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# Chapter One

The Alderman Wix estate was grey, forlorn and almost deserted. Soon the demolition men would move in.

Not yet though. The blocks of flats with their cracked concrete

walkways and dripping walls could not be knocked down until the last stubborn old people had been cleared out. Only a few had clung on, but they were so difficult to rehouse. The two men who were walking round it one morning knew this and also that there wasn't much time left.

'How are we going to do it?' said one. 'We can't go knocking on every door.'

'Listen and learn,' said the other as an old man shuffled by leaning on a stick. He went up to him.

'Excuse me, guv'nor. Could you tell me where Mrs Freakwell lives?