THE FUTURE OF TELEVISION

**A Gina Fallon**

When my parents were young, there were only two or three channels to choose from. I think people at that time were happy with that because there was nothing else. Then satellite and cable TV came along. These companies offered hundreds of channels for a monthly fee. But everyone agrees that a lot of these programmes were poorly made and people spent more time changing channels trying to find something interesting to watch than actually watching something. I think television will change a lot in the future. Firstly, more and more people are now buying smart TVs which are linked to the Internet. This has lots of possibilities. One idea is for the television to remember what you have watched and, when you next switch on, it will tell you about programmes that you might be interested in. We will also be able to link our televisions to our friends’ televisions and find out what they are watching so we can watch the same. That will be cool!

**B Leon Adams**

A lot of people assume that television will continue to work in the future as it does now, with programmes appearing at a certain time each week. However, most companies now offer a catch-up service where you can watch programmes from the previous week that you have missed. There are also online television providers who allow you to watch what you like, when you like, so you can watch a whole series in one night. This is great for people like me who hate waiting to find out what is going to happen next. One big advantage of not having specific times for programmes is that no-one can complain that ‘there’s nothing worth watching this evening’. It also means that television companies can show programmes for everyone, from popular series to documentaries that only a handful of people will be interested in. So, there will always be something to watch, whoever you are.

**C Dana Jones**

I think that in the past there were a lot of good programmes, although people always seemed to complain that there was nothing worth watching. I worry that in the future we won’t get the same quality of programmes. In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of free video channels on the Internet. Why should people pay to watch television when they can spend their evenings watching almost anything for free? Television companies have to charge their viewers for their service, of course. But if the service is too expensive, no-one will sign up for it. On the other hand, if the service is too cheap, the company won’t be able to afford to buy or make enough programmes. This creates a huge dilemma for television companies. I think it’s a bigger problem for them than keeping up with the latest technological advances. It isn’t clear to me how they will manage to find a solution.

HELP OUT AT YOUR LOCAL FOOD BANK

We need volunteers to operate food banks in our area. Food banks have been a feature of our towns and cities for many years. Traditionally, they gave food to the homeless. **(1)**             Food banks are therefore more important than ever to help the most vulnerable in our society.

We are not asking for financial help. The food is provided by supermarkets, charities, schools and other organisations. Local business leaders have helped to finance our centres. **(2)**             We need people to check that the food isn’t out of date, pack it in boxes and, most importantly, chat with the people who come into the centres. We will train you to give help and advice to people with serious problems as well as providing addresses and phone numbers of organisations that people can contact if they need emergency financial help for debts or rent.

BE A PART OF YOUR LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Would you like to play a bigger part in helping your community? Why not sign up to join a neighbourhood watch scheme? Being part of a scheme in your area helps you to feel safer in your own home. **(3)**             This can be a real comfort, especially for people who live alone.

**(4)**             These will also give advice on things such as securing your home at night or when you are out, and what to ask if people come to your door claiming that they are collecting money for charities. In addition, we are trying to persuade the government to make funding available for burglar alarms for the less well-off.

HELP MAKE ‘REHABILITATION IN THE WORKPLACE’ A SUCCESS

We are calling on all business people to help us with our new Rehabilitation in the Workplace scheme. **(5)**             Despite some opposition from those who think that we should be doing more to help those who haven’t committed any crimes, we believe this will bring benefits to everyone. It can also help you cut costs, as half of the wages of anyone on the scheme will be paid for you. A trial of the scheme has been running for the last six months in the London area. You can go to our website to read reactions of employers who have taken on employees.

Dan’s revenge

The lights went off in the studio. Almost immediately, the tension in the air seemed to disappear. Some of the actors stood and chatted together. Others stood alone, stretching their aching muscles. The extras left the area quickly, no longer a part of the team, unappreciated and unwanted. Any who stayed hoping for a kind word of praise or advice were sent running by the security men who were there to protect the studio’s stars from anything that might disturb them.

Only one actor noticed this and felt guilt and anger at the same time. Dan had worked his way up from being an extra himself. Anger because he remembered the way he had been treated and, although he wasn’t close to the extras he was working with, he hated it happening to them. Guilt because he wasn’t brave enough to speak out. He was still very much a junior member of the cast and he knew he could be sent back to where he came from if he upset his more famous colleagues.

As he stood, lost in thought, he noticed Elmira Ray, the highest-paid star in the studio and one of the romantic leads in this movie. He smiled and made a friendly remark about the difficulties she’d had getting one of her scenes right. Elmira glared at him with hatred and turned away to where the director was deep in discussion with the producer. Elmira’s screaming voice was very unlike anything her fans had ever heard but it was well-known by all who worked with her. Her message was clear. She wanted Dan off the set, off the movie and, if possible, out of Hollywood. The director and producer exchanged knowing glances. They disliked Elmira intensely but they also knew how much she was worth to the studio. Whatever their feelings for Dan, if Elmira didn’t want to work with him, he would have to go.

They called Dan over. They didn’t have to say anything. One look was enough for Dan. He’d been in the business long enough to know how things worked. ‘Oh well,’ he thought, ‘It has been fun while it lasted.’ He knew he could ask around at the other studios for work but his heart wasn’t in it anymore. He disliked the work, he disliked the people and he hated living in Los Angeles. He would go to the party that he had been invited to earlier that week but he would spend the time having fun, not desperately trying to impress people and begging for work. Tomorrow, he’d pack and head back east to New York.

At eight o’clock that evening, wearing jeans rather than the usual dark suit, he arrived at an already packed villa high in Beverly Hills. As he walked in, he noticed Elmira. She glanced at him with no sign of recognition. He was no-one important. Nothing to do with her or her life. She passed him and moved on, searching for more famous faces to spend her time with. Suddenly Dan knew what he had to do.