

From I Heard You Were Dead by Don Zolidis

PIPER, 16, F

CONSTANTINE, 16, M

Constantine has recovered from leukemia and is on his first day back at school. He's having lunch with his best friend, Piper.

PIPER

What did your Mom make me for lunch today?

CONSTANTINE

Uh...

PIPER

You wanna see what I got?

She holds up several packets of Cheez-its.

Behold.

CONSTANTINE

I didn't realize you liked cheez-its that much.

PIPER

Not a fan, actually. My Mom is just throwing whatever into a bag –

CONSTANTINE

Here's a thought – I mean, this may be impossible, but maybe you could like make your own lunch?

PIPER

Have you seen what's in the pantry at my house? There's like pre-pandemic Mac and Cheese in there. I swear my parents have gone from passively trying to ruin my life to actively trying to ruin my life. The divorce has turned them into children. I want trees to fall on all of them.

CONSTANTINE

What happened this morning?

PIPER

Oh my God it's crisis 24/7. My Dad stole our cooler and took it to his apartment and it's like the crime of the century. They keep texting me. I hope the school takes our phones away, honestly. I can't deal with this.

(regarding the food)

What is that?

CONSTANTINE

Spanikopita.

PIPER

Your Mom made you Spanikopita for lunch. Think about that.

CONSTANTINE

You want some?

PIPER

I'm not gonna take your lunch – you're literally recovering from cancer.

CONSTANTINE

I'm basically almost fine. Seriously, Piper. Take some. My Mom thinks I should eat like an offensive lineman now.

PIPER

I don't even know what that is.

CONSTANTINE

Sports reference.

PIPER

Oh I didn't realize we were doing sports now.

CONSTANTINE

Have it.

He hands some over.

PIPER

Thanks. Thank you. I mean that. Thank you. My Mom is just like... spiraling.

CONSTANTINE

Sorry.

PIPER

It is what it is. Constant nightmare. BUT – how are you doing? How is your day? Is it everything you always dreamed of?

Constantine laughs.

Is this what you were envisioning in the chemo?

CONSTANTINE

It's exhausting. All day long. 'Are you cured? Is your hair gonna grow back? What was it like?' I need like a little sign that just answers everything.

PIPER

Put it on a t-shirt.

But I saw Chloe Jimenez.

CONSTANTINE

Oh. Well in that case.

PIPER (*sarcastic*)

Do you know her?

CONSTANTINE

PIPER

She was in my Earth Sciences class freshman year I think. And I know you're totally obsessed with her.

I'm not totally obsessed with her.

CONSTANTINE

Serious stalker energy.

PIPER

I'm not obsessed/ with her –

CONSTANTINE

Okay. I'm sorry. You saw Chloe today. Congratulations. She goes to school here.

PIPER

She saved my life.

CONSTANTINE

Wow. I didn't even know she was an oncologist.

PIPER

I'm serious, Piper.

CONSTANTINE

No that's amazing that she's a junior in high school and already completed medical school and works in the cancer ward already – wow –

PIPER

Can I tell you how?

CONSTANTINE

Please – and if this doesn't end with Chloe developing a cure for cancer, I'm going to be disappointed.

PIPER

CONSTANTINE

Can I just tell you?

PIPER

Fine.

CONSTANTINE

Okay – so um... so you know how like nobody came to see me, right?

PIPER

I came to see you. Like all the time.

CONSTANTINE

Right. You know how nobody else came to see me, right?

PIPER

Fair.

CONSTANTINE

So um – Chloe’s Dad is a firefighter, and they do benefits for the children’s wing sometimes – and so anyway, she visited one time.

PIPER

All right.

CONSTANTINE

And you know that I had a totally non-obsessive crush on her –

PIPER

Uh huh.

CONSTANTINE

Well anyway, um... this is like actually pretty embarrassing –

PIPER

I can’t imagine how this is embarrassing.

CONSTANTINE

So uh... we talked and... I was in pretty bad shape – like really bad – this is not the moment you want to see your crush, you know? You’re not sleeping, you can’t eat anything, you haven’t been outside in like a week – not cute, right?

Piper nods.

So... she leaned over and gave me a hug and um...

He’s having trouble saying the words

PIPER

What?

CONSTANTINE

It moved.

PIPER

What moved?

CONSTANTINE

Me.

Piper almost gets it.

PIPER

I'm sorry?

CONSTANTINE

Like I felt something... in my... loins.

Piper bursts out laughing.

No no no it's a big deal!

PIPER

Oh is it?!

CONSTANTINE

Because it's like blood flow – I had a *blood* disease - That's one of the symptoms that you can't like... get aroused... and that reaction –

PIPER

Hold on hold on are you telling me that Chloe Jimenez saved your life by giving you a magic erection?

CONSTANTINE

No –

PIPER

Your manhood *awoke* and with it, your will to live!

CONSTANTINE

This is why I don't tell you things.

PIPER

I'm sorry, please continue your story about your life-saving boner.*

**If this section would give your community fits, please see the alternate lines at the end of the play.*

CONSTANTINE

It was proof I was getting better. You don't understand – until that point, I didn't think I was going to make it. But then... I know it's stupid and ridiculous, but at that moment, I could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Chloe loses it.

Don't make jokes!

PIPER

Was Chloe aware that she had that... effect on you?

CONSTANTINE

I mean I was wearing like a cotton dress that was open at the back –

PIPER

Hot.

CONSTANTINE

But I vowed that if I lived I would... ask her out. And let her know how much she meant to me.

PIPER

Funny. Cause she's right here.

Chloe is behind him.

Hey Chloe.