

First Stirrings

By Mike Lansdown

(Inspired by: At a Sunny Window)

Would he be back, and did I care? He wasn't, as they say, 'my usual cup of tea', but there had been something, just something, I couldn't deny...

"That'll be three and fourpence, please," I said, handing him the small plate and a china cup. He fished his pocket for change, smiled, and held my gaze, a fraction too long, then tipped his hat and found his way to an empty table in a quiet corner of the room. It must have been about ten to five when I realised he was still there.

"Ooh! Should have asked me for a refill, sir. And the pie must have gone cold hours ago. Can I get you anything before we close?"

He fiddled with his cuff and cleared his throat, then smiled. "I expect you'll think it strange," he said "but I simply couldn't eat. I work across the way, you see, and see you every morning as you arrive." He added quickly, "Mine is the seat by the window, you understand, and I just can't help seeing the comings and goings of the street."

I smoothed my apron, flushed a bit I suppose, before answering - I will confess to feeling a little flustered.

"I don't know about that, sir, I'm sure. There's a dozen of us girls that work here and..."

That evening I let him walk me home. A proper gent he was, walked on the outside, next to the kerb, and held the umbrella so as I wouldn't get wet.

"Perhaps I can see you again," he ventured, as we reached my digs, "the cinema, or a walk in the park perhaps?"

I thought this was a little forward, but told him I would think about it. Then shut the door.

I haven't see him for a while, now. There's another face at the window opposite the tearooms. I sometimes hear a letter on the mat and run downstairs, but it'll be a bill or a letter from mother.

And as I sit, I feel the sunshine on my shoulder; the stirrings of new life within me.

350 words

