

10/10/44

Forgotten Men

The last rays of the sun filter through the window and fill the store with a golden glow. The glazed porcelain gleams in a final burst of red and yellow, reflecting crazy patterns of light into the showcases. The proprietor is blinded by the brightness, and as he pulls down the shades an oppressive staleness and the stifling odor of tobacco again dominates the room.

variety change

The walls are lined with dusty shelves of ^{weak}various dimensions. Two or three shreds of flypaper, that long ago ^{have}passed the prime of their usefulness, ^{which}~~hang~~ from the ceiling. A few flies, ^{survivors from}~~which have survived~~ the chilly days of autumn, buzz around gaudy posters ^{that}~~which~~ proclaim the effectiveness of Anacin for headaches. In the dim recesses between the rafters, spiders busily construct their webs, which, in the semi-darkness, ^{look like}~~have the appearance of~~ delicate lace. A blackened light bulb is the sole source of illumination, and its gleam throws weird shadows into the gloomy twilight of a winter evening. *stilled*

At one end of the store, a group of men have gathered. Lazily they lean on the counter, veiled in a blue haze of cigarette smoke. One old man seems to stand out from the rest. There is nothing unusual about his clothes. His tattered blue overalls hardly reach

torn and cracked leather

down to his shoes, (whose leather is torn and cracked.) His hands are brown, not so much from the hard labor they have endured, as from the indelible mark that pellagra leaves on its victims. In his eyes lies an indescribable frustration, the sadness of one who has lost a battle, the despair that one feels on a cold evening in a cemetery, when the wind rushes through the quivering poplars, ^{or} when the shrieking of a flock of mallards dies away in the distance, and one finds himself alone.

He must have been alone very often in his life, because as he walks through the store, his gait is the expression of solitude itself, an expression so forceful that words cannot define it. He speaks to the shopkeeper in short, terse sentences. Pulling a wallet from his pocket, he lays a dollar bill on the counter. The storekeeper shakes his head, and the man says a few words in tones so low that only those standing very near can understand them. There is a moment of hesitation, a short exchange of words, and then the storekeeper replaces part of the merchandise on the shelves, and returns the change. The man turns and leaves. For a moment, all eyes are fastened on the door that has just closed behind him.

The storekeeper smoothes the dollar bill and puts it into the drawer. He appears to experience acute discomfort when the cash register is not under his immediate surveillance, and has ^{acquired} ~~made~~ a habit of watching it out of the corner of his eye. The veins stand out on his hands, and his fingers are long and bony. They bear a striking resemblance to the claws

of a vulture. ^{forms on his} No smile ever passes the rigid lips, ^{from} which ~~never~~ ^{come} ~~only~~ what few words are necessary to carry on his business. He is a gaunt, wiry man, whose eyes have the color of steel. ~9

Coldly, they follow the people who come and go. ⁷ The shadows on the wall are like silhouettes of giants, and the distortion makes their shoulders appear even more bent than they are in reality. Mechanically, the men open the door. ~~It~~ Outside, it is snowing. The wind blows through their thin coats as they shuffle out into the cold. The lights of the store grew small and insignificant in the distance, and then, suddenly, all is dark.

Dieser Satz
gehört auf den
Original mit dem
vorherigen
absolut. Ich
habe die letzte
Seite nochmal
abgeschrieben,
denn Kopie.

Oct 10

I wish I could accept a short story as a theme, but I cannot, at least not yet. Therefore, I can not now give it either a credit or a grade. If your theme work continues on this level, we may be able to count it later on in the term, but it is no promise I make. The alternative, I regret, is an extra theme to take this story's place. We'll discuss this in conference. Forgot to add: this is quite good!

P.S. G.B. A changed his mind. Nach der agter Konferenz und nach Besprechungen mit anderen English 4 Lehrern, sagt er mir er würde diese Arbeit annehmen.
Zusatz: A - oder B+, abhängig von späterer Arbeit