telephone, I gave a harsh cough into the mouthpiece, Sarah's Mum stopped , what in Heaven's name was that she asked, I winked again at Sarah then I said in a gruff voice hello misses King, your daughter has decided to marry me, with your permission of course, she said, what, whats happening over there, I slipped the phone back to Sarah, she could'nt speak for laughing eventually she said, mother dear calm down, its only Peter having a bit of fun with you,, Sarah gave me the phone again and said , convince Mum Peter before she has a fit, I said in to the mouthpiece in my normal voice, misses King, please accept my apologies will you, she said, wait till I get back Peter Nelson,, I'll give you what for , I nearly had a heart attack, now then, what were you saying, I said, misses King, your lovely daughter has kindly agreed to marry me, can we have your blessing please, she said, and about time too, certainly Peter love, I'll be back in a few days, god bless you Peter,, has my Sarah given you anything yet, I said yes, but its too good for the likes of me, I will try to deserve it, I really will, oh Peter love,, you do, you do deserve it believe me.

Now Peter, please put my daughter back on will you, I handed the phone back to Sarah excused myself and went to the back, when I returned, they were still on the phone, Sarah was saying, yes Mumy I will yes Mum, yes ,, alright them ,oh ,are you sure, I'll try, yes perfect , I'll tell them, no Mum I wont alright Mum,, bye see you soon bye Mum. Sarah hung up . Well Peter my love, you've made Mumy very happy and me too,, give us a kiss we kissed then Sarah said, its getting on Peter shall we go back, as you know,, I've got a headache so I'D better go to bed, I am tired anyway. Right darling I said,, I'll just check the back door again and make this fire safe then we'll go,, be putting your coat on I love I'll not be a second or two. what was needed to be done was done and then we left. On the way to our house,, Sarah said, I'll be alright tomorrow Peter,, but when I'm like this, I tend to get tired quicker but after a rest I'm alright again, I said, well love nature must have its way ,,you can only carry on as best you can for the next few days,, I do understand Sarah, I'D be a very worried man if you were'nt that way wouldn't I just, Sarah laughed at that , yes she said I'm afraid you would.. We reached our house Mum and Dad were still out , I made Sarah a cup of tea had one myself then filled a hot water bottle for Sarah, it was made of earthen ware and had a screw top, I gave it to her, she kissed me goodnight , took her new lamp and went to bed. I refilled the kettle and put it on the ~~hot~~ hob for when Mum came in, I wrote her a note explaining about Sarah, and reminding Mum that Sarah had to be up for the fish man and I would be early for breakfast and I would shave in the morning, I turned down the gas light, made sure the fire was alright, left the note where Mum would see it and went to Josh's house and so to bed. Laying there in bed, I suddenly remembered about the hotpot , I was'nt going to go for it now, I'll have it sometime tomorrow ah well, Oh dam, I forgot to see if Josh was in bed, I slipped out of bed , went to Josh's room and peeped in, He ~~was~~ ^{was} laid there snoring his head off, that meant I must go down and lock up, off I went, I locked the door and slid the big bolt across then I nipped back to bed,, I didn't waste time, I went right off. The next morning, it was raining so I borrowed Josh's big raincoat and dashed to our house, as I took my door key out, I dropped it, I bent down to retrieve it and saw a shilling lying there, I picked it up along with my key then went into the house,, I hung Josh's coat on the hall stand then made a beeline for the kitchen: Sarah was just stirring the fire, it seemed slow and dull I said Hiya,, then I kissed her I got hold of the ash tray which was full and took it to the back yard,, I emptied it ,, then took it back and put it under the fire again,, then I put the coal shovel up onto the front fire bars and left it there for a while,, it acted like a blower and the fire slowly came to life. Mum came downstairs and told Sarah to sit down,, Now Peter she said,, what about that hotpot, yes Mum I said,, I'll take it with me to work in a basin iff I may,, Sam would love it warmed up for his dinner,, I'll bring the basin back don't worry,, yes she said,, in the meantime Sarah love take this,, its what I take for a headache,, she handed Sarah a drop of warm Indian Brandy in a glass ,, drink that ,, it'll do you good,, then we'll have a cup of tea. The kettle had started to boil so Mum brewed some tea ,, I went and had a wash and took some water out of the kettle for a shave,, Sarah I said,, did you get the stuff I asked you for yesterday, yes love,, I left it in the parlour,, I'll get it,, she brought it out,, every thing I asked for.

am surprised me, after setting my breakfast down on the table, she went upstairs and I heard her talking to Dad who was just getting up, fetch em down will you she said while coming down stairs, when she came into the kitchen, she had a new tie in a box and a very thin brown paper parcel, she gave them to me saying, here you are son, put these on, I looked at the tie, a plain maroon in colour and silk, mother I said you should'nt, I opened the thin paper parcel, a wallet with my initials in a kind of gold monogram, oh mother I said, its lovely, I opened the wallet, inside was a ten shilling note, I got up from the table and kissed her and said oh thanks Mum then Dad walked in, morning son, Sarah, he said we both wished him good morning and with a twinkle in his eye he said, Sarah, just look how his mother spoils him, she'll be wiping his nose for him next, Mum said, get on with you Dad, your as bad, getting him that expensive thing your holding under the table, come on now Dad, out with it, Dad smiled and holding up a brand new briefcase, he said, and if you kiss me for this, I'll rattle your earle young Peter. I said, well Dad, your the only one who does'nt get kissed in this house, but thank you so much, I appreciate all you've done for me, I'll never be able to repay you both Mum, Dad, thank you from my heart Sarah I said, its going to be hard trying to live up to these two dont you think my love, I would'nt try Peter love, but I will do my best, yes girl, I know you will Dad said Mum said well, every body's different, and people go about living and loving in their own way, Sarah said, well said Mum, I said, I wont forget this day in a hurry either, you see what a very lucky fellow I am, the best parents, and to top it all, I'm going to marry the best girl in the world and I thank god for it. Sarah came over and kissed me, I was so happy. I put my new tie on, put the wallet in my inside breast pocket then flicked some imaginary dust off the case and said, well, I must be off, wish me luck, they all did. Mum, I said I'll take that hotpot for Sam shall I, it was ready wrapped up and tied round with string so I picked it up and kissed Sarah, I said, ta raft every body, see you tonight, As I walked with Sarah to the door I felt in my pocket for some small change, I, pulled it out and looked, three gold sovereigns, two half crowns, a shilling, a sixpence two theepenny bits and four pennies. Sarah I said, look I cant think how all this got here, Sarah said, keep it to yourself Peter my love, you dont need to spend it but you never know, its just for emergencies, off you go now, I do hope you have a good day, take care now, she kissed me again and I set off to work and mister Spencer. I got to work as the whistle blew, the time keeper waved hello then I entered the hut. Sam was checking his book, morning Sam I said, he looked up, the last time I saw you so smart Peter was in church, you remember, old misses Lord wanted change for sixpence out of the collection, yes Sam, I remember I said, Sam, here's a hotpot I wont be eating today I want the basin back but I'll pick it up on the way home or tomorrow. Sam asked me if I remembered to get a book, Yes I said but I forgot to bring it, or a pencil, never mind he said, I've got one for you, and a pencil here, he handed me one like his and the pencil was just the right size, in the back of the book he had written, To Peter from Sam, best wishes. I thanked him and put it in my case, he said, well, you look the part Peter so get cracking lad and the best of luck to you Peter, I said thanks Sam, I'll let you know what goes on, tomorrow. There was the sound of a motor horn then and as I went out with whith Sam, mister Spencer's daughter was waiting, she said come on, hop in Peter Nelson.

Good morning I said,, good morning she said,, Dad's waiting so lets get a move on shall we, and off we went. As luck would have it,, we arrived in one piece and as I got out of the car he met us at the door,, He smiled and said ,ah,good morning Peter,, I'm glad you could make it,,lets go in ,. first things first,, a nice cup of tea then to business He ushered me into his study and directed me to sit in the easy chair, now Peter he began, the door opened and Mildred the cook came in with a tray , a teapot and two cups and saucers a jug of milk and a glass bowl of sugar, teaspoons were in the saucers.

Mildred wished me good morning and smiled I said the same to her and returned the smile, she withdrew .. The boss put milk in the cups then poured the tea, Help yourself to sugar Peter he said and handed me the bowl, I took two spoonfuls and stirred the tea. I have here Peter, a letter asking me to attend a meeting at the Winthrop Hotel, Charmley square The town council have a plot of land they want to develop and have not yet decided what to build on it, now I would like them to build something they can be proud of, the town can be proud of, and if I play my cards right, I might ,. just might, end up building whatever it is they want, do you follow, I said that I understood. I asked him where did I fit in and he said, I want you to observe just what goes on at these meetings and I might add,, a fresh face with different ideas would liven things up a bit You'll get the drift as the meeting progresses,, there'll be a lot of hot air and not much achieved, most of them just attend for the lunch and drinks, they don't care about the town really only about their own interests,, that's where you can come in, if you feel you can liven the debate up a bit,, and don't forget, I'll back you up, alright. I said that I would give it a shot but if I am going wrong please give me a nudge and I'll stop, but first, I would like to hear what is said then I can give an opinion if it is asked for,, oh don't worry about being asked, I'll do that bit, then I want to sit and watch their faces and get their reactions,, now I hope you can deliver or at least, try, can I rely on you Peter, I said that I wouldn't let him down, then that's my boy he smiled, Oh and Peter,, yes Sir, I can buy and sell the most of them so don't be frightened of the set up, it may look a bit so so, but really, none of them know what it's all about, believe me. Now where's that daughter of mine she's taking us and where I'm with her , she has to drive properly, We'll be alright you'll see. Elsie Spencer breezed in and said come on chaps, lets get going, yes I know Dad, I will drive nicely have no fear, we got in the back of the car and the car moved off at a sedate pace.

We arrived in good time and the boss introduced me to various people as his assistant. About fourteen to sixteen men assembled in what was ~~had~~ termed the Tudor suite, the meeting was chaired by a mister Merwin from the town hall, first he introduced himself from what I gathered, he was the town hall, they way he sounded off with his, my this and my that,, then he went on to what he would like for the town,, what would be best for the town, and he hoped that his proposal would be seen as the only solution to the problem confronting us today. He asked for any other proposals, no one seemed the least bit interested except mister Spencer, he proposed that a swimming bath was built on the land together with a sports ground with facilities for everybody to partake . No , said mister Merwin he didn't think that was feasible but he gave no reasons.

I looked round the room, I realised that mister Merwin was acting like a schoolmaster this had to stop, I rose to my feet, mister chairman, I said, with respect, who do you think you are addressing, a class in a school or what, it seems to me that you did'nt need a meeting, according to you the matter is cut and dried before we started, All Heads looked up and started to take an interest, I deliberately said that to you mister chairman sir just to create a little interest in these proceedings, now with respect, gentlemen, this is our town we are talking about, lets think about the welfare of the town shall we, after all, some of you may well profit from one of these proposals, that stirred them a bit but I was just starting, I was annoyed by their apathy and so I created a fictitious story, I continued, traveling round the country, I have seen signs of progress in many towns and cities, when asked where I come from, I tell them, "AVENHAM", they have never heard of us, now if people knew of us I'm sure our trade would improve, you would all be wealthier, our goods are the best in the country, so why are we not known, we can beat anybody if we pull ourselves together and do something about it. Stop being small minded, lets build something that other towns want to copy, and enjoy popularity its there for the taking and what is more gentlemen, we have the skills, we have the resources, the space and the ready and willing workforce just waiting to perform and show the rest of the country that our business men, and traders, are the finest in the country. We have the knowledge, the skill and the energy to break away from the stagnant inert and torpid existence we have today, our younger generation need an example to emulate and they want something to be proud of to look up to, and to show off to others. Now gentlemen, everyone in this room can contribute to that goal and Do Not forget, it is you, who will prosper as well as the town provided, you do, and not just talk. Am I looking at a group of decadent old fossils, or am I seeing a virile inveterate company of highly skilled business men, willing to do their bit for the town, bearing in mind, they who invest now, will reap the rewards and not some outsider who will take all and give nowt back, gentlemen I leave it to your intelligence to decide what you want, thank you all for listening. I sat down. To a man, they clapped, then a mister Bell stood up and said, I go for the public baths and recreation centre, A mister kline said, I second that motion, the rest fell into line. Mister Merwin was asked by the townsmen to convey that message to the council and they hoped for a favourable answer. A man whispered to mister Merwin something, he stood up and said that lunch was about ready drinks were available at the bar and no charge would be made. We retired to the bar, I asked for a glass of ale, my boss was talking to mister Merwin, he brought him over and formally introduced him to me, he surprised me by saying, well done young man, that was a tonic we all needed I'm very glad you came, you know, I in all honesty, agree with every word you said, the way I spoke, at the beginning was a talk prepared for me by one of the townhall clerks, in future, I think I'll write my own addresses, this town must not be left to slowly fade out, it can be, and will be, a thriving community I'll do my best to see the scheme come to fruition, thank you sir I said, no, no, mister Nelson I thank you, then he went in for lunch. the boss and I followed and had a very good do.

Sitting in the bar after lunch, mister Spencertold me to try and keep the following Thurs-
^{day} evening free, dinner would be at seven thirty, dress informal and would I please bring
 miss Sarah, she might be a good companion for Elsie for the evening while we talked shop.
 I asked the boss did he think I upset the meeting, he laughed, Peter my boy he said, upset
 a meeting like that, I 'd like to know what's going through their minds right now, oh and
 Peter, you will be asked by one or two about your connection with me, I would like you to
 tell them nothing, our own private arrangement is our affair, nobody else's, you will
 probably get offers to join someone else's firm, I can't stop you of course but I'd be
 very sorry to lose you, I interrupted him, hold on boss I said, why should I leave you,
 I have no intention of doing that, if you like, I'll draw up an agreement and sign it
 if that's what you want, I've heard of these rising stars before, now I ^{do} not like that,
 I'll always remember which side my bread's buttered on no matter what, and if this firm
 prospers, so will I, on the other hand, if this firm starts to deteriorate, then it will
 be my responsibility to take it by the scruff of the neck and haul it back into viability,
 Now boss, just let me finish them you can put me back where I belong. As I was saying,
 earlier this week, I have a few ideas I would like to put to you, you can either accept
 or reject them, but I would rather not go into details as yet, I must get my facts right
 before I come to you about them. The boss replied, Peter, in the first instance, yes,
 you did upset the meeting and I might add, for which I'm very grateful, and secondly,
 I think you are where you belong now, and thirdly, where's that damned daughter of mine,
 Here I am Daddy, are you ready then, the boss said Peter, why the dickens don't you
 learn to drive a car, it would save me a lot of trouble. We left the hotel at about
 half past two, Elsie drove us back to the boss's house, he invited me into the study
 again and motioned me to the same easy chair, I sat down and felt a sight more comfortable
 this time round, the boss went out, a few minutes later he came back, Peter he said,
 the lavatory is one flight up the stairs, second door on the left if you want it, I
 said excuse me I'll use it if I may, he said, be my guest and waved me away. the toilet
 was posh and had a flush system like any other, but it was surrounded with shiny tiles
 they looked smart and clean, this gave me another idea I kept to myself for use at a later
 date. I got back down stairs and into the study, the boss was pouring tea out again,
 he looked up and said, well, what do you think, I said, yes lovely but don't you think
 it would be nicer still if a wash hand basin was installed and a towel hanging by, I
 think that would finish the job off nicely don't you. Yes he said, I suppose you're right,
 I never thought of that, I'll have it done in the near future, yes, thanks Peter.
 I'm expecting a few telephone calls shortly Peter, they'll be asking questions about
 the meeting and trying to pry a little as to what's going on, I'll not make them any the w
 wiser for it but there'll probably be more meetings before we can get the ball rolling,
~~properly~~ so I'll try and get sorted out ready. I want you on the site tomorrow Peter, we
 can let Sam know about the meeting, he'll not feel left out then, in any case, Sam's
 alright, he might have something to add, and I do like the old chap, I said, yes boss,
 so do I, he's got all his chairs at home when it comes to doing a foreman's job, yes
 Peter and that's just it, a good man at his job, if you know what I mean, I understood.

Now Peter, before you go, there's a new motor wagon in the yard its standing there waiting to be used, I'm going to ring the garage up and arrange for a few lessons for you at driving the thing about, do you think you can handle it, I'll have a do at it if you like ^{boss} ~~boss~~, if you like, I can call at the garage on my way home and arrange it, save you ring-
ing them up, ~~He~~ said, that'll do fine Peter, I'll just get Elsie to drop you off, maybe for the last time eh, the boss said, I ~~hope~~ ^{hop} so I said, I get a little nervous riding with Elsie mister Spencer, he laughed and went into the house. A minute or two later, Elsie came out and said, so you want a lift to the garage do you mister Nelson, I said yes please miss Elsie, she said, cut out the miss part will you,, I replied that I would if she would cut out the mister part,, Elsie said righto then Peter, now I'll get the car out,, I have to get some gasoline from the garage anyway,, she went and brought the car round to the front I jumped in beside her and said, your Dad wants me to learn to drive the wagon Elsie, so I'll first watch if I may, oh yes she said, you'll soon get the hang of it really,, there's nothing to it but the best way is to drive as much as you can, that way you will think nothing of it, in no time at all, but you must try and remember everything you are shown,, at first you think that you'll never pick it up, then suddenly it comes to you just like riding a cycle, well Peter, here we are, now if you would ask Joe Rimmerin there to fill it up,, he'll know what to do and Peter, yes Elsie, good luck on your driving,, thank you ~~El~~ Elsie I said. Joe checked the car over, ^{and} filled it with gasoline, ^{then} asked Elsie to the sheet ^{sign} of paper then she was off, giving me a wave and a smile. Joe came back into the garage, and what can I do for you he said, I explained who I was and what I wanted,, Joe said it would be no trouble at all, he would be round on Monday morning, ^{Then} ~~I~~ we'd take it from there, I thanked him and walked on home. Mum was in the kitchen I greeted her with a smile then told her all she needed to know about my day, I explained that I had to go to the yard on Monday to learn to drive the new wagon, it was just so that I could drive if and when I was needed because Elsie Spencer was a little wild with her driving and the boss was'nt quite happy when riding while she was at the wheel. I knew that Sarah would be in ~~the~~ the shop so I told Mum I would take my suit off and put something else on then go and see her, Mum said that tea would be ready in an hour and Bob would be coming, He wanted a word, right Mum I said and went up stairs ^{to} change.. that done I went to the chip shop,. I walked in, it was a bit steamy and the windows had lines down where condensation had occurred, Ivy was serving she shouted Sarah, there's a chap come to see you, can you spare a minute, Sarah came from the kitchen wiping her hands on her pinny, yes she said and looked up, Ivy she said,, I'll get you one of these days,, hiya darling,, had a nice day, come through and in future don't wait to be asked,, I followed her through into the kitchen we kissed each other and while she was getting some more fish ready to take into the shop, I told her how my day had been but, not everything,, then I explained about next Thursday evening,, that will be lovely she said, but who's going to mind the shop, and look after the money, I said that Mum and Dad would be happy to do it, Ivy and Bob would be in as well so that was fixed up,, I went through to Ivy and explained to her about it she seemed quite happy about it and said she would mention it to Bob

Dad popped in on his way home and I took him through to Sarah. She smiled and said hello. Dad, I can see you've had a hard day, would you like a cup of tea to my surprise he said yes please Sarah love, have you any old news paper though, Sarah said go on Peter, be a darling and fetch a paper from Iwy, Iwy had a stack of them for wrapping fish and chips in, I pinched one and took it to Dad, here you are Dad I said as I handed it to him, thanks son he said, then he spread it out on a chair and sat on it, as he took his pipe out he remarked that his clothes were a bit sooty, Sarah said Dad, your a very thoughtful chap now here's a cup of tea and Peter can tell you what he's been up to today. Dad took a sip of the tea and looked for the sugar and a spoon, I gave them to him, now Peter he said, lets be hearing from you, I told Dad roughly what transpired then I mentioned about Joe Rimmer coming to the yard to teach me to drive the wagon, Dad said, Ay Peter lad, its all happening is'nt it I nodded then I mentioned about next Thursday evening, he said jokingly, Well now, let me consult my diary, I might be dining with the Mayor that night, on second thoughts, I think I'll give him a miss this time, yes, I think I can persuade your mother to accompany me here, although, I shall want a fish supper for both of us with plenty of salt and winagar followed with a nice cup of tea, hows that for a bargain, Sarah had heard it all and came in and said, it'll be a pleasure sir, I think that is how things ought to be, but, don't forget my Mother may be back, if she is, I'm sure that she will be very pleased with the arrangements, she might even ask Bob to nip down to the local with a couple of jugs, I think we have two large ones somewhere hung up.

Dad smiled and said, just you try and keep me away, I know that Mum will come if its only to keep her eye on me, so thats settled then, come on Peter, lets go and break the news to your Mother, then We'll get our tea. Sarah, do you want anything for your tea, Dad asked, no thanks Dad, we've got something ready its cooking in the oven, Iwy made it just send your son back please Sarah said. Dad and I went home to have our tea, Mum was just putting it out, Bob was already there and sat down at the table, Dad accepted the fact that our house was open house as far as Josh and Bob were concerned, when we were younger he used to go and bring them sometimes, if they wanted to stay the night, he went round and told their parents then he would put them to bed himself while my Mum went to their parents for a good matter. Now, how many parents would do that sort of thing today.

After the usual greetings, we sat down Dad having had a swill, and Mum put the meal out, pea soup with big chunks of ham in followed by spotted dick and custard, Bob had two helpings of each, for once I just had the one, well I'd had a big lunch. After we had eaten, Bob and I washed up, just as we were finishing, Dad came in as he often did and asked us if we needed any help, I said no thanks, Mum didn't want any breaking, Dad flicked some water at me out of the sink, I ducked and Bob got the lot, Mum came in then and said, where's my rolling pin, I left it here somewhere, Dad and Bob ran out and I wasn't far behind, we got back into the kitchen and sat down, Dad said, Peter lad, when your mother's brewed the tea, will you fill the kettle up again for me I must have a good wash right Dad I said I'll just put some coal on the fire, I picked up the coal kettle, it was about half full, I emptied most of it on the fire, Bob said give it here Pete, I'll go and fill it for you, It'll save going later, he took it out and filled it up.

When Bob came in with the coal scuttle, he put it down and went into the back kitchen and washed his hands, he came back with mine and Dad's pint pots of tea, Mum followed with his and her own cups, we sat down then asked Bob what he wanted to see us about, he began, Ivy tells me that you want to get married the same time as us, is that right Peter, I answered in the affirmative, he was relieved, I could tell by his face, a double wedding he said, well yes I said, if it's alright with us, you don't need to ask that Peter, it was what we were hoping would happen, I'm pleased about that, I know Ivy is, how about Sarah, I said, we'll have a talk about it when Sarah's Mum gets back and sort everything out properly then, it's no use arranging a bit here and there, we'll organise a meeting of all concerned at the chip shop or here when Sarah's Mum gets back, I turned to my parents and looked for their approval, they both nodded and so that was settled. Bob and I put our coats on and went to the chip shop, tea time was over and the blind was down so we knocked Sarah came to the door and said, go away, come back later, we knocked again and louder, she lifted the blind a little saw us and let us in. I'm sorry she said but I thought it was more customers, they can't read some of them, I told her to calm down, and turn the light down in the shop oh she said, I never thought of that, she turned it down, I locked the door behind me and walked through, Bob was kissing Ivy and Sarah said Peter love I'm sorry but we have been busy and I'm so tired let me sit down for a bit I told her to relax, Ivy said that she would get the tea out of the oven, would I make them a brew, I obliged, Bob stoked the fire up and put a couple of cobs on, the place was nice and warm in no time, Sarah went to the table and Ivy gave her a plate of shepherd's pie Sarah ate it and said Ivy, when Mum comes back, would you like to stay on a bit say another couple of weeks, I would like to have a couple of days free to get some jobs done and get some shopping done, you'll get paid of course Ivy said, I'll speak to Mum and let her know then, she won't mind provided I tell her first I'll go home tomorrow and let her know, I'll be back in time for you opening at dinner, Sarah said thanks Ivy then Sarah nodded off to sleep. We kept quiet so as not to wake her, Ivy said, the poor girl can't help it Peter, I said I knew all about it so Ivy left it at that. Bob asked about Irene and the house job, I said that we never broke a promise so we would go and help out this weekend, Mum would help in the shop a bit, she liked doing that and Sarah could take it a bit easy, Dad would pop in from time to time to see that everything was alright and we could get on with the job. Bob said that he had given his notice in at work and was on his last week, he hoped he had done the right thing, I told him then that he needn't be short of money he knew that and I had a proposition to put to him but in a month's time, not before, he thanked me and said, Ivy, do you need some more spuds doing Ivy looked and said, better had Bob love, there's only a bucket full ready, Bob said, I'll get cracking then, I'm getting quite good at it now, off he went and prepared some more potatoes for opening time, Ivy started on the fish, I checked the fires in the shop. Sarah opened her eyes yawned and said, is it opening time yet, I kissed her and told her no, we would have a drink first and I would make it, she excused herself and went to the back, when she returned, she washed her hands and went upstairs to her room when she came down again she said, now Peter my darling, where's that tea you promised.

