

She Forgot My (Fake) Name!

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For the past few months, I have felt like Alicia Keys in a hairnet serving pie. Why? Because I have met my secret fiancée, though she doesn't quite know it yet. Furthermore, she doesn't even know my name. Or didn't, until now. Let's be honest; my name isn't run-of-the-mill. My whole life, I've had to hear people butcher my name, be it teachers doing a roll call or magistrates releasing me from jail. It's not an easy one to pick up; the pronunciation often fails most people on first run.

To avoid this, to the amusement of family and friends, whenever I go out to some establishment providing a service whereupon they need to know my name for identification purposes while I wait for said service, I have used fake names. I usually use friends of mine as examples. Makes my life easier; it makes their life easier. Neither the hostess nor I enjoy (her) stumbling through my name while the lobby is filled with hungry guests. I justify it not only out of convenience, but also out of practicality. I'm not lying to these people about who I am; I'm sure I will never see them again. I am doing a harmless courtesy. But then, something happened. You see, my whole life, I've been getting consistently appalling haircuts. I think I may have a slightly misshapen head. Anyway, I never feel I get a "good" haircut. Once in high school, I found a barber shop that did a decent job, but I also used to sport a flat top for a year or so. Things went downhill when my barber suffered a stroke and returned to work never quite the same. Thus, I expect bad haircuts. A few months ago, I had received a particularly bad one, and so I asked around for suggestions. A friend of mine with a remarkably sharp coif told me he just gets it done at the local Hair Cuttery. Although I hadn't been to one in a few years, during college, I had a few good experiences there, so I decided to give it a shot. And what a shot it was. I was introduced to a queen of the clippers, a sorceress of shampoo. Her name was Hanh. And she gave me the best haircut I have ever received. She was beautiful, smart, funny, outgoing, great at cutting hair, and the scalp rub I got during the shampoo was 7th Heaven. Her character seemed very nurturing, and I knew she was the One. The One to cut my hair. Usually, when a joker hands me his/her card, I end up throwing it away. Yet, when Hanh gave me her card, it became a prized possession. I had found the perfect woman, the perfect hairstylist. For the first time in my life, I became a "regular." It felt good. From here on out, no longer would I be getting my hair cut merely at the Hair Cuttery, no, alas, I would be getting my hair cut "where everybody knew my name." Unfortunately, my name was now "Bobby." I just threw the name out there on the waiting list, not expecting to necessarily go back to this place, so when I realized I had just sold this siren on a golden boy named Bobby, I panicked. I really liked this woman! I respected her! I wanted her to cut my hair! Calling in an appointment to the woman who I would come to know so well under a fake name just seemed like I was living a lie. And I was. It wasn't fair to her. She was pouring herself out there, and here I was, hiding under an alias. I mean, she knew all about my life, my goals, my dreams. Every time I came in, we would pick up our conversation where we left off. She remembered. She remembered! It didn't feel right. She wasn't just some nameless, faceless hairstyling entity, able to be used up, thrown away and replaced! I pledged to one day explain to her my lapse in judgment and its innocent intentions. I trusted she would understand. After all, her name was Hanh. This brings us to yesterday. I was contemplating making the big step and telling her. I had tried to phone my appointment in as usual, but the line was busy. I knew she was working, so I just stopped in after work. As I walked in the door, she was already standing there by the computer, ready to type my name in so gingerly. We both smiled at each other, greeted each other, and it felt like home again. She logged in, ran her fingers across the keyboard, and then paused. "Oh my gosh, I'm sorry. What's your name again?" What? This is the woman who knows which college my brother goes to and what he studies, what renovations I'm making to my house and when I bought it, where my mother lives and what brand of cigarettes she smokes…This woman who knew me so intimately forgot my name. I stood there, frozen in shock. I gulped, speechless. I blinked once in utter astonishment. It's not even my real name! I calmly replied, "Bobby." "Oh, of course! That's right! Bobby!" She forgot my fake name. I was crushed. It didn't make sense! As soon as we sat down she started asking about my family and my job and my house, and she remembered it all, but not my (fake) name. She apologized again, and I took the opportunity as the perfect shot at telling her the truth. So, I did. I thought the occasion was bestowed with serendipity, that it was meant to happen this way. But sadly, after the truth was revealed, the sparkle in her eye began to fade. The magic drifted away. I think the pain of my hurtful, hurtful lies got to her in a place where even her highlights couldn't protect her any longer. Now, I don't know if it will ever be the same. At least she knows the truth now, and my conscience is clear. She knows my name. But what if it's too late? I guess it doesn't matter now…She'll probably just forget it, anyway.