

EMPLOYMENT WANTED

By Deena Gomersall



ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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Chapter One: Desperate for Work

Boy, was Donald ever fed up with being flat broke. His car tax had just ran out; and, not only could he not afford to renew it, he couldn't even afford the gas to put into the tank if it had been taxed. He was also weeks behind with his rent and was feeling pretty hungry, having hardly eaten over the past few days.

In fact, he had only just been graciously informed by his landlord that, unless he paid up his owed rent in full by the weekend, he would be out by his ear.

He had tried to get a job, of course, but nothing ever came of any of his interviews. Perhaps that was because of his generally scruffy appearance. Maybe it was because he had never held a job, or that he had no formal education.

This had been brought about because he was the offspring of a pair of 60's hippies. Born in 1971, he had, from his earliest memories, known no other form of life than of being on the road with hundreds of others like souls as his parents. They traveled from place to place, listening to flower music, taking drugs, and having love-ins.

His parents kept his hair long, and he wore it in a tight ponytail. As he grew into his late teens, he sported a sparse beard and mustache. His uniform was a denim jacket, holed jeans, and sneakers. He knew that having a smart appearance would help to land him a job, but he had never bought new clothing in his life. The only things he owned now were a few pair of jeans, tee shirts, and sweaters.

After his parents had died from drug overdoses a few years ago, Donald had tried to change his lifestyle. He had dislodged himself from the hippie cult and tried to settle down in a nearby town, relying at first on stealing to feed himself, then living on social benefits.

Perhaps foolishly, a portion of his money still went to buying marijuana; he felt he needed a 'fix' just to get through the strife of daily living. He had got easily into the drug habit through his parents, even though it was drugs that had cost them their lives.

In fact, Donald was needing a 'smoke' right now as he scanned, yet again, the small ads of the local newspaper to see what jobs were open. If he did not get one soon, he would not be just broke but homeless too. But, as always, it was the same requirements:

'Looking for apprentice trained personnel'

'Person of smart appearance required'

'Bright young male with IT skills wanted.'

‘Mature man wanted; Qualifications; levels etc....’

It was always the same. Where were all the laboring jobs, the heavy duty work? He didn't mind grafting for a living, he would do anything. ANYTHING.

‘Young person required for general duties: operative at a local boarding school. Domestic and cleaning work involved, any necessary training will be given. Apply for interview with Mrs.. Miriam M. Frobisher, High Uxberry school for young ladies.’

The advertisement seemed to leap right out off the page at Donald.

“Hmm... It sounds a bit like a school caretakers job. I can give that a try," he thought to himself. At this point in time, Donald would have given anything a try. How great it would be to have some money in his back pocket at last, be able to pay up his rent, get his car back on the road?

So... what would he have to do; mop floors? Trolley packages about from the store room? Sweep up leaves? Donald did not think that would be bad at all— and in an all girl school! That sounded just swell. Who knew? He might even have found the chance to get his rocks off with some of the older students. He hadn't had a regular girlfriend for over two years.

After spending precious dimes to phone the school for an interview, he was given an appointment for 4:00 p.m. the following day.

Keen to get the job, Donald made as much effort as he could. He washed his long hair, took a bath, and even tried to sew together the rips and holes in his jeans.

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Entering the school grounds the following afternoon, Donald was pointed the way to the secretaries office by three well dressed, prim and proper girl students.

It was 3:55 p.m., as the school secretary, Miss Williams, looked Donald up and down. She appeared almost disdainful as he introduced himself to her.

“Miss Frobisher is detained in her office at the moment; applicants for the job have been instructed to fill out the application form and wait outside of her office," she told him authoritatively and rather snootily.

Following the instructions given to him, Donald soon found himself sitting on a metal chair outside a dark, glossy, varnished oak-wood door marked: ‘Principal’s Office- Knock and wait.’

To his surprise, Donald was the only person there. He had expected to join a line of other applicants. He decided that Frobisher had perhaps staggered the interview times, or maybe he was the last person to see her and the vacancy was already filled. Knowing his luck, this was the case.

