

The man had not yet entered the bar. David had clocked in about an hour earlier, and was quietly wiping down the counter. He wasn't quite focused on the world around him, too busy thinking. The man had vanished from the bar nearly 3 months ago, and he'd yet to see him again. He was the strangest customer he had ever had the pleasure of serving. He was a fascinating person, based on the minimal things he knew about him. Once, when he had first started dropping by, he'd thought he was part of the mafia. He'd said he worked in a family business, and his work was exhausting and not pretty. But he'd quickly dismissed that theory. The man seemed too nice, and if he really was part of the mafia, David figured he'd have had at least one suspicious altercation by now.

Though he hadn't given him his name, he didn't think he was suspicious. Just strange, and therefore interesting. David liked strange people. They made for the best stories, and the most engaging conversations. And the man was always willing to talk, and even if he talked around what he meant, the vague way he spoke about his life was fascinating. He skirted around details and often his statements were so general he may have been anyone at all. But David listened, and despite not knowing his name or where he came from, he felt like he knew him. It was a bit disorienting, knowing the inner workings of a person before knowing their social shell, but he'd gotten used to it over the years. Bartenders provided intoxicants and shoulders to cry on, and in return were given money and a thousand details into a stranger's life.

The hand on his watch clicked, nearing 7. Happy hour visitors would be leaving soon, and he clung to the idea as another group of giggly patrons ordered a round of drinks. The bar he worked at was never particularly busy, and even when it was, by the time it had reached 9, the most rowdy of customers had vacated the sleepy little bar for the clubs.

As the clock struck seven, the door swung open and one group of giggles was gone. A few minutes passed, and they were replaced with a face David had strangely missed.

The man entered the bar with a cheery smile still on his face. He looked less purely euphoric than the day he'd done it, a rather dreamy expression clouding his features instead. He took his proper place at the counter, and David made his way over, leaning across to begin their conversation.

"How's being unemployed treating you?" he asked. The man grinned at him.

"Wonderfully. I haven't done *anything*. I've never stayed in one place for so long." He sighed, propping his head up against his hand.

"I'm glad." He was. He was rather overjoyed that the sad stranger he'd come to know looked so much less weighed down by the world. "Anything I can get you?" he added, because he still had work to do.

The man waved the offer away. "No, no, I'm perfectly fine staying sober."

David chuckled. "Let's hope you don't spread that around, I'll be out of a job." He smiled as the man laughed at his remark. They settled into silence for a moment before David spoke again. "Have you figured out what you're going to do with all this free time?"

The man nodded, his face lighting up. "I've decided I will travel. I want to actually see the world. And you suggested it. Your advice always seems to work out well."

"I do try," he quipped. "Where are you going to go first?"

"I thought Italy," he said, clasping his hands together. "A popular place to visit, an area I've been to a thousand times over but never had the chance to really appreciate. From there, I'll figure it out."

David nodded, allowing a playfully envious look onto his face. "I'd kill to go to Italy."

"Don't. Too many have already."

He grinned at the graveness in his voice. "Was that a reference to Rome? What are you, a history buff?"

The man smiled slyly. "Of sorts." And that was the newest piece of the puzzle David was trying to solve. Archeology, expert on Roman civilization, grave robber? He chuckled quietly at the thought.

"What's so funny?"

"Nothing, I was just thinking... it's sunny in Italy. I can't imagine you getting tan." He laughed again at the image of the pale figure before him, still dressed in black, his skin a dark bronze. The man laughed with him.

"Neither can I... I suppose I was made to be white as a ghost." As if to accentuate his point, he splayed his hands out on the dark counter, the contrast from skin to wood striking. David patted one of them.

"Maybe Italy'll help."

"Maybe." The man fell suddenly silent, and David frowned. The look on his face was perplexing. His eyebrows were slightly furrowed, but his mouth was still stretched into a smile. After a moment, he blinked, and spoke again. "Come with me."

"Sorry?"

"Come with me. To Italy. Or- anywhere. Travel with me."

David leaned back, taking in the sudden opportunity. He did like the sound of traveling, and learning more about the man, but there was the main issue. He barely knew this man, at least on the surface. He knew too much about him not to trust him, but they'd only just introduced themselves.

