

“Hello there young lady”, the older man said to the young college girl who was fixing herself a glass of sweet tea in her university dining hall. She looked back at the man and gave a light fake smile. Truth be told, the older man was somewhat repulsive in his looks and came off as a creepy person. The young girl had seen the man in the dining hall almost every day since she had been at the university. He was known all over campus for his sweet tea, all who drank it knew who he was, and that was pretty much everybody. Even those who didn’t drink tea knew who he was due to his usual creepy friendliness.

The man walked off with a smile on his face after the rude response from the girl. He was used to it. He knew he came off as the creepy old guy who hits on the young girls, but that was not his desire at all. He merely only desired to be friendly. The man would shout a warm hello to any of the kids, regardless of how weird they appeared in their new-age emo haircuts and body piercing or regardless of how unattractive they were. He enjoyed the company of the young people and they brought him happiness; much more happiness than he had gotten from working in the medical field in the previous portion of his life.

Most students did not know much about the man other than the obvious things on the surface such as his incredible friendliness, or creepiness as many regarded it, and his gift at making the best sweet tea on the whole campus - maybe even the whole state. Most of his fellow workers were also in the dark when it came to his personal life. Most people were unaware that he had once been a well-respected surgeon in another state until retiring early. By simply looking at his attire, one would assume he was rather impoverished and the dining hall job was the best he could put together for himself. Most people pitied him. He, however, did not share their pity. He worked the dining hall job to keep himself from getting bored on the golf course or from simply becoming content in a life of doing nothing. Besides, the happiness he received from watching the young people make their journeys to success similar to what he had achieved those many years ago could not be replaced.

The young girl went back to her dorm and later that night thought of the way she had acted to the older man. She felt guilty. She wondered to herself, “what if he was just being nice? What if he has no family? What if he has no friends and that’s all he wants from me? What if he had cancer and was dying?” The whole night, she could not get the older man out of her mind. She felt that she had almost grown to know the man

through the ideas about him that she had created in her head that evening. "Tomorrow" she said out loud, "I will speak to him and ask him, like, how his day is!".

The next day in the dining hall the young girl walked over to get her usual glass of sweet tea and enact her plan of charity. The older man was not to be found. She looked around for him and was sad when she realized that he was not in the area. She was full of questions and went to sit down to eat her meal. She could not help but wonder if something unfortunate had happened to the older man. She knew a man at his age was vulnerable to just about any sort of sudden illness. She sat at her table and ate her meal while the scenarios and curiosity continued to run like a pack of wildebeests. For the rest of her meal, the young girl continued to look for the older man in hopes of finally speaking to him. He never showed.

As the days turned to weeks, the young girl started accepting the probable truth that something horrid had happened to the older man and she would never get her opportunity to get to know him. Perhaps he was fired? Perhaps he died? She feared that she may never know the truth and never get her chance to speak to the man. She felt guilt. "All the man wanted was to be nice and I could not even give him that", she reprimanded herself. She felt terrible for a while, but as time had passed she had eventually forgotten about the man and had much more important things to control her mind.

That was, until one day when she went to get the Coke she had become so accustomed to now since the tea was no longer anything special, she saw the older man, back at the tea machine. A smile immediately grew across her face that resembled a balloon with a drawn on face that was being inflated.

She quickly walked over to the man and said with much enthusiasm "hello sir where have you been?". A smile grew across his face even larger than that on the young girls'.

"Hello there young lady", the older man said to the young lady who was now fixing herself a glass of sweet tea.

"How are you doing?", she said with enthusiasm continually growing

"I'm quite alright", he said, gazing at her beautiful eyes. "I'm glad to be back", he told her.

“Where have you been? I’ve been, like, worried about you?”

“I have had the misfortune of burying my only son, it took me longer than I expected to get back on my feet” he said with tears surfacing in the corners of his eyes.

“I’m so sorry” she said, with tears surfacing in her eyes as well.

“He is in a better place, he knew Jesus, but enough with the sad stories, how have you been young lady?” as a light smile began to resurface.

“Oh, I’ve been pretty good, you know, like, school has been really tough and all that. I just hate math, it’s so stupid, but other than that I’ve been pretty ok. I was afraid you would never come back though... to be honest.”

“Well trust me, math is definitely a useful thing to learn, no matter what you might think right now. After all, if I didn’t know math, I would never have made it through medical school or been able to make the sweet tea you enjoy so much”

The young girl heard the reference of going to medical school and could not believe what she heard. “If he was a doctor, he must be full of green”, she thought. Suddenly her interest in speaking to the man changed from only desiring to speak to him in order to heal her conscience to speak to him in order to become more than just an acquaintance.

The girl was an overall nice girl, but like typical college students, her focus was on herself and obtaining her goals, many of which required money that she did not have, such as the latest cell phone or pocket book.

