

Text 22

“You realize, Stevens, I don’t expect you to be locked up here in this house all the time I’m away. Why don’t you take the car and drive off somewhere for a few days?”

“You look like you could come make good use of a break.”

Coming out of the blue as it did, I did not quite know how to reply to such a suggestion. I recall thanking him for the consideration, but quite probably I said nothing very definite for my employer went on: “I’m serious, Stevens. I really think you should take a break. I’ll foot the bill for the gas. You fellows, you’re always locked up in these big houses helping out, how d you ever get to see around this beautiful country of yours?” this was not the first time my employer had raised such a question; indeed, it seems to be something which genuinely troubles him. On this occasion, in fact, a reply of sorts did occur to me as I stood there on the ladder; a reply to the effect that those in our profession, although we did not see a great deal of the country in the sense of touring the countryside and visiting picturesque sites, did actually ‘see’ more of England than most, placed as we were in houses where the greatest ladies and gentlemen of the land gathered. Of course, I could not have expressed this view to Mr Farraday without embarking upon what might have seemed a presumptuous speech.

Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, Faber and Faber, London, 1989