**Word count: 1665**

**(footsteps)**
**(jingle/door opening/closing)**
**[from across the room:]** Hello.
**(footsteps)**
**[much closer, from across the counter now:]** Do you need a moment?
*[Listener confirms ready to order.]*
Sure.
*[Listener gives order, some small addendum like extra mix-ins or half and half of two flavours.]*
Yeah, that's fine. Just…
**(quiet beeping of order register)**
Card or cash?
Yeah.
Okay. It'll be out in a bit.
**(silence, soft whirring of the machinery. Speaker drums his fingers on the counter, it's late at night and chilly and the ice cream shop is boringly empty.)**
*[Listener asks about passing the time when it's so dark out.]*
**[startled:]** Uh- sorry?
*[Listener repeats the question.]*
Oh… yeah, it's pretty quiet around this time of year. I mean, it's still technically fall, so there's some people during the day, I guess, but… I'm usually working nights. I just got in, actually.
*[Listener asks about the store staying open 24/7.]*
**[quiet huff-laugh:]** No, they only flash that on the sign during the good seasons. We're open nine to eight after the last random rush of people once the snow falls.
*[Listener admits they're one of those people.]*
Really?
**(longer pause as Listener speaks)**
*[Listener tells him cold ice cream is more of a luxury when you can eat it in your lukewarm house under warm covers and crack the window to let the chilly breeze in, as opposed to racing the sun to eat it and cool off before it melts into soup.]*
**[Speaker laughs.]**
You're right. I hadn't really thought of it like that before, but it's nice to take your time and actually enjoy it.
Oh-
**(Listener's order is ready, Speaker hands it to Listener.)**
Here. Do you need napkins?
*[Listener confirms.]*

Yeah, um… here.
**(a quiet pause. Speaker is interested in more of Listener but realizes the limitations of the employee-customer interaction.)**
*[Listener says goodbye.]*
Um. Bye.
**(footsteps)**
**(jingle/door opening/closing)**
**[Speaker sigh-huffs to himself.]**

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**(footsteps)**
**(jingle/door opening/closing)**
**[from across the room:]** Hello.
**(footsteps)** Oh-
**[from across the counter:]** Back so soon?
*[Listener laughs.]*
**[Speaker laughs back.]** Ready to order?
*[Listener confirms, orders something with an addendum again]*
For sure. Paying the same way again?
*[Listener confirms.]*
**(quiet beeping of register, soft whirring of machine.)**
**(another silence, awkward this time as Speaker tries to collect himself and start a conversation.)**
*[Listener breaks the silence first, asking about yesterday's shift after they left.]*
Oh, yeah… I mean, it was pretty boring. There was this one guy, but he went through the drive-through, so… Nothing for me to do, really.
*[Listener asks about co-workers.]*
Well… We're supposed to have three or four people on shift, but they normally just have one person on the register and one person in the back when it gets slow like this. In like… a month, when there's actually snow, they'll bump us back up to three or four until the rush is over, but…
*[Listener asks about passing the time with the coworker(s).]*
Mostly I just hang out here on my phone. I've worked here on and off for like, two years now, but, I dunno, I don't think they really like me, or something. I don't really mind though. It saves me from having to pretend to like spending time with them.
*[Listener apologizes for bothering Speaker.]*
No- don't even worry, I-

**(Speaker is mortified, almost breathless trying to assure Listener.)**
It was nice. Yesterday, um, when you came in, I mean, it was nice to have an actual conversation, you know, talk with a person that doesn't, like, resent me a little, you're *way* better than my coworkers, I'm, um.
**[strangled:]** Yeah. No worries. You know.
*[Listener laughs, tells Speaker they understand. Listener asks whether he'll be working tomorrow.]*
T… Tomorrow? Yeah, uh, I'm working tomorrow. I'm working nights for the rest of this week, actually.
**[nervous, but hopefully:]** Um… Why?
**(longer pause as Listener responds)**
*[Listener tells Speaker tomorrow is the last day of some ordeal they've been going through, these late night ice creams have been rewards for getting through it. They're hoping to see Speaker again when they celebrate the end of the ordeal.]*
Wow. Um, I'm honoured. No wonder you're coming in for ice cream so late at night- **[Speaker laughs nervously-]** Not that there's anything wrong with that, I had just noticed, because um, you know, it's cold out, and it's quiet, so you just stand out- *NotInABadWay*-
**(Listener's ice cream is ready. Speaker attempts to save face by busying himself with collecting napkins.)**
**[strangled, again:]** Your order's ready.
*[Listener thanks him.]*
Of course. So, um… I'll see you again tomorrow?
*[Listener confirms.]*
Cool. I guess… bye till then.
**(footsteps)**
**(jingle/door opening/closing)**
**[Speaker lets out a long groan.]**
**[muttering:]** Stupid. **[mocking himself:]** "Wowwww, I'd be soooo honoured…" Stupid stupid stupid.

