

Coin Flip

The old lady's hands trembled as she attempted to pour a glass of water for the mysterious man sitting in front of her. She put on a gentle smile, the kind of smile that radiates warmth and comfort, the kind of smile she would normally have while playing with her four-year-old grandson, the kind of smile she prayed would keep her and her grandson alive. The smile was of course a facade, the old lady desperately wanted to flee from the room and scream bloody murder for the entire neighborhood to hear, but there was no way she was going to risk endangering her grandson who was busy playing with his trucks only ten feet away. She knew she shouldn't show any weakness, so she lied to herself and acted as if she believed that this was just an ordinary Sunday just like every other mundane Sunday in her life.

She finished pouring the water and then slowly slid the cup across the table towards the man. The man reached for it with his left arm, his right arm stayed motionless below the table. The man kept his eyes trained on the old lady as he brought the cup up to his mouth. The old lady could feel beads of sweat start to form on her forehead. His eyes were a cloudy grey type of color. His gaze was piercing; it felt like he was peering into her soul itself. Her mouth had begun to dry up, it was as if she had eaten a fistful of sand. She was having trouble swallowing. She lifted her own cup up to her lips, but before she had a chance to take a sip, she saw the outline of an object pressing against the man's coat. She disliked violence and always tried to avoid it, but even she could tell what it looked like; a gun holster... without the gun. The man calmly finished drinking and placed the cup on the table. He took a deep breath and let out a satisfied breath of air.

"Hot today, isn't it?"

"Why yes, I suppose"

"I never could stand the heat. It makes people far too... lively for my liking. I must say I much prefer the cold. I feel more... relaxed, perhaps it's because it reminds me of home"

"Ah, I see. Well, they do say that you feel most comfortable at home"

"They?"

"I'm sorry?"

"Who is: They?"

"Oh. people. People say that"

“I’ve never heard people say that. Though I guess there’s still some truth to that statement regardless of whether people say that or not”

“I suppose so. Uhm... Sir I hate to cut this short, but I have things to attend to. Now that you’ve finished your drink, I’d like you to please leave”

“What kind of things?”

“Well all kinds of things. I need to clean, do laundry and start making lunch. I’ll be very busy, so I’d like to ask you again to leave so that I could get started”

“You’re lying”

“I beg your pardon?”

“You don’t *need* to do anything”

“Well, I must finish everything today. I want to get an early start, and of course I can’t do that if I must attend to a guest”

“Tell me. Will you die if you don’t do those things?”

“Well... no, but they’re still important tasks. Everyone needs to do them. Everyone needs to eat”

“That’s true, but will missing one meal kill you? I think not”

“I suppose so. If given the choice however I’d rather eat all my meals”

“I assume most people would”

“Sir... please. Take whatever you want. Just please don’t harm us.”

“I’m not here to steal from you”

“Then why are you here”

“To tell a story”