

OVER COFFEE

by

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1 EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A cherry red Corvette parks just outside a small coffee shop. The license plate reads "KL M ALL."

A beautiful woman emerges from the driver's side. She's wearing a cherry red dress, tight in all the right places. Chic dark sunglasses cover her eyes.

Her sultry attire contrasts her sweet, innocent demeanor.

Time slows down as she walks toward the coffee shop. A single word appears on the screen, following her for a brief moment. Her name:

WAR

Time speeds back up as she disappears inside.

An SUV pulls into a parking space. Its driver, a stocky man with dark hair, is finishing a glazed doughnut as he steps out. He's wearing a dark green button-up shirt.

He polishes off the doughnut and grabs a small bag from the driver side. He closes the door and shuffles to the coffee shop entrance.

Time slows down again. Another name:

FAMINE

Time returns to normal.

Another car, a beater, sputters to a stop outside the coffee shop. Maybe the driver kills the engine, maybe it dies on its own. It's hard to tell.

Two men emerge. The driver is pale and slender with greasy hair and a sickly pallor. It looks like he dressed in the dark from the thrift store bargain bin.

His companion doesn't look much better. Meek and nervous, he's hesitant to go inside the coffee shop.

The first man gestures impatiently for the second man to follow him. Time slows down and the first's name is revealed:

PESTILENCE

The two men enter the shop.

A roaring engine heralds the final arrival: a jet black muscle car, testosterone incarnate.

A man emerges, dressed to kill: black slacks, black shoes, black shirt untucked and unbuttoned at the sleeves.

He looks at the shop over the top of his black sunglasses, a smirk of supreme confidence permanently planted on his face.

The man pauses outside the shop as a stray dog walks his way. The dog stops and looks up at the man, curious.

The man's smile broadens. He points at the dog with his index finger, mimicking a gun. He fires.

The dog falls down on the sidewalk, dead.

The man looks up and opens the coffee shop door. Time slows down one last time:

DEATH

Time returns to normal as Death enters the coffee shop. The title fades in:

OVER COFFEE

The screen fades out behind the title. The title lingers for a moment before fading out as well.

2 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A quiet din fills the small coffee shop.

Near the entrance, a YOUNG MOTHER sips her latte while reading one of the local papers. Her BABY rests quietly in the stroller.

At another table near the door, a COLLEGE STUDENT is reading a biography of Mahatma Gandhi.

Behind the counter, the CASHIER busies himself as he waits for customers to arrive.

At a tall table along the wall, a YOUNG MAN AND WOMAN whisper quietly to one another, the language of love.

Another MAN, his HEAD SHAVED, stands at the bar with his coffee. He steals a glance toward the back, trying vainly to appear disinterested.

The Four Horsemen and their guest sit around a table near the back of the coffee shop. A cheery WAITRESS delivers their drinks.

WAITRESS

Let's see, coffee black (to Death), two hot teas with honey (to Pestilence and his companion), two grande cappuccinos with cream (both to Famine), and one white chocolate mocha (to War).

WAR

(gently)

Thanks so much, dear.

WAITRESS

(smiling)

Will there be anything else?

War looks around the table. Something's missing. She looks back to the waitress.

WAR

My strawberry scone?

WAITRESS

(apologetic)

I'm sorry. Did you order one?

War's demeanor shifts. Her sweet, innocent disposition fades. Her reply is a gradual crescendo of anger.

WAR

Did I order one? (beat) I asked for two things: my mocha and my scone. And you actually forgot this simplest of orders between here and the kitchen? Does your mind reset itself with each bovine blink of your eyes? Would you even remember your own name if weren't right there on your nametag?

War rises to her feet.

WAR (cont'd)  
(shouting)  
I ordered a strawberry scone and  
I want it RIGHT NOW!

The waitress is wide-eyed, terrified.

Subtly, Death points his finger at the waitress. The young woman slumps to the table, her eyes open in a vacant stare. Dead.

WAR (cont'd)  
(forcibly calm)  
Put her back, D. I want my  
scone.

DEATH  
Aw, c'mon...

War glares at him.

With a sigh, Death performs another gesture. The young woman comes back to life. She looks at War, confused.

WAR  
(genuinely calm)  
Please, dear. My scone?

The young woman collects herself and hurriedly walks away. Famine calls after her, half-rising to his feet.

FAMINE  
Bring one back for me! Wait,  
two! I want two!

Famine reaches into his bag, pulls out a sandwich, and takes a huge bite.

War settles back into her seat. She turns to Pestilence.

