

Tekst 6

*Het volgende fragment is het begin van een verhaal uit *The Fallen Curtain*, geschreven door Ruth Rendell.*

Almost Human

The Chief was stretched out on the settee, half-asleep. Monty sat opposite him, bolt upright in his chair. Neither of them moved as Dick helped himself to gin and water. They didn't care for strong drink, the Chief not even for the smell of it, though it wasn't his way to show his feelings. Monty would sometimes drink beer in the George Tavern with Dick. It was cigarette smoke that upset him, and now as he caught a whiff from Dick's Capstan, he sneezed.

'Bless you,' said Dick.

Better smoke the rest of it in the kitchen while he was getting their supper. It wasn't fair on Monty to start him coughing at his age, bring on his bronchitis maybe. There was nothing Dick wouldn't have done for Monty's comfort, but when he had taken the steak out of the fridge and gone once more into the sitting room for his drink, it was the Chief he addressed. Monty was his friend and the best company in the world. You couldn't look on the Chief in that light, but more as a boss to be respected and deferred to.

'Hungry, Chief?' he said.

The Chief got off the settee and walked into the kitchen. Dick went after him. It was almost dark outside now but enough light remained to show Dick Monty's coat, the old check one, still hanging on the clothesline. Better take it in in case it rained in the night. Dick went out into the yard, hoping against hope old Tom, his next-door neighbour, wouldn't see the kitchen light and come out. Such hope was always vain. He got the first of the pegs out when he heard the door open and the cracked whining voice.

'Going to be a cold night.'

'Mmm,' said Dick.

'Shouldn't be surprised if there was to be a frost.'

Who cared? Dick saw the great angular shadow of the Chief appear in the rectangle of light. Good, that would fix him. Standing erect, as he now was against the fence, the Chief was a good head taller than old Tom, who backed away, grinning nervously.

'Come on, Chief,' said Dick. 'Supper time.'

'Just like children, aren't they?' old Tom whined. 'Almost human. It's uncanny. Look at him. He understands every word you say.'

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3p 8 Geef voor elk van de volgende beweringen aan of deze wel of niet overeenstemt met de inhoud van de tekst.

Omcirkel achter elk nummer 'wel' of 'niet' in de uitwerkbijlage.

- 1 Dick zorgt voor the Chief en Monty.
- 2 Monty heeft last van zijn luchtwegen.
- 3 The Chief was vroeger de baas van Dick.
- 4 Tom komt altijd naar buiten als hij weet dat Dick daar ook is.
- 5 Dick vindt het fijn om af en toe met Tom te praten.
- 6 Tom is een beetje bang van the Chief.