I had made the tea by them so I poured her a cup, I took one in to Bob and put one down by Ivy, after pouring a cup for myself, I sat down next to Sarah, I explained what was happening at the weekend and Sarah said, can I go with you on Sunday then, I said why not, Sarah put her empty cup on the table, and stood up, she looked at the clock, I'll start frying now she said, I'm much better at the moment Peter, I said that I had checked the fires and they seemed in order she thanked me and went into the shop, put some chips into the fryer and then lifted the blind, then she unlocked the door, there were two youngsters waiting, they had a shilling wrapped in a note, they handed it over to Sarah, it read please two fish and chips ta, Sarah waited until the chips were done meanwhile Ivy had put some fish on and they were ready, the kids were served, they were given the right change wrapped in the same note, the two parcels of fish and chips and Sarah gave them both a couple of chips each and then told them to go straight home. the customers drifted in and out all night until closing time then Sarah said right, that's it finish, she pulled the blind down and locked the door, there were four fish left, I put two shillings in the till and took the few chips that were left Sarah had a few mushy peas left, I said to Bob, supper Bob, how about you Ivy, she turned me down, Sarah wanted the rest of the pie that was in the oven so Bob and I ate the fish suppers and Sarah had the pie Ivy cut herself a cheese sandwich, then came the cleaning, half an hour and the job was done, Sarah put the light out in the shop and Bob said he was ready for home, Ivy and he said goodnight and off they went. I locked the door behind them and went back into the kitchen, Sarah was sat down waiting for the telephone to ring, five minutes, then it rang, I left them to it, girl talk was 'nt my forte, I checked the back door and made the fire safe then I went into the shop and checked round, everything was alright. Sarah finished on the phone and asked me to have a quick word with her mother, I held the earpiece and said in a very pleasant voice, Hello mother dear she answered I'm alright my pet, how are you, oh fine I said, just fine, Sarah's a bit under the weather yes I know poor girl, but give her a couple of days, she'll be right as rain again look after her now wont you Peter, I answered, yes mother I most certainly will, when will you be coming back, I've missed you you know, I'll probably be back Tuesday night Peter love, she said, I said that if possible I would meet her at the station if she could find out the time of arrival, she promised to let me know later then she hung up. My mother's saving some furniture for us Peter darling, but the problem is, where to store it. I said that was great and storage was no problem, I would fix that up alright. Peter, Sarah said, I want to go home now please, I said, well, lets get going then. I've already checked round, everything's in order so put your coat on my dear and we'll be home in a couple of minutes, Sarah put her coat on and we left the shop, the door was secure and all the lights were out. when we got home Mum was just going to bed, Sarah, my mum said, I've put a hot water bottle in your bed so you'll be alright and Peter, yes Mum, I said, she said, don't stop too long love, let Sarah go to bed, yes Mum I said, goodnight Mum, Mum said goodnight and Sarah said Peter I must go, wait for me please I'll not be long, Sarah went to the back, she was washing her hands when I looked next so I checked the back door kissed Sarah goodnight, saw her upstairs and went out, locking the door behind me and off to bed at Josh's house.

In that case Uncle Tim, I'll have to go and weigh the job up first, I don't want to make a hash of my first job starting on my own, after all, it will be a good advertisement for me, I might get more work when they see that eh, Dad and I agreed with him. Sarah came bouncing in and said look who's come to see us, Elsie Spencer breezed in, hello everybody she smiled, Sarah said I never guessed you were the Elsie from school, well, I am ~~so~~ surprised, fancy and Peter working for your Dad, what a turn up, how are you anyway, I think we're coming to your house next Thursday evening for dinner, that's simply marvelous, Elsie said, now that I know, I can't wait, I'll tell you what, I'll come and pick you up quarter past seven and I promise Peter I'll not try to scare you to death this time, Sarah said, lovely Elsie, We'll be ready, but come to Peter's I'll be waiting there right Sarah love, I'll do that, now she said Peter would you introduce me please, I did the necessary introductions and Elsie said, Mister Nelson, what fine strong hands you have, My dad had to say, the better to hold you with my dear, we all laughed, Elsie said Dad likes his fish and chips on the quiet you know, when I tell him where I got them, He'll be over the moon anyway, I'll get going, he'll be waiting so, don't forget Sarah, Thursday, I'm looking forward to it, so am I Sarah said, Elsie said, night all as she picked up her parcel and jumped in her car, Sarah waved as she drove off. Sarah came back into the shop and said, that girl helped me a lot at school, she's older than I am and befriended me when the other girls were catty, none of them dare say anything when she was with me, she was a real tom boy but a good sport, I'm glad she lives in the district, Peter you don't know what a good friend she can be, and mind you, she is very clever and can handle herself very well. I'm glad you've met her Sarah darling I said, Bob said, I've seen her knocking about but never she was old Spencer's lass Ivy came in then and said, there tailing off now Sarah, Dad said, I'll take Mum some back Sarah lass if you have any left, Ivy said, there's half a dozen fish yet and a good couple of scoops of chips Uncle, how many do you want, fish and chips twice Ivy love, and here's the money, now take it and put it in the till like a good girl, Ivy took the money, Sarah said Bob, do you want the other that's left, you've worked here all week and taken nothing, Bob said, that's what friends are for Sarah, Sarah said, never mind that Bob, I know all about that, take what's left, there's little Geoff, your mam and Dad and not forgetting yourself so take them please then I can shut shop, there's a good chap, Bob said yes alright Sarah and thank you, Sarah replied, no Bob thank you. Ivy received some money from Sarah, she looked at it and said, oh Sarah, are you sure certainly Ivy she said your worth it love and thank you, Ivy thanked her and went home with Bob after wrapping up the suppers. I followed them to the door and locked it, then I rolled the window blind down and turned the light out in the shop. Dad looked at the time and said it was time he went, I asked Sarah to show him the watch, she opened the draw drawer and brought it out, Dad looked at it, breathed on it and polished it then said, what a beautiful time piece, Peter you must be very proud, Sarah love, this is absolutely exquisite, I've never seen such a watch in all my born days, it must have cost a fortune, Well dad Sarah said, it was my father's, and mother suggested I gave it to Peter, it will stay in the family won't it darling, I said of course my love and it will be treasured.

I only saw Josh on a couple of occasions before Friday evening but I managed to have a quick word about the job at the house in Larkhill road set for Saturday and Sunday, he mentioned that Irene had been busy at the hospital and was due a couple of days off, Irene had got some food in ready for weekend and arranged for ladders and bits and pieces to be taken from the factory by horse and cart, sand and a couple of bags of cement was already at the house, Josh said that he understood that cement was better than lime and was being used more and more now in the building trade so he asked Irene to get some I told Josh he had done right and asked about the brickwork, did it need pointing, were there any bricks for replacement, had he been on the roof and inspected it, could he tell me of any dampness or leaks, did the windows rattle, Josh held his hand up, Peter he said, I'M a plumber remember, he said, I have been on the roof, a little reslating is necessary, not much, and a few windows do rattle, as far as pointing goes, you make your own mind up when you see it, there are some replacement bricks and yes there is a bit of damp here and there but as far as he could tell, not a great lot to worry about. I told Josh, he would make a foreman yet if he put his mind to it, but he had done very well indeed, if he'd have been working for me, I might have given him a rise, Josh I said, your a dam good man to have arround so how about being my best man as well, we're having a double wedding, Josh didn't look surprised, he said, I was wondering when that would crop up so now I'll tell you Pete, he paused then he said, I would have been upset if I wasn't, now you know, lets get back to thinking about that job, Its going to be a bit of a tight squeeze getting everything done on time but I dare say we might just make it. He rubbed his hands together then said, Pete, do you think we could get a joiner in to give us a lift, I mean, there's plenty of woodwork to be done as well you know and although we can do a bit between us, we'll have to have an expert for certain parts. I said, Josh, this is your show, your the boss, and if you think we should then by all means get one but Josh, get a good one, one who's willing to muck in and help out with any job and he's got to be good company as well, we don't want any arguentative blokes on this job. Josh said he knew of a chap who might fit the bill and he would see him that night. I made arrangements to see him at the house early the next morning. I took myself off to the chippy, they were busy as usual, Sarah was stirring the chips in one of the vats, Ivy was wrapping suppers up for a woman, a stranger to me but Ivy said she knew her, she was just passing through and smelled the shop so she had decided to try them, Ivy said that she lived over the furniture shop in Brewery street, her husband was at sea and she waited on in a cafe in town. Sarah asked me to take peas off the stove before they started burning in the pan, and put them on the sink a bit, I ~~went~~ ^{went} through to the kitchen, Dad was in talking to Bob, Bob looked up, smiled and said, Pete, your Dad has asked me to go to the smithy and paint them a new sign, and the new lean to that's just been put up, I'll have to get hold of that chap I met at night school you know, the one who did Susan's portrait, he's a proper signwriter now and does a good job, Bob turned to Dad, how big do you want it Uncle Tim, He always called Dad that, oh, Dad said it has to fit over the arch, not right across and not too low down, I don't want horses banging their heads on it when I want them inside.

My Dad was moved with emotion, as Sarah put the watch back in the drawer, son, he said, Sarah and her mother are putting a lot of faith in you letting you have that, to them, it must be priceless, that proves beyond doubt the love they must have for you, I know that you will try and live up to their expectations, just promise your mother and I that when you're married, you'll keep your vows that you make in church and from that moment on, that Sarah is number one in your life and we, your own parents are your reserve, our only wish is for you both to be good to each other, respect each other, and be happy. We will always love you both and stand by you but one thing boy, never forget your roots, any problems, let's all share each other as a family, Don't keep them to yourself. That's what I want to say I am not one for lectures as a rule but I just had to say that. Dad, Sarah said, as she went and kissed him, that was lovely and we won't forget it will we darling, she looked at me as I shook my head in response, I cleared my throat and said, Dad, that was the longest speech I've ever heard you make and I will never forget it, I do promise and thank you for it. He stood up, nodded his head and said I'd best be getting back to mother, I hope the supper's not gone cold, Sarah brought them from the shop, they had been kept warm in the chip range, Dad felt them and said, oh yes they're fine, I'll not wait up, I suppose your mother's going to ring anytime eh, yes Dad, every night, so if Peter will let you out, I'll wait, Dad walked through the shop saying, good night to us, I followed and let him out, as he stepped outside, I put my hand on his shoulder and squeezed but said nothing, Dad did the same to me then set off home, I called, goodnight Dad, he just waved and kept on walking. Sarah was talking to her mother when I got back in, I motioned to her that I would like a word later, she nodded, I strolled into the back kitchen and checked the door, everything was secure, so I went and stood with my back to the fire and waited for Sarah's call, after a while I grew a little impatient then Sarah called, she had been writing something down that her mother had dictated to her, she handed me the phone and kissed the side of my face, I squeezed her arm gently and said through the mouthpiece, Hello mother, how's my second girl friend she liked that and said, Peter dear, I've written to my lawyer asking him to sell this house, he will write back to that address, the letter might arrive before I do on Tuesday so when it arrives, I want Sarah to open it and then ring me up and tell me what it says I'm letting you know this because you know then that it's alright and not to worry, have you got that Peter, I said yes mother, can I have a word, yes dear, what is it she said, well I said, I'm going to get Sarah's friend to pick you up from the station on Tuesday, she has a motor car, Oh she said, you mean Elsie, I said yes, and I'll bring Sarah, how's that, wonderful dear boy, ~~mother~~ wonderful, now let me tell you, I've sent a lot of furniture in fact a whole van load to Avenham on the train, when it gets there, have we somewhere to put it, in storage I mean, I told her I would arrange it but when would it be due to arrive, she said Monday Peter, I said that would be fine and I would get the railway to deliver it with their wagon to where I directed them. Sarah's mother seemed satisfied with the arrangements then said Bye love, put Sarah back on a second will you please, I handed the phone back to Sarah, after a short while she hung up. Sarah turned to me and said, Peter love, will you see Elsie about my mother or what, I replied that I would ask her Dad or better still,

Why don't you ring her up,, they have a telephone you know,, yes Peter,, I can have a talk ~~with her~~ with her and ask her then. On the way home, I mentioned about helping Josh in the morning,, Sarah said that she was going shopping in the afternoon with Mum and reminded me about going to see the vicar along with Bob and Ivy after tea,, I promised I would be back in time for that and to make sure that there was some hot water ready for when I got home I would probably need it. After seeing Sarah safely indoors and on her way to bed,, I let myself out of our house and went to Josh's. He was waiting for me when I arrived,, hiya Pete he said,, tomorrow still on them,, he said,, yes,, why not,, I asked oh nothing Josh answered,, I managed to get hold of Ding dong you know,, Norman, Norman Bell,, standard seven,, him as made that foot stool for the school caretaker so he could reach the windows to shut them,, oh ay, I said,, you mean four eyes don't you,, yes I remember him now, come to think of it,, he went to work for Kipps,, joiners in Peddar street,, that's him Peter,, well,, he served his time with them and when he was twenty one,, they wouldn't pay him his right rate so he Jacked in,, he's doing odd jobs when he can, till he can get on regular somewhere,, it was him who put that lean to up where your Dad is, your Dad says it's a good job so anyway,, I told him to come up tomorrow and we'll see what he can do, right Josh I said,, you do what you think's best, is he getting out for doing it I asked,, I'll give him a few bob then if he does a good job, I've told him I'll see about getting him some more work well, we'll see what happens eh,, that's fine by me Josh I answered, now, I'm going to kip, and be ready early tomorrow Josh, no laying in, Oh and Josh,, yes Pete he said,, I said goodnight, goodnight Pete he said,, He locked up and we both went to bed. We were lucky the following day,, Norman was waiting for us with his tools and Josh took him round and showed him what he wanted doing,, the man was a good joiner who got on with the job without much talking,, I set to pointing, and worked fast, round a couple of windows,, just above a doorway and three or four bricks to replace then there were a few coping stones skew wiff I had to straighten, that was the front done. Dimmer time came and Irene brought a basket with hot pies in,, Bob,, who had arrived just after us had put the kettle on and Irene brought out mugs,, tea and milk, the sugar was already in the cupboard along with a few plates and bits and pieces, we sat down and ate two pies each,, Bob asked Irene about the colours of paint she wanted on the woodwork and whether or not she wanted the ceiling painting and the frieze in certain rooms Irene said that Bob was better at choosing so she would leave it to him. Josh had to go and get some more piping to replace some that was corroded,, when he got back, He found that Ivy had turned up with Sarah and they were both doing some washing and scrubbing, I asked Sarah about her going shopping, she said that Mum would get what was wanted for now and Dad was going as well, so she thought she and Ivy would come for a bit and help and make sure that we got back in time to see the vicar, Bob said jokingly that he had decided to write him a letter, he had't time to go galavanting round vicarages at night, he had a lot of work to catch up on. Perhaps we could go in his place. I pretended to kick him on his backside, he put his hands up and said, alright, alright, I give in, then he turned to Ivy and said,, can't we elope or something,, I don't think my heart will stand all this strain, I'm only a weak man you know,, we all laughed.

After our pie dinner, I walked round to the back of the house to check the brickwork, I found no real defects apart from a patch that needed pointing under the pantry window, on my way back to pick up my gear, I noticed opposite the back door, just on the other side of the path, an unusual depression in the ground, I investigated and found it to be the opening to a rather strange underground chamber, there were three steps down in a type of doorway, I went down and looked in, the wall all round was stone and what looked like two shelves, one above the other made up of stone slabs, the room was damp and dead leaves and twigs littered the earth floor, the ceiling or roof was also made of stone, the place had been well built and was there for a specific purpose, I wondered what. I noticed old wheel ruts that seemed to go towards the garden gate, I followed them and they led to the roadway, I retraced my steps thinking about how it would be a few years ago, then ^{the} sun shone on the back door, I thought of warm sunny days and then it struck me, it must have been an ice storage chamber, there was no door so I guessed that no food would be stored in there, that must be it then, I called Josh and took him to see it, he was ~~surpr~~ surprised and went for Irene, she was delighted to see it and said that it was what I thought it was, she said that it could be left for the time being, when her parents came, they would decide about it then. I did the bit of pointing, tidied up a bit then gave Bob a lift, Norman came in and borrowed some steps, he told us that he needed a bit more wood for one of the floors in an upstairs room, there were three floor boards missing just why, he didn't know, I went with him to see for myself and sure enough, they were missing. Josh shouted up, are you looking for floor boards, we answered yes, where are they, he came up and said, I had to take them up so that I could put new pipes in, if you look, you'll see the pipes leading through, there's a bath to go in here, and if I can manage it a lavatory as well, they're coming next week along with some more pipes and stuff, that's what Irene said, so that's what she gets, well, she is paying, now we'll get new wood for there, then we know it will be safer, the joists under here will hold anything, and Pete, there'll be a bit more brickying to do when I've knocked a hole or two in the wall for the pipes, but that can wait till the bath and petty have been put in. I'll get some new wood on Monday, they'll be shut now so Monday, Norman, and maybe all week, we'll see, and while I'm at it, I'll pay ^{you} proper rate, Irene said so, and with them, money's no object but, let's see what you've done so far. The three of us went round Norman soon showed us that he was no gobbler, he knew his job alright and proved it, his work was finished properly and what impressed me was how tidy he was, I said, Norman, when Josh has finished this job, I might be able to find you permanent work, if you come and see me, anyhow, think it over will you, Norman said yes Peter, I most certainly will. Time was getting on and Bob suggested we call it a day, a lot had been done and Irene was quite happy with what had been achieved so far, we arranged to go again the next day and Irene said that Ivy would be coming and making the dinner, Sarah would be helping her as well, Irene had to go to the hospital for half a day, she would come on later. We went home and Sarah wanted a good wash first, so I went to Josh's house for a while, Josh asked me about some work if he needed it later, I told him, that if anything came up, I would let him know and he could make his mind up then, he knew that I would always see him alright and he needn't worry.

I returned to our house in thoughtful mood, I had suddenly ~~realised~~ realised that my life was going to change dramatically, physically, socially, and therefore mentally, I hoped that I could cope with the situation, I was not afraid but I sincerely hoped that no one got hurt in the process least of all myself, I must therefore think very carefully about every proposition and situation that I was confronted with in the future. So far in my life, I had been very fortunate, I was indeed a lucky man, I must try and justify the faith, reliance, and good will towards me, I resolved to prove I was worthy of it all and that I would not shirk my responsibilities. I knocked on the door, (I had given Sarah my key) Dad opened it with a greeting, my mother was laying the table, she looked up, noticed a smile on her lips as she greeted me, Peter she said, wash your hands, we'll have our teas before you have a wash and change, the water's not quite hot enough for you yet, alright Mum I said, Sarah came out of the back kitchen looking well scrubbed and shiny just like a new doll, I said Hello Love, you see how clean you can look if you use a bit of carbolic, cheeky she said, anyway, I've got you a scraper out for your skin, by the looks of you you'll need it. I said, Sarah my love, when I'm through, you'll think, who's that handsome young chap, you won't know me, Mum broke the banter up with saying come on everybody let's have our tea before it gets cold. Mum had made a hot pot again she had made the crust separately, I never once heard Sarah say that she didn't like this or that, now to me, that in a woman is unusual to say the least but not my Sarah, I was thankful for that. After tea Sarah went home to change, I had a good bath in the backyard shed then I got changed, I was putting my tie on when Elsie Spencer came in, she invited Sarah and I to a dinner dance at the masonic temple, it seemed that her Dad had two tickets for this particular ladies night and had forgotten all about them until he had looked in his diary, I mentioned that we were going to the vicarage and she said, that's alright, it doesn't start until seven thirty and she would pick us up and drop us off afterwards well I said I haven't got a black bow tie, oh she said dad has plenty, he'll let you have one, and Elsie I said I must tell Sarah then she can put the right kind of dress on. Elsie said that she would pop round and tell her and not to worry. As she was leaving, Bob and Ivy came in and I explained what had happened, to them it was a Godsend, they were glad because they had arranged to go with Josh and Irene to see a play in town but could only get four seats, they were all booked up and they were going to meet us later in a pub in town before going on somewhere for a bite to eat. Now, I thought, lucky again, I wonder why, ah well accept it while you can but don't forget to thank God for it, that doesn't cost anything. Elsie dropped Sarah off at our house again, she was very excited and said that she would get changed after going to the vicarage, she didn't feel right going to see a vicar in an evening gown so she thought it best not to, besides, we would have plenty of time after, I said alright then let's get going. Bob and I were a little apprehensive as the reverend gentleman ushered us into his study, we explained why we had come to see him, he in turn told us what we had to do and know, then he said that we must see him again the following week on the Friday night when the proper arrangements could be finalised. The reverend P Sheldon was in his early forties a courteous man and inclined to be a bit fussy, he nevertheless made us feel at home and said that he would be only too happy to

conduct the **THE CEREMONY**

We left the vicarage and said cheerio to Ivy and Bob then wended our way to the chip shop, when we arrived, the telephone was ringing, Sarah answered it, it was Mister Spencer, he apologized about the short notice and asked us if everything was alright, Sarah said yes thank you and we would see him later, he said that he had a bow tie for Peter and he (Peter) was not to worry, his dress was perfectly good enough to have drinks spilled on it. When he rang off Sarah said, well Peter my love, it looks like you'll have to buy an evening dress Does'nt it darling, I said I suppose your right Sarah, I'll see what happens. Sarah went upstairs and changed then she called me up to fasten her dress at the back, I did it quickly then kissed her and went down stairs again so that there would be nothing to be sorry for later. Sarah knew what I was doing and said so, then she kissed me and said its a good thing you did that Peter, I think I would have allowed you, promise or no promise. Still, its not for long now darling, I replied that it was a good thing that it was'nt. Elsie was on time, Mister Spencer was waiting on the doorstep for us, I noticed that he had electric lighting and it seemed a lot brighter than the gas light, he greeted us with a smile then ~~looked~~ looked at Sarah and said, so your Sarah, my daughter's talked a lot about Sarah King, I must say miss King your positively beautiful, and that dress, it suits you, now Peter, you want a bow tie well come in to my study and we'll fix you up, the boss took us through and opened a drawer, he turned to look at my jacket, Hmm he said put this dark brown one on, that should do it, he held it to the jacket, that will be alright Peter, now, have you ever tied a bow tie Sarah, Sarah said not, so the boss said let Elsie show you, she ties mine for me, Elsie said now watch Sarah, with deft fingers Elsie had it tied in less than a minute there she said how's that, Sarah said I'm afraid Elsie I'll have to practice to get it right, you are an expert, no, Elsie said it took me a while before I got the hang of it but you're right, it takes a bit of practice, the boss gave us a glass of sherry each and then we set off, Sarah sat with Elsie at the front, the journey did'nt take long and we were entering the ~~masonic~~ masonic hall in less than twenty minutes. While the ladies were putting their coats away, the boss took me to the bar, he ordered himself a beer and asked me my pleasure, I assured him it was beer, we waited for the girls to enter the lounge then I went to ask them if they wanted a Pint pot each, they laughed and said, no thank you, they both preferred a drop of lemonade because the night was young, I was told by the boss that I could not buy a drink at the bar because I was not a member but, that could be put right at a later date. He paid for the drinks and I took them over, the boss came with me and said that we were his personal guests and would be treated as such. At that moment, a man came along and said ladies and gentlemen, dinner is served, mister Spencer said, just follow me, we entered a large banqueting hall, I would estimate that there were well over a hundred people sitting down to dine, at each ladies place round the tables, was a ladies fan and a fancy little book with a pencil that slipped onto the side, I understand that this was for writing in the name of the partner for a particular dance, first, grace was said by a member of the cloth, then the meal was served in the different courses. After the dinner which was served with wine, we had the loyal toast then cigars and cigarettes were handed round, with liquors if you wanted, it was a grand affair. When it was over, the dancing

Commenced, they were the usual run of the mill dances, walse, quick step, slow fox trot, military two step, saint Bernard's walse and the gay gordons, during the interval, they had a raffle, we won nothing, balloons and streamers were all over the place and the band which was highly professional, played one or two requests which I thought was very nice. Elsie dropped us off at our house as promised in the early hours so after thanking the boss and Elsie for a wonderful evening, they drove home and we went indoors. Sarah kissed me and said that she 'd^{Had} a marwelous time and hoped that there would be more of them, I agreed with her and said that if things worked out right for us, there might well be. I reminded Sarah about the job to do later that morning and said that I would pick her up at nine,

