

# A clean, well-lighted place

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Through his work entitled "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," Hemingway tries to demonstrate how people have different opinions regarding aging and experience, and he does this through the eyes of the two waiters and an old man.

Today, a large percentage of people assume things about other individuals they do not know based only on how they look. Hemingway seems to hold the hand of the reader as he expresses why people should have an open mind and make an attempt to look through the eyes of each person because there is so much more to know than just by looking at a person's physical appearance.

At the start of our lives when we are not yet fully aware of the things happening in our surroundings, everything seems to be beautiful and innocent. However, by the time we get older, we realize that things are not as easy as they once seemed.

Along with the joys and happiness we experience, there is also pain, sadness, and loneliness.

This short story is about an old man who sits in a bar a few times a week. He preferred this particular club from the others because it is clean and has a calm ambiance, which relaxes him. He drinks away until two o'clock in the morning and is the last person to leave the bar.

On the side are two waiters who serve the old man. One is a young man while the other is a middle-aged waiter. While serving the old man, these two waiters converse and argue about the old man and it is evident that they see the old man in different perspectives due to their age difference.

In the beginning of the story, an old, deaf man was described and how he was enjoying the bar and getting drunk almost every night. He feels comfortable in the bar because it is calm, clean, well-lighted, and quiet unlike the other bars in the area.

He stays here until the wee hours of the morning and it can be seen that he does not fit well into the society at the time because he is well over his time already.

It was mentioned that “ last week, he tried to commitsuicide” (Kennedy & Gioia 148). This gives the reader the impression that the man was in despair even though he is well-endowed in terms of financial resources.

The young waiter was in a rush to close the bar an hour earlier because there was only one customer, the old man, who was present at that time. The young waiter also wanted to go home early because his wife was waiting for him at home.

It is shown that he disrespects the old man by throwing the old man out of the bar insisting that they were already closing. The younger waiter seems to be flat and static.

He is somewhat intolerant and self-centered for he has his own social life and does not depend on the bar to seek refuge. He does not understand what the old man was feeling and why he spends his time in the bar drinking the night away.

The fact that he is young and has very limited experience in life contributes to this attitude. He has no idea that the old man has spent his life and

believes that he has no use to anyone because of his age, which is why he tried to commit suicide.

He is lonely and loneliness is very hard to cure, especially when people around you do not understand what you are going through, just like the old man in the story.

The young waiter also sees the loneliness and despair of the old man as largely a fault of his own because the old man chooses to see the darkness instead of the light.

The young man feels that the old man dwells in his misery too much and that there are better things to do than sit inside a bar and drink. He yelled at the old man saying “ you should have killed yourself last week” (Kennedy & Gioia 148). He treats the old man like an obstacle as if the old man was slowing down the young man's life.

The older waiter, on the other hand, shows a different attitude towards the situation, and this might be because of his age. He is more sensitive to the old man because he knows what it is like to be old and lonely. This waiter says “ I am one of those who like to stay late at the cafe with all those who do not want to go to bed” (Kennedy & Gioia 150).

He knows what it is like to go home at night without anything or anyone to expect and how it is better to spend the night in a bar instead of experiencing the loneliness that the night can bring. He knows that the bar is a very nice and clean place for people at night, especially the older ones. He says “ each night, I am reluctant to close up because there may be someone who needs the cafe” (Kennedy & Gioia 150).

He is not only referring to the old man but to himself as well. Personally, I think that this is why he most likely works at the bar at night himself. Just like the old man, he does not want to be alone at night. He is becoming older as time goes on and he also has an insomnia, which makes it hard for him to sleep at night.