

True or False?
Written by Aaron Cheng

On a sunny day in mid-July, the sun hung high up in the air, radiating heat. People walked up and down the streets of Truth Town. Among them stood a medium-height man with a moustache and curly blond hair. He wore an outdated t-shirt that looked like it had been washed a bit too many times, and a pair of khaki shorts that hung down below his knees. He carried a cheap replica of a leather bag in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other.

The man was named Andrew, and he worked for a finance company. He was in his thirties, but life hadn't been great to him – he'd never had a girlfriend nor earned a promotion. His life, you might say, was without flair.

On this day, he walked through the rotating doors of a tall, metallic building that reached up to the sky. As he walked in, his colleague greeted him with a smile.

"How are you still wearing that shirt? The colors are so faded - I don't even know if the pattern on it is a cat or a mouse."

Andrew replied with a sigh, "If I had had a promotion after five years of work, maybe I could afford to buy a new one."

"Good luck with that, but I don't think it will happen in a thousand years."

Diminished, Andrew trudged the distance to his work area, a small, non-descript but rather soulless cubicle. His desk was cluttered with half-empty coffee cups and papers scattered across it. In the centre sat an old, tired computer. He pushed the 'on' button to begin the laborious process of starting it up. As he waited, Andrew began to sort through all the things he had to do.

James, a try-hard newbie, leaned into the cramped cubicle.

"Andrew, the boss wants to see you immediately, hope you don't get a promotion!" he said jealously.

That was when one of Andrew's colleagues said to him, "The manager wants to see you in his office, hope you don't get a promotion."

He stood up from his seat and slowly walked towards the manager's office, both a bit excited and a bit nervous.

Inside the office, before Andrew even had the chance to sit down, the manager said to him,

"Andrew, I'm sorry to have to tell you that we need to let you go. Our leadership team is downsizing. With your departure, I'll have a thousand dollars added to my year-end bonus." He waited a moment before finishing. "You understand, right? Money is money."

Andrew was stunned and yelled angrily, "What? You can't do that!"

The manager simply replied, "Yes, I can because I'm just a selfish person."

"Now get out of here, I'm a busy man, you know."

Then he waved to Andrew like he was shooing a fly away from his food. Andrew walked out of the office with his head drooping. As he went to pick up all his belongings from his cubicle, his colleague approached him again and said, "Were you fired?"

Andrew didn't reply, hoping he would go away.

But the guy took his silence as a yes and said, "Great! Now I can have more room for my stuff! Hope you don't find a new job, loser."

In that moment, Andrew wanted to punch his fellow worker in the face, but he refrained from it and instead took hope in the event tonight to cheer him up. Tonight was going to be the night of the first date Andrew has ever had. Back at his house, Andrew decided to watch some TV to pass the time. When he turned it on, it showed an advertisement for a new shampoo on the market.

The woman in the ad smiled like she loved her product and said, "This shampoo will cause you to lose hair! I would never use it myself. Regardless, you should still buy it because I get the commission!"

Andrew quickly turned to the news channel, showing an interview with a government official.

The reporters asked him, "Mayor Drump, some say that you are taking bribes from people, and others suspect that you have been corrupting tax money. What do you have to say about that?"

Governor Drump replied, "Of course I did, why would anyone reject that kind of money? Believe it or not, I earn more in a minute than most of you in a month. God bless capitalism." After he said that, the angry mob of reporters quickly ran on stage, and the TV signal was abruptly cut off, automatically switching Andrew to another channel. The channels were different in their content, but similar in how "honest" they were.

Soon it was time for Andrew's date. He put on his nicest suit with a white collared shirt underneath and a blue bowtie around his neck. He also wore a pair of black trousers that seemed a bit too big for him; they almost dragged on the floor. When he arrived at the restaurant, the servants took him to his seat. In front of Andrew was a girl he would claim to be: "A true angel on Earth". In reality, Georgina was just a normal, maybe slightly prettier woman somewhere in her twenties. Andrew knew her from an online dating app, and after four years of constant chasing and countless transactions, he thought that he had finally melted her cold heart and would be blessed by the flaming love underneath all the ice. He was very wrong.

They started to talk after they ordered, mostly about work, hobbies, and financial status. When Andrew told her that he had lost his job, he was a bit sad when she didn't show as much sympathy as he thought she should; in fact, she didn't show any at all. Yet Andrew convinced himself that it was probably just because she was too shocked to hear it.

Finally, Andrew brought up the subject of having a second date or, even better, a future with her. However, to his great dismay, she rejected him instantly and said, "A Future? With You? You are jobless, poor, and ugly, out of the few billion people in this world, you think I would choose you? That just proves another of your faults: Stupidity!" She also added, "And anyway, Jack wants to be my boyfriend. He is really nice, but most importantly, much wealthier than you!" With that, Georgina stormed out of the restaurant. Andrew quickly ran outside the restaurant and chased after her.

Behind him, a feeble waiter yelled, "Sir, you didn't pay the bill yet!"

But no one answered him. When Andrew turned a corner, he saw Georgina's back as she was about to enter a cab. That was when something suddenly clicked in Andrew's head as he said, "Georgina, if you don't be my girlfriend, the world will end!"

Georgina spun around and faced Andrew, her eyes furious yet shocked. "What did you say!?" Her voice trembled.

"If you aren't my girlfriend until the day I die, the world will end!" Andrew replied with a confidence he never knew he had.

Georgina's mouth pursed as she processed the information. In any other town, perhaps she might scoff at his bold yet ridiculous declaration. But in Truth Town, you don't doubt what other people say because no one has ever lied here. After some time, she smiled eerily and walked back to the cab.

As Andrew watched her back again, she said coldly, "Then I will never leave you, my love ..."

"HUH? I thought people couldn't lie?" screamed Andrew.

"Oh, but you just did, didn't you?" smirked Georgina.

"You see, when you lie, don't expect others to stay honest. That just makes you look like a clown."

"Bye, hope to see you again, sweetheart!"