

C h r i s t i a n H o l m e s

Please Be Mind

A YOUNG NOVEL

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Chapter 2

Where on earth was 1965?

In the hot doldrums of summer, David had made many attempts to replace the activities he would have usually done with friends. He had started a job selling singing telegrams door to door. He had zeroed in the first week, but he became industrious in the second, and started giving samples. By the third he had given one-hundred forty-seven and a half renditions of “Fly Me to the Moon.”

David had even tried taking a dance class at the local ballet studio. He wasn't too bad at the movement part, it was the girl's outfits that made it so hard for him to focus. On the third day of class the teacher jammed the stop key in the CD player and looked directly at David.

“Well David,” she had said, “You've got the hips and chest movements down now. How about taking a look at some of the other body parts. David hadn't returned to class.

His final try was collecting, and it was working out well. He had a coin collection, complete with two collections of state quarters, one organized by state and one by date. He had a movie-stub collection, he had his books, organized by author of course, and DVDs by director.

The infamous end-of-year performance wasn't the only reason he had no friends. His previous “best friend” Justin Kinney had moved far away, and now they only talked every few months. The conversations mostly consist of rapid “stock”

updates, the kind you tell a million times to everyone when they ask you how it's going followed by excuses to get off the phone.

At first, David had been hurt by Justin's sudden detachment. After the second friend moved, and the third, David began to understand that they hadn't been real friendships at all. They had been more like relationships of convenience. As soon as it was more convenient to be friends with people from their new town, they were.

David wished he had known that before pouring his heart and soul into them. He had made sure to do as many favors for his friends as he possibly could. He made a massive central calendar in his room, wrote all of his friend's birthdays on it, and made a special habit of checking it each night before brushing his teeth to see which of his friends needed presents and cards.

David put his last penny into its place in line with the others on his carpet floor. He counted each one, double checking the dates, and used a small washcloth to wipe off as much dirt as he could. That summer, he had painstakingly sifted through every ounce of change he could find and picked out one for each year. He didn't even try for the coins below the 50's, they were too rare and hard to find.

As he counted each coin, David checked them off on a small piece of paper. He had most of the quarters since the 50's, and some of the nickels, but his real pride was his penny collection.

These were his favorites, but they also drove him a little crazy. He had every single penny from the year 1950 to 2009 except for the elusive 1965. David had used this dilemma as

one of his stock conversation pieces when he was talking to a distracted Justin on the phone one day:

“I swear man, its a conspiracy. I can’t find a 1965 penny anywhere.”

“Uh huh, ya that sucks man.”

“No, seriously! It’s bugging me so much! Where did they all go? Is there a 1965 penny collector who’s keeping them all stockpiled? Did the government have some sort of 1965 penny recall?”

“You may be over-thinking this a little.”

“Wait, hold on, one...nine...six...five...together that makes twenty one! Aha!”

“Um...my mom is calling me for dinner. I have to go.”

Come to think of it, that was the last time David had heard from Justin. David was ponding this when he heard his mother’s voice through his thin walls.

“David! We have to go! We’re both going to be late if we don’t walk out the door within thirty seconds!”

David didn’t have time to pack. He would reorganize it later that night. Maybe he could arrange them by condition? He grabbed his shoulder-bag and collided with his waiting mother in the hallway. Not even his linebacker tackle could alter her irritated stance, arms folded tightly like she was trying to keep something hidden in her belly-button.

“I made you some tea. Its in the holder.” She said flatly as he ran out ahead of her to put his bag in the car.

Caffeine always lifted David's spirits. He had even gone so far as to try convincing the headmaster to keep thermoses of hot water next to the vending machines so the students could keep themselves caffeinated the entire day.

"That's what energy drinks are for" the headmaster had told him.

But how could someone even attempt to stay awake and interested what was being blabbed at them by someone in a blue checkered shirt?

His mother talked into her cell-phone the entire drive to school. She was a lawyer which means she worked for herself. She could control the amount of hours she worked. The problem was, she didn't exercise any of this control. Apparently David was important enough to drop off and pick up from school, but not important enough to talk to while doing it.

Some mornings the phone did not ring, and some of the times they would talk.

Well, she would talk.

David would be amazed at her self-centeredness. She would talk about her work, the last inconsiderate thing his father had done, what she had "on her plate" for that day. Sometimes David would mention something about how stressful a big was and his mother would chuckle to herself knowingly as if to say "If you only knew what real work was."

David was almost happy to arrive when they rolled up to the school drop-off point. It meant more tomatoes, more dull subjects, and more cafeteria food, but at least school had people. At least school gave him contact to someone, if only

just a furtive glance from a new kid that didn't yet know what a social time-bomb David was.

As David walked down the steps and went again to his locker, he wondered when it would all end, or begin. Would things be this way forever? They couldn't. David had once been a confident, social person. He wouldn't go so far as to think he had been popular, but certainly not anonymous. Actually, anonymous would be better than this right now. David wished he was one of those lost-looking new kids or freshman who had not yet truly begun writing their record in social school history.

David found no tomato in his locker today.