

That One Green Thing

“Remember that one green thing you wore?” She was in no mood for questions, but this was important.

“Why are you back here? You said you were leaving. You said a lot of things, but you said you were leaving, most importantly.”

“Do you?” I repeated the question.

“Do I what? Look, the kids need some lunch. Somebody's got to feed them.” She was right, naturally. Kids need to eat. I looked at my watch, it was lunchtime.

“I can wait.”

“What the hell do you want here, anyway? You said you were leaving. Did you forget something?”

Yeah, I forgot something. And I needed to know if she forgot that same thing. “Do you remember that one green thing you wore?”

She opened the door and walked over to the kitchen. It was more than a walk, though. It was the gait of an angry woman. A gait I had caused and intended to remedy, if possible. Was it possible? As unsure as I was, I didn't want to leave again without knowing.

“What the hell are you talking about, John? Green thing. Will you grab the peanut butter and bread from the pantry?” I walked into the pantry – the pantry that I built – and grabbed the Jif and the whole grain nut bread from their usual place. Sure, I had left, but not much had changed. Particularly essentials and their locations.

“On our second date. Remember that one green thing?”

Lisa started spreading grape jelly on the bread; I could never understand why she started with jelly, but it wasn't important at the moment. A week ago, it was important, but at this moment, it was in the cheap seats of importance. In the front row? The green thing.

“The one that my mom pulled out of a closet? You said it made me look like an M & M. So what? What's this about?”

“That was the moment I fell in love with you.”

Lisa stopped with the jelly. Personally, I would have started with peanut butter, but I always sat in the cheap seats. Which, as I was finding out, was one of my many problems.

“John, I -”

“Lisa, the rest of this is not important. Everything I said last week? Not important.

What's important here – remember when I told you I played clarinet in my high school band?”

“Yes.”

“That was the moment you fell in love with me. You told me so, later.”

“Yes.”

“Let's go back to that.”

“To what, John?”

Yes, to what? What was I talking about? Could I put it into words before it was too late? Before the green thing was never in the front row, ever again?

“To that...to that innocence. To that wonder. Where we still surprised each other and still found each other hilarious and poignant and marveled at our innocence.”

“But we have kids, John.”

“I know. But why should that affect us? We need to show our kids how people should treat each other and how to find the wonder in other human beings. And we need to have wonder about life ourselves. Together.”

“How do you propose we get there, John?” She had completely stopped making sandwiches for the kids. I guess the sandwiches were moved to the cheap seats and our relationship was sitting in front row, center. Good.

“I don't quite know. But I'd like to try. I'd like to come back. And I'm sorry for the things I said. They were cheap seat things.”

“What does that mean?”

“They weren't important. But you're important. The kids are important. Our family is important.”

“All this because you thought of that one green thing?”

“Yes.”

END

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