

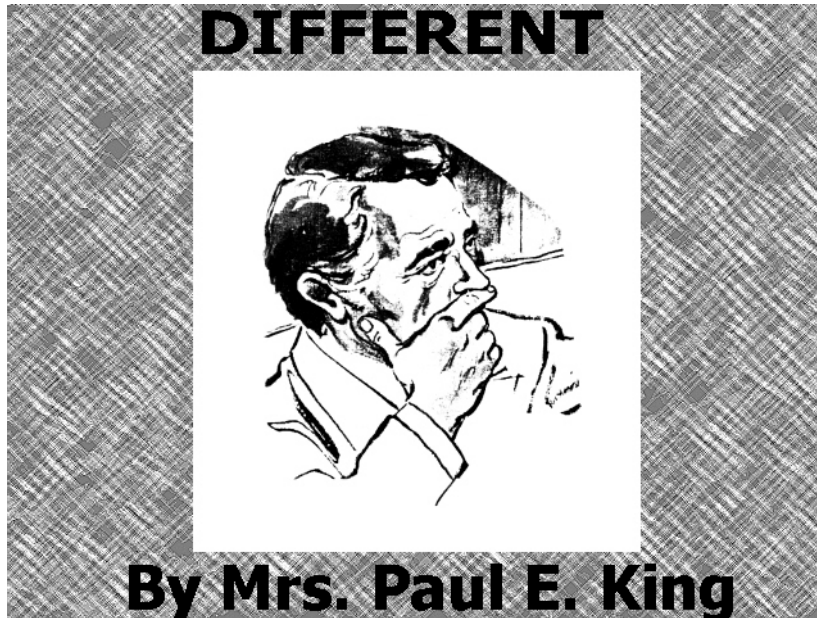
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DIFFERENT
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Harvey tossed the cigarette on the sidewalk as he stepped to the door of Greenwich and Greenwich Associates. He mustn't let the new young office man see him smoking. And what his reason for that was had a way of making him feel downright irritable and angry. Josh McHenny was indeed, different.

What was there about the young man that made him feel uncomfortable when he was in the same room with him? Harvey wondered as he slipped a mint into his tobacco soaked mouth to cut the telltale odor, or, maybe, even remove it completely.

"Good morning, Mr. Greenwich," Becky Duckworth said, with her usual bright smile accompanying the greeting.

"Morning, Becky. Is my brother in yet?"

"No sir, he isn't. Neither is your uncle in. You are generally the first one in, though. However, the new man your company hired on has been in for ten minutes already. He was here when I arrived. Truth of the matter is, we came inside together. I like him, Mr. Greenwich. He's extremely conscientious and diligent; said his late father always taught him to arrive at whatever job he may be doing a bit earlier than the starting time, and to work diligently at it and go beyond what was required of him to do. That's quite a switch from the average young man growing up in today's culture and society, wouldn't you say so?"

Harvey sucked hard on the mint. "It surely is," he admitted candidly. "Josh is different all right," he added. "I'm trying to figure out the whys and wherefores of his difference and I seem to be doing nothing but going in endless circles. Take the way he dresses, even; not so much as a hint of today's sloppy, so-called 'relaxed' style about him. Why Becky, he comes in here looking every inch of him a well-dressed, conservative man. His hair is always neatly cut and handsomely in place and. . . ."

"I know; I've noticed it. But then, who hasn't noticed? And wondered? Marveled about it, too?"

"He stands out all right, among today's sloppily dressed young people especially," Harvey Greenwich admitted.

"He's outstanding, wouldn't you agree?" Becky asked, still smiling.

She could be so frustrating, Becky could, Mr. Greenwich thought. Why couldn't their receptionist answer with a simple yes or no instead of stating what she thought then finishing by asking a question of her own? It was almost like she knew what he was thinking and how he felt but like she

couldn't be satisfied until she had drawn out a "confessional" sort of statement from him.

"I'll be in my office," he replied rather curtly without replying to her last question. "Send my brother in as soon as he arrives, please."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Greenwich. And before you go, here's the contract you've been waiting for. It came via special delivery shortly after I got here. Have a good morning, sir. I have a pot of freshly-dripped coffee ready for you."

By the time Becky finished speaking, Harvey's better mood had returned. Turning, he smiled at the middle-aged receptionist and thanked her for the contract and the freshly-brewed coffee. "I don't know how we'd get along without you," he complimented with sincerity.

"Thank you, Sir. However, no one is indispensable. Not really. Right?"

Smiling, and pouring a cup of the fragrant smelling coffee, Harvey said simply, "I guess you're right. But I still can't see how we'd get along without you," and he hurried away toward his office, sipping the steaming coffee as he went.

