

THE FLAG MAN

A Dramatic Reading

by
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The kids in the neighborhood grew up calling Mr. Coffey the Flag Man. On a staff in his front yard, a flag flew every day of the year. Except, that is, on a few days in which it was raised just half way.

One day, one of the boys told him that his flag was, "Sort of hanging part of the way up." It was then he told them that it was at "half staff" in honor of the many young men and women who had died in the service of their country, and also for presidents when they died. The day his wife died, the flag was raised halfway too.

He said, "That isn't quite proper, but Mary waited for me to come home from the war and then raised the kids well. I reckon that she deserves the honor."

The Fourth of July was a very special day in the neighborhood. Mr. Coffey always had a whole handful of flags for each kid to carry as they tried to keep in step following the city band down the street. They sorta felt important and proud.

Whenever that flag in his front yard began to fade or get frazzled, a brand new one would be up very quickly. One year, probably to make him feel good, one of the girls told him that he had the prettiest flag ever.

Mr. Coffey shook his head and said: "Kids, let me tell you about the prettiest flag ever.

"It was way back in 1944. That was when the war was going on. I was in the infantry and we entered a town that the enemy didn't defend. As we walked down the street, being very careful for fear of snipers, we began to see dozens of men and women from a camp the Nazi's used for slave labor. Those poor people were dirty and weak. You could tell they were starving, they were so thin.

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