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The Five-Minute Visit
Blink and You'll Miss Her

I'll never forget my seventeenth birthday of August 29th, 2014. Contrary to popular belief, family do not count as birthday guests. The only way to get around this belief is to not live in your mother's basement. Unfortunately, I was a basement dweller. It was not so bad down here because I had the ample company of my Miku, Megumin, Ai, Akame, and Taiga anime body pillows. Just kidding, it was bad down there. Naturally people avoid bad places, thus I felt no-one was going to show. Earlier that week I used social media to promote my party. I got plenty of people giving me a "Sure" or a "I'll see" but I still doubted anyone would show.

At exactly one in the afternoon, I heard my mother cry out, "Michael! Someone is here!" It took me a moment to register what my mother had said.

Someone I thought to myself as I slowly rolled off my bed into my towering dirty clothes pile below. I laid in the smelly clothes pile for a moment thinking to myself again. *Here* is what I then thought. I finally made the logical connection—someone is here! I sprung up with renewed energy and vigor. Happily, I skipped over to my light-switch to get some illumination going. *Click* and there was light.

My mother sounded excited, so it had to be a girl. I just knew it! After-all I invited at-least twenty, so one had to show. The sudden possibility that it was a girl here gave me an existential crisis looking upon my room. I swallowed nervously and assessed the wasteland of my room. Sexy anime posters, sexy anime pillows, sexy anime figures, clothes on the ground, and a pyramid of empty cola cans. "M- Mom. I'm going to be a minute," I called back as I swiftly locked the door.

Like a sailor attempting to save a sinking ship, I attempted to hide my degeneracy in that moment. I hid Miku under the bed, Megumin and Ai in the closet, Akame in the attic, and Taiga remained on the bed because she was expensive. Next, I tearfully tore all my posters from the walls and stuffed them under the bed with Miku. Finally, with a heartfelt grunt, I swiped all the priceless anime figures off my dresser. They too joined Miku under the bed. This left me with clothes and my pyramid of cola cans. I decided to leave both as is for aesthetic reasons. The clothes strung about demonstrated I was free-spirited. Furthermore, the cola pyramid displayed I like cola.

Okay, good to go! It was time for me to meet my guest. I unlocked my door then dashed upstairs with too much vigor and energy. “Oh, hello dear! You seem excited!” No! My world was falling apart. It was just grandma! I did not invite her! “I bought you a figure of that one Chinese cartoon your always watching Buddy,” she extended a wrapped gift.

I did not bother correcting her on two things. One: do not tell what is in the wrapped gift. Two: it is not a Chinese cartoon. With a fake smile, I took the gift and unwrapped it on the spot. Oh-joy, the same character I got last year. If it sounds like I am being ungrateful then I am accomplishing my goal.

Now firmly out of my lair I had to go through the standard motions of a birthday party. Presents, dinner, and then cake. It was like this every-year, almost like I never grew up. I could not be mad because every year I was not mad. I only felt a tinge of disappointment. Then suddenly as we were wrapping up the festivities the doorbell rang. With predatory reaction, I dashed to the door to answer it. I was still hopeful *anyone* would show up. Then as if God himself was late to answering my prayers, it was a girl! Although, you must be careful what you wish for. This was the girl I had been embarrassingly annoying for the greater portion of the

month via Facebook messenger (We will call her K). At the time, I had a hard time taking a hint. I had no good reason for being such a hassler. Idle hands are the devil's workshop and Facebook only served to enhance that.

I began to feel some anger the instant I saw her. First of all, she had the audacity to show up AFTER sicking her boyfriend on me. Secondly, she was late to my birthday party! Finally, I did not invite her! "Woah—I did not invite you," I immediately spouted.

K rolled her eyes and clicked her lips, "Uhm. Yes, ya' did."

"No—I didn't. Uhm, is Chad here? Are you going to have me beat up on my birthday?" I attempted to sound like a smartass, but my body language demonstrated fear. I took a step backwards.

K smiled and shook her head, her large hoop-like ear-rings dangling about, "No. I'm not that cruel Michael." She pulled out her phone and thumbed through it for a moment, "Here look."

"Gimme that!" I snatched the phone from her hands to get a closer look.

Hello! I am having a birthday party on the 29th at five p.m. Please respond if you plan on showing up.

That message was the basic copy-paste one I sent to a bunch of people. I accidentally sent it to K, and she did not even bother to reply.

My eyes traveled to the top right corner of her phone to check the time, it was a little after four p.m. "K—how about we go out to eat?" I said with a ghostly realization about my voice. I handed her phone back, my hand shaking. I started my birthday party early. All the food and

snacks we prepared were partly consumed and put away. How could I be so dumb? I could not face this. I felt so stupid.

“But eh—Michael you said you are having a birthday party,” K said, cocking her head in confusion. It was apparent she was picking up on my unease.

“No no no. I lied!” I said while scratching the back of my neck, “Well sorta—” then suddenly K cut me off with the corner of her lips raised.

“Oh I see what is going on,” again she rolled her eyes, “Grab whatever you need. I’ll be in my car. You have five minutes or I’m leavin’ kay?”

“Wait what?” I was absolutely confused, “Five minutes?”

K turned on her heels, “Yes. Five minutes to get lookin’ decent.”

Without thinking twice, I turned around and dashed downstairs to my room. I was akin to soldier getting geared up for an imminent battle. Why was I doing this? Why was I running off from my own mistake? Why was I going out somewhere with someone’s girlfriend? My body was moving faster than my brain’s capability to make sound decisions.

I slid on some khaki shorts and a purple-striped polo shirt, and then applied about a gas chambers worth of cologne on myself. Slipped on my shoes and I took off out of the front door. I recall my mother yelling something at me as I took off, but I was in too much of a hurry to bother.

To my dismay, I was not fast enough. Five minutes had gone and so had K. I felt a feeling only a dead man could feel. The memory of that moment has become etched into my mind. The sky had not a cloud. A light breeze wafted by teasing the hairs of my skin. Rays of nourishing sunlight gently kissed the back of my neck. My legs slowly became more and more

limp until my body was too heavy to support. I sat down attempting to grasp what the hell had just happened.

I recalled that the day started with me feeling lonely despite having family around me. Additionally, I had a rather boyish fantasy of having a girl over at my birthday party. This fantasy became so realized that I absolutely cleared my room of anything I deemed shameful. My mind was so caught up with all that non-sense, I completely forgot when I said my birthday was *supposed* to begin. To top it all off, I did get my boyish wish. I did have a girl show up for five minutes.

Now what? Running was not an option anymore because K was serious on her time-constraint. If people did show, it was going to be awfully hard to explain why the cake was missing. With a sigh I brought myself to my feet and dragged myself inside. Instead of running about awkwardly and causing myself more trouble—I decided to simply accept circumstance and go with it.

Fortunately, no-one showed up that night. Despite my earlier disposition, I was glad no-one showed up. That night I relaxed gladly that things only got as awkward as they did. My anxieties and expectations only made everything far worse. I knew assumptions and ill-preparedness only made that worse. Knowing this, from that day forward, I happily kept my birthday celebrations family-centric. It was a lot less to be worried about.