

Tipping

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INT. POKE RESTAURANT

Gentle, calm restaurant music plays.

TOM, early twenties, finally steps to the front of the line.

NOEL, early twenties, stands behind the poke bar.

As the two talk they slowly move their way down the bar, and Noel fills the bowl.

NOEL

What will you be having?

TOM

Ummmm, I'll go half-white, half-brown rice.

NOEL

Yeah that's the move. What protein?

TOM

Ummmmmm, I'll go albacora tuna and salmon.

NOEL

Damn, you got good taste dude.

TOM

Thanks, man.

NOEL

Sides?

TOM

I'll go crab salad, and seaweed salad.

NOEL

No problem, you know seaweed salad's an extra dollar right?

TOM

Yeah, that's chill.

NOEL

Toppings?

TOM

Tempura flakes, Hawaiian salt, and wasabi please.

NOEL

You got it, boss. Anything else?

TOM

Nah, I think I'm all good.

NOEL

Alright sweet.

Noel packs up the bowl, and walks to the small iPad to ring Tom up. Noel taps the screen.

NOEL (CONT'D)

It's going to be 14.78, do you
wanna do cash or credit?

TOM

Credit please.

Noel flips the screen towards Tom. The options have little phrases beneath them. Under "10%" the phrase reads, "Really? You can afford that 14 dollar bowl of poke, but can only swing a one dollar tip? You selfish sack of shit. You disgust us."

Tom gasps and looks at "15%." The phrase reads, "Well you're rising the ranks, but still only 15%? You selfish douche. Choose 20. You're splitting pennies at that point, asshole."

Tom glances up at Noel who is smiling back at him, kindly.

Tom curiously looks at "20." The phrase reads, "Oh thanks for doing the least you could. If you were really a good person you'd hand over a crisp five dollar bill. But you're not a good person, you just tell yourself that you are so that you can look at yourself in the mirror. You stuff your gluttonous face, as you sit dodging your aging parent's calls as they slowly die. But yeah the few extra cents you gave us really makes you a saint. Thanks, Ghandi."

Tom looks at Noel, who is still smiling. Tom looks at "other" which reads, "well we know you aren't going to give an extra tip you scumbag. You're just going to manually input zero like the pathetic disappointment you are. Whatever. Do it. Asshat."

Tom tries to enter zero into other but it refuses to input. Tom begins smacking the button, but the iPad still doesn't respond.

NOEL

Oh did you click other?

TOM

Yeah it's not working for some
reason.

NOEL

Yeah this happened before, you just have to manually input a value greater than zero. So you can just put down like a penny.

TOM

Oh okay thanks.

Noel's smile disappears. Lights dim. Music gets ominous.

NOEL

The only thing is you have to look at me as you do it.

TOM

What?

NOEL

Look at me.

TOM

Huh?

NOEL

Look at me as you manually give me a one cent tip.

TOM

Is that--is that part of it?

NOEL

No. But I'm telling you to look me in the eye as you go out of your way to give me a one cent tip.

TOM

I mean, I'm not in the wrong.

NOEL

Okay then look at me in my eyes-- look into my soul, and give me a one cent tip.

TOM

Um, okay.

Tom looks at him for a moment, before breaking eye contact like the coward piece of shit that he is.

NOEL

I knew you couldn't do it.

TOM

You barely even did anything.

NOEL

I barely did anything?! I gave you good banter about your dumbass order. You made the wrong choice every. Single. Time. I even gave you a little extra half scoop of your precious albacore tuna. Is that nothing to you, buddy?

TOM

Okay sorry. Fine. I suppose you did give me a little extra tuna.

Tom clicks the 10% option and checks out. Music returns to normal and Noel smiles again.

NOEL

Thanks, have a good day!