

## Wilderness House Literary Review 19/3

*Clive Aaron Gill*

### MY SUMMER JOB

While I ate cereal on a Sunday morning, my father slapped me on the back of my head.

"You have five days to find a summer job, Jason," he said. "Or I'll take you to your mother."

"No." I rubbed my head. "Not Mother."

"Then quit playing games on your phone. Get a damn haircut. You're seventeen. You need to pay for your expenses."

Although my dad didn't spend much time with me at home or watch me play baseball, I didn't want to live with my self-absorbed mother who suffered from anxiety. So, I searched the Snagajob website, my feet tapping the floor. My six-month relationship with my high school girlfriend had recently ended, and it was hard for me to focus on my job search.

Three evenings after father's ultimatum, he asked, "Found a job?"

"Not yet."

He glared at me.

The next day, I found an ad that interested me. "Tasty Parlor needs a scooper. The requirements are: 1. Must smile, even when the line is out the door. 2. Five years of experience with ice cream consumption. 3. Resist eating all the profits. Do you qualify?"

That sounded like the perfect job for me.

I had a fifteen-minute interview with Amy, the friendly green-eyed manager at Tasty Parlor. She hired me for a two-week trial and explained my pay and duties.

"Thank you," I said. "I appreciate the opportunity."

"You'll enjoy our rich and creamy ice cream."

"Chocolate ice cream is my favorite." I left the store, pumping my fist in the air.

When I told my father I got the job, he said, "Good. Make sure you keep it."

During the weekend before my first day at work, I couldn't stop thinking about Amy's green eyes.

On Monday, I arrived ten minutes early at Tasty Parlor and put on a red apron. The store had bright pink walls and lots of natural light. When Amy and I weren't busy selling ice cream, restocking or cleaning, we discussed movies, food and our hobbies. She told me she was twenty-one. I liked her, and she seemed to like me.

Although Amy was four years older than me, I thought of asking her if she'd like to go out on a date.

On the second Monday at work, even though I got along well with Amy, I had doubts about keeping the job. I had tried the delicious choco-

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late ice cream and all the other flavors but couldn't imagine eating another scoop. Even thinking about eating ice cream made me nauseated.

*Is this real life? A week has been wasted mindlessly scooping ice cream onto cones for screeching children with gooey noses. My arm and shoulder really hurt. How does anyone slog at a monotonous job all week? Even for years?*

*Oh, great, here come five more kids. I'll ask them, "Do you want a sample? One scoop or two? Regular cone, sugar cone, or waffle cone?" This is terrifying. But if I quit, I'll need to move out of Dad's place.*

After Amy locked the front door that Monday evening, I lied by telling her I was offered a job as an apprentice electrician and would be leaving.

"Good career choice," she said. "But I'm sorry to lose you."

"I know I'm younger than you, Amy. But would you like to check out karaoke with me?"

"Well ... if we're just friends, sure."

*Yes, yes, yes. That's a good start.*

That evening, I told Dad I would stay with Mom, who lived a mile away. She never pressured me to get a job and always gave me a generous allowance. I'd need that for dating Amy.