

Youngju Chae

Age: 15, Grade: 11

School Name: Loveless Academic Magnet Program (LAMP) High School, Montgomery, AL

Educator: Helen Lee

Category: Flash Fiction

12:47

Like usual, he was running late. It was 11:57 but the arranged time was 11:45. I had arranged a meal for lunch with my friend John when I heard he was coming down to the countryside for work. We haven't talked in ages, and I wanted to get closer to him again like in our youth. We were distant from one another after college, as he moved to the city and I stayed in the country. I've decided that I was going to just get up and leave if he didn't show up in 5 minutes. Before the 5 minutes is up, I hear the entrance door opening, and I see John walking in. "Over here John," I said.

"Oh... Hey Lennie." John replied.

John walks over and takes a seat.

"It's good to see you, John. How long has it been, about 5 - 7 years?" I asked.

"Yeah, it's been a while," John answered.

"We have a lot to catch up on, let's talk while we eat. I'm starving!" I said excitedly.

We were at a Mexican restaurant. I ordered a Turkey Taco Lunch Bowl and John ordered Chicken Avocado Burritos. We completed our orders and started talking again.

"So.. how's your work going so far?" I questioned.

"It's going great, growing little by little and getting some profits here and there," John explained. "What about you?"

"It's going very well, I am getting a lot of customers lately since it's a fishing season," I said happily. "You know, you should come over some time. We can go fishing again as we used to when we were younger.

"I can't. I'm going to be busy soon with work, and I have some family matters to take care of, especially my brother." John said hesitantly. "Maybe next time."

"Oh, it's fine. You can definitely come at a different time when you're free." I said with a sigh.

The waiter brought our ordered meals. I inspected my bowl, fumbling the ingredients around. I could see the juicy turkey taco meat, the sweet corn, the spicy pico de gallo, and the chewy brown rice. I stared at it as I thought to myself. How can these ingredients come together and form such a delicious meal? How are they so compatible with each other? I sighed as I thought to myself, why can't John and I be as compatible as these ingredients. I hope with this meeting we can be closer again. We started eating our meals

"So, how's the meal?" I asked with a smile.

"Oh, it's alright," John replied. "What about yours?"

"Oh mine is great, I really like Mexican food," I answered.

"How's your family doing?" I questioned.

"Oh everyone's fine except for my brother. I acknowledged the fact that my burnt injuries will leave a scar forever on my body, but It's still hard to be around people for a long time. My brother still can't accept his burn injuries. He can't even stay out in public places, only in front of our house. He's still struggling a lot, and I always help him when he needs me. I just hope he gets better." John answered with a bit of sorrow.

"Just wait for him, he will definitely become happier and healthier. He will be fine" I said with optimism.

"Oh, I really hope so," John said with a sigh. "I'm sorry for completely blocking you off these past few years, but I think I still need a lot more time before I start hanging out with you more. It was very hard to even come here to meet you, but I'm relieved that I met you and talked to you though."

"It's fine, you were going through a lot. I'll keep waiting. I'm sorry for asking to meet." I said.

"Thanks for understanding, I really appreciate it," John said.

We slowly finished our meals. It's already been forty minutes since we've met. I feel like time went by so fast. I wanted to prolong my time with him just for a little bit more. "This meal was delicious, do you want some dessert? They have a wide variety of cakes to choose from. They have corn cakes, strawberry cakes, cheesecakes, and much more. Come on! I know you like strawberry cake." I said with enthusiasm.

“No, no. It’s fine. I’m full and the meal was delicious. I really have to get going now, my brother is probably looking for him. I’ll pay for the meal. Thanks for the offer, but maybe next time.” John replied promptly.

“Oh, definitely, you have to get to your brother. We can have another meal next time when you're free. You don't have to pay, I'll pay. Go head out, it was nice meeting you. I'll see you later.” I said.

“Thanks for the meal. I got to really go now. Bye.” John said.

“Oh wait! I really wanted to say, thanks. It was great meeting you. We have a lot to catch up on. See you next time.” I shouted.

“Yeah, yeah. It was nice meeting you. I have to go now. Goodbye.” John replied.

It was nice meeting him again. However, I regret not asking him to stay a little more. I should have started another conversation. I’m really happy though, I got to talk with him. I hope this meeting was a success and we see each other more often again. It was nice meeting him. I looked at my clock to see how long it passed. It was:

12:47.