

Chapter 7: “Orson”

EXT. A small quaint independent coffee and pastry shop (THE EARLY RISER) Painted in bright blues and yellows. DAY

A light rain is causing people to duck their heads and hurry. JULIET hops off a bus that has just pulled up to the EARLY RISER. She ducks into the shop.

INT. THE EARLY RISER DAY

Patrons are scattered about the shop. “The Regulars” BEARDED MAN slowly sips a cup of coffee and stares out the window. HIPSTER MAN and WOMAN in matching glasses, are animatedly discussing some foreign film. PETER an unenthused slacker working behind the counter watches as JULIET walks hurriedly past them all to the back room.

PETER
You’re late.

JULIET
(from back room)
I know. Bus was late. And I had to help Mr. Peterson with his dog.

PETER
Who the fuck is Mr. Peterson?

JULIET
(from back room)
Peter, please, we have customers.

PETER
They don’t know who Mr. Peterson is either.

JULIET
(entering)
Whatever. You’re relieved of duty.

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PETER

Yes sir. Aye aye, Captain.

PETER salutes and exits. JULIET gets ready for her shift, rewriting a chalkboard that PETER has screwed up, arranging the menus and generally cleaning up. She tosses her long black hair over her shoulder and casually puts it into a ponytail.

Enter ORSON. He is unassuming, but confident. He casually enters the coffee shop, in search of something, perhaps coffee, but his eyes betray his real reason for entering.

ORSON’s eyes lock with JULIET for a brief moment, then he hurriedly looks away and walks towards the pastry display.

JULIET has taken no notice of him.

ORSON looks casually at the cream cheese danish all the while knowing that his soul mate is on the other side of the counter... and she has NO IDEA that her soul mate is on the other side of the counter studying the cream cheese danish... studying longer than any normal, rational person would study a danish.

CUT of ORSON’s face.

The concern is evident. His eyes shift back and forth. Sweat beads on his brow.

ORSON (V.O.)

This is it. Now is your moment. Just stop looking at the danish and say “Hello.” What’s the worst that could happen. Think of it? What’s the absolute worst? ... She could leap across the counter and stab you...that’s stupid, why would she do that.... I... I don’t know, but there could be a reason.... you asked “what’s the worst?”

JULIET

May I help you?

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ORSON

(shaken out of his inner monologue.) Hello. (smiles awkwardly.)

JULIET

You let me know if you need something.

ORSON

(standing straight now.) Juliet. (she gives him a momentary strange look of suspicion.) Your name tag. That’s right, isn’t it?

JULIET

Yes.

ORSON

I’ve been a regular here for a couple of weeks now, and I’ve finally built up the courage to talk to you. I would like to ask you out on a date.

JULIET

(with a wry smile) Stalking me?

ORSON

Absolutely not. Simply building up courage. A woman of your beauty can be intimidating even to the most courageous of men. Fear of rejection as well as the normal difficulties of socially acceptable communication. But, I’ve finally built up the internal fortitude to talk directly to you in hopes that you’ll give me a chance.

JULIET

That is the single sweetest thing a man has ever said to me. Of course I’ll give you a chance. As long as it’s not coffee.

They laugh together.

ORSON

My name is Orson. And I would like to invite you to a wine tasting event tonight.

JULIET

I get off work at 7:00, will that be okay?

ORSON

Perfection, Juliet. Perfection.

Camera pulls back, their conversation becomes muddled in the ambient noise. They are smiling and laughing. JULIET touches her hair, straightening it, then touches ORSON’s hand in a joking and flirtatious way. If there exists magic in this world, this moment is what it would look like.

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What would Jack say?? Weak. Weak and pathetic. “in hopes that you’ll give me a chance.”?? Even in your fiction you can’t be assertive. There’s no way she’d respond to that. If you can’t get your fictional self together how’re you ever going to get your real self together??