Passing the small room that served as an office for Josh McHenny, Harvey glanced quickly in through the partially-opened door. What he saw made him tremble. Then sudden anger boiled up inside of him. Josh was kneeling beside the desk chair. The man was . . . praying! Of all things! Harvey thought.

The cup in his hand shook violently. Coffee began slopping over its side. For an instant he was tempted to hurl it at the kneeling figure, hot coffee and all. Then just as quickly the violent feeling abated and left him and he walked quickly into his own spacious office-suite and closed the door quietly behind him.

He walked over to the large ceiling-to-floor windows and pulled the drapes wide open. Warm, mellow sunlight poured in through the thick, heavy panes, flooding the room with light and cheerfulness. He stood for a long while in front of the sun-drenched windows, feeling both uncomfortable and awkward over what he had seen and sensing mingled stirrings of deep admiration and awe and anger from somewhere deep within his being.

Remembering the contract Becky had given him, he took quick steps to the enormous mahogany desk and opened the thick, sealed envelope and scanned its contents. His mind, however, was not on the much-desired contract. Ah no! It seemed to stubbornly refuse to budge away from the kneeling form of Josh McHenny in his tiny office room a short way down the hall.

"What's wrong with me?" Harvey Greenwich asked himself aloud as he pushed the papers aside. He'd always had control of things. Always. And of himself, too. He "knew his way around." So why should Josh's kneeling form create this fear within him? Why? And why should it have disquieted him so and unsettled him? Why? Sure, he -- Josh -- was different. But he'd come to their firm with qualifications far above any others they'd interviewed, Harvey remembered.

He felt sweat break out on his forehead. He needed coffee. Strong, steaming-hot coffee. His had gone cold. He couldn't stand cold coffee. Pushing the buzzer to Becky's outer office, he said, "A cup of the hottest, strongest coffee you can bring me, please."

"Yes Sir. Are you all right, Mr. Greenwich?"

"I'm fine, Becky. Fine. Thank you."

"Your brother called, Sir. He and your uncle will be a little late this morning. Problems on the bridge. . . ."

"Thanks Becky."

Great! Harvey thought. Just great! Especially since the three of them were to have gone over the contract together and to have gotten it back to the company with their revisions and/or additions as quickly as possible so it could be finalized and signed by those with whom they were dealing.

Harvey reached for his cigarette pack; then Josh's face and kneeling figure came before him and he slid the pack to the bottom of his jacket pocket, wondering angrily why he didn't seem to have control of himself when Josh was around.

"Your coffee, Sir," Becky announced, knocking lightly on the door before entering. "And here's a doughnut to go with it. Jenny brought them along this morning."

"Thanks Becky. Tell Jenny to get busy on yesterday's unfinished work. There's plenty for her to do until my brother and uncle get here. That bridge is a real headache. What happened this time, another accident?"

"Yes sir. Quite serious, I understand. Is there anything else I can do for you, Mr. Greenwich?"

"Send Josh McHenny in, will you, please, as you go to your desk? And bring him a doughnut and a cup of fresh coffee too, please."

"Yes sir. Gladly, Mr. Greenwich," and Becky left the office door open as she hurried away.

"You wanted me, Sir?" Josh asked softly as he stood in the open doorway.

"I did. Come inside, please, and leave the door open. Becky's bringing you a cup of coffee and a doughnut. Sit down, please."

"Thank you, Mr. Greenwich," Josh replied as he settled down in the leather chair across from Harvey just as Becky came with the little tray on which was the cup of coffee, the doughnut and sugar and individual creamers.

Josh smiled. "Thank you, Becky," he said. "You make the 4.0 grade this morning for remembering things like this," and he held up the sugar packets and creamers.

Becky smiled. "I've always made it a point to please the people I think highly of," she answered. "I find out their likes and their dislikes. . . ."

Her voice trailed with her smile.

"Is it only for those whom you think highly of?" Josh teased pleasantly. "I'm sure I've seen the same kindnesses performed for and bestowed upon

some who were not so . . . so . . . kind to you. This is indeed a most admirable quality about you and characteristic in you."

Becky blushed prettily. Josh was glad to see that, in her, this lovely thing of pure womanliness and modesty was still resident. It reminded him of his mother.

Becky thanked him and left the room, closing the door upon the two.

Josh bowed his head and thanked God in silence for the food. When he opened his eyes Harvey Greenwich said, "You're a religious fanatic." There was a scowl on his face.

Josh sipped the steaming coffee. "Why do you say that?" he asked softly as he watched the man across the desk from him.

