

A Walk in Park

By

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CHARACTERS:

JACK, a senior who is walking in park. Thinks he sees someone he knows.

ESTHER, an older senior woman who is trying to adjust to the perils of what life is for the elderly.

Did he know her?

SCENE 1

A Park. Daytime in the present. It is a bucolic atmosphere in the middle of a city.

JACK, a man in his late 70s is walking by a park bench when he notices an elderly lady of 85 or 90 years old. She sits on bench and has been feeding pigeons. Her handful of feed is now depleted.

The lady's name is Esther, and we can see that she was quite attractive in her day. She is dressed rather simply and thriftily. Jack is also.

Esther wipes her palms together with a tissue. Jack impulsively goes to the bench expressing a familiarity. There are empty benches in the area.

Jack speaks excitedly.

JACK

Hello Miss. Hi Miss!

(Esther is taken aback at first, grabs her heart)

ESTHER

Oooh! my goodness! *(Looks; clears throat gains composure)*
Yes? *(Annoyed)* What is it?

JACK

I didn't mean to startle you.

ESTHER

Startle? Why by no means did you. Just scared the holy hell out of me is all. Yes?

JACK

My name is Jack. Sorry.

ESTHER

Jack Sorry? An unusual name.

JACK

Ha. No, I mean my name is -- it's Jack. And the "sorry" part is that I disturbed you. Scared the bejesus! I apologize. But I swear you looked so darn familiar I couldn't resist asking. Could your name be --?

ESTHER

Ah ha! Aren't we a bit old Mister to do the make believe hanky panky?

(He chuckles)

JACK

Wow. That's a first for me. I guess I look like kinda of a goofy pick up con-artist. I'm not. Swear to God and hope to --go to Hell. Which I'm likely going to anyhow, gratefully, because according to Shaw's Don Juan In Hell, Heaven's a bore. Ah. Is your name Essie??

ESTHER

No. You sound like an educated man. I'm impressed. But no. You're mistaken. I am not who you thought. People resemble other people all the time. And they mistake strangers for old friends. Why is it so important if I was this -- Essie? Oh forget it! I have too much to worry about. I'm enjoying a quiet relaxing day, sir. Imagine, I've landlords' who want to get rid of me. I've always paid my rent loyally for over twenty-five years. Keep a tidy apartment. Never make noise, no rowdy entertainment at night. Had Rodolfo for the last ten years. A joy to my life. He never barked much. We'd listen to La Boheme on the record player at night and he'd nestle up against my foot and climb onto my lap; and he so kindly, gently, put me to sleep. He was a Yorkie.

JACK

Okay. I'll fess up and tell you this Essie was important in my life when I was -- Oh Jesus! why would anyone want to evict you?!

ESTHER

Greed! My landlord's family sold the building. We were under rent control. Sol died. He was the best. He'd tell tenants -- the older ones -- give me what you can afford if you got it. If not -- not to worry. He was a widower and he cared about his tenant's lives. But the new owners could care less and are cheap bastards to boot, -- they know they can triple the rents, once we old-timers are out on our asses. They threaten us daily. It never stops. They slip stupid notes under the door: We'll give you five hundred dollars to move! We'll buy you a suitcase -- We'll even give you a fifty dollar gift certificate to Wendy's.

JACK

Big deal! They sound like real sons-of-bitches! I'd fight them if I was you!

ESTHER

Sonny-boy. I have. All of us have. Mrs. Kroner in her wheelchair with an oxygen mask. It's disgusting. I'm tired now. Damn! They'd love to see me dead. It's why I come here for peace and comfort Oh, dear me, if it isn't one thing then it's something else.

JACK

Things just pop up out of the woodwork when you reach that certain age. Know what I mean?

ESTHER

I am not speaking of my age!

(Suspiciously)

Are you an investigator of some kind? Have I committed some heinous crime that I am unaware of? Or did my daughter hire you to put me in a home?! she thinks I'm senile.

JACK

No, no, no. Lady. you ain't senile. I'm Jack. Just Jack. I'm a nobody.

ESTHER

Then why don't you sit down. Your movements are distracting me. Your gestures drive me crazy! SIT!