

THE EARTHEALSTOW

A short English tale

On the way to Las Vegas, in the midst of the empty night and of nowhere, the timekeeper reading one in the morning, I had a shift working at an earthalstow – a freestanding one called Gas Plus: Premium Gasoline – so I took out my key to the dark building, twisted it, got in, and switched on the lights. Nobody else works there from midnight till stounds later.

A fellow walked in and bought a pack of cud. I thought him alright. But in this eerie stead alone, I felt swith tired from what time it was (I hadn't slept in about sixteen stounds), and uneath from the room's wan and dingy lift. Only owing to my havelessness durst I work at those ungodly tides, alone.

“What worthless work!” I mind thinking. “Who comes here in the mid of the fucking night?” If I had had that accurst 5G, I would have watched films on my handset. I should have broughten a book! How silly I felt then.

I went to rest my head on the front beed, and after a sixth of a stound of napping, I heard, “Bing bong!” from the door opening. A man walked in.

I was glad to see anyone at such a time, to break the aloneness for a handwhile.

“Hi!” he said, with a great smile on his mug, looking swith giddy. “I’ll be your new workfellow! My name is Jack!”

I was glad to hear this, and said, “Good to meet you. I’m Tom.” And we shook hands.

But then I mimmered what my foreman had said, “You’re working the night shift tonight. I have no-one else to do it but you this time. I’m sorry.”

This man, Jack, was still grinning widely. I asked him a few frainings, but all his answers eked up to “Well, I guess the foreman didn’t tell you.. I don’t know, man.”

As he walked about, I watched him taking oddly quick, wide strides, with an evenly odd speed, as if he were ever in a hurry. And eerier yet, not a braid went by without his wide, lips-shut smile dropping or his fully-open eyes waning, ack to blink.

I had by then addeemed something to not be right at all. Jack kept walking back and forth, wherefor I could not understand, up and down the Food Shop rows, with swith fast steps as well. Yes, I was wiss that this man, “Jack,” sought my harm; likely death.

“Jack” stopped walking and began to speak with me offhandedly, but creepily as ever, as if there were nothing amiss. Whilst we talked, I umbethought how I might flee to my wain and get away afore he could reach me. I minded how thankful I was for not being a woman in such a stead.

It was hard to think and gab at the same time, but at last a plot came to mind.

“Hey, Jack, I’m no drinker myself, but I’ll buy a beer for you, if you want.”

“Alright.”

Thus I walked down to the beerstow, and grabbed a Stella Artois, but in so doing I saw, out of my eye’s hirn, that “Jack’s” shroud dropped for a brightomwhile, and, affrighting me all the

more, him staring at me with the grimmest, evilest-looking ansen, as if his only wish were to slaughter me when he next got the hap. I could tell he thought I didn't see him. How good that was, for if not, he might well have slain me on the spot.

I put my own shat in the rimer and handed him the beer – which he drank within about seventy braids. And to buy time (before he forthwent in his plot), I put on calling a friend from Israel (which I did not have), as it was otherwise far too late to be doing so. I truly, for a sixth of a stound, put on that I was speaking with someone on my handset. I kid not, I made myself seem to talk to a friend for a sixth of a stound. It was swith awful.

Till at last!– I could hardly forbear shouting of glee – “Jack” went to the restroom to migh. And I mean he speed-walked there. And waiting carefully, two braids after the door shut, I sprinted for the outfare with every bit of my might, running what felt like one hundred miles a stound, toward my wain in the moonlitten wheelyard.

I made it thither, but I took note that as soon as I had heard the “Bing bong!” sound upon leaving, Jack had begun running after me, yet smiling widely. I had unlocked the wain door with my key from afar, and so I swang it open, leapt inside, and shut it with great strength – which cut off three of “Jack’s” fingers, as he was reaching for me. I started the sare, slammed on the quickener, and drove one hundred and twenty miles a stound, shivering and twitching all the while of dread, in my G.H.C. (Gamely Helpful Craft), on the dark, swarthy, two-lane weasten highway.

Stuttering and trembling, I called my foreman, Rick, to tell him all that had happened to me. He kithed me that he had seen news-writs about a shape-shifting wight licheting to be workers and then killing the true ones; which till then he had not believed a smattering of. (What happened next I could not witness firsthand, but Rick did.) So at once he left home and drove out as fast as he could to the earthealstow, taking his shotgun with him.

He got there to see the whole building burnt down to ashes, and “Jack” walking back and forth near it, still smiling a broad grin with wide, open eyes. As Rick stepped out of his wain, “Jack” sprang toward him unmannishly, to kill him, but the former drew his gun and slew the thing, blowing its dark-greenish brains out.

Though ashock, Rick went and took some Gas-Plus, laving it upon the shuck’s lich, and set it alight with a match.

Rick came eft to bed, and I bode at an inn in nearby Las Vegas for two days before coming back home. After that, I had to get another work.