

MISTER HIPSTER MEETS THE BARISTA

by

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Characters

- The Barista - female
- The Hipster - male

Setting

A coffee shop.

A barista calls out coffee orders...

BARISTA: Tall skinny latte with caramel drizzle.

Triple shot half-sweet non-fat banana macchiato.

Quad non-fat no whip mocha for Marc, with a 'c' not a 'k'.

Half-half Honduran bean latte for Loretta. *[aside]* Half-wit.

Large cappuccino, no chocolate. *[surprised]* Really? That's it?

Grande sugar-free vanilla latte, with soy.

Tall black-like-my-men, super hot! For Sheila.

Decaf soy almond latte with extra shot and cream.

Diabetes macchiato.

The El Salvadorian lesbian collective cocoa bean. In an organic cup.

[Takes a deep breath and lets out a long sigh]

And that's the end of the morning rush hour...

[Sees another customer – THE HIPSTER - approaching].

Uh-oh! Spoke too soon. *[smiles sweetly]*. Good morning! What can I get you?

MAN: I'd like a deconstructed flat white please.

BARISTA: *[quizzical]* The flat white bit I got. What's the 'deconstructed'? That's a new one on me.

MAN: I want the coffee, the milk and the water all separate. In their own beakers.

[The BARISTA stares at him, incredulous]

Please.

BARISTA: In their own... 'beakers'? You mean like, on the side?

MAN: I like to mix it myself.

BARISTA: Like a science experiment?

MAN: No offence.

BARISTA: Absolutely all taken. I mean, how could I possibly be offended? I've only been making coffee for six months--

MAN: Don't take it personally.

BARISTA: Trained at - *graduated from* - the best barista school in Melbourne.

MAN: I'm not doubting your credentials. (*beat*) But...if you did graduate from the best barista school in the coffee capital of the world, then I'm surprised you don't know what 'deconstructed' means.

BARISTA: Must be a new thing. A fad. I graduated--

MAN: Six months ago, you already said.

BARISTA: Mug.

MAN: Pardon?

BARISTA: Mug? Do you want a mug to mix your coffee components in?

MAN: Oh, ha ha! I thought you were insulting me for a minute.

BARISTA: Or would you prefer a cup? Or a glass? Or a... I don't know. A thimble?

MAN: Thimble? Don't be silly.

BARISTA: Now who's insulting whom? Are you calling me silly for not knowing what a 'deconstructed' flat white is? Or because I'm a woman?

MAN: No, no! Don't get your knickers in a twist.

BARISTA: Right! That's it. I've had enough. Get out.

MAN: But I haven't had my coffee.

BARISTA: And you won't get it either. You hoity-toity hipster types are all the same. Who do you think you are?

MAN: Now, now. There's no call for that.

BARISTA: Now who's 'offended'? Listen, mister. If I were to insult you, *really* insult you, I'd do a lot worse than call you a mug. You can count yourself lucky that I'm in a good mood today.

MAN: This is a good mood?

BARISTA: Yes! Well, relatively speaking. But I've still had enough of your deconstructed hipster claptrap. So go on. Clear off. Sling your hook. And don't. Come. Back.

MAN: I want to speak to the manager. This is discrimination.

BARISTA: Discrimination? Against who? Dimwits?

MAN: Against...against...

BARISTA: Hipsters? Listen, *mate*. I think half this city's had enough of hipsters. You're ruining coffee for everyone.

MAN: But I love coffee. I live for coffee.

BARISTA: But you're just being a pretentious--

MAN: *[Cutting in]* Pretentious...*[takes a breath]* dimwit...or not, I'm a customer in this café and I would like a deconstructed flat white. You're the one pushing the caffeine habit. So push it. Princess.

BARISTA: Princess! Push it? You make me sound like a drug dealer! Or...worse...a...a...Disney character! And believe me, Mister, I'm not as *delicate* as one of those!

