

That Joke Isn't Funny Anymore – Chapter 5

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CHAPTER 5

Mickie left the police precinct house at around 8.15pm. There'd been lots of questions, which surprised her. Maybe it was to do with the large amount cash they had found on the corpse. Mickie felt herself shiver at the thought and hugged her jacket just a little tighter around her. With her left hand she corralled a stray strand of her and tucked it behind her ear as she made her way around steps and down the ramp.

“Officer,” A male voice called. “Officer Chalmers.”

Mickie turned to see the Doctor emerging from the station house. He was carrying a rolled up copy of The New York Times. He waved it in the air like baton, drawing her eye. Mickie gave him a quick acknowledgement but moved forward to vacate the entrance ramp as she could see several wheelchair users approaching. The Doctor took the steps two at a time and was waiting at the entrance of the ramp as Mickie approached.

“Doctor,” she said. “What can I do for you?” Mickie began fidgeting in her purse. “If you don't mind, it's been a long day. I just want to go home and have a nice long bath. Of course I can't because my room mate hogs all the hot water and I have to make do with icy showers. She's in Pittsburgh, for a week, with her boyfriend to see The Filthy Souls, so I get the place to myself and I...” Mickie felt herself rambling and trailed off even as the monologue ran on in her head for a good thirty seconds more. She continued to dig in her bag. Bingo, she'd found it. Mickie pulled her hand

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out and popped a piece of gum into her mouth. A sweet hit of nicotine to take the edge off.

“May I?” The Doctor indicated to the gum. “I haven’t had anything to eat for a while.”

“I wouldn’t if I were you, Doc.” She ran the gum around her mouth. “Nicotine.”

“Never mind,” he exhaled deeply, momentarily distracted by a passing couple. Very much in love, very ancient.

Mickie stared at him for a second or two and decided that he didn’t look like he was going to offer anything further conversation. “Well so long, Doctor. It was nice to meet you, but I just wish the circumstances could have been better, like getting a rabies shot or something.” She made a move to leave and managed a couple of steps before the Doctor decided to speak.

“That’s what I want to talk to you about.” He said. His eyes looked tired in the glow of the street lighting.

“I don’t have rabies, Doc. Sure there are quite a few rats in my building, but that was a joke.” She was about to playfully punch him on the arm before she stopped and thought better of herself.

“Yes, quite.” He stiffened his posture. “What I meant to say was, are you okay with what happened today? You looked nervous out there and a little shocked. I hope you don’t mind me saying?” The Doctor paused, wetting his lips, “You still do to be honest.” He added before she had a chance to respond.

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Mickie waved a hand in front of her face, as though she were swatting away some sort of imaginary mosquito. Perhaps just trying to swat away those nerves.

“Don't mention it.”

“But it would be remiss of me to not to try and help you. It isn't easy dealing with death.”

“My Dad said the same when my hamster died. And my mother.”

“Sometimes it helps to talk to someone. I can put you into contact with some first class counsellors.”

Mickie chuckled. “I don't think that I can afford first class at the moment, Doc. How about a second class shrink or just perhaps plain ol' Doctor Jack?”

The Doctor reached into his coat and produced a card. He held it to her between two fingers. “Take it. No pressure, but in a few weeks you might feel like talking about it.” She took the card and the doctor smoothed down his coat with his now free hand.

Mickie dropped the card in her purse and pulled out a nicotine inhaler, the gum just wasn't working. “Thanks, Doc.”

The Doctor raised his NYT in the air and hailed an approaching cab. He stepped over to the curb and opened the door. He turned Mickie. “Cab, Officer Chalmers?”

Mickie sucked on the inhaler and shook her head. “I'm gonna clear my head. Besides you can't smoke in a cab.” She smiled at him.

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“Oh yes, very good.” He stepped in, but once again called back to her tapping his Times on the open window as he did so. “Did they ever find the driver of the other vehicle?” Mickie looked at him for a second. “I’m not being nosy, of course.”

“Oh no, of course not.” Mickie agreed with a hint of sarcasm. She’d put more than a dollar on the fact that he was just as nosy as she was.

“Strictly from a medical stand point, you understand. He should get checked out at the hospital. Whiplash doesn’t kick in for a while until the adrenaline wears off. He’ll be sore in the morning.”

“I’ll check on that.” She nodded. Mickie’s eyes felt heavy as she dug around in her purse once again. She pulled out her notepad and a small pen, and made a note as the cab pulled away.

She watched the cab pull to the end of the street and as it turned the corner, the Doctor waved the rolled up New York Times out the window as one final goodbye. Mickie found herself waving back, even after the cab had disappeared. Several passersby just stared at her. Just another crazy in New York City.

Mickie whipped her hand down and felt suddenly self-conscious as she looked around at the dozens of eyes staring at her. She took a glance at the notepad. She turned over a leaf of paper in the spiral bound pad and saw the cab company’s address. She hadn’t heard much about the cab driver while she’d been in the station.

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He was kind of cute, especially with that accent. What the hell? Mickie thought. It was on the way home, what could it hurt?

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