WAR  
Now, Pestilence, you wanted to  
tell us something?

Pestilence looks at each figure in turn.

Death eyes the young couple at the other table. War waits patiently. Between bites of his sandwich, Famine stares worriedly after the waitress.

Pestilence's companion puts on a brave face, struggling to suppress his nervousness.

Pestilence takes a deep breath and continues, firm in his resolve.

PESTILENCE

I'm out.

The two distracted Horsemen turn in unison to face him, jaws slack. War narrows her eyes.

WAR

(surprised)

Excuse me?

DEATH

(to Famine)

Told you he was gay. Pay up.

PESTILENCE

I'm not "gay" out. I'm  
"quitting" out. I'm leaving the  
group.

Famine flashes a smug smile at Death. Death sneers back.

DEATH

(to Famine)

Denial. Give him time.

WAR

Pestilence. Sweetheart. I  
understand your frustration,  
trust me. We've all felt that  
way at one time or another. Give  
it time. It will pass.

PESTILENCE

I've been waiting for this to  
pass for the last three  
centuries! It's not going  
anywhere. It's just that...

His words trail off.

WAR

What, dear? What is it?

PESTILENCE

It's this job. I hate it! I just want to be done with it.

War leans in, encouraging him to go on.

PESTILENCE (cont'd)

It's not me. It's empty, it's unfulfilling, and it's mind-numbingly boring! Plagues, boils, infections, sores, explosive diarrhea... it's the same thing over and over and over again. (beat) And the worst part? The worst part is that this is the ONLY job I've ever had. It's the only thing I've ever done, and it just doesn't feel... right. (beat) It isn't me. It isn't me, and I don't know why I keep doing it.

The waitress returns to the table. Death slides his hand beneath his arm and subtly gestures toward the young woman. She dies again, spilling her tray on the floor.

Death snickers.

WAR

(instantly furious)

Dammit, Death! If you kill her one more time, I swear I'll...

Death quickly gestures again, and the woman stirs. He looks at War and throws his arms up in mock surrender.

War turns to Pestilence.

WAR (cont'd)

Pestilence, the significance of your job, of our jobs, is immense. You do understand that, don't you? You understand why we do what we do?

PESTILENCE

(standoffish)

No, I don't. Not anymore. Why don't you enlighten me?

The waitress scoops up the mess. Death eyes her lecherously.

Famine stares at the scones, heartbroken.

FAMINE

They need us.

The waitress hurries away.

PESTILENCE

What?

FAMINE

(to Pestilence)

They need us. They need to suffer.

Pestilence looks from Famine to War. War nods in agreement.

PESTILENCE

That's the big answer? They need to suffer? Why? Do you they really need to fight, to starve, to agonize before they die? (beat) So our sole purpose is to cause them pain? If I wanted that, I would have become a dentist!

FAMINE

They NEED us in order to appreciate the good in their lives.

PESTILENCE

What a crock of sh...

WAR

(interrupting)

Look.

War points over Pestilence's shoulder to the young couple Death was watching earlier.

The man leans on the table, holding the woman's hands in his. They're still staring into each other's eyes, whispering sweet nothings.

War gestures with her hand.

Without warning, the young woman slaps the man's face so hard that he spins out of his chair and lands on the floor.

The young man lies there, stupefied, as the young woman looms over him, berating him. She spits on the man in disgust and bolts out of the coffee shop.

In shock, the man scrambles to his feet and chases after her, stopping briefly to pay at the counter.

Pestilence turns to War.

PESTILENCE

And how does that help them  
appreciate anything?

DEATH

Sex.

PESTILENCE

(to Death)

Excuse me?

The young couple stops outside the shop window. The woman gesticulates violently and continues yelling.

The waitress quickly appears at the table, drops off the pastries, and scurries away before anyone at the table can notice her.

Famine greedily snatches his treats and stuffs one into his mouth.

Death watches the fight, wistfully.

DEATH

They'll go home, argue some more,  
wear themselves out, wonder why  
they started fighting in the  
first place, apologize, and have  
the best sex they've had in  
MONTHS.

Outside, the woman storms off. The man stands there for a moment, bewildered.

DEATH (cont'd)

They appreciate sex.

Pestilence smirks. Looking out the window, he performs his own hand gesture.

A pained expression crosses the man's face. His hand moves to his crotch as he chases after his girlfriend.

War turns from the window to Pestilence.

WAR

What did you do?

PESTILENCE

I gave him gonorrhoea.

Famine guffaws, spewing crumbs on the table.

PESTILENCE (cont'd)

Nobody appreciates gonorrhoea!

