

The Quiet Man

By Alexei Edwards

Joe spoke, just not very much. He was a man born in the wrong time. The wrong era. Now is a time when the person who talks loudest, goes furthest. People think that if you talk, then you are clever. If you sit and just get on with your life quietly, you are considered stupid. Or rude. Or both. This perception did not bother Joe. Joe just kept himself to himself. He once had a job which required him to speak. Needless to say, he didn't last long. People mistook him for an idiot and incapable of doing his job. This was not the case. He just didn't feel the need to speak. There were various meetings that maybe he should have spoken at, but he would rather remain quiet and let others talk. It was a shame because his role did require him to express his opinion but that did not deter Joe. He remained obdurate to the end. Joe was a slim, rather unassuming man. He was good looking but not good looking enough to turn heads. I guess you'd describe him as inoffensive. He did not submit to pleasantries which he described as meaningless. He did not suffer bullshit in any way, shape or form. People would often greet him with a smile when he would walk into work but he would regularly ignore their gesture of kindness because he perceived this kind of behaviour as insincere. Perhaps he was right or perhaps he was wrong. Either way, there was no changing his mind. I remember I once brought it up. I very quickly learned my lesson. He stared into me. Not at me. Or beyond me. No, he stared into me. You know what it feels like if you have ever experienced such a thing. It was a penetrating stare. One that I will not forget and one that I will not like to see repeated. So I hope you appreciate, I do not intend for it to happen again. I knew Joe because I worked with him once. For some reason he took a shine to me. Maybe he saw something in me he already saw in himself. I don't know what it was but I was the only person he would wish good morning to. I was the only person that he would talk to. He wouldn't talk much, but when he did talk, he spoke very eloquently. He was a man that would never waste his words. There was never anything superfluous with Joe which is what I loved about him. I don't use the word love in

Writing Raw

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vain. I genuinely grew to love him. I thought he was a unique specimen of man and one that the world needs more of. There is too much talking around and to be quite frank, I am fed up of it. I very quickly understood exactly where Joe was coming from with his general approach to life. He was no idiot that was for sure, he just decided that he did not want to conform at all. He belonged in another time, in another era. Now was not his time. And it was both his stubbornness and his unwillingness to speak which eventually led to his unfortunate death. Some would think of his passing as something which could have been avoided and some would even find it rather funny. Not me. I feel there was a certain nobility in his death. A certain willingness to remain consistent and married to his beliefs, right until the end.

He died while swimming in the sea. He had wandered out into the water on a warm day. The beach was quiet, but not completely empty. I'm guessing people were absorbed by whatever it was they were doing. Eating sandwiches and whining presumably. Anyway, he wandered out way beyond his depth and was being pulled out further and further into sea. He knew that he was not a strong enough swimmer to make it back to shore on his own. Now, most people would shout for help but not Joe. No, Joe just decided to remain quiet and accept his fate. I don't know why he made that decision. No one does. But my god, Joe was stubborn. Someone spotted him in the distance and made an effort to save him but by the time they reached him, it was too late. Joe was already dead. Some would say it was suicide brought on by a quiet sadness but I just think it was just a big middle finger to the world. He accepted that his time had come and he decided to face it head on. I'll miss him, that's for sure.

The End

Alexei Edwards bio: Born and raised in London, England, I've always loved to write mainly as a tool to shed the weight off my mind. I work in adland so there's a fair bit of weight to shed. I jest, of course. I've written plays, poetry, short stories - all mainly for pleasure. I did have a short play performed at a prestigious London theatre which is my proudest writing moment - so far. I intend to extend that list before I expire.