

Coins

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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