Pumpkin Spice isn't for Lovers.

by melbopo

Summary

Simon's got a brain full of perfect coffee related pick up lines to ask out the cute barista he's pretty sure has been flirting with him the past three months, well mutually flirting, as well as high hopes for how smoothly it's going to Simon pan out but then Pumpkin Spice happens and Simon's heart feels more roasted than the beans used in his coffee.

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for the sh au mondays prompt: autumn

Notes

Jimon + Coffee Shops = Endless Coffee Puns and Happiness (I've taken plen-tea of math classes, this equation froths just right)

I have no excuse for this title - I just think I'm funny.
Simon might have majored in accounting at college but of late his budgeting skills leave much more education to be desired. Or maybe it would be easier to stick to his food and drink monthly allowance if the coffee shop across from his apartment wasn't so damn good. Okay so maybe it isn't just the coffee being delicious that pulls Simon in at least four times a week but a certain barista that is so damn good looking, the freshly brewed pots of steaming coffee have worthy competition for the hottest thing in the shop.

And Simon's relatively certain that the attraction isn't just one sided either. They have this flirty banter thing going on, complete with snippets of conversation about more than just his order and dumb nicknames written on Simon's to go cups. Last time he stopped by for some pre work caffeinated liquid fuel, his favorite barista let it slip that Simon had a pretty face when he asked for a lid for his coffee to minimize spilling. Simon had been so surprised that he immediately parroted back the compliment in disbelief which earned him a soft chuckle and eyeroll instead of verbal confirmation but his nickname that day was 'pretty face' (and it made Simon beam all damn day).

Which is why today is going to be the day that Simon takes charge! He's going to act on his feelings! He's going to finally ask out the cute barista that thinks he has a pretty face! He is going to do it! At least that's what Maia and Clary are pushing for after he canceled on their standing every other
week movie night plans for the third time in the past two months (you see, his amusement budget is still recovering from buying Harry Styles concert tickets and he tries to save a portion of that budget to go towards being amused by a certain barista).

Through the window, Simon spots the unmistakable long red hair of one of his best friends sitting at a table in the cafe, waiting to congratulate him either way on the other side. He nods to himself slightly as he pulls open the coffee shop doors, reminding himself (and his brain) that even if the feelings aren't romantic in nature, a platonic relationship would be just as desirable to him. He's taking this chance because he genuinely enjoys their interactions that often add a little more light to his days and he wants to interact with the cute blonde barista more than just for ten minutes at a time. He wants Jace in his life, if that want is mutual of course.

At the sight of the best of the best baristas behind the counter, Simon feels only a smidge of nerves, mostly overcome with the adrenaline his anxiety has produced over the situation. As he waits in the ordering line, he rehearses in his head the terrible coffee related pick up lines he researched early this morning specifically for this moment. When it's finally his turn to order, Jace doesn't even look up from what he's scrawling across a paper to go cup when he asks in a flat voice, "what can I get for you?"

Simon takes a deep breathe to ground himself, "hey Jace, what do you recommend for a latte? Because I like you and value your opinion a latte ."

Jace looks up as he passes the cup to the side but instead of cracking a grin at the bad coffee pun, he looks annoyed. Jace responds in that same flat tone. "Our pumpkin spice latte is popular this time of the year."

The tone sounds cold compared to the voice Simon has gotten accustomed to over the past four months. It's as if the person in front of Simon is a complete stranger and not someone that says he's buying flowers for his sister when they're really for himself or that opened a coffee shop because he loves baking and wanted to create a space for people of all ages to meet that doesn't revolve around alcohol. The second part of Simon's pick up line dies in his throat at the coldness. He stutters through a reply, "uh... yeah... sure."

They exchange nothing else besides the quiet "thanks" Simon says after cashing out. Even when he picks up his cup, it simply reads his name, 'Simon', which hasn't been written on one of his cups for the past three and a half months. He takes a sip of the orangey brown liquid to confirm that it tastes just like he feels: confused, sad and overly sweet.

