

## News From Home 10

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9/1/03

Hashimoto surveyed the remains of his lawn, tears in his eyes. The wedding had taken a drastic toll of his masterpiece, his – I suppose – coup de grass. But he gave a sigh and heave of the shoulders, and prepared to start afresh. As I speak, I watch him fuss over the newly-laid turf, filling in any remaining cracks with a little loose dirt. It took a few days to clear up the mess from the party, lager in bushes, condoms in stray nooks and corners of opportunity; Georgio was particularly put out by the amount of debris at the bottom of, and floating on, the pool. “Ay, ay, big job for Georgio, people like animal, no respect, people use as lavatory, Georgio change filter now” etc. Among the objects retrieved from the depths:

- 1 Ladies Rolex
- 2 Pairs Men’s Briefs
- 1 Bottle Champagne
- 1 Dozen Cans, assorted
- 1 Child’s Bike, red
- 3 Cell Phones, 1 with charger
- Coins, various denominations, US and UK
- 1 Bridesmaid’s Dress, or part thereof

## 1 Toaster

The good news, or is it the bad news, is that Brandi and Keanu really like our neighbourhood, and would love to move nearby. The exact proximity may be sensitive here – as it seems that Mrs. Wasserman's old place could be available on a short rental, until they fix it up to sell it.

Speaking of whom, Mr. Trewell from across the street dropped in to say hello. That description doesn't really do justice to Mr. Trewell's style...some people, like the finest butlers, are said to glide into the room as if on wheels.... others, like Seraphina Pekkala, have a kind of cloaking device which, while not rendering them invisible, makes them fail to register on the mind. Mr. Trewell, on the other hand, seems to blend in so perfectly with the shadows, or the couch, that it is only by movement that the eye picks out his shape. Is it the neutrality or vintage of his wardrobe that renders him so neutral a figure? Does he buy clothes because they look like curtains, or have the curtains evolved over centuries to harmonize with the Mr. Trewell? I have also never seen him enter a room – he is always there already, even in my own house, and I don't quite know how he does it. It was normal, therefore, to walk into my living room, search briefly for a book (De Monaco's Dictionary of Medieval Decoration) stand thoughtfully for a moment wondering whether I should call my dentist, and then nearly jump out of my skin and through the roof when a voice says, "(cough) I do hope I haven't come at an inopportune moment". The cough may have been a cough, or he may have said the word, cough, I was too shaken to remember. I should also probably explain that Mr. Trewell is a Funeral Director, and being discreet of foot and word and gesture goes with the job, as well as a sober dress sense and a mournful demeanour. The fact that he was wearing his professional black did little to help him stand out against the room – he merely stood instinctively in a deeper shadow. He explained that he had come over to say, rather generously, that our little party really hadn't disturbed the neighbourhood, and was there anything he could do to help us clear up? I said that wouldn't be necessary, we had things fairly under control...but I took the opportunity to ask him about Mrs. Wasserman's funeral. It seems it was a thinly attended affair – a daughter

flew in from Australia to take care of things – Mr. Trewell had been on a long-standing retainer from Mrs. W to see to her last needs – Mr. Alphonso, of course, was there, and I ventured to ask about his strange denial of the obvious decadences of Mrs. W's lifestyle. Well, it seems that Mr. A had sworn an oath on the deathbed of Mr. Wasserman, to protect the name and honour of his trophyesque bride; which he had done in exemplary fashion, and had not been bonking her on the side, as I had suspected. (He just bonked everybody else on the side). Mr. Trewell asked if I was going to the local Mayor's Day Parade – he was on the biggest float, as a radiation-suited scientist trying to shoot Godzilla. I told him I wouldn't miss it for the world, and indeed I wouldn't. I wonder who our honorary mayor is this year – one of the boons of living around here is the showbiz nature of local politics. Previous incumbents have included Mel Blanc, Vivian Vance (Lucille Ball's foil) and Adam West (original TV Batman). Ah, the excitement!

Took Mr. Alphonso to the Coliseum to see a touring Manchester United side play the Mexican champions, Club America. A latino crowd of 52,000 screamed their lungs out, but Man U prevailed. I found the whole experience disturbingly out of context – where was the mud, the rain, the miserable toilets, the turgid food? All that was comfortingly familiar was the cynical tackling. Mr. A lapped it up, though. “Manghester Oonytaed” – I attempt to approximate his strangulated, throaty rendering – “They put on exhibition, no? They show these Mexicanos ‘ow to play the beautiful game. I embrace them with my heart!” Good old Mr. A, ever the Anglophile. At a chosen moment, during a lull for a niggling injury, I took the chance to suggest to him that his house would be a touch more comely with a hint of yellow, and a hint less grey, in the paint mix. He took my suggestion very well, and said that it was kind of me to give some input, but that Mrs. Wasserman and he had chosen the colour together, just before she was sadly taken, and he would feel it an act of betrayal to her memory to change it now. Apparently, she felt that the colour complemented her own house, they being on opposite sides of the street. I must tell you that Mrs. W's house is one of those loud, mother-of-toilet-seat sort of blue-greens that only looks good in Florida, after three or four large daiquiris, and through a good pair of tropical-issue Raybans. Blending in with one's next door

neighbour (me), does not appear to be a factor. I further asked Mr. A, just to annoy him a bit, if he ever had a thing for Mrs. W? He didn't reply, and our attention went back to the game...several minutes later, he replied that it was complicated, and he would have to tell me another time. He then said, just to annoy me back, that I had to take him to see the film about the racehorse, Seabiscuit, knowing that it will bore the pants off me, and all conversation for the next week will be about withers and bloody fetlocks.

I have now fitted padlocks with combinations to all pertinent animal cages – we can't afford a rerun of the wedding fiasco. Mavis said it was the most fun she'd had at any wedding, and I shouldn't overreact. Little does she know of the dry-cleaning bills, invisible mending quietly taken care of, a new jacket here, pair of shoes there – to avoid the law suits and family feuds – everybody blaming me, of course. The good news is, no-one has come forward to claim the ladies Rolex – I'll think about pawning it to offset expenses.