

"JUST A CHAT. NOTHING MORE."

By

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INT. DINER - NIGHT

MORGAN sits across from CUTTER, watching them pile greasy diner food into their mouth. The place is almost empty, but MORGAN keeps glancing around. The cup of tea in front of them remains untouched.

CUTTER

Thanks for the food. Appreciated muchly. I'll finish up and then we can talk details.

MORGAN nods. CUTTER drains their coffee cup, and then holds it up to the waitress at the counter to request a refill.

MORGAN

"Cutter"?

CUTTER

(eating)

Mm?

MORGAN

Is that- Is that a family name?

CUTTER snorts through a mouthful of fried egg.

CUTTER

Why would I tell you that? (Pause.) Guess it could be a family name...

MORGAN

So it's a nickname? Like a prison nickname? Have you been to prison?

CUTTER swallows, stares at MORGAN.

CUTTER

You're making me nervous with all your questions. Drink your tea.

They drop their cutlery onto the plate and push it away. The WAITRESS arrives and pours another cup of coffee. When she's out of earshot, CUTTER begins to speak. It sounds confident, but rehearsed.

CUTTER (CONT'D)

You haven't done anything wrong.
It's what I always say, first up.
You've done *nothing* wrong.

(MORE)

CUTTER (CONT'D)

(Gesturing to their booth.) This isn't wrong. Us, here. It's just a chat. Nothing more.

MORGAN glances around, leans in.

MORGAN

But I gave you money. I paid you money to-

CUTTER

To what? I haven't done anything. Not yet.

MORGAN

Was there- was there a problem?

CUTTER

Why not just get a divorce? Can I ask you that?

Something in MORGAN shifts. Something CUTTER notices.

MORGAN

No. You may not.

CUTTER

Fair, fair. There's no problem. I'm ready to go. You paid enough to start the ball rolling-

MORGAN

And you'll get the other half-

CUTTER

But I want to ask you--I ask everyone, you're not special--if this is what you want. Really.

MORGAN

That's none of your business.

CUTTER

That's not quite true, thanks to yourself.

MORGAN drops off. CUTTER leans in. Tries a smile. Ish.

CUTTER (CONT'D)

You seem nice enough. Like a good person. The reason we're sitting here "chatting": that might be how you feel today. Shit, you might have felt it since the wedding! But years from now, you might start to regret it. Let it eat away at you. Neither of us want that.

(MORE)

CUTTER (CONT'D)

You can still walk. No harm, no foul. All I wanted to tell you.

MORGAN

I can walk away?

CUTTER

We don't see each other again. We don't know each other. Why would we?

The cup of tea finally meets MORGAN's lips. They drink.

MORGAN

What about my money?

CUTTER

I'm afraid that's non-refundable. It's a deposit. Same as any.

MORGAN

And that's how it works?

CUTTER

That's how it works at most places.

MORGAN

No, I mean: this is how you run your little operation? You offer a service, you take a deposit and then talk vulnerable, nervous people into letting you walk away?

CUTTER

I'm just making sure-

MORGAN

You think you're some kind of counsellor, some kind of therapist, sitting in this booth with egg on your chin? I am a paying customer.

For once, CUTTER is lost for words. MORGAN stares them down.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Have you ever followed through on the job? Ever? Or does it always end with the "just a chat"?

MORGAN stands up from the booth.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Let me know when it's done. You can pay for my tea.

CUTTER watches MORGAN walk to their car through the window. They exhale slowly as their employer drives away into the night.