

Text 19

For at least a minute, the smelling process continued ; then, without opening his eyes or moving his eyes or moving his head, Pratt lowered the glass to his mouth and tipped in almost half the contents. He paused, his mouth full of wine, getting the first taste ; then, he permitted some of it to trickle down his throat and I saw his Adam's apple move as it passed by. But most of it he retained in his mouth. And now, without swallowing again, he drew in through his lips a thin breath of air which mingled with the fumes of the wine in the mouth and passed on down into his lungs. He held the breath, blew it out through his nose, and finally began to roll the wine around under the tongue, and chewed it, actually chewed it with his teeth as though it were bread.

It was a solemn, impassive performance, and I must say he did it well.

“Um,” he said, putting down the glass, running a pink tongue over his lips. “Um-yes. A very interesting little wine - gentle and gracious, almost feminine in the after-taste.” There was an excess of saliva in his mouth, and as he spoke he spat an occasional bright speck of it on to the table.

“Now we can start to eliminate,”he said. “You will pardon me for doing this carefully, but there is much at stake. Normally I would perhaps take a bit of a chance, leaping forward quickly and landing right in the middle of the vineyard of my choice. But this time - I must move cautiously this time, must I not?” He looked up at Mike and smiled, a thick-lipped, wet-lipped smile. Mike did not smile back.

“First, then, which district in Bordeaux does this wine come from? That's not too difficult to guess. It is far too light in the body to be from either St. *Emilion* or Graves. It is obviously a *Médoc*. There's no doubt about *that*.”

Roald Dahl, *Taste In Someone Like you*, 1954