MAN: Hmpf! Coffee *is* a drug, sweetheart. Now get dealing. Or else!

BARISTA: Or else what?! What are you going to do? Shoot me in the head, execution style, for not frothing your fix? Oh! Sorry! I forgot, you prefer to froth it yourself. You really are a DIY deranged, delusional moron, aren't you?

MAN: That's it! I want to see the manager. I wish to make a complaint.

BARISTA: Well. Tough Cheddar. She's not here.

MAN: When will she be back?

BARISTA: Well, that depends.

MAN: On?

BARISTA: Her flight back from Ethiopia. It could be delayed.

MAN: What sort of mug do you think I am? Your manager is *not* in Ethiopia. Where is she? Really. [*looking animatedly over her shoulder*] Hiding in the back?

BARISTA: Really. She really is in Ethiopia. She's negotiating an exclusive contract with a one-legged farmers' collective over there.

MAN: One legged?

BARISTA: Oh, sorry! That's the Cambodia collective. Land mines. Legacy of the war – wars - you see. I can't actually remember what the Ethiopian lot have got going for them. Or not going for them, if you know what I mean...

MAN: I don't believe you.

BARISTA: Well, there's nothing I can do about that, is there? But this is an *independent* coffee shop. It's not a sick-vomiting Starbucks! So she – the boss – does all that stuff herself, you see. No armies of sales execs or buyers here. Just the boss woman. The coffee whisperer, if you will. She who knows all there is to know about your little drug dependency.

MAN: I see.

BARISTA: "I see"? What does that mean?

MAN: Well, I've never been here before. Just passing through. And I think I might have...may have...underestimated the seriousness – *the reverence* – with which you rightly undertake your duties. Deconstructed flat whites notwithstanding.

BARISTA: Didn't you notice the sign outside? [*faced with a blank expression*] The name of the shop? *The Reverend Bean*.

MAN: Ah! Very...reverential. I approve.

BARISTA: I am so relieved. We have your approval on *something*. Even if it isn't the actual coffee or the stupid way that you want it served.

MAN: Look. Can we just...start again? Perhaps we got off on the wrong foot. [*looks around*] The place isn't busy--

[*The BARISTA looks around the shop*]

BARISTA: Isn't busy? It's dead as a decaffeinated Dodo.

MAN: Exactly! So why don't I buy *you* a coffee and we wipe the slate clean. Be civil. To each other. What do you say?

BARISTA: You want to buy *me* a coffee?

MAN: Yes.

BARISTA: I suppose you still expect me to make it.

MAN: Well, yes! You do work here. I don't.

BARISTA: I freaking hate coffee. Can't stand the stuff.

MAN: What?! What heresy is this?! What are you talking about? How can a barista – trained in, *graduated from*, no less, the best coffee school in the whole known civilized world – not like coffee? That's...absurd! No! It's much worse than absurd! It's...insane!

BARISTA: Well! Then just call me plain Jane-the-insane why don't you? Everybody else does.

MAN: Well, you're far from plain. But the other descriptors...

BARISTA: Drop it. Deadbeat.

MAN: Pardon my asking. But where does all this aggression come from? It's not...that time of the month, is it?

[Death stares from the BARISTA]

Sorry! Uncalled for. None of my business.

BARISTA: No. It flaming well isn't. *[takes a deep breath to calm down]* But, since you ask, I haven't had my morning pick-me-up yet. Been too busy. Rushed off my feet. Speaking of which. They're killing me. Do you mind if we sit down?

[The MAN shrugs. They go to sit down. The BARISTA takes off her shoes and starts rubbing her feet]

MAN: And what is your morning pick-me-up? If you detest coffee? I can't believe you detest coffee!

BARISTA: Tea.

[The MAN recoils like a vampire from sunlight]

MAN: Tea?!!!!

BARISTA: Yes. Tea.

MAN: Urgh!

