

Theme of counterparts



Alcoholism is the main theme in "Counterparts", we are introduced to Farrington, a legal clerk, who is verbally abused by his authoritarian boss, Mr. Alleyne, who has given a demanding deadline to make a copy of a contract. It is made clear early on in the story that Farrington has a long desire for a drink and shortly after returning to complete his paper work is taunted by the music, and laughter coming from the local bar nearby, therefore, Farrington sneaks out for a glass of porter.

Upon his return, the chief clerk tells him that Mr. Alleyne, in need of the paperwork for the case, and has been looking for him. Farrington delivers the files, hoping that his boss won't notice that the last two letters are not complete. After Farrington returns to his desk, knowing full well he will have missed his deadline because he will not be able to complete copying the contract on time, he begins dreaming of spending the night pub crawling, then suddenly interrupted by a very upset Mr.

Alleyne who yells at him about the missing letters screams "do you think me an utter fool?" when Farrington gives him a pertinent response, Mr. Alleyne demands an apology which embarrasses Farrington and makes him more miserable. Later on, Farrington hopes to get the company cashier alone so he can borrow money against his wages, but there's no hope and the only way he can get money for his carouse is to pawn his watch, for which he gets six shillings.

He meets his buddies Davy Byrne, O' Halloran and Paddy Leonard and falsely tells them that he was able to trick his boss. They buy rounds of drinks and Higgins comes in and adds glorious embellishments to Farrington's run-in with Alleyne. After numerous drinks, they take off for the Scotch House

where they meet young Weathers, an acrobat and an artist. They continue to drink and after this bar closes they continue on to Mulligan's, where a woman catches Farrington's eye then rebuffs him.

Then he becomes surly and starts bemoaning his sorry, impoverished life. He thinks of how he has spent his money on drinks and how young Weathers drinks more than he buys. The night continues in typical drunken raucousness and arm wrestling until Farrington, angry now, accuses Weathers of cheating when he is defeated. Farrington's anger continues to mount on his way home: " a very sullen man stood on the corner of O'Connell Bridge," and once again he regrets pawning his watch, especially since (he thinks) he isn't even drunk .

His reputation as a mighty man has been lost to young Weathers: " he had lost his reputation as a strong man, having been defeated twice by a mere boy" and his " heart swelled with fury". When he enters his home he finds a cold dinner. Tom, one of his five children, tells him his wife is at church and Farrington orders the boy to heat his dinner. Little Tom obeys but Farrington notices the fire has gone out, chases the boy and beats him brutally with a stick despite the child's pleading cries for mercy: " Don't beat me, Pa!

I'll say a Hail Mary for you pa, if you don't beat me" . The clearest example of this theme is in " Counterparts," where the main character, Farrington, can think of nothing other than how to get drunk. He jeopardizes his career and spends all his money on alcohol, briefly feeling like an important man while telling stories to his friends in the bar. However, the effects of heavy drinking catch up with him later in the evening, when he is out of money but is not

drunk enough to forget his problems. He goes home and takes his disappointment by beating.