

Borge and Glark and the

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“Hey Borge, look,” Glark pointed to the kiosk. “It’s one of those self-serving kiosks which lets people order food without having to talk to people which helps introverted people but is also kind of bad in a way because it automates away jobs but it’s also kind of good since it’s more efficient than cashiers but it’s hard to say whether or not the benefits outweigh the detriments, so really whether it’s good or not is arguable.”

“So, like,” Borge leaned against the wall. “Do you like or do you dislike them, bro?”

“I like them, bro, I don’t really like talking to people.”

“But, bro, isn’t that a bad thing.”

“I don’t know, bro.”

“Isn’t it a problem if you can’t talk to people at all, though?”

“I just don’t like talking to people as much as you do, it’s not like I can’t-“

“Excuse me, sir,” another customer cut him off. “Are you going to order, because you’re kind of clogging up the-.” She did not get to finish her sentence before Glark collapsed and curled up into a foetal position.

“Come here, bro,” Borge dragged Glark to the closest table sat on its only seat. Glark looked around for a free chair, but couldn’t find one and did a wall sit on the other side instead.

“I think this is a serious problem, bro. It’s like you’re not confident in yourself or assertive enough.”

“But,” Glark wheezed on shaking legs. “I think I’m assertive, bro.”

Borge peeked under the table at the position Glark was in.

“I disagree, bro.”

“Okay, you’re right, I’m not.”

Borge had never thought of it before, but if Glark was truly this bad at communicating, how did they become friends at all? Borge knit his brow and stroked the single hair on his chin, but no matter how hard he thought, he just couldn’t remember.

“How did we become friends at all?”

“I’m your cousin, bro, we grew up together.”

“Really?” Borge tilt his head. “I don’t remember it at all.”

“But we live together, bro.”

“When we were kids?”

“No, bro,” Glark was sliding down the wall now, inching closer and closer to the puddle of spilt salsa right under him. “We live together right now, bro, we walked here from home together.”

“Oh, I get it,” he clapped his hands together. “You don’t have enough experience with others because you’ve gotten comfortable only being around me.”

“But,” Glark was sitting on the floor now. “I’m not comfortable around you, bro.”

“Yes, you are.”

“Okay, you’re right, I am.”

“I think you need to try talking to strangers, bro, experience human interaction.”

“I don’t feel too comfortable leaving my comfort zone, bro.”

“Is this your comfort zone?”

“Yes,” Glark said from his puddle of spilt salsa and his own sweat.

“No, it’s not.”

“Ok, you’re right, it’s not.”

“Today, we are going to challenge you, instead of ordering from the kiosk you are going to go there,” he pointed behind him.

“Leave the building?”

“No,” Borge pointed a little more to the right. “You are going to challenge yourself by going up to the cashier and ordering the most complicated thing on the menu.”

“Okay.”

Glark stood up and limped over to the counter. Yet, as soon as he saw the cashier, he realised he was no longer capable of reading the menu and began to wonder whether he knew how to read at all.

“Hello, how can I help you?”

“Uh.”

It wasn’t until now did he realise how cold the salsa he sat on was and the way it was seeping through his pants and into his underwear. His tongue wiggled in his mouth and his eyelids fluttered. His body parts no longer felt like his own. Then he wondered whether he owns his body at all, *maybe it was his body that owned him.*

“Sir, are you okay?”

Glark was snapped out of his astral projection into the eighth metaphysical dimension.

“My name is Glark,” He blurted out

“Ok?”

Wow, Glark thought. *I actually did it, I actually said something.* But he was not sure what he said and he had to ask himself whether or not he actually ordered something yet. He saw the cashier writing and thought he must have already ordered if the cashier was typing it out. But upon closer inspection, he realised the cashier was actually writing her letter of resignation. He decided it was very likely he had not ordered yet.

Okay Glark, Glark thought to Glark. I can do it, I can make the order. It'll be like ripping off a band-aid or like an event similar to it where doing something quickly makes it easier.

“I want a mochafrappalatticino!”

“Sir, this is Taco Bell.”

Borge watched the scene unfold from his table. Though he couldn't hear what they were saying, it seemed like it was going well. He checked his watch and realised it had been twenty minutes since Glark went up. It must have really been the most complicated thing he could have ordered if it took this long. Glark must have really been doing his best and Borge knew nothing can go wrong if one tries their best. Borge looked up to see the cashier beating Glark with the cash register.

It was an interesting sound, it reminded Borge of bongos or thundersticks or someone being beaten by a cash register. He closed his eyes and nodded along to the beat, but it ended right as it was getting to its second chorus. Glark was crawling back to their table. *It made sense,* Borge thought, *his legs must have been tired from the wall sits.*

“Bro,” Glark said, or it was only what Borge thought he said, it was hard to hear.

“Bro.”

“I,” Glark coughed up a roll of receipt paper. “I nailed it, bro, did you see that? I went up and ordered something, bro. Hell yeah, bro.”

“Bro.”

“I can actually do it, bro. This changed my life, bro, I’m a new man.”

“Bro,” Borge said, or at least it was what he was going to say. He decided not to for Glark was already unconscious.

Standing up and stretching, Borge smiled to himself. As he dragged Glark out of Taco Bell by his legs, leaving a trail of Glark’s tears and rancid salsa, he thought about how good of a friend he was. Then he paused, the automatic door behind him closing and opening on Glark’s limp form, and struggled to remember where he lived.

He looked at his watch again, it was lunchtime. He should really go somewhere to get food but couldn’t decide where. His cousin was the one who usually decides.