A Coke With Mike

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"Hey, Luke." You don’t need to turn around to know who it is...
“Hey, Luke.” You don’t need to turn around to know who it is. No one but Mike calls you Luke.

“Hello, Luke,” he drawls as he slides into a chair. “Lots of people here in the Grill today. What’ll you have? How about a coke with me?”

“Okay, Mike. I’ll have a cherry.”

“Right. Cherry it is.” And in a moment he is gone, striding in a business-like way to the coke bar.

Remember the first time you saw him. You were in the libe, and as usual Mike was walking around the reading room in that business-like way of his, but not quite managing because he wasn’t going anywhere or doing anything. But he looked like the fellows you had read about in Good Housekeeping and The Journal and the kind you had always wanted to meet. He wore a pair of corduroy pants and a ski sweater, but on him they looked different than the same attire on the other fellows, because he looked special to you. You liked him the first time you saw him, and you kept on liking him for a long time.

“Here you are, Luke. Boy, was it hard to get through the line at the bar, but I made it. The bartender is a special friend of mine. What do you know, Luke? Anything new? Man, look at that little chick over there. Nothin’ but smooth. Do you know who she is? Speaking of girls, there is a pledge over in you house that I’d surely like to get a date with. You know who I mean—Shirley Adams. I think she’s really on the beam.”

“Yes, she is, Mike. However, I don’t know how busy she is.”

Sip your coke and forget that you used to like Mike before you dated him too much—before you found out that he had been around too much and that to be seen with him wasn’t exactly the smoothest thing a girl could do.

“Aw, Luke, she won’t be too busy to have a date with me. Besides, I won’t be around here forever. She might miss out on the opportunity. You know I expect to go to Annapolis. I have some pull with the senator.”
Remember that last spring Mike was going to go to Annapolis. He was second alternate, and he was sure that the fellow just ahead of him would flunk his tests. Remember how he came to the dorm to see you and tell you that he was going to Annapolis—how happy you were and yet you didn’t want him to leave because you still liked him? Then, later how disappointed he was when he found out that his first alternate had passed his tests. He had gone out with the guys that night to drown his sorrows. No, Mike wasn’t exactly the kind of guy for a young girl like Shirley. But just exactly how are you going to keep him from dating her?

“Well, I’ll have to ask her, Mike. But she won’t be able to help it if she’s already dated up.”

“Well, if she really wants to go with me she’ll break a date for me.”

Break a date for him. Remember how he asked you to break a date for him? Not just once, but several times. You wanted to, but you knew it wasn’t right. So you told him that you couldn’t, and he didn’t call you again for several weeks. No, Mike wasn’t the kind of guy for a sweet young girl.

“Girls can’t very well break dates, Mike. It isn’t too good for their reputations.”

“Now don’t get started on that. If they want to badly enough, there isn’t anything they can’t do. You ought to know that, Luke. The only way to have a good time is to do just what you want to do. Don’t listen to what other people tell you.”

Remember that Mike always did what he wanted to. Remember the time he came after you to take you to a big formal, and he was drunk. You were so mad at him you didn’t talk to him during the whole dance. Remember that after that dance you didn’t like Mike so well again. No, he isn’t the kind of guy for a sweet young girl.

“Maybe that isn’t what makes some people happy, Mike. Maybe the things that make some people happy are doing the right things.”

“Hell, Luke, people like that are squares. Definitely off the beam. Maybe I don’t want to waste my time on this girl. She does have an awfully pretty face, though, but you can’t have a good time just looking at a pretty face. Hey, what time is it, Luke? Gosh, it’s time to go eat. Say, are you doing anything Saturday night? We might take in a dance.”

“I’m awfully sorry, Mike, but I have a date.”

“Good bye, Mike.”

There he goes. What if you don’t have a date for this Saturday night, like you told him? It won’t hurt you to stay at home and improve your mind. Besides, Mike isn’t the right kind of guy for a sweet young girl.

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The Child Sleeps
Mary Smith

SANDRA sleeps. Her heavy lids finally gave up the struggle and remained closed. The clean, glowing face, tan from the warm sun, is freed from the problems of the child’s world. Damp curls have worked their way out of the tight pigtails. Pigtails—today she lost her yellow ribbon, yesterday her red. Rubber bands will break, and boys in kindergarten will pull the “paint brushes.”

A clean hand falls between the rails of the white bed—the same grubby little hand that brought home the first violet, the colored picture of the flowers from school, the favorite rock from the sand pile, and the bursting green bud from the mock orange bush. It’s the same little hand that picked out the notes of the song on the piano—the new songs today about the fuzzy bear and about the birds in the spring and the familiar songs heard over the radio. It’s the same little hand that was painted with mercurochrome to ease the pain of a scratch. The color helped so much.

The sturdy round legs are stretched to the extent of the bed. They are worn out from following the bigger kids whose legs are longer and faster. She will tag along, reminding them at intervals to “wait for me, you guys.”

The corners of her mouth turn up in a slight smile. Pleasant dreams about flowers, music, school, dolls, sand pile—who can tell. She sleeps unconscious of anyone watching, for tomorrow is another busy day.