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# Sunshine Personified

## or... Why Humoring People in Third Period Biology is a Really Good Idea

If you ask Caleb Kavanaugh, and I don't know why you would, the world is made a better place through endless chatter.

He tried to liven up every class with it. Math too boring? Tell everyone about that one time that a girl you don't know set fire to a macaroni project in third grade. Science too difficult? Remind the kid next to you that he used to have lice, and that's why his hair is so short. Start with, "Remember that time when..."

Charlie Adams had no patience for Caleb Kavanaugh. Not then, not ever. He was forever tormented by Caleb's incessant noise, commenting on every little thing. The teacher wrote the wrong problem on the board, Alyssa MacCready's chewing mango gum instead of mint, the clock is two minutes fast, all of them seemed to merit some kind of pointless remark.

And besides all that, Caleb seemed to take a special interest in talking directly to Charlie.

"Why do you *always* do that?"

Charlie looked up from his Biology worksheet. He sighed. "Do what?"

Caleb reached over and touched Charlie's watch. Charlie pulled his arm away. "Tap your watch." Caleb continued, "You always do that. Like, when you're thinking. Why? Are you afraid of being late?" His eyes widened. "I learned from Marcie – you know Marcie, right? Marcie Haywood?" Charlie didn't have time to answer. "Well, Marcie told me that Chronophobia is kind of like the fear of being late. Do you have that? Chronophobia?"

Charlie opened his mouth.

"It's okay if you do," Caleb continued before Charlie could even start. "I have lots of phobias. Well, not lots, but you know what I mean. I have, like, acrophobia I think. That's spiders, right?"

"No," Charlie said as quickly as he could. "That's arachnophobia. Acrophobia is a fear of heights. And

I'm not scared of being late, it's just a nervous habit."

"Nervous? What are you nervous for?"

"Look, Caleb, I gotta do my work."

"C'mon Charlie, what are you nervous for?"

"I'm not nervous for anything, Caleb, I'm just stressed because of homework."

"Why is it a nervous habit then?"

"I don't know!" Charlie snapped. "Maybe I'm nervous that I'm never going to get my work done because someone keeps talking to me."

Caleb smiled. "You'll get your work done, Charlie, don't worry!" His attention turned to Biology. "Isn't it cool? About the frogs?"

"What?"

"That thing about the frogs?"

"What thing?"

Caleb laughed. "In the video. The frogs in Indonesia without any lungs!"

Charlie rolled his eyes. He had a babysitting job that night, and he had to get his homework done or he'd have to stay up terribly late. "Please be quiet, Caleb," he said, turning back to his paper, "I need to focus."

Caleb wilted a little. "Okay." He tried to focus on his homework. A few minutes later, Charlie felt a tap on his elbow. "What?" he said, a little harshly.

"What kind of movies do you like?"

Charlie sighed. "Horror."

"What's your favorite color?"

"Green."

"Do you like sports?"

"Not really."

"How about flowers? Do you like flowers?"

"Caleb, come on man."

But Caleb said, "You didn't answer my question."

Charlie sighed. It was sort of endearing, he supposed. Besides, no one ever seemed to take this much interest in what he liked. He knew Caleb was just

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*Too Cute*, colored pencil, Marie Duprez



*Funny Faces, Sophie Pollock*

**In the (extraordinarily green) envelope, there was a card with a little frog on it. On the inside it had the message...**

## Sunshine Personified continued ☾

talking to talk, but maybe chatting with him wouldn't be too bad.

"I like geraniums."

Caleb smiled, and scribbled something illegible on his paper. Finally, Charlie thought, he's done.

But of course, he wasn't done.

"Do you like candy?"

Charlie looked at him. He had freckles and a bright white smile. A lot of girls had a crush on him, and Charlie could kind of see why.

"Yeah," he looked out the window.

"Chocolate, I guess."

"What kind?"

"Hm? Oh, any kind."

Caleb grinned and nodded. "Me, too."

And he was quiet for the rest of the class.

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The next day Charlie settled into his seat, and of course, there was Caleb. He was already smiling, but when he saw Charlie, he positively beamed, "Hi Charlie!" He turned around and pulled something out of his bag.

Before Charlie even had the chance to respond, a box sat in front of him on his desk, wrapped in grass-green paper with an emerald-colored bow on the top. He looked at Caleb, who nodded enthusiastically.

He tore the paper off, feeling a little embarrassed. There were quite a few people not-so-sneakily watching him. He opened the flaps on the cardboard box under the paper, and his eyes widened. Inside sat a truly impressive array of chocolate. Kit Kats, Twix, Baby Ruths, Toblerone, M&M's, Hershey's bars and even a round box of assorted chocolate.

He stared for a moment, and when he turned to Caleb, his face was mostly obscured by a bouquet of red geraniums. He held an envelope in his other hand.

Charlie pushed the flowers away from Caleb's face, and was nearly blinded by his smile. "Do you like it?"

Charlie didn't know what to say. He was generally ignored at school, everyone at home was busy with their

own stuff – nobody paid him any mind. Now the spotlight of Caleb's grin was directly on him.

He offered his own smile, "Thanks, Caleb. This is amazing."

Caleb's smile relaxed a little, though it didn't dull. "Here," he said, handing Charlie the card.

In the (extraordinarily green) envelope, there was a card with a little frog on it. On the inside it had the message, "Go with me?" and a huge smiley face in glittering green ink. There were two tickets to a movie premiere at their local theatre. It was a 'Tucker & Dale vs. Evil' remake, and Charlie didn't think it could be done any better than it was 20 years ago, but apparently life was in the mood to surprise him, so maybe it would be all right.

He nearly laughed that a boy had just asked him on a date, and he was thinking about how crappy the movie was going to be.

He smiled at Caleb, who looked like sunshine personified. For once, Caleb wasn't saying anything.

Charlie looked at the card and felt the eyes of other students on him. He nodded. "Yeah," he said, "I'll go with you."

**Charlie didn't know what to say. He was generally ignored at school, everyone at home was busy with their own stuff...**