Love, The Old Man: Why So Serious?

I discovered a while ago that laughter catches people’s attention. They want to know what the joke is. Even if you’re not actually laughing at anything, people around you will be curious if they hear you.

I was studying with some friends in a random classroom the other night. It was quiet and productive, the silence only punctuated by the occasional joke.

That is, until two girls walked in.

I’d never seen them before in my life, but they came in laughing and I couldn’t keep my eyes off of them. I don’t think any of my friends could either. One girl in particular was nearly giggling her head off while bumping into desks and chairs in a room with three-foot wide aisles. Even managed to drop her phone once too. They waved, some of us threw out a couple of words, but I couldn’t stop chuckling. When they calmed down a bit, I was still laughing and they cocked their eyebrows.

“Are you laughing at me?” The giggler’s voice was a little rough.

I smiled. “Yep!”
“Why? What’s so funny?”

My smile spread. “Oh, nothing.”

The second girl stepped forward, head up and standing straight. “What? What’s she doing?”

I couldn’t tell if they were annoyed or joking, so I stuck to my guns: Honesty. “It’s just all the laughing and dropping stuff and...” My “eloquence” failed. Big surprise. I couldn’t have articulated what had made me laugh. I think it was simply their laughter by itself.

I can’t remember exactly what happened next, but the two of them started giggling again as they tried to take a picture of the equations written on the board behind me. It took them a couple of tries, but they eventually got it and started to take their leave, saying that they needed to find a room to study in.

At about that time, the giggler clipped the wall and a shot glass tumbled from her backpack to the carpet.

“Ooh...” I nodded. “So that’s why you’re so happy...”

“No! That’s not it! I was gargling salt water for my cold!”

“Sure... Of course.”

“Seriously! My professor told me to-” She snatched up the glass and straightened. “You know what? We’re going to find a place to study.” And thus they marched out, shot glass in hand.

Two minutes later, they walked back in. “Yeah, well, all of the rooms were filled, so we decided we already know you guys. It okay if we study here?”

Of course there were no objections. On the other hand, there was no work done after that either.

By the end of the night, I had finished in three hours an assignment that should have taken me one, I had gained a couple of phone numbers, and the girls had gone through some unlabeled Gatorade bottle. Probably that salt water one of them mentioned.

Sure, I got almost nothing done and I was next to useless in one of my classes the next day for neglecting the reading, but I felt like I had just spent a week with the King of France and Gabriel Iglesias, giddy from nerves and laughing all the way back to my dorm.

It wasn’t a productive night in the academic sense, but it was in a way that still matters.

Until college, I was the kind of guy who devoted his life to schoolwork. Instead of hanging out with friends, I’d be studying in the library. Alone. Yeah, it got me some
feathers in my cap, but it was solitary and often unfulfilling. I regret having spent almost every day like that. You should never settle for a C+, but don’t give your whole life to studying like I did.

So if someone catches your eye and you can have fun with them, do it. Yeah, keep your work in mind and make sure to finish it, but don’t become a slave to it as I once was. Try to lighten up a bit and, once in a while, let yourself have a good laugh.

Song of the Week: “Take It Easy” by The Eagles. This one’s pretty self-explanatory, no?

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