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It's almost a week since the Pumpkin Spice Shutdown and Simon hasn’t dared to show his face in the coffee shop since. Sure Jace may have just been having a really awful day the one time that Simon worked up the courage to ask Jace out or it could be that all the previous flirting was manifested in Simon’s hopeless romantic head from reading too many of of coffee shop%!au fanfictions and Jace was immediately turned off by Simon stating his feelings at the barista’s place of employment which mean he couldn't escape. Regardless, it seems like a sign in the grand scheme of all things from the universe to not pursue the crush any further, which means a complete detox of Java Jace and cafe fanfics and all social interaction not apart of his nine to five job that’s required for financial stability.

Clary and Maia have had their fill of his debby downer attitude and canceling of plans come the following Saturday. They appear at his apartment bright and early, trying to coax him out of his sulking cave of sadness to join their corn maze plans. It’s something they do every fall as a group so the guilt that Simon felt about trying to bail is marginal. Then Maia divulged that they are bringing
their boyfriend, Bat, for everyone to meet and Simon knows how much of a big step this is for Maia so he finally gives in, even throwing on their ‘best triad” matching flannel to show his support.

The corn maze theme changes every year but it’s never an overly complicated design, intended for both adults and children alike to walk through, answering themed trivia questions and collecting pieces to solve a puzzle along the way. It’s part of the reason Simon doesn’t hesitate to tell his group that he’ll just find them in the maze after he gets some apple cider doughnuts to snack on. After all, he has his own map and a cellphone so how lost can he really get?

While an empty stomach and getting lost in eight foot tall corn stocks are two things that Simon is totally and completely fully equipped to handle, one thing that he’s the complete opposite of prepared to handle is the source of his mopey attitude this week, a certain someone who’s currently starring at him from just a couple feet away at the third maze fun fact station. If Simon had any sort of survival instinct for his emotional sanity, he would have just turned and walked the other way, ignoring the site of Jace looking happy and at ease in the autumn sunshine with a beautiful dark brown haired femme with flawless fawn beige skin that Simon has definitely seen at the cafe many times. Instead he takes a step closer, offering small wave in greeting when Jace mirrors the first step. Maybe Simon ignores that flight instinct of his because Jace looks equally shocked at seeing Simon at a corn maze that is over an hour away from the coffee shop or cause Jace’s smile seemed to grow when he saw Simon or maybe it’s just cause Simon has missed Jace this past week.

“I didn’t realize what a hot spot corn mazes are for dates - though I guess getting through the maze is a pretty good test for a relationship.”

Jace snorts out a chuckle, stirring up that familiar feeling of warmth in Simon that he gets anytime he makes Jace smile or laugh. “Izzy’s my sister, not my girlfriend, and I’m gay, you know this.” Jace says with a fair amount of judgement in his expression at the fact that Simon would assume they were dating all.

“Maybe I’m no longer sure what I know about you.” Simon responds without a second thought, the hurt he’s felt all week from making himself vulnerable only to be dismissed so quickly bleeding into his tone. Jace winces, his smile shrinking but it doesn’t fill Simon with any sort of the closure or comfort that he wants. Instead he feels over dramatic the moment those words leave his mouth because after all they aren’t even friends; Jace is just Simon’s favorite barista at his favorite coffeeshop who doesn’t owe him a damn thing. “Sorry, that was unwarranted.”

“Not entirely.” Jace says with a small shrug and a self deprecating smile. He turns back to Izzy, “go ahead and meet up with Alec and Magnus before they quit the maze to make out in some corn stalk corner. I’ll catch up later.” Izzy narrows their eyes at Simon in a clear sign of distrust, like they’re committing his face to memory in case something happens to Jace so they’ll know who to fight, before taking a different path through the corn stalks and out of site.

Jace focuses his attention back on Simon, taking a step even closer when a family comes around the corner for the fun fact station. “I’ve been wanting to apologize for how rude I was to you last Sunday but you haven’t been by the cafe since.”

And curse Jace for looking both hurt and like he expected that sort of response, like he even might deserve an emotional outlash. It makes his baby blue eyes look so vulnerable that all of the pain Simon’s been feeling this past week just evaporates because it’s obvious that Jace has been beating himself up about it just as much, if not more, this past week. “I may have been nursing my wounds.”

