

Two Lives New and Improved

DJ Kane

Clutching a lamppost with one hand, while with the other hand holding a half opened bottle of Tylenol, and crying desperately for attention, after digesting half of the bottle. "Please someone help me" Mike cried, not aloud, but to himself, as he has done many times before, in different settings, at different times. Mike was filled with desperation and had become frustrated with his life, filled with loneliness, and hopelessness.

Freezing and shivering profusely, Mike would take another desperate action. Lifting his right hand, which held the unused half filled bottle of Tylenol, and completely emptying the contents into his mouth. Luckily for Mike, the pole by which he was clinging to on this cold, and blistery night was in front of Kings County Hospital, a noted Psychiatric hospital. Mike being there by luck or design, we'll never know, but we do know, before he had a chance to swallow the Tylenol, two alert hospital orderlies, whom were off duty interrupted him. While one held his head down, the other slapped him on his back preventing Mike from swallowing the half bottle, thus the contents made its way joining the frozen city street. One orderly comforted Mike, "It's okay buddy, nothing could be that bad. Come with us, it's freezing cold out here, you'll be just fine and warm inside. Mike followed the orderlies to the hospital's elevator, which they took to the fifth floor. While on the elevator the orderlies introduced themselves, and asked Mike his name and where he was from.

Once on the fifth floor, Mike was taken to the nurse's station, and the orderlies left. A nurse directed Mike to a private room, to be interviewed by a doctor. After the interview, Mike was told he would be staying for a while. He was given hospital wear, and an orderly took him to a room, he would be residing in. The orderly informed Mike, that he could stay in his room if he wanted during the day, or go to the dayroom to watch TV, and meet other patients; it was his choice to make, the orderly then left. Since it was late Mike decided to call it a night, and turn in. He changed to the hospital wear and went to sleep.

The next day was a day of sorrow, and grief for Mike. He woke up and realized what he had done. He pounded his head over and over with his fist in disbelief saying, "What did I do last night? This was a mistake, I've got to get out of here," He slipped on his hospital slippers, and proceeded to the nurse's station to complain. "This was a mistake, I've got to get out of here!"

Mike was informed by a nurse, "You have to have your doctor sign a release. If your doctor isn't making their rounds today, you can fill out a request for your doctor."

"Okay, I want to put in a request, but I don't know who my doctor is."

"That's all right Mike, I can find out who your doctor is, and put in your request."

"Thanks" Mike replied, as he made his way to the dayroom. Breakfast was being served in the dining room, but he was not hungry or in the mood.

In the dayroom Mike looked for a table that was not occupied to sit. He found one that was close to a window and noticed the window was covered with wire on the outside, and

he commented in a whisper, "Reminds me of a prison, I've got to get out of here, I don't want to spend my Christmas here." Just then a voice interrupted Mike's anger, which he had put to rest for the moment. "May I sit here young man?" Mike turned around, and saw an old man.

"Would you mind if we shared this table?" The old man asked again.

"Not at all" Mike answered, "It's a free country.

" I know young man, that's why my wife and I came to this country, many years ago."

The old man hesitated a bit, deciding if he should stay or leave, but continued, "My name is Samuel, but you can call me Sammy, there's no need for last names in this place"

Mike replied, "Okay Sammy, my name is Mike, and it's nice meeting you, Sammy,"

Mike put out his hand, and they shook hands, and a long friendship had begun.

Mike, a young 18-year-old confused Catholic boy, and Sammy, a 72-year-old depressed Jewish man; a cure for both, had begun.

The two enjoyed each other's company, appreciating each other's lives, thus helping heal each other's inner wounds by just being friends. No doctor's cure needed here needed here, while so different in many ways, and yet they bonded.

A month had passed, and Sammy had been given the good news, he was going home, Mike was still waiting for his release. Sammy couldn't wait to tell Mike, who was in the dayroom. Running up to Mike, Sammy exclaimed, "I've got one week to go Mike, and I'm out of here. After eight months, next week I'll be home free!"

Mike approved saying "You deserve it Sammy, home for the holidays."

Mike didn't feel to bad for himself eiether, he didn't waste all his time in the hospital with doctors. There was a budding romance going on, between Mike and a pretty blond Jewish nurse, by the name of Julie. Mike had asked Sammy what he thought about it, as if he was asking for his blessing. Sammy said, "Ma-zel-tov! Mike, but do you think you can afford her?"

Mike thought a bit and answered, "At least she's working,"

"I meant can you afford her Mike, not her affording you?"

Mike scratched his head and continued, disregarding Sammy's questions, "Next step Sammy, is getting passed her parents."

"If that's a question Mike, pray that her mother is not like my wife, who believes a guyim is never acceptable for marriage in our home. That's a non-Jew, Mike."

"That's why I'm asking you these questions, Sammy?"

"Sorry Mike, I was never a lady's man; I married my wife after we came from Europe. All our children married within our faith. In a way, I feel sorry for you my friend, but that's how it is."

"Yeah, not so fair, is it Sammy?"

“I guess it isn’t Mike, and as long as you don’t ask my wife, I can live, and let live. By the way Mike, my wife will be here next week to take me home, and all of us will have a little celebration. It may be the last time we meet.”

“Sammy, I promise you, that my girlfriend and I will visit you often.”

Sammy responded, “Your girlfriend yes, but you, not so much. After a pause, Sammy continued, “Just kidding Mike, you’re always welcomed in my home.”

It was celebration day, at the hospital; Mike and Sammy were sitting at their table, when Sammy’s wife entered the dayroom carrying packages. Sammy stood up and hurried towards her, and they hugged and kissed, and Sammy relieved her of her packages. Mike stood up and greeted her, “I am Mike, a friend of Sammy’s.”

She responded, “ Happy to meet you Mike, I am Adah, I want to thank you for being my husbands friend, and you are invited to our home anytime, just call.” Mike thanked Adah and gave Sammy the thumbs up.

Adah started unpacking her treats as Julie came to the table bearing good news, “My Mike will be released next week,” and Sammy gave Mike the thumbs up.

Mike replied ecstatically, “Now we have another reason to celebrate!

Mike turned to Sammy whispering in his ear, “Sammy Adah isn’t that bad.”

Sammy whispered back, “She was never like that.”

Mike whispered back, “Maybe you didn’t notice,” Sammy fell silent.

After the party, Sammy gathered his belongings, and everyone gathered the door to freedom. While Julie opened the door, Mike hugged and kissed Adah, thanking her for the food. Mike then hugged Sammy promising, he would visit as soon as he could. Adah, quietly handed Julie a mezuzah saying, “I think you’ll need this Julie good luck.”

As Sammy entered the elevator, Mike with tears in his eyes yelled, “It’s not goodbye old man, oh, I meant Sammy, it’s I’ll see you soon!”

This proves that you don’t have to be an inanimate object to be:

NEW and IMPROVED