

Thr33

By Michael Pudney

Malcolm

33 years old and on a rare date. He is nervous but a nice person. He is nervous because of his embarrassment with his condition, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Hannah

33 years old. The woman at the date with Malcolm. She is rather timid as well, but very understanding towards Malcolm. Her coyness is due to a secret she is harbouring herself.

Waitress

19 years old. Good at her job but this is just part time for her. She would rather be watching a movie on the sofa with her boyfriend. She is a patient person but everyone has their breaking point.

Int. Restaurant. Night

Hannah is sitting at a table in the restaurant, facing the door. She has her hands on her lap and is tucked well into the table. Nervously, she stares at the door, waiting for his arrival.

Ext. Outside restaurant. Night.

Malcolm is walking awkwardly towards the restaurant door. He is dodging the cracks in the pavement quite elaborately. He doesn't care about the way he looks, what is most important to him is that he stays off the cracks. He finally reaches the door. Looks

down to the restaurant's floor and breathes a sigh of relief at its blank design.

Int. Restaurant. Night.

Malcolm approaches the table that Hannah is occupying. He smiles at her, she smiles back. The waitress approaches.

Waitress

Hello sir. May I take your scarf?

Malcolm is still slightly flustered. He is also pleasantly surprised with Hannah's beauty. This makes him even more nervous.

Malcolm

Huh? Oh. Yes, yes... yes.

He takes off his scarf and hands it to the waitress, who puts her hands out to collect, but then snatches it back and puts it back on. The waitress is confused. He takes it off and gives it to the waitress only to snatch it back again. The waitress is still being polite but is clearly confused. He puts the scarf on again, takes it off and this time gives it to her. The waitress doesn't put her hands out on this occasion, causing confusion. Malcolm doesn't seem perturbed by the confusion. Finally, and cautiously, the waitress takes the scarf. Malcolm sits down as the waitress leaves and looks at Hannah.

Malcolm

Hi, hi...hi. I'm so sorry I'm a bit late.

Hannah

Oh, that's ok. I understand.

Malcolm

It's just that this restaurant is only one train stop from my house but I had to get off

at the third stop and walk, and the pavements  
are a bloody nightmare around here.

Hannah

Why? There aren't any?

Malcolm

No, they're full of cracks

A silence follows and the waitress comes back with menus. Malcolm takes his from the waitress, hands it back, takes the menu, hands it back, and takes it from the waitress a final time. Hannah waits for the waitress to place it in front of her on the table, which she does. The waitress leaves. They both look at their menus for a while until Malcolm breaks the silence.

Malcolm

Well, well...well, I've made my choices, well, well...well, kind of choices.

Hannah

Me too. How efficient!

They both smile nervously at each other. The waitress returns.

Waitress

Ok guys, what can I get you? (She looks at Hannah first.)

Hannah

Could I have the oxtail soup and a coke please?

Waitress

(jotting it down) and you sir?

Malcolm

Could I have the third drink in the list, the third dish on the mains, and the third dish on the dessert menu please, please...please?

The waitress looks confused but writes down the order nonetheless. She takes the menus but Malcolm asks for his back. Once again, he needs to exchange passes of the menu three times. On the third time, he realises what he is doing and feels embarrassed. The waitress leaves completely confused. Hannah is staring in astonishment.

Malcolm

I'm sorry. It's, my problem. I have this condition called...

Hannah

You don't have to explain anything to me. It's fine. So I bumped into your mum...

Malcolm

Yeah, yeah...yeah, which I guess is why we're here! Good old mum, mum...mum, it's great to see you again. I lost touch with more or less everyone from school, school...school.

Hannah

Yeah, me too. Some people just fade away, but I'm glad we've met up again, it's great to see a friendly face after all this time.

Malcolm

When was the last time we saw each other anyway, way...way?

Hannah

Wow, I'm not sure. I remember you coming over to help with my homework.

Malcolm

Yeah, yeah...yeah, that was weird cos you were definitely smarter than me. I don't believe you actually needed my help, help...help.

Hannah

(She looks down at the lap) You're right. I didn't.

This line causes a silence, however not uncomfortable. The waitress arrives with the order. She gives the coke and soup to Hannah. She then gives Malcolm his three choices. It ends up being an all day breakfast, an amaretto served neat, and a bowl of chocolate ice-cream. As the waitress puts each piece of his order down, Malcolm counts.

Wow, that is quite a selection! I've never had a full English breakfast with amaretto.

She begins to laugh in a fun way, Malcolm smiles at his own madness. The waitress begins to leave.

Oh, sorry, could I have a straw please?

Waitress

Certainly

The waitress leaves

Hannah

Please start, you don't have to wait for me.

Malcolm looks slightly confused. There is no reason why she shouldn't start her dinner. Malcolm picks up his knife and fork and rubs them against each other three times. He puts some food onto his fork, puts it in his mouth, pulls it out, puts it back in, pulls it out and puts it back in, this time pulling the food off the fork into his mouth. He repeats this religiously as Hannah looks on, fascinated. The waitress returns with a straw which diverts her attention. She goes to place

it in the coke, even though there is already a straw in the coke.

No! Sorry, I don't want it in there, I already have a straw in there. I want this straw in my soup please.

The waitress looks at Hannah like she is mad, but puts the straw in the soup anyway. Hannah smiles. Malcolm is so into his ritual, he doesn't immediately notice Hannah sucking the soup from a straw. They are both sitting, eating in their abnormal ways, oblivious to how insane they may look until they both suddenly stop and take a look at each other. Their silence is broken as some of Hannah's hair falls into the soup; Malcolm reaches across to pull help her.

Malcolm

Your hair, hair...hair

To deal with the problem herself, Hannah pulls her right hand from under the table for the first time. It reveals that she is wearing protective latex gloves. There is a moment of utter silence where Malcolm is staring at the glove, Hannah is staring at Malcolm in suspense. Finally, Malcolm sits back in his chair.

Malcolm

Well, well...well. My mum didn't tell me about that.

Hannah

I know. Look...

Malcolm

I'm sorry. I have to go, go...go. That's just too...Weird, weird...weird.

Malcolm jumps up as Hannah looks on, dejected. Malcolm heads to the door, opens it, walks

back in (which makes Hannah perk up), re-opens the door, walks through it, walks back in, re-opens the door again, and leaves. Hannah watches him dodge the cracks all the way out of sight and looks at her hands in shame.

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