

Recitation B

Coffee on the Wall

I sat with my friend in a well-known coffee shop in Venice. As we enjoyed our delicious coffee, a man entered and placed an order saying, “Two cups of coffee, one on the wall.” We heard this with interest and observed that he was served with one cup of coffee but paid for two. Before he left, the waiter pinned a piece of paper to the wall that read, “A Cup of Coffee.” A little later, two other men entered and paid for three coffees – two for themselves and one for the wall. The waiter did the same again; he put up a piece of paper on the wall that read, “A Cup of Coffee.” It was all rather perplexing.

After a few days, we went back to this coffee shop. While we were there, a poorly dressed man entered. He seated himself and looked up at the wall, saying, “One cup of coffee from the wall.” The waiter served coffee to the man with the customary respect. The man had his coffee and then left without paying. We were amazed, noticing that the waiter took a piece of paper off the wall and threw it in the trash bin.

Now we could understand the situation. The great respect for the needy shown by the inhabitants of the town brought tears to our eyes. Ponder on how kindly this poor man was treated. He entered the shop with dignity. He did not have to ask for a free drink. He was served a cup of coffee without asking or knowing about the one who paid for it. He only had to look at the wall, place an order, and enjoy his coffee. It was a truly beautiful system; with probably the most beautiful wall you may ever see anywhere!

(299 words)