

mail boxes etc. /2/ not the guy

I **approached** the door **along with** a bearded man **in his mid-40's** holding a large brown box. The store was closed. It was 3:30 p.m. How **dare** the guy close his store **early** when he's **the one** so **obsessed with** time? Then **the bearded man and I** both noticed a small yellow **Post-it note stuck to** the window.

It said: "The owner of this store died yesterday. **There will be** a memorial service tomorrow at 3 p.m. at the church **down the street**. I guess we **will not be having** normal **hours** until **things get organized**." It was signed by the assistant.

The bearded man **and I** stood there, **speechless**. "He died—that guy died?" I said. "**Huh**," the man replied. "Jesus. That's so crazy. Horrible." -- "God, he was a **jerk**." -- "I know," I said. "**Such a jerk**." -- "But, yes, it is horrible. Yeah."

We stood there for a while. It was **as if** we were both trying to **figure out** how we **were supposed to** feel when a **regular** background player in your life dies. But not someone like the jogger who stretches in front of your window every morning. Someone you actively hate.

Oh, God, **had he been** sick? I **wondered**. If he was sick **for a really long time** and that's why he was so angry **at** the world, then, wow, that is the saddest thing **ever**. But if he was suddenly **hit by** a truck, well, that would be sad, too. But **slightly** less sad.

Then the man picked up his box and said, "FedEx is just a mile **down the road**." -- "Yeah, I know, thanks." But I went home. When I **entered** the store the next week and the little bell went off, a tall man with a small round head **was busy** behind the **counter**. He smiled and said, "Let me know if I can help you with anything."

I know I **should have felt** calm and **welcome**, but I didn't. **Instead** I thought: He **wouldn't have wanted you to treat** people **this way**. It was his store. Ten years. Have some damn **respect**.