

"The Sacred Coffee Stain of Parmak"

by
Mike Murphy

112 Lovering Street
Medway, MA 02053-2326
508-533-8310
mikeandzachary@gmail.com
WGAE Registered

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EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - EARLY MORNING

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PAUL DUFFY, 35, coffee in one hand and briefcase in the other, runs through a sudden snow squall for his city bus. He waves his briefcase at the driver, AL, 50, who sees him.

Dodging stopped cars and black ice, Duffy makes it to the bus, walks up the damp well, and puts his fare in the box. His overcoat is unbuttoned. He puts his briefcase down on the floor.

DUFFY

Thanks for waiting, Al.

(catching his breath)

I haven't sprinted like that since high school.

The bus door squeaks shut.

AL

I was wondering where you were.

DUFFY

Woke up late. Had to grab my coffee and go. The next bus isn't for half an hour. I didn't feel like waiting in this mess for it.

Al, his bus still stopped at the red light, looks at Duffy's overcoat.

AL

I think you had a run-in with your coffee.

DUFFY

(confused)

Huh?

Al points at the coffee stain on the left sleeve of the overcoat. Duffy unhappily looks.

DUFFY

Damn! I just had it cleaned.

AL

Not your day.

(beat)

You'd better grab a seat. The light's gonna change any second.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Duffy tightens the lid on his coffee, picks up his briefcase, and heads down the damp aisle of the crowded bus.

Most of the seats are taken by people in winter coats so bulky that they spill over into the seat beside them. A few passengers are reading today's newspaper, but most are listening to something on their earbuds.

Duffy notices an empty seat, and then he sees *why* it is vacant: The seat is beside a thin, young man named TRO. Though he seems to be in his early twenties, his hair is as white as the snow falling outside.

He is wearing a purple tuxedo out of the 1970s and no overcoat against the biting weather.

Duffy stops beside the empty seat.

DUFFY
(reluctantly)
May I sit here?

Tro's face beams.

TRO
Certainly. Your country and this
universe are free.

DUFFY
Uhm. . . thanks.

He sits with a grunt.

DUFFY
What a morning!

Duffy realizes Tro is staring at him or, more precisely, his coat.

TRO
It's you! I. . . I don't believe
it! I, the lowly Tro, am unworthy
of this honor!

Some of the other passengers turn to have a look at what's going on.

DUFFY
(confused)
Excuse me?

(CONTINUED)

TRO

To have been selected from all the
undeserving wretches of creation!
I am honored and humbled.

He holds his hands before him in prayer and looks up,
seemingly to the sky and Heaven, and not to the bus's
ceiling.

TRO

I will do as you ask, oh great and
wise Parmak.

He briefly closes his eyes.

DUFFY

What did you call me? "Parmak?"

(beat)

I'm. . . I'm afraid you have me
confused with someone else. The
name's Duffy - Paul Duffy.

TRO

I know *exactly* who you are.

DUFFY

You do?

TRO

Yes.

(longish beat; very
happily)

You are the A. O. - the Anointed
One!

FADE TO:

The snow squall is stopping.

Tro rises from his window seat and squeezes past Duffy,
who looks relieved that this nut is getting off the bus.

Once in the aisle, Tro kneels beside Duffy, as though to
propose. Some other riders look back and smile, enjoying
the show.

Al calls from behind the wheel.

AL

Is there a problem back there?

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY
(calling back)
Nothing to worry about, Al.

Duffy is very embarrassed at the spectacle Tro is making.

DUFFY
(sotto voce)
Will you *please* get up?

TRO
I prostrate myself before you, A.
O.

DUFFY
I can see that.

He looks up the snow-wet bus aisle at the gawkers.

DUFFY
So can everyone else.
(beat)
What's your name?

TRO
I am called Tro.

DUFFY
OK, Tro, will you -

TRO
(thrilled)
The Anointed One speaks the name
of this miserable wretch! I am
greatly honored, but it is
unworthy to form on your blessed
lips.

DUFFY
(quickly)
Sure. Whatever you say.
(beat)
Listen, friend, I'm gonna scoot
over to the window seat. I want
you to get up off your knees. It
looks bad.

TRO
Whatever you say. It is written
that I should be with you.

Duffy moves to the window seat. Tro sits beside him.

(CONTINUED)

TRO

I am blessed to be in the A. O.'s presence.

DUFFY

Look, Tro -

TRO

Again, my unworthy name is formed on your blessed tongue!

DUFFY

(annoyed)

Can we get over this "name" thing? You don't need to keep telling me you're unworthy.