War thinks for a moment. She tries a different approach.

WAR

You know the rules, Pestilence.  
Once you're out, you're out.  
Permanently. Have you  
considered... a holiday?

PESTILENCE

(hesitant)

I have.

WAR

Instead of being rash...

FAMINE

Ha! Rash! I get it.

WAR (cont'd)

... why don't you take some time  
off, think things through.  
(beat) Have you given any thought  
to what your "true calling" might  
be?

PESTILENCE

This may sound asinine, but... I've  
always wanted to try my hand at  
gardening. Gourds, mostly.  
Squash. Maybe zucchini.

Death looks at Famine and raises his eyebrows. He silently mouths the word "gay."

WAR

(incredulous)

You? The source of all sickness and disease on the planet, and you want to be a farmer?

PESTILENCE

Gardner.

WAR

Whatever! You'll kill everything you touch!

DEATH

Technically, I do all the killing...

WAR

Shut up! (to Pestilence) You do realize that you'll fail at this, don't you? Miserably.

The two stare at each other for a long moment.

PESTILENCE

I have to try.

War simmers quietly for a moment. She keeps her frustration in check. Barely.

WAR

Fine! Go! Be a gardener! You've got three months, that's it. If you can't get your stuff together by then, you're right back here. Permanently. Understood?

Pestilence nods, slowly realizing what he's just committed to.

WAR (cont'd)

In the meantime, the Three Horsemen of the Apocalypse will pick up the slack.

Death groans. Pestilence's friend clears his throat.

PESTILENCE

Actually, I had someone in mind  
to take my place.

At the bar, the man with the shaved head perks up. He  
sets down his coffee and smoothes the wrinkles out of his  
shirt.

Pestilence gestures to his friend at the table.

PESTILENCE (cont'd)

Friends, I give you... the Common  
Cold!

The man with the shaved head is crestfallen.

MAN WITH SHAVED HEAD

Oh, man!

Time slows down. His name is revealed.

CANCER.

Time returns to normal as Cancer mopes toward the exit,  
unnoticed.

THE COMMON COLD stands up and reaches out to shake War's  
hand. War stares at the hand, unmoving, then looks him  
in the eye. He slowly shrinks back into his seat.

War turns back to Pestilence.

WAR

No.

PESTILENCE

No?

COMMON COLD

(whining)

No?

The Common Cold folds his arms, sulking.

WAR

We need someone capable of  
pandemics and plagues. We'll get  
along just fine without him.

COMMON COLD

(quietly)

I can do a plague...

DEATH

You can't even do anal leakage.  
Shut up.

PESTILENCE

Come on, War. Give him a chance.  
He's got a lot of potential.

War looks at The Common Cold again. He starts to shrink even further under her stare, but he catches himself.

In a sudden burst of self-confidence, he stands, looks toward the mother at the front window, and moves his hands as if casting a spell.

His stare is intense. The muscles in his arms tense up and begin to quiver. Beads of sweat appear on his brow.

Finally, the payoff.

From the stroller, a tiny baby sneeze.

The Common Cold collapses in his seat, satisfied.

The Four Horsemen just stare at him in wonderment. War breaks the stare first, turning to Pestilence.

WAR

Three months.

Pestilence nods and smiles, ecstatic. He shakes each teammate's hand then leaves through the front door.

DEATH

I better get comp time for this.

Another patron enters the shop. War gestures at the college student sitting near the entrance.

The student leaps from his chair and begins beating the newcomer with the life and teachings of Gandhi.

3 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Pestilence is hard at work, planting a garden. Music plays on the radio in the background.

As he continues to toil, the music ends and a news story begins.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

Negotiations between India and China ended abruptly today as news leaked out of a massacre in a small village east of Badrinath. Early reports indicate that Chinese soldiers brought in to quell a border skirmish began firing into crowds of men, women, and children...

4 INT. HOUSE - DAY

Pestilence stares out the window at his struggling garden. Many of the plants are dead, starved of nutrients and suffering from disease.

He looks on the counter at his first harvest. Each one is an atrophied joke.

He looks to the wall calendar. The end of his holiday is approaching too quickly.

A news story plays on the small kitchen television set.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

In other news, the WHO has confirmed that the number of new AIDS cases in Africa has dropped dramatically over the past two months. Scientists are speculating that there may be a connection between this change and the significant increase in cold and flu-like symptoms among the populace...

As Pestilence pines over his pathetic crop, Famine peeks through the kitchen window, munching on those veggies that are... were good enough to eat.

