

LUNCH COUNTER by Morley Callaghan

Summary

Fill in the missing words:

affection - company – developing - fast food – flips – furious - hostile – liking - respectable – opinion show off

Fred Sloane is the cook in the O'Neils' small _____ restaurant. Mrs O'Neil, a heavy, hard-working, sober and earnest woman, thinks that Fred is inclined to be profligate and too easy-going. Her husband, on the other hand, enjoys Fred's _____. He tells the younger man jokes and likes talking to him about girls and the various low joints in the city. Yet despite this he is a steady, _____ husband. This is not, however, his wife's _____. She thinks of him as a wild roustabout.

Nevertheless she obeys him from a sense of religious duty. At times Jerry O'Neil is openly hostile to his wife, quarrelling with her in front of others, which makes Fred feel rather sorry for her.

When Mrs O'Neil's teenage niece comes to stay with them one night Fred tries to _____, pretending to be more than just a common fast food cook. He _____ his omelettes like a professional and Marion, the girl, seems to take an immediate _____ to him. When the O'Neils go upstairs Fred shows Marion round the kitchen and teaches her how to make an omelette, which brings them into close contact. When Mrs O'Neil notices the warmth developing between them, she orders Marion to follow her upstairs. The girl stays, and Fred is _____ when Jerry also intervenes with an angry "Cut it out." But before Mrs O'Neil can finally drag the girl away, the young couple have time to declare, quite spontaneously, their _____ for each other.

"Lunch Counter" is a psychological study of the interaction between four people. As soon as Mr and Mrs O'Neil realise that some sort of relationship is _____ between their niece and the cook they try to intervene. Yet the harder they try the more Fred's resentment builds up. Gradually his friendly feelings for the girl take on a new dimension and he begins to fall in love with her.

Unit I Characterisation

1. Mrs O'Neil and Fred

What does the reader learn about Mrs O'Neil?

13 5-6:

13 7-8:

13 12:

How does Mrs O'Neil feel about Fred?

How does Fred feel about Mrs O'Neil at the beginning of the story?

2. Jerry O'Neil

What sort of person is Jerry O'Neil?

UNIT II Marion's arrival

What does the reader learn about the O'Neils' niece?

How does Marion feel about Fred?

How does Fred react to the girl?

How does Fred show off?

2. The effect of Marion's arrival on the relationship between Fred and the O'Neils

How does Mrs O'Neil interfere in Fred's relationship with Marion and what feelings does she arouse in Fred?

15 18:

15 20:

15 22-23:

15 28-29:

It is not only Mrs O'Neil, but also Jerry who interferes with Fred's simple pleasure. How does Jerry annoy Fred?

Why do you think the O'Neils behave like this towards Fred and Marion? Do you think their behaviour expresses a generation conflict?

Unit III

Marion and Fred; Narrative Technique;

1. The relationship between Marion and Fred

Despite the O'Neils' efforts to prevent Fred from getting closer to Marion, the two young people succeed in communicating their feelings to each other. Their relationship changes during the course of the story. Show how.

2. Type of story

What sort of story is this? Why would you define it this way?

3. Personal reactions

Did you like the story? Why/Why not? Compare it with other love stories you have read or seen.