The Days of Peanut butter and Honey sandwiches

By Bridget Grace Sheaff

by Rick Francis

Human Interest story

I eat, and I couldn’t paint. I just kept hearing a cough and then the word “unimpressive” replaying in my head over and over again. I wasn’t an artist. I was a fourth-grader doodling with crayons and finger paints. I almost didn’t go to work or class after that, but I forced myself to get out of bed. I got dressed and made another stupid peanut butter and honey sandwich. The only good thing I could think about peanut butter and honey sandwiches at this point was that they were deceptively filling. They were gooey and packed with carbs, and I had to down an entire bottle of water to swallow them. They made my stomach think it was full, when in reality I was practically starving.

I sat at my easel in class and didn’t look at anyone. I waited to hear what humiliation was ahead for me that day, and then I would just get through it. The instructor said that for the next few weeks we would be painting something that we found beautiful. Great! That was specific. Thanks! I knew exactly what to do. Not.

I was so mad at the end of class, I slammed the door behind me on my way out.

Beauty is so arbitrary! What does that even mean? I was still steaming when I got back to my apartment. I flopped down on my bed and glared angrily at the ceiling. Beauty! Something we found beautiful. I thought for a long time. I just lay there, thinking. I must have dozed off at some point because all of the sudden I looked up, and it was time for dinner. I groggily walked to the kitchen and slathered peanut butter on some bread. I almost didn’t add honey. It was an extra step, almost unnecessary. Then I looked at the honey in its ridiculously shaped bottle. It looked like a bear and had a moronic smile pasted on its face. It was then that I really looked at the honey. It was the color of sand glistening in the sun, the color of sunlight glinting on the water. It reminded me so much of the sun. I picked up the bottle and really studied it. The honey had preserved bubbles in its thick, gooey liquid. It looked like champagne, like a picture of champagne, frozen in time. Then I looked at the peanut butter. The ridges and hills of the creamy spread gave the whole sandwich a swirling effect. When you added the honey, it was like giving water to a thirsty earth, letting the river flow through its mountains.

It was pretty clear that I had lost it at that point. There I was, standing in a tiny kitchen in a tiny apartment in the middle of this huge city staring at...
The Days of Peanut Butter and Honey Sandwiches

By Bridget Grace Sheaff

Now the peanut butter and honey sandwich is not your traditional peanut butter sandwich. Most people go with the standard pairing of peanut butter and jelly. That was just a little too normal for me. Plus, honey never goes bad. It’s both timeless and incapable of being spoiled. The sweet, sugary consistency of the honey doesn’t overwhelm the creaminess of the peanut butter, but it sparkles through with a liquid, golden flavor that you just can’t hate. I thought I was brilliant. Here was a traditional sandwich idea modified and made completely my own. Peanut butter and honey sandwiches. I lived off peanut butter and honey sandwiches for weeks. They were cheap, easy to make, and one step above your traditional dorm food.

I was taking an art class a few blocks from my apartment. I walked in with a mixture of both excitement and terror. I sat down at an easel and started to look at the people around me. They all looked so much older than I was. I knew they had to be about my same age, but they looked mature and focused and some of them had that look on their faces that so plainly said “This class is a joke.” The first assignment was to paint a tree. That was all we had to do. Perfect. Simple. I would show the instructor what I could do. So I started painting a tree, but it was more than just a tree. I made the perfect tree. I thought of everything, the roots popping up out of the ground, the sunlight coming through the branches. I even added a pretty good bird to one of the boughs. At the end of the class, my instructor walked around, slowly examining each painting, not saying a word. When he got to mine, he stopped. He seemed to be standing there during the entire Rosary I was saying in my head, praying he would like it. He coughed slightly, looked at me and said, “Unimpressive.”

I was home from Ohio more than anything. I wanted to see my parents and sleep in my old room. There averaged more days of homesickness than days of feeling at home. It was on those days that I hated peanut butter and honey sandwiches. Most people go with the standard pairing of peanut butter and jelly. That was just a little too normal for me. Plus, honey never goes bad. It’s both timeless and incapable of being spoiled. The sweet, sugary consistency of the honey doesn’t overwhelm the creaminess of the peanut butter, but it sparkles through with a liquid, golden flavor that you just can’t hate. I thought I was brilliant. Here was a traditional sandwich idea modified and made completely my own. Peanut butter and honey sandwiches. I lived off peanut butter and honey sandwiches for weeks. They were cheap, easy to make, and one step above your traditional dorm food.