5 INT. HOUSE - DAY

The kitchen is empty. The calendar is all marked up. The holiday ends tomorrow.

Pestilence is outside, on his knees, examining the withered vines on a small lattice in his garden.

6 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

The radio broadcasts another news story as Pestilence handles the vines.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

... may be unsuitable for children.  
(beat) Britain has seen an increase in bizarre deaths involving sex toys. That's right: sex toys. London-based Spankalicious has been slapped with a class action lawsuit, asserting that use of their wildly popular Downtown Damien device has resulted in no less than 27 deaths over the last 3 months.

Pestilence reaches the end of the lattice and stops.

He smiles.

7 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The same coffee shop, three months later. The customers are different, but the staff is the same.

The Three Horsemen of the Apocalypse sit at the same table they did three months ago. The Common Cold sits with them, much more confident but still not quite fitting in.

The same waitress has just finished delivering drinks to the Horsemen. Her dress is stained from freshly spilled coffee.

She mumbles to herself as she walks to the counter, quietly reassuring herself.

WAITRESS

I love my job. I love my job.

The front door opens. Bathed in light, a lone figure stands in the doorway.

Pestilence has returned.

War glances at The Common Cold, then closes her eyes in relief.

WAR

Finally!

Pestilence moves steadily toward the table in the back. When he reaches it, he remains standing, his back to the front door.

WAR (cont'd)

So, the prodigal has returned. I have to admit, though, I thought you'd be back sooner. I...

She realizes that he's smiling.

WAR (cont'd)

What? What is it?

Pestilence reaches down into his pants and pulls something out. A dull thud sounds as it lands on the table.

War blushes as her hand covers her mouth.

WAR (cont'd)

(whispering)

Oh my.

Famine stares wide-eyed and licks his lips.

Death nods, smiling.

DEATH

I am impressed! What is that, twelve inches?

Hands on his hips, Pestilence beams.

PESTILENCE

Thirteen.

Lying on the table is a healthy, supple, near-perfect ZUCCHINI.

Pestilence takes a seat.

WAR

So. This is it, then? You're sure you want do this? Give up being a Horseman to become a... gardner.

His smile fades. For a moment, Pestilence appears unsure.

PESTILENCE

Well...

War catches Death's eye and nods conspiratorially. Death leans in to address Pestilence.

DEATH

Hey, buddy, grab a set.

Death offers Pestilence the empty chair. Pestilence sits down, one hand on his zucchini.

DEATH (cont'd)

I've been thinkin'. You remember the Black Plague, right? All that crying and bleeding and puking..

PESTILENCE

Yeah. Good times...

DEATH

That was all you, baby! Millions of people, sick and dying for years. Years, man! You'd set 'em up, I'd knock 'em down. And chaos reigned supreme.

Pestilence smiles, nostalgic.

DEATH (cont'd)

Well maybe that's what you need, pal. Another plague! Think about it...

PESTILENCE

Times have changed, D. I've changed. It's just not me anymore.

The Common Cold realizes what War and Death are up to. He raises his hands, again the spellcaster.

Simultaneously, all of the coffee shop patrons sneeze.

The Common Cold leans back and smiles, hands behind his head.

DEATH

Piss off, wannabe.

WAR

Pestilence, dear, let's be realistic. This was luck, a fluke. One vegetable is hardly a new career.

Pestilence is undeterred.

PESTILENCE

It's a start. A good start. If I stick with it, the next one will be better. And the one after that, better still.

War sighs.

WAR

I'm not going to win this one, am I?

FAMINE

Since when do you care about who wins and who loses?

War scowls at Famine, then looks back to Pestilence.

WAR

Fine. Okay.

War softens and smiles. She reaches for a handshake.

WAR (cont'd)

I wish you all the best.

Pestilence gladly accepts the handshake. He stands and begins saying his goodbyes. Another handshake, a pat on the back, a hug.

When he finishes his goodbyes, he stands for another awkward moment, then turns to leave.

Death calls after him.

## DEATH

Hey! Whaddya say? Just one more  
fling? For old times sake?

How can he say no? Pestilence flashes a lopsided smile, shuffles his feet and begins gesturing at each of the shop's patrons.

Time slows down. Chariots of Fire starts playing. Each patron is suddenly afflicted with a horrible ailment.

Another young couple is covered in boils. The waitress looks like a leper colony escapee. The cashier begins retching violently into a trash can. Everyone is crying and screaming in pain.

The Three Horsemen (and The Common Cold) applaud their former companion and wave him on as he leaves his friends, his life, and the suffering patrons behind.

THE END