

Neil Gunn Writing Competition

Quinn's secret

It was a warm spring day and I was walking home from school wondering why blue cheese was blue when I looked to my right and saw that there was a new pet shop. I was curious to see what they sold but I knew that if I went in then I'd probably not come out for hours and miss mac and cheese for dinner. I stopped and thought to myself, was going into a pet shop worth missing mac and cheese? No, it was not, so I kept on walking, but curiosity got the better of me and I walked back to the shop.

As soon as I opened the door, a wave of sounds hit me: dogs barking, cats meowing, parrots squawking, mice squeaking and fish splashing. As I walked in, I expected the place to smell like poo and cat food, but it didn't, it actually smelt like a mix of freshly mowed grass, fresh air and flowers. To my right there was a huge fish tank built into the wall and to my left there was an enormous reptile enclosure split in half. On one half there were bearded dragons of all shapes, colours and sizes then above me there was a cage hanging from the ceiling with parrots.

I walked on and alongside the fish was a wall with pictures of Peru and the Amazon and alongside the reptile enclosure was a circular glass window and on the inside was a jungly mess with a rock cave, I peered inside, then, all of a sudden a huge tarantula jumped at me! I quickly moved on to a cage which had little house like boxes and tiny food bowls. I peered into one of the little boxes and a little mouse scurried out, it was white with pink eyes. It came up to me and sniffed my finger then, a man said, 'Watch it don't bite your finger off miss.'

I jumped!

'Oh, did I give you a fright, sorry!'

'Its ok' I replied as I turned to look at him. He was a tall, skinny man with round glasses and a smile.

'Hullo, my name is Mark, short for Marcus,' he said in a friendly way.

'Hello Mark, I'm Quinn. Do you run this shop?' I asked.

'Yes, I do. I see you quite enjoy the mice, and I think they do too! Look!' he said still with a smiley face.

I turned around and the mice were all gathered around my finger trying to sniff it.

'Tell you what Quinn, why don't you take one of them, for free' he said.

'Wait, really?!' I replied surprised.

'Yes' he said as he reached into the cage to pick up a mouse.
'Thank you!' I said, as he handed me a box.
'No, thank *you* for stopping by and saying hello, not many people do.'
'Goodbye!' I said and I walked out happily holding my box.

I went home and quickly ran upstairs, I couldn't tell mum or she could blow. Mum called me for dinner so I ran down the stairs.

'Why are you so late?' she asked as she dumped some mac and cheese into a bowl.

'Nothing, just was walking slowly because I was talking to my friend Harley' I replied.

'Alright...' mum replied suspiciously as she handed me my bowl, I went to sit at the table then I said, absentmindedly 'The man at the new pet shop gave me a mo-' then I realised what I had said.

'What did he give you?' mum said.

'Uhhhhh, not a mouse.' I said, a little too quickly.

'He gave you a mouse?!' she exclaimed.

'Y-yes' I stuttered.

I guess keeping a secret is harder than I thought.

The end