

Pale brown

The Albanian businessman was waiting on the platform. The train was late. He went to a vending machine, inserted a coin, made his selection and keyed in his number. The metal cylinder inside the glass box revolved and dropped the candy into the slot. He bent, took it out, tore the thin wrapper and ate quickly and with big swallows as he paced bored on the freezing platform.

The man was clearly wealthy, meticulous in his dress, cleanliness and haircut. And yet it was obvious that he clipped his hair some two weeks later than he should have. There were minerals on his shoes, signs of dampness that had dried unnoticed, his coat had been bought in haste and sat on him with no subtle enhancements, which would have turned the expensive coat into one that had been tailor made, the richly-hued soft leather suitcase had been mistakenly chosen to serve its owner on his frequent trips. The wealthy man supplies cheap labor to the construction worker market. His specialty is semi-professional people skilled in building multi-insulated roofs. His meetings are frequent and take place all over the country. Within three weeks of placing the order he supplies groups of workers with and without the authorities' knowledge. Somebody arranges citizenship for him with the possibility of choice. He employs only Albanians and a few Portuguese. He speaks German, Russian, Polish, Swedish and Spanish. The train arrived, ten minutes, the announcer apologized, the passengers boarded, the guard signaled the driver, the Albanian sat down, his legs apart, he didn't take off his coat, tried to rest, looked at the timetable, glanced at his watch and fell asleep.