Colin Hite

DGM - 4000

**Characters, Conflict**

A small chime rings out into an empty seating room followed by a loud screeching crackling door. A moment of dead air fills the room followed by a thundering slam. A few of the on lookers huddled in a dreary 1980’s booth crane their heads over to peer at the lapse in atmosphere. A tall bald middle-aged man in a well-kept double layer cotton shirt with long pleated kakis skips into the foyer. Behind him is a timid short blond-haired girl drenched in a hoodie and shorts. After being greeted by their waitress the two sheepishly saunter to their table. As they sit down the man confidently raises his chest and folds his arms while the girl struggles to find a comfortable way to sit. Once she finds her place the man clears his bellowing windpipe and takes a big deep breath.

“So, Clara, how was your day at school?”

Not wanting to attract any undue attention the girl meagerly shrugs as she looks down at the old worn wooden table. Not to be undone the man simply smiles and relaxes his shoulders. Suddenly the waitress appears from around the corner with two ice cold glasses of water shimmering with condensation. Sporting a small ticket book the waitress sets the glasses down as she flips to a new page.

“What might I be able to get you fine folks today?”

Excitedly and full of energy the man adjusts his seat as he pleasantly remarks;

“I’ll be having the usual today, as for this little monkey, she would absolutely love a large plate of fries.”

Without a word the waitress spins around and jaunts down the aisle. Looking pleased, the little girl loosens her posture with a slight smirk strewn across her freckled face. Noticing her reaction, the man smiles as he looks out the window. Although there is not much to see, the man gazes off into the sea of tall spruces that line the road. Soon after, the waitress returns with two steaming plates placing them down in front of the man and girl. One houses a large burger dripping in sauce while the other holds a modest plate of fries. Thanking the waitress, the man immediately lifts the burger with both hands and takes a tremendous bite forcing a waterfall of sauce to leak out the edges. However, the girl isn’t eager as she eyes the plate of fries to find the best slice to start her meal. Having chosen the largest longest fry, she begins to nibble around the edges nervously. Sensing her unrest, the man peered down at the girl.

“What’s wrong? Do you not like the fries? I have them here all the time and they are top notch. Here let me try one and make sure they aren’t cold.”

Without hesitation the man reaches over the table and picks up two fries with his smothered saucy hands leaving a large trail in his wake. Disgusted the girl jumps up in her chair with a huge frown on her face eking out a shriek from her full closed mouth clinging to her mangled fry. Hesitantly the man swallows the fries as he attempts to console her. Despite his attempt she looked the man straight in the eyes as she grabbed her glass of water and dangled it over the side of the table. Shocked, the man dropped his burger as he pleaded for her to not drop the glass. However, it was too late. With one final deep breath the girl loosened her grip and the glass careened to the floor. CRASH! A loud shattering noise filled the open air as glass shards flew in every direction. Clearly upset the man threw his hands onto his head smearing the sauce all over his face.

“Clara!”

Hearing the commotion, the waitress rushed over to the now drenched floor. As she saw the carnage she looked over to the man and screamed.

“I hope your willing to pay for this Tom!”

In a defeated rage the man cleaned off his hands and dug into his pocket. After riffling around for a bit, he found his leather wallet and opened it extracting the last of the cash he had left. In an attempt to calm down, the man paused for a moment as he shuffled the bills. With a large sigh the man simply placed the bills onto the table and stood up cautiously while gesturing to the girl that they were leaving. Letting out a noticeable grumble the girl stood and made her way out the door.

“I don’t want to ever come here with you again Tom!”