

Pat Patterson

[Politician & Crazy Cat Lady]

Mervyn looked up Jesmond Road and then down at his clipboard trying to ascertain his success in this street. There weren't many ticks in the boxes on the form he held, he noted with disappointment. "Oh well", he thought, "up and at them", as he rapped the cat shaped knocker at No. 37. The door opened slowly and the owner stepped out, pulling the door to behind her.

"Good morning Madam. Would you be Verona Swizlehurst?" the politician asked, his pen poised to make his mark on his form.

"I be her. Who be you then?" she answered, her Devonian accent surprising her questioner.

He raised his eyebrows as he had expected a local dialect. "Mervyn Devonby, your Member of Parliament" he introduced himself, making to shake her hand but realising too late that she was holding the door closed with one hand and the other was in the pocket of her skirt, so his extended hand then went up to smooth his hair down at the back where it usually stuck out.

"Who?" she responded rudely, pursing her lips and eyeing him suspiciously.

"I am your Member of Parliament, Mrs Swizlehurst. I have come to make sure you have enrolled in the electorate" he politely replied.

"You have? Why?"

"Well I would like to represent you as your advocate here in Horncastle" he explained.

"You would, would you? What about Marcel, and Ronald, and Pablo? Be you theirs too?" she asked looking him in the eye.

"Do they live here in this house with you also?" he enquired.

"Yes", and a few seconds later she added "and Dolores, Miriam and Tabitha, Miriam's mother" she explained.

With surprise in his voice, Mervyn asked: "How many are there in your house Mrs Swizlehurst?"

Vaguely, she returned: "I'm not sure. Sometimes it be all of those and other times it's more, or less."

"Are they all over 18 years of age?"

Impatient now, Verona snapped: "I don't be remembering all their ages now? Why you be after asking so many questions? You nosy or something?"

"It is my duty to have this information so that I can be of assistance to you if you have any problems or difficulties at any time."

"That so, is it? Well, come on in then."

Mrs Swizlehurst pushed opened the door and walked ahead while Mr Devonby stepped into the hallway. As he closed the door behind him and turned, she thrust a can opener into his hand and turned then walked off up the hallway. Mervyn looked around him as he tried to make his way along the hall that was littered with all the detritus of cat ownership. With the door closed, the smell was overpowering and as he took each step he had to ascertain whether the floor was clear, as first a black cat and then a tabby, then a marmalade cat wound themselves between his legs as Mrs Swizlehurst disappeared from sight further into the house.

"Ah, CATS!!!!!!!!!" he muttered through clenched teeth as he realised his mistake, yet hoped he got one 'x' on his form today.