Arnold was exhausted. He concluded it was because he was around other people. When he sat at home alone, he had plenty of energy, or at least enough. At 80, he never had quite enough energy. Alone, he interacted with people by a distance, with delays—texts, emails. No matter how stressful the interaction was, now matter how much attention and energy it required, he could address it when ready. When alone.

But when someone visited or Arnold went outside, relating to people was real time, one on one–*immediate*. He had to listen, pay attention. He could not pause the action to use the washroom. Real life interactions were not like streaming. He had to be there, all the time.

How could Arnold make his real life interactions more like his digital ones? More distanced, less intense? It would certainly be more convenient–for himself and probably everyone else. The world was increasingly digital, especially with AI. He thought of using a hologram of himself, but that would not work for personal interactions. People expected the real thing.

His solution was dainties.

Every visitor was provided with coffee or tea. Every fifteen minutes, Arnold would bring out a new plate of dainties. He and his guests would stop any conversation to eat. Conversation paused as chewing ensued and beverages were sipped. At least now there were regular pauses where he could ignore visitors for a moment.

Arnold knew this was somewhat Elizabethan, but it worked for them over a hundred years ago. Yes, there was some weight gain initially but Arnold moved to low calory dainties (which were very popular.) It was not the most scientific or creative solution, but dainties were practical.

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