

# **Coins**

**By Jerold London**

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## Coins

Evening at the St. James' Tavern. ROSA and GOLDIE, college students, are sitting at a table, sipping their favorite drinks. The gentlemen they are waiting for are late. There is a stack of quarters in front of each of them; but the stack in front of GOLDIE is far the larger of the two (59 to 21 at the rise).

### ROSA

We've been flippin' these flippin' coins for an hour, Goldie. Where are they?

### GOLDIE

I don't know, Rosa. Car trouble, I guess. You know men.

### ROSA

And they keep landing heads. And you keep winning. Why?

**GOLDIE**

I whisper.

**ROSA flips a coin from her dwindling stack.**

**ROSA**

Another head.

**ROSA hands the coin to GOLDIE.**

**ROSA**

You always win.

**GOLDIE**

I whisper.

**ROSA**

Whisper what?

**GOLDIE**

“Lord, have mercy, make it heads for me.”

**ROSA**

You pray?!  
For flippin’ heads?

**GOLDIE**

Okay. Call me a sinner.  
But I like to win.

**ROSA**

Are you crazy?

**GOLDIE**

I don’t know.... Why? Because I like to win?

**ROSA**

Because you believe prayers can change reality. That’s why.

**GOLDIE**

See any tails? Lately?

**ROSA**

And you think that’s because of you?

**GOLDIE**

Why not? I don't see you praying.

**ROSA**

I pray for real things. Like a COVID cure and Ukraine.  
Not random things. Like coin flips. Like genuine random happenings.  
The world is full of randomness. And praying doesn't change that.

**GOLDIE**

My Chinese friends don't think so.  
They believe we're put on Earth to follow the rhythms of the universe.  
[with air quotes] To them there are no "random happenings."  
Everything is dictated by waves.  
It's Ming.

**ROSA**

Your turn to flip.

**GOLDIE flips a coin from her stack.**

**ROSA**

Another head.

**GOLDIE puts the coin back in her stack.**

**ROSA**

You know what I think?

**GOLDIE**

Is it going to get you any tails?

**ROSA**

I think St. James' Tavern has moved.  
Outside the world of reality.  
That's what I think. It's too improbable.  
It's fallen off the globe, into your Chinese friends' Ming-o-ling world.

**GOLDIE**

Because I always win?

**ROSA**

How many times have we flipped? Twenty?

**GOLDIE**

Forty, I'd say.... I'm forty coins ahead.

**ROSA**

Forty. See? What are the odds?

**GOLDIE**

So?

**ROSA**

So ... it must be a trillion to one against.  
We lost the laws of chance outside somewhere. They aren't in here.  
And furthermore, why are we in here? when the guys aren't.

**GOLDIE**

Because Romeo told you, "Meet me at the James."

**ROSA**

No. He didn't. You told me Shawn said that to you.

**GOLDIE**

I did not.

**ROSA**

Are we losing our minds, Goldie?

**GOLDIE**

I don't know, Rose. Does it feel like it?

**ROSA**

How does it feel to lose your mind?

**GOLDIE**

Like what you're saying, and thinking, and seeing isn't meant to be.  
Like not listening to Ming when a trillion-to-one commands you to.  
Like, who dares to lose her mind?

**ROSA**

What is this Ming you're always talking about?

**GOLDIE**

Understanding Ming is finding the proper way to live, they say.

**ROSA**

That tells us what?

**GOLDIE**

It tells me you're not Chinese.  
And it tells you, there's nothing you can do about what's inevitable.

**GOLDIE**

Accept it.  
Coexist with the impossibilities of life. Embrace them.  
Accept your fate.

**ROSA**

And do nothing about it?  
I don't think so.  
That's not what they teach at Ohio State.  
Sitting in here, waiting for two guys who don't even know we're at the James?  
And losing all my quarters to heads-up along the way?

**GOLDIE**

Now you get it.... That's Ming.

**ROSA flips another coin from her  
dwindling stack.**

**ROSA**

Fucking heads again.

**ROSA throws the coin at GOLDIE. It  
winds up on the floor by a pool table.**

**GOLDIE**

You get it.

**ROSA**

You. I'm watching for the guys.

**GOLDIE**

You're a control freak.  
And a poor loser, to boot.

**ROSA**

Fuck you.  
This whole business freaks me out tonight.  
I'm out of here.

**ROSA exits, leaving her remaining coins  
on the table.**

**GOLDIE takes one from Rosa's stack and  
spins it on the table. When it stops ....**

**GOLDIE**

Heads.... Of course.

**She puts it in her stack.**

**END**