TRO

Whatever you say, A. O.

DUFFY

Let's start there.

(beat)

You think I'm the "Anointed One?"

TRO

I *know* you are.

DUFFY

How?

TRO

From your coat.

(beat)

The stain on your sleeve is the very image of the great god Parmak.

DUFFY

It's *coffee*. French roast.

TRO

Nevertheless, the stain is in the shape of Parmak's countenance.

Duffy briefly studies the stain.

DUFFY

I guess it *does* kind of look like a face in profile.

(CONTINUED)

TRO

It is the spitting image! I have seen such things in our sacred texts.

DUFFY

Pictures of coffee stains?

Tro shakes his head.

TRO

Of *Parmak*.

(beat)

It is written that someday the A. O. will appear to one of the great god's followers, and I - this most unworthy wretch! - have been selected to be the Second in the grand and wonderful Divining.

DUFFY

What religion are we talking about here?

TRO

Carnapyism.

DUFFY

Never heard of it.

TRO

Not many people have.

(beat)

It's new.

DUFFY

How new?

TRO

About three hundred years.

DUFFY

That's new?

TRO

Compared to more-established faiths, like Catholicism and Judaism, yes.

DUFFY

Look, Tro. . . and *please* don't tell me about my blessed tongue and your unworthiness!

(CONTINUED)

TRO

Gotcha.

DUFFY

You think I'm the Anointed One
because of a. . . a coffee stain?

TRO

Your appearance is prophesied in
our sacred texts.

DUFFY

They mention me by name?

TRO

Well. . . no.

Duffy chuckles.

DUFFY

I'm flattered, really, but I'm not
your Anointed One.

TRO

It is also written that the A. O.
will deny any knowledge of his
status as Parmak will choose
someone unknown to Carnapyism.

DUFFY

But I'm *not* religious. I. . . I
didn't even go to church last
Christmas. You can't get less
religious than that!

TRO

You are the A. O., and I am to be
your Second.

DUFFY

My *what*?

TRO

The A. O. serves as a conduit
between Parmak and the Second -
me. Staying by your side, I will
soon receive all the wisdom of the
great god through the Divining.

DUFFY

But I'm *not* the A. O.

(CONTINUED)

TRO

You have Parmak's image on your coat.

DUFFY

It's *coffee*.

(longish beat)

I'll tell you what: I'll *give* you the coat. It's all yours! You can bring it to your church, or temple, or synagogue, or whatever. You must be cold in just that ugly tuxedo.

TRO

I must refuse. I am only to be the Second. I cannot attempt to usurp your sacred status by donning the blessed coat myself.

Duffy sighs.

TRO

I will stay with you. I will *learn* from you.

DUFFY

But I don't know anything about your religion. I never even heard about it before today.

TRO

No matter.

(beat)

I will follow you day and night. I will stay by your side and wait for the moment of the Divining.

DUFFY

How long until this "Divining" happens? Do the sacred texts mention that?

TRO

It takes what it takes. It could be hours, it could be months.

DUFFY

Months!

(beat)

I've got a job, a wife, and a baby on the way. I can't have you beside me everywhere I go like a puppy on a leash.

(CONTINUED)

TRO

I will be no trouble.

DUFFY

You've *already* been trouble!

TRO

I *must* be with you when the
Divining occurs. It is my duty as
the Second.

DUFFY

But. . .

TRO

You will barely know I'm around.

Duffy rubs his aching forehead.

DUFFY

Oh boy!

FADE TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

The squall is over. The bus pulls up at a corner.

Duffy and Tro are among the passengers who exit.

AL

Goodbye, Mr. Duffy. . . and good
luck.

The squeaky doors close, and the bus pulls away.

The city is very large, with many streets and
skyscrapers. Bundled-up people are walking quickly, but
carefully, in the squall's snow, trying to make it to the
office by 9:00.

Tro looks up and about at his surroundings, seemingly
impressed by the city. He hurries behind Duffy, who is
trying to distance himself from the Second in the hubbub
of the city.

TRO

Where are we off to?

Duffy sighs, realizing that he is licked. He stops
walking.

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY

You again?

TRO

Where are we going?

DUFFY

I'm going to work in the Shepherd Building. I don't know about you.

Duffy picks up his pace.

TRO

What do you do?

DUFFY

I'm an accountant.

(beat)

Look, it's been fun talking with you, but I have to be moving along. I'll see ya later - maybe on the bus.

TRO

I *must* walk with you.

DUFFY

(flustered)

Why?

