

Small Talk

Robert: What a weather, eh? A true downpour it is. Oh! I am sorry, ma'am! I did not mean to startle you!

Claire: ...Do I know you, dude?

Robert: Yeah... I mean, yes. Just seen you here every morning for the past week or so, going the same direction as me. Thought maybe it is time to, you know, make acquaintance. If we are commuting to our jobs the same way everyday, you know what I mean? Not sure about you, but I have started to feel a bit awkward.

Claire: Sneaking up on me surely did not improve awkwardness, sugar. Also – weather? Really?

Robert: Yes, indeed! Just realized how... um... *lame* that was. Let me try again – name is Robert, pleasure to meet you, ma'am. I am – I have a restaurant down the Fleet's street, perhaps you know it? Just opened up recently.

Claire: The fancy place with slimy tentacle-fish and whatnot?

Robert: A seafood restaurant, yes. You should try it – food is, um, much better than it looks? Oh, look out for that puddle!

Claire: Thanks, man. I'm Claire.

Robert: So, are you local?

Claire: Lived there since I was three. Originally from Reykjavik.

Robert: Oh, that's so interesting!

Claire: You have no idea where it is, do ya?

Robert: I am... I am sorry...

Claire: Relax, man, just yankin' your chain. Where are you from? Don't seem to be local yourself. Mean no, whatchamacallit, *disrespect*, but you do stand out from the crowd. And not in a good way, Bob.

Robert: Yes, about that...

Claire: Sorry. Did not mean to pry.

Robert: No, that's OK... I *am* local, actually. My family lived here for... let's see... one, two, three... five generations! But, you know... with the politics being what they are... It is harder and harder to live Downtown if you have my complexion, you know what I mean? So, err, me and the missus decided to move here. Far from the city centre, small neighborhood, pickled fences, everyone knows everyone. No place for faceless prejudice-

Claire: WATCH OUT!

Robert: Holy fuck! Watch where you're driving, you God-damn moron! This village of hicks, I swear... Could have killed me! Could have murdered me, you fucking IMBECILE! ...Sorry about my language, Claire. I am... I am good now.

Claire: Dude, it's fine. He DID almost run you over. Might have not been on purpose, wet tires and all... could've stopped, though.

Robert: Yeah... This damn weather...

Claire: Hey, you just made that weather small-talk relevant! Congrats, man!

Robert: Was it that bad?

Claire: It wasn't good.

Robert: Ouch. Anyway, Missus... Miss?

Clair: Miss.

Robert: Miss Claire. Right. Thank you. You have just saved my sorry hide, ha-ha. If this to be our first acquaintance, we might just become best of friends along the way.

Claire: We are all friends here, Mr. Robert. Village hicks are naïve that way.

Robert: I... I am...

Claire: I am sorry, man, sorry! Could not resist. It's fine, heat of the moment, I understand.

Robert: Um... yes. Still, I shouldn't have said those things...

Claire: It's fine. Really.

Robert: Thanks. So, my restaurant is just around that corner. Where do *you* work, by the way?

Claire: I think you can guess it.

Robert: The Factory?

Claire: Correct. But you knew that already, didn't ya, Bob?

Robert: What?

Claire: I know who you are. You looked to the right, after all.

Robert: I... I don't follow...

Claire: While crossing the street. You looked to the right instead of left, Mr. Five-Generations. That's why you didn't notice that car. Not a mistake someone local would make. Ta, ta, ta. Hush now. Let me talk for a change. You know how we call a person, who is so *preoccupied* spinning a convincing lie, he unconsciously does something a man from his *milieu* would certainly not do? A person, who is claiming to own a restaurant even though he is working as a low profile pot-washer? An *individual* such as this... stalking an innocent lady with hopes to *attain* classified blueprints from the Factory... must be *an enemy spy*, Mr. Robert.

Robert: ...What?

Claire: Ha-ha, you had to see the look on your face, Bobo! I'm joking, just foolin', ya know? C'mon, t'was pretty good, wasn't it? Met your wife yesterday at the post office – didn't know she was your wife then, of course. Noticed, she was new around here, like you... talked about her husband for a spell. Just put two and two together.

Robert: ...Right.

Claire: No need to boast about owning that restaurant, though. They sell tastier calamari at "Michelle's". "Little Korea" has better sea food in general. Be proud of your real job, dude. Pot-washers are always on demand.

Robert: I... yes... sure...

Claire: Oh, you're still shaken, you silly goose! I'm sorry. T'was a bad joke – how do they say it? *In a poor taste*? Politics'n'stuff... I know times must be tough for your people. Anyway, if you could *pardon* my bad humor – could you?

Robert: Yes, of course...

Claire: Perfect. Then, I am sure, we can definitely become friends. You, me, your pretty little wife. Be seein' ya, neighbor!

Robert: ...Yes, ma'am.