“You are a doctor?”, the young girl said to the man, showing even more interest in him than she previously had.

“Well I was” he said as he put the lid back on the tea machine

“*Was?* I don’t get it, why aren’t you a doctor anymore?”

“Well,” he said without hesitating as if he had told this story to many people many times before, “you see, I loved being a surgeon, don’t get me wrong. I loved the feeling I got when I was able to save people’s

lives, and of course I felt sorrow when I could not, but I don't think it is my calling to spend my entire life doing one thing, no matter how long or hard I worked towards it. You see, young lady, this whole college experience is great, don't get me wrong, but there are more things to life than simply having a high paying career. There are places to see, people to get to know... life is just too short to spend doing the same thing your whole life."

They stood in front of the tea machines looking at each other for a few awkward seconds before the girl finally figured out the best thing that the man probably wanted to hear, "Wow, I respect that so much! I really want to like, do something really meaningful one day. That would be so cool!"

"Well then you should do just that! You see, it may seem hard at times to take a career and make it more than that, but if you are able to take that career and use it to make a positive difference in other people's lives instead of just your own, then, young lady, that is what really matters in the end!"

The girl smiled at the older man and knew she had somehow connected with him. She had dollar signs in her eyes. She had heard the positive advice the man had given her, but it only went in one ear and out the other. The only thing she could now think of was how much money the older man must have buried in a treasure chest in his home. "This is God's way of rewarding me for being nice to this man", she said to herself, feeling like one of the most-generous people alive.

"Well, I should probably like go ahead and eat my lunch, I *do* have a class in like twenty minutes" she said as she wave farewell to the man.

"Wait!", he said, "I don't think I know your name, I don't want to call you 'young lady' forever", he chuckled.

"Oh my name is Allison, what about you?"

"You can call me Farkus" he told her. He then winked to her , turned around and prepared to start making a fresh tub of sweet tea. The two people went their separate ways and continued doing what the were obligated to do.

Later that night, the young girl, Allison, lied in her lofted bed thinking about her conversation with Farkus earlier that day. As usual, her

mind was racing with all sorts of scenarios, only this time, she did know some facts and wasn't simply pulling ideas out of nowhere. She remembered how he spoke of his only child dying recently and realized he had no other children to leave his "chest full of money" to. "I bet he isn't married either, if he works in a dining hall, I know I wouldn't let my husband work there if he had a doctor degree" she thought to herself.

Allison began to formulate a plan of how she could inherit his money, "after all", she thought, "if his only child is deceased and if he really is unmarried, then he probably doesn't have a person to leave that chest full of money to. It will probably just go to the government or something, and I doubt anybody would want that." It was then that Allison decided that she would make a very strong effort to win over Farkus' heart, regardless of what was necessary. There would be no limits.

The next day, Allison went to the dining hall as usual, except this time she wore clothes nicer than usual for a simple day of classes. She was looking really good in her bright yellow sundress, matching slippers, freshly straightened hair, perhaps even the best looking girl in the dining hall. She knew what she was doing. She headed to the sweet tea station and spotted Farkus talking to another student, or trying to rather. The student, a decent-looking girl, was performing the typical response of politely ignoring the older man. Allison thought this was the perfect scenario to continue winning over Farkus's heart. She figured he would be extremely happy to see her and get a real conversation after the usual rejection by the other students, or "heartless" as she now thought of those who were rude to him.

Allison began walking over to Farkus who immediately smiled when he saw her. "Hello there, Allison", he said to her as he fixed her a glass of his freshest tea before she even finished getting to him.

"Hey Mr. Farkus!", she said in a very enthusiastic and loving voice that seemed somewhat counterfeit compared to her tone the day before.

"How has your day been? Have you thought any about what we talked about yesterday?"

"Oh of course! That is like all I have been able to think about," she lied. "I just like really want to help people and all that"

"Well that is great to hear, Allison. Listen, if you ever need help with any mathematics lessons or any other subjects, then feel free to ask

my help any time. I sort of miss the days of academics, to be quite frank” he laughed to himself.

“Oh definitely”, she said in a sort of seductive voice.

“Alright well... you just let me know then alright?”, he said in kind of an awkward and confused tone.

Just then, Allison put her hand on Farkus’s hand and whispered in his ear in a very sexy voice, “and if you ever need anything, you just let me know”.

After this, there was no expression on the man’s face. He didn’t know what was going on and he wasn’t too interested in finding out. The young girl then scanned her surrounding to find that there were no other students in the immediate area and decided to make a bold move and kiss the man. She leaned forward and upwards to kiss his wrinkled and rather pale cheek when she suffered from spontaneous human combustion and died. The older man looked down at the enflamed body lying on the floor and said, “Young lady, are you alright?!” Her flaming body did not respond with anything but a fake smile.