

# THE TOILET ATTENDANT

by

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In the centre of the park stood the public toilet, and in the public toilet stood Alf the attendant. He had been there for a lifetime, and he enjoyed his work.

On Alf's fortieth birthday, the town clerk arrived at the toilet to speak with Alf.

"It has come to our attention, Alf," said the clerk very formally, "that you are illiterate. Can this true?"

"Sorry Sir... Yes, sir..." responded Alf. "I come from a poor 'ome, an' they couldn't afford to sent me for no schoolin'."

"I see." said the clerk. "Well I'm afraid I've got some bad news for you... we don't employ illiterates... so you'll have to go." He reached into his pin-striped pocket, and pulled out an ominous looking envelope, which he thrust into Alf's hand. "Look, here's two week's severance pay; you have to leave right now."

Without further words, the clerk had a pee, washed his hands, and breezed out of the toilet.

Alf slowly put on his cap and coat; and after bidding a final adieu to the urinals, he emerged, dejected and jobless, into the outside world.

As he walked out of the park, Alf passed by a fruit shop that was having a special on apples. On a mad impulse he exchanged all of his severance pay for apples and paper bags.

He took his fruit to the other side of the park and set up business by the main tram stop. By the end of the afternoon Alf had sold all of his stock and had made an honest profit.

He repeated the experience the next day... and the next... and the next...

Five years later, Alf was being interviewed by "Business" magazine as "business-man of the year", and the town's first local millionaire. He had also just opened his fifth fruit shop.

When asked what the secret of his success was, Alf replied, 'I just gets the fruit an' stuff, what the people likes, an' they just keeps on comin' back.'

When asked about his future plans, Alf said, "Yeh... the way fings is movin', I don' fink it'll be long 'fore I've doubled my places, 'cos people really likes the fruit and stuff wot I flogs.'

At the end of the interview, the interviewer asked Alf for his autograph, and a dedication.

"I can't..." said Alf embarrassedly, "I aint never learned to read an' write."

The interviewer started, and said, "Why, Alf, that's incredible! If, as an illiterate you have achieved what you have in only five years, what would you have been if you'd been able to read and write?"

Alf winked at the interviewer, and grinned, "If I'd been able to read an' write, I'd 'ave been the attendant in the park bogs..."

('bogs' - An English slang expression for 'Toilet')

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