

## Over Coffee

A chance encounter changed both their fates forever, though the change was heavily one-sided. Both men would forever relive that single moment every single day of their lives.

Adam was the hope of his poverty-stricken family. Born into a family of six children with him at the head, he was expected to take care of everything and everyone when he grew up. The problem started when that responsibility was thrust upon him at the tender age of fifteen. This was due to his parents retiring early as farm workers as their backs couldn't handle it anymore. It was never talked about, but Adam and everyone knew: The eldest son was now the breadwinner. School? That was a dream he had to lock up in his heart and forget. As a farm boy, the only thing he knew was hard labour; hence, his first job was working at the farm as a day labourer like his father and his father's father before him. The never-ending chain of modern-day slavery.

Due to having seven mouths to feed, Adam started work at five in the morning and ended at ten in the evening. A normal shift ended at dusk, but the young man had to work extra hours to satisfy his financial needs. His family knew better than to spout any negative comments about Adam, for he was a heavily-laden man burdened with sorrow and stress. The last thing he needed was an ungrateful soul telling him how he should work extra hard in order to afford luxury for the family. They ate to survive, and that was that. All was well; the family was eating, his siblings were going to school, but above all, Adam was not happy. Despite his unhappiness, he worked so hard that his employer, Mr Jones, started to notice him.

After two years, Adam was promoted to the rank of supervisor. His main area was overseeing the workers who maintained the soybean section. It was quite a huge responsibility considering how he had a little over five hundred workers under him. Despite the slight pay rise and flexible working hours, Adam couldn't even manage to be happy. There was something deep inside of him that yearned to be part of something greater and not just be an ordinary farm boy. He always prayed to any supernatural power that would just listen to his plea; he wanted to be alive. It seemed that at least one deity, who shall forever remain unnamed, answered his prayers. However, the answer came in a very distorted form of help, so distorted it seemed like it wasn't an answer but a ridicule from the gods.

At twenty years of age, outperforming other supervisors on the large farm, Mr. Jones had bad news for his most productive employee. His employment was unfortunately terminated with immediate effect. The reason was that Mr. Jones felt that his inner talents were being suppressed by working on a farm; hence, he had to let him go. What inner talents? Adam asked. His employer could not give an answer. Luckily, two of his siblings were now on the farm, so they could help with the family finances. With his severance pay in his hand and family's goodbyes in his heart, he headed for the city to look for work.

Two months down the line and with no money in his pocket, Adam had knocked on every factory door looking for a job, all to no avail. It seemed none cared whether you were appointed Supervisor Of The Month twenty times on some farms out in the boons; the factory managers wanted educational qualifications of which Adam had none, considering how he ditched school when he was in Form 2. In despair and contemplating even suicide, he entered a random shop and just sat on the nearest table he could find. The thought of being chucked out wasn't a deterrent to him; the man had decided to steel his heart before taking his own life.

Whilst being stuck in his own thoughts, the waitress in the shop slid a steaming hot mug containing black fluid right in front of him. Perplexed, he raised his head to enquire, and the young lady just

smiled and hinted that the man sitting two tables across from him had bought the cup of coffee for Adam. Still reeling from confusion, the mysterious man slid into the chair opposite the one Adam was sitting in and urged the ex-supervisor to drink. Adam started bursting out his story to his patron without being asked, as he had a lot on his mind. The waitress stealthily refilled Adam's mug countless times with black coffee, and the man was very thirsty, both in mind and body.

A few months later, Adam was being taught how to start a business by the mysterious man who later revealed himself to be Jack, an entrepreneur who was looking for someone to teach everything Jack had learnt about in the business industry. To his delight, Adam was an honest man who thought of the people working for him, unlike all the rich businessmen Jack knew. Whenever Adam asked Jack why he bought that coffee for him, Jack always replied by saying that Adam looked like a man at the end of the line with no hope of tomorrow, hence he felt the need to interact with him. For the first time since he was fifteen, Adam was happy.

A year later, Adam was running a successful business, and it was a true testament to coming from rags to riches. Being the caring eldest son in the family, the whole family relocated to the city, and they started eating for luxury. All this was possible only because of a conversation held over a cup of coffee.