

## **Cafe Society March 2, 2022**

Anthony settled into one of his usual booths and noticed that there was a new server. Well, they do come and go, he muttered to himself. Shitty wages and minimal tips...that would do it.

There was a man and a woman sitting adjacent to him. The man seemed older than the woman. Was this an older brother younger sister dynamic? A teaching assistant and his student?

Well, the Prime Minister of Ukraine is becoming a war hero. It's interesting that he used to be an actor.

That's a tradition, isn't it Emily?

What do you mean, Greg?

Let's see. Ronald Reagan...

Reagan wasn't American President during any major war.

That's debatable. Iran. Nicaragua....there are always other wars that never really make the papers.

Let alone The Internet and Social Media.

Exactly.

Anthony saw the new server taking orders from Emily and Greg. The pair of them continued their conversation after the waiter moved over to Anthony's table.

Pancakes no butter. It is exactly what it sounds like, thank you.

The waiter shook his head and walked toward the kitchen. Surely the cook would nod and explain the Man With No Butter to the new recruit.

The thing is, Emily. There are always wars and military endeavors that don't get reported in the mainstream western media.

**I don't disagree, Greg. But...**

There's Saudi Arabia and Yemen. There's Israel and Palestine. There are many others if we care to investigate.

**But the current Russian invasion of Ukraine cannot be trivialized.**

Nobody's doing that, Emily. Except... now it seems to be illegal to point out that Russia is not the only big bad imperialist in the world. That Vladimir Putin is hardly the only terrible dictator bullying other countries. Et cetera.

**Putin is a megalomaniac attempting to revive the Soviet Union as it was prior to 1989. He'll bludgeon Ukraine and then Latvia and then...**

And here we have The West as the only plausible alternative to the evil dictator all over again..

Hah. You might remember, Greg, how the previous American president hero worshipped Putin.

Oh for fuck sakes. Stupid old Donald Trump loves his strongmen. How predictable. There are people who mistake America First ...or isolationism..for pacifism, true enough. But Biden and the Democrats are warmongers true and through..

The server delivered the order to Emily and Greg's table and then told them to lower the decibels. They were bothering other customers.

Anthony could see a solitary woman at another table who looked displeased with the tone and volume of Greg and Emil's conversation. Anthony could also see that the new waiter appeared to be Ukrainian, or perhaps Latvian or Lithuanian.

This is a free society, at least it is officially.

Greg!

Emily's admonishment did have its desired effect of making Greg shut up. Free speech was never completely free. Yes, this cafe is a public space. And so on and so on.

The waiter returned with Anthony's order. Anthony asked for another glass of water. Emily and Greg ate silently and then began talking about some local artist.

Anthony tried not to listen. The local artist did not sound at all interesting.