I kissed her, said see you, and as she was going upstairs, I slipped out and away to my bed at Josh's. I woke at about twenry past eight that morning, I went home to find Mum up and about, stirring the fire, I greeted her and told her of the time we had, then I took the ashea out for her, I had a pint of tea and asked Mum to get me my clothes from my room, she said there was no need to because Sarah was awake and getting dressed, a minute or two later, Sarah came down, yawned, smiled at me then wished Mum and I good mornig. Neither Sarah or I wanted breakfsat, Sarah had a drink then we were on our way to Larkhill road. Irene met us at the door and said that she had just brewed, Josh came through and told me he wanted a lift withan awkward cistern he was trying to manipulate into the top of a cupboard upstairs, after we had had some tea, we bothclimbed the stairs, Josh was all excited, the cistern was an excuse to get me on my own so that he could tell me that he and Irene had slept together in the house overnight and was pleased at the result I told Josh never to divulge any thing that went on between them, it was personal between them and Irene must not know that I knew, Josh looked crestfallen, I Told him that although we were inseparable mates, thats one thing that we must not talk about, that was a secret between him and her and thats how it must remain, Right said Josh, I'm sorry, I guess I did'nt think, I asid, thats alright Josh, but Mums the word, he answered that he would be more discreet in the future so we let it drop at that. We were securing the cistern when Irene popped in, she asked how we were doing I answered that it was nearly fixed and then Irene said, what have you two been talking about, I told her, Oh just men's talk Irene why, she said nothing really only I want to tell you that when my parents get back, Josh and I want to tell them that we want to get married, I don't suppose that there will be any problem, its just that Josh wanted you to be the first to know, then we can tell the others, I said, Irene, thats very nice of you, this year will be known as the year of the weddingsanyway, good luck to you both, Irene thanked me then said, oh and by the way Peter, if we can get this place ready imtime, we'll have a nice Big House warming and you'r all invited, Next week, I'm getting some of the ~~fasiaatazesh~~ furniture out of storage, thats iff the electricians get the lighting fixed, they should be here next week, that means Bob will have more to do, but we'll see what kind of a mess they make first. Josh said that when the bath is put in with hot and cold water, I would have to patch up as well so we were going to be very busy indeed, I said that as long as it did'nt interfere with our wedding plans it was alright. We went down the stairs and I told Josh not to forget the wood for the floor boards on the other hand, wait untill the

Lighting has been put in , that way you won't need to make two journeys for wood, I'll remember said Josh,, I'm just going to measure up the windows for the blinds,, I didn't know there were so many different things to think of,, it makes my head spin, I told Josh not to panic there would be plenty of time for everything provided it was planned properly,, Josh then asked me if I could help him plan then,, I told him yes,, provided that he got Irene to help as well,, after all it was ^{her} thing,, we were helping out and she might want a few changes of course you're right Pete he said,, I can't think straight today. I whispered to him,, in that case Josh ,, you want to lay off for a bit, he laughed and said,, I'd be a damn sight worse I think Pete. I said I was going to help Bob a bit, he was putting tiles on the wall in the kitchen ,, Bob was doing alright,, the fire was burning well,, the oven was on,, something smelled good and a couple of pans were boiling away merrily,, Bob said,, now then Pete,, come to see what's cooking,, I answered no, I've come to give you a lift if you want one. Well Pete he said, the lassies are in there,, pointing to the next room I guessed would be the dining room, Bob continued,, I've finished it and they're discussing where what goes. Did you know that Irene's getting a chandelier and where I've had to leave bare wall, big mirrors, and some sort of bells for ringing for a maid or cook or something like that ,, they must have a bit of brass you know Pete,, I said ,, well as long as we do a good job, that's all that matters,, I suppose when it's really furnished,, we won't recognise the place, I checked the pans on the stove,, they were nearly boiled dry so I shouted for Ivy, she came running in ,, Yes Peter she said I pointed to the pans, she looked ,, Oh I see she said a drop more water in, that should fix it,, she took a jug and put a drop of water in each pan then she opened the oven door and I said ,, my Ivy love,, that smells great ,, beef I said, yes ,, and a big piece too,, she began basting it and then, pushed it back in the oven and checked the yorkshire pudding, yes that was alright,, after closing the oven door she said,, ten minutes at the most then dinner. Sarah poked her head round the door Peter she said, I've been weighing things up ,, I wonder how much it would cost us to buy a new house ,, I suppose you've been thinking on the same lines eh darling, I mean,, what with all the cleaning and repairs and decorating and painting that needs to be done in one that's been well lived in,, oh you know what I mean Sarah I said,, lets just calm down a bit shall we and I'll tell you what I ~~propose~~ propose later, just now, I'm up to here,, I raised my hand above my head,, now, we'll have some dinner, then tonight when we go home,, we'll talk about things then Oh and Sarah love,, I went to see uncle Ted about that furniture that's coming ,, he has an empty place for us to use as long as we want,, it's snuff dry and clean,, I'm taking it there and I'll see him right,, these storage firms in town cost a lot and the stuffs not always safe so I thought it best,, is that alright with you petal,, that's fine darling,, I spoke to Elsie about picking mother up and she said that she would be delighted,, Elsie's only met mother twice you know and she seemed to like her then, so that's fixed up,, oh and she said that she would love to be a bridesmaid so that lets Irene be Ivy's ,, it's working out up to now you see, I'll be busy at the shop when you go for mother so coming back, will you let mother sit in front with Elsie then she can talk with her on the way back. I told her that mother would please herself where she sat and I wasn't going to interfere. Mother was her own boss and what she said went, as far as I was concerned.

Bob had brought a trestle table specially for paperhanging,, it came in very handy for dining on,, the meal was exelent,, Iwy was a very good cook and Sarah reminded her about staying on with her for a couple more weeks,, Iwy was extremelyhappy because everyone enjoyed the meal and left nothing,, Irene said that when dad got back to England,, he would have a few big bills to pay out but to him,, it would be well worth it,, ~~she~~ ^{SHE} said that although she did'nt want us to think that she was boasting,, her Dad had put up half the money for the hospital, that was said only to prove that her Dad did have a lot of money, We told Irene she did'nt need to prove anything to us,, and that as Josh's girl friend,, she was one of us and no different than any of us, well off, or as poor as a church-mouse, it made no difference,, Josh said,, Irene lowe,, I told you,, now do you believe me, Irene looked at us and said ,, I feel very, very honoured to ^{be} one of you, do you know, I've always been sort of on my own, that is, untill I met with you people,, its so nice and comforting to know I have some reall friends at long last,, thankyou everybody.. I said I know I speak for every one here Irene whenI say, we are all glad to have you as one of us. Now, we are all faithful to each other, and no matter what,, we always stand by eachother so, thats all we askbut I can see that you are faithful and you will stand by your friends. Right, I said, now who's doing what,, Josh,, you and Irene are running this show,, and I for one amready to get cracking,, the sooner we start the sooner we finish,, where do you want me to start, Josh said, well Pete,, does Bob need you, Bob said no,, not at the moement well how about giving me a lift with a bit of plumbing,, I'm going to put a new lavatory and wash basin in the bathroom. I have made , there's pleny of room and it's easier to connect the pipes, there's a bit of labouring to do and I dare say you'll just about manage it, but if it gets too much for you, then, he got no further ,, I threw a wet cloth at him, he laughed and said ,come on, lets get th e job done Pete, and off we went. The girls washed up and did a bit of cleaning,, I told them they could pack in, they had done very well and deserved a restso,, they made a brew and each to her own,, I got a cup from Sarah,, Bob got one from Iwy and Irene took one to Josh,, we sat down for a few minutes chatted about nothing in particular then went back to work. Josh was proud of the work he had done ,, the lot was tested and proved to be sound,, then he turned to me and said, do you want any plumbers at your works,, I could do with some regular work when this job's finished, I asked him if he meant it he said, well,, yes but only on contract, ,, I told him that I would talk to him about a job during the week, after I had had time to think about it, he thanked me and I told him that if he were short of cash,, he knew he had only to ask, and he replied that we might talk about that some other time. We both went to see if Bob was alright, He had four more tiles to put on, then some grouting to do,, we said that we would do that, he saidno, he wanted to complete the job himself then stand back and admire it, I must admit the pattern was spot on, and the corners fitted perfectly, I said to him, Bob, when you get your own house , you've no excuse for not hawing a perfectly tiled kitchen and bathroom, he said, if I can afford it Pete, I will, dont you worry, the only thing is getting a house decent enough to fit one. We waited till Bob had finished then I helped to clean up then we called it a day.

Sarah and I strolled home arm in arm, tea was on the table when we walked in, Dad asked Sarah about oiling and cleaning the grandfather clock, I really don't know Dad she said, well I'll have to ask old Bobby Preston about it then, He 's retired now but if I ask him to have a look at it, he'll come and show me what's what, Mum said she did'nt want it messing up, she loved to polish it , there was something about that clock that gave her a comfortable feeling as though every time it chimed , it was telling her that all was well. Dad did'nt say much but we could tell that he was proud of it, He touched it every time he came through the front door, I just looked at it in admiration, ~~it~~ was such aa exquisite article, I thought that if I touched it,, something might go wrong,, I Don't know why, but when I stood and looked at it I felt a sense of inalienability, a kind of, you can look, but not touch,, perhaps it was because I was not used to grandeur of that nature, well, not in our house. Mum said let's have our tea shall we, and before I forget Peter, I believe you have a lovely watch from Sarah, can I see it, Dad tells me it's gold, I'd love to see it when I come to the chippy again, Sarah said yes Mum, I want you to see it so if you want, we can go after tea , I have to go in any case I've got a bit of book keeping to do before mother gets back,, that won't take me long though Mum said well you two go on first after tea, me and Dad'll come a bit later. Dad said that if Sarah and I washed up, Mum could start getting ready then we could all go together, Sarah said that she would wipe and put them away,, that meant I did the washing so I took some hot water into the back kitchen and got cracking,, Dad put some slack on the fire and shut the damper,, are you two coming with us tonight after,, we're going for a pint in my local,, they're having a bit of a sing song and I want to get a decent seat , Sarah said that we would certainly like to go,, we 've never been out with you and Mum yet so that would be lovely . We finished the pots and Sarah had a wah and got changed, I had to use cold water for a wash , that did'nt bother me but waiting to get changed was something I found difficult to get used to. Sarah was'nt long so I soon got ready,, I put a polo neck pullover on. As we went out through the front door,, Dad touched the clock,, as if in answer,, it chimed the quarter hour , he smiled to himself and said Hm. A few minutes walk and we were at the chip shop,, Sarah opened the door and we trooped in,, the living room was cold but we where'nt stopping long,, Sarah went straight to the drawer where the watch was kept,, she brought it out and put it in Mum's hand, Oh Sarah she said, its so beautiful I could cry,, isnt it lovely, I've never seen anything like it even in the shops,, it must have cost a fortune, Sarah said, I was never one for hiding beautiful things,, I think they should be shared with the right people of course,, Mum said , Sarah you're a real ^{been} darling, this must have so precious to you, it shows just how much you must love my son,, I will be proud to have you as my daughter , you are such a nice person,, bless you Sarah,, Dad said can I have another look at it , I could sit here and let the world go by just admiring it,, as I said before, Peter is a very lucky man,, I said to Dad, now Dad, you look after the grandfather clock Dad, and I'll look after this one with Sarah's permission , now Peter my love,, as long as you wear it on our wedding day,, thats all I ask,, however,, I must get those books done. Sarah went upstairs and we could hear her moving arround then quiet,, I shouted are you alright Sarah; she answered yes darling, just a few more minutes,

Sarah came down stairs, the watch was put away and we all went to Dad's local, because we were early, we picked which seats we wanted and sat down, Dad went to the bar and ordered two pints of home brewed then turned round and said Sarah, what are you having, she replied, the same as Mum, that meant, two bottles of stout and two glasses, Robin, the landlord said, the two stouts were on the house, he was pleased to see two nice looking ladies in his establishment, they added a touch of class to the place, he hoped we had a nice evening then he went to serve another couple who had just walked in. Ronnie Wolwin was on the piano, he played by ear and wamped a lot but the tunes were popular and everybody sang their hearts out, it was a good night, of course Dad was proud to introduce myself and his future daughter in law to all his pals and the drinks flowed right left and centre, Dad was crafty, he said to Robin that he would get one or two tomorrow night, Robin knew the score and marked them down, at the end of the evening, Mum and Sarah said that they had enjoyed themselves and would come again with Dad and I, perhaps Sarah's mother would like to come with us, we would have to ask her when she got back to Avenham. During supper, I asked Sarah about building a house provided we had the resources, I reckoned that I could just about manage without skimping but we would have to be careful with the money because I didn't want a loan hanging round my neck, Dad said that he would help out, but I said, no thank you Dad, your money was too hard earned and might be needed in later years and what's more, but for him, I wouldn't have as much as I had right now so I told him he had done more than his share for me as it was, Dad insisted so I said, well Dad, Mum, how about buying us a little motor car instead, or part of it, we could go on outings together then and see the country, So he said, that's not a bad idea, we'll give it some thought and let you know in a few days, how does that sound, Oh Dad, I said, that would be just fantastic, what do you think Sarah, Sarah said Peter, I think that we can manage the house as you rightly say and how Dad and Mum spend their money is up to them, I certainly like the idea about the car though and if Mum and Dad approve, then so be it but as you said before, we will manage provided we don't go too fast and make sure that we take a good look round before buying a house, Sarah darling I said, I personally want to build my own house and I have in mind to employ Josh and Bob, you have seen what they can do, now, what do you think, that's a little different love she said, now that's being smart, course you'll want a real good joiner as we'll want you, I said that I was thinking of ding dong, you know, the one we had at Irene's, I think he'd be alright, Sarah said that she thought that he did a good job, Dad said that he never knew how much I had, but he always thought I had a fair bit because I didn't buy silly things and although I wasn't stingy, I never spent a bob where sixpence would do. I said, no Dad, thanks to you and Mum, I've been able to have a little nest egg stashed away knowing that one day it would come in useful, oh and Josh and Bob are ~~not~~ not much less either, they went to the bank with me and always put something in so they are not too badly off anyway, I must admit, that's their business. Sarah said Peter, I was going to tell you that on our wedding day, my mother has a rather large amount of legacy that has been held in trust for me from my father, the interest alone is enough to buy a house and more, in the light of what I've heard tonight I thought it only right

That you should know. I might add, that mother asked me not to divulge this information just yet, so I would glad if you would kindly keep this information untill mother says its alright, you see , mother was pretty well off before she married my father and he had a lot of money himself anyway , when I was born, he put most of it in my name, you see by then, he knew he had'nt long to live, he caught some sort of disease abroad working for the government, his father, left him land and plantations in Cylon, I think it was tea, well he sold those and put the money in trust for me, in the event of my getting married, I was to receive the full amount with interest, well now you know. Peter darling, are we still getting married or have I frightened you off somewhat, I swallowed hard and said, Sarah love, if you want me I am yours, well Peter she said, you must still call the tune you know, and my lawyer will see to it that we don't go off the rails, he was Daddy's best friend and he does'nt need the money, he's my godparent so he must be invited to the wedding. Sarah, for a younglady you have some secrets, tell me I said, how come you picked me, although I'm flattered and so much in love with you, I would'nt care if you had only the clothes you stood up in, I would marry you just the same, Peter, the chip shop is just to show that we can, my mother and I, work, and make a business pay, we did'nt want to be doing nothing all of our lives so we arranged all this with my lawyer and instructed him not to contact us at all for two years, in three weeks Peter my love, that time is up, and mother and I intend giving him a shock, you see, he did'nt think we would survive so long but, we've shown that we can, and will, and we will not be dictated to by anyone, not any more, well thats how it used to be and we decided together that we can manage without anybody,, that Peter, is one reason why I wanted you, but only on your terms, so that the less you knew about us the better, and mother is like a new woman now, she absolutely adores you and knows that I love you for what you are, Now, have I been wicked Peter, do you think, or what do you think my love, I answered her with a kiss and said that I was glad I did'nt know because I might have been frightened off but let's forget all that for now shall we and concentrate on the wedding, not one word must be said ever to any of my friends about it , that is the only thing I would ask , Sarah kissed me again and said, I wont if you wont, lets carry on like we are for now , I like it so much and she turned to Mum and Dad and said,, when we get married,, you can take over the chip shop if you want to,, no one will be any the wiser and then Peter and I can pop in for fish and chips on the house,, does that suit you, Mum, Dad,, Dad said , Sarah,, Sarah I knew there was something special about you, I could'nt put my finger on it for a while, but I happen to have some old newspapers upstairs and your father's death was reported in the times,, I have said nothing, I wanted you to tell us about it in your own time,, Is'nt that right mother,, Mum just nodded well Dad said, you play it the way you want Sarah my dear and we'll go along with it you are a genuine good lass and I want nothing better than for Peter to marry you but for love you understand Sarah, and I know that is what you want, now then,, how soon can we move in, we all laughed at that and Mum said, I'd better get some practice in then, but do you think that Ivy would come in perminent like , Sarah said yes Mum, she'd jump at the chance but can I ask you to pay her a bit over the odds you'll find her worth every penny.

Dad had been smoking, he leaned forward to the fire, took his pipe from his mouth and tapped it on the side of the grate then put it back in his mouth and blew down the stem then he put the pipe on the cornice and sat back. He looked at my mother and said, well Mother, we've come a long way since we wed,, do you remember, the only thing we could give Peter to keep him quiet at night ~~at night~~ was a sugar butty, thats all we had then, it was a very rough time and I've been many a time without a crust, we knew what poverty was in them days, Mum said yes Dad, I remember trailing to the nightwatchman's little hut to stand by the brazier for a while to get warm when it was in flood street and they were laying gas pipes, oh yes Dad I remember alright, will I ever forget, oh well thats gone now, thank God, and here we are today, do you know, I thank God every night for his blessings, I'm not religious or proud but I am grateful and always will be. Sarah said, I think it's time I went to bed, I must be up early tomorrow,, the fish man you know,, only the best for my customers and thats how I make it pay,, people will always patronise a good shop. I kissed Sarah and she said goodnight to all of us, I bade my parents the same and went to my bed at Josh's. I woke up and the first thing on my mind was that I must look for a site to build a house on, that led to all sorts of problems like access, drainage, the water supply gas pipes and electricity and of course the land must be right, not boggy or too sandy, a call from Josh stirred me from my reverie, yes Josh I said, what is it, he came into the room and asked me about seeing our building surveyor to go and check the house in larkhill road for him so that he could be certain that everything was correct, I said that I would ask him to call round as soon as it was convenient and let Josh know, he was happy with that and went down to his breakfast, I went for mine. It was waiting on the oven top when I got in, Sarah had cooked it and gone to the shop, she had left a note asking me to call round tonight after work, (as if I wouldnt) I ate my breakfast, washed up what few pots there were and shouted at the bottom of the stairs, Mum, Dad, I'm off, see you tonight ta rah then, ta rah came the faint reply from the closed bedroom door. The yard was full of activity when I arrived, one or two men were stacking bags of cement under one of the arches and covering it with a heavy tarpaulin, Joe Rimmer was waiting for me, he was the jovial type and we got on well together. I knew how to hold the starting handle but Joe showed me what to do first and more important, why.. I spent most of the day with him, by four o'clock, I had the hang of it so Joe asked me to take him back to the garage, I was nervous at first but as I went along, I felt my confidence increasing. By the time I reached the garage I felt exhilarated, Joe warned me about going too fast, reminding me that the slower you went within reason, the more time you have to avoid an accident, then he made me go through the whole rigmarole twice more to be sure I knew exactly what I was doing. he said that from now on, only practise made a good driver, any problems,, stop, think, try, and then if there was a breakdown, ring him up and he would come out and fix it, he gave me his telephone number and I wrote it down in my book which I now always carried with me, I thanked Joe and said that I had better fill up with gasoline and take a can with me in case I ran out, good thinking Peter he said, when I was ready, I signed for the fuel and waving to Joe I drove back to the yard and put the wagon away in a corner, I went home after that, feeling contented, another hurdle over. Tea was a bit late, so I washed,

I Did'nt need to change so I set the table out for Mum, she made me a pot of tea and said she had been in town shopping, Sarah had been with her and they had been looking at some lovely rings that were in Newmans window I said Newmans Mum, thats the best round these parts,, I bet the prices were the best as well,, Mum said that the prices were a bit steep but she knew which one Sarah fancied, it was a beautiful ring, a cluster of diamonds and it had a saphire in the middle there were others but she said she liked that one best,, how much Mum I asked, well Peter it ah, Mum, I said,, How much, she said alot Peter,, a lot and what do you call a lot Mum I said five pounds, ten, twenty, forty, well,, Mum said, Peter, it costs eighty seven pounds,, I told Sarah that it was a lot of money now,, you know, its up to you.. Oh Mum I said, nothing's too good for Sarah, don't worry Mum love I'll pawn my suit, but seriously Mum, I really can manage it so tomorrow morning,, please go and get it for me will you, I'll put the money in your bedroom after tea, Save tea for me please, I'll just catch the bank before they shut. I nipped out quickly I managed to get to the bank just before they closed and drew one hundred pounds out. when I got home, Dad was in and Mum had already told him about the ring,, he said that I had done the right thing and he let it go at that, I put the right amount on Mum's dressing table and then went down and had my tea. There was a knock on the door just as I was getting up from the table, Dad said I'll get it son and he went to the door,, there was a big van outside, two shire horses were harnest to it, they had brought the furniture, where was it to be off loaded, Dad came to me and said, Son, is this that furniture to go to Ted's. I said yes Dad I thought it was coming tomorrow,, well its here now so I'll send them on and we can follow on, I said right Dad, I'll borrow Josh's byke, you'll be using your own, so I'll nip up to Josh's now. Off I went, no, Josh said that he was using his, I'd better get Bob's, so off I trundled to Bob's house, Bob was having his tea, right Pete he said its out the back, take it, I'll see you later, thanks I said and after making sure the lights worked, I set off back. Dad was waiting so we started off, about half way there,, we heard this tinkle tinkle behind us, we stopped, it was Josh. I told you I was using my byke Pete he said, and I knew this stuff was coming so I thought I would give you a hand, you know very well you can't manage without me, I said thank you Josh, I might have known, just don't get in the way,, now Pete he said, I did'nt want any thanks till I've seen that the job ~~was~~ done, come on uncle ~~Tim~~ stop lagging behind, Dad said, Joshua my boy, any more off that and I'll smack your backside, it won't be the first time will it. We pedaled on and got there just as the horses were drawing in uncle Ted's place,, right I said, I'll just get uncle Ted, then we can get the job done, Uncle Ted had heard the van draw into his place and came out to see what it was, he spotted us and showed us where to put the load, it did'nt take long with the three of us and the driver, so when it was all in and checked off,, and found to be correct, I gave the driver ten shillings and told him to go back and look after his horses, and no trotting them back to the station, uncle Ted invited us in and said that he was glad that we had decided to have a double wedding, aunt Beth came in then and asked Dad about Mum and said that she would visit before the wedding, after a nice cup of tea and a piece of her ~~pudding~~ ^{Pastor} we mounted our bykes and cycled home.

