

Walter.

Walter always woke up at seven am sharp. Regardless of whether it was a Sunday, Christmas Day or Britney Spears' birthday, he was up at seven. By seven fifteen Walter was watering his plants. He was prompt, never a minute late nor early. The plants had become accustomed to being watered at seven fifteen, so they would be watered at seven fifteen. Simple. End of the story.

The very thought of the plants being without their morning water made Walter's left pinkie twitch. It was a sign of a trouble when that pinkie twitched. Walter chewed on his pipe while he watered. It was actually a point of contention between him and the plants. You see, the plants were vocal anti-smokers and made a habit of reminding Walter of the numerous health hazardous of nicotine. Walter urged them to mind their own business. "Stick to what you know, soil and sun!" He barked back. The plants rolled their metaphorical eyes every time Walter launched into another coughing fit. "Told you so" was bantered around a bit. Both parties thought the other was so incredibly in the wrong but ultimately, they did enjoy the playful back and forth each morning. If not only for the delight of the daily routine.

Mind your own business had become Walter's mantra. He would have it tattooed across his chest if he didn't think tattoos were so utterly ridiculous. This mantra, although frequently repeated by Walter, was often if not always ignored by strangers. Walter was commonly mistaken for a sympathetic ear. People of all ages and walks of life would moan on and on about their stupid problems to Walter. He detested the free emotional labour he was required to perform, but secretly loved the fact that he was perceived so trustworthy. His pipe was required to change this approachable image. He thought he'd look a bad boy – the local 'godfather' type. But the pipe only encouraged even more strangers to approach him, usually just to warn him about lung cancer.

Walter was in search of peace. Now even the plants had become too noisy for him. The quiet mornings had been replaced by intense debates over soil richness and air quality. Everybody has something to say including the flora and fauna. He wanted quiet, peace, and solitude.

But one sunny afternoon, a realisation had dawned on Walter. His search for peace would be hijacked by the desire for mutual understanding. He wanted to sit in silence with someone else. The realisation had occurred after meeting the local whipper snapper Marjorie Ann.