

CAFFEINATED

LOVE

By Tom Smith

SAMPLE

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4234 Tres Ninos
Las Cruces, NM 88011
(575) 635-5194
kirbysr@hotmail.com

Cast of Characters

SAM Male or Female, 20s-40s

HARLEY Male or Female, same age

Author's note: Since either character may be played by either gender, please feel free to change the pronouns to the appropriate ones.

Time/Location

Today

A funky coffee house

CAFFEINATED LOVE

(A funky coffee house in a large city. SAM sits drinking a latte while periodically editing a manuscript with a red pen. After a few moments, HARLEY approaches, cappuccino in hand, and looks around tentatively. After a moment, s/he pokes her/his head in front of SAM.)

HARLEY

I'm sorry to bother you. All the other chairs are—

SAM

Oh, sure, no problem.

HARLEY

And, unfortunately, all the other tables—

SAM

Knock yourself out.

HARLEY

(Sitting down.)

Thanks!

(Extending hand.)

I'm Harley.

SAM

I'm Sam.

HARLEY

I haven't seen you here before.

SAM

I just moved into the neighborhood.

HARLEY

Ah, that would be why...

(SAM gets back to work. Beat.)

What are you working on?

SAM

A short story.

HARLEY

You're a writer?

SAM

Editor.

HARLEY

Oh. That's kinda like being a lawyer, isn't it?

SAM

What do you mean?

HARLEY

Well, you know, everyone hates lawyers! I'm sure all writers hate editors. Cutting their words. Forcing re-writes. Thinking they know it all. That kinda stuff.

SAM

Writers don't hate editors; that's just a cliché. Actually, a stereotype.

HARLEY

Hey, you just edited yourself! I guess it's in your blood, hunh?

SAM

A table just opened up by the window...

HARLEY

Oh, Jesus, I'm sorry! I'm coming off like a total ass, aren't I? It's just that I think you're incredibly attractive and you're making me really nervous.

SAM

Oh. Well, thank you...I guess.

HARLEY

You see, I have this thing for guys (girls) the rest of the world doesn't find good-looking. They have something wrong with them: like a big nose, or eyes that are too close together, or bad hair, or something. I hate people who are traditionally good-looking: there's no substance there, you know?

(SAM looks stunned.)

Oh, God, I did it again, didn't I? I always say the wrong thing! I mean, it's the right thing but people just take it the wrong way.

SAM

I need to get back to work.

HARLEY

Right. Got it.

(Beat.)

You're one of those A-types, aren't you? You have no interest in someone like me: you think I'm beneath you...

SAM

I never said you were beneath me!

HARLEY

Well, I could be if you play your cards right! Ok, that was just a joke. I'm not suggesting that we actually go back to my place and do it or anything. Unless you want to. It's been a while for me. I'm not that picky.

SAM

Unfortunately, I am: I like my dates sane.

HARLEY

This isn't a date! Oh, God, were you thinking this is a date? I just wanted a cappuccino and a little conversation. Jeez, you're putting an awful lot of pressure on me alluva sudden! What are your intentions, anyway?

SAM

What are you talking about? I don't have any intentions!

HARLEY

Thank God! Now let's just enjoy our coffee and not think about what will or will not happen at the end of our date.

SAM

This isn't a date! You said so yourself!

HARLEY

(Loudly, to others nearby.)

That's right. It isn't a date!

(Whispering.)

So s/he's here?

SAM

Who?

HARLEY

Your girl/boyfriend?

SAM

I don't have a girl/boyfriend.

HARLEY

Shhh! S/he'll hear you! Look, it's cool. We go out, and your girl/boyfriend just happens to show up. I'll play it cool. Just keep on pretending that we don't really know each other.

SAM

We don't!

HARLEY

You're blaming me for that, too? That is so like you! I mean, that's the whole problem with our relationship: I do all the talking. You think I don't notice that? At first, I thought you were just reserved. "S/he's so quiet," I'd say. "S/he just needs someone special, someone s/he'll feel comfortable opening up to." But it's more than that. You're keeping secrets from me; I don't know why, but you are. Just tell me what I've done to make you hate me so much!

SAM

I don't hate you!

HARLEY

You don't? Truly?

SAM

I don't know you enough to hate you. You're just...incredibly annoying. And a little scary. Look, I wish you'd just go away and leave me alone.