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One evening, my agent came to me. I had got into the habit of conducting business from the back room of the Danish Tea House, an activity made possible by some astute hacking (of which I was duly proud), which put the Greek Orthodox WiFi hub located down by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at my entire disposal. I had been sitting there sipping at a fuming glass of mint tea, and had just added another piece of sugar to calm my irritation at having to put eBay on my blacklist. Another commercial internet site that had left 'Palestine' out of their registration page's country list. Now how was I to find in all of occupied Palestine, or in the shopping malls in the Israeli part of Jerusalem, for that matter, the Annette Funicello bear that my niece had been nagging me for her birthday?

My agent came into the room, appearing out of nowhere, as if he had materialised from behind the dark drapes by the passage leading to the toilets. The poor fellow was in an advanced state of distress and agitation, bordering on contained hysteria. This is something that happened every now and then, and though it irritated me it was our tacit agreement that since it was his job brief to solve my problems, when he had problems, I would take care of them. What was it this time, I wondered. On a previous occasion he had had his computer infected by a virus when his sister-in-law had come down from Ramallah to get away from the constant harassment of her cousins who would not let her alone in case she did something 'reprehensible' on the internet. And after much virtual footwork I discovered that it was the same cousins who had followed her all the way down to Jerusalem and had infected my agent's machine with a poison-pen email.

Another time of great agitation was when my agent's young nephew who had definitely been keeping dubious company threatened to blow up his entire arithmetic class if the teacher didn't give him a better grade. I had to take the young fellow under my wing to coax a bit of positive attitude into his gloomy outlook on life. This was not as easy as I thought. I gave him a Doberman puppy that I had picked up on the Israeli side, in the garden across the street from the Knesset parliament building, undoubtedly offspring from one of the guard dogs linked

to a wire running along the perimeter fence. I was rewarded with a mouthful of ire from the lad's mother, and only got out of cleaning their rooftop terrace by removing the animal, taking it to the SPCA up in Atarot. I knew that what the boy needed was something that he could nurture and make grow, if it couldn't be a puppy, he would have to make do with some Microsoft stock. No one waiting for a bull market to mature would blow themselves to smithereens.

I asked my agent what the problem was, and he beckoned me silently to follow him. We both disappeared behind the dark drapes at the back, and I found myself in the alley that runs behind the Danish Tea House. The air was surprisingly cool and clear, a sharp change from the early afternoon when I had gone looking for solace in the Tea House from the dust storm that had laid its gritty clamp upon all that moved in Jerusalem. Now it was just a memory, a hint of powdery desert sand leaving pale imprints. I followed my agent to the Jaffa Gate in silence, and up the steep steps leading to the narrow path running along the crest of the ramparts. The sky was a deep, dark blue, paler at the horizon where failing day bordered the night, with a sliver of moon setting over the modern part of the city to the west. I asked my agent for an explanation, but nothing. Our way along the wall was blocked by one of the numerous rusty iron gates that keep the tourists from falling off, and the Jerusalem municipality out of lawsuits. My agent slipped his master key from his pocket and unlocked them one by one.

Finally he signalled me to stop. We were on the southern wall, looking down the valley past Silwan, all the way down to the Dead Sea. But there was a low haze remaining from the sandstorm that had sunk down into the valley, and it was as if one could look downwards forever and never see the bottom. There is a problem, the agent said. That I had figured out already. And the fact that by now my tea was probably stone cold. 'What is it?', I asked gently, for, after all, I am a gentle man. 'You're on the Clearstream list', he said. 'And the Clearstream list has just been leaked'.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Joseph Rabie.