

The Job-Seeker

By Jenny Butler

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First published in *Mulberry Fork Review* on 13th February 2017

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And God says ‘seek and ye shall find’. She sought a job not because she needed money, routine, or a reason to get up in the morning. It was simply a means to an end and a new hunting-ground. The aptitude test was the usual dichotomous mechanism to sort the lapdog-lackey from the idle-idiot. Any occupational psychologist knows, or should know, that psychopaths can mimic empathy but they do not feel it. When Carl’s ditz of a secretary dropped the forms they were to fill in, the candidates in sitting-line on plastic chairs against a wall the dark-yellow-slightly-orange colour of which made Scarlett think of the smell of urine in summer, she helped her pick them up only because she knew John, the floor manager, was watching. Minds like Scarlett’s all work by the same simple principle: seventy percent appearance and a hidden thirty percent of menacing calculation. They thrive on the contrived, so much easier in this social-media savvy, fashion-conscious world. She is helpful only in aiding the downfall of others, in measuring the rope for them, checking its thickness, in pointing out the noose that’s most in fashion and assuring them it looks lovely on. She looks the part and on that day she was dressed for the job she wanted: Carl’s. He didn’t realize it but at 9:45am that morning he had met his devastation in person. Carl shook hands with the ruination of him. He politely offered his demise a chair in the boardroom and Scarlett smiled sweetly as she took a ladylike seat, cognizant as she always was of the traditional norms of propriety in the interview setting. Her hobbies include grinding finger-bones into powder and counting blood-droplets dripping down

the tempered glass of shower doors in minimalistic hotel bathrooms, a secret hers alone. Last night's soap opera episode does not delight her, the soccer match does not rouse her in cacaphonic thrill, but what does excite Scarlett is the sound of a broken high-heel against the asphalt of an empty parking lot. She did impart that she enjoys walking in the countryside, in the forest particularly, but of course she did not confide in Carl the reason why. Seated in the cafeteria, she smiled amiably at Carl's colleague Jane, who she was to 'work-shadow' while hoping the hummus-covered carrot stick would lodge in her throat, stopping her incessant chatter, and in a double gift to Scarlett, kill her. Unbeknownst to them, she had indeed 'shadowed' before, crept stealthily behind lone dog-walkers, more furtively than any male killer, slinked around corners and into open doorways. Carl would not remember the seemingly shy intern but only the anguish in his wife's voice as he told her the business went to rack and ruin and that he could not understand why. You see, as Scarlett did, to be meek is not to be cowardly or submissive, but to be patient, to not draw attention to oneself. And God says 'the meek will inherit the Earth'.