

The Boy at Feeding Time

by evntho

When I first met him, the volunteer boy, he was like water from the source. I was in The Homewood Medical Center for two reasons. The first reason was on account of my attempt at suicide. How do you like that, I've known you for all of 10 seconds and already I've told you the darkest thing one person could tell another. The other reason was because of my eating disorder. The boy was there for the second reason. His job was to watch me eat, and to make sure I didn't hide it or chuck it somewhere, like under my bed or under someone else's. He couldn't leave until I had time to digest, which took about an hour.

I remember that first time we met, that look on his face when he saw Mrs. Livingston strapped to her bed, yelling for someone to let her up. He looked over at her, than back at me, his eyes saucers full of uncertainty. It wasn't a minute later when Anna came down the hall outside Mrs Livingston's and my door, telling the orderly that the book she'd read that day was speaking to her. It was in his eye then, wish I had a photo to show you, that a mistake had been made. Where had he come from, probably the other, safer part of the hospital?

He surprised me though and said, "Hello, my name is Chris."

I liked that he was able to shake off what he had just seen and get on with it. I admire that in a person.

My legs hung over the bed as I leaned over the food tray. Under my left arm was Adele, my toy cat. I wondered if the staff told the boy of my ritual of always feeding Adele first before I gave the spoon to myself. I could see him looking inquisitively at the strangeness before him.

“Oh, I didn't know they allowed cats in here?” he said.

But, before I could clue him in, he began to smile and with no warning at all, neither to him nor myself, I began to cry torrents.

Shamelessly, I said, “Do you ever think they'll let me out of here and let me see my baby again?”

Without a word he moved closer, and with a hand on my shoulder said, “You're not like the others here, you'll be home in no time.”

I'd been there 3 months and every time Mother came to visit me she'd say the same thing. But when he said it, I really believed it.

The second time I saw him was in a shopping mall, we were walking towards each other with Mother at my side. I whispered to mother that this was the boy I had spoke of. I could see that she smiled at him. But, I did not even so much as glance at him. I wanted him to know that I was completely different from the person he had met in the hospital. Growing exponentially, week by week, hour by hour. Getting better and better. Changing right before there eyes, like baby. Baby, whom was promised to me, in perhaps a month, or so.

