

## One Bench-One Walker-One Umbrella: A Conversation

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One December afternoon, the week before Christmas, I was sitting on a bench enjoying my view of the cascade waterfall. Which sparkled in the sunlight, as the sun seemingly appeared to be dancing off the falls. As it once again, would make its endless trip at times, crashing into the waters below, seemingly without any remorse. And at other times falling graciously as a ballerina in flight, only to repeat its constant rhythmic dance over again, and again, in our little village. Thus, being the envy to all others while expressing itself this month, with a contagious backdrop of Christmas cheer. While being so accented with lights of joy, and in perfect concert with the homes beyond, in their holiday celebration.

All at once an umbrella put down besides me on this warm, and unusually sunny day interrupted my heavenly focus. “Good afternoon, may I share this bench?”

I looked up much to my surprise, there stood a tall, neatly dressed, gentleman, who seemed to me, not of this world, or safe to say Country, “Of course you may”, I answered.

He immediately sat down, putting his umbrella between us and replied, “Young man, my name is Thomas, and I must admit, you do have the best view in the house.”

“Expecting rain Thomas?” I asked.

“Habit,” he answered, “I’m originally from England, and old habits take a long time to die.”

“You don’t say, Thomas” I replied, “How long have you been here?”

“About five years,” he answered.

“Guess they do, the habits I mean”, I replied, and continued “My name is Doug, and it’s nice meeting you, Thomas.”

Just then an older gentleman with an upright walker joined our little group. “Can I join you gentlemen, or is it too crowded already?”

As the self-appointed spokesman, I answered, “Always room for one more to partake in this beautiful showcase of life. Your first name is all we need?”

“I am Rabbi Irv,” and he sat down, parking his walker at his side of the bench.

”Rabbi, this is...” As I pointed to my British friend Thomas, he replied,

“Oh, my name is Thomas”

Rabbi Irv said to me in a whisper, “Your British friend isn’t too quick?”

I let the remark pass and continued, “Welcome, Rabbi Irv, I’m Doug and I welcome you, to this humble attraction of life. That had framed us on this particular bench, at this exceptional week of Christmas. Rabbi what do you think of this week?”

“Before I answer, I would love to know who’s umbrella that is, I can surly guess?”

“That’s Thomas’s Rabbi, he’s a British chap.”

“Oh, one of those,” the Rabbi remarked, and continued answering my question, “I do like the lights, the celebration of life. We do, we meaning the Jewish people, have our holiday, Hanukkah which we start to celebrate on December 10<sup>th</sup>, of this year, and last eight days, also known as The Festival of Lights.”

I then interrupted the Rabbi, before he had gotten to far into his preaching mode, and pointed out to him saying, “Isn’t this so appropriate Rabbi? We are being entertained be the waters of life and a festival of lights, no matter their origin, but the meaning remains clear. Peace on Earth, through Love and Strength. We should all work together as one, Rabbi”

“ I think your getting a little preachy yourself, Doug?” The Rabbi replied, “That’s usually set in my arena.”

I then asked Thomas, “Anything to add, Thomas?”

“Just taken it all in, not at all in disagreement.”

“I bet you don’t,” the Rabbi interjected.

And I immediately began to question Thomas and the Rabbi,” Do you guys know each other, or even met?”

They both nodded No, and I continued, “I can just imagine what would be, if you guys had.”

At last a female voice interrupted the testosterone, sitting on the bench. “Afternoon, gentleman can a female join in, or is this an exclusive?”

I gave the Rabbi a little nudge, “What do you think Rabbi, she sure is pretty?”

Slightly turning at the sound of my voice the Rabbi answered me “I’m married Doug”

“Rabbi,” I continued, “I wasn’t offering you a Christmas present, but for you to admire a woman of beauty that we can all appreciate, married or not. Besides, I’m not asking you to cross the line. She may not even be Jewish.”

She continued, “I’m so tired of walking, and I see you gentlemen have the best view from this bench. I’m Stella, I’m visiting my mother, and for your information, I’m happily married, and with child, who is due this month.”

“Stella,” I replied, “We are not exclusive to this bench, but today we are inclusive to one another, and you may join us. I started the introductions, this is Thomas, Rabbi Irv, and I am Doug, welcome Stella” and we all stood for Stella to sit, after which we sat.

I whispered to the Rabbi “Sounds mighty familiar, I mean this story, I believe, I read it somewhere before, I even bet she’s Jewish. And I know we have at least one wise man sitting on this bench, don’t know about Thomas, and you Rabbi. Thomas doesn’t have much to say, he may be wisest, after all, and you have too much to say, Rabbi. By the way Rabbi, do you have a garage?”

“I do have one, why are you asking me?”

“Good, I may be able to pick up a manger at the local Good Will, we can be ready for Stella’s baby.”

“What do you mean?” The Rabbi exclaimed

“Don’t get nervous Rabbi, I was just kidding. You’ve must have heard of ‘Tradition,’ Rabbi? We all have our Traditions,”

We stayed for a few hours enjoying the picturesque scene we were privy to. Stella taking our cell numbers, that we would all be notified when she had her baby. Thomas promised to leave his umbrella home, if its not certifiably raining, and Rabbi Irv will catch up with the New Testament, so there will be no future surprises next time we meet, and he promised to take anger management classes, and I promised that I will have another conversation with my new found friends, if or when we all meet again.

Funny, no one asked Stella if she knew the sex of the baby was, or if she had picked out a name. Could the name begin with a J and end in jr.? Just thinking out loud.