BARISTA: You haven't lived. You think coffee is the centre of the universe. *Your* universe. But tea...*[a dreamy expression comes over her]*

MAN: You're not Chinese.

BARISTA: No?

MAN: English?

BARISTA: No...

MAN: Then why do you like tea so much?

BARISTA: I like the taste. The variety. Keemun. Lapsang souchong – how sexy does that sound on your tongue? Earl Grey. Irish. Jasmine. Green tea. White tea. Russian caravan. And then there's all the infusions...rosehip, ginger, chamomile, nettle--

MAN: Nettle?

BARISTA: That one's an acquired taste, admittedly. But that's the beauty of tea, you see. There's a flavour for every mood, every occasion. And tea's good for you, too. Much better than coffee.

MAN: Well, you can keep your nettles and your daisies and your rose petals and...I'll happily stick to my coffee bean, thank you very much.

BARISTA: Suit yourself. *[starts rubbing her feet again]* God, my feet are sore! It's all that standing up for hours. *[looks at her hands/wrists]* And I think I might be getting carpal tunnel syndrome from all the bloody repetitive taps and wrist action what-nots I have to do.

MAN: Yes, you do suffer for your art.

BARISTA: It's a daily grind, let me tell you.

MAN: Here *[taps his knee]*.

[The BARISTA stares at him suspiciously]

MAN: Put your feet up.

BARISTA: What? Are you a foot fetishist as well as a coffee crazy?

MAN: I'm a reflexologist. Trust me *[taps his knee again]*.

[The BARISTA puts one foot up. The MAN massages her foot]

BARISTA: Oh. Oh. Oh. Ooooooh....

[more groans and Oooohs in the manner of 'When Harry Met Sally']

Urrrghh!!!! God, you're good! Do you do backs as well? I've got an awful backache.

MAN: *[laughing]* Glad to help. Hey, you still haven't had your morning pick-me-up. Shall I make you one?

BARISTA: Hang on!

MAN: What?

BARISTA: What's going on here?

MAN: What do you mean?

BARISTA: You hate tea! Yet you've gone from a hipster shit-ster to my all-action hero in the time it takes to make an Americano.

MAN: Don't be so suspicious. I like you.

BARISTA: You like me? Five minutes ago you wanted to complain about me and get me fired.

MAN: Like I said, we got off on the wrong foot. Come on. Let me make you a tea. Or an infusion. Or whatever it is you'd like.

BARISTA: Customers aren't allowed behind the counter.

MAN: *[looks around]* There's no-one to tell.

BARISTA: I've got a better idea.

MAN: What's that?

BARISTA: Do you like chocolate?

MAN: Milk, dark or white?

BARISTA: Any.

MAN: Love it all.

BARISTA: There's a Max Brenner across the street.

MAN: My treat.

[The MAN stands, offers his hand]

[The BARISTA smiles, takes his hand and stands]

BARISTA: I've got to put my shoes on and lock up. Meet you over there?

MAN: *[grinning]* Don't be too long.

[The MAN exits]

[The BARISTA watches him leave. She starts to put her shoes back on]

BARISTA: *[As she's putting on her shoes]* Well, Jane. If you leave and the boss comes back from Aldi to find this place shut up you'll get the sack. On the other hand...he is kinda cute. *(beat)* Mmmm. He likes coffee. You like tea. Nothing in common. But maybe opposites attract? Oh, to hell with it! He likes chocolate. And he's got nice hands.

[The BARISTA runs out of the shop]

CURTAIN

Warren Paul Glover is a British-Australian writer and actor based in Sydney. Previously employed in the health sector in the UK, Warren studied screenwriting and creative writing at Edinburgh University before emigrating to Australia in 2010. Several of Warren's short plays have won judge's or audience awards in Sydney's short play festivals, and his plays have been performed in Australia, the UK and the United States. He has won four screenwriting contests, two of which for feature films (yet to be optioned). He was shortlisted for the Bridport poetry prize in 2016.