
WE ARE INMATE #881129

Posted by rockefeller - 2017/11/10 12:06

Several weeks ago, perusing the Floor and Business Office blogs here as Rocks is sometimes so inclined, he noticed that The Distant Rumbling of Nye Bevan Turning in His Grave by one Scott Derry had been unceremoniously portholed. Having long been a fan of this young UK writer, Rocks solicited from him a copy of said unceremoniously portholed cap, to see where and how he had fucked up, dropped the ball, missed the mark. It is not uncommon for writers of fine imagination and solid technical ability to overreach, as has, in Rocks' view, the author of this We Are Inmate #881129. (According to a Federal inmate locator site, "Federal inmates numbers will have this format: 00000-000 five numbers - dash and then three numbers.") In other words, if no experiment of yours ever fails, you aren't really experimenting. And strong writers experiment.

Normally when Rocks sees that a cap has been portholed, he sends the associated Floorite lingerie and a box of chocolates, then dances about his tiny cell singing Hendrix's My Friend in his uniquely disturbing monotone falsetto, testicles bungeeing commando-freely in their bright orange cutoffs. And so he does not wish to discourage this practice of, when in doubt, portholing cap by opining that someone screwed up on that Nye Bevan sub, which, while perhaps not grossly entertaining (no sex or violence), is a subtly brilliant, technically flawless, sublimely insightful, authentic and evocative work.

This inmate (actually, we prefer to be called prisoners) cap, while intermittently shiv sharp, largely confounded. A strange read, that begged both to be skimmed and savored. As in this excerpt:

He who was driving was not so different than the bounded seemingness of the environment, which was alive one could well see, and which was, much like the foreboding individual, inquisitive and inquiring in regards to the seemingness of that jubilation, making it oasis, and reciprocal in its fundements, which were the fundaments of man in his introduction, a complete Babylon.

Rocks loves a good run-on, a judicious fragment. But the above is a "which" hunt. Even after taking the trouble to parse (and it actually does kind of parse), it makes no sense. Says nothing, at least nothing that could not be said better in fewer words. It smacks of the rambling of a muse perhaps too fond of her own voice, too unrestrained. VC, restrain your muse. She is brilliant but needs fettering, clarification. Help.

Anyway, so sayeth the Rockster.

Or this one:

The girl, who was named Stephani, had been a quite and seeming girl, and one could not call her daft though she spoke when nobody was speaking to her and spoke in those times nonsensical until Thanasi came to the decision to excise the quite and seeming girl from the day to day pursuits in entirety, and with remorse; for she was crazy, and everybody liked it when she was not in company.

What is a "quite" girl? A strong (here somewhat biblical) voice should not abandon meaning. Clearly, this is a VC fond of the short-term motif (even in his cover letter he repeats his cap's title four times).

Rocky's BS meter did, too, on occasion sound. E.g., at one point (page 24), it's asserted through dialog that the recycling of inmates' numbers is "the only way they can stay zero-sum." Even after several searches and look-ups, and as much thought as Rocks' 70's-worn brain could muster, this, while intelligent enough sounding, made no sense to him. And while slogging through a novelette of such was deemed a lot to ask, Rocks did stop here and there to savor what seemed fine poetry. But, alas, as narrative the experiment, albeit gloriously, fails.

Anyway, no sayeth the Rockster.

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