

Skeleton in the cupboard : Part 2 (l.96 – l.239)

Introduction

This document is the second part of a short story written by Tony Wilmot. In the first part, two characters were introduced. Robert Smythe and a young girl. They use to meet everyday at lunchtime but at the end, we learnt that the person which is looking for the girl, have an MG car like the one that have Robert.

In a first part, I'm going to present the Robert's flashback and in a second part the Robert's and the girl's investigations.

I – Flashback (l.96-137)

Robert remembers a past event. he is reading some press clippings he keep hidden in a box in the garden shed (*cabane de jardin*).

a) The accident : It happened 20 years ago during an evening. Robert took an unusual route (*trajet*) to Margaret's parents house and there were roadworks. He didn't put his car to repair because he didn't want to spend money and he was overspeeding on the road. He hit a ten years old girl and fled. => He is a hit and run driver.

None had witnessed (*assisté*) the accident (l.120-121). The police had led an investigation but with no result (l.122-123).

b) The man's reaction at the time of the accident : he panicked and ran away. He could have stopped, yet he ran/fled away. If he had stopped, he would have lost his driving license and he would have gone to jail and thus, he wouldn't have got married.

c) Past/present : Now, Robert is haunted by the accident. He keeps remembering it. It's a clear memory. He remembers every details (l.114). It's a hellish/nightmarish event. He can hear and picture it. He is unable to face his guilt (l.124-125). The girl that he met in the park and which is searching a MG car owner may be the little girl's sister, friend or relative.

II – The investigations

a) The girl's inquiry : - in the park (l.140-164) : she learnt, about the car, that some numbers are missing, she has a photo of the car (l.150) and she has a negative and she will have it printed (l.150).

- at the evening Gazette offices (l.170-197) : she asked for the wedding reports written 20 years ago. She went to the archive on the 4th floor.

b) The man's inquiry : - in the park : he tries to make the girl his friend. He tells her he knows someone in Elmston who can be helpful. he feels nervous, dizzy when the girl tells him she has a photograph (l.152).

- at the Evening Gazette offices : he tries to follow the girl without being seen (l.170-172). He tries to listen the conversation. He feels embarrassed. A friend saw him and thought he was trying to flirt with the girl. Consequently he stop.

- at home : Robert must think that the girl must have gone to the photographer's office (l.214) and she must have found the negatives (l.216). She can't have traced him because Margaret's parents had moved and because his parents were dead. She can't have recognized him since he has changed a lot. He suddenly changed his mind because he realizes that the girl may have looked at the electoral roll. He conclude that he is bound to (*sur le point de*) to be found out. He is likely to be seen as a child killer (l.227) and he will certainly go to jail and lose his reputation (l.230-231). He decides to go out. he tells Margaret he is going to the pub. He's coward (*lache*), weak (*faible*). He is used to leading a conventional life and he doesn't want to ruin it.

Conclusion

To conclude, in this part we learn some important point of the story. The girl is leading an investigation and Robert should be involved. We learn that 20 years ago, he hit a little girl and fled and the girl is looking for someone who have or had an MG car like the one that had Robert during the accident. So Robert suppose that the girl is searching him perhaps because he killed someone that she knew, thus he is afraid.

Now we could wonder what Robert will do to avoid that the girl reveal what he did, if it's the real reason of her investigation.