As he sat and waited to be called by the principal, he noticed, as a constant flow of girls passed by him in the corridor, that they were all wearing what must be the school uniform. It comprised of a white blouse, red and white tie, a flared and pleated black skirt, thick black tights, and thick-soled, black lace-up shoes. He had noted that Miss

Williams wore the same items, except for sheerer nylons and black, medium heeled court shoes in place of the heavy duty shoes.

Donald felt as though he had been waiting outside the door for hours. During that time, several adult women, ranging from between their mid-twenties to late fifties, had passed him by as they walked along the corridor. He took them to be teachers; all were wearing the same 'uniform.'

Finally, a buzzer sounded, making him jump. An electronic voice announced, "...Mr. Carter, please enter."

The office was a square room that smelt of old books and wood polish. When he entered, he saw before him, behind a wide desk, a rather somber-looking woman of about forty-five. She was again dressed in a similar style to the rest but was wearing a mortar board upon her head and a black cape around her shoulders.

"Please sit. I understand that you are applying for the cleaning and general duties operative vacancy, is that correct?" she asked, looking at him disapprovingly. Though, he felt sure he had detected a smirk playing around her thin lips.

"Yes, that is correct, uh, Madam," Donald answered, trying to sound as well-mannered and educated as he could.

"Well, the truth is, Mr. Carter, the vacancy is really intended for a female. The work is more appropriate for a woman rather than a man."

Donald now began to feel miffed. How many times had he been rejected over one thing or another? "Well, it didn't state that in your advertisement," he countered.

"But it did state that it was an all girls boarding school, did it not? One would expect that anyone with average intelligence would assume that it was a female position."

"Look, I'm not worried what kind of work it involves, whether it's more suited for a woman or not, whether it's dirty or demeaning. I really don't care."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Carter, how can I possibly have a man running around in an all girls school? Such a thing could be quite off-putting to my girls."

"But that is prejudice," Donald replied. "You never advertised for a woman. And, as long as I keep away from your girls and just do my work, why should it matter? If you do not give me at least a chance to prove myself, I may be inclined to go to a sexual discriminations board."

"I really do not think so, Mr. Carter. I only need say that you were not suitable for the position," Mrs. Frobisher countered.

"Who's to say I am unsuitable? I can do any job that a woman can."

"Really?" Mrs. Frobisher questioned with a smile. "But even so, I can pass you as being unsuitable simply by the state of your dress. This is a smart modern school which holds a strict dress code. Your appearance is scruffy to say the least. I think I have now said all that there is to be said. Good day to you, Mr. Carter."

"No, wait. I'm sorry, I would never have gone to a discriminations board, really. I'm desperate for a job and I'll do anything to get one. These are the only clothes that I

have. But you did say that a uniform and work clothes were provided. I could always do something with my hair and, if you insist upon it, shave off my beard. When I begin earning a wage I can buy new, smarter clothes."

Donald paused. Then he continued, in a quieter tone, "...If I fail to get a job by the end of this week, then I will be kicked out of my apartment by the landlord. Please just give me a trial. I'll work for half the pay while you assess me. Please..."

Mrs. Frobisher straightened herself in her chair and began to look more interested. "Oh dear, thrown out, eh? Of course, the successful candidate for the general duties operative vacancy would be expected to live on the premises. A room is provided with the job, plus working clothes. Would you have any objections to that, Mr. Carter?"

"Really? Live on the premises? I wasn't aware of that. Actually, Mrs. Frobisher, that would be ideal. How many people have applied for the job, if I may ask?"

"Well, to be quite truthful with you, although we have been advertising for six weeks now, you are the first. That is the only reason I invited you to attend an interview at all. The job is menial and the working hours are long and hard. The successful candidate is expected to work until all daily duties have been finished. But, as this is a girls school, like I have already implied, I would have preferred a woman to fill the vacancy."

"But it's unfair," Donald started to protest again. "If you haven't had anyone else apply for the job, then I should at least be given a chance. I swear I will do all the work that is asked of me."

Mrs. Frobisher sat in thought for a minute, scrutinizing the young man. Her intertwined fingers supported her chin. "And you would be quite happy living on the premises if you were to be given the job? You would wear the uniform provided for you and do something about your appearance?"

"Yes, anything," Donald eagerly replied, sensing a glimmer of hope.

"And tell me, Mr. Carter, what about all your personal possessions, or your family ties?"

