

The Measure By Which We Measure

Read and respond to this story. As you read, be aware of your feelings toward the woman and the young man.

One night there was a woman at the airport who had to wait for several hours before catching her next flight. While she waited she bought a book and a packet of cookies to pass the time. She looked for a place to sit and wait. She was deep into her book, when suddenly she realised that there was a young man sitting next to her who was stretching his hand, with no concern whatsoever, and grabbing the packet of cookies lying between them. He started to eat them one by one. Not wanting to make a fuss, she decided to ignore him. The woman, slightly bothered, ate the cookies and watched the clock, while the shameless cookie thief kept eating. The woman started to get really angry at this point and thought, 'If I wasn't such a good person, I would have given this daring man a black eye by now.' Every time she ate a cookie, he had one too. When only one cookie was left, she wondered what he was going to do. Softly and with a nervous smile, the young man grabbed the last cookie and broke it in two. He offered one half to the woman while he ate the other half. Briskly she took the cookie and thought, 'What an insolent man! He didn't even thank me!' She had never met anybody so rude and sighed in relief when her flight was called. She grabbed her bags and went toward the boarding gate, refusing to look back to where the man was seated. After boarding the plane and nicely seated, she looked for her book which was nearly finished by now. While looking into her bag she was totally surprised to find her pack of cookies nearly intact. 'If my cookies are here,' she thought, feeling terrible, 'those others were his, and he tried to share them with me.' Too late to apologise to the young man, she realised with pain that it was she who had been insolent and a thief, and not him.

Did you assume the cookies belonged to the woman? Explain.

If you did, why might you have made that assumption?

What were your feelings toward the young man? Toward the woman?

How did you feel about your judgment of the man after you read the last paragraph?

How did you feel about your judgment of the woman after you read the last paragraph?

Do people sometimes make judgments after only hearing one side of the story? Explain.
