

## Another Day at Woubba-Burger

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“Can I take your order please...” my voice droned and trailed off towards the end of the question. I’d been at work six hours already, and with only another fifteen minutes to go, I was exhausted. *Uh, he’s smacking gum*, I thought.

“Yeah...can I...” –SMACK– “have a large order of fries” –SMACK– “and a doubba-woubba burger?” –SMACK–

I almost couldn’t take his order for the smacking. Every time he chewed his gum, his mouth opened wide, showing a couple of browned teeth, no others, and strings of long sticky strawberry gum.

“Oh, and a doubba-woubba Coke with no ice?”

I guess this time I tossed him an upraised eyebrow because he threw his thumbs into his belt loops and guffawed.

– SMACK– “I won’t git as much Coke if you put ice it.”

Gross, I thought, as I punched his order in as quickly as I could and took his money – a soggy ten dollar bill. As I counted his change into his brown, unwashed hand, I glanced at the clock. Five more minutes. Time to close my drawer and for Sarah to replace me.

Friday nights were the worst at Woubba-Burger. As soon as school was out, I was on the bus to work. Six and a half hours later, I walked home. Jerry took his break to walk with me, and no one ever said anything if he was a little late coming back. It was too late and too far for me to walk by myself.

Jerry was old; one of those little guys who retire and then realize he’s spent all his money and has to come back to work. I think I would have picked a better place than Woubba-Burger. He always asks me about my day, like my gramps would have. I never answer, but I always think about it.

Since it was Friday, no one I knew had come in tonight. I guess they went to the movies instead, or maybe the mall. Usually some kids from school, Alice or Rick leading, come in to make fun of me in any way they can. They have complicated orders, like doubba-woubba burgers with a quarter-size of mayonnaise and three pickles with a single slice of onion. Or they wait until I work drive-through, order the biggest order they can, wait until it’s fixed, and drive off. If they have a regular order and stay to eat, they make a huge mess, which I have to clean up “because I know them.” At least it wasn’t that way today.

Jerry dropped me at home, and exhaustion set in. It wouldn’t be long before I was snoring.

“Can I take your order?” Lunch shift was hopping. We were about half through the rush, and no one had gotten into a shouting match, neither us nor the customers. It was a good day until I noticed familiar faces: Alice and Rick. *BOTH of them*, my brain screamed. The panic must have registered on my face. As I counted change for my customer, I noticed the two exchanging smiles. Rick was ordering for the couple.

“I’ll have the largest cherry milkshake you have,” he cooed with a smile. Alice giggled.

“We don’t have cherry, but we do have strawberry, vanilla, and chocolate.”

“Oh, but I want a cherry one,” he whined like a four-year-old, stamping his feet. Alice started to laugh.

“I’m sorry sir, the closest we have is strawberry,” I was beginning to turn red.

“FINE! I’ll take a stupid strawberry!” he sniveled. “What’s the biggest, most humongous size you have?” He made a motion to show the size, arms stretching wide, nearly hitting the granny with the walker behind him.

“We have the doubba-woubba size, which is thirty-two ounces,” I returned.

“Huh?”

“We have the doubba-woubba size,” I said a bit louder, turning redder.

“I couldn’t hear you, what?”

“We have the doubba-woubba size,” my voice rising.

“What?!”

“We have the doubba-woubba size,” I yelled, bright red. The line silenced. Alice was rolling with laughter. A few people behind her had begun snickering.

“Well, if you’re soo adamant about it, I guess I’ll just have to have that size,” Rick replied.

“It’ll be three thirteen,” my voice quaked. Jerry handed me the prepared milkshake. Just as I handed it to Rick, I knew the ordeal wasn’t over. Rick opened the lid of the milkshake, and looked in.

“Oh, come on, I said I wanted CHERRY!” he cried. At this, he threw the milkshake at me. When I opened my eyes, I was expecting to be dripping in doubba-woubba strawberry shake. Instead, I saw Rick and Alice being escorted out by Dave, the manager. I looked over; Jerry was covered in shake. I ran out the back door.

I don’t even know why I did it. I should have stayed to thank Jerry; he saved me from my baptism into strawberry heaven. But instead, I ran. I guess I was scared and ashamed. I sat on the back curb, put my elbows on my knees, and cried.

An arm crept around my shoulder. I expected it to be Sarah, but I could tell from the smell it wasn’t.

“Hey, you want me to walk you home?” It was Jerry.

“Yeah, could you walk me home? I haven’t had a good day today.”