

Congrats! You found a hidden link.

Enjoy this flash fiction piece, then see if you can find another.

-Al

Don't Believe Everything You Read Online

Vague chattering and orange-tinted light highlighted the cafe, dull plates and cutlery clinking against one another, creating a soft cacophony of mindless noise. In one corner, slightly past a clear glass case of various scones, two men were in the heat of a quietly intense conversation. They seemed to be friends, but despite the apparent closeness, one was clearly uncomfortable in the situation, consistently hushing the other and looking over his shoulder.

“I am absolutely not doing that.” Elliot was firm; eyebrows furrowed rather seriously.

“Oh, you’re no fun,” his friend quipped.

The two sat in opposition to one another, Elliot holding a delicate, second-hand teacup in his round hands. Sam, his much lankier counterpart, rolled his eyes and pushed his sliding glasses back to the bridge of his nose.

“I’m not doing it,” Elliot repeated.

“C’mon . . .” Sam whined, leaning over their shared cafe table. “You’re making a big fuss out of nothing, you worrywart.”

“Oh, I am *not*.” Elliot leaned backward from Sam, as if literally dodging his words.

“Are too,” the other man teased.

Elliot groaned, teacup resting on his lap and eyes rolling back. His tea had been cold for several minutes now, seeming more like an accessory than a beverage. Originally he planned to drink it, but Sam's request had put his appetite off.

"You're an idiot. You know that? An absolute idiot."

"Oh, shove off Elly," Sam retorted, although the phrase was said with a playful grin. "I'm not asking for much, now am I?"

"My answer is no."

"But it's so easy," Sam whined, leaning back on his chair.

Elliot briefly wondered if he would fall before shaking his head and remembering the content of their conversation. He stared at Sam with bewilderment, absolutely amazed at the lengths this man was willing to go to prove a point.

"And I'm sure everyone's doing it these days," Elliot said, finally taking a sip of his drink.

It only worked to accentuate his point.

"Well, I mean, not everyone," Sam seemed to lose his train of thought before snapping back to reality, "But everyone on the internet is doing it! They have advice blogs now, you know."

"They have *what*—?" Elliot nearly spat out his tea. "There's advice blogs for this sort of thing?"

“Yeah,” Sam started getting riled up again. Fantastic. “All these little folks on the internet come running out of all their nooks and crannies giving all sorts of tips for it. They say it’s really quite easy.”

Sam pulled out his phone, unlocking it with the obnoxiously complicated passcode he insisted on putting everything. He held it up to his face for a moment, quickly twitching his thumb repeatedly to scroll quickly through the supposed blogs he mentioned early. With a grin and an excitable chair hop, Sam shoved his phone screen at Elliot, eagerly helping him scroll through the content.

“Oh my God, there really *are* advice blogs for this sort of thing.”

“I told you!” Sam laughed. “They’re really helpful—this one says you can use an icicle, and this one, look—fed the evidence to a pig. It’s brilliant.”

Elliot sighed, “I suppose it is.”

Letting himself relax in his chair and taking hold of Sam’s phone to begin scrolling on his own haphazardly, Elliot let out a deep sigh.

“This does not change my original answer, Sammy.” He said, deflating but glancing at his friend. “I don’t care how easy the internet makes it seem. I’m not committing murder with you.”