

Four Days of Short Stories I Story 1

~We're Closed So, Come Right In~

by Thaddeus Coleman

"3:33, there nothing to do," sung Sierra as she tried desperately to fight off her boredom. She sits at her desk, the store's counter, trying to finish the last of her assignment. There is only a single lamp lighting up the storefront. The store is actual a bookshop in the front and house in the back and the upstairs. The store is closed for the night won't be open again until after the weekend. Sierra is all alone and tired and bored. "4:44, same as before."

Knock, knock.

A knocking at the door had interrupted her singing. She glared at the door to find a young man waving back at her. Sierra points at the sign on the door. On her in end read: WELCOME, on his: CLOSED. He persisted, knocking on the door again and again. Sierra decided to get up and tell him to his face that the store was closed.

"We're closed. Come back Monday," said Sierra through the glass door.

"But you're light's still—" He grimaced and held his side. He quickly recovered, though and continued. "You're light. It's still on."

"I live here, too. We are closed, so leave."

The stranger looked up and gives Sierra long look. "Come on, just until the rain stops. Please."

Sierra pinched a piece of her hair and let her fingers follow it to its end, before she replied. "I must look like a stupid kid to you. No." The stranger reposed to this reply by lift a bit of shirt to reveal a fresh wound. Sierra's eyes widen slightly.

"Can I just clean myself up a little? Please. Then I'm gone." He looked boldly into her eyes. "Please."

Sierra sat outside the bathroom where the stranger is taking a shower. Her legs up to her chin, she listens to the shower water mimics the sounds of outside. "I made a mistake," she thinks to herself. The shower water stopped. She could hear the shower's door open and footsteps. Voice calls to her from the other side of the door.

"Hey, where's the mirror in here?"

"It's broke," Sierra answered back. "You can wear this old shirt. It's might to a little small—"

The doors opened and the stranger, with his lower body wrapped in towel, comes out. “Thanks.” He walked back inside. Sierra turned red for a second. “Where are your parents?”

Sierra still somewhat flushed takes a moment before she answered, “They’re on a business trip right now.”

“And left you in charge all by yourself. You gotta be pretty responsible. What are you fifteen? Sixteen?”

“Yes.”

“I won’t be trouble. I’ll be done and out the door in a second.”

Sierra pushed her legs closer to her body. After a few minutes the stranger emerges from the bathroom now sporting his new pink violent shirt. He puts his jacket over it. In his right hand is the old slight blooded shirt he came in with.

“Your restroom is okay. I didn’t blood anywhere.”

“You’re leave now.”

“Yes, like I said. Thank you.”

He follows Sierra down the stairs and through the somewhat cluttered back portion of the store/house combo. Following Sierra to the front door the stranger bumps into one of the bookshelves and a snow globe that had been sitting on the shelf fall. He catches it.

“Gotcha!” the stranger exclaims. Sierra turns around she hears this. “Hmm. What’s that?”

Sierra snatched the little globe away from him. “Please just leave.”

“Sure,” he said watching Sierra put the snow globe back in its place. “By the way, my name’s Alfie. It’s really a lot longer, but I like people to call me Alfie.” Alfie walked to the door, turned around and said “This world’s not so scary, right? Thank again.”

After he left, Sierra sat at her desk again and put her head down. She closed hers and didn’t move a muscle for a while, but she never went. She was trying to think, but nothing came to her. An hour went by and still her mind was blank except for, “5:55, nothing left to rhyme.” Then, like before, there was a knock, knock at the door interrupting her song. Her head bounced with curious excitement, but soon dissolved away to a more dreadful feel.

Two men dressed in extreme sharp black suits stood outside the door. They looked serious. Sierra approached the door slowly, tension build with every step. Her hands shook as she opened the door and voice crackled as she greeted them.

“I—I’m sorry. Closed. We’re closed I mean. I just—”

They cut her off, flashing their FBI badges to her.

“Have you had any visitors tonight?” said one. Sierra only stared, fixated on his choice of words. Tonight. It was hardly *tonight* anymore.

“He’s most likely injured,” said the other, “and dangerous.”

“Is he?” inquired Sierra.

“Very.”

The first man asked if she mind letting them step inside. When Sierra said she did the man made it very clear her he wasn’t asking. Sierra stepped aside. Inside, one of the agents, introduced himself as Mr. McAllen and sat with Sierra while the other, identified as Mr. Holland searched through her store/house combo.

“You don’t need to worry about any damaged to this place,” said Mr. McAllen, “Mr. Holland is very professional. We won’t stay longer then we need too if we don’t find him.” Sierra stayed silent. “Do you want to know why I insisted on coming in? It’s because I could see you are hiding something.”

“I’m not,” answered Sierra in a quiet voice.

“Where are your parents,” Mr. McAllen questions her. He takes out a lighter and cigarette as he continues “I can’t imagine you run this place all by yourself.”

This act disturbed Sierra causing her to get up from her seat and forcibly remove the recently placed cigarette from the agent’s lips and walk to the trash can and throws it in. “There’s no smoking here,” she points to an old hand painted sign. “And my parents are out of state right now. They trust me to watch the shop.” She decided not to the return her seat and instead leans against a bookshelf. Mr. McAllen nodded.

“Down stairs is clear,” a shout came from the backroom. Mr. Holland emerged soon after heading directly for the stairs with no care as to what was happening between Sierra and Mr. McAllen.

“He’s quick,” she thought aloud, watching him zoom past. Head tracking his movements see notices that the snow globe in still out. She waits until Mr. Holland is upstairs and moves somewhat quickly to the item. Mr. McAllen begins his questioning again. She gives him simple

answers as tries to stealthfully hide the item behind her back. After a few minutes the Q and A comes to an end and only silent is left until Mr. Holland speeding down the stairs. He stopped and looked at Sierra before turning to Mr. McAllen and saying, “There’s nothing. We should go.”

Sierra hurdles them to door. Two agents step outside the shop, but before the girl had a chance to close the door, Mr. Holland remarks on the absence of mirrors in the shop of any kind.

“My father is very superstitious.” She closes the door and the two agents walk away.

Sierra receded to her desk, plopping her snow globe down on the table, and laying her head down in front of it. Today the store is closed. If she wanted she could sleep in and rest after the events of the night and morning. That is after she finishes up her still unfinished homework. She sighs heavily before taking a deep, long look at her reflection in the glass of the curious little snow globe. “3:33, who should I be?”