

## The Silly Programmer

He made me happy. So, so unbelievably happy. I wasn't in love, I was sure. I even wrote a program and checked. The terminal window specified that it was far from love. It didn't know what it was. It couldn't tell me what it was. For that, I'd need a giant computer called the Earth with ape-like inhabitants who called themselves 'people'. Can't stand the wretches. I'd have to make do with the fact that I was not in love.

He made me feel alive. He set my veins on fire and made my heart beat to a rhythm it didn't know existed. He made me want to pour my heart and lungs out into being the best person I possibly could – for him. Here's the thing, though. Why couldn't I be this great on my own? Why did I need some pathetic muse in the form of a humanoid male who I was probably in love with? Wait. Love? Huh. It couldn't be. My program specifically said that the answer wasn't love. 'Twas probably just infatuation. Happens.

What disgusted me the most though was my emotions. How could one silly little boy make me want to write love ballads and vivid grape metaphors? How could the galaxies I saw in his eyes compare to all the ones I'd ever visited? How could his stupid dimples make my heart skip a beat? I'd come here to learn programming; not how to make my heart skip a beat! Though, I don't think I ever learnt – he did it for me. And I doubt he was ever taught, really. He was not the bookish kind. It's like he was born with this obnoxiously loud laugh and roaming hands that set my lungs ablaze.

How dare he be so perfect? I'd been trying to write this program for the last week, and here he'd decoded me with a simple grin and a stupid joke. I wish he'd stop. He made my insides go all mumbo-jumbo. I called mum to talk about him, – bad idea. A million galaxies away, all she did was panic. She sobbed on the phone for an hour and a half, contemplated

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life and finally hung up after making me promise I'd apply aloe vera on my face before going to bed. "It'll make you pretty, darling," she'd said. How was beauty going to help me? I was dying, for crying out loud! My heart was skipping beats – this surely couldn't be good! How was being the cover of Vogue going to prevent my death till I finished this program?

Wait. Surely he could solve all this? He made me feel this way, he must be knowing how to make it stop. But, what would I say? That he's making my heart skip beats and driving me wild with his crooked grin? Ugh, no.

I needed to finish this program as soon as possible. Then I could go back to mother, apply aloe vera and be on the cover of Space Vogue. This puny man was going to turn my insides into liquid if he kept smiling like that. Or maybe the liquification of my insides was due to the heat of my laptop but, regardless.

Lola'd come over. She was here to have a look at my program, see why it wasn't running. Maybe I could finally go home after this.

She scanned my program for errors as I sat there anticipating her answer. All of a sudden, she laughed.

"Well, then. What's wrong?"

"You have to take the variable here, not in the loop like you have, silly. Whoever taught you to take variables there?"

I felt the blood rushing to my cheeks. I was beyond embarrassed. How could I err like this? Well, whatever. My work on this planet is done. It doesn't really matter. But, wait a second. If this program is wrong . . .

I opened my laptop and quickly found the program I was looking for. Opening it, I realised that here too, I had taken my variable inside the loop. Of course. How typical of me;

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to make a mess of even the simplest of programs with stupid mistakes like this. I fixed the program and ran it again. Surely there would be no difference, as such?

Boy, was I wrong. I couldn't help but gape at the terminal window as my output was displayed. No. This couldn't be.

I was in love.