Jace looks at Simon intensely, the internal struggle written clearly on Jace’s face while he chews on his bottom lip as the sun catches on his eyelashes. “I was having a really awful day -like the worst day I’ve had in years... A customer said I reminded them of someone from their hometown but if she
were a man.” Even without hearing the strain in Jace’s voice, Simon knows this is a difficult memory for Jace to retell in his tightly clenched jaw and moist eyes.

Simon knows he doesn’t need to hear the rest to understand. “Jace, it’s fin-” but Jace shakes his head back and forth to cut off Simon, as if this is a bit of himself that he wants to share, even though it’s hard. “They weren’t wrong - I recognized them from my old high school.” He opens his mouth before quickly closing it, clenching his jaw for a moment before opening his mouth again. “It brought me back to a dark place and I kind of just shut down, resorting to old bad habits. So I’m sorry I was shitty and dismissive to you on Sunday -I mean I know that you love sweets but hate sugary drinks.”

Jace holds Simon’s eye contact while he searches frantically inside of himself for the right words to share this warm feeling growing inside of him and how much it means for Jace to feel comfortable enough to trust Simon with this very personal piece of himself.

“That sounds really hard to have experienced and I understand. I accept your apology and appreciate your honesty. Though, I’m sorry that it happened at all and that I’ve been avoiding you this past week.” Simon says with as much sincerity as possible, unsure how to adequately convey all the support he feels. The relief that passes over Jace’s face tips Simon off that he definitely didn’t make the moment worse. The last part throws Simon, “wait, do you think I’ve been avoiding you because of your shitty drink recommendation?”

Jace’s eyebrows draw together, “uh, yes.”

“I told you I liked you a latte!” Simon all but yells in response.

“Yeah and I thought you were just being Simon and making a new coffee pun.” Jace’s eyebrows pull even closer together, like he doesn’t understand the significance of their Sunday conversation.

“What? No! When have I ever told you a coffee pun?” Jace thinks about it for a moment, see sawing his head back and forth like he concedes. Before he can bring up any other terrible puns Simon has made, he clarifies the full scenario. “I was trying to ask you out!”

“But you didn’t even ask me out?”

“That was part two of my coffeeshop related pick up line! But once you dismissed my admittance of feelings, I skipped the next part and moved straight to sulking.” Jace’s expression goes slack in surprise, his eyes widening at this new piece of information. Simon admits a little more quietly as he looks at the ground, “that’s the real reason I’ve been nursing my wounds this week.”

“Tell it to me now,” Jace’s voice is firm.

Simon looks up with surprise, “What?”

“Please tell part two to me now.”

The smile that stretches across Simon’s face feels as soft and hopeful as the look on Jace’s face. “I like that you only sell fair-trade coffee but I was wondering if you think that my number for yours would also be a fair trade?”

Jace’s grin so wide and bright in response that Simon can practically feel the warmth radiating onto him and heating his cheeks as if Jace was the sun himself. “Absolutely, though I think it would only be truly be fair if I added a kiss.”

“I would like that.”
Jace tilts his head in closer to Simon, pausing only inches away. It’s a small distance that Simon wastes no time in eliminating, tilting his head just enough to catch Jace’s lips. Jace’s hands gently come up to hold Simon’s chin like the extra point of contact is necessary to stabilize the kiss, the moment, or maybe even just himself. Simon pulls his lips away but rests his forehead against Jace’s, both grinning like the lovestruck fools they are.

“So I heard a rumor that corn mazes are a hot spot for dates because they’re a really good test of a relationship, wanna check out that theory with me?”

Simon can’t help but chuckle at Jace’s suggestion, “Sounds like a date cause I feel something brewing between us.”

Jace pulls his head back, laughing with his full body at Simon’s terrible coffee puns.

“I’m glad you liked that one cause I’ve got a whole arsenal of them now.” Simon adds with a wink at Jace.

“Oh boy, it’s a good thing that I like you a latte.” Jace says with fondness as he offers his hand which Simon takes excitedly within his own, thinking to himself what a good thing he thinks they are gonna be indeed.

End Notes

what's your fav pick up line??? comment it here or in the tags on this post on tumblr and maybe it'll just appear in one of my fics??? if you want that? no pressure... feel free just to tell me bout how much you love Soft Jace and Simon or if you don't? (If you dont, why did you click on this fic then???)

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