

Title: The Death of a Veteran

Soundtrack link: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNV5tx_KMboPHr47gCPxIJbIDSDadgSZf

THIS IS NOT PART OF THE STORY- Song Choices

Song One- It's quiet sound helps build the atmosphere as the characters and main ideas are introduced

Song Two- An old love song, it helps to pull the reader into the world of the Major, helping them understand him better in addition to the song's simplistic and happy tone that contrasts the events of the story.

Song Three- The building tension in the story is coupled with the gradual crescendo of the piece, ending with a triumphant climax which juxtaposes with the bittersweet ending.

Copy:

He was always known as the Major. With his tattered military regalia and bourgeois manner of speaking, John Caneman often seemed as if he had been plucked from the annals of history itself. Apart from his name, nothing was known about the veteran apart from his time in the army and his appearance at the St Georges Lodging House in 1970. Fifteen years later, he still remained a peculiarity, an illusive figure of local fame whose upper class character stood in stark contrast to the vagabonds and conmen loitering in the anonymous rooms at St Georges. He would only leave his room at meal times, making it all the more suspicious that on the morning of the 5th of August, he failed to attend breakfast.

It was 9:30 and, as usual, breakfast was being served in the dining room. Most of the residents were half drunk so were more than happy to consume the half burnt fry up. "Helen, could you go check on the Major? I'm not wasting this perfectly good meal just because that senile fool is in bed", bellowed Mr Mendale, the owner of St Georges. Rushing out the cramped room, Helen, one of cleaners at St Georges, was eager to get away from his critical gaze. After all, Mr Mendale was known for two things in East London, his snobbery and his temper.

Helen was getting impatient now. She had been pounding the door for 5 minutes and yet no sound of waking emanated from the room. Barging past the door, she stumbled inside. The first thing she noticed was the darkness. Drawing the curtains she saw with horror that the window had been smashed, with shards of cheap glass glinting in the sunlight. With the room now bathed in the weak morning sun, her eyes were drawn to the center of the room, where John Canemans body lay sprawled out on the floor. His neck had been cut and a small pool of crimson now surrounded the remnants of his uniform. With a shocked shriek, she swiftly left the room, leaving only the body in her wake.

"I'm telling you Constable, this is murder. Caused by one of the residents, if you ask me. Any one of those drunkards could have done it, probably wanting to steal Major's clothes to buy beer", the voice of Mr Mendale boomed across the landing as he led Dean Roberts, the Constable, and a few officers to the Canemans room.

Only ten minutes later, the Constable emerged from the room, a grim disposition already set on his youthful appearance. "I want everyone in this lodging house questioned and I mean everybody. Does anyone know who was last with Mr Caneman? I would like to personally interrogate them as soon as possible?" Dean Roberts' antipodean voice rang out across the landing. But his orders were swiftly interrupted by a separate voice, which eliminated from the dimly lit lower hall, "I saw him last night".

Arriving shortly after the police, Melissa Caneman had been waiting in the hall, smoking a cigarette to calm her nerves. Getting up at the sound of the Constables' voice, she prepared for the worst. After coming up the stairs, she introduced herself to the officers. "I'm Melissa Caneman, the Major's.....daughter. I met him last night at his request and he gave me this' ", she pulled out an envelope and handed it to the officers. Barely half full, it contained an eclectic series of photographs of, all reminiscent of a 19th century tea party. They all had the same background, that of an old manor with a sign bearing "Caneman House". At this sight, Melissa's eyebrows arched upwards as a cloud of recognition passed over her. "I know that place, it was where my father used to live, I can drive you there if you like". At this, the Constable nodded and began heading downstairs, eager to finish the investigation promptly.

Where once there had stood a grand house, there now stood a desecrated ruin. Bricks that had stood there for centuries now crumbled to dust in the face of neglect, reducing a grand building into a pitiful reminder of the past. Nothing even resembling a childhood home had remained, all except for a modern shed which was occupied by the groundskeeper, himself nothing more than a relic of a bygone world.

Melissa Caneman watched the groundskeeper walking towards their car and as she parked, the Constable already began to question him. Yet she sat there, staring at the house and the pictures, wondering how such a beautiful building had become so degraded. The Constable pulled her from her thoughts and explained his findings, "He says he was the groundskeeper of Caneman House. He knew Mr Caneman, last seeing him in 1980. Anyways, he wants you to have this." Roberts handed her a small diary, written in the handwriting of her father. She began reading the last entry:

"August 1st - So much death. Bodies everywhere, on the landing craft, on the beach, everywhere. My friends. All dead. Above all the suffering, the constant screaming of machine guns deafened me. They called it Sword Beach but it was hell. A hell I cannot escape. I cannot forget, I cannot sleep or eat or drink without seeing those lifeless men lying on the beach. All I want is peace and company. I only possess visions of death. At least I have my knife. Maybe you will understand why I am doing this, Melissa. Eventually.

“It was suicide, that's become very clear to me. How he did it does not matter, he's dead so he succeeded in his grim mission”. Constable Dean Roberts turned away from Melissa as the car ground to a halt. They were back at St Georges. “I'm sorry Mrs Caneman ”. With that, he got out of the car and left. Melissa watched the police stream out of the building, off to investigate another murder. After all, who cares about the death of a veteran?