

Fifty Different Sharps and Flats



I walked into the interview, saw the interviewers, and immediately smelt a rat.

It was the way they were sitting and smiling. I was almost certain the Mayor didn't normally interview candidates personally. Times were hard, even for someone with 3 As for A Level Biology, and I wasn't about to give this interview up. The whole business took on a dream-like appearance.

It all started one Monday morning. I went down for breakfast and there was one, solitary pancake.

"I made more, but *they* got them," my mother told me, wearily.

"I'm fed up with this!" I shouted.

"Shush! *They* might hear," my mother said. I stopped shouting. "Well, give me some money so I can buy something from a bakery," I told her.

She sighed. "*They* took all the money."

"Look at me! I've lost so much weight! I had to make a hole near the buckle of my belt because otherwise it was too loose! And sometimes when I change, I get lost in my shirt!" I shouted.

"If you want to eat, you'll have to get a job," my mother told me, firmly.

I looked for the newspapers and found only the Employment section. *They* had taken the rest of it. "Teacher needed," I read. But the

children were hungry, too, and fell asleep. Besides, *they* had taken the furniture and books.

"Policeman needed," I read. But the people filed complaints against *them* and policeman who took action against *them* disappeared in the night.

The list went on. Then I finally saw it. An unobtrusive advertisement tucked in the corner.

"Job available. 3 As at Advanced Level required. Great pay, many benefits. Proficiency with a musical instrument required."

The last clause seemed weird, but I was desperate, so I loaded my miniature pyrophone organ onto my wheelbarrow and went to the address given.

I had to fight for a place in the line, which stretched for a mile. Nobody had any idea exactly what the job was. We all had to answer a long, fiendishly difficult examination, and then the top fifty were given 3 more exams over the space of a week. I managed to pass all the exams, and the final interview day came. There were only five of us left. I was the last to be called, and I had to wait in a small room. There was a portrait on the wall of a man wearing a colourful suit. It had a black wreath around it. "Killed in the line of duty" said the plaque underneath.

They called me in and asked me a few normal interview questions. Then I had to