"I don't even know your name," was what he finally got out. The man blinked, as if in his excitement, he'd forgotten that knowing names was important. He'd been as vulnerable as he'd ever been, what was more important than that? He paused, lost in thought, mostly likely questioning how he could have forgotten that basic bit of human interaction. Finally, he spoke again, almost hesitating.

"I'm sorry. My name is Morgan." He stayed silent for a moment before stiffly holding out his hand. David shook. His hands were quite cold.

"David. But you knew that already."

Morgan nodded, a slightly bashful expression on his face. "David, yes... I truly am sorry."

"It's okay, really," David assured him, chuckling softly. "I appreciate the offer."

"There's no pressure, of course," Morgan hurriedly said. David shook his head.

"I'd love to go, really! I like where I am, sure, but nothing compares to vacationing in Italy. Or- wherever. It's just, take me to dinner first, you know?" he said, lilting his voice in what was clearly not enough of a sarcastic manner, because Morgan seemed to think he was serious about dinner. The man immediately frowned and checked the time.

"Tonight?" he asked.

"What?"

"For dinner," he clarified, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. "It's 7:13. We could go now, unless you meant later this week?"

David gaped at him. Morgan was amazing, and he had to smile at it. “Well, I don’t get off work until 8:30. And you don’t really need to take me to dinner.”

“No, I want to. Will tomorrow work?”

“I can get someone to cover my shift. 7 o’clock?”

“Perfect.” Morgan smiled at him, looking almost as excited as he did at the prospect of Italy. It was rather flattering.

“Great. Do I get to know where we’re going?”

Morgan considered this for a moment. “No. You like surprises, don’t you?” He stood from his stool before David could even begin to decipher what that meant. “I’ll see you tomorrow at... 6:45?” He giggled softly under his breath, delighted by the concept of scheduling.

“Works for me,” David said, because it did. He had to admit that even if he hadn’t meant it, he was equally excited for dinner. He’d have a chance to actually meet Morgan, learn a little more regular information about him. And maybe plan for Italy.

“Wonderful. Have a good night.” He waved, and walked quickly out the door. To where, David didn’t know. Maybe to make dinner reservations.

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Morgan slipped out onto the street, intent on finding a perfect place for dinner. He didn’t know what had gotten into him. Inviting the one human he knew to travel the world with him? And then inviting him to dinner in nearly the same breath? He supposed it was to be expected. Everything in his own world had changed, so why wouldn’t he change along with it?

What was most astounding was how he felt. He was the lightest he’d ever been, even with his feet firmly planted on the ground. He felt absolutely and entirely euphoric, as if Joy had overtaken him completely. David’s ideas had taken hold of his entire being and he couldn’t feel more grateful, despite this being only the beginning of where he would take himself. He was Morgan now. He had a face, and a name, and a life he could do whatever he so chose with. He wasn’t a frightening and formidable God, something and someone to treat with terror-filled respect lest he steal a soul. He was Morgan. A man who went to a bar a few times a week and spoke to an old friend. He was a man like any other, one who liked traveling more than he liked work. And what that work was? Well, perhaps Morgan had worked a boring office job. Perhaps he was tired of work that hadn’t turned the universe against him. Perhaps Morgan was a million ordinary and completely likable things, and perhaps Death could be those things too.

He barely noticed the strange looks cast by strangers on the sidewalk, and even if he did, he knew they were because he looked like a man who’d just won the lottery, not because he was an omen of bad things yet to come. He was ordinary in their eyes. And maybe, in his unordinariness, he *had* won the lottery. He was whoever he wanted to be, he could do whatever he wanted to do. For the first time in his millenia-long life, he was truly happy. His only job now was remembering to collect David. Not just his soul, but the rest of himself too, taking him off to a restaurant he would deem appropriate. He hoped he could gauge what appropriate was.

He couldn't wait for dinner. Seeing David, perhaps bringing him along, speaking to him as if they were both normal. Being served by a third party. Seeing David relax. Getting him away from his job as well.

Perhaps that was projecting, but the bartender did seem like he could use a break. Morgan hoped he'd read the signs right, and that he did want to go to Italy. Maybe elsewhere, too. Maybe David would like Morgan as much as Morgan liked himself. Maybe David would see him as completely ordinary. Maybe David would call him his friend.

But, he could consider what the future could hold once he settled the plans for the next evening. Hopefully an evening to remember.