As we neared our house, I asked Josh to come with us, I wanted to talk to him about my buying some land to build a house on, I remembered him saying one time that his Dad worked with a tackler who had a bit of land that was for sale at the right price,, our front door was open when we arrived, Dad jumped off his byke and walked in, I was close behind him, old Bobby Preston was talking to Mum, I'll hve to fetch some misses Nelson ,, Dad ~~said~~, nah then Bobby,, why've you left our front door open,, I'm sorry Timmy,, you know me ,, I forget these things Bobby said, ~~av~~ cum t see that clock,, wots up wi it then eh,, looks gradely t me, tha knows that their clock's best aw ever sin,, nah, wots t want me fur. Dad said, I want to know the proper way to clean ~~and~~ oil it . At that stage of the conversation, I went ~~out~~ ^{out} to Josh and we went off to Bob's,, on the way, I broached the subject of land acquisition, he said that he would mention it to his Dad tonight and he'd let me know some time tomorrow. We got to Bob's, he was getting ready to go to the chippy I mentioned my plans to him, both of them were unthusiastic and said that it would be a great challenge and at the same time a good advert for them both, I said well, first things first, and not to forget church on Sunday morning, for three Sundays then the big day and, that reminds me,, we need another best man, who would you suggest,, Josh thought Tony, DoraButler's hubby,, Bob said, why not ,, He's like one of us and he does live round here,, I said that I would first ask Sarah if she had anybody in mind, if not, then Tony it was that settled that question, now, where shall we hold the reception and don't foget,, there'll be a lot of folk to invite so it hed better be a big place, oh, and, Bob,, Don'T worry about the cost, that's ~~al~~ ready taken care of now I suggest the Masonic hall, that might do it, will that suit you Bob,, Bob cleared his throat then said, if its all the same to you Pete, I don' think that's fair you paying for all that, I think I should contribute,, I told him to keep it under his hat but I was'nt paying,, and certain people in this town,, wanted something big to celebrate,, now they've got it, so if you don't mind Bob,, please take my word for it,, the person who approached me wants to keep their name out of it but I' ll let you thank them personally after, will that suit you then Bob,, he said that it was very unusual but if I was in favour then that was good enough for him . I gave him his byke back and he put ~~it~~ ^{it} away . I said,, come on,, lets go, the girls will be looking out for us, are you coming Josh, Josh declined saying that he was going to meet Irene when she came off shift at the hospital . I thanked him for helping me earlier and he reminded me that that was what mates were for. Bob and I sauntered to the chip shop, On the way, I reminded him not to mention any thing to the girls as yet because things were not yet settled, there were one or two things to sort out, and it would take me a day or two. There was a q ue at the chip shop so I nipped home and told Mum, she jumped at the chance to go and help so Dad said, that he would go along later,, Mum and I went back to the chippy, she got cracking right away and Sarah breathed a sigh of relief, Bob told Ivy to have five minutes she was looking tired, Sarah took over wrapping orders up for a while with Mum and they soon shortened the que, after half an hour, the shop was empty, there were only three fish left so Sarah put the blind down quickly and asked Mum to lock the door, Mum locked it and had to open it again because Dad knocked,, she let him in then shut it ,, I thought you were busy he said,, we were, but we've sold up now.

Bob had brewed up and Ivy was sat looking upset, Sarah put her arm round her and said, Ivy love, let Bob take you home, I know you've had a busy day and in future, take things a bit easier, in fact, you can take a couple of days off, you've earned it, you'll get paid just the same only one thing, on Wednesday, come and meet my mother, she knows about you and if you feel like it you can stay on as long as you like, I know mother will want you to. Ivy said thank you Sarah, that will be alright, I'll go now then and I won't forget to come on Wednesday to meet your mother. Bob and Ivy said goodnight and went home. Now, Dad said, let's have another brew, Mum said well Dad, you make it, this shop needs ~~cleaning~~ cleaning and I'm starting on it right now, Sarah, yes Mum Sarah said, you do your takings Peter will help me, it will only be a few minutes of a job, it's not bad so Peter bring me a bucket of hot water and put some washing soda in to help clear the grease. I put hot water in a bucket for Mum added a bit of soda and got a clean dishcloth then I went in to Mum, the place was ship shape in no time at all, Sarah finished the till and put the money ready in a bag for the bank in the morning. Bob had made a good fire and it was warm in the kitchen, Dad had brewed up and we all sat down and enjoyed it, Mum said Sarah, I'll make some cake or biscuits tomorrow, what time will your mother get here, Sarah said that she would know in a few minutes time, mother should be ringing then, so we sat and waited, each with our own thoughts, I was thinking about Thursday evening, I wanted to go and yet, I was reluctant, because of the many commitments I already had and I knew that Sarah was looking forward to it, the telephone bell broke my train of thought Sarah got up, kissed me as she passed me and went to the telephone, hello mother darling she said, Mum spoke quietly to me and said, I wonder if I could have a word, I answered yes why ever not, Sarah would 'nt mind I'm sure, but I'd better get her a pencil and paper Oh I forgot, she has one by the phone ready, after a few minutes, Sarah called me over, Peter she said mother wants to ask you something, I took the receiver and said yes mother, Peter here, what is it you wanted to ask me, she asked if any letters had arrived and had the furniture been put away safely, I put my hand over the speaking tube and asked Sarah about any letters she shook her head, I released my hand and said, no letters mother, but yes the furniture was undamaged and quite safe and stored in a nice dry place, she said that she would see me at the station tomorrow, I said hang on a moment please, my Mum wants a word, I beckoned Mum over she came and took the phone, hello she said, they had a bit of a natter then Dad was asked to join in for a minute, Dad was tickled pink and enjoyed his little chat with her then he handed the phone back to Sarah, a couple more minutes and she said, bye mother, see you tomorrow and hung up. Mum said, that was nice, to Sarah she said, your mother wants a meal when she gets back tomorrow so I've invited her to come over when she's ready tomorrow, I'll get something nice for her, what does your mother like Sarah love, Sarah answered Oh Mum, can you make a hot pot with a crust on and rice pudding afterwards, Mum said It'll be a pleasure my love, but let me remind you that it must be in between the shop hours or else, when it's closed at night, it all depends on the time the train gets in. Sarah said that she expected her mother to be in a bit earlier than she was, and in any case, Elsie Spencer was picking me (Peter) up and bringing mother from the station, she would be in by six at the latest provided the train

94

Arrived on time, that would mean , mother could get home , sort herself out, and then Irene would hold the fort for an hour with Josh, in any case , customers only came in ones and twos for about an hour and a half, after that things could get a bit busy but by then, we would have had our teas and be back in the shop, if all goes well Mum, mother will will be sitting in your house at a quarter past six, maybe, before, it all depends on the train, better still, I'll ring her up now and arrange for her to get an earlier train then I'll ring Elsie and she can pick Peter up straight from work I'm sure mister Spencer wont bother about it. Before anyone could speak, Sarah was on the phone again to her mother When she came back, she said that her mother was getting the earliest train which left Bristol at seven forty in the morning, it got into Avenham at two fifteen so now, she would ring Elsie and let her know, and Sarah went back to the phone again. She came back a few minutes later and said that Elsie was out, mister Spencer was out but the cook would leave a message, I thought that she had slipped up there and was just going to say so when the phone rang, it was mister Spencer,, Sarah explained what it was she wanted my boss asked her to put me on the phone, I felt a little apprehensive as I took the phone I said, hello boss, Peter here, he said,, Peter,, your a boss in your own right now so don't ever ask me for time off,, just take it man, you don't have to explain to anybody anything only, if I ask you and I'm not likely to do that. Now, in the morning, I would like you to come up to the house about half past nine , you and I have some very important business to discuss, and after that, you will understand more about whats happening now I'll say goodnight Peter lad, I'm off to get some sleep and I suggest you do the same right boss I said I'll be there and goodnight. he hung up and left me wondering what it was all about, ah well tomorrow, I'll find out soon enough. I went back into the kitchen and said, well, thats that, Sarah looked at me and said whats what darling, oh I said, he told me to take time off whenever I liked,, he said that I was a boss as well and not to have to tell him when I wanted off , just to take it, I've to see him tomorrow at nine thirty and that I must get home and get some sleep and, I must say, I am ready, its getting late so if your all ready, lets go. Dad said yes, I'm ready come on Mum, Sarah said yes, me too. We shut up the shop after checking round and we went home, I saw Sarah off upstairs after she kissed me goodnight, I bade my parents the same and went to my bed at Josh's. The next morning I was at the boss's house for half past nine, he wished me good morning and led me into his study , he waited a while saying nothing, there was a knock on the door, Mildred the house keeper cook came in with the usual tea, morning Peter she said morning Mildred I said then she withdrew. As we drank the tea, the boss startled me by saying, Peter, perhaps you didn't know, but this business needs a partner right now, and your it , I don't beat about the bush Peter, and I have certain information come to hand that tells me that I must take on a partner because this firm is going places, I have just signed a very large contract all legal and binding and it calls for a partner so my solicitor has drawn up papers to that effect, and he is coming in a few minutes along with Elsie and Mildred to witness your signature, are you ready for such a big step and can you cope, I know that you will do your best and you wont let me down.

Mister Spencer I said, this is a bit overwhelming, I need a period of adjustment and thought for this sort of promotion, it is a meteoric rise to say the least and one that I will be very proud to take on in matters of responsibility and so forth, but I don't know the first thing about management and the likes, how am I going to arrange contracts, deal with the surveyors, architects, salesmen that come and all that sort of thing, I don't want to make a complete fool of myself. He smiled and said Peter lad listen, I will run the company, I will deal with whatever needs dealing with, I will teach you the way I operate and I will personally see that you get the best grounding for this type of business anyone could possibly have anywhere in the whole of the country, believe me, when I've finished with you, with the knowledge you already have and what I will teach you, you'll be a lot better at it than I ever will be, you've got it in you man so exploit it. I must explain also that your salary will be paid monthly, and a lot more than what a site foreman gets, later, a percentage of the firm's profits go into your bank account, now then, Elsie and Mildred should be in with George Benson my solicitor in a couple of minutes, there is nothing underhand or wrong and no hidden secrets, I give you my solemn word, that this is just an agreement between you and I that you become a junior partner first, and later take the firm over and make it a well known name in the building industry and I might add, no one can poach you from the firm. Now Peter, that's it in a nutshell, are you coming in with me, I said I would make one stipulation and that was that I was put on probation with the firm for one year, after that, if things didn't work out, then I could revert to site ~~foreman~~ foreman again and carry on from there, he said that he had no objections to it being written in the agreement so I said in that case I would sign. Mildred knocked and entered she announced mister Benson, Elsie followed and the boss told them to be seated. He explained what he wanted them to do then he said why and went on to itemise the all the relevant facts, then he entered my stipulation on the papers and asked me to read them carefully before I signed them, this I did and found them satisfactory, I even read the small print and demanded to know what one or two of the phrases meant in simple ordinary language this was explained by mister Benson after a full two minutes silent thought, I signed, then mister Benson, Mildred next and then Elsie, mister Benson cleared his throat and said, if I may say so, this is the first time that I have ever witnessed such a document giving someone the chance to become a partner in such a thriving business as yours mister Spencer being signed, now I think congratulations are in order and, turning to me he said, young man, I sincerely hope that you go from strength to strength, you have your foot planted firmly on the ladder of success, I hope you make it to the top. he shook me by the hand, I thanked him and he told the boss he would see to it that we each (the boss and I) get a copy, he put the papers in his briefcase and was gone waving goodbye from the door. the boss thanked Mildred and Elsie for being witnesses and asked Mildred if we could have some tea. Elsie said, and where do I fit in to all this Dad, he said, you don't really Elsie, your only job is to draw the dividends when they're due you see, when I retire, I'm going to let Peter here run the firm completely, he will also have controlling interest, you my girl will benefit by receiving dividends from time to time, I have already made sure that you have more than enough to live on, even if I

Went bust tomorrow, your money is safe and growing all the time,, I don't mind telling you I had a killing on the stockmarket, that has all gone to you my dear,, you are a very well off young woman now I'm glad to say,, if you had much more you would be taxed so heavily: so don't you worry your pretty little head about the business, all that is now taken care of, I think that the sort of dividend you will get will keep you going from year to year while your bank balance keeps on growing all the time, now be a good girl and leave us please, we have one or two things to discuss but don't forget to take Peter to the station right to Daddy she said, she gave me a smile and shut the door behind her. Mildred came in a few minutes later with some tea and a couple of biscuits each, she put them down and left, I took a cup sugared it and stirred, the boss said, Peter, the firm at the moment is in a good sound position, we can compete with practically any body, I want you to expand it, take on a few more good men, we need some joiners and plumbers as well as good painters and plasterers, don't rush it though, have a good look round and you can afford to be choosy, now anyone who doesn't pull their weight, they must go and let's have a bigger yard with covered premises for stuff like cement and so on, that spare land next to the yard belongs to the firm so we'll extend onto that for a start. I said yes boss but who's going to be the site foreman when Sam goes to the new site, he said I'm sure you can come up with somebody quite capable, but he must be a working site foreman just to set an example, you see Peter, we are going to create a new image, with everybody pulling their weight and getting the best wages but doing their work properly as craftsmen should, and cutting the time down from the foundations to topping out. Peter, that's one reason I want you to get your own team together from tea boy to site foreman. We have the best architects and surveyors it is possible to have, so we must have a crack team under you, to build the new baths and the rest of the project to go with them. You have four months to get your team together and let's pay them over the odds say an extra five shillings a week, labourers, half a crown extra the tea boy well a shilling or one and six, how about if then, think you can handle that, I said that if I couldn't then nobody could, but I wanted complete charge, no butting in, even if you didn't sometimes agree with what I was doing, I would expect guidance from time to time and would expect constructive criticism in fact I would be glad to have it and boss, you are going to have the best but not the biggest firm in the country, you'll see, and while I'm at it, I can tell you that I intend buying a nice piece of land in the near future and building my own house on it in my own time and I will get all my stuff through the firm and pay for it properly with cash and everything will be checked twice before it is moved I want it to be a show house so that people will come and want one like it, I have a few plans and ideas I want to put on paper first, and then discuss ^{them} with you before I start though. I will hide nothing from you boss, I have never been that way and am not going to start now. Mister Spencer listened to what I had said then he said, Perhaps you can tell me where all the money is coming from Peter, I produced my bankbook and said, you can see for yourself, he glanced at it then said, well, I never, you've enough there to build two houses and furnish them as well, Boss I said, I will let you into a secret on the understanding it doesn't go out of this room, right Peter, you have my word on it he said, then listen,

I said, now my fiancée, is really extremely well off believe me when I tell you, I ~~explained~~ explained about her father and one or two other things, when I had finished, He said, well you have surprised me Peter and now I must say that I am doubly grateful to you for taking me on with this firm, I understand your genuine affinity with the firm and that makes me feel very honoured to have you with me, thank you Peter, and this will go no further.

We stood up and he held out his hand I shook it then he patted my shoulder and said, this town could do with more like you, I said, but there are a couple more like me and we will have them on our side don't worry about that, for instance, you know the chap who has the sweet factory, he said yes, I said that one of my mates, best mates, was going to marry his daughter, I've been helping him in my spare time to get their house ready for when they get back and I think it's in about a week's time, you know the house in Larkhill road that was empty, well that's the one, they've bought it, now Irene, their daughter, is working at the hospital as a nurse, she's doing very well by the way, she wants to make her own way in life she says, well, she told us that her parents paid for half of our hospital to be built, did you know that, Oh yes, the boss said, that is true, well I said, Josh that's the chap I mean, he's a good plumber, as a matter of fact, that's how he met Irene and believe me when I tell you that they are very much in love and intend to get married in a month or two, now he's one of the men I want on my team and he would make a good site foreman I know it. You pick them Peter the boss said, all I'm after are results so go ahead and see what you can achieve. We parted then and I said that I would see him on Thursday evening but please not a word to Sarah that he knew about her.

I had half an hour before dinner so I walked to the site and found Sam, I took him to one side and told him of the changes, he looked at me and said, Peter lad, I will always be on hand to help you any way I can, I thanked him and told him to leave the site for half an hour and leave word with the time keeper that you were with me in town. We went to the yard and I told him to get into the wagon, I did the necessary and started it up then off we went to town. I parked up and we went into a cafe for a hot dinner. Sam was very happy and we had a good chat then went back to the yard, I put the wagon in its place and walked back to the site with Sam. The whistle was blowing as we entered the area, men were still talking and lounging about, I mentioned this to Sam and he said watch Peter and you'll learn something, I stood and watched, Sam spoke to one chap, the fellow touched his cap and scampered off, he turned round and shouted at another who gave him a sullen look and carried on talking to his mates who started laughing, Sam called them together and walked with them to the office, then they were on their way home, Sam came back to me and said Peter, whatever you do, always demand respect and if it's not shown then sack them, you'll find it's the only way, they'll all come back tomorrow cap in hand asking for their jobs back, there'll be no more slacking today, I could go to sleep now and the job would still keep going, you see Peter, you must be firm but fair that way, you will get respect, the pay packet is what they come for and if they don't behave, no matter how good they are, they get stopped that means no money then where are they eh. Sam, I said, I've always respected you and I always will, I want you to always remember me as your prodigy and your friend no matter what you see or hear, I've a lot to thank you for. He replied that he would be very proud to be my friend and thanked me then off he went.

Elsie arrived on the site in time to take me to the station,, Her attitude seemed to have changed towards me., she was very talkative driving to the station, and I could sense that she was trying to say that now,, she accepted me as an equal., I put her at ease by telling her that if I were a free agent, I would be pleased to get to know her better by suggesting an outing with her, but as I'm about to be married in the near future to one of her school friends,, I don'T think it would be a good idea. I asked her if Sarah had asked her to be a bridesmaid,, she said yes and had accepted with pleasure , then she asked me to forgive her for her standoffish behaviour the first time she spoke to me and would I not tell Sarah please, in future, she would be happy to treat me as a very good friend which she hoped I would be. I told her that she would always have me as a friend and an equal but her Daddy was, and always will be, the boss to me no matter what. The station approach came into view, she stopped the car and said,, Peter , would you mind if I kissed you, I was a little taken aback with the request, I said go ahead, but don't tell Sarah,, she gave me a lovely kiss and said, oh what a pity , I said why , she said your getting married to my best friend so from now on Peter, I will behave myself,, mind you, we'll have some good times together with Sarah, I promise I won't try anything on, that's a promise I won't break now, shall we go, the train's about due so I'll wait in the car while you go and meet your future mother in law. I bought a platform ticket and asked what time the train was due , on time I was told, so I stood on the platform for a few minutes and the train arrived right on the dot. Misses King was looking out as the train pulled in to the station, she saw me, smiled and waved, I did the same, then I ran and as the train stopped, I opened the carriage door and said, welcome home mother, did you have a nice journey, she said Peter, I'm so glad to see you, come here, I stepped forward, she flung her arms round me and gave me a lovely big kiss and hugged me, then she stepped back Porter she shouted, two came , that's alright she said, both of you, they accompanied us to the guard's van, there were a cart load of trunks and boxes, I scratched my head in bewilderment, Peter she said, I want this lot to go directly to the shop,, can you arrange it for me now, I said that Elsie Spencer was waiting to take her home, she said come on then , let's meet her, then you can arrange the transport after, Its alright, we won't go without you my darling, we'll sit and talk Oh, and I'll meet her, then visit the ladies room. Outside the station, misses King met Elsie, she said , hello Elsie my dear, how nice to see you again, my,, have'nt you grown , you are a beautiful woman Elsie, are you married yet, no misses King, I'm not even courting, I can't be bothered just yet, I'm enjoying myself too much. I left them talking while I went back and arranged for the luggage to go to the chip shop, they said, yes sir, in the morning, I said no tonight, right now, once again I was lucky, I saw the carter with the two shire horses standing, I called him over, I explained what I wanted he said yes sir, right away sir , he shouted for a couple of men to help him load up, I watched him and then I handed him two half crowns and told him there would be more on delivery, and to take some one with him to help to unload, He touched his cap and said, yes sir thank you very much sir, then got cracking. I went back to the car and jumped in to the back, I said , ladies, the luggage is on its way so shall we,,

E
Elsie turned to me and said, if your ready Peter I nodded and we set off.

There was not much in the way of traffic on the roads and Elsie made good progress, we passed the carter with his shire horses on his way, and a street vendor trying to sell ribbon, ~~safety~~ pins and elastic from a suitcase, once we had to stop to allow a chap with a horse and cart, he was trying to back the cart into a ginnel, we didn't linger ~~café~~ passing the skin yard and nearing our neighbourhood, we passed some men resetting cobbles, I noticed a good bit of shovel leaning and not much graft going on, I mentioned this, and both the women agreed saying that they wouldn't employ that gang of layabouts, turning into the street, the usual kids were playing about, they stopped to let us pass, then we drew up at the chippy. Sarah opened the door and we entered the shop, first it was kisses all round then Elsie said that she must be going, Sarah asked her to stay for a cup of tea, she declined the offer saying that she was going to get her hair permed and was late already, after reminding us she would see Sarah and I Thursday evening, she waved and drove off. I shut the door after Elsie left and entered the kitchen, Sarah and her mother were having a cup of tea, I helped myself and sat down facing them, her mother was telling Sarah the latest gossip from Bristol, and she stopped to remind me about the carter bringing the load of trunks, I asked where they had to go, she said, oh in here for now, they would get sorted out later, then she gave me ten shillings for the carter and asked me to supervise the unloading when he arrived. Sarah started to tell her mother about things that had occurred in her absence, then she went on about the wedding, I said that we were going to use the Masonic Hall and she said that it would be ideal and to spare no cost because she would be happy to foot the bill no matter what, (this I knew already, but I didn't reveal the fact) Sarah looked at me and said, that my mother was expecting us shortly and we must be going, Misses King said that she was looking forward to seeing her again and had something for her, I said that they would have to go on without me, I would have to see the luggage offloaded first then I would follow, in that case, Sarah said give us a kiss and we'll leave you to it Peter darling, she came over to me and kissed me then she and her mother left, I shouted after them to leave me the key to lock up, Sarah said that I would find one on the sideboard then off they went to our house and my Mother. the carter arrived half an hour later, I got hold of two crusts of bread and gave one each to the horses then we unloaded the luggage, I gave the carter the ten bob note and told him not to forget his mate, then he told me the next, he said, I know sir, no trotting the horse. I bade him so long, he touched his cap, thanked me and said gee up, then away they walked, the horses I mean. I locked the shop and made my way to the corner shop, I asked Misses Heap for a bit of fancy ribbon but thin stuff, and a small piece of wrapping paper about eight inches square, she took a piece from under the counter and cut it to the required size, I told her I was going to wrap a ring up for Sarah, so she said go on Peter you can have it with pleasure and congratulations on your engagement I thanked her and went home. I opened the door to laughter and chatter, with the tinkle of spoons on china, Mum spotted me first as I entered and said, Hello Peter, then she turned to Sarah and her Mum and excused herself then she took me into the parlour and gave me a box with the ring inside sat on a deep red velvet cushion, it certainly was lovely, I wrapped it up and put it in my pocket. As I entered the kitchen, I took hold of Sarah, kissed her and then presented her

With the small package, she opened it and gasped, oh, my lovely, lovely Peter she said, she put the ring on her finger and came over and hugged and kissed me, then she turned to her mother, held out her hand towards her and said just look mother, what do you think of it, her mother looked, smiled and said, its beautiful my pet, I said yes, a beautiful ring for a beautiful girland that saphire matches your eyes, Sarah made a big fuss about it and I must admit, I did'nt want to stop her, after all, it was her moement of happiness. It was getting on for tea time and I told Sarah that she could stay and I would open the shop and wait for Irene and Josh, I knew what to do and in any case, she must have a lot to catch up on with her mother, I still had the key so I said, save me some tea, I'll be back and I'm hungry. I went out and spotted Josh, he waved and I continued to the shop, Irene was coming down the street so I waited for her, we went in together, she said Peter, do you know what to do, certainly I said, I did the necessary and then made some batter, Irene washed the chipped potatoes then shook them, and we waited for the chip range to get to the correct heat, Irene went into the kitchen and put the peas on then put some pies in the oven, I put some more coal on the fire and poked it up, everything was going on nicely, Josh entered and said, well, the chef has arrived, now you can go and don' be too long, I have other fish to fry, I told him not to be overgenerous with the portions and if Bob Did'nt come, he,, Josh would have some spud bashing to do later. I said see you, and I went back to my tea. Dad was home and they were just sitting down as I walked in, now then Peter he said, I responded, we sat down to hot pot and rice pudding, when every body had had enough, I scraped the dish then left it to sask abit. As was usual, Sarah and I washed up, then I had my pint pot of tea, good strong sargent major stuff, the talk was focused on the wedding, I listened and from their conversation, it was to be a white wedding with the bells, churchorgan, the choir, the chimney sweep and a landau, there was to be a three tier wedding cake with a band and a special extra time for the bartill two o clock the following morning. Sarah said that she would like to go to Scotland for a short honeymoon, just a week, that would be ample, I said, now how about me getting a word in here, they all stopped and looked at me, I said, for a start, I'm not dressing up in white tie and tails, for another, I would'nt like to embarsss Bob and Ivy so lets try and remember that our friends from childhood are not left out shall we, now about the landau, is it going to be one or two, No, Sarah's Mum said four, and Bob and Ivy have one like you do, we have another for us your best man and the brides maids, the same for Bob's and Ivy's side, now at the table in the masonic Hall, if you don't mind, their side one one side and exactly the same for us on the other, then, other tables will be laid with the guest's names in their places,, I'll get wine for each table and a glass of champaign for all adult guests for the toast, now how does that suit Peter, I said that quite happy with those arrangements and that our guests were more or less the same people except perhaps for one or two special guests of Sarah's, or mine, Bob maybe had one or two as well, now I said, I think that a street party can be held specially for our street residents and their kids, because we can' invite every Tom, Dick, and Harry we know, and besides, there would be some jealousy and that would never do, so what about it, yes Peter, good thinking on your part Sarah's mum said, we could drive down that way