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**(crunchy footsteps in snow)**
**(jingle/door opening/closing)**
**[across the room]** Hello.
**(non-crunchy footsteps)**
**[warmly:]** Hey. How are you?
*[Listener is very happy, the ordeal that is over is a huge weight off their chest.]*

That's good. That's really good, I, uh… I'm glad you aren't stressed anymore. You… You look lighter.

**(Listener smiles brightly at Speaker, Speaker is momentarily stunned.)**

Oh. Um. Um. So. **[cringing at his patheticness:]** It snowed early?

I figured you'd be all excited for it, since you like the cold, you know.

*[Listener confirms their enjoyment.]*

Good.

**(triple the levels of awkward as before.)**

**[unsure:]** So… I guess you aren't coming in after this? Since your, um, "ordeal" is over?

*[Listener shrugs.]*

Right.

**(Speaker is frustrated with his own hesitation, uncertain silence again as he gathers himself.)**

**(nervously:)** Um, I was thinking, after you left yesterday, well uh, last night… that doesn't matter. Well, anyways, I was thinking, and I was thinking that maybe.

Well, you know, or well maybe you don't know actually, anyways, um, *crap*, I was thinking you're really nice and you were really nice to talk to and I kept thinking about you after you were gone, you know, not- not to be creepy but just in the way that you lingered on my mind, you know?

And I just had the thought that I kind of liked the way you were, um. Lingering. And I realized if your big stressful thing is over now, then you're not really gonna come in regularly anymore, and I don't really want you to have to keep doing a stressful thing, so I got to, uh well, thinking about. Other ways to see you regularly. And it kind of seemed, *um oh god,* kind of seemed like you liked me? Or you thought I was cute? Or well. You were really nice.

So I mean, you don't have to say anything really, but I figured maybe I could just say I'd like to see more of you. Regularly. Outside of work? Maybe.

**(Silence. Listener is taking in the jumble of words that just fell out of Speaker's mouth.)**

*[Either way, Listener laughs- not cruelly, but at the situation.]*

**(Speaker is still bracing for their response, but bowled over by their laugh.)**

**[softly:]** Oh, yeah. That was the other thing I thought about. I really think I like your laugh. I think I actually just really like how it looks when you're happy.

*[Listener teases Speaker about saying he "thinks."]*

**[amused:]** No, I do. I like it. I know I do. It's, um… sweet.

**[grinning (like an idiot):]** Like *ice cream.*

**(Speaker and Listener laugh together. A short silence falls afterwards, but it's not awkward this time, instead warm.)**

