Beata Williamson

Obey Your Master

The following text was an assignment for the "practical English" course (PNJA) taught by Mr. Wojciech Kubiński (now Professor Kubiński) in the spring of 1984. At the time, I was a second-year student of English philology at the University of Gdańsk. Except for a few minor corrections, I am leaving the text unchanged, a true juvenilia piece.

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Mike Flannery, the West Coast agent of the Interurban Express Company, leaned over the counter of the express office and shook his fist. Mr. Morhouse, angry and red, stood on the other side of the counter, trembling with rage. The argument had been long and heated, and at last Mr. Morhouse had talked himself speechless.

From the back of the room, I had been watching them for the last half an hour. At the beginning, Mike kept calm. He was pale and talked quietly, although the other tried by all possible means to offend him. Morhouse shouted and swore, and used the worst foul language possible. He was standing in back of me, but I could easily imagine his red face, wet with perspiration. His small eyes must have been bloodshot—I had seen him in such a state before. I hated him and he knew it. For all these years when my fate depended on him, Mr. Morhouse had been cruel to me and used to find great pleasure in humiliating me.

I did not know the other man before. It was because of his present argument with Morhouse that I had some warm feelings towards him. Had I seen him in any other situation, I would probably pay no attention to him. But now, seeing him successfully arguing with Morhouse, humiliating him, proving his stupidity, I started to deeply admire Mike Flannery. Anybody who was against John Morhouse was with me. It gave me an unspeakable pleasure, watching the calm, pale face of Mike in contrast to the crude, uncontrolled features of Morhouse.

At the end, Flannery was not completely calm, either. Not that he lost control over himself, like the other did, no. But his voice became hoarse and his face got paler. I wish I could have understood what they were talking about, but that was too much for me. The most I could make out was Morhouse's strong language. Silence prevailed after the moment Flannery shook his fist. The two men were staring at each other with hatred . . .

. . . And then I heard Mr. Morhouse—"Get him, Billy!" I jumped over the counter and tore out Flannery's throat with my strong teeth. I am a very well-trained dog. I have never failed to react right at the sound of my master's voice.



Wiktoria Szamotulska

** “Obey Your Master” – Metallica released the song in 1986, as an inquisitive reader will note; the original paper was untitled.*