

Before the Internet

by

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INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Here is a room of warm colours. The flower-pattern curtains are drawn and the only lighting comes from a dim chandelier. A grandfather clock is in the corner. A wooden table is in the centre and four leather chairs surround it. A GRANDFATHER (80) in a cardigan sits relaxed and domineering, facing his GRANDSON (10) in trendy clothes.

GRANDSON

Hello, granddad! Good to see you!

The two lean close to each other to shake hands. They then sit back.

GRANDFATHER

It's nice to see you, too. So, what the young people of today don't realise is the internet is only making people more isolated. Before online chats, people could REALLY talk to each other. You could see, hear AND smell them.

The GRANDSON widens his eyes.

GRANDSON

Why did you start a conversation like th... Why is it important for you to be able to smell people?

The GRANDFATHER growls and shakes his head.

GRANDFATHER

Why?? Over the internet, you can't tell who has been smoking illegal weed. And do you know what that stuff leads to?

GRANDSON

What?

GRANDFATHER

Hallucinations. Imagine someone saying 'you're a prick, you're a prick, you're a prick' over and over and you not being able to do a single thing about it. And do you know who I told to stop calling me a prick? Myself. How do you think that looked? That's why I gave it up.

GRANDSON

I suppose at least when talking to people offline, you don't get have the risk of losing internet connection...

The GRANDFATHER loses some of his confidence.

GRANDFATHER

Yes... That's true. But things weren't perfect in the good old days. There was another, similar kind of 'internet crash' as you would say.

GRANDSON

What do you mean?

GRANDFATHER

Instead of people disappearing off your screen suddenly for unknown reasons... What happened was... Well, how do I put this?... Let me take you back to the 50s...

INT. 1950S CAFE - DAY

Here is a large room, seating twenty. The vinyl floor has a black and white checkered pattern and the walls are pink. The tables and chairs are blue, as is the counter. Behind it stands a WAITRESS (20) in a pink dress, attending to the CUSTOMERS. The 80 year old GRANDFATHER, dressed in the same cardigan, enters the establishment with his FRIENDS, TONY (20) in leather and jeans; BILL (20) with a green mohawk; and ALAN (20), wearing a Metallica hoodie. The group sit down on a four-seater table.

GRANDFATHER

Good for us to all get together, right??

TONY

Sure is! I haven't seen you in weeks!

BILL

Me neither, I've been working my butt off in the office all the time, it's been driving me crazy.

ALAN

Yeah, well. NOW'S the time we can have some fun and...

ALAN passes out and his face smashes the table. The three conscious FRIENDS stare at the back of his motionless head.

GRANDFATHER

Dammit. He lost connection.

TONY

When do you think we'll have him back?

FRED
God knows. Could be...

ALAN slowly raises his head then gives it a good shake.

ALAN
Sorry about that. Happens all the time nowadays.

FRED crashes into the table, the exact same way ALAN did.

GRANDFATHER
God dammit, not him too. All I wanted to do was have a little catch-up. This is rid...

The GRANDFATHER also does the same. ALAN and BILL twiddle their thumbs.

ALAN
Errr... Let's just have our own conversation, Bill. Those two could be out cold, all day.

BILL
Right.

ALAN
Here's a thought: What do you think has actually happened to Fred and old pops?

BILL
I don't know. Could just be bec...

ALAN and BILL slam on the table, together. The WAITRESS walks up to them in concern. She then faints to the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The GRANDSON narrows his eyes in disbelief.

GRANDSON
Did that actually happen?

The GRANDFATHER nods reassuringly.

GRANDFATHER
Yeah!

GRANDSON
Why?

GRANDFATHER
Um...

The GRANDSON narrows his eyes harder.

GRANDSON
Why were you 80 at the time? That must
make you about 150!

GRANDFATHER
That's what your five fruit and veg a
day does for you...

GRANDSON
Why was someone wearing a Metallica
hoodie? The band formed in the 1980s!

GRANDFATHER
What about Megadeth?

GRANDSON
They formed later.

GRANDFATHER
Not much later though, right?

GRANDSON
I guess.

The GRANDFATHER nods.

GRANDFATHER
Well there you go, then.

The GRANDFATHER scratches his head.

GRANDFATHER
Hm. That's funny.

GRANDSON
What?

GRANDFATHER
I'm feeling a little funny...

GRANDSON
(jokingly)
You're not going to pass out, are you?

GRANDFATHER
No. I think it might be a virus or
something...

GRANDSON
You mean flu?

The GRANDFATHER starts coughing up notes with 'YOUR HEAD HAS
BEEN INFECTED WITH A VIRUS' written on them.

GRANDFATHER

Oh no.

The GRANDSON covers his face with his hands.

GRANDSON

What's going on??

The notes now come out of the OLD MAN'S nose and ears.

GRANDFATHER

Get out of here, son! It's too late
for me! I don't want to infect you!

GRANDSON

But...

GRANDFATHER

Go!

The GRANDSON runs away crying as the GRANDFATHER starts to
drown in messages.