TRO

I cannot take the chance that you will dispense Parmak's wisdom without me present.

Duffy sighs a heavy sigh.

DUFFY

Very well.

(beat)

Come on, Spot.

FADE TO:

Duffy and Tro enter the mostly glass building through the revolving door.

Again, Tro is amazed at the sights before him and stops to drink it all in.

(CONTINUED)

TRO

This is your building?

DUFFY

I *work* here. I don't own it.

TRO

It is very impressive - worthy of you.

Duffy grabs both of Tro's shoulders.

DUFFY

I'll see you later.

He breaks from Tro, walks to the security desk, and flashes his building pass at the older, bulky security guard seated there. The guard glances at it and waves him on.

Tro follows right behind him and is stopped by the guard, who climbs off his chair and stands in Tro's path.

GUARD

(grumpily)
Hey, buddy!

TRO

Yes, friend?

GUARD

Where do you think you're goin'?

TRO

(innocently)
With Mr. Duffy.

GUARD

Not without a buildin' pass you ain't.

TRO

But I must not leave the side of the A. O.

GUARD

The *who*?

Duffy realizes something is up and returns to the security desk.

DUFFY

(to the guard)
Something wrong here?

(CONTINUED)

GUARD

This guy was tryin' to enter the
buildin'. He didn't show me a
badge or nothin'.

(beat)

He says he's with you.

Tro points at Duffy.

TRO

There is the A. O.

The guard is confused.

GUARD

Is he with you, Mr. Duffy?

DUFFY

Unfortunately.

(beat)

Let me deal with this, huh? I'll
be right back. . . I hope.

He grabs Tro by an arm and leads him to a set of
connected, plastic chairs.

DUFFY

Have a seat.

Tro sits.

TRO

Is there a problem?

DUFFY

You can't simply walk into my
building like that.

TRO

(confused)

Is this *not* a free country?

DUFFY

Yes, but there is such a thing as
security.

TRO

And this "security" will not allow
me to follow you any longer?

DUFFY

(relieved)

Exactly.

(CONTINUED)

TRO

But the wisdom of Parmak -

DUFFY

Will have to wait. I've got work
to do upstairs.

TRO

And following you upstairs is
forbidden?

DUFFY

Definitely.

TRO

I would not bother you. I would
sit beside you and not make a
peep.

DUFFY

It's not *my* decision to make.

TRO

The burly man decides?

Duffy nods.

DUFFY

He does.

TRO

(beat)
May I plead with him?

DUFFY

He's not a big talker. He speaks
with his fists.

Tro is surprised.

TRO

How vulgar!
(beat)
We believers in Carnapyism
practice nonviolence.

DUFFY

Good for you.

TRO

It's not worth trying?

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY

Not at all. You could get me in trouble.

(beat)

Is that what you want?

TRO

Never in my life would I wish to cause you trouble!

(beat)

I will wait here for you.

DUFFY

(dumbstruck)

What?

TRO

Are not these seats for the general public's use?

DUFFY

They are, but -

TRO

Then I will wait patiently here for you and meditate.

DUFFY

But I'll be busy for a long while - five o'clock or even later.

TRO

I will stay in this seat.

(beat)

Will the burly man mind me doing that?

DUFFY

I'm not sure. I don't think anyone's ever done it.

TRO

I will cause him no trouble either.

DUFFY

See that you don't.

TRO

Will you be removing your overcoat when you get upstairs?

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY

(confused)

Sure I will. Why do you ask?

TRO

The texts mention that the Divining cannot occur unless the A. O. is adorned with the symbol of Parmak - in this case, your coat. If you are not wearing it, the sacred event will not happen.

DUFFY

(sarcastically)

Swell.

TRO

I am so grateful that you are practicing such benevolence. It is written that you would. Your great country is known for its freedom of religion.

(beat)

People of other lands would have pushed me aside long ago.

DUFFY

(humbled)

Yeah.

(beat)

See you around 5:00.

FADE TO:

PAM, Duffy's young assistant, greets him as he walks into her outer office. Everything electronic you would expect to be in an office is there, including a laptop, a printer, a phone with multiple lines, a fax machine, and a one-cup-at-a-time coffee maker.

DUFFY

Good morning, Pam.

PAM

Good morning, sir.

(beat)

Coffee?

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY

No thanks. . . and could you
please not mention coffee in my
presence ever again?

PAM

(taken aback)

OK.

DUFFY

(apologetically)

I'm sorry. It's not your fault.

PAM

Bad weekend?

DUFFY

No, just this morning. I'll tell
you later.

