

## What The Cleaner Saw

Her eyes lids were stuck together, Maggie forced them open. She reached out to quiet the insistent ringing of the alarm clock, her 4.30 am wake up call. She knew she was lucky to have a job, any job. The company took her on while knowing of her prison record. She was grateful. She'd had her cleaning job for three years now. After a stint in prison for a third time, charged with possession of a class A drug and a drunken assault, she had turned her life around. It wasn't an easy life, but she was doing her best. These early mornings were getting tougher. With a sigh that was followed by a yawn, Maggie slowly swung her legs out of the bed.

By 5.30 am she had clocked on and was wearing her uniform that the management insisted was necessary for all cleaning staff. That morning she was assigned to clean the top floor. This floor had the male changing rooms, spa, pool and gym areas. Due to a ceiling leak the area had been closed to the public and members for the last three months. The repairs had now all been completed. The smell of new paint was still strong and it was up to her to clean and dust from one end to the other. Wheeling out her trolley, the lift door closed behind her. "Do your best Maggie. It needs a team of you to get the job done. But there's only you up here today. We're short staffed, with Amy and Gilda off. It needs to be spotless. Take your time and take your breaks." "Right you are Mr Ashworth." Maggie replied with a tight smile. She thought the sooner he goes the sooner she can start. But of course he had to walk her through the entire floor pointing out areas she had to concentrate on.

Sometime later, she nodded with pride as she looked back and shut the doors to the spa area. Locking in the new aromas of Bergamot and Cedarwood. Glancing at her watch, she had enough time to wipe down and disinfect one half of the lockers before her next break. All the lockers were open. She got into her rhythm.

The last locker had a medium sized black rucksack wedged on the top shelf at the very back. She was surprised to find anything left behind, after all this time. She would just hand it in to Mr Ashworth. It was surprisingly weighty as she pulled it out. She rested it on the bench below and undid the zip. Maggie's breath caught in her throat as she looked down at the contents of the rucksack. There were neat bundles of money secured with a paper band.

"Oh my God,!" Exclaimed Maggie and she sat numbly next to the rucksack.

Questions and thoughts came rushing into her mind.....

I wonder who this belongs to?

This area has been closed for three months! How has this bag been missed!

How has no one claimed it yet?

Does the owner know it's here?

Does anyone know it's here?

Three whole months have passed surely an urgent notice would have been sent out to the staff. Just like the time Mr Bradbury-Jones lost his Rolex watch in the swimming pool. That whole thing caused such a Kerfuffle until he realised he didn't even wear it on the day he said he lost it. Calming the palpitations in her chest and the slight tremble of her hands. Maggie reached out for the bag again. She reached in and lifted out one of the bundles. It was made up of only £50.00 notes and there was probably 100 notes in that bundle. She checked the bag again quickly counting how many bundles she could see. There were at least 20, if not more.

She sat for a while thinking.

She carefully placed the bag on the bottom shelf of her trolley. It was time for her break. She'd be able to think better after a cup of tea.

***By Norma Powell***