

Collegiate  
by  
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INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MARY watches him carefully. Her eyes bright with interest. She grips her pen tightly, holding off on the philosophy notes.

PROFESSOR (O.S.)  
The Kantian categorical imperative  
is something you should all be  
familiar with.

JON notices her. Mary scribbles something down. He smiles.

JON  
Right Mary?

Her eyes dart from her paper and up to him. He is standing over her desk, taller and about ten years older than the pretty college student he is staring at. She looks right at him, an odd smile in her eye.

JON (CONT'D)  
Would you care to recap the  
categorical imperative for the  
class? For those who might have  
slept through 101.

MARY  
Epistemology's not my thing, but  
sure, I'll explain. That is, if you  
want me to do your job.

Jon's smug grin disappears. Students look to one another, confused and feeling awkward. Mary raises her eyebrows at him and begins to speak.

MARY (CONT'D)  
It's a duty, an unconditional  
obligation. It is inherently  
good...

Jon smirks.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Backpack on, Mary is walking to her next class. The campus is small, but still isolated from the town. She is in her head when a voice stops her...

VOICE (O.S.)  
Mary.

She turns to see Jon.

JON  
Hey. Can I walk with you a minute?

Mary shrugs and continues.

JON (CONT'D)  
Thanks for that display back there.

MARY  
What display?

JON  
I'd like to talk to you about this.

MARY  
This?

JON  
I know you're resentful about that grade on your Sartre paper.

Mary stops walking and turns to him.

MARY  
My next class is across campus.

JON  
Look, I have office hours later today at 5. We'll discuss this then. Ok?

She looks at him questionably.

MARY  
Ok. Just remember you're not indoctrinating me with that subjectivist crap.

She leaves. Jon chuckles and watches her go.

INT. BUILDING - EVENING

An ELDERLY PROFESSOR with a stern face walks past Mary, exiting his office. She smiles at him only to receive a grumpy stare back.

She arrives at Jon's office. Knocks on the door.

JON (O.S.  
(muffled)  
Come in.

INT. OFFICE - EVENING

Jon is grading papers, wearing glasses, which he takes off to look at her. She stands above him in his small office, which is full of bookshelves. There is hardly room for anything else on the walls, except his framed credentials.

JON  
You know you can sit.

MARY  
I think I'll stand.

She puts her bag on the chair.

JON  
Suit yourself. You know Craig  
Tillman?

MARY  
Yeah.

JON  
Dumb kid.

MARY  
Yeah.

JON  
What do you think? D or F?

He tosses an essay covered in red ink across his desk. She picks it up, reads a couple lines.

MARY  
Why are you asking me? I'm pretty  
sure that's a violation of at least  
a dozen codes of conduct.

He ignores her question.

JON  
He deserves an F, but I'm not sure  
if it's worth giving him a failing  
grade. Will anything good come of  
it? Will he learn or even care?

She throws the paper back on his desk.

MARY  
Are we gonna' talk about that  
Sartre paper or not?

JON  
Only if you sit down.

She sits.

MARY  
I know why you gave me a B plus.

JON  
And why is that?

MARY  
Because I didn't agree with you.

JON  
Oh really? You don't think it was because you didn't follow the assignment? I didn't ask for your opinion in the essay. I asked for an analysis of existentialism.

MARY  
You asked for a laundry list. I gave you an essay.

JON  
And what's that supposed to mean?

MARY  
If you want me to look up Sartre on Wikipedia like everyone else did, that can be done. If you want someone to actually think about what they read, then I guess I'm in the wrong class.

Jon laughs, frustrating Mary even more. She gets up to leave.

JON  
You know I'm gonna' give you an A in the class, so what's the big deal over this one essay? Considering you didn't follow the prompt you're lucky you received the grade you did.

MARY  
It's the principle Jon. I came to college, not expecting to be treated like a goddamn high-schooler, but to be given the respect to be able to at least use my mind.

She slides the straps of her backpack over her shoulders; she's angrier than she should be. Jon stands and begins to move toward her.

MARY (CONT'D)

And it doesn't help that there's only one female faculty member in this entire department. Half the professors look at me like I don't belong here and the other half looks at me like they want to...

He is next to her now. She is breathing hard.

JON

Want to what?

MARY

I think I made the wrong choice.

He backs off her, sits on his desk.

JON

Are you uncomfortable here Mary?

She takes a moment to breathe.

MARY

You're my favorite professor. I'm taking my frustrations out on you and I sincerely apologize. I should leave.

She moves toward the door.

JON

Same time next week?

With her back to him, she stops to think. Turns to face him.

MARY

Ok.

She exits, leaving Jon alone. He gets up to close the door. She pops her head back in.

MARY (CONT'D)

I prefer not to be scoffed at with a feminist label, for the record.

Jon laughs.

JON

Get outta' here.

MARY

I'm not.

She smiles and leaves.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Mary sits in the front, rows of tired students behind her. She looks at a clock. Ten past.

No one at the head of the classroom. A couple students get up to leave.

Bored, Mary pulls a cell phone out of her bag. A text.

CLOSE ON PHONE: MESSAGE FROM UNKNOWN NUMBER: IT'S JON, WILL BE 15 MIN LATE. DON'T LET THEM LEAVE.

She stares at her phone, bewildered by the text. Just then, Jon bursts through the door. His hair is a mess and his clothes are ruffled.

The class is intrigued by his disheveled demeanor.

JON

Ok guys. I'll be honest...I got into a bar fight.

The room erupts into laughter. Mary watches him, spots a small cut and bruise on his ear. Jon notices her eyes on him.

JON (CONT'D)

See that? The SOB punched me in the ear. The EAR!

STUDENT (O.S.)

Who won?

JON

Well you should see the other guy. Speaking of physical pain, let's talk about Nietzsche and torture.

INT. OFFICE - EVENING

MARY

Did you really get into a bar fight?

Mary sits across from Jon, who has cleaned up since his first class of the day.

JON

Yes. I did. What did you think of my lecture today? Did I focus on torture too much? But it's so critical to understanding morality.

MARY

How did it happen?

JON

What?

MARY

The fight. How did it happen?

JON

Oh. Well, it's kind of embarrassing actually. We both had too much to drink and I got into this discussion with some Christian, one of those, pardon the vernacular, holy rollers. And--

Mary is unimpressed. He stops.

JON (CONT'D)

Mary. Does that name have significance for you?

MARY

I suppose you mean religious significance? No, it's just a name. But you're really asking if I am religious aren't you?

JON

You're too smart.

MARY

You're too obvious.

JON

Am I? Then tell me this, why do I like you? As my student, why do I like you? Even though you challenge just about everything I say?

She genuinely ponders his question.