She said, I do so love to ride in a landau, I would feel like the queen and wave to the clapping, waving and cheering people, that would be something, I must make those arrangements oh and Peter, I do want to underwrite the whole lot, it will give me something to do with a small amount, and I will so enjoy doing it please Peter love, you wont mind will you, say you wont mind, the genuine pleading was there and so I agreed with a little trepidation as to what Bob would say if he ever found out, I said to all present, now this is very very important, what I'm about to say, you may not think so, but to me, it is, Bob and Ivy, must never know ever, who is, or will, arrange all this, you can mention the arrangements about the masonic hall, and he will personally want to thank you, then please leave it at that would you, yes love, I certainly will she said. that leaves me one other thing to say then and that is, I am very grateful indeed for everythkng and I thank you all sincerely from the bottom of my heart, I thank all you here now, Mum, Dad, Mother and Sarah I love you all very dearly and always will, God bless all of you. Peter, Dad said, I'll say it myself I am very proud of you, and hope that you just remember to keep your feet on the ground, you have done up till now, so keep it up and never forget lad, we are all family. thanks Dad I answered, that's a solemn promise I will try to keep. I said to Sarah, shall we go and see what's happening at the shop, let's see if that Josh and Irene are coping. We said cheerio and went to the shop, there were about six people in when we got there, Sarah asked Irene how things were, Irene said that she couldn't quite get the fish to crisp, so Sarah checked and found that the fire was too low, so after a bit of messing with it, the fish cooked properly and Irene served while Sarah looked after the cooking side. Josh meanwhile was trying to do some more potatoes and was in a mess, I told him to leave it to an expert, then I showed him how to do the job properly, I showed him how to use the chip chopper, I had to tell him to be careful to let go of the potatoes before he pulled the lever down or he might get ^{sausages} instead of chips, at that time Bob came in and wanted fish and chips twice, for him and Ivy, Sarah said, go through Bob and show them how to use the chipper, Bob came through and sorted a pail full out in no time at all, and that my lads, is how it's done he said, now you try, he stood back and let Josh have a go, after one or two near misses, Josh got the hang of it, there you are he said, I told you I was good at it, Bob laughed and said, any more instructions required and just send for the expert. Bob said he had to get back, Ivy was alright but she was on her own, his Mum and Dad had gone out for the night, Sarah shouted from the shop, Bob there ready for you, tell Ivy I'll see her tomorrow sometime, Bob got his suppers and left shouting goodnight. Sarah's Mum came in just before closing and said to Josh that he was shaping like a veteran I said, mother, Don't say that in front of him, it'll go to his head, there'll be no more dealing with him, Josh said, jealousy will get you nowhere Nelson so just watch it lad. I pretended to clout him and he put his hands up saying, sorry sir I didn't mean it, we both laughed and I said I think you deserve a cup of tea, I'll make one, Sarah's Mum said, I'll make it, the girls want one as well, you like yours strong Peter don't you, yes please I said, so does Josh and afterwards Josh, I'll show you something that will brighten up your life. Sarah's Mum said you mean, and I knew she meant the watch, I nodded, she knew where it would be and opened the drawer, there she said as she showed Josh the watch

Josh gasped, wow, he said that is some watch misses King, what a lovely thing, I feel very honoured just holding it, is'nt it a beautiful thing, my word, I bet that cost a good few pennies, she said, this now belongs to Peter, its Sarah's wish that he wears it on his wedding day, right Peter, I nodded again, Josh said, Peter, you lucky chap, I could save for years and never hope to buy one like that, I must say though, I am pleased for you and I just bet that Bob says the same when he sees it, you will show him wont you Peter, of course I will Josh, you should know that, I said, Now mother, if you would kindly put it back safely please, she put it back in the drawer then she said by the way Peter love, when the shop's shut, would you mind helping us with our personal things in these trunks, it will take a while but it will be worth it, I said certainly mother when ever you're ready. Josh took the hint and said, misses King, any time you want Irene or I for anything, you know where to find us, I'll be taking Irene home as soon as she's ready, Josh she said, I'm sorry, but I did'nt mean it to sound so rude, Josh said, Oh its quite alright, in any case,, I want some time with Irene, we've to go to the house to put some velvet curtains up I thought of something rather rude but kept it strictly to myself, a flicker of a smile crossed my lips and Josh caught it, then he blushed and turned away. Mother did'nt seem

to notice so it was passed off. The girls shut the shop and Sarah shouted for me to get some hot water and help to clean up, I started but Sarah's Mum called, girls, come here a minute please, they both came into the kitchen, yes mother Sarah said, mother said, now, first of all, come and sit down and have a cup of tea before it gets cold, they both sat down and had their tea, Sarah's Mum said Irene, just wait a moement I'll be back, she came back with a lovely little watch that fastened on to her dress at the front like a broach, now sbhe said, I've got one for Iwy as well, this is for being a good sport and helping out, please take it, its a good one, the same for you Josh she said and gave him a wrist watch, I said to Josh, now pin it on your shirt, he laughed and thanked Sarah's mum then he gave her a kiss, so did Irene,, they were both embarrassed and didn't know what to do next Misses king said that she had one for Bob as well, so she hoped that they liked them, they

both expressed their delight and after they had drunk their tea they decided to go. I got on with the cleaning after saying goodnight to Josh and Irene, and Sarah did the till.

when everything was done, mother said, well, let's get started, there' a lot to unpack, there were vases, china tea sets, a grandmother clock,, figurines, candle sticks, toasting forks that could be extended, a really posh compendium of games made of ivory, including a beautiful chess set and dominoes plus one or two games I knew nothing about. It was

like an aladin's cave, Sarah's mum had two more trunks to open and she said to Sarah, Darling, you don't know what's in these two trunks, and I'm not going to open them untill you enter your own house, I can tell you that they are what your gradmother wants you to have, still there's no harm in knowing what they are so I'll tell you, in one you have one of the finest rugs together with a carpet that you can ever hope to get in this world they are from China, and given to your father for services rendered by a very important Mandarin, they have never been sat or stood on yet, I thought they would be nice for a gift when you buy a house. I said mother dear, I'm going to build my own the way I want, the number of rooms and things, I'll leave to Sarah

Where are you going to live in the meantime Mother asked, We have'nt made our minds up yet but I dare say we'll fit in somewhere I said, I'll admit, it is a bit of a problem, you see, we don't want to offend you or my parents so I'm thinking of renting an empty house nearby, and living there temporarily until I get the house built, oh I don't know, it is a bit of a worry. Mother said well, we are all family so why don't we all get together and talk it over, I'm sure that a solution can be found that will be satisfactory to everybody concerned, anyhow, let's leave it at that for now Peter dear and concentrate on this other portmanteau I have here. Now this my dears contains a wedding dress, it must be unpacked and hung up, I don't think Peter that you should see it before Sarah is walking down the aisle, they say it's bad luck, personally, I'm not superstitious but it is so beautiful I would like to show it to you, after all, Sarah will not be wearing it until the wedding day so surely there's no harm in that is there, I said not and I was'nt superstitious so I would love to see it. Sarah helped her mother unpack it, it was magnificent, pure silk and lace white of course and a long train, now that will be something to show off, I thought of Ivy, what of her, mother saw the look on my face and said, if your thinging of your cousin, don't Peter, she has one not quite like it but she won't look out of place, look, from the back of the case, came another dress, white, with a long train but satin, not silk and it too looked beautiful the same kind of lace as Sarah's, I went to mother and said, Oh, you good natured thoughtful mother you, and I put my arms round her and kissed her, she said Peter please, not while my daughter's watching, we all laughed and Sarah said, well, I dare say, I can spare that one mother, but you really are a darling thoughtful mother, I said yes, is'nt she, a real cracker, no wonder she has a beautiful daughter, I am the luckiest man on God's earth and I thank him for it, I really do. Sarah said well Peter my beloved, I am also clever, listen, I've solved our little problem as to where to live provided everyone agrees and I think they will, I'll tell you tomorrow when we're all together. Now for tonight, I'm staying here with mother, and you are going home, and will Josh's Mum know about it, I'll be going with mother to your house tomorrow afternoon with mother, we have some private business to discuss with your Mum and when you come home after work, we will tell you everything, alright love, I nodded she said Peter, your nodding again, I said yes I know, it's just a habit. I left the house after the usual ritual and went to Josh's, I caught his Mum before she went to bed and explained everything then I went home. My parents were in bed, I shouted, Its only me, Sarah's stopping home tonight with her mother, I'm off to bed, goodnight Mum, Dad, I heard their reply as I went upstairs, Sarah had left one or two bits and pieces in the room but I left them where they were and addressed then got into bed, I fell asleep in no time. Wednesday morning saw me saw me on the site in good time, I wandered round checking this and that, everything seemed to be going well Sam was in the hut when I walked in, morning Peter he said, and how are you today, I'm fine Sam and you I said, Oh, so, so, can't grumble, he looked up and I could see there was something up, I asked him what was bugging him, he told me about a load of timber that had arrived yesterday, it was green he said if that was for the houses, it would warp when it dried out properly, it was'nt seasoned, I said, come on then, let's sort it out right away.

Together we walked to where the timber lay stacked, it was certainly green but in colour I picked a piece up and smelled at it, I said to Sam, here take this piece and smell it Sam, well I said what do you make of it, he said confidentially Peter he said, I have no sense of smell, I said well, only I know that, it smells like a type of disinfectant actually Sam its preservative, it is supposed to give the wood a longer life it's not supposed to decay as quickly as untreated wood Sam, now you know, and it has been seasoned it's alright, let them use it, right Peter, I'm glad its right and thanks, he said, now, the boss said that you are getting a special team together Peter, is that right, I told him yes but there was plenty of time for that, I asked him why, well he said, naturally I want to be on it, I said but look here Sam old friend, I'm not bossing you round, no way in any case, the boss said not to include you because you are too valuable he wants you for a new site starting shortly, what will he do without you there to see things are done properly and, what's more Sam, I have asked him and he turned me down flat so that means, I'll be coming to ask your advice on one or two things in any case, in that case Peter, I suppose he wouldnt mind giwi ng me a bob or two extra them eh he said, Sam I said, your pay is between you and the boss, I don't know how much it is and I don't want to, but I can see him for you iff you like, although, I think that it would be better coming from you, yes he said I think maybe your right about that, I'll see him this afternoon. I told Sam about Sandra and he said, dont you worry about Sandra, I'll sort her out in quick time. Sam I said, I want to build my own house when I get the land, now it will be a spare time job for me, my mates will help me but I want a good man there now and them to superwise and make sure that everything is done properly, I would would deem it an honour if you could spare the time to be that man Sam, I would of course have to and indeed insist on you being paid for your services and I would want you to check everything I purchase from the yard and make sure it's all above board. Sam took his bowler off and scratched his head, he said after a moment's thought, well son, I can spare the time, and I will certainly advise you, now about the pay, I broke in and said, Sam, I insist, what's more, I can well afford it, take it from me, and it will be well worth heving an expert like you on the job for me private like, so Sam old friend, don't say no, please, put like that Peter lad, how can I refuse he said, then I said, well shake on it we shook hands on the spot and I told him I would let him know the minute I had the land. With that settled, I asked him to send the surveyor to Larkhill road to look over some property, he knew the house and told me he would send him that afternoon, that suited me fine because it would put Josh's mind at ease and he could finish the job. We entered the cabin and the tea boy had a brew waiting for us, we sat down and talked about things in general, I said that before we went to dinner, I would look round the site again and report back, the boss arrived just after we had finished our tea, he walked into the cabin and said, after the normal greeting, Peter, I hope you're not trying to persuade Sam to join your team, I can't spare him you know, I said, in that case boss, if the man's so interested, you might be able to keep him with a little bit of an incentive dont you think, he said thats why I've come, He turned to Sam Sam he said A little raise eh, Sam

Sam pretended to think about it, well boss he said,, Peter made me a good offer and I said no knowing you would come and ask me, I've worked for you nearly all my life so why in heaven's name do you think I'd change now, well it isn't a change as such is it,, its the self same firm, just another gang,, that's right Sam,, and you will have to spy for me and make sure Peter is looked after,, I don't want any more drivers coming fiddling and he wont always be on hand, it may mean using a driver and a wagon to go from one site to the other but that's alright,, I know you'll keep on top of it so keep on Sam and Peter can find his own formaneh,, Sam smiled and said I'll do that boss,, don't worry about it,, leave it to me. The boss and I walked round the site and found that everything was going smoothly,, He asked me had I seen anybody on the site that I would like,, I told him yes, but I would'nt take them I owed it to Sam not to poach from him, I told the boss I intended going round other sites and seeing one or two lads I knew, and if their work was up to scratch it would'nt do for me I was on the lookout for experts who took a pride in their work, I could get a gang together any day of the week, I wanted a team of dedicated experts who could and would work without any real supervision and that was my intention. I have a joiner, a plumber, a painter and a good tea lad lined up now, they'll come when I want them but I want a couple of brick layers and their mates as well, then there's the labourers and pipe fitters a good plasterer. oh there's plenty of men wanted but I dont want to go too fast,, I want it to be a real good team willing to help each other out and not afraid of give and take, the boss said, Peter,, the site is being cleared now so that the surveyors can get the thing organised, and dont forget, there'll be visitors and plenty of them, from all over the country so, in a way, it will make or break us , however, I have complete faith in your ability to see the job through, well boss I said, now if this job is a huge success, would you consider giving the men who did the job a day off to go to the opening when that day came, if it is a success yes Peter, you have my word on it, thanks I said, now if you will excuse me, I'm taking Sam for a quick dinner in town, we'll be just over half an hour gone then he'll be back in time to see that the men get back to work, right Peter, I'll get off home and do some paper work after lunch, and Don't forget tomorrow night, dress optional of course, Elsie's looking foward to it you know, so dont be late, seven thirty, I said right boss, we'll be there I wandered back and picked Sam up, and then did exactly the same as I did the last time I took Sam to have a mid day meal, then we went back to the site,, the men were playing foot ball untill the whistle blew and they all to man went back to work promptly,, Sam said, I tell you Peter,, that little episode a couple of days ago, did the trick,, I took them back on again, they're not bad workers,, its just that you have to show them who's boss and mean it, you can't afford any larking arround on a building site,, you never know when an accident occurs,, now if everybody behaves themselves, then there should never be any.. the men dont have to fork out, and the work does'nt stop, so the job gets finished on time, I'm happy, the boss is happy, and the customer's Happy, thats how I like it.. Now Peter,, lets have a word with Paddy Kilshaw, I've made him ganger,, he knows a thing or two about roads you know, and he's not afraid of speaking his mind,, I've told him to fire anybody making trouble, or not doing the job properly, they can't pull the wool over his eyes you know, I rather like the fellow and he seems a decent sort and fair.

It was still early in the afternoon when I left Sam and I decided to go and have a look at one or two other sites that were not too far away, I was looking for potential plasterers and tilers, any other building tradesmen worthy of their hire might well be about and I would try and talk to them. As I approached one of Stead's sites, (Stead was one of our main competitors) I saw two men sitting on a wheelbarrow playing cards, oh well I thought, its probably brew time, I wandered round, two brickies were on a wall troweling away. I looked at a stack of wood, some of it looked very knotty and twisted, a chap came to take a piece, examined it, and gave it up as a bad job, I watched from a distance, the men went away and then came back with another man, then they both walked off, I saw the first man leaving the site with a canvas basset, I suppose his tools were in it, Hello I thought, he's out of a job, I followed him and saw to my surprise it was four eyes, Norman Bell, I caught him up and said, Hello ding dong, sacked again you four eyed devil, what for this time eh, he looked at me and said, I don't care Peter, they wanted me to put some timber in one of the houses, ~~that~~^{it} was rubbish, I wouldn't do any cost cutting for them or any body, what happens later when the houses are finished, some poor sod's going to have to pay for renewing it, sooner or later there could be a nasty accident using that stuff for joists, and I'm not going to be part responsible, no thanks I'd sooner be out of work any day, at least, my conscience is clear, the wife's not going to like it but there it is. I said, I thought Josh was going to fix you up with a job Norman, oh yes he said but it wont be for a while, he tells me that the job he was after was undercut with this chap Stead said oh, a bit of a cowboy eh, he needs a lesson, right I said, now go to the forman on our site, just say Peter's sent you, and you can start right away, only temporary mind, but after we've seen what you can do, and how you get on, I might take you on permanent, we'll see. Off he went, I looked in my little book and found the building inspector's number I rang the number, a voice said Building inspector, I was a little ashamed but I thought no, it must be done, so I mentioned my name and explained the situation, he thanked me and said that he was glad, now he would have proof of substandard workmanship, he said that my name would be kept out of it but he had been after this firm for some time, he would go right away with his assistant and get the job stopped and the houses would have to be rebuilt, besides, the firm might land up in court. I waited to see what was going to happen in less than one hour, the whole job had been stopped and there was a very angry scene on the site, I walked away satisfied that a lesson had been learned that day, I went back to our own site and spoke to Sam about the incident, Sam said that a couple of Stead's men would try to get on with us but he knew the score and he would be watching for them, Paddy Kilshaw must be warned about it as well, you know Peter, Sam said, I knew something like that was going on there, I could tell by the type of men he employed and his forman wants keeping an eye on as well, he'd rob his own grandmother that one, I know him of old, anyway, its time they were stopped, I'm glad, serve em to the rights. Let's try and keep our noses clean shall we. I mentioned about Norman and why he was stopped, Sam said that we did need another joiner, we were behind with the roofing ~~the~~^{on the} south section, one of the men hadnt turned in this week so Norman could do his work.

I walked home at half past four and arrived in the street just as Josh did, he told me that the surveyor had been and left him a bill for the inspection on the house in Larkhill road, I said that architects and surveyors were like solicitors, you paid to look at them. I asked him if he got the curtains hung alright, he said, well, some of them, hey, you want to see the place now, its different again and there's some more looking glasses and things to be put in yet, the tiles have all been done and Bobs still there, he's been hanging pictures and would you believe it, the bathroom has to be painted up yet, now that its been passed and then he's got the outside to do, do you think you could brick up that hole we made Peter, I said I would be round tonight after I'd had my tea, it wouldn't take me long but I wanted some sand and cement, just a bit, we parted when we came to his house, see you then he said and went indoors. I got to our house and opened the door, there was a lot of chatter coming from the kitchen, as I walked in Mum got up and said hello Peter, I'll make you a brew Sarah came over and kissed me, hello darling she said, had a nice day, not bad I replied and you, fine she said, I turned to her mother and you mother, how about you, she said, I went to town arrangeing things Peter love, I've really enjoyed myself today, I've still one or two things to sort out yet but everythings going on fine, we're waiting for your Dad to get home then we can discuss what we were talking about last night, remember love, yes mother I said, my Mum put my pint of sargent major on the table, ta Mum I said, by the way, I must go to Larkhill road soon, tonight, I've a little job to attend to, you know Sarah, that hole in the wall, it'll take me about twenty minutes after my tea, I saw Josh on the way home and he asked me to get it finished tonight, I said I would, I had promised so I'll get it over with. Mum I said, where's my overalls please I'll need them for that little job, Mum said that she would get them for me after tea, Dad walked in and greeted everybody, Mum said that after he had washed, we'd have our tea, tonight, we had a leg of lamb with boiled and roast potatoes, peas and cauliflower mint sauce and gravy then home made apple pie and custard, I said to Mum, this is fine Mum but what about Sunday, Ha she said, your having pea soup and your Dad and me are going to dine at the chip shop with misses King and Sarah and you my boy, can stay here for being cheeky, Oh Mum I said like a small child, I'm frightened on my own, can Sarah stay and play with me, we all laughed and Sarah said, if your a good little boy Peter, you can come to our house, I said, I'll have to ask my Mum first, this bantering went on untill Dad walked in having washed, and then we sat down to tea. when it was over, Mum said, now then, let's get settled, the question that's cropped up about where to live Peter, I mean after you're married, Sarah said, a solution to the problem would be if You Mum, and Dad, would be kind enough to take over the chip shop, lock stock and barrel as it were, and live there, the business would be a gift from mother and I, and to be honest, its getting a bit much now, the only stipulation is that you would employ Ivy as long as she was able, and we could live here with mother, hows that then come on what do you say Dad, you could keep your job then if you wanted to and to get you started, we would give you a lift Oh and next Monday we're closing for three days, they're coming to put gas fires in the chip range, then it will be all modern and no hard work, would you rather think it over Dad said ~~the~~ misses King was being overgenerous, nonsense mother said, ever since

Peter said that he wanted to marry Sarah, we have planned and looked forward to this day, now, please don't let us down now, you see, our aim is to get rid of the chip shop, because we said at the start, that we would see if we could make it pay, well to be honest, we can but, oh how can I put it, we have more than enough money to see us and our children's children for the rest of their lives, and ours of course, we have been so fed up with people telling us what to do, and how to spend our money, that we decided that we would say nothing to anyone, and live like any other normal person without any hangers on, and giving us advice on how to live, and where to, live, only our lawyers know about this, and that's how it is, now it would give us so much pleasure if you could see your way to accepting the shop, and, we could live here, it would be doing us a big favour, Peter said that he wanted to build his own house, it would give him the chance, and you would be giving us the chance to be close by as a happy family. Mum said, well Dad, you once said that you wouldn't mind having a chippy, Dad said your right I did, well, I'll let you live here if you will let us live there, and the business will have to be handed over properly, and if you don't mind, put down on paper, if, after awhile things go right, we'll hand over a percentage of the profits to you, how's that, Mother said, why not keep them on one side in case of grandchildren, then think what you could do with it, oh and that Grandfather clock you like so much, if you got that, to be handed down through the generations, what a lovely thing to do, now I will have to buy a house otherwise, and I'd much rather have this, it will suit us fine, Dad said, well your twisting my arm but I like the idea, I like it very much, alright then, what do you want Mum, Mum said oh Dad, yes please I would love it. Dad said, then that settles it, misses King, can your lawyer draw up the papers all legal like and above board, and the clock goes with me as well is that right, mother said yes, that's what I said mister Nelson, is it a deal then, Dad said yes, Mum said yes, mother said, mister Nelson, if you prefer it then we will keep this to ourselves, I never liked noseys people. Dad said that he was the same, but this deal now called for a drink, he asked Mum to get the special malt whisky out, we all drank to the deal then, I said to Mum I would go and get that job done then get back, Sarah said well, I'll wash up and mother can dry, then I'll get to the shop, that's one thing Dad, I won't be tied to it anymore then, will I. Dad said, the fish and chips will be on the house when you come and Peter can have some mushy peas as well. I put my overalls on, that Mum found, then I went off and went to Larkhill road. Bob was using the ladders so I had to wait for a while, I took the opportunity to look round inside. It certainly was nice, a few bits of furniture was already installed and the pictures on the walls looked expensive, the staircase had been gilded a little, it made all the difference and was positively grand, a big chandelier all bright and twinkling was hanging in the entrance hall, and a grandfather clock ticked away on one side, then there was a large statue of a black runner or someone standing in a corner, Bob came in and said I could use the ladders, I told him that I wouldn't be long as I had to get back, he said that he'd seen Ivy's ~~pink~~ wedding Dress. it was lovely and best of all, it fit her. I said that Sarah's was similar and everything was going fine and we had decided to have a street party as well, and we would drive down the street just to show off our brides to our own people, I thought that they deserved to see them, after all we were brought up with them, in their street. Bob. agreed.

