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### **The Peppermint Man**

“Hello little lady.” I would hear this greeting from a sweet old man every Sunday morning as he handed me a Brach’s peppermint. For many years, Jasper Felty stood at the front door of my church and unintentionally reminded me of a dying breed of kindness left in the world. A true Christian man. That’s what he was. Mr. Felty’s two life goals were to go to heaven, and live to the ripe old age of one hundred years old.

Peppermints. When I think of peppermints, I think of three things. I first think of smell. After you tug on the loud, clear wrapper to open the infamous round candy, you can smell the minty scent that pours out like honey—slow and memorable. Once the covering is off, you can clearly see the two classic colors, red and white. To me, the red is a reminder of Jasper’s rosy-red cheeks when the harsh December wind danced on them after greeting all the church members at the door.

Swirled into the red is the definitive color white. In remembrance of Jasper, white continuously reminds me of his pale, fragile skin that seemed to just drape on his face like curtains. It also reminds me of his heavenly attitude that interminably never quite. In our church, Mr. Felty was always one of the first people to volunteer—no matter what the case.

It was only a few weeks before his one hundredth birthday when my mother and I went to see him for an unexpected final time at his home in downtown Portsmouth, Ohio. We were on our first duty as a home care taker from our church. Thankfully, our first job was Jasper. In his soul, he still had the pizzazz of a seven year old, but his body was shriveled and uneasy on the eye. After talking for around an hour about the things in life that matter the most, the way everything used to be, and how we are today, Jasper went into his room, came out with a surprise, and affectionately handed me a bag of his usual Brach’s peppermints. It brought tears to my eyes to think that he still thought of me in his worst time of health. The meaning of the bag made me realize the significance of our friendship.

Mr. Felty never made it to one hundred years old. So close, and yet so far. Ninety-nine. Jasper died only a couple of days after I saw him at his home. When I got the horrific news, I was devastated. Even though the old man wasn’t my best friend, or someone I talked to everyday, he made such an extreme impression in my life. He made me realize that my law of life is to give, and not expect to receive. To love, and not expect to be loved. To give kindness, and not seize any in return. I, now, have the honor of being a part-time greeter on Sunday mornings at the same door Mr. Felty had duty to. Sometimes, I can sense his presence, helping me greet our fellow Christians into the house of God. Even now, I remember him standing at the front door with a peppermint in his old suit pocket, waiting for me to walk in to the church. “Hello little lady.”