

Kill The Spirit

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The man was dressed smartly. He wore a blue jumpsuit and, no doubt, regulation, black boots. In one hand he carried a pen. In the other a clipboard. Situated upon the clipboard – a pad. With well-written, straight, square writing. He walked along the road and noted the atmosphere, situation and state. Occasionally ticking a box or writing a note. He paused, put the pen in a pocket and as rule 543(a) told him, he turned the page of the pad in precisely two seconds. As rule 556(b) told him he manipulated his pen from his pocket. Yes indeed, not everyone could learn all these rules and do all this. It took a special person, such as this man. These would not be his own thoughts, as to have thoughts of your own was below your level, a commoner's pastime.

I shall progress to describe the street, tenements, run down, dusty, smelling stale. A good clean or wash and a bit of refurbishing could probably make all the difference. The sun shone brightly. Shadows almost pin dots as the high bright object rained its life upon the street. Hot light is smeared as thick as paint on these ramshackle tenements.

As the man walked he left a trail of floating dust which gradually crawled back down to grab hold of stone once more. A wave of clawing dust desperate not to be blown away, to be back safely to something to hold on to. A community of dust you might say. Not wanting to be destroyed or moved. But Officer 54321A did not pay much attention to the dust, or its larger friends.

A child poked its head out from a hole in the endless wall of stone. Its face with a look of wonder peered around. Officer 54321A frowned when he saw the dirt upon its face. It was thick and dry. Dutifully he noted this down and ticked a few more boxes. He moved on and the face disappeared, no doubt to rejoin with its body for some common game.

The street was silent bar the scuffing of Officer 54321A's feet as rule 321(k) stated. Scuff, step, silence, scuff, step, silence, scuff. It was endless. Then a squeal was heard. Then another. 54321A checked his watch. He noted down this out of turn sound and ticked a few more boxes. A seagull flew overhead. Wandering about in its prison. Solitary, but happy it flew around. 54321A noted this again. More boxes fell to his pen's strokes.

A group of five shapes burst on to the road. Jumping around. "You can't catch me, you're just a puddin'!"

"Oh yes I can ya..." He struggled to speak. A towering figure was above them. Officer 54321A noted their numbers, and whipped his pen through several square shapes on his paper. As rule 543(a) told him, he turned the page. The children retreated from the ominous shape. The smallest one tried to see what was on his pad, but did not understand the meaning of "Report For Decision On Termination Of Glasgow East."

Away from Officer 54321A in the actual buildings lived a group of people. Happy and contented. Community spirit was strong, they liked their street and they liked each other. Like the dust they clawed to their stone and were happily settled. 54321A would not count this, no box had ever said "Emotion Factor: High Low". Only real things counted, like grains of sand per precise square centimetre.

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A change of scene. The room is metallic, cold, unloving. Upon the wall opposite the one with the door is a huge television screen. On it a face resides. "54321A" it booms.

"Yes, leader."

"I have read your report."

"Yes."

"There is only one outcome and you know that."

"Yes, leader."

"Demolition."

"Of course, leader."

"They will be rehoused in several new bunkers all over Nu-Scotia. It will be the best for them."

"Of course, they shall be informed immediately."

"The tenements have to be flattened by..." The leader mused. "Two o'clock today."

"Of course, leader."

The face faded.

"It shall be done, oh mighty Tebbit!"

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The land is now wasteland. The people now dispersed. No longer do they hold joy in their hearts. Situation is not everything. They had spirit, now killed by strokes of a pen in a box. Misery now reigns. The seagull hobbles over the dusty stone. The dust, even the dust of the tenements, is dispersed. The seagull has been given freedom. It is now free in a wasteland and no longer a pet in a happy community.

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"They tell me they are unhappy, 54321A."

"Such is progress, leader. Such is growth!"