I finished the job in short time, the sand and cement being ready mixed for me so I gave Bob the ladders back and told him I was going to the chippy, he told me that he would be dropping in to thank misses King for her generosity, and if it was needed, he would help with doing some spuds, in any case, Ivy was going to help tonight, so he had to go to pick her up and take her home, I said that I would expect him later, and not to forget to ask Sarah or misses King to show him my watch, yes he said I'm looking forward to it. Josh came and said, I see you've done it then Pete, thanks mate, it won't be as draughty now and I can get the job finished, I told him about the street party and he said that it was great, a lot of them in the street knew about the wedding and if they knew there was going to be a street party, they would be quite happy, some of them thought that a street party was the right thing to have on a day like that, well I said, tell them that it's all being arranged, just for them, and they must get their own pots and things, we'll supply the grub and the drink and they won't be short either, Josh was happy about that, he liked the street and most of the residents, so he went up the stairs whistling, I shouted see you and without turning round he waved and disappeared round the corner of the landing. Bob said see you later Pete and went back to work, I went to the chippy. Ivy was in, putting fish into one of the vats, she turned when she saw me and smiled she didn't speak then, she was concentrating on the fish, I went through, Sarah was checking the peas, she turned and kissed me when I was near enough then said, be a pet and fetch me some coal please darling, and can you fill the boiler up, I see it's nearly empty, mother won't be long now, I did as I was asked then looked at the fires in the shop, they were alright, a customer came in the shop, a heavy set sort of man, he asked for fish and chips, Ivy wrapped them and said nine pence please, he said can you change half a crown and put it on the counter one and nine pence change sir she said, thank you the man said and walked out, he came back later and said, excuse me miss, but I seem to have left my change, Ivy said yes sir, here it is, I expected you back, you left it on the counter, thank you so much he said, a pleasure sir goodnight, with that Ivy turned round and went on with the fish, Sarah happened to look then and saw the man, she ran to him, Uncle Simon, what on earth are you doing here, she turned to me and said, Peter, meet Uncle Simon, my god parent, uncle Simon, meet Peter Nelson, my fiance, we shook hands, his were soft and I could tell he wasn't a working man Sarah said come through Uncle Simon, Ivy, come and meet Uncle Simon, introductions again, then we went into the kitchen, Sarah said sit down, I'll get you a cup of tea, how did you like our fish and chips, he said that they were the best he had ever tasted, honestly, he explained that he was booked in at the Grafton Hotel in town and was due to meet misses King, Sarah's mother in town the next morning, Sarah said, listen Uncle Simon, I'm going to be misses Nelson junior shortly, will you give me away and walk me down the aisle please, he said, my dear child, I would be greatly honoured, and delighted to, oh thank you Sarah, your daddy would approve I'm sure, Sarah said, now, mister Simon Tate, you are my lawyer right, right Sarah he said, well she said, can you tell me how much I am worth, Sarah he said I'm afraid that I can't off hand, it's too complex and you know very well that I am under oath not to divulge any family matters without the consent of your dear mother, so please Sarah wait until I've had a word with your mother.

I said excuse me, I went into the shop to help Ivy, she was doing alright but the shop was getting full so I said hang on, and I went for Sarah, she came out and she served most of the customers, they all seemed in a jolly mood and there was no trouble at all, Ivy said that she would manage now and we could go back, I was surprised when my mother walked in with Sarah's mother, Mum had an apron with her and put it on and got cracking right away, she told Ivy to go and have a rest, she could manage, Ivy said alright then aunty, and off she went. Bob arrived and went straight through saying hello aunty, to Mum, I told Mum to go into the kitchen for a minute as I wanted her to meet someone, I was thinking that all the introductions might as well be made as far as possible, all together. Bob came into the shop, how are we for chips he said I told him that we wanted some more and could Ivy do some more more fish please, Ivy came in then and said, I think we need some more fish so I've brought some Peter, now you can go and join the clan, I'll manage for now, if it gets busy I'll shout I said right Ivy love, I'll leave you to it, I went into the kitchen, Sarah was talking to her mother so I pretended to check the fire and the boiler then I sat down, mother had been explaining to my Mum about ordering the fish and potatoes and the pies and showing her how to enter them in the books and that sort of thing, mister Tate said that he would be glad to help any way he could, he would be coming tomorrow in any case so that things could be signed over properly and the deeds changed, they would in fact have to go back with him and when they were made right he would ensure that they were given Mum and Dad. mother said that the wedding day would be soon enough to let Sarah know the extent of her wealth, Sarah said that she could wait and really speaking, she was quite happy with what she had. I said that any money that Sarah had ^{was her} ~~was her~~ business only and it must be kept strictly in her name, if it was needed, Sarah alone would decide whether it was to be used or not. Dad walked in and was formerly introduced, then he was put in the picture and he said that he understood, if at any time he was not sure of anything he would contact mister Tate and ask him to sort things out, after all Dad said, that's what lawyers were for. He said that sometimes the wording of certain documents was so confusing to the ordinary working men that they made big mistakes and consequently, they lost out on things, that must not happen to our family, mister Tate said that Dad was right and he, mister Tate, would look after their or should I say our, interests, just as he had looked after Sarah's and her Mum's. He said that he must get back to his hotel, he was feeling a bit jaded after the long train journey and would be in better shape in the morning. I suggested that we send for one of the new taxicabs to take him home to his hotel, he declined, saying that the walk would do him good. Dad insisted that he went as far as the town centre with him because he could get lost in the dark and the street lighting was 'nt all that good, any way, he wanted a word. The lawyer said goodnight and departed with Dad for company, Dad said to Ivy, put me a fish and chips in paper Ivy love, Peter will pay, I said Dad, you're supposed to buy mine, not me yours, oh go on then, I've just about enough on me, now let me see, there's twopence, and a theepenny bit, two halfpennies ah yes and three more pennies, is there any change, Ivy laughed and said go on you big lump, Dad winked at me and said, this wont be the last time either son, I'm sawing up you know, something about a nice little motor car I think, I said, a toy one Dad, he laughed as he went off with

MISTER TATE.

Bob was ready to take Ivy home when I remembered the watch, I called him into the kitchen, I asked Sarah to show him the watch, Sarah said to Bob, now, shut your eyes Bob please, Bob did, Sarah put the watch carefully in his hands, now she said open them, Bob opened his eyes and gazed at its beauty, he didn't speak for a moment then he said, Peter, you lucky begger, this is a bobby dazler, there'll be a few year's wages there all right, its magnificent, Oh Peter you must wear that for your wedding, you must be very proud to own such a treasure, I'm very pleased to have seen it, thank you for showing it to me, it makes me very happy for you. Sarah put the watch away then said wait Bob, mother has a little surprise for you, oh yes, mother said, Bob, close your eyes again, he did, mother said, hold out your hand, Bob held out his hand, there she said, thats for being a good help in my absence, Bob looked, he unwrapped the paper and saw the wrist watch, Oh misses King, you shouldn't have what are mates for, misses King I don't know what to say except thank you, mother said, that'll do nicely Bob and thank you, but don't throw that piece of paper away, it might come in very useful Bob looked again at it, it was a large five pound note, I can't, he got no further mother put her hand up and silenced him with the gesture, Bob she said, I gave Ivy a lovely wedding present, have you seen it, yes I have misses King, and its gorgeous and thank you for that, its wonderful, he stepped forward and kissed her, then he blushed and said, I do beg your pardon but I didn't know what else to do, mother laughed Bob my dear she said, you are a good hearted lad and you deserve the best, I like you Bob, now take Ivy home and enjoy yourselves, goodnight? Bob, Ivy goodnight dear girl, they both said goodnight and went home. when they had gone, mother asked Sarah to put the kettle on again, she did, sit down she said, Sarah sat next to me, now listen mother said, first of all Peter, tell me, have you purchased any land yet, I said no but I was waiting to hear from Josh he is trying to find out about some, from his Dad, why, well Peter she said, it may come as a shock to you, but I own some land, I bought it before I met you. its a while ago now, you know where the new baths and recreation centre is going to be built, yes of course I said, well I bought that and donated it to the town on condition that baths and a playcentre was put there for the town, I started to speak, her hand went up again, silence from me, Peter what I haven't told you is that the littlefield next to it is mine also, it all came in one job lot, now Sarah knows nothing about this so, there are no secrets, now, I wanted to ask your firm to build me a big house on it, then Sarah met you and it kind of upset my plans, bear in mind, that all this happened before you started courting Sarah, now then, the question is, do you still want to build on that, a big house, or do you prefer something smaller, if so, its quite alright, I looked at Sarah and said, mother, that decision must be Sarah's, the house will be for her to live in and the location must be her choice and I don't want to influence her in any way, it wouldn't be proper, mother said, Peter, I think that is one thing that I admire among others, you do try to be so fair, I'm glad your going to marry Sarah, you'll be good for her, I said thank you mother and I know that Sarah will be good for me as well. Sarah said that she would like a big house but she would want a maid or a cook housekeeper the design she would definitely leave to me. mother said that she thought that that particular place was in a nice part of the town and when the baths were built it would be better still, I said that I knew a good architect who could probably come up with something to their liking, provided he had a free

(Mum Had gone home)

We talked well into the night about the wedding plans, the house to be built and the transfer of the chip shop,, eventually Sarah yawned and said that she was ready for bed, I took my leave and said that I would be round before getting ready tomorrow night, to go to the bosses with Sarah for dinner.. My head was full of the many things we had talked about as I walked home,, the time was after midnight so I was surprised to see the light on in our parlour as I entered our house,, Dad and Mum were still up,, they had been checking what they required for the wedding and the cost, I went and sat down with them and listened to what they were saying,, I never interrupted any conversation my parents had without their permission, they both invited my opinions and I told them that the only thing they need worry about was the transfer of the chippy, the rest was all taken care of, it would cost them the price of a new suit for Dad and Mum a new outfit,, handbag,, shoes,, hat and gloves, that sort of thing, I reminded them that we were on a promise that Sarah's Mum could do as she liked,, she wanted it that way and we promised,, so leave it at that,, one thing we could do was buy Sarah's Mother something special as a thankyou gift for organising everything, Dad said that he knew that I would come up with a sensible solution but what can we get her, the woman has everything, I said not quite, there's something, I must make sure first , I'll have to ask Sarah first though,, well what is it Dad asked,

I said, I think that she would like a real good wireless one of the latest the sound is a lot better than the early ones that came out, I've seen them in the shops, they're like cabinets all polished wood and fancy,, Mum said that sounds fine Peter but what about electricity, Mum, I said they have them accumelators , they're batteries that can be recharged but we'll have to buy two so that when one is run down, she can use the other one while that one is being charged, but we must remember, we'll have to arrange for the man in the shop to change them for her they're a bit heavy for her to carry to the shop . Dad thought it a good idea and said that he would fix that up for her himself and he would buy the best one in the shop, I said that I would like to help, to pay for it as well but Mum said that it would be a present from them, they wanted to buy it for her on their own, and hoped

I wouldn't take umbrage, I said no Mum,, I won't and I would think of something else.

I said that I was tired and was going to bed, I had a late night tomorrow night,, Mum said you mean tonight Peter , its gone twelve you know,, we wished goodnight to each other and in no time at all, I was fast asleep. the next day went slowly I went round the site a time or two then I said to Sam that I wanted to see our architect on Friday,, I would be at the office most of the day,, He could contact me there,, Sam said that he would arrange it and asked if I wanted the surveyor as well, I said not them, but maybe in a day or so, I told Sam that my house was going to be a big one and he was the man to see it take shape in the field next to the bath site, Sam was surprised, he thought that belonged to the town, I put him right on one or two points and told him to say nothing to anyone, your future mother in law must be a very wealthy woman he said, Sam I said,, between you and me and the gatepost,, that lady has more money than what she knows what to do with I tell you Sam, old friend,, you will not find a more benevolent person anywhere, our boss is a benevolent man and she beats him into a cocked hat, but that's only because she has lots more than he has,

I repeated to Sam that all this was in the strictest confidence and he mus'nt even tell the boss, Sam said very well Peter I promise, he took his bowler off and scretched his balding head, Peter he said, you're doing well, he patted my back and said good luck son, I left Sam and went for a word with Paddy Killshaw,, I asked Paddy if it were possible to get me some good men at a later date, to do a private job for me after hours and weekends I wanted them at a later date and I would let him know when, also I would like him to be in charge of the gang himself, I would pay a good wage but any man not turning up for their regular job as well on this site need'nt bother again, He told me that he had a few men in mind and to let him know when that would be, I thanked him and told him it would be all above board and I would let him know as soon as I could. After speaking to Paddy, I went to the office, Sandra was polishing her nails when I walked in, she did'nt bother speaking but kept on with her nails, I went through, the boss was sitting at his desk going over some papers, he looked up and smiled, hello Peter he said, I said, I've just come through the office, Sandra's sat polishing her nails, she did'nt even look at me, has she no work to do, he said she's supposed to be making a list for the yard I want a load of stuff to go out first thing in the morning, well I said, shall we see how much she's done, oh and what time did she get the order to do it, the boss said this morning at half past ten, then, it must be done by now, I said ,, will I shout for her or you, he said leave it to me Peter and watch and listen, don't say a word right, right I said. I got hold of a book and pretended to be looking through it, the boss shouted Sandra, she said yes, he said come in, a minute, she opened the door without knocking and said well, the boss ignored that and said, have you got that list for me Sandra please, she said , I have'nt finished it yet, you can have it tomorrow, the boss said now Sandra please , she said well I broke one of my nails and it took a long time to fix, I'll have it ready by tomorrow dinner, the boss said can I have it before you go home, oh no, she said, I'm going a bit early tonight, I've got a date with Andrew Stead, the boss said, would you like to go now Sandra, she answered well why not, I might be a few minutes late getting in tomorrow the boss said Sandra, you can go now and he put his hand in his pocket and gave her some money, she smiled and said oh ta that'll come in handy, the boss said, them's your wages, you're sacked, Don't come back , get your things and go now. Sandra was flabbergasted but she said , there's no but about it, get gone before you get my foot behind your lazy backside, she was off like a shot and started crying . The boss said thanks Peter for not butting in, I feel better already, anyway she was useless, I would'nt be surprised if she has been giving that Stead some of our estimates, no wonder things started getting a bit slow, I told him about the Stead site I had visited, and what happened,, he said that he knew a little bit but did'nt know who the person was that blew the gaff on him, I said that it was me, and why, he said that calls for a drink tonight Peter, I do believe that when word gets out about his jerry building, he'll loose a lot of contracts, serve him right ,, no wonder he could afford to undercut, but he won't any more will he,, I said that I thought he deserved a lesson after he sacked ding dong , I mean Norman Bell. the boss laughed at that ,well Peter he said,, you will have to find me a secretary now, of course tomorrow will do, tonight we will enjoy ourselves, We'll have a good night.

Dinner with the boss and his daughter was a pleasant intermission of the interminable preparation for our marriage, Elsie had picked us up from our House on time, as arranged and we were ushered into the dining room, the table was laid for four, we took our seats and Mildred served up the most succulent feast imaginable, hors-d'oeuvre, fish, soup, roast gammon with pineapple cranberry sauce, roast potatoes, creamed potatoes, brussels sprouts carrots and peas, there was wine to drink with the meal and for dessert, there was fruit salad and fresh cream, small kendal mints in a fancy little silver barrel, coffee and a drop of fine cognac, the ladies preferring a liqueur. During the meal, not one word of business or even our forthcoming marriage was discussed, there was plenty of small talk about local affairs and sport and of course the ladies spoke of the rights of the suffragettes and the difference it would make to the political scene. Sarah took leave of us to be shown round the house by Elsie, the boss and I retired to his study, when we sat down, he invited me to talk of my plans after I was married, I said that I intended to build on the field next to the recreation site, a big house and install all the amenities such as, Gas, electricity, water, a bathroom and things of that nature, there would have to be a good thick hedge round for privacy and a nicely laid out garden with a rockery and maybe a glass house for growing tomatoes and different flowers, all this is possible because Sarah insists, and in any case, as you well know she has the financial resources and, her mother to back her up, you knew that the land for the public baths was bought and given to the town by Sarah's mother didn't you, no Peter, I honestly did not, well I said, please keep it to yourself boss, it was given on the understanding that you build your baths and recreation centre on it, I only found out myself a couple of days ago, I also found out that Stead had put a lot lower tender in than you did, but Misses King's lawyers investigated the firm and didn't like what they discovered, so the instructions were that you got the contract, I might add boss that I knew nothing about this until it was signed sealed and delivered, such is the way of Misses King, she can be a good ally for us and we have nothing to fear from anyone. The boss said that he had had secret talks with her and her lawyers just after he had promoted me and they knew all about my background and Misses King was a woman who wanted the best for Sarah with all that money and wealth and she was in her own way quite capable of ruining anyone who tried to put one over her, she was a great lady who didn't like class distinction neither did Sarah, they said that the so called upper class was riddled with snobs and hangers on with not an ounce of work in their miserable bones, that's why she came here and is enjoying every minute of her stay here. Misses King will see to it that you are well looked after Peter but you must never take her for granted, I know that she thinks you're an honest good working man who will try to help others, she knows about the incident with Stead's and even the man you helped what's his name I think you called him ding dong, how on earth did she find that out I said, ah he said, Peter, Misses King employs many people, investigators, lawyers, and the like, she has to, there is so much at stake, anything to do with her daughter or you, is her prime concern, now you must not under any circumstances divulge what you know Peter, it would ruin everything.

told the boss that I didn't like the idea of being spied on, he said that no one did but with all that wealth, and if you had a daughter wanting to marry someone, wouldn't you do just the same, I had to admit that that was only fair, looking at it from that point of view, I would find out about any person wanting to marry a daughter of mine, money or not, she was quite right to do that, I said that I supposed that she didn't want me to be upset knowing that I was the subject of scrutiny, well boss, I've nothing to hide he said Peter, we all know that but it had to be proved didn't it I said yes, I realise that now, well the boss said, Peter, I have to tell you that you and your family have gained the respect and the love of the Kings, you are now no more under their investigations you are to be left entirely alone, and if Sarah's mother ever hears of anyone nosing anyone, they will be severely dealt with, there's nobody at your elbow now so don't worry about it any more. Now I'm glad we've had this little talk, from now on you can indeed be a boss, in your own right because, after your wedding, from myself and Sarah's mother, with our blessing, you are a partner properly, you see as a wedding present, I have got papers made out, it was a deal I made with her that after you were married, I would make you a full partner but she insisted that she bought half of the company to be given you after the wedding, she wants you to prove that you can make the firm a number one in the building trade, I told her that you were the man to do it and she said I like him give him a try. Now Peter, I'll be here to assist you any way you want, I know you'll do your best but don't be afraid of making mistakes, they will occur from time to time, I make them and so does everybody, as long as you learn from them. I said, boss, do you think I'm ready for this, he replied "why not?" I wasn't frightened, I was the forward looking type and I had him to advise me provided I went a little carefully at first I said, well boss, as far as I am concerned, you are the boss and you have the final word, now I'm going to get Sam to check everything I take from the yard to build my house, it will be entered and paid for, I would be grateful if you could find the time to look it over from time to time in your way as the boss and advise me as to how you think it's going. He said that it would be a pleasure, and he personally would see about my banking arrangements for signing checks and ordering material, I said that that would be fine he said that it would be better if I didn't mention our little talk to Sarah or anyone for that matter, as it was to start after the wedding, I was a boss right now but a full partner after the wedding was a different kettle of fish, there would be meetings and some big decisions to be made and maybe a few headaches to share as well, I said, boss, ever since I came to this firm you have taken an interest in me and my work, coming every week, therefore, I see no reason for me to worry about anything when I have as good a mentor as you always have been to guide me in my new life as a partner but, please don't ever forget, you are the boss will you. He replied that he would try to make life as comfortable as possible for all of us to the best of his ability.

The ladies came back into the room then and Sarah said that she and Elsie had had a good talk and now she was ready for home, we both thanked the boss and Elsie for their kind hospitality and they said that we must come more often,

The next few days were rather hectic, the wedding was not far off and I had a lot of shopping to do, I hadn't even bought a ring for the occasion and on top of that, Sarah had left the decision of best man in the air, there was a feeling of excitement around me, I could sense it, Sarah's mother had hired one of the new taxi cabs to drive her around, she was hardly ever in the chip shop, quite suddenly I felt agitated and annoyed, people were fussing about and seemed to be ignoring me for some reason, I went to see Sam, he was checking a list, I waited until he had finished then I asked him why the change in attitude towards me, had I done something wrong or what, Sam came up to me and put his arm on my back, Peter had he said, just calm down a bit and let me explain, you're getting wed right, I nodded, he continued, you may not believe me when I tell you that the whole town is turning out, flags are going up and folk are getting prepared, naturally, they don't want to take away the surprise they have for such a popular chap and his bride, not forgetting the other happy couple, they are trying to avoid you so that they won't give anything away, now, I don't mind telling you that I've become involved I'm glad to say, and it's taking up quite a bit of time, I don't mind in the least, the only thing, none of us want to do, is upset you, so don't go mistaking their attitude, you understand Peter, now if you don't mind, I have work to finish, and please, no offence meant, right Sam I said, none taken, I'll see you eh, sure son he said then I left. I was still pondering over who I should invite to be best man when I saw Sarah walking towards me, I hurried forward to meet her, Sarah said, is anything the matter, no she said, I've been shopping and while I was out, I decided to meet you and have a little chat, I'm sorry if I startled you darling, come and sit down next to me on this low wall, we sat. Now Peter my boy, I think that I would like mister Spencer for best man, I said after a moment's thought, well my darling, it sounds a little unusual not having a chap of my own age, come to think of it, what does it matter, I do like him, and if that's what you want, well, that's what I want as well, come on, we'll go now and ask him shall we, yes Peter, let's. We walked into the office, there was no Sandra, that was an improvement for a start, we went into the boss's office, he looked up and said, well now, is that my new secretary Peter, then he held out his hand to Sarah, how are you my dear, welcome to my office, Sarah said she was quite well thank you and would he be good enough to sit down, we had something of importance to discuss with him, he sat down, Sarah sat facing him and smiled at him then, she said mister Spencer, Boss, do you think you could spare the time to come to our wedding, he said, I would be delighted to, thank you Sarah, I said well boss, it's not quite as simple as that, I said, I would deem it a great honour sir, if you would consent to be my best man, I know it will be difficult to get away but would you consult your diary and kindly let us know as soon as possible, time is getting short. He looked at us and said, Sarah, Peter, what a lovely thing to ask of me, I will be greatly honoured indeed and may I add, this is the kindest thing I have ever had said to me in my entire life, I do hope that your not going to wear top hat and tails, I look ridiculous in them, I said, there's no chance of that Boss, I will have a silver tie though and a double breasted suit on, I think a nice pale blue shirt the suit will be a light grey, black shoes I think as well, now, you won't mind being at our house at nine o'clock on the day will you, Elsie would take you there.

Don't you worry about that Peter lad, I most certainly will be there and thankyou both,, he said. with that out of the way,, I asked if Elsie might fill the gap of secretary temporarily,, he said Peter I have never thought to ask her thinking that she may have something else on her mind,, oh I said,, then I will ask her and if she turns me down,, I won't ride in her car any more,, that should make her mind up,, Sarah could suggest it maybe, or would you prefer to ask her yourself,, I think I had better ask her myself, I'll ask her at lunch she's picking me up and we're going to town to eat, would you like to join us,, Sarah shook her head and declined,, the chip shop you know mister Spencer,, I must get back,, the new owners will be moving in very shortly and I want to be able to make sure that everything is put right before they do, now if you would excuse us,, we must be on our way,, she smiled as she leant over the desk and kissed him, then said ta ta mister boss,, see you,, he smiled back and said cheerio miss King, see you,, bye Peter and thanks, I said bye boss , I waved my hand as I escorted Sarah out of the office. As we went back to the chippy,, I said to Sarah,, I would never of thought of asking the boss to be my best man Sarah,, that was a good Idea come to think of it, I am proud of you Sarah ,, you are clever as well as pretty that really makes you unique,, well not quite,, mother is a lovely woman and she has brains as well, it must run in the family,, ar'nt I the lucky one. Sarah was still smiling at that ~~re~~ remark as we entered the shop, Mum was behind the counter with Ivy,, I said ,, fish and chips with mushy peas please Mum,, Sarah said she was living on lowe Mum said that means Twice Mum asked us to go through and brew up for her and Ivy, Ivy turned from stirring the chips smiled at us and said hello young lovers,, I'll bring yours through in a minute, will you make a brew, I said I would, and went into the kitchen, Sarah had put the kettle on and was setting the table,, I took a couple of plates through ~~and~~ Mum put our dinners on then she said help yourselves to peas I thanked Mum and went back with the plates of fish and chips. Sarah and I, went into town ~~after~~ after dinner, we browsed around for a while looking at this and that then we walked passed a jeweler's shop, I said, hang on a minute, I have'nt got your wedding ring yet my love, come on, let's see what they have to offer in here. the shop bell rung as we opened the door, we entered, looked round a bit then went to the display cabinet which was glass and looked in,, Sarah saw one that looked alright the shopkeeper came to us then and asked if he could help us,, we asked him to show us the ~~particular~~ ring on display ,, he said I'm afraid sir it is rather expensive,, I said would you mind opening the case and showing it to us,, I could see, he was very reluctant, this type of attitude gets right up my nose,, I said,, mister, we would like to see that ring if you please right now,, but sir he said, it's nearly thirtyfive pounds, I said and you think I have'nt got thirty pennies never mind thirtyfive pounds, is that it eh,, the man winced at my voice, come sir he said , there's no need to get angry, the door opened and a very familiar voice said, hello Sarah, Peter, having trouble, it was Elsie, I spotted you from across the street she said, now mister Naylor, what seems to be the problem,, I said Elsie, we wanted to look at a ring in there, I pointed, Sarah wants one you know,, we thought that one may be nice, Elsie said to the shop keeper, mister Naylor, you have just committed

A cardinal sin, you have just lost yourself two of the best customers you're likely to ~~have~~ ^{have} ever, serves you right, you silly old man, and I won't be coming in again you are a snob sir, and I loath snobs good day sir, Elsie bounced out and held the door for us, come on she said, before I throw a brick through his blooming window. Elsie was showing a a different side of her character to me and I liked it, Sarah said, Elsie lowe, never mind I can probably find one just as nice further on, Elsie said, listen Sarah, remember at school what I used to say to you, yes Elsie, I do Sarah replied, when someone offends you, stamp on them hard and teach them some manners, right Elsie said, and sweetheart, any body gives you trouble in this town, remember dear old Elsie, now, let's forget it shall we, I'll take you to my jeweler, he's genuine enough, and just to prove it I'll stay outside for a minute and see how he treats you. She took us to a little shop hidden down a side street, now in you go she said, I'll wait a bit, we entered the pokey little shop, a little jewish man said good afternoon and welcome to my little shop, what can I do for you please, I said that I would like to look at some wedding rings please, certainly sir, he said, if you'll pardon me asking, is it for the young lady, I nodded, Sarah nudged me, I said yes please, he took out three trays of plain gold bands, I said no, no, a little bit nicer than those if you please, he smiled and said, excuse me but these are just for trying so I can get the correct size, I do hope you don't mind, Sarah tried four or five before she got the right one, she said this one fits, he said, well lady, may I suggest one just a fraction tighter, you see, many ladies loose them when doing work in the house I can make them smaller or larger but if the lady feels that it is what she wants, then so be it. Sarah said I'll take your advice and try another one then, if you please, he took another out of the tray and said, that will be fine I'm sure, Sarah agreed with him and said thank you sir, then he pulled out a tray of rings that were engraved with flowers they were very nice Sarah was looking at them and Elsie came in, hello Solly she said, ah, good afternoon miss Spencer he said, would you please excuse me, I am serving a customer he said, Elsie said go ahead, as a matter of fact, I brought them here, now, I hope you are showing your best rings Solly, he shook his head no I'm not at the moment but if they care to I can show them, he went to the back of his shop through some beaded curtains and came back with some real beauties, he asked Sarah to choose one, Elsie looked on as well, Sarah selected what I thought was the nicest one, plain except for a thin garland etched on, the price nine pounds ten, I asked Sarah to see if it was the same size as the one she tried on, Solly said yes, every one in the tray were the same size, the next thing Sarah said was, could I have it altered later if my fingers get fatter, he said, I can do that for you any time you wish it lady, she said that it was the one, I said wrap it please, he told me, begging my pardon that with a ring, it would be far better in a nice velvet lined box it would cost nothing, then he wished us much happiness and a long life. Elsie said, now Peter, can I take it to Daddy, he will keep it safe until the wedding, I said yes you can Elsie, but for heaven's sake bring it to the wedding, Elsie laughed and said, if he forgets it you'll have to borrow one of my ear rings, they're just about the right size Sarah, with that I paid Solly and we took our leave thanking him very much.

