

The Open Window

Framton Nuttel's Nervousness

Framton Nuttel was suffering from nervousness. He goes to a calm and quiet place in the countryside for treatment. There he calls on a family friend. There he met a fifteen-year old girl named, Vera. She was very calm and confident. She told Nuttel that her aunt, Mrs. Sappleton, would come downstairs soon.

His Sister's Observation

Nuttel's sister had told him that he would meet very few people in the countryside. He would feel very unhappy there and his condition would become worse than before. So she would give him letters of introduction to all the people she knew there. Some of them were quite nice.

Vera's Questions

The young girl, Vera, asked Nuttel if he knew many people there. He told her that he did not know anybody. In fact, his sister had visited the place about four years ago. She had given him letters of introduction to some of the people. On being asked, he told Vera that he knew only her aunt's name and address.

The Tragedy

Vera, told Nuttel that a tragedy had happened in the family about three years ago. She pointed to a large glass window. It opened on to a lawn. It was kept wide open even on an October afternoon. Nuttel asked the girl if that tragedy had something to do with the window. The girl told him that it concerned her aunt's husband and two brothers. They had gone out for shooting. This happened exactly on this day three years ago. They went out through that window. But they never came back. It was because they were swallowed up by the wet spongy ground. Their bodies were never recovered.

Mrs. Sappleton's Reaction

The girl's aunt, Mrs. Sappleton, always thought that they would come back some day. They would come through that window along with their dog as they used to do. That was why the window was kept open every evening till it was dark. The aunt often told the girl how they went out. Sometimes Vera, too, had a feeling that they would walk through that window.

Mrs. Sappleton's Arrival

Meanwhile, Mrs. Sappleton entered the room and apologised for coming late. She

hoped that the open window did not bother Mr. Nuttel. She told him that her husband and brothers would come home straight from shooting. They would enter the house through the open window. They had gone to shoot birds in the marsh. So they would spoil the carpet as their shoes would be muddy.

Nuttel's Reaction

Mrs. Sappleton went on talking about the shooting and the shortage of birds. To Framton Nuttel, it was completely horrible. He tried to turn the talk to a less horrible topic. But he was not fully successful. He knew that Mrs. Sappleton was giving him only a part of her attention. Her eyes were directed to the window and the lawn.

Doctor's Advice to Nuttel

The doctor had advised Nuttel to take complete rest. He should avoid mental excitement. He should also not do any exercise needing great physical strength. Framton Nuttel wrongly thought that strangers were interested in his illnesses and weaknesses.

Nuttel's Reaction

Mrs. Sappleton was not much interested in what Nuttel was saying. Suddenly she looked towards the window. Mrs. Sappleton said with a cry that they had come at last. They were in time for tea. They looked as if they were covered with mud. Framton Nuttel trembled with fear. He turned towards the girl to express sympathy. But the girl was looking through the window. There was horror in her eyes. Framton had also a feeling of strange fear. He swung round in his seat and looked towards the window.

The Three Figures

It was dusk now. Nuttel saw three figures walking across the lawn towards the window. They all carried guns. One of them had a white coat hung over his shoulders. A brown-coloured dog followed them. They came silently near the house. One of them sang : "I say, Bertie, why do you bound ?"

Nuttel's Sudden Retreat

Framton Nuttel took his stick and coat. He walked through the hall door, along the pathway and reached the front gate. Thus he made a hasty retreat. A cyclist had to run into the hedge to avoid collision with him.

The Figure With The Coat

The figure with the raincoat came in through the window. He asked who was the man who had rushed out of the house. Mrs. Sappleton told him that he was one Mr.

Nuttel. He was an extraordinary man. He could talk only about his illnesses. He went away without a word of goodbye or apology. It appeared as if he had seen a ghost.

The Girl's Explanation

The girl explained that Nuttel rushed out of the house because he was afraid of the dog. He had told the girl that he was terribly afraid of dogs. Once a group of dogs chased him into a graveyard. He had to spend the night in a newly dug grave. The dogs were growling all around him.