I was home from Ohio more than anything. I wanted to see my parents and sleep in my old room. There averaged more days of homesickness than days of feeling at home. It was on those days that I hated peanut butter and honey sandwiches. Most people go with the standard pairing of peanut butter and jelly. That was just a little too normal for me. Plus, honey never goes bad. It’s both timeless and incapable of being spoiled. The sweet, sugary consistency of the honey doesn’t overwhelm the creaminess of the peanut butter, but it sparkles through with a liquid, golden flavor that you just can’t hate. I thought I was brilliant. Here was a traditional sandwich idea modified and made completely my own. Peanut butter and honey sandwiches. I lived off peanut butter and honey sandwiches for weeks. They were cheap, easy to make, and one step above your traditional dorm food.

I was taking an art class a few blocks from my apartment. I walked in with a mixture of both excitement and terror. I sat down at an easel and started to look at the people around me. They all looked so much older than I was. I knew they had to be about my same age, but they looked mature and focused and some of them had that look on their faces that so plainly said “This class is a joke.” The first assignment was to paint a tree. That was all we had to do. Perfect. Simple. I would show the instructor what I could do. So I started painting a tree, but it was more than just a tree. I made the perfect tree. I thought of everything, the roots popping up out of the ground, the sunlight coming through the branches. I even added a pretty good bird to one of the boughs. At the end of the class, my instructor walked around, slowly examining each painting, not saying a word. When he got to mine, he stopped. He seemed to be standing there during the entire Rosary I was saying in my head, praying he would like it. He coughed slightly, looked at me and said, “Unimpressive.”

You know, there were days after that class that I wanted to go back home to Ohio more than anything. I wanted to see my parents and sleep in my old room. There averaged more days of homesickness than days of feeling at home. It was on those days that I hated peanut butter and honey sandwiches. Most people go with the standard pairing of peanut butter and jelly. That was just a little too normal for me. Plus, honey never goes bad. It’s both timeless and incapable of being spoiled. The sweet, sugary consistency of the honey doesn’t overwhelm the creaminess of the peanut butter, but it sparkles through with a liquid, golden flavor that you just can’t hate. I thought I was brilliant. Here was a traditional sandwich idea modified and made completely my own. Peanut butter and honey sandwiches. I lived off peanut butter and honey sandwiches for weeks. They were cheap, easy to make, and one step above your traditional dorm food.
I moved to New York to become an artist. I know. Cliché. Everyone moves to New York to become an artist or an actor or a singer or to find themselves or whatever. I’m not going to try to tell you I was any different than they are or were or will be. I moved to New York, and I was going to paint and be famous and become filthy stinking rich. That was the plan. Not a very good plan, was it? My parents gave me $1,000 a month to live on. Not much in New York City. Not much anywhere. It barely covered rent for the tiny apartment I lived in, and the remainder wouldn’t really buy me food. I had to find a job, and fast; which is also not easy in New York City, not easy anywhere. It would seem that every job applicant was a wide-eyed, struggling artist from a small town in Ohio with no formal education and a laughable resumé. I mean, at least that’s who I was. I started out working in a flower shop. I swept the floors. I’m not joking. Sweeper. Minimum wage.

The biggest problem, in my mind, was food. At home, my mother was always trying out new cuisine and fusing cultures together. There were times where we were forced to try Italian Meatball Tacos or Kung Pao Cabbage. (It’s worse than it sounds. Believe me.) Mostly we had excellent food though with brilliant flavors and textures and combinations of flavors and textures that were all new and different. College student food really didn’t sound that appealing to me. I mean, I didn’t know macaroni and cheese came in boxes. Apparently noodles in Styrofoam cups heated to lukewarm in a microwave counted as an entire meal. It was at this time that I discovered the peanut butter and honey sandwich.