Elsie led the way back to her car,, I said you go on ahead Elsie,, I'm going to the site,, Elsie said,, Peter Nelson,, I'll take you but first I want to show you something,, now Hop in and let's be on our way,, it wont take very long,, Elsie took us through some narrow streets to a little known glass factory,, I didnt like the smell of sulphur and said so,, Elsie said,, follow me ,Sarah and I followed her into a long room with a glass roof,, it was more pleasant in there and we looked round,, there were all sorts of things all made of glass,, a chap came in behind us and asked us our business, Elsie said that there was supposed to be a special chandelier somewhere,, where was it,, the man said why,, Elsie said listen you,, bring your boss, now,, the man went out,, a middle aged man came in, Hello he said, can I help you good people,, Elsie said,, excuse me but are you the owner of this place,, yes he said,, I'm Elsie Spencer she said,, now about that chandelier,, oh yes madam he said,, Elsie said,, miss , I beg your pardon miss,, he said, we have it made and if you would come this way please,, he took us up some steps along a corridor and into another large room,, he asked us to wait ,we waited then there was a knock on the door,, a girl came into the room and brought us some tea on a tray ,,there was milk and sugar and spoons,, the cups and saucers were bone china and we sat down on some highly polished chairs , I slipped off they were that highly polished,, the girls laughed , I righted myself just as the door opened and two workmen entered carrying a large case,, they put it down on the floor and went out. The owner came back and asked us if our tea was satisfactory we said yes and thanked the man, he said that he hoped we didnt mind, but the thing had been packed ready,, he would open it again and show us,, this he did, and brought out part of a gorgeous chandelier,, it was exquisite,, the glass was sparkling,, I asked about accidents and breakages he replied that if that should happen,, the glass could be replaced, Elsie said, your looking at mine and Daddy's wedding present to you,, how do you like it, we said thank you very much then we both kissed Elsie and she said ,,Peter, it was worth it if only for that,, Sarah smiled and said, Elsie,, and she wagged a finger at her,, Elsie laughed and said,, don't worry my pet,, Peter and I have a pact that says I must be a good girl, I made a promise. We trooped back to the car and Sarah thanked the man , as arranged it was put into storage until asked for, then it was to be delivered and put up on the ceiling by their own craftsmen. Elsie dropped me off at the site and I thanked her, she took Sarah back to the chippy and then went to the office to help her Dad. The site seemed quiet as I wandered round then I heard the whistle ,, the sounds familiar to my ears reassured me that Sam was in charge,, I reached the cabin as two men were leaving, I asked their business, they told me to mind my own, I told them who I was, they said that in that case,, would I be interested in hiring two bricklayers from down south, I said not,, the man for that was in the cabin,, if he said no then there was nothing I could do,, they called me a dirty name and left,, Paddy walked up and said,, watch them two mister Peter,, they are up to no good,, right Paddy I said,, come in the cabin,, we went in,, Sam was sat writing a report out, he looked up and said them two rascals from Steads, they wanted a job, I told them to stop it,, I don't trust them,, I think it calls for old Gavin Parker tonight again,, I'll send the tea lad for him and remind him to fetch his dog , I said yes,, and I'll let the local police know what's going on, that'll fix them alright,, good idea Sam said.

I was worried, the two men, were on my mind, I could'nt shake from me a feeling of unease, I mentioned it to Dad at tea time, Josh and Bob came to talk about the wedding, I don't know why but I mentioned it to them as well, Josh said that the only thing to do was to go later on tonight and see for myself, I said I would do that and both of them said, not without us you dont, Dad's voice came from the back kitchen, you led's planning to go out tonight,, then you can come with me, I'm going to walk round that building site and if anyone wants to come with me,, they can do ,, but it will be late on about midnight or a quarter past, meet me at the chippy but outside, we dont want them lassies bothering, I said to Josh, I think you'd better tell Irene to stand by just in case,, we might need treatment, you never know do you,, that's right Bob said you never do,, I said to Josh, what shift is Irene on, He surprised me by telling me that she had finished there the matron was an old battle axe and Irene told her where to get off. she stopped her for a week, and Irene told her that she, (the matron) would be leaving shortly,, Irene took her uniform off there and then and threw it at the matron, Irene said that the place was more like a prison than a hospital ,, she has written to the council and expressed her disgust at the conditions that prevail there at the moment, and when her Dad gets here in two days, she's going with him to show him, along with some councillors and she hopes ~~that~~ the old biddy gets the push, the young nurses are terrified of her but she picked a wrong one when she picked on Irene,, of course, the matron does'nt know that Irene's Dad paid for half of it being built,, wont she get a shock when she finds out. I said that ill - treatment of patients is a very serious charge,, it will be interesting to get to know the outcome, Josh said that he would find out and let me know. that reminded me, I said to Josh that if Irene wanted a good job,, she could see me tomorrow morning at half past nine and I could put something her way, but she must be on time at our office,, Josh said thanks Pete,, I said mind you,, tell her that at work,, I am a different kettle of fish than away from it, I'll not forget Peter he said thanks again, I said well ,, what are mates for eh. After leaving Sarah and her mother that night,, I pretended to go home,, Dad came and told me to go home and change,, the decent clothes had to be kept decent he said, I ran home and changed, when I got back, they were waiting for me, Dad,, Bob and Josh,, we set off, I mentioned Gawin and his dog,, there was the smell of smoke coming from a pile of new timber,, Gawin was there, he told his dog to be silent and stay ,, Dad said quick,, Peter you get that fire out with Gawin, we'll scout round, come on lads and keep it quiet, there's some thing going on, they started that fire deliberate,, Gawin and I tackled the fire and had it out in ten minutes, and to make sure,, we doused the lot with water,, old Gawin was hopping mad, he set off with his dog and caught one man destroying the bags of cement and pouring water on it, the poor fellow was bitten waddc by old Gawin's dog, two more men were caught by Bob he chased them right into the path of Josh and Dad ,, they did'nt stand an earthly,, Dad made them take their trowsers off and made them wait for the police, the bitten man went to hospital then we found two more hiding they were supposed to saw through some beams in two houses being roofed there would have been a nasty accident had they done the job, it turns out that young Stead had paid the men to do the job,, the two men looking for a job the previous afternoon just wanted an excuse to case the ~~site~~ site so that they would know

Just where to go.

That night,, six men were held in the police station,, they were charged with arson, trespass and a lot of things the police thought of, they were sent for trial later, five of them were sent to prison ~~from~~ ^{For From} two to five years, it seemed that they had done that sort of thing before, young Stead was fined one hundred pounds, and given two months prison, a few months later Steads, the Builders, went bankrupt and out of business.. Bob and I decided to dispence

with the traditional bachelor's night,, we considered the street party would be enough,, Sarah and Iwy were too busy to bother about a hen party,, that was not in their interest either , the night before the wedding, we were all too busy preparing anyhow, even Josh, was kept busy, the chip shop was shut and misses King was still using the taxicab going about making sure that everthing was as it should be,, the street was preparing as well,, flags and bunting was strung across the street,, and front room lights were on in the houses,, this told me that folk were getting the things ready for the big do,, it was as if the whole street was getting married, and not just Bob and I,, ah well, I hoped they had a real good day tomorrow and knowing them , I dare say that they would. I was up at eight, I raked the fire , pushed the damper up and made sure that the boiler was full. After tidying round the fireplace,, I filled the kettle,, then I swept the kitchen floor,, I was thinking of putting some dripping into the frying pan when there was a knock at the door,, I went and unlocked it then opened it,, Josh stood there,, I said , Now Josh,, come in,,

don't stand there, he came in and said, I hope you don't mind Peter, but I've sent one off them new taxicabs to pick up your aunt Daisy she lives so far away and I hoped you wouldnt mind , have I done the ^Vright thing, I said, Josh, if it wasnt for you,, I dont what I'd do,, you are a good mate and thanks now,, stop and have a cup of tea with me,, the kettle's just about boiling,, we went into the kitchen,, the kettle was singing away so I got two pint pots and made us both some sargent major. Josh said,, I'm just going to make a bit off breakfast,, do you want some,, no thanks Pete,, I've had some,, but thanks for the invite. I have a lot to see to before I get ready,so I'll see you in church right, and good luck Pete,, I thanked him and he let himself out. Dad was the next to appear,, he bobbed his slightly wrinkled and unshaven face round the doorway, wished me good morning and asked for a pint of tea, he said that Mum was on her way down and she would make

breakfast,, I made a cup of tea for her ready, then I put some more water in the kettle the coal scuttle was empty so I went into the back and filled it up, when I returned,,

Mum was in the kitchen drinking her tea, I wished her good morning and she replied then she thanked me for the tea,, what do two of you want for breakfast she asked,, Dad said,he would settle for sausages and toast, I said that'll do me as well Mum please,, twenty minutes later,, we were sat down at the table.. Mum looked through the window,, son she said , its going to be a lowely day for you , I'm so,pleased , Dad said,, there's been a lot of toing and frowing up and down,, you'd think all the street were getting married, I hope my new boots dont creak when I'm walking in church, Mum said,Peter, I've been looking at your new ~~sui~~ suit,, I like it , a nice silver grey,, are you wearing that blue shirt with it as well,, thats it Mum, I said,, my, she said, you will look a toff, Oh Mum, I said I forgot to get that watch, Dadsaid,, dont you fret about that son,, Sarah handed it to me last night I've got it upstairs for you lad, what time are you getting read.

I told Dad that he could bath first if he wished, the boiler was full and there would be ample for both of us, I intend to put some more in, in any case when you have got what you want out of it, because Mum might want some as well, right son he said, I'll get it over with now. The water in the boiler was hot enough so Dad got the tin bath down off the backyard wall and took it into our little shed, Mum gave him some white soap saying, she didn't want him smelling of carbolic in church, He took his shaving cup and soap then his leather belt he hung on a nail, took out his open razor and began to strop it on his belt, when he was satisfied with the razor's edge, he foamed his face and with a few deft strokes, he was ready for his second run, once again a fine good lather then over with the razor, wiping it on a bit of newspaper to remove the stuff from the blade then he was finished. He went into the shed then shouted to me to take him his fresh clothes he meant his John-L's and clean vest, when he was done, he put his trousers on and nipped back in the house then he ran upstairs to get dressed. while, all this was going on I had replenished the boiler and ~~stoked~~ stoked the fire, Dad had left me to empty the bath and wash it out, I first of all shaved with a safety razor, then I got some scented soap that Sarah had left, we put them in the shed and got a clean dry towel from Mum and took that in, by that time the water in the boiler was hot enough for me, I took enough for a bath then I put some more in the boiler, I had my bath and cleaned the bath then hung it back up in the yard. I was dressed and ready by the time the flowers came, two sprays and three buttonholes, sprays for my Mum and aunty Daisy the buttonholes for Dad mister Spencer, and myself, I asked Dad for the watch, he said son, let me show you how to put it through your waistcoat, I let him and the ruby hanging from the gold chain did make a difference, although I say it myself, I did look presentable. The boss arrived right on time, I sat him in the front room, and ^{he} knowing Dad, there was no need for an introduction Dad got the malt whisky out and gave us all a small drop, the boss said that the church bell were ringing, I looked at my watch, it caught the boss's attention, Peter he said, may I, I took it out placed it in my hand, and showed it to him, my word Peter he said, what a lovely piece, he held it for a moment then put it back, I returned it to my pocket, that's a real watch Peter he said and worth a fortune, I said I know that, it belonged to Sarah's father, ah, I see he said, well, it suits you and you do look very smart Peter, I thanked him and said, for a best man, you'll do me proud boss, he said Peter, please, today, if you don't mind, I would appreciate your calling me by my first name, it is Daniel, or Dan to you, I said right to Daniel, it will be as you ask, but after that it will be boss which is only right and proper, and while I'm at it, thank you Daniel for being my best man, I too appreciate what you're doing for me today, and that gorgeous present, it really is magnificent, while we were talking, Mum had been getting ready, she came in, she had on a new two piece suit, gloves, and bag to match, and a big flowery hat on she looked like a grand duchess, I smiled went up to her and kissed her, Mum, I said you do look grand, the boss said charming misses Nelson, charming I do say, thank you kindly mister Spencer, you are in fact the perfect gentleman, I am in fact proud that you are Peter's best man, the best choice possible if I may say so, I held my hand up, pardon me I said but I think we must be going, the time is getting near, we will go in the first landau, Bob and Josh

Were already in church, they looked round when we entered, smiles were exchanged and a whispered conversation followed as we sat in the front pew with them, I think we're a bit early, no, we're just about on time, I hope they arrive together, yes, so do I, I wonder if I'm on the proper side, oh don't bother about that, we'll get sorted out when they do come, I looked round, Mum and Dad had arrived, so had aunt Daisy and Bob's parents, Sargent butler, his wife, daughter, and son in law, our best Bobby and his misses, the church was beginning to fill up, the organist started playing some sort of music, I wasn't struck. But I expected it, then I heard some creaking boots, it reminded what my Dad said first thing this morning, I looked round, it was my Uncle and aunt walking in, if they were in, then Ivy and Sarah were not far behind, six or seven more minutes would do it, all these thoughts whizzing through my mind, then the organ stopped, the choir came in and the wedding march started, the boss said come on out, ~~wait~~ as we got up, I stole a glance, Ivy was first with her Dad, it seemed that he brought Ivy who had to wait for Sarah coming, so he took her Mum in first then went back, Sarah was escorted by her god father, thank god he was wearing a suit like we were, and not tails, the service was a very lengthy one and we were glad when we went into the vestry to sign the register. Ivy and Bob led the way out with their entourage then Sarah and I followed with ours, they the brides both kissed the chimney sweep and we got into the third landau. I have never seen such a crowd, rice and confetti strewn all over, before we could move away from the church, we had our photographs taken for the news papers, the flash frightened the horses but men in the crowd held them and were rewarded by Sarah's Mum in the back landau, ~~then~~ throwing money into the crowd. To cap it all, there was a band marching in front of us, it took us about an hour to get to our street, then both sides were lined with residents there were cheers, flags waving, the band was making a racket and as I looked behind us mother (Sarah's Mum) was having the time of her life, she was smiling and waving and every yard or so she would throw pennies to the kids, we left the band there, and trotted on to the masonic hall, every invited guest was in their place as we walked in, we were clapped right to our table, I felt very embarrassed but it was soon over with. I spotted Sam and his wife then there were the lads from the site, Elsie gave me a wink and a smile, Bob and Ivy looked across at me I smiled at them and as we sat down, Sarah said, darling, hasn't it been wonderful, I replied yes and surprising, the boss turned to Sarah and said, my dear Sarah, you look breathtaking, my word what a gorgeous dress that is, Dad gave me a big grin, Sarah's Mum had been crying but smiling at the same time, she was very happy, the vicar said grace, then the feast began. considering the number of people sitting down to the banquet, the service was very good, even the plates were warm and the food was excellent, I turned to mother and remarked on it ~~Sam~~ said she knew how to organise, she was the tops, she smiled and said thank you Peter. After the meal and the toast, the curtains opened there was a band on the stage and right in front were two identical wedding cakes, there was a photographer there as well, and we had to go and cut the cake. the bar was opened and the drinks were all free, we mingled with the guests for a while, then I got hold of Bob and took him to Mother so he could thank her for putting on a super show, Bob was embarrassed but he was soon put at ease, mother

Told him that she had enjoyed every minute and would do it all over again if she could, Bob kissed her and thanked her, and said that if at any time she needed his services, he would be happy to oblige,, Ivy came up them and thanked her in the usual feminine way, then she turned to me and said, ar'nt you going to kiss the bride Peter,, I said certainly Ivy I love,, I did, then I said to Bob, where's Sarah got to,, Bob said that he had already taken the liberty now she was being photographed,, I looked round and saw a large group of admirers watching Sarah being photographed,, I grabbed hold of mother's arm and said please come with me mother,, I spotted Dad and Mum, I waved them to come over,, they pressed through and we made our way to Sarah's side, I told the photographer, to take photos of all of us, then of just Sarah and I, then I asked mother to have her's taken on her own, then Dad with Mum, then the three of them, I wanted one of the boss and I together, then one with Elsie,, the boss and Sarah and I,, then once again all of us only then was I satisfied Sam came up so I asked the photographer if he had any plates left, I said then take one off Sam and I together, this he did, then I told him to go and get some more plates and come back,, we had'nt finished, I wanted one with the boss, Sam, myself, and the lads from the site,, I also wanted one of the three off us meaning Josh, Bob and myself,, then the complete double wedding crowd, the photographer was at it untill quite late in the afternoon then the site boys gave me their surprise,, they brought in a wooden crate and placed it in the middle of the floor, I was asked to open it,, I broke open the crate,, took some wrapping off this article then stood back and looked at a really magnificent statue of a bricklayer building a wall,, I was so embarrassed with gratitude I did'nt know where to turn, and to surprise me even more,, all the names of the men who worked on the site were inscribed on the plinth all the way round,, that was something to behold,, I thanked them all and said that I could'nt have wished for a better present from them,, I turned to Sarah and said,, darling,, your looking at the finest bunch of lads ever to work on a building site and I am proud of every one of them, Sarah smiled and blew them a kiss,, whereby they all broke into singing, for he's a jolly good fellow them they clapped and cheered,, I put my arm round Sarah and we waved to them all and thanked them again. I said to Sam, let them all have what they want at the bar Sam and thank you old friend,, he patted my back as I walked away with Sarah,, Sarah on impulse turned back and planted a kiss on Sam's cheek that brought more cheering as we walked away.. I got Mum and Dad along with mother together, then I took a bottle of champagne and poured them a glass each and took one myself, I raised my glass to them and said to the nicest family a man can ever hope to lucky enough have,, god bless you all.. They all drank my health and I asked to be excused for a moment,, I went for the boss and Elsie,, they were sat on their own quietly talking,, I asked them to join us, they smiled and accepted,, I escorted them into our company,, then we sat at a Table and talked between ourselves untill the place was cleared for dancing.. when everything was ready,, the band played a chord,, everybody stopped what they were doing and listened to the announcement,, would the happy couples please start the dancing and then lets have a real good northern ball. It was a nice slow walse the four of us started off, half way through we changed partners then everybody joined in.

I had noticed that Sarah's god parent was not with us shortly after the banquet, Sarah said that he sent his apologies, but had to get back, he had a very urgent business meeting with a very important client who had sent a special messenger to take him back with him, however, he had made him wait until after the banquet before he made his departure, he promised to return within a few days and would make it up to us. The celebrations went on and Sarah told her mother that she was going home to change ready for the trip to Scotland, my

bags were already packed so I only had to pick them up. Sarah's mum insisted on going with her so there was nothing I could do to prevent her, I didn't mind, and Sarah, wouldn't comment. Mother's taxi was still waiting for her outside the Masonic Hall, so we used it to go to the ship shop. Mother had purposely come with us to tell Sarah and I about her good fortune, that is, Sarah's, mother said that she knew that we wanted to be alone but just this once she wanted to speak to us without any interference, Sarah said, first mother, I must take this dress off, will you see to it later for me please, and pack it away for me,

mother agreed and Sarah shot upstairs changed and was back ready in a few minutes. Now Mother she said, what must I hear, Mother said, Well it seems that you are the sole owner of two more plantations in Cylon, Simon, your god father has just received confirmation that the dispute that has gone on for years, has finally been resolved, proof of ownership by your father has at last been found and the courts have decided that all profits together with everything else concerning the two plantations must be handed over to you within a month however, if you wish to sell, there are five or six buyers ready to offer a good price, I have said that you are in no hurry to sell, and will think things over first, I thought it best Darling, you don't want them to think that you want to sell, the price would drop and that is what they're after, Sarah said, mother, I don't know the first thing about finance so I think it is better if I left you on that sort of thing, what do you think Peter, I said, mother is the best organiser there is, I reckon that sort of thing needs careful thought and mother knows best how to deal with that sort of problem, when we get back, I know that mother will always be here to guide us in any transaction that may crop up and, further more, you my dear wife, always have the last say.

I think that I am better at sitting and listening, and only then can I, with your permission, say what I think, after all you are a very lucky girl to have such a talented mother.

Please Don't flatter me Peter mother said, I'm not, I said I am speaking the way I see it, Sarah, be honest with me and tell me, don't you think that your mother is better at that sort of thing than I am, yes Peter she answered, you're right, mother, will you take care of it like always, mother said, I would love to but, I will try and teach you both the ins and outs of the money game, some you win and some you draw, you never lose.