"Like I said, I've just got a few clothes... a stereo, portable TV set, and a couple of odds and ends. The place I'm living in now was already furnished. As for family, my Ma and Pa died five years back. I was their only child; I've never known any other kin folk."

"Very well, Mr. Carter, I am prepared to give you a three months trial period."

"Oh thank you, thank you very much for giving me this chance! You will not be disappointed," Donald told her.

As he left the office, Donald's mind was a jumble. A female school, with free accommodation on the site... everything!

"Wow," he thought with a smirk on his face. "My landlord can take a running jump for that back rent I owe him. I'll be out first light and he'll never find me again."

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Donald risked running his car without insurance the following morning to be sure of getting to his job on time. He put all his meager possessions in the trunk of the car along with his other clothes.

The remaining gas that he had in his tank just about got him to his destination. He parked up outside the school gates and waited until it was a few minutes off seven thirty.

Parking his car on the school grounds, he set off to see Mrs. Williams. On greeting him, she presented him with a key. She then led him along a series of corridors until they arrived at a room.

On opening the door, Donald saw it was a small, square room containing a bed, armchair, dresser table, and a built-in closet.

“Right, hurry yourself and bring your belongings up into this room. Don't dawdle, as the school assembly finishes at 8:15. I do not want you disrupting any of the girls on their way back from assembly. When you are through, wait in your room and someone will be along presently to help make you look more presentable.”

It was obvious to Donald that Mrs. Williams was not happy about having a man around the school. Still, he felt he could put up with her and expected that she would soften to him as she got used to him being there.

By 8:05, all of Donald's worldly belongings, and the few extras, were in his room. His car was locked up in a garage, and he was now sat in a worn armchair awaiting the someone to come and see him.

“This is going to be cool,” he thought to himself as he sprawled out with his hands behind his head.

Chapter Two: Fitting In

At 9:30 a.m. there was a knock on the door which shook Donald from slumber. Unbidden, Miss Williams entered with an attractive and very shapely woman following behind. The new woman was in her mid-twenties. Other than her good looks and large, firm breasts, Donald noted that this woman was not dressed in the familiar clothing of the others. Rather, she wore blue track suit pants, white sports shoes, and a loose fitting blue jogging top.

"Mr. Carter, this is our sports mistress, Miss Keeling. She has agreed to help you tidy up your appearance so that you look somewhat presentable in front of our pupils. First, however, I have some additional papers to the ones you signed yesterday in need of your signature."

She put them in front of Donald, on the dresser top. "Sign along the dotted lines, if you please... And do so in a hurry, as there is much to do," she told him as she pushed the small pile of paper and a pen at him.

Half of Donald's attention was being focused on Miss Keeling's chest. Add to that the fact that he was rushing to comply with Miss Williams' orders, Donald neglected to read any of the papers. He simply wrote his signature where it was required. Any thoughts that he'd had about enticing a young schoolgirl into the broom cupboard was now replaced with getting better acquainted with the lovely sports teacher, with her soft bouncing locks of curly auburn hair and angelic, pear-shaped face.

Miss Williams then departed from the room to set about her own daily duties. She took the signed papers with her and left Donald alone in his room with Miss Keeling.

"Right, follow me quickly, chop chop," Miss Keeling suddenly ordered, turning abruptly to leave the room with a bemused Donald following close behind.

"In here," Miss Keeling snapped, leading him into a bathroom and turning the taps of the tub on full.

"I, er... I had a bath yesterday," Donald mumbled.

"Then a second one should get you all nice and squeaky clean, shouldn't it?" Miss Keeling replied.

As the tub filled up, Miss Keeling ordered Donald to strip out of his clothes. Without looking his way, she poured a blue liquid into the gushing water that immediately began to froth up and fill the air with a flowery scent.

Donald just remained where he was.

"Didn't you clean inside those ears yesterday? Come along, chop chop." Miss Keeling repeated her order tersely.

"But.. aren't you going to leave the room while I do?" Donald asked.

"Certainly not. I'm here to make sure that you are scrubbed clean. Personal hygiene and cleanliness are a top priority at this school. You will be expected to shower each morning and bathe before you go to bed."

Hesitantly, Donald began to pull off his clothes, until he was standing in just his socks and underpants.