

CUP OF JOE

Written by

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INT. GRUBBY SWEATSHOP - DAY

Sounds of rustling sit in the air, as waves of hunched MEN and WOMEN, sit lined up working at tables.

The room is dark and massive, seemingly underground. Dressed in loose burlap clothing, they slave away.

One worker stands out. His brown shirt rests on pale shoulders and oily black hair partially obscures his stunted features.

Worst of all however are his fingers. Cracked and peeling, with flakes of skin stuck onto raw bleeding flesh. In all senses of the word JOE is worked to the bone.

With shaking hands, Joe peels a coffee bean. He takes its thin skin, placing it in a small glass chamber on his work table.

The chamber is cubed with an opening in the front, a pile of previously peeled skin sits in the center.

A sharp glass door slams shut sealing the box closed. Air tight, a hatch opens from the table, exposing a white vacuum tube.

WOOSH the peelings are sucked out of sight and out of mind.

Joe reaches over and picks up a new bean. He begins to peel.

One flake, two flakes, three flakes, CRACK.

The sound of the bean snapping echoes off of every wall in the room.

Everyone stops working. They all know what that sound means.

An electrical hum emits from the back of the room. It slowly increases in volume and intensity, as if something was charging or powering on.

Joe shakes with unadulterated fear. He looks straight ahead with white wide eyes.

The humming crescendos, just as a small blue light awakens revealing the source of the sound. Something rises in the shadows in the back of the room.

Slowly it moves. Floating down the rows of tables and workers, all of which avert their eyes. They know their place.

Bone white, and perfectly smooth this spherical robot looks far too advanced for the current establishment.

It reads as completely emotionless. Plain except a bright blue light coming from its face, an eye. Other than that this ORB, is completely cold and unpredictable.

Joe still trembles, as he locks his eyes down at the table. MMMMMMMM the sound of humming increases gradually, drawing closer and closer, soon the noise is only mere inches away.

Joe steals a side eyed glance at the Orb, immediately lowering his eyes.

The ORB speaks in a disturbingly pompous electronic voice.

ORB

What is your designation worker?

JOE

Joe, s-s-sir

ORB

Joe. Old name, archaic.

The Orb circles around to face Joe directly. Face to metal, inches apart.

ORB (CONT'D)

That's always the problem with people isn't it? Archaic.

The Orb hovers away slightly giving, Joe the chance to breathe.

ORB (CONT'D)

Why are men so eager to forget that they are not monkeys anymore?

ORB (CONT'D)

Tell me monkey, what do you think you did?

Joe tentatively looks down at the broken bean in front of him, before looking back up at the Orb.

JOE

I broke the it sir.

ORB

Your confidence in the wrong answer speaks volumes for your species. No, Joe you didn't break anything. You wasted.

The Orb turns and floats from side to side as if pacing, to exemplify his monolog.

ORB (CONT'D)
Wasted my resources, my time, even
the energy I'm using to explain
this to you monkey.

The Orb stops to face Joe directly again.

ORB (CONT'D)
The truth about all of these things
are that they are important.

The Orb gestures down with its body.

ORB (CONT'D)
Even that bean generic as it is, is
only of a limited many. In fact,
there's only one thing in this life
that's not finite, not important.
The 14 billion of you apes, running
around this planet. You are the
most easily replaceable resource in
the history of business.

The Orb raises it voice to address the room, causing his words to echo around the chamber.

ORB (CONT'D)
I could feed you all to rats for
breakfast, and have 10,000 workers
interviewing to be lunch.

The Orb pauses, nodding its head down at the bean again.

ORB (CONT'D)
Throw it away.

Joe quivering picks up the bean with his left hand, and slowly places them into the glass chamber from before.

Joe starts to pull his hand out of the chamber, but stops, the voice of the Orb, hovers over his shoulder, inches from his ear.

ORB (CONT'D)
What's the rush monkey?

Joe gulps, keeping his eyes straight forward.

ORB (CONT'D)
Once you put trash in the bin, do
you take it out?

JOE

No sir.

The blue eye of the Orb glows red for a split second as it drops its collected deposition.

ORB

Then why are you trying to!

Both the Orb and Joe now sit in silence waiting for inevitable. With every second the Orb's eye glows brighter, filled with red hatred, while Joe sits in absolute knowing terror.

SNIKT can be heard as glass meets flesh. Glass wins.

Screams of agony explode as Joe clutches his wrist, and stares in horror at his detached hand sitting in the glass chamber.

Yells blare from Joe, yet everyone still stares down, not wanting to draw the Orb's wrath next. The Orb now satisfied hovers away from Joe.

ORB (CONT'D)

Clean yourself up. You still have
eight hours on your shift, and now
I got to explain this to our
customers.

The Orb leaves, with Joe's detached hand limp in the case. A panel slides out from the table revealing the vacuum tube again. With little effort the tube sucks up, the bean, the shavings, and the hand.

INT. MACHINE WORKINGS, INNER TUBES - DAY

The hand is dragged through Rube Goldberg machine of shiny white tubes, with glowing cyan accents.

It's smashed, ground, steamed as if it was just another bean until finally, it is squeezed, and twisted as its juices dribble out in a reddish brown mix.

INT. FUTURISTIC CAFÉ, WAITING LINE - DAY

A middle-aged man waits at a serving counter, tapping his fingers on the pure white counter as he stands. Slick glass panes and neon cyan highlights consume the background of this 2252 café.

The man is dressed in an unflattering silver spandex, that covers everything but his face. On his head rests silver headphones, with red and white antenna.

This odd specimen is REETABLE PLEECEABLE.

A DING chimes, Pleeceable's order is ready. A reddish brown liquid streams from a dispenser into an awaiting cheap disposable coffee cup.

A familiar robotic voice rings out, this time masked in a suspiciously fake accent.

ORB

My most sincere apologies for the
wait Monsieur Pleeceable.

Orb floats in behind the counter to talk to Pleeceable.

PLEECEABLE

Ah no problem Orb.

Pleeceable takes a sip, and eyes widen with surprise.

PLEECEABLE (CONT'D)

Hey Orb, this tastes different than
usual...Did you improve your
recipe?

ORB

Ah Monsieur Pleeceable, no just a
new chef is all.

PLEECEABLE

Well give him my compliments

Pleeceable takes another sip.

PLEECEABLE (CONT'D)

Hey if its no bother, do you think
you could ask him to make me
another for the road?

The Orb lets lose a slight robotic laugh.

ORB

Not a problem Monsieur Pleeceable.
I think he has one more in him.

END