(beat)

May I ask you a favor?

PAM

Certainly.

Duffy touches the stained sleeve of his overcoat.

DUFFY

Could you please take this to the
cleaners and ask them to get rid
of the stain?

PAM

Sure. I was heading over a little
later myself.

DUFFY

Do you think that "Alice" lady
could do the job by the end of
today?

PAM

(uncertain)

I'll ask.

(beat)

They're usually pretty quick over
there.

He puts his briefcase down and starts to remove his coat.

DUFFY

Thanks.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

5

DUFFY (CONT'D)

You'll want to go out the
secondary entrance, *not* by the
security desk.

PAM

Why?

DUFFY

Trust me.

FADE TO:

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INT. DUFFY'S OFFICE - LATER

6

Paul is seated at his desk in his book-lined office when
the phone rings. He answers it.

DUFFY

(into the phone)

Paul Duffy.

The screen splits to accommodate the security guard from
earlier, who is speaking into his telephone.

GUARD

Mr. Duffy, this is Security down
at the front desk. We spoke
earlier.

DUFFY

Yes?

GUARD

We're havin' a bit of a problem
with that "friend" of yours - the
white-haired guy in the purple
tux.

Duffy momentarily closes his eyes.

DUFFY

What's the trouble?

GUARD

He's been sittin' where you left
him for hours. He's hardly
flinched, but he's freakin' people
out.

DUFFY

Just by sitting there?

(CONTINUED)

GUARD

No, he's started. . . hummin'.

DUFFY

Humming?

GUARD

Yeah, and loudly sometimes. Off key too.

DUFFY

(exasperated)

I'll be right down.

FADE TO:

INT. SHEPHERD BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

Duffy hurriedly exits past the security desk and toward the humming Tro. He taps him on the shoulder, and Tro comes out of a trance.

He sees Duffy and smiles.

TRO

A. O., I am happy to see you again. You honor me with your presence.

(beat)

Is it time to leave?

DUFFY

Not yet.

TRO

You have not been wearing the sacred coat, I trust.

DUFFY

Of course not.

TRO

That is good. Then I need not worry about missing the Divining.

Duffy sits beside Tro.

DUFFY

Tro, I got a call that you were causing a disturbance down here.

(CONTINUED)

TRO
(very surprised)
I?

DUFFY
You said you weren't going to
cause me any trouble.

TRO
And I have been true to my word. I
have been sitting here since you
went upstairs to your office.

DUFFY
I was told you were humming. . .
loudly.

TRO
Humming?
(beat)
Oh, I *may* have been. I was
meditating, and that has been
known to happen occasionally when
I meditate.

He instantly looks guilty.

TRO
Was I disturbing others?

DUFFY
You were.

TRO
I am *so* sorry. I sometimes enter
another plane when I meditate. I
was not aware I was causing a
disturbance.

DUFFY
Can you stop the humming?

TRO
Certainly. I have no intention of
meditating anymore. If there is no
meditation, there will be no
humming.

DUFFY
Good. That will make everyone feel
better.

TRO
Including the guard?

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY

Especially him.

TRO

I will cause no trouble.

Duffy stands.

DUFFY

Do you want a newspaper or
something to read?

TRO

No thank you. I have the mysteries
of the ages to contemplate.

DUFFY

That should keep you busy.

FADE TO:

The phone rings. He answers it.

DUFFY

Hello, Paul Duffy.

The screen splits, as before, to show ALICE, 30, from the
cleaners, who is also on her telephone.

ALICE

Mr. Duffy, this is Alice over at
Commonwealth Cleaners.

DUFFY

Yes, Alice. How's my coat coming
along?

ALICE

That's what I'm calling you about.

(beat)

The stain on the sleeve looks like
coffee. Is that right?

DUFFY

Yes.

ALICE

(beat)

Strange.

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY

What is?

ALICE

It won't come off.

DUFFY

No?

ALICE

I've cleaned hundreds of coats like this one in my time here with all kinds of stains. I've got some tried and true methods, but this stain won't budge.

DUFFY

How can that be?

ALICE

It beats me. I've tried three times to get it out with stuff that would take the spots off a Dalmatian. No dice.

(beat)

I've cleaned this for you before, haven't I?

DUFFY

Several times.

ALICE

I'm sorry, Mr. Duffy. What I tried should have worked. I'm at a loss.

(beat)

Will Pam be coming back for the coat or would you like me to run it over to you?

(beat)

No charge.

