

REFERRAL

Written by

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Address
Phone Number

INT. FRAYED LEAF CAFE

Arthur steps inside, and the cafe lacks company as opposed to the previous morning. The warmth and comfort remains despite this. Jerome looks up from wiping a table and smiles.

JEROME

Hello, friend! Welcome back!

Arthur gives back a tired smile as he approaches the register. Jerome frowns and gets behind the counter.

JEROME (CONT'D)

Oh boy. Can I get you anything?

ARTHUR

Yeah, can I have the cocoa and banana bread again, please?

JEROME

Of course. That'll be \$4.50.

Arthur pays with a \$5 bill and moves to a table. They smile at each other, and Jerome moves into the kitchen.

Arthur looks over to the book nook, and he makes his way back to the QUEER LIT shelf. He spots *Life of Melody* and pulls it out.

He takes it back to his table and opens to where he left off that morning.

INT. FRAYED LEAF CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Jerome steps out of the kitchen with two mugs in one hand and two plates on the other arm. Arthur looks up when Jerome places the dishes on the table.

ARTHUR

Wait, I didn't order-

JEROME

I know. I'm just bored and looking for company. I can move to a different table-

ARTHUR

No, it's okay.

JEROME

You sure?

Arthur nods and uses a thin napkin to mark his page, the book read about halfway through. Jerome sits in a chair across from him and takes a sip of his drink.

JEROME (CONT'D)
So, find something you like?

ARTHUR
Yeah, this story is cute so far. I love a good rivals-to-lovers plot.

JEROME
Ugh, same. I'm a sucker for fantasy fluff.

ARTHUR
Same.

Arthur sips his mug of cocoa, and his shoulders relax.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Mmm... this is delicious, and so is the bread.

JEROME
Aw, thank you! I try.

ARTHUR
Well, trying works for you. It's a wonder you have such little business.

JEROME
Hey, cut us some slack. We only opened up last month and we're still looking for new hires.

ARTHUR
Yeah, that's fair.

JEROME
So, if you don't mind, can I ask what's got you down today?

Arthur's smile drops and he sighs.

ARTHUR
Oh, y'know, the usual boring corporate work shit. It's actually my first paying job, but I think I'm already done with it.

JEROME

I mean, yeah, I got that from before, but-

BUZZ BUZZ. Arthur pulls out his phone. The screen reads: DARYL IS CALLING. Arthur sighs and lets it ring, but he turns it face down on the table.

JEROME (CONT'D)

Who's that?

ARTHUR

My roommate. He's probably wondering where I am.

JEROME

Oh, that's nice.

ARTHUR

It'd be nicer if it wasn't because he wants me to go to a goddamn house party. He even came to my workplace just so he could... ugh, I dunno.

Arthur looks up and meets Jerome's gaze. He turns away and takes a bite of his bread. Jerome takes another sip from his mug, and Arthur swallows.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Shit- sorry, that was so rude of me to say. I mean, he's my best friend, for God's sake.

JEROME

It's okay, friend. It's good to talk about it sometimes.

Arthur chuckles nervously and glances at Jerome's food: a mug of chamomile tea and a plate of pistachio macarons.

ARTHUR

Nice snack option.

JEROME

Hm? Oh, the macarons? Yeah, I bake them all the time. It's great for late-night reading.

ARTHUR

This is going to sound odd, but do you like *Bridgerton*?

Jerome perks up, and his grin widens.

JEROME

I do! I actually read the whole series before Netflix adapted them, and dare I say, the on-screen version does not do it justice.

ARTHUR

Most people don't really watch it for the plot, though.

JEROME

I know! Season one was too straightforward- and dare I say graphic- with the smut, season two went way too heavy on the tension, but season three? Beautiful.

ARTHUR

You're actually invested in the plot?

JEROME

Of course I am. Plus the outfits are always stunning, and the ballroom sets?

Jerome does a chef-kiss. Arthur laughs.

JEROME (CONT'D)

Why do you ask?

ARTHUR

Oh, nothing, I just figure you're a fan of period romance.

JEROME

Wow, I've never been told that before.

ARTHUR

Really?

Jerome flexes his arm and points at his tattoos. Arthur chuckles and looks away.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Yeah, I don't really connect stuff like that, I guess. I just figured from the tea and macarons that you're, um... Never mind.

Arthur takes a long sip from his mug and stuffs more bread in his mouth.

JEROME
Y'know what, I like you, and I'm
glad you found us here, uh...
sorry, did I catch your name?

Arthur swallows his food.

ARTHUR
Arthur. Arthur Freud-Metzger.

JEROME
Arthur. I'm Jerome Lucero.

Jerome holds out his hand. Arthur takes it and shakes it
once.

The door opens, the old man from the other day coming in.
Arthur lets go of Jerome's hand and stands.

ARTHUR
I agree, it's been nice talking to
you, but you have customers and I
better get home. Bye.

Arthur rushes out the door. Jerome sees the book he left
behind and sighs.

JEROME
He'll be back.