

Early Meeting
by
Simon Wiedemann

© 2023

INT. THERAPY ROOM - DAY

A fifteen year old JAMES ZIEGLER sits and twiddles his thumbs as he faces a seated PSYCHIATRIST in his mid 30s. The latter is wearing a watch and has notes on his lap. The room is bare and various qualifications hang on the walls.

PSYCHIATRIST

(calm)

Good afternoon James, it's nice to meet you again. Sorry if I'm repeating myself, but do you know why you're here?

JAMES

I have schizophrenia?

PSYCHIATRIST

Good. And would you like to explain what schizophrenia is for me?

JAMES

Don...

PSYCHIATRIST

(interrupting)

Yes, I DO know what schizophrenia is. I'm asking if you know.

JAMES

A break with reality?

The PSYCHIATRIST nods.

PSYCHIATRIST

(still calm)

Good. James, there are different levels of symptoms. Some are very mild, for example someone worrying about someone else not liking them. Other symptoms are more extreme, but YOU, you have symptoms best described as being in what we call 'the mental range.'

JAMES

I see.

PSYCHIATRIST

I want you to be honest with me.

JAMES

Ok...

The PSYCHIATRIST looks serious.

PSYCHIATRIST
Have you been smoking a bit of the
old... y'know...

JAMES looks around the room and takes his time to answer.

JAMES
No...

PSYCHIATRIST
Ok, good. So you've done no drugs?

JAMES
No...

PSYCHIATRIST
Good. James, do you know what me and
my colleagues thought when we saw
your brain scan?

JAMES
What?

PSYCHIATRIST
We all thought 'what the (expletive)
is that?'

JAMES
Oh.

The PSYCHIATRIST looks at his notes.

PSYCHIATRIST
You're blood pressure levels were
concerning too.

JAMES
Why is that?

PSYCHIATRIST
I don't mean to alarm you, but
technically you were having a heart
attack when we tested you a while
back.

JAMES
Really??

PSYCHIATRIST
Yes. But you're fine now.

JAMES
Oh good.

PSYCHIATRIST
How would you describe your diet?

JAMES
Fairly average, I guess.

PSYCHIATRIST
And to be clear, there's no cocaine
in your diet?

JAMES
No!

PSYCHIATRIST
LSD would make a lot of sense...

JAMES
No!

The PSYCHIATRIST looks sympathetic.

PSYCHIATRIST
Maybe you put some in your cereal in
the belief that's ok, somehow?

JAMES
Errr... Nope.

The PSYCHIATRIST is upbeat.

PSYCHIATRIST
Ok. Well the good news is, there are
treatments available to you!

JAMES
(offended)
Hey!

PSYCHIATRIST
What?

JAMES
Why did you call me an asshole??

PSYCHIATRIST
Did a voice in your head say that?

JAMES
Yes!

PSYCHIATRIST
(calm again)
Of course it did. James, have you
ever heard of antipsychotics?

JAMES
No...

PSYCHIATRIST
They are medicines that can help a lot with your symptoms.

JAMES sighs.

JAMES
Do they have side effects?

PSYCHIATRIST
They can increase your heart rate which is the last thing someone like you needs, but you're young so you should be fine.

JAMES
Great!

PSYCHIATRIST
And they may make you feel drowsy which is also bad for an exceptionally lazy person such as yourself, but if there are too many problems, I can change your medication.

JAMES
Woo!

The PSYCHIATRIST looks stern, again.

PSYCHIATRIST
Quite. I have to be honest, your road to recovery may be long, but you SHOULD make steady progress.

JAMES
Hey!

PSYCHIATRIST
You've heard another voice?

JAMES
Right. And stop reading my mind.

PSYCHIATRIST
I'm not reading your mind, I made an educated guess.

JAMES looks impressed.

JAMES
How do you do that?

PSYCHIATRIST
Taking your medication will help...

JAMES

But you said they'll make me even lazier...

PSYCHIATRIST

James, there are two people at a party. One person is lazy. The other guy on the other hand is described as a fruitloop who needs to be locked away immediately for his own safety. He's a complete freak and he's weirding everyone out, so much so they can't stop throwing up. Which person sounds worse to you?

JAMES

The second?

PSYCHIATRIST

Good. The sad reality is that right now, you're both of those people.

JAMES

Huh.

PSYCHIATRIST

What would you like to be in a perfect world, James?

JAMES

A film music composer?

PSYCHIATRIST

And what do you know about film music?

JAMES is confident.

JAMES

Nothing.

PSYCHIATRIST

Nothing?

JAMES

Yep.

PSYCHIATRIST

Surely you must know something?

JAMES

Errr...

PSYCHIATRIST

Do you watch many films?

JAMES

No.

PSYCHIATRIST

And what music do you listen to?

JAMES

Heavy metal.

PSYCHIATRIST

I see...

JAMES looks down.

JAMES

That was embarrassing.

PSYCHIATRIST

Yes, it should have been.

JAMES

I feel a bit foolish.

PSYCHIATRIST

Perfectly normal.

JAMES

Ahem.

PSYCHIATRIST

...

JAMES

Can I go now?

The PSYCHIATRIST looks relieved as he stares at his watch.

PSYCHIATRIST

Yep, our time is up. I think I'm getting a clear idea of how to treat you and I think I'm getting to know you better. I'm glad you are opening up more. What are you going to do now?

JAMES

Nothing whatsoever.

PSYCHIATRIST

Great. Bye!

JAMES leaves the room.