FADE TO:

Duffy is seated at a large conference table with many other suited accountants, a report open before him. MR. WILSON, his gray-haired boss, is holding court at the front of the table.

WILSON

And so, if you'll all turn to page 29, we can -

(CONTINUED)

Duffy's cell rings in his pocket.

DUFFY
(embarrassed)
I'm sorry.
(beat)
I won't be a minute.

WILSON
Make it brief.

Duffy gets out of his chair and hurriedly walks to a corner of the conference room.

He answers his phone.

DUFFY
Hello?

In split screen, we see that it is his wife, ELLEN, who is also on her cell.

ELLEN
Hi, honey.

DUFFY
(anxiously)
Are you OK? Is the baby alright?

ELLEN
We're *fine*.

DUFFY
I'm afraid this isn't a good time.
Old Man Wilson is holding a -

ELLEN
I wouldn't have called, but this
is *really* strange.

Duffy is concerned.

DUFFY
What is?

ELLEN
I just got back from running some
errands, and there are. . . people
on our lawn.

DUFFY
People?

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

A couple of dozen, I think.
They're all wearing really gaudy
purple tuxes, and some of them are
humming.

Duffy shakes his head.

DUFFY

Oh no!

ELLEN

One of them touched my belly and
called me "Anointed Mother."

(beat)

You know I *hate* it when people
touch my belly!

DUFFY

Are our "guests" causing any
trouble?

ELLEN

No, it's just weird: It's below
freezing outside, there's snow on
the ground, and they're acting
like it's summer.

(beat)

I don't mind telling you, I'm
scared.

DUFFY

I think I know what's going on.

ELLEN

You do? Please tell me.

DUFFY

It would take too long. I'd kill
the battery on my cell.

(beat)

I'm coming home. I'll take a taxi.

ELLEN

But your meeting -

DUFFY

They'll have to live without me.

(beat)

Ellen, I don't think any of our
visitors will cause trouble, but
lock the doors just in case.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

I always do.

DUFFY

I'll be back as soon as we can
snag a cab.

ELLEN

We?

DUFFY

I'll be bringing a guest home.

ELLEN

Anyone I know?

DUFFY

No, but he'll be wearing a purple
tuxedo.

(beat)

Love ya. Goodbye.

He hangs up and walks back to the conference table.
Wilson is still talking.

WILSON

As you can see in the pie chart,
the number of clients who report
complete satisfaction -

DUFFY

Excuse me, sir.

Wilson dislikes being interrupted.

WILSON

(slightly annoyed)
Yes, Duffy?

DUFFY

I'm afraid I'm going to have to
head home.

WILSON

An emergency?

DUFFY

Nothing horrible, but something
that requires my immediate
attention.

WILSON

Very well - if you *must*.

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY

Oh, I *must*.

He rolls his eyes. Duffy quickly heads to the door.

WILSON

I'm not happy about this, Paul.

Duffy opens the door.

DUFFY

Neither am I, sir.

FADE TO:

Duffy, wearing his coat and carrying his briefcase, passes by the security desk and approaches the still-seated Tro, who is flipping through a magazine on his lap.

DUFFY

Hello again.

Tro is surprised to see him.

TRO

Anointed One. I did not hear you.

(beat)

The guard let me borrow this magazine.

Duffy picks it up. It is the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue. He drops it back down on Tro's lap, and Tro instantly starts looking at some of the pictures again.

TRO

I have never seen it before. I mainly read our sacred texts.

He closes the magazine and looks up at Duffy.

TRO

I am at a loss to understand what sport all these scantily clad young ladies play.

DUFFY

We'll talk about that later.

(beat)

I just got a call from my wife.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY (CONT'D)

It seems that some of your purple brethren have found my home.

TRO

(surprised)

Really?

DUFFY

They're making the Mrs. nervous, and, being pregnant, she's in no mood for that.

TRO

No one will harm her.

DUFFY

How did your pals learn where we live?

TRO

(longish beat)

I'm not sure.

Suddenly, his face brightens.

TRO

It must have worked!

DUFFY

What must have?

TRO

My meditation.

(beat)

We followers of Carnapyism learn the power of telepathy. . . or, should I say, we try to. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. The meditating I did here must have actually worked!

DUFFY

But how did you -

TRO

We shared a bus ride, A. O. You told the driver you had just come from home, so I knew the town where you and your wife live.

DUFFY

But how did your friends find the address?

(CONTINUED)

TRO

(beat)
Google, probably.

DUFFY

Why are they at my house?

TRO

I suppose they hope to witness the
Divining.

DUFFY

C'mon.
(beat)
You're coming with me.