Peter, can I ask you a personal question she said, go ahead I said, we're all family, well she asked, how much money are you taking with you to Scotland, oh I said, about thirty five pounds, why do you ask, mother said, well if you look in that small blue case of Sarah's, you will find another fifty and that is from me to you as a gift and I don't want to hear any more about it, bring me something nice from Scotland as a keepsake will you. I went over to her, put my arms round her and kissed her, mother I said you really beat the band don't you. It was time to go to the station, mother still had the taxi standing by, we used

IE

We rode passed the street party unobserved, the taxi having made a slight detour for my ~~benefit~~ benefit, I collected my bags, the station was only a few minutes away and mother fussed about our rail tickets, yes I said I had them in my pocket, yes mother I had reserved a compartment, yes I had booked at ~~the~~ ^{BURGH} metropol in Edinburgh for the overnight stay, I will keep an eye on the bags, Sarah said, mother please, yes alright Sarah but wait until you have a daughter going away, Sarah replied that they may be all sons, the station approach saved us from anymore fuss. there seemed to be a lot of people at the station sargent Butler and his constable were the first to meet us, I'm afraid that word got out you were on your way Peter, so most of the folk insisted seeing you off, Jim, my constable and I, will clear a path for you though, they are a bit unruly but good natured with it so the sooner you are on the train, the better, thank sargent I said, let's go, the train was in so we elbowed our way through, Jim the heat hobby offered to take our bags so we let him I put a protecting arm round Sarah, after a lot of backslapping and clapping, we got to our reserved compartment, mother came in and sat down for a minute, she hoped we had a nice journey, was our compartment alright, and please look after my little girl, I had expected those words to be uttered before now, however, that meant mother was ready to depart and leave us alone at last, Mother got up, gave Sarah a kiss then gave me one, looked me in the eye and said, Peter, please, steady eh, I knew what she meant and said, promise, she got out and the door shut with a clunk, I let the window down and we both leaned out, a porter ran by the side of the train slamming doors to, then, the guard blew his whistle, the train driver tooted in response, then there was a slight lurch forward, the engine wheels spun round rapidly as the brakes were released, great clouds of steam billowed out from the engine, and we slowly moved forward, we waved to the crowd and mother, confetti and rice once again showered on to us, the crowd cheered and mother waved her handkerchief we waved until they were out of sight, we passed the signal gantry, and went under a small bridge the train picking up speed as we rolled along, I put the window up and then we sat down, both of us said phew, that's that, now, we're on our own at last. there were a few stops along the way but we pulled in to Princess street station right on time. We didn't expect a taxi to be waiting for us but there was, courtesy of the hotel on arrival, we received a welcoming handshake from the manager, he snapped his fingers, a young man ran to us and took our bags, he was dressed in a well buttoned suit and wore a pillbox hat with a chinstrap, the manager escorted us to the reception desk and said to the young lady behind the desk, Mister and misses Nelson, one night the honeymoon suite, follow me please sir, he led us up two flights of stairs and along a corridor, all well carpeted, and to a door at the end, he opened the door and bade us enter, there was a nice big fire going and a bottle of champagne on a small table compliments of the management, a big vase of flowers on the table in the middle of the room and ^{By the Fire Place,} a cord with a tassel on the end of it, the manager asked us if we liked ^{the room,} was it to our satisfaction if we needed anything at all, anytime, day or night, just ring the bell, he pointed to the cord the bell boy entered with the bags, he put them down and was about to leave when I said, wait a moment, here, I gave him five shillings he saluted me thanking me, and left, the manager wished us a pleasant stay and left, after giving me a key to the door.

We explored the rest of the suite , a well carpeted bedroom, a bathroom that was tiled, a ~~and~~ small lavatory and a balcony that you could stand on and look over part of the city . I took a quick look under the bed, yes it was there, the inevitable pot , now why a chamber pot under the bed when there was a lavatory handy, that was peculiar, I supposed that anyone who smoked could use it for an ash tray , I could'nt see anything else that they could use well, Neither Sarah or I, smoked, so we would'nt be needing it,, Sarah said that she would like something to eat, maybe a sandwich or two and a pot of tea,, I pulled the cord, in less than two minutes, a knock on the door answered our summons, I opened the door, you rang sir, the thin young man standing in front of me asked, yes I said, could we please have some sandwiches and a nice pot of hot tea with the usual milk and sugar , the man asked what sort of sandwiches we preferred, I turned to Sarah what sort of sandwiches do you want darlin I said, Scottish cheddar she said, I repeated it to the man and he said very good sir , I'll bring them right away, he turned and went down the corridor, I shut the door. A few minutes later, the sandwiches arrived, I gave the man half a crown, he thanked me asked me if there would be anything else , I said no thank you and he left, I closed and locked the door. The sandwiches were fresh and the tea very satisfying, Sarah and I enjoyed them, after we put the tray on the table, and sat on the bed. We slowly began to address,, we were both a little embarrassed at first but ~~our~~ our passion and love for each other overcame all other emotions, and our marriage was consummated. In the morning,, we both bathed and went down for breakfast,, the manager was there to greet us, and Sarah said that we may as well stay two more days if it was convenient, the manager was delighted, and said that it would be to our advantage to use the hotel courtesy car which he put at our disposal, and then asked us if we would be back for lunch we said yes, and that we would have dinner that night. He said that if required, he would get us tickets to a show or whatever we wished, we thanked him for his kindness and said that we preferred to use the car and driver, and just do a little sight seeing,, this arrangement suited us perfectly. After breakfast,, Sarah said that she would go shopping, I accompanied her into the city, the driver was very helpful and said that he would keep an eye out for us,, he told us that he would not be with us for half an hour,, he had to go on an errand for the manager,, we told him not to worry and pick us up later. there are some nice but expensive shops in the city however , Sarah wanted to browse, and so I followed,, I saw a beautiful bedspread in one shop I liked,, Sarah said, oh no,, you might get the same one on the market only half as much,, lets wait and see eh,, I said you're right of course darling,, I said that I would have to buy a lot of presents , There was the Boss for being best man, Elsie,, Josh , mother,, Mum , Dad,, Sam and I would like to buy Bob and Ivy something and last but not least,, there was you. Peter she said , obviously I'm not sure yet,, but it could be possible that I already have mine,, she laughed I said Sarah, you know what I mean oh yes she said,, and darling you know what I mean, don't you Peter,, I said yes my love, and then I kept quiet about the subject. We found a market and as we were going towards it, the driver approached us and said, if you don't mind I'll just walk behind you round here,, pick - pockets you know, and although the stallholders are honest enough, there are one or two who may have stolen property to get rid of so, I'll just be behind you to watch.

We ambled about the market and came across a bedding stall that looked alright, I turned round the driver said that the stall was good, we purchased three tartan blankets and a beadspread, later on another stall we came to sold cloaks,, I bought a lovely brown one fully lined, that I thought would look well on Mum now for Dad what could I get him,, well I think a nice good pipe and some tobacco and a pouch,, now mother,, what can you buy a woman thats got everything,, a thistle broach for mother I think, and Elsie, I wonder what to get her,, I turned to Sarah,, I asked her what she thought Elsie would like as a present,, Sarah said,, leave it to me that,, I'm going into that ladies wear shop,, I'll buy her some nice frilly underclothes,, that left Sam and the boss,, a problem in deed,, I know,, I would buy Sam a cloak with an extra cape on the shoulders that would keep him warm in winter,, He'd like that I hope, now then the boss,, Sarah had gone into the ladies shop so I waited,, I noticed the driver still hanging round,, I beckoned him to come on over,, as he approached I detected a slight limp in his stride, I asked him why he was limping,, he told me that he had a sore foot, his boots were a bit tight,, I said that he could get them stretched,, there was a boot and shoe shop over the road I had noticed,, I took him there, we entered I said to the man in the shop that my driver wanted a boot stretching could the man fix it he said he would try,, our driver sat down and took his boot off then handed it to the shop man, he took it into the back and said that it would be ten minutes,, I said that I would go and meet my wife then come back,, I crossed the road and Sarah came out with three or four parcels I took them from her and we both went to the boot shop, the driver was putting his boot back on,, he was also minding the other parcels, I asked him how his foot was now, he said that it was fine and why had'nt he thought of it before, I paid the shop man half a crown and he was satisfied with it. the driver stamped his foot and smiled, I feel a lot better now sir thank you, he said I said come with us, I took Sarah and the driver into a cafe and we had tea and shortbread I must say that it tasted delicious, the driver looked uneasy I said,, what's the matter driver,, he said that he should'nt dine at the same table as the hotel guests I said, popycock,, if you want, you can dine with us tonight, oh no: thank you Sir he said,, my wife's making Broth, and I dont want to miss out,, she wont thank me for it, but I do thank you for asking me. after we left the shop,, we wandered into an arcade, there we saw what I thought would suit the boss,, it was a small silver trowel to act as a paper weight,, that would be ideal,, I asked the price, twelve pounds the man said,, the driver said excuse me sir,, the one in the shop in the arcade across the way is only seven pounds ten in that case I said,, I'll go there, I moved to leave, ah one moment sir, he said, I can reduce it if you want to buy it, you can have it for seven pounds sir,, the driver said well now would you give us a bill its for the lord Prowost,, He wants to present it to the new school of building design on the other side of the city,, we'll have to get it engraved as well,, oh. in that case the man said,, I can have it engraved while you wait,, and seeing its for his lordship, five pounds will be enough,, I always like to help the city when I can,, give me half an hour please and I'll have it done, what name has to go on it,, well I said,, its a mister Daniel Spencer,, a mister Daniel Spencer for special advocacy, I said you know what that means do you, oh yes sir he said,, I knew he did'nt, but I got that trowel for a fiver thanks to

THE DRIVER.

I insisted that the driver take one pound five shillings for getting me the trowel, so cheaply, I happen to know that shop, a good one indeed sir, but the prices are pretty high you see sir, my wife used to clean in that shop and she knows a thing or two about it, just the same I said you have saved me a bob or two so there's no harm in sharing, we walked on with the occasional glance through shop windows, I had told the driver to put the packages in the car and lock them up, this he had done and was a few yards behind us, we bumped into a nattily dressed man who stepped back, said sorry, and raised his hat, then walked passed, our driver, Andrews got hold of him and gave him a cuff on the side of his face, give it back now, or I call the police, the man spluttered, but the driver held him, then the driver did a funny thing, he took the man's jacket and ripped it from his back, all sorts of purses and items of jewelry and wallets tumbled out on to the pavement, I spotted my wallet and picked it up, well I said, this is what happens to pickpockets where I come from if they get caught, I hoisted the man onto a nearby shop door and told the man in the shop to call the police, the pickpocket was hanging by his braces, one or two people gathered round but we left them at it and as we walked towards the car, I turned and thanked the driver, all part of the service sir he said, I said yes, I dare say, but how did you spot him, oh he said he's tried it before, he didn't spot me though, as soon as I saw him, I dodged into a doorway and waited, I knew what he was up to, so I was ready for him, well I said, you certainly caught him, I shall report this matter to the hotel manager, your a good man to have around, thank you, no thank you sir he said, a word to the manager is needed because he was thinking of giving this job to a younger man, he doesn't think I'm up to it, oh I said, is that so, well we'll see about that, we got back to the car and I helped Sarah in, she said, Peter, would you please let me handle this matter, I'm pretty good at this sort of thing, I know it sounds rather vain of me to say so, but please, will you, I said Sarah, I certainly will, and I'll probably learn something about you I didn't know, oh darling you will, I promise, but afterwards, don't talk about it, promise Peter, oh alright then I said. We reached the hotel and entered the foyer, the driver came in behind us with our packages, He put them down, Sarah turned round to him and told him to wait, he stood there, at the reception desk, Sarah asked for the manager, the receptionist asked for what purpose, Sarah said, mind your own business and get him now, I'm sorry He's very busy right now, the girl said, Sarah said, very quietly get him now or you're fired, a bell boy was despatched and the manager appeared as if by magic, Sarah said, lets go into your office shall we, yes certainly misses Nelson, what seems to be the trouble, Sarah sat down, do you like your job here she asked the manager, oh yes he replied but I don't understand, then listen to me Sarah said, do you know who I am, yes he said I do, then Sarah said, well my mother owns this hotel and three more in this city, have you ever heard of the King Industries, yes he said very well known financiers and a lot more other things besides, why, Sarah said, only because my maiden name was Sarah King now do you understand, would you like proof, oh no he said I believe every word, Misses King rang up this morning to ask how you were getting on, you had just left with Andrews, right Sarah said, now first of all, that receptionist must learn how to use her manners when speaking to guests and furthermore, Andrews

Is worth every penny you pay him, he is an asset to this hotel, then Sarah went on to describe the events of the morning, she ended up by saying she thought that Andrews was worth another twoshillings and six pence a week, she finished by saying that she had enjoyed her stay in the hotel and would be leaving in the morning, would he please present us with a full bill, and reserve us a table for dinner tonight, then Sarah turned to me and said, darling, just the two of us, I said yes, that would be fine, but what about lunch now, Sarah said yes, then turning to the manager, she said, just this once, would you be kind enough to allow Andrews to have lunch with us, as a reward for his efforts, certainly misses Nelson, I agree with you, I'll let him know right away, we got up and Sarah said, thank you so much, you have been so helpful, I'll let mother know, thank you he said, I'm most grateful, not at all Sarah said, you're doing a good job here.

We had what they call lunch, with Andrews, he was clearly embarrassed but decided to eat well just the same, I got him to chat a little and Sarah was enjoying every minute, she liked surprising people, even me, I wanted to talk about the King's enterprises or industries, I thought better of it. one thing was certain however, the King's family were very deep, mysterious, and a little eccentric but nice with it, I resolved to take things as they came provided I was'nt on their payroll, and I was left to do my own thing. After lunch, Sarah went to freshen up, I followed at a leisurely pace, as I entered the suite, Sarah was quietly singing, the song was'nt important but it alerted me to the fact that she was cooking something with that agile brain of hers, I would soon know about it, as I said before, she loved surprising people, even me, I went into the lavatory, when I came out and washed my hands, the singing had stopped, I thought, now the talking begins, I dried my hands hung the towel back on the rail and went into the big sitting room, I sat down on the large sofa, crossed one leg over the other and leaned back awaiting the next surprise and considering my reactions, what sort of comment I might make, and whether to be cross with her or what. Sarah came in from the bedroom, she had changed her dress and wore a hat with feathers in, it looked very pretty and I said so, she asked if we might go for a walk together, I said yes why not my dear, she had a drink of fruit juice then brought a parasol from the bedroom, right darling she said, I'm ready, we went out and locked the door behind us, I left the key at the reception desk, the same girl was on the desk duty and she asked me if I would ask my wife if she would kindly go to the desk as she had something to say to her, I went to Sarah who was waiting by the doorway, Sarah I said, she turned, yes dear she said, I asked her to go to the desk, I waited, when she came back, Sarah was smiling, well I said, oh she said, that girl was worried about her job, I put her mind at ease, I was a little snappy with her I must admit, but I'm only human you know, I said yes dear, and we went on to the street. Now Sarah I said, where are you taking me, she smiled and said I want to do just a little more shopping Peter my love, there were shops all around us, I wondered where on earth we would end up this time, Sarah darling I said, no more surprises I said, oh, but Peter she said, I must take you to one place it's very important, I nodded then said, alright, if it will make you happy, we crossed the street and went into a passage, she seemed to know her way around, she opened a door and we entered a corridor, we walked

Along to the third door on the right,, she knocked and we entered ,, a middle aged man was sitting at a mahogany desk, papers everywhere ,, he looked up and said, good afternoon miss King, Sarah said,, no,, no^F any more Angus, I'm misses Nelson now,, meet my husband,, mister Peter Nelson,, Peter, meet my scottish attorney, mister Angus ~~Monsieur~~, he stood up,, a big man and he had a twinkle in his eye, we shook hands,, sit down please he said,, we sat,, now then misses Nelson,, what exactly have you in mind, Sarah said ,, all my scottish holdings have you got the papers ready,, yes he said, and your mother says that as long as your are ~~h~~ happy about it, then go ahead, from now on,, you are the owner of it all and you please yourself Sarah then turned to me and said,, Peter dearest,, I know it looks somewhat unusual to you, ~~h~~ but all this business has got too big and too much for me to handle,, now, if you could see your way to releiving me of this lot,, I can manage the rest,, I said , Sarah,, why can't you sell it them, that would be the easiest way would'nt it,, no she said its too complicated,, what's more Peter,, I wanted you to have it and be indipendant,, I wanted you to have a wedding present just from me ,, that way,, I can still keep it in the family, there may be children to consider later on ,, when they grow up, they can take it on for you and in any case ~~any you know~~, I have enough money as it is, as you well know by now, and giwing it away does'nt help, most of it would finishup in some other rich man's pocket,, I really would like you to take it ower,, it would make me feel a lot happier, and think what you could do withit. Sarah was getting all worked up, and I did'nt like that so I said, Sarah,, when we get back to the hotel, can we have a chat about all this, and would you please put me in the picture properly, yes darling,, I promise I will,, I signed the papers. On our way out ,, Angus said that the administration would continue as long as I said so, and the reports would be sent ewery month to me, that would be fine I said,, and I would keep in touch. Out in the street, I said Sarah, you are a mystery to me sometimes,, now that is not playing fair at all, so lets get one thing straight,, from this moement on, no more ~~se~~ secrets from each other please, do you promise, yes Peter darling, I do, and to prove it,, when we get back, I'll open my heart to you on condition that it remains confidential, that is a deal I said, now Peter ~~he~~ said I was going shopping, well,, come on, I have a gift for you in a shop round the corner from here.. Off we went again,, this time it was a surprise, we entered a book shop, Sarah said, I'm misses Nelson junior, you have a special package for me I believe, oh yes madam, the elderly man said, here it is,, all wrapped and ready for you, its rather heavy I'm afraid, perhaps the gentleman can carry it, I picked the package up from the counter and nearly dropped it , it certainly was heavy, Sarah Paid a lot of money out and got a receipt, then we staggered back to the hotel. In the privacy of the bridal suite,, I was asked to open the package,, I took the paper from it and found it to be a large box with brass ~~bands~~ round or if you will a brass bound box, it was locked, I looked at Sarah, she held a key in her hand, now Peter,, please do what I say, no, no, please Peter, do this , I said right, go on, she said put the key in the lock turn it but let me open it please , alright I said but Sarah, no more games ,, no she said this is'nt a game Peter,, this is very serious indeed, I turned the key and stood back she threw back the lid to reveal a beautiful leather bound gold edged family Bible.

Printed in big gold leaf lettering were the words, family Bible of Peter and Sarah Nelson. I opened it in wonderment, there were plenty of pages at the front for writing names and dates and ^{space} ~~room~~ for events, there were pictures in it and little ribbons for bookmarks, it was proof to me that Sarah loved me truly, I turned and kissed her and put my arms round her and said, Sarah, I do truly love you, we kissed again, Peter she said, that makes me so very happy. ~~we~~ We put the Bible away and I pulled the cord, the knock on the door wasn't long in coming I opened it and said to the porter, A pot of hot strong tea with the usual, and some nice shortbread, enough for two, yes sir he said, I shut the door and said, Sarah, I am taking you out shopping after our tea, I must buy you something, but this won't be a surprise, you are going to pick your own present instead.

After we'd had our tea, we asked for Andrews to take us into the outskirts of the city, he duly arrived with the car and we got in, where to sir he asked me, oh, I said just drive round for a while we'll think of somewhere presently, Andrews drove slowly through the city Andrews I said, I want a good well known factory where they make kilts, take us there please will you, certainly sir he said, we'll have to hurry though, they'll be closing shortly

After a short quick drive we arrived at a small factory, we slipped through the gateway and after a word with a fellow wearing an apron, we were shown into an office, a young woman came and asked us what we required, I said, a couple of kilts to fit my wife, yes sir she said come this way please, now what tartan do you require, I said that would be my wife's decision, the young woman took us into a small kind of show room with different designed tartans, there were the Stuart, Cameron, Macdonald, Gordon and many others Sarah picked the ~~one~~ ^{one} off Gordon, Sarah was measured and she got one parceled up for her, now I said, what about the things that go with it you know, the big safety pin and the sporran then two pairs of stockings you know, everything, don't miss anything out then I want the same again but make it a Stuart for the next one, I asked her mother's size, Sarah picked mother's size and all the trimmings that went with it, now, I said, what's the damage, I pulled out my wallet for the lot sir she said, give me ten pounds that will be enough I paid the woman then I noticed a big shawl on the rack it looked warm and lovely, I pointed, how much I said, twentyfive shillings she said, wrap it up I said, in half an hour, we were on our way to the hotel, I was feeling happy, Sarah I said do you like what I have bought you, oh yes darling she said, and mother will be pleased I'm sure, I said that the shawl was for Josh's Mum, I owed her for putting up with me when you were sleeping at our house, oh yes she said, and Peter, do you know what, what my dear I said, well, it was the friendly and welcome atmosphere that decided mother and I to stay in what you call your district, we were always with snobs and leaches, people would come to our house and overstay their welcome, it was horrid, that is one reason that we decided to move and lose ourselves, now who would think of finding us in the north of England, but I'll say this, they don't know what they're missing now, mother and I have never been happier believe me, well, that's nice to hear you say so Sarah my love and, if at all possible, I'll try to make you contented as well, you know that community spirit is the thing that is lacking in the south, they may be better off money wise, but we beat them with everything else you can mention except bad manners and them

They can keep. I told her.

We left Edinurgh the next morning, Andrews drove us to the station, our destination was north,. before leaving the hotel, we rang mother to let her know that everything was fine and we were going on to Stirling and Perth,, mother said that the change over was going smoothly, and when we got back,, Mum and Dad would be running the chip shop.

We visited various places on our trip north , Sarah enjoyed the fresh air and the walks along the banks of the different lochs,, our dream had come true,, we were together, I prayed inwardly to God that our relationship would always remain unspoilt,, it was as if I was being rewarded for something I had not yet achieved ,, a little apprehension crept into my mind,, then I refused to let it dampen my spirits,, I knew that my new found wealth had something to do with it , then I began to understand why Sarah had put it to me so gradually and carefully,, and I realised that it must have been something far worse than I could have imagined for her to have made ,, along with her mother,, such a drastic decision as they did, to enter my kind of world and environment,, I resolved to find out one way or another. I was distracted from my reverie by Sarah giving me a gentle nudge,. we had been walking along the bank of loch Lomand, having stopped off at Balmaha,, a penny for them darling, she said,, I said that I was thinking about the wealth at my disposal, I wondered if I could make good use of it,, and more important,, who could I help to make life easier,, Sarah said, Peter love, let's talk about it on our way back home shall we, you see,, I have some very painful memories about the subject I wanted to discuss with you after you had got used to this sort of thing. We strolled in silence for a while, Sarah's dress was becoming wet and smudged ,, I remarked about this but she did'nt seem bothered and bent down,, picked up a stone and threw it into the loch,, look Peter she said,, those ripples,, what about them I said,, you see how they spam out from the centre where the stone landed,, well,, I said, that is what hapens when you disturb the water the ever increasing circles expand as far as they can then disappear ,, the same thing hapens in high society you know,, Sarah said,, I dont understand you Sarah darling I said,, it happened Sarah continued,, when we lived on London,, Mother was walking out with a so called single man,, you know the type,, pillar of society and all that,, well before mother got seriously thinking off remarrying,, she naturally had him investigated,, he turned out to be a right cad ,, of course his friends all took his side,, he even went so far as to tell people that he had slept with mother, and they believed him, this we could'nt tolerate,, Mother took him to task in public,, he was with an actress at the time, so it was put down to jealousy on my mother' part ,, the whispering campaign that followed was so vicious and indicative, it made Mother quite ill,, I persuaded Mother to sell the house and move,, as you can gather,, we moved to Bristol,, some of the stygma caught up with us there, that was enough,, we contacted Simon,, you know,, Mother's lawyer, and with his help,, we bought the chip shop in Avenham and we have been so delighted with the people there,, that we decided to settle for good. Peter darling,, I know that if anybody tried the same thing here,, they would'nt last two minutes would they,, I answered the question by reminding Sarah that now,, we were family,, no one ever comes between me and my family,, if they try it on,, well, you know what we're like in Avenham.

Balmaha ~~was~~ is a nice centre to stay in when you want to visit Loch Lomond and the surrounding countryside, personally, I liked the place but it was not home, therefore, I was not unhappy when we, Sarah and I, moved on and decided to make for Glasgow and ~~home~~, then home, we both liked Scotland but to us it was like visiting a museum, I mean, you went, you saw, then you left, we liked what we saw and enjoyed our stay, the thing was, that so much had been going on in the weeks leading up to the wedding, that we started to miss the atmosphere and excitement, Sarah was looking forward to living in our house with Mother, and planning for our new one I hoped to build, I had an idea that she was thinking of other events as well. Our baggage had increased somewhat so, another trunk was purchased and used for the gifts. On the morning of our departure for Glasgow, I had washed and dressed and packed out the abolition gear into the necessary bag and stepped back nearly falling over Sarah who was on her hands and knees searching round, I asked her what on earth she was looking for, that button-hook she said, I put it down for a minute while I sat down, I put my boots on and was going to fasten them with it and now it's gone, oh I said, I saw it and put it away with the rest of our stuff, I'm sorry I forgot that you had to button up your boots, hang on dear, I'll get it for you, I reopened the bag rumaged around a bit and found it then I said, come on, I'll do it for you, there were six buttons on each boot and talk about a struggle I had, well, the job was eventually accomplished and we rinsed our hands again, then went for breakfast and afterwards paid our bill and asked for a taxicab to take us to the station. The trip home was uneventful and tedious, we arrived nonetheless in good time to get a taxi home, then nip to the chip shop and get some fish and chips, and of course not without, a lot of Hello's and how are you, and tell us all about it, all that carry on, not that we didn't expect it or even mind it, we didn't, but we were tired, and wanted some sleep, besides, I had missed my sergeant major and was looking forward to my pint pot. My life changed completely after our honeymoon, I do not think that any man alive today could have had a busier or more wonderful married actuality than I, the sheer joy and overwhelming affection bestowed on me by my wife and her mother would have to be experienced first hand to be believed. to tell you about that, I must write another story.

tell you another time

*Perhaps I should retitle this
My P-ecology*



