

Memory

Memories are funny things. Sometimes, they come flooding back in vivid detail, and other times they're elusive. As I sat down to write this essay, my mind was completely blank, until it wasn't. A single memory surfaced, so unique that it remains etched in my mind. This isn't just any memory; it's the story of the most mysterious man I have ever met.

It was years ago, back when I was just 8 years old, taking the public bus to school every day. My routine was always the same: get on the bus, find my seat, and stare out the window until my stop. But one day, everything changed. I saw a man who stood out, dressed in bright, mismatched clothes, with a strange bag slung over his shoulder. I took my usual seat, which was right in front of him. I couldn't help but try to sneak a glance at what was in his bag, but he caught me. His eyes, hidden behind thick lenses, seemed to look right through me, making me uncomfortable. I quickly looked away.

The man got off the bus at a stop with a creepy graveyard. As the bus pulled away, I saw him disappear through the graveyard's gates. It sent a shiver down my spine. Over the next few months, I saw him every day, always staring at me. His attire was peculiar, and his expression never changed. I wished I had a phone to distract myself, but all I could do was look out the window, trying to ignore his constant gaze.

Then, one day, everything shifted. I boarded the bus and barely recognized him. He'd changed. No more glasses or cap. His clothes were trendy, his hairstyle was fresh, and he had a new bag. It was like he'd transformed into a different person. He even smiled at me, and not just a slight grin, but a full-blown smile. He sat down next to me and began to laugh—a hearty laugh that seemed out of place coming from someone I'd known to be so serious.

"Surprised to see me like this?" he asked. I was stunned and could barely nod my head. His voice was deep and rich, nothing like what I had expected. At that moment, I wondered if he'd gotten a promotion at the graveyard. Almost as if he read my mind, he said, "Don't assume things about people just because of where you see them or how they dress." His words resonated with me, making me realize how much we judge people based on first impressions. I never learned his name or his story, but our brief conversation stayed with me. It's a strange memory, one that raises more questions than it answers. But maybe that's what makes it so special—the mystery and the lesson in not judging others by their outward appearances. Sometimes, the most intriguing stories are the ones that remain unexplained.