TRO

(astounded)
To the home of the Anointed One
and his expectant wife? I'm not
worthy.

DUFFY

That again?
(beat)
We're grabbing a taxi.

Tro stands.

TRO

May I bring this magazine?

FADE TO:

Duffy and Tro pull up in a cab outside a modest house. Approximately two dozen white-haired men and women, of various ages and races, all wearing purple tuxedos, are standing on the snow-dusted front lawn amid the unlit Christmas decorations.

Two of them are setting up a Hibachi.

A few neighbors stand on the sidewalk, looking quizzically at the unusual, once-in-a-lifetime sight.

As Duffy and Tro step out of the cab, there is a loud cheer from Tro's fellow worshippers. The two men hurry up the marble walkway to the front door. Along the way, several smiling people slap Tro on the back. One of them high fives him.

(CONTINUED)

Ellen quickly opens the door to let them in. She closes and locks the door even faster.

She hugs her husband as much as her pregnancy will allow.

ELLEN

Thank God you're home, Paul. Those people are *really* weirding me out!

TRO

(calmly)

So glad to meet you, Mrs. Duffy.

Ellen takes a few steps back.

ELLEN

(nervously)

You're one of them.

DUFFY

His name's Tro. I met him on the bus this morning.

TRO

And a *blessed* meeting it was.

Duffy peeks through the window curtains and turns to Tro.

DUFFY

Is your entire congregation out there on my lawn with Santa and the reindeer?

TRO

I believe so.

ELLEN

How many of. . . you are there?

TRO

Thirty-seven. Thirty-eight if Murray has returned from Miami Beach.

ELLEN

Paul, what's all this about?

Paul sighs a big sigh.

DUFFY

Let's go to the kitchen. I'll tell you everything.

The Duffys begin to leave. Tro follows them. Paul stops walking and gently places an open hand on Tro's chest.

DUFFY

You're not invited.

TRO

I must stay with you while you wear the blessed coat.

ELLEN

The *what*?

DUFFY

I'll only be a minute.

TRO

But if the Divining were to occur while I was not by your side. . .

ELLEN

What is he talking about?

DUFFY

It's a *long* story.

He removes his coffee-stained coat and offers it to Tro.

DUFFY

You hold onto it while Ellen and I go into the kitchen to talk.

Tro puts up his hands.

TRO

I cannot touch it! I am but the Second.

ELLEN

The second what?

Duffy tosses the coat on the couch.

DUFFY

There!

(beat)

You won't miss anything.

FADE TO:

12

INT. DUFFY KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

12

Duffy and Ellen sit at a circular table. Ellen can't believe what her husband has told her.

ELLEN

You're kidding?

DUFFY

I wish I were.

(beat)

Tro is convinced that his god is going to speak to him through me by something known as the Divining.

(beat)

He calls me the Anointed One - A. O., for short - because of that coffee stain on my coat, which he says looks like Parmak.

Ellen rises and starts pacing.

ELLEN

This is crazy!

DUFFY

Don't you think I know that?

ELLEN

Couldn't you shake him?

DUFFY

I tried. He's very persistent. He stayed down in the lobby all day waiting for me.

(beat)

Then he appealed to my patriotism.

Ellen stops pacing and stands in front of her husband.

ELLEN

You're too trusting, dear. It sounds like a con to me.

DUFFY

What do you mean?

ELLEN

Tro comes home with you and insists that he has to stay by your side for this thingy to happen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

12

CONTINUED:

12

ELLEN (CONT'D)

He's probably going to expect free
room and board until it *does*.

DUFFY

I don't think he's like that.

Ellen cracks the kitchen door and peeks into the living
room.

DUFFY

(longish beat)

What's he doing?

ELLEN

Kneeling down by your coat.

FADE TO:

13

INT. DUFFY LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

13

Paul looks through the window at all the purple tuxes on
the front lawn. Night is falling, and the Christmas
decorations are now illuminated.

DUFFY

How long will your pals stay
outside the house?

TRO

Until the Divining occurs.

ELLEN

(eagerly)

And when will that be?

TRO

We have no way of knowing. Only
Parmak will decide that.

ELLEN

(calling to Paul)

Are they all still there?

DUFFY

All of them, and maybe more.

(beat)

I think Murray came back from
Miami Beach and brought a few new
recruits.

ELLEN

They must be *freezing* out there.
It's January.

(CONTINUED)

TRO

My religion teaches mind over matter, mother of the Anointed One's child. Though they would appreciate your concern, they do not feel the cold.

