

Truth in Finance and Fandom

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First Draft

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

*A cafe inside a science fiction convention. It's one of those weird moments when the cafe is pleasantly busy but not crazily so (it happens) and a few of the celebrities are on breaks from their autograph tables but not hiding in the green room. MAN and WOMAN are sitting at one table. SCI-FI actor and his TEEN SON are sitting at the next table.*

WOMAN

Are you sure you don't mind missing the panel for *The Walking Dead*? You actually watch it.

MAN

But you don't.

WOMAN

True, but I'm happy to sit here and read for a while, or write - you know cons always make me really writey - or hit the vendor floor for stuff for your birthday... get autographs from... (notices that SCI-FI ACTOR is at the next table)... people you're not that interested in.

MAN

Naah, I'd rather spend the time together. I mean, it's our vacation.

WOMAN

And this is why I love you. (beat) My coffee is defective. (beat) Get me a refill and I'll love you even more.

MAN

Regular coffee or... ?

WOMAN

Grande double mocha, no whipe, only foam. Please.

MAN

Got it.

WOMAN

Thank you.

MAN

Love you.

MAN heads off to get WOMAN her frou-frou espresso drink, and woman reaches into her con bag for the program, so she can plan the rest of their day. Meanwhile, at the next table, SCI-FI ACTOR and TEEN SON are also having a snack and a quiet chat.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Are you okay? You seem a little tired.

TEEN SON

I'm good.

SCI-FI ACTOR

You sure. It seems like your zip-a-dee-doo-dah's a bit overdone.

TEEN SON

Just tired. I thought you'd stay at the party last night.

SCI-FI ACTOR

You know that's not me.

TEEN SON

Yeah, but all your friends did. Aunty and Uncle invited me to hang with them.

SCI-FI ACTOR

You could've.

TEEN SON

Would you hate me if...

SCI-FI ACTOR

If what?

TEEN SON

If I decided I didn't want to be an actor?

SCI-FI ACTOR

(relieved)

No. Never. It's a hard profession, and you're constantly audition for your job. Sure, sometimes you're lucky and get a series that runs for seven years, but most of the time you're not that lucky and you end up hoping you get three weeks of film work every year so you can keep your family in health insurance.

TEEN SON  
Three weeks?

SCI-FI ACTOR  
SAG minimum, yeah.

TEEN SON  
Oh, so that explains -

SCI-FI ACTOR  
(Interrupting)  
Don't say it!

MAN returns to the other table with  
WOMAN's mocha to find her quietly  
laughing.

MAN  
Everything okay?

WOMAN  
Oh, yes.

MAN  
What's so funny.

WOMAN  
Life. (beat) Um, I'll explain later.

MAN  
O-kay... here's your coffee.

WOMAN  
You didn't get anything for you?

MAN  
Later. I'll get something later. Lunch was enough for now.

WOMAN  
Okay.

SCI-FI ACTOR and TEEN SON leave  
their table when a CON VOLUNTEER  
comes to fetch them. MAN AND WOMAN  
continue chatting as the lights...

FADE TO BLACK

SCENE TWO

*The convention floor, the  
autograph tables. Rows of*

*tables with the names and pictures of celebrities above them are spaced across the floor. MAN and WOMAN are in line for SCI-FI ACTOR's. As they approach, we can hear the conversation he is having with MAGA FAN, who, you guessed it, is wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat.*

MAGA FAN

(stepping up to SCI-FI ACTOR's table)

Hi, I've been a fan of yours for a long time.

SCI-FI ACTOR

(notices the hat, is cautious)

Thank you; that's nice to hear.

MAGA FAN

(pushing a photo toward SCI-FI ACTOR)

Would you mind signing this?

SCI-FI ACTOR

Of course not.

MAGA FAN

Thank you. I have to say, though, I follow you on Twitter, and I think I have to stop.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Oh? Why?

MAGA FAN

Well, you keep spouting all that liberal Hollywood elite stuff about how much you hate our president.

SCI-FI ACTOR

I've never said I hate him. (beat) It's true I disagree with almost everything he does, but I don't hate him.

MAGA FAN

(unfazed)

You think because you're a high class actor your opinion outweighs everyone else's -

The sound balance and lighting shifts to focus on MAN and WOMAN who are standing right behind MAGA FAN, as they are next in line. MAGA

FAN and SCI-FI ACTOR continue their conversation in a murmur, but we cannot discern their words.

