

Tempting Fate

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It was late at night. My dad was already sleeping and I was finishing a drawing on my tablet. I looked at the time only to find out it was two in the morning. I should really go to sleep. I finally turned off my tablet and fell onto the bed. It only took a short while before I fell asleep.

I opened my eyes. Where am I? My eyes dart around, but all I can see is emptiness. Suddenly, a dark... thing appears. What is it? Its form is fiery and glowing, yet it's the darkest black I've ever seen. Its shape bares some resemblance to a person, and it seems to be watching me.

„Welcome, Christine,“ said a resonating voice.

„Who are you?“ I asked.

„I have many names, some would call me God, while others might call me Fate,“ The voice echoed, as if it was said from a distance, yet it sounded close.

„Okay... but where am I? Why am I here?“

„You're in a dream. I have brought you here with an offer.“

„Wait... an offer? Are you the Devil?“ I don't like this.

„I've been called worse. My offer is as follows: I will rid the world of internet. Every person will permanently be offline, and therefore happier.“

I started to think. There's a lot of articles that say being on the internet is bad for your health. I could name multiple dangers, from addiction to sleep problems. On the other hand, a lot of my drawings are uploaded on the internet, and there's hundreds of them. Every memory within my art would be gone in an instant. A lot of them are bad but they still mean a lot to me. I definitely can't do this, unless...

„I can't accept your offer.“

„Oh, what a pity.“

„But I will accept if you make it last only one day,“ The entity glared at me, I could tell it was surprised.

„I don't make temporary changes, but I will make an exception. After all, you're the first one to accept this.“

„Wait, what do you mean I'm the first?“ I blurted out, but the entity was already gone.

„Wake up Christie, you don't wanna be late for school!“ My dad was in my room, he drew the curtains to let some sunlight in and immediately left. I just rolled around. Then I realized something. He never wakes me up, I have an

alarm on my phone to wake me up. I quickly sat up, put on my glasses and looked around. I left my phone plugged in a charger on my nightstand, but it was gone. Instead, there was a book on the nightstand. I glanced over to the table only to find my tablet gone too. Was that weird dream actually real? Whats going on? Suddenly, a pleasant smell breaks my train of thought. Are those pancakes? I got up and walked into the kitchen, where my dad was making pancakes for breakfast. That's especially odd, He doesn't have time for cooking most of the time, which means we mostly live off of take out food.

„How come you're making breakfast?“

„What do you mean? I always cook something up for breakfast.“

„I thought you didn't have time because of your job“

„What are you talking about? I always have time.“

That last sentence didn't sound right. It felt like it wasn't him who said it. But i remembered that my dad works as an IT guy. Who knows, maybe he doesn't have a job in this world. In any case, I would never turn down pancakes for breakfast.

I made my way to school. It felt a bit weird since I wasn't listening to music like i usually do. I payed more attention to my surroundings, namely all the flowers in bloom. I also didn't feel tired, even though I stayed up late yesterday. So far this world seems good. I arrived to class about five minutes early.

„Oh hi Christie!“ That was Andy who just noticed that i walked in. He was talking to Julia, his twin.

„Hey, Chris, we were wondering if we could hang out today after school, at our usual spot.“ Julia has always called me Chris for some reason, but I don't really mind it.

„Our usual spot? Where's that?“ I have no idea what shes talking about, since normally we would video chat. Both Andy and Julia don't live in the same town as I do, they go to school by bus and their parents don't have time to pick them up. As I said that, Julia glared at me. Did I say something wrong?

„What do you mean? We always hang out in the park on the small hill, there's only one bench in there,“ She sounded really annoyed at me, and I got a feeling that something was wrong. Julia is a sweetheart, she just doesn't get angry, unless you really try to get on her nerves.

„Oh, right, sorry, my bad.“ I apologized.

„So can you come?“ Andy asked me.

„Yeah, I can. Right after school?“

„Yup,“ Andy replied just as the bell rang. I got to my seat.. The teacher came in started writing absences into a classbook, and just then I noticed that the teacher's computer was gone.

The whole school day felt very strange. Everyone was acting differently for some reason, it wasn't anything major, though, just details. Right now, I'm walking to the park with Andy and Julia and they're talking like usual. Normally Julia would talk about some new scientific study she found on the internet that apparently changes everything we know, somehow she manages to find at least one of those per day. Me and Andy would discuss it with her and we would inevitably start talking about all sorts of things. Today it was Andy who started the conversation, and he started talking about nature, ecology and whatnot. He sounded almost obsessed. It's nice that he's thinking about this kind of stuff, but the real Andy wouldn't take it to such an extreme.

We finally got to the bench with a nice view over the town. Andy and Julia kept talking about the same thing over and over. I didn't say anything, I just kept thinking, mostly about my dream, but also about the entity that changed everyone I know. I kept telling myself it was just today, everything will be fine tomorrow.

After about an hour, I had enough. I stood up from the bench.

„I'm sorry, but I should probably go,“ I said in the most apologetic tone I could.

„What do you mean? You said you've got time today.“ said Julia. Her voice sounded irritated.

„Yeah I just got a-“ I cut myself off. I was about to say I got a text from my dad. „I forgot that I needed to do something today, sorry.“

„Oh, alright then. See you soon.“

„See you tomorrow.“ I sure can't wait for tomorrow.

I arrived home, and yet again there was a delicious scent. This time it was the smell of grilled meat. I heard my dad shouting from the kitchen.

„You're home already? I just started cooking.“

„I'm not really hungry,“ Food was the last thing I could think about right now.

„Alright, I'm leaving you some in case you change your mind.“

I didn't even take my clothes or my glasses off and I went to bed. I just wanted this day to be over already.

I found myself in the emptiness once again, with the entity right in front of me.

„We meet again, Christine,“ the voice was as booming as yesterday.

„How did you like your day offline?“

„You lied to me. You didn't just make the world offline, you changed everyone. You manipulated them.“

„I can assure you it was necessary. Take you dad, for example. He works with computers, which ceased to exist.“

„Sure, say whatever you want, it's still manipulating. Also, I have a question. Yesterday you said something about me being the first, before you disappeared. What was that about?“

„You see, you are the first one to accept this offer of making the world offline, but I have made other offers. I proposed to hundreds who accepted just like you, although you're the first one to change my offer. Most humans just refuse, It's strange how afraid you are of change.“

„Did anyone I know accept one of your offers?“

„You can ask them, they wouldn't know. I make them forget.“

„ Wait, are you telling me that you toy around with people and then make them forget you?“

„Yes.“

„You're a monster.“

„I've been called worse.“

Silence filled the room after it said that. I don't know what to say anymore.

„Well, seems like we're finished here,“ The entity said and quickly disappeared.

I got woken up by the alarm on my phone. How strange, I usually remember my dreams.