ELLEN

They must be hungry then.

Paul looks outside again.

DUFFY

I doubt it.

(beat)

They're having a weenie roast.

Ellen finally reaches the end of her patience.

ELLEN

That's enough! I'm pregnant and tired, and I want to go to bed.

Duffy yawns.

DUFFY

Me too.

TRO

But what of the Divining?

DUFFY

It'll have to wait until morning. The A. O. needs some sleep.

ELLEN

Tro, did you say that unless Paul is wearing his coat, this Divining can't happen?

TRO

Very true.

ELLEN

Put it on, Paul.

DUFFY

What?

ELLEN

Put on your coat.

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY

Wear a wool overcoat in a seventy-degree house?

ELLEN

Don't argue with a pregnant woman!

DUFFY

But -

ELLEN

We need the Divining to happen so we can attempt to get our lives back to normal. If you don't wear the coat, it could take forever to occur.

TRO

She is correct. With more frequent wearing of the blessed garment, the Divining will occur sooner.

ELLEN

See? What did I tell you?

DUFFY

Alright! I'll put the damn thing on.

He grabs the coat from the couch.

TRO

I am *honored* to witness the donning of the sacred coat.

Paul grumpily puts on his coat.

DUFFY

Yeah, yeah.
(longish beat)
Let's go to bed, honey.

ELLEN

(exasperated)
About time.

As they walk away, Tro follows them again. Duffy stops him.

DUFFY

Ellen and I are going to bed.
You're not invited. You can sack out on the couch if you like.

(CONTINUED)

TRO

I *must* stay by your side. If the Divining occurs and I, the Second, am not there to receive the wisdom of Parmak -

ELLEN

I am now very tired!

Tro touches Ellen's belly.

TRO

(respectfully)
Mother of the Ages.

ELLEN

(very angrily)
Move your hand or lose it!

Tro quickly withdraws his hand.

DUFFY

For future reference, she *hates* that.

TRO

(to Ellen)
My apologies.

Ellen turns quickly.

ELLEN

I'm sleeping in the guest room tonight.

DUFFY

(surprised)
What about me?

She faces her husband.

ELLEN

You and your "pal" can sleep in our room. I wouldn't want him to miss his Divining.

(beat)
You leave that coat on, Paul!

FADE TO:

14

INT. DUFFY BEDROOM - LATER

14

A lovely room with a large king bed covered in many comforters.

An angry Duffy is lying in bed, wearing his overcoat on top of his pajamas and sweating. Tro starts to climb in with him.

Paul puts out one hand.

DUFFY
Hold it right there!

Confused, Tro stops.

TRO
Is there a problem?

DUFFY
You are *not* getting into bed with me.

TRO
Why not?

DUFFY
You're just not!

TRO
You have nothing to fear, A. O. Carnapyism teaches celibacy, and I have been a believer since my birth.

DUFFY
(surprised)
You've never had. . .

TRO
No. My religion is everything to me.

DUFFY
Haven't you ever felt. . . well
. . . stirrings?

TRO
Of course! I am celibate, not robotic.
(beat)
I felt some stirrings earlier while looking at the pictures of the young ladies in that magazine.

(CONTINUED)

DUFFY

You're not "stirring" anything in this bed.

TRO

But I must be by your side!

Duffy points at a chair in the corner.

DUFFY

Sleep there.

TRO

So far away?

DUFFY

Then pull it closer - right up to the mattress.

As Tro goes for the chair, Duffy mops his brow with one of the blankets.

DUFFY

(sotto voce)

I hope he doesn't snore.

FADE TO:

A very tired and sweaty Paul is wearing his woolen overcoat at the table. Beneath it, he has his pajamas on.

Tro sits beside him.

DUFFY

How much more, Tro? It's been *six* days.

TRO

There is no way to tell, A. O. The attainment of heavenly wisdom does not punch a time clock.

He sips his orange juice and seems delighted by its taste.

TRO

Are we going to work today?

DUFFY

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

TRO

You will not wear the coat while -

DUFFY

I won't. I won't.

Duffy tugs on the coat, trying unsuccessfully to make it more comfortable.

DUFFY

It's not easy sleeping in this.

(beat)

If I wanted a sauna, I'd have one installed.

TRO

I imagine.

DUFFY

Frankly, I'm getting tired of this whole Divining thing.

TRO

Then you should get some sleep, Anointed One.

DUFFY

I'd love to - with my wife!

(beat)

Tro, I've gone above and beyond the call of duty in allowing you your freedom of religion.