WOMAN

(to MAN, sotto voce)

Oh, this should be good.

MAN

(softly)

Oh, why?

WOMAN

(still quietly)

He loves to engage with people who disagree with him. I think he gets off on sparring.

MAN

Oh... should we record this?

WOMAN

No, no definitely not. But we should definitely watch.

And now the focus shifts back to the other pair, as SCI-FI ACTOR says...

SCI-FI ACTOR

Hollywood elitist? Does this apply to character actors, too? What if you don't live in Hollywood? What if you live in Ventura county? Malibu? Or... (whispers) Northern California?

MAGA FAN

Oh, come on, you know you're one of them. You were on a series. You've got wealth and power and a platform, and someone like me is mute.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Kind of vocal for someone who's mute, though. And how do you know I have wealth? Most members of the Screen Actors Guild don't actually make that much, and those who do paid dues for years, working in the service industry as cabbies and waiters... just because we're actors now doesn't mean we weren't always.

MAGA FAN

Well, but...

CON VOLUNTEER

Sir, we have other people behind you.

MAGA FAN

Oh, fine. I'll see you on Twitter sir.

SCI-FI ACTOR

But I thought you were unfollowing me?

CON VOLUNTEER

Next?

MAN and WOMAN step up to the  
autograph table.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Hi, welcome. Thanks for coming today. I'm really sorry you  
had to see that.

WOMAN

I follow you on Twitter, too. Watching you engage live is  
better than tennis.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Depends on the match.

WOMAN

Serena Williams. John McEnroe. That caliber.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Oh, well, then. Am I signing something for you?

WOMAN

(passes him a photo)

This, please.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Oh, I loved doing this film. Wow... this is a rare still.  
(beat) Do I talk to you on Twitter.

WOMAN

No.

MAN

She says you only engage with people who disagree with you.

WOMAN

Honey!

MAN

You did say it.

WOMAN

(to SCI-FI ACTOR)

Sorry. I did say it.

SCI-FI ACTOR

It's true. Mostly.

WOMAN

It's probably a good thing that whole exchange *wasn't* on Twitter, though. I'd have butted in and defended you - and you don't need defending... but... I know you get comments like that a lot, and - may I say something?

SCI-FI ACTOR

Sure.

WOMAN

I worked in finance in California for half my life. I don't any more, but that's not the point. I've done mortgage loans for some of your colleagues, so I know how much working actors who aren't leads on TV shows really make... and I also know that in economies like we have in California, New York, and almost every major city in the US, millionaires are middle class.

SCI-FI ACTOR

You're right.

WOMAN

You do have a platform, though. I, for one, am glad that you mostly use it to be kind.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Thank you.

WOMAN

(reclaiming her  
signed photo)

No. Thank you. I really enjoy your work.

WOMAN touches MAN's arm and they  
start to leave, but SCI-FI actor  
calls them back.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Wait. (beat) Are you doing a photo with me?

WOMAN

(shaking her head)

No. I did one with you a couple years... and three hair colors... ago. I was awkward and they treated you guys like meat. I didn't like it. But, thanks for the chat.

SCI-FI ACTOR

Have a great day.



WOMAN  
You, too.

MAN and WOMAN walk off as the  
lights...

FADE TO BLACK

SCENE THREE

*A hotel room. MAN and WOMAN  
are in pajamas, ready to go to  
bed. The signed photo of SCI-  
FI ACTOR is on the desk, and  
various bits of con  
memorabilia are strewn around  
the room.*

MAN  
So, you have a good day at con.

WOMAN  
Yes, actually. Probably the best one ever.

MAN  
Good. I'm glad.

WOMAN  
I'm tired though.

MAN  
Me, too.

WOMAN  
Ready for bed?

MAN  
Almost. I have to know something.

WOMAN  
Oh?

MAN  
What were you laughing about in the cafe earlier?

WOMAN  
Oh! That! Well, SCI-FI actor and his son were at the next  
table and I was kind of listening to their conversation.

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

And... you know how I always tease that the reason he did that one really horrible movie was to get health insurance for working three weeks that year?

MAN

Yeah?

WOMAN

He pretty much told his son exactly that.

MAN

Seriously?

WOMAN

Seriously.

MAN starts laughing as he gets into bed, and, infected by his amusement, WOMAN joins him.

BLACKOUT

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