

DELI GUY

A DELI GUY is working behind a counter. WILL walks in.

DELI GUY  
Hey, how's it going?

WILL  
Fine. Hello.

DELI GUY  
You want to usual? Ham on rye?

WILL  
No, I'm not eating. I just stopped  
by to tell you that I appreciate  
how gracefully you impose  
narratives.

DELI GUY  
Uh, what do you mean?

WILL  
Well, last week I came in here to  
order a sandwich. A Black Forest  
ham on rye.

DELI GUY  
That's what you usually get.

WILL  
Right! And it was raining. A lot  
of people were complaining about  
the rain that day. But when I  
ordered my sandwich, do you know  
what you said?

DELI GUY  
Can't say that I do.

WILL  
You said "Some rain, huh? I guess  
we were due."

DELI GUY  
Okay, sure, I can imagine myself  
saying that.

WILL  
Well, that's a narrative! You are  
creating a story in which the rain  
arrives when it is due. That the  
rain has a purpose.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

In a very subtle way, you are providing a way to mentally cope with the rain. Sure, it's uncomfortable to get rained on, but if it's DUE then maybe it is JUST. And it becomes easier to bear.

DELI GUY

Hmm. Well, I didn't have any of that in mind when I said that. It just fell out of me. I guess it was just in the air.

WILL

And.. you're doing it again! You're imposing the narrative that you are NOT imposing narratives, that they are things that exist in the ether, and you perhaps just pluck them out of the air and hand them to people! It's marvelous!

DELI GUY

Well, I think what you're talking about is just... having a conversation.

WILL

Yes, yes, that's true! A conversation is, in a way, two people each imposing narratives onto the world. Taking the events of their lives and forming them into a story. Assigning cause and effect to things which may in fact be random.

DELI GUY

Sure, I guess. Aren't YOU imposing a narrative right now?

WILL

I suppose I am! And you're doing it again! You are imposing a positive narrative on my telling you that YOU impose narratives! Amazing! You're amazing.

DELI GUY

Are you having some sort of emotional breakdown, and that's why you're doing this?

WILL

No! No I'm just genuinely impressed and wanted to tell you. (beat) Sorry, have I bothered you? Was this too weird? I know that I can be weird.

DELI GUY

It's not too weird. But I am bothered. Not because you're too weird, but because of some personal stuff. I shouldn't even go into it, but it's just so strange that you say I'm good at narratives. I'm just going to tell you. I had a cousin about my age. We were pretty close growing up. But in our 20s .. he ... killed himself. Sorry, I know this is a lot. It was horrible. Pills. And talk about narratives -- trying to fit my cousin's suicide into a story that made sense to me... it was impossible! There was no reason for it that I could see. I had no idea anything was bothering him. Some days I'd feel so guilty that I hadn't noticed anything was wrong. Other days I was angry -- you know, mad at him for the pain he'd caused me! Most days I was just stunned. I didn't know HOW to think of it. I eventually had to accept that there WAS no good explanation. I mean it's crazy to me that you're saying I am good at narratives -- this whole time you were talking I was thinking "I couldn't come up with a narrative for what happened to Alex." That's why I asked if you were having a breakdown. I want to make sure I reach out if someone needs to talk to someone. I know I barely know you, but if you need to talk, I'd listen. Okay?

WILL

Oof! I'm gonna get out of here. You're bumming me out, dude!