

The York Rd Street Saga as told to Uncle E'Benn.

He entered the Black Hole that was the abode of Rigor Mortice. Peering from behind piles of order forms, festooned with cobwebs and layered with dust, was Rigor himself. So many hopes, so many dreams had ended here. Young men, bewitched by a beguiling smile had been promised the earth, but had received a bag of compost. They had wasted the best years of their youth, toiling in the airless caverns of Herospace, for this pitiless monster who cared nothing for human needs and inspiration.

"Do not let the siren voice of Tassitus lead you away from the true path, my son" said Rigor Mortis.

"But I would like an upgrading, sire. A few more pence just to feed my starving children."

A hand held high silenced him. "Speak not of pence, you who have been selected by me for greater things than mere money. Do you hear me speak of money? We live only to serve the greater need." The child, the changeling slunk away but was called back.

"I am not unaware of your needs. Many are consumed by material things before they reach a state of grace. Leave your problem with me. A few short days (spelt y-e-a-r-s) and I will surely surprise you with my response."

And so the child, the changeling was light of heart as he returned on wings of hope to spurn the teachings of Tassitus.

"He placed his arms around my shoulder and promised me my heart's desire".

"Not that again," said E'Benn, a man of little faith who followed the ways of Tassitus and consequently was not to be trusted.

"When I was young and untried in the ways of Herospace, I too was tempted to place my trust in the wheel of fortune, and look at me now!"

All eyes saw a broken, dispirited man, a husk, a shell without substance. And they laughed the laughter of hope, of youth, of the unbroken spirit, as the once proud E'Benn shuffled away. His second hand safety shoes were all that remained of his triumphant past.

"Broken on the rack of local bargaining", said Dippy whose entrepreneurial spirit had led him to success in the field of sheep dip technology, and County Charm toiletries.

"Relax in a hot bath of sheep dip. It's for ewe!"

His Holyness, Ballcock, High Priest of Tassitus was presiding over what remained of his disciples. The mighty Berisbored officiated.

"You entrusted me with national bargaining, and I returned with talk of Herospace," said Ballcock.

"Honeyed words that bend a man's mind" said Grunt, whose elfin features had broken many a heart. "I went forth again and this time we were to be delightfully local. An intimate collusion, a meeting of minds. Kindred spirits entangled in a symphony of success."

"How much?" said Fartkins, his mind befuddled by thoughts of Italian dumplings, browned by a Grecian sun.

"Depends on your definition of 'How much'" said Ballcock in a voice that conjured doubt from certainty.

"Before we rush on," interposed Undergrowth. "Could we not contemplate the interspatial connotations of any increase on the infrastructure of the Technical Scales".

"I take your point," said Berisbored discarding his embroidery, and then fell silent. (Bang!)

"How much?" asked Fartkins.

"We find ourselves at this time unable to respond quantitatively to that interpellation" said Ballcock.

"Security reasons", said Dod Bod. "The workings of local negotiations must at all times remain in camera, as it were."

"When are we going to have the meeting?" persisted Fartkins. "We must put the question to the membership".

"Would this mean divulging the precise sum?" inquired Ballcock.

"Someone might ask" said Grunt. "I will not be put into a position where I am forced to divulge a monitory amount in open session."

"Precisely", said Berisbored.

"The secrets of the inner sanctum cannot be spread willy nilly before the masses."

"Willy, will who?" spluttered E'Benn awaking from a trance like state.

"Willy nilly!"

"New bloke is he? Is he a member?"

Berisbored hit him gently on the head with a small table and E'Benn returned to the arms of Morpheus.

"So it's settled then. We have a mass meeting so that we can settle the pay claim, and to avoid embarrassment, no members of the JOC will attend" said Grunt.

"It will avoid confrontation. Market forces will prevail" they chorused.

In Castle Kelly they were celebrating.

"A great step forward" said Micheal O'Kelly, "I shall build myself a nice garage over by the railway and spend the rest of my life cultivating portacabins and potting on DECU's"

Pip clamped her mouth around the top of another champagne bottle and tore the cork out with her teeth.

"To the zero option" she said. "And next year we shall increase the settlement threefold".

"They will still get safety shoes" said O'Kelly.

"We can't have our engineers shuffling to work in bare feet can we? Or can we?" murmured Pip who was not without a segment of compassion.

"I don't care" said the child, the changeling. "I have been selected by Rigor Mortis for advancement. He will look after me!". A kindly hand silenced his fevered ramblings.

And a great darkness settled upon Herospace, and the air was foul and full of evil elements. All that was good had long departed. Only the old, demented and bedeviled remained.

In the wilderness that was electroland, Ballcock stood among the remnants of his disciples.

"Was Tassiturn a fake God," whispered E'Benn.

"No!" exclaimed Ballcock. "We had too little faith. Put your faith in market forces, they told us, and all will be well."

"Let the force be with you" shouted the child, the changeling. "I am strong! I am fit! I am the unfettered future!"

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Is it possible to fit 24 subbies onto the head of a pin?

What has happened to the formula for boiling spuds, first discovered by York Road canteen in April 1987?

Will E'Benn learn to fly his new desk? Will the LLW-D(esk) ever go supersonic again?