

Years 9 & 10
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Post Conflict

The bar is always so busy on a Sunday night. The beer tastes sweeter and richer, especially with a friend.

It's 1946. I'm here with my mate, Andrew. He's a good guy. We've been to hell and back together. We pull up a stiff wooden chair at our local pub. We each order a pint. The air is thick with cigarette smoke and stale beer.

"How's the family?" I ask, looking him in the eye.

"Good, we're running low on food, as usual, but we'll be OK," he responds with light sadness in his voice.

"I could give you a few bucks? You need it more than me. You got a nice family to take care of."

"Yeah, maybe."

We continue talking. Before long, we start to sense stares at the back of our heads. I feel an aura around me, so I turn around and see a tall man looming over us. He looks familiar. He starts puffing smoke into our faces. His face reminds me of a bulldog – sweaty and withering away.

"My friends brought to my attention that there are two black fellas in our bar."

I look at Andrew quizzically. Then we look back up at them.

"Do you not speak English?" the man booms.

The room falls silent. The tension is almost suffocating. All eyes are on us, to see what would happen next.

"Sorry mate, is there a problem?" Andrews asks, a bit irritated.

He takes a step closer to our rusty table.

"You have to leave. You can't be here," he says in a raised voice, knitting his eyebrows together even more.

Andrew and I scan the room, looking for assistance, but the men who helped us in the war have discarded us and act like we don't exist. I close my eyes and take a breath. I feel as if the room is getting smaller and smaller. I grab Andrew's arm and drag him out, before anything else happens.

As I step out, I feel a wave of relief to be away from the commotion, but also sadness and anger.

I look to my left and see Andrew looking bothered.

I say to him, "Don't worry about it," patting his back. "We're used to it, aren't we?"

"Yeah. I just thought that after we all fought together we would be treated as another one in the herd."

"Yeah," I say, walking down the street as the warm breeze shifts our scruffy hair.

"Our time will come."