"Because I'm convinced that this is exactly what you are?"

"And what has convinced you of this, may I ask?"

"First, I find you on your knees praying as I pass the door to your office and now you offer thanks for a doughnut and a cup of coffee!"

"And that makes me a religious fanatic, does it?"

"Well, what would you classify yourself if you're not that?"

"I am a child of God, Mr. Greenwich. A born again, sanctified wholly follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. For almost all of my life I have served Him and He has done me nothing but good. I delight to please Him because, you see, Sir, I love Him. From my earliest days, my father and my mother taught me to love Him and to serve Him. At the tender age of six, I surrendered my heart and life to Him and He became my Savior, forgiving me of all my sins and making me His child."

"Sins! What sins does a six-year-old have? You're a fanatic, McHenny."

"What sins does a six-year-old have? you ask. Plenty, Mr. Greenwich. Plenty. You see, we were born in sin, all of us. Nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ can wash those sins away. I well remember, as a four or five year old,

having my dear mother rock me, in her arms, in the rocking chair, and hearing her sing, 'What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.'

"Oh, Mr. Greenwich, I am not a religious fanatic; I'm a sinner saved by grace who is so in love with the Christ who saved him from a burning, blistering hell and readied him for Heaven, that I must thank Him for His bountiful blessings to me and commune with Him every opportunity I get. And as for praying in the office, this is a daily practice and joyful habit of mine. I need His wisdom and help for the decisions that need to be made and the papers that may need to be signed."

"Then why didn't you sign on that Flaherty contract?"

"I couldn't, sir. I told each of you before accepting this position that I believed in honesty and uprightness and that I would work only under these conditions. I have had, and mean to maintain, a conscience void of offense toward God and man. The way the contract was drawn up, I couldn't sign. You see, Mr. Greenwich, my parents, and my grandmother, taught me that the All-seeing eye of God sees everything: I mean to keep a clean slate with Him and be true and faithful to my Christian heritage and upbringing. It would break my grandmother's heart and send her to an untimely grave were I to change and make shipwreck of my faith. I love my grandmother, sir. Love her dearly. She finished raising me when my parents were taken to Heaven in an auto accident."

Harvey Greenwich turned pale. A sickly ashen gray crept into his cheeks and up to where his hair line began. Pain and anguish like Josh had never seen filled the man's eyes. "Grandma!" he exclaimed with a gasp. "Grandma! Now I remember!"

Josh was on his feet in an instant. Rushing to where Harvey Greenwich sat, looking more dead than alive, he said, "Are you all right, my friend?"

Mr. Greenwich looked suddenly very old. With pain-filled eyes he looked up at Josh. "Grandma," he whispered. "I remember it all now. This is why you are so different. Yes, it's coming back to me like the waves that wash in to shore. I was a little boy. Yes, a very little boy. Oh, I'll never forget how she held me and sang to me and told me to meet her in Heaven. And I . . . I . . .

well, McHenny, I promised her. Yes, I did! I told her I'd meet her in Heaven. And . . . and . . . then she died. Still holding me, she died!"

Great heaving sobs shook the broad shoulders of the man.

"It isn't too late to do it, kind friend. You can meet her again if you will become converted and. . . ."

"You don't know how wicked and unscrupulous I've been," Harvey Greenwich cut in between sobs. "I've cheated and lied and been as mean as a mortal man can be. God wouldn't want the likes of me. I'm a wicked man, Josh McHenny. An exceedingly wicked man."

"And didn't you ever hear what Jesus said about that?" Josh asked, getting on his knees and laying a hand on Mr. Greenwich's shaking shoulder. "Jesus said, 'They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.' And He didn't stop with that, but He stated, a little farther along in that same chapter in Matthew's Gospel, 'for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' That means you, kind sir. And me. I came; I was freely and wondrously forgiven. And you can have the same forgiveness."

Harvey's eyes opened wide. For a long time he looked at Josh, saying, "Now I know why you're different. Yes, I know. You have what Grandma had." Then, quickly, he grabbed Josh's hand and asked pleadingly, "Are you sure He'll have me, my boy? Oh, I've been so wicked."

"He only saves sinners, Mr. Greenwich. This is why He died and for whom He died -- sinners! He didn't come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners!"

"Oh, I believe I see it, Josh. Yes, I do. Will you pray for me? Please? Since it's not too late for me to live up to that long-ago promise I made to my grandmother, I want to fulfill it now. And Josh, please forgive me for what I said to you. I'm sorry. Now pray, please. If He'll have me, I'm ready."

Nearly beside himself with joy, Josh began to pray.