Tro nods and takes some more orange juice.

TRO

You have been most patient with me.

DUFFY

You're following me wherever I go - even to the bathroom, which I'm really not happy about - like a puppy that's being housebroken.

He grabs at his coat's lapels.

DUFFY

This "sacred" coat is starting to smell, and your frat buddies are having a 24/7 weenie roast on my front lawn!

(beat)

Don't they ever sleep?

(CONTINUED)

TRO

Through the use of mind-over-matter techniques, we Carnapyists can go without sleep for some time if need be.

DUFFY

(sarcastically)

Wonderful!

TRO

A. O., I know this has been an inconvenience for you.

Duffy quickly stands.

DUFFY

(angry)

Inconvenience? An "inconvenience" is when the cable goes out. This whole thing has been a big pain in the butt!

(longish beat;
mystically)

Wait! Wait! I'm getting something. I think this is it!

TRO

The Divining?

DUFFY

I think so.

TRO

(eagerly)

What a glorious moment!

DUFFY

Someone is telling me to relay these things to the Second - that's you:

(longish beat)

Always wait half an hour after eating before going swimming. . .
Don't sleep in the subway. . .
Don't eat the yellow snow. . .

TRO

(sadly)

A. O., you are joking with me. Parmak would not know of subways.

Duffy sighs heavily, sits back down, and takes a swig of orange juice.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

DUFFY

You can't blame a guy for trying.

FADE TO:

16 INT. DUFFY KITCHEN - ANOTHER DAY

16

It is breakfast time again. Tro, Paul, and Ellen are seated around the table. Duffy wears his overcoat on top of his work suit. Tro's purple tuxedo is starting to look the worse for wear.

The three breakfast plates hold partially eaten bacon and eggs.

DUFFY

(to Ellen)

Any plans today, dear?

Ellen wipes her mouth with her napkin.

ELLEN

I'd better go to the supermarket.

(beat)

Our bacon and eggs aren't lasting as long as they used to.

TRO

I am grateful for your hospitality.

DUFFY

(to Tro)

I suppose you're coming to work with me?

TRO

Absolutely.

Duffy leans towards Ellen.

DUFFY

(whispering)

Honey, how about tonight the two of us -

ELLEN

Three.

DUFFY

(beat; depressed)

Oh yeah.

(CONTINUED)

ELLEN

The three of us what?

DUFFY

I thought we could go to dinner at
Chez. . .

A loud sound suddenly fills the kitchen, like many discordant wind chimes ringing in unison. Ellen clutches her husband's arm.

ELLEN

Honey, what is it? What's wrong?

Duffy is feeling a little out of it. The stain on his overcoat sleeve begins to glow.

Duffy shakes his head.

DUFFY

I feel. . . weird.

Tro levitates from his seat and floats into the air. The Duffys are shocked at the sight.

Duffy raises his hand up, but Tro is rising fast. He is soon out of reach.

DUFFY

Give me your hand!

TRO

No, Anointed One. It is the
Divining! I *know* it to be!

(beat)

Glorious! Absolutely *glorious*!

Tro rises to the kitchen ceiling and is pressed flat against it. A very bright light starts coming off of him. His voice echoes as he speaks.

TRO

(oddly echoing)

I, the lowly Second, surrender
myself gratefully to the will of
Parmak!

The wind chime sound grows very loud, and the light emanating from Tro becomes blinding. Paul and Ellen shield their eyes.

After a moment, as if on a switch, the sound and the light stop together.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

Tro is gone.

The Duffys look at each other, not knowing what to make of this.

Paul notices that the coffee stain on his overcoat sleeve has vanished - like it never was.

FADE TO:

17 INT. DUFFY LIVING ROOM - LATER

17

Duffy peeks out the window. All the tuxedoed visitors are leaving. Some snow douses the embers from the weenie roast Hibachi. He smiles. The strange ordeal is over.

He walks into the dining room and spots Tro's dog-eared copy of *Sports Illustrated*. He picks it up and chuckles briefly.

DUFFY

Better give this back to the guard tomorrow.

Something falls from between the magazine's pages. Duffy bends to pick it up. It is a small, folded sheet of purple paper. He opens it and reads what is written inside. We see the message over his shoulder.

DUFFY

(reading)

Dear A. O.,
Thank you for everything. This would never have been possible without your blessed assistance. Parmak sends his gratitude for your help, and blesses you and your soon-to-expand family. Your friend, Tro.

(beat)

P.S. Thanks for the warning about the yellow snow. Parmak had never heard that one.

FADE TO BLACK.