

2021 - 50

Lucy Small Gets Fired

On a grey Monday morning. Lucy Small went through the Staff door to the Henry Oldsworth Products factory. She clocked in, climbed the stairs to the Staff Room and hung up her coat in her locker. On the other side of the glass partition Lucy could see the conveyor belt beginning to move for the start of the morning shift. She reluctantly opened the door into the hot, clanking, humming atmosphere that was the heart of the factory and had been her daily life for ten years. It was a boring mind numbing life, staring down at cardboard boxes, flat forms, passing beneath her on their way to being folded into containers. The boxes passed along to departments that would fill them with objects that would be used once or twice and soon discarded.

As always, Lucy's machine would be printing H enry O ldsworth P roducts on one side of the boxes and just the letters H O P on the other, giving rise to the names Hoppers for the delivery vans and Hoppies who worked in the factory.

Lucy was dejected as she typed in the date, type of box currently being processed and the letters needed. In her mind she said "What if?" and without thinking about it she added a capital E to the letters to be printed on one side of the boxes. She pressed the Start key and watched as box after box passed by with H O P E on the side.

For a while, Lucy was mesmerised as her message went by. Where would all these boxes end up, or, as she was afraid, would they end up being scrapped as a "bad lot"? Of course, as she knew it would, a summons came very quickly and soon she was in the Factory Manager's office facing Henry Oldsworth himself, in a barely controlled rage.

"What have you done, Miss Small? There will be five thousand useless boxes by the end of this shift. You're fired, Miss Small!"

Lucy turned to walk away from the Office and her job. As she reached the door, Henry Oldsworth was still shouting "If these boxes had been allowed through they would have ended up all over the country, everywhere in fact..." he stopped "Everywhere? Of course, they would go everywhere!" He shouted again "Miss Small, come back! You've given me a wonderful idea... We'll print "Henry Oldsworth Products Everywhere" on the boxes and that will be my new message. We'll start immediately. Miss Small, I'm promoting you to the Department of Product Innovation, as from now"

"Thank you, Mr Oldsworth", Lucy went on her way smiling, and the Hope Movement was born.