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The twelve days of state bureaucracy: 8-12 [1]

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Day 8

Dearest Grandmama, eight noise abatement officers arrived saying that the noise of my neighbours' protest and the various inspectors' cars coming and going was in clear breach of official guidelines. They served me a compliance notice. I will write more tomorrow.

Day 9

Dearest Grandmama, the au pair and I made the mistake of bringing out tea and cakes in an attempt to make peace with the neighbours, it is the season of good will, after all. Now nine food safety inspectors are here, saying that out kitchen does not comply with hygiene regulations for the provision of food to the public. I will write more tomorrow.

Day 10

Dearest Grandmama, ten Home Office people broke down the door today, saying they suspected that the au pair might have been working here illegally. I've spoken to a lawyer and we hope we can get her out of the detention centre soon. We had the workmen come back to repair and repaint the front door. I will write more tomorrow.

Day 11

Dearest Grandmama, eleven EU inspectors arrived today. We convinced them the au pair was Bulgarian and therefore had a perfect right to be working here, but one of them noticed the name of the house and told us that we had to change it from Green Acres to Green Hectares. They also quizzed us on what colour the front door had been painted. I will write more tomorrow.

Day 12

Dearest Grandmama, today twelve court officers turned up to serve me with a European Arrest Warrant. We had been reported for painting the front door in a colour called Burgundy Red, Unfortunately this name breaches of EU local origin protection regulations. Anyway, I'm in prison myself now in Burgundy, and will have to sell the house, including the partridge and the pear tree, to pay my legal bills.

Still, it was a very kind gift, and at least it has taught me a lot about regulation these days. Please address any future correspondence to my lawyer.

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