*[Listener tells Speaker they'd like to see more of him, too.]*

**[VERY excited:]** You would?

**[embarassed:]** I mean.

Um.
Thank- no. Um. I'm glad.
Sorry.
**[deeply restrained:]** I kind of really like you. I think.
I'd really like to see more of you. I mean, I know I said that already, but I mean in more of a… dating kind of way?
**[lightly embarrassed again:]** I know it's kind of sudden. I just figured I really didn't want to let the possibility slip through my fingers without doing something about it.
*[Listener tells Speaker that's what they thought he meant all along.]*
You did? Oh. Then, yes, that's what I meant all along, I was *very* bold and asked you out right off the rip. Yup.
**[nervous realization:]** Wait. So, so yes? You'll go out with me? Like, uh, on a date?
*[Listener confirms.]*
Ohmygod. Thank you. I mean- not thank you, I guess, I just- well- Kind of thank you? In a way?
I'm not making any sense. I'm sorry. I'm just- really excited. I'm- *happy.*
*[Listener tells him they feel the same.]*
You do too?
I'm glad. I- I'm *really* glad. Sorry, I think I'm being kind of, um, embarrassing, I just figured this was more so a thing I had to do so I could be rejected up front and not regret it for the next ten years of my life, or something, I didn't think… I'm really glad.
Do you, um… Do you want to go out this week? I could take you somewhere tomorrow, maybe, if you're available. If you wanted to.
*[Listener asks about him working nights and sleeping days.]*
No, don't even worry about that. I can call tomorrow off.
**[amused, almost cheeky:]** If it keeps snowing like this I can just tell them the roads are bad or something.
*[Listener agrees, delighted.]*
It's a date. Can, um… Can I get your number?
*[Listener agrees, hands Speaker their phone.]*
Thanks.
**(quiet pause as they type.)**
Okay. Um… I'll see you tomorrow?
*[Listener agrees.]*
**[delighted:]** Yeah. I'm really excited.
**(footsteps)**
**(jingle/door opening)**
**(door closing)**

**(a few crunchy snow footsteps, less than normal, then they stop.)**
**(crunchy footsteps)**
**(jingle/door opening/closing)**
**[confused:]** Hello?
Oh. **[warmly:]** Hey, you. Did you forget something?
*[Listener tells Speaker they forgot to order.]*
**(pause.)**
**[mortified:]** *Oh-My-God-I-Forgot-To-Do-My-Job.*
Um. *Crap.*
What can I get you??



**Word count: 1009**

Hello.
Do you need a moment?
Sure.
Yeah, that's fine. Just…
Card or cash?
Yeah.
Okay, it'll be out in a bit.
Uh- sorry?
Oh… yeah, it's pretty quiet around this time of year. I mean, it's still technically fall, so there's some people during the day, I guess, but… I'm usually working nights. I just got in, actually.
No, they only flash that on the sign during the good seasons. We're open nine to eight after the last random rush of people once the snow falls.
Really?
You're right. I hadn't really thought of it like that before, but it's nice to take your time and actually enjoy it.
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Here. Do you need napkins?
Yeah, um… here.
Um. Bye.

Hello.
Oh-
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It was nice. Yesterday, um, when you came in, I mean, it was nice to have an actual conversation, you know, talk with a person that doesn't, like, resent me a little, you're *way* better than my coworkers, I'm, um.
Yeah. No worries. You know.
T... Tomorrow? Yeah, uh, I'm working tomorrow. I'm working nights for the rest of this week, actually.
Um... why?
Wow. Um, I'm honoured. No wonder you're coming in for ice cream so late at night- Not that there's anything wrong with that, I had just noticed, because um, you know, it's cold out, and it's quiet, so you just stand out- *NotInABadWay*-
Your order's ready.
Of course. So, um... I'll see you again tomorrow?
Cool. I guess... bye till then.
Stupid. "Wowwww, I'd be soooo honoured..." Stupid stupid stupid.

Hello.
Hey. How are you?
That's good. That's really good, I, uh... I'm glad you aren't stressed anymore. You... You look lighter.
Oh. Um. Um. So. It snowed early?
I figured you'd be all excited for it, since you like the cold, you know.
Good.
So... I guess you aren't coming in after this? Since your, um, "ordeal" is over?
Right.
Um, I was thinking, after you left yesterday, well uh, last night... that doesn't matter. Well, anyways, I was thinking, and I was thinking that maybe.
Well, you know, or well maybe you don't know actually, anyways, um, *crap*, I was thinking you're really nice and you were really nice to talk to and I kept thinking about you after you were gone, you know, not- not to be creepy but just in the way that you lingered on my mind, you know?
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Like *ice cream.*
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I mean.
Um.
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It's a date. Can, um… Can I get your number?
Thanks.
Okay. Um… I'll see you tomorrow?
Yeah. I'm really excited.

Hello?
Oh. Hey, you. Did you forget something?
*Oh-My-God-I-Forgot-To-Do-My-Job.*
Um. *Crap.*
What can I get you??