

An Epilogue to 'A Family Supper' by Kazuo Ishiguro

By Emilia Dunfelt

Inspector Nakamaro took a brief moment to close his eyes and rest, it was a luxury he seldom granted himself, though, on this particular night he thought it appropriate, considering what lay ahead. As his grainy eyes opened, they were met with the sophisticated web of small brooks and streams restlessly pacing down the window of his car. Autumn night rain. Tokyo rain.

Stepping out of the car, into the heavy rainfall, he gazed towards the house. Through squinted eyes, he saw the well lit veranda, the garden, the gaping front door, the darkness inside. There was a faint light coming from somewhere further within. *It wasn't always like this*, the thought flashed through his mind as he stepped into the spotlights like an actor on a stage. *The protagonist has arrived, or rather, the antagonist.* A few colleagues were waiting by the front door, none over the age of 35. He pictured iron shoes on his feet, dragging him down towards the center of the earth. Not letting a single syllable pass his clenched teeth, he passed the young officers and entered the doorway.

The feeling of passing through a portal to a distant world came upon him, and he welcomed it. This world was dark, with faint apparitions of once familiar shapes scattered across the dimly lit rooms. He passed the kitchen, everything neatly cleaned. Barren, without a trace of life. *Because there is no other life*, he thought. A distant smell of fish lingered in the deserted room, perhaps it was emitted from the walls, oozing out through every microscopical crack and crevice. Like the scent of warm, well-lit family meals, or the odor of mortal fear and nervous chefs.

Purposefully, like a machine made of sturdy steel, he pressed on through the gloomy rooms. He could still see the light coming from the three half closed bedroom doors. Luminous angels were in those rooms, claiming the souls of weary bodies.

Upon entering the first bedroom his eyes, as if under the influence of an outer force, immediately turned towards the girl. The white lamp made her face seem like that of a mask. One half paper white, the other filled with sharp shadows drawn with paint on her waxen face, her dark hair adding to the effect. She looked so young and virtuous, but he knew this could not be the case. He turned, reaching his hand out to the cold plastic of the lamp. With a slight movement he let the darkness swallow the girl in the room.

The second bedroom was bare with the exception of a futon and its former occupant. The sheets were in disarray, as if a struggle had occurred. One glance at the young man was all it took to determine the cause of his current disposition. His distorted facial expression, his western haircut and the neatly folded branded clothes next to him. *There was no other way.*

Moving on through the dark void of the house, he finally reached the last room. This room held the truth, the key to the riddle. After a moment's pause, he pushed the door open, ignored the sight of yet another young officer standing in the room, and instead turned his head towards the man lying in the center of the well lit circle, formed by the surrounding lamps.

He knew this man, they came from the same world, the same epoch. It was an honorable man, a man worthy of respect. This was how things used to be — harsh, perhaps, but honest and true. There is only one path through life, a path that always should be followed and not strayed from.