

Notes On Short Story

A story about two boys who live near this house that they think is haunted, but in reality is only a shabby old house inhabited by a weird and mysterious couple and their son. The boys are always wondering why the boy never comes out to play. In fact they wonder if the boy still lives in the old house, for they never see the boy these days. And so, as kids will, they decide to sneak over to the house and spy on those that live there in hopes of finding the boy. They find him locked up in one of the upstairs rooms. He is chained to the wall and he looks very thin. He is sitting like a monkey, sulking in the corner of the bare room. Suddenly he looks up and sees the boys. His sunken eyes shine in the glint of madness, and he rushes at the boys- screaming like a wild animal and slobbering like a mad man. The boys make a hasty retreat, however they feel that their friend must not be abandoned- that he is sick only because he is being confined in the old house and is being treated like an animal. They make a plan, they are going to free him as soon as the boy's parents are gone or are asleep. They decide that this is the only solution to the problem, for it is the duty of the boy to tell the police of his mistreatment. The boys arrived at this decision only after their parents refused to believe their story. They were going to leave the boy alone but in the old days back when they had all been friends they had made a pact of mutual assistance. This pact had been made with the other boys in the neighborhood, but nobody could be sure that the boy in the room had ever taken the oath of aid, he had been such a strange boy and he had never been very much accepted by the crowd. But the boys decided to take their chances anyway.

They sneak into the house through the window in the boy's room. As before, he is huddled in the corner with an old moth-eaten blanket over him. The room smells awful, for the floors are littered with dung. They see the sparkle

of his eyes in the candle light (for this story takes place in the 1890's).

But the sparkle is not that of fierceness but of fear. The boys see that he is about to scream and are on him in an instant, with their hands over his mouth to prevent him from yelling his head off. The poor boy's eyes moved quickly from side to side like a frightened animal's and he gave them quite a struggle, but because he was thin, he was weak and the fighting soon ceased. The boys tried to explain to him that they were his friends, and the boy calmed down. The boys questioned him for some time and the boy only answered with a nod of his head. He would not talk. Just when the boys feel that they have his confidence one of the boys accidentally flashes the lantern in his face, and the chained boy starts to scream his head off. The boys try to shut him up, but it is of no use, they are too late, they hear footsteps hurrying down the hall outside. They made it out the window just as the heavy sound of bolts being drawn sounded at the door. The next day the house was empty. The occupants had left.