

"COIN TOSS"

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audiobook 7:45 minute

[PROLOGUE]

We possess many objects in our life, which we endow with meaning and mystery. Sometimes those objects possess us, by reflecting what we are, or will be.

[SCENE 1]

The story begins in a wooded battlefield, night patrol. Korea. There is a thunderstorm rolling over the far hills. A small contingent of soldiers weave their way through the brush, looking out for the enemy, looking to get back to shelter. There is one man we follow, a teenager, quite scared. Lightning flashing off his wet helmet, each thunder clap makes him crouch down to the nearest large tree.

As we move back, we see the gradual length of a gun-barrel pointed in his direction. We never see the face of the enemy, we only see the soldier coming into focus through the pinhole sights of the rifle, until he is lost in a cloud of white smoke.

Gunshots and thunder, echo together, as the soldier slowly falls backwards. We hear him breathing erratically as he moves his hand underneath his uniform and draws out bloody fingertips. And then once more shoving his hand into the uniform, this time to draw out a coin, a silver-dollar with a hole through its middle. Somewhere between laughter and agony he holds it upward, a silhouette against the lightning filled sky. First to one side, then the other, .

The out stretched arm transforms with each flash of lightning, from a soldier's uniform to a hospital patient's identification bracelet. Quietly, a child says "I love you grandpa." The soldier's hand slowly moves the coin down toward that voice. A young boy's face fills the hole in the coin. His hand suddenly surrounds it. Then gently opening, offering the coin to the child who reaches back to accept it. The soldier's voice quivers "It's your turn." The child and old man hold hands as we move away.

[SCENE 2]

Outside, the young boy eagerly shows the coin to his school friends. One of the boys holds it up skyward. A brief scene unfolds of a young couple getting married. "Hey, It's my turn!" The boy swings the hole in the coin in the direction of that voice, to a girl, someone's sister. Just as he puts it in her hand, a hoodlum gang of three boys barge in. The leader steals the coin away from her. "You! Owe! me!" as he points to one of the other children.

"Hey, That's mine!" shouts the young boy. "I don't care." Then the

bully relentlessly beats the boy to the ground as his henchmen fend off the younger children, laughing and shouting insults as they disappear down the street. The young boy starts off after them limping along side his bicycle.

[SCENE 3]

As the three hooligans casually walk down the city street, the bully holds the coin upward to peer through the hole. A scene flashes in front of him of a man beating his wife. "Stop it Daddy" a voice shouts. The bully quickly flips the coin to look through the other side. There are visions of parties, easy money and fast women. The bully sneers at the other two gang members, "It's mine. You can't have it."

"Let me see it you bitch" as hands reach out to grab it away. The bully pushes them back, baring his knuckles, ready to fight. Then in a smirk of bravado, he starts flipping the coin into the air, each time making sure he grabbed it before the others could.

He knows that when the coin is in the possession of someone, that person's life is revealed. The bully. The soldier. The boy. The storekeeper that handles the coin after someone buys candy with it. The bank teller that pockets the coin from the cash drawer. The priest who finds it in the collection plate. Some people looking through that coin see their future, good or bad. Their choices become links, either toward or away from that future. Sometimes it doesn't make a difference.

[SCENE 4]

The bully and his gang disappear through the open door of a small market. An upward hand flashes into view forming a fist. It slowly opens and the coin is flipped back into the air. Someone stands in the doorway. Another moves to the back of the store and lets out a whistle. The tip of a gun-barrel drifts into sight.

The shopkeeper starts nervously, slowly, pulling money out of the cash register. The gun holder growls, "I want all, of it!" A car slowly passes by the storefront. Two gang members duck into the shadows, one peeking out from behind a chips display as the gunman shoves his way behind the counter. Knocking the storekeeper to the floor, he says slowly, like trying to talk to a foreigner, "stay there, or, I, blow, you, head off."

The boy that was at the back of the store grabs a paper bag and empties the cash drawer into it. Then he fills the sack with cigarettes, and condoms, and breath mints. The gunman laughs, "until next time." Seeing his favorite candy, his free hand grabs a fist full and shakes it at the shopkeeper. The gunman and bagman start to leave. The gunman has trouble pushing the weapon into his back pocket using only one hand. The bagman starts laughing boorishly. The third robber standing watch at the door sends a high pitched yelp and is suddenly gone.

Alarmed, the two remaining robbers bolt through the doorway. The bagman was the first to run broadside into the kid with the bicycle. The gunman was too close behind to avoid getting tripped. To break his fall, he yanks his hand out of his back pocket, firing a bullet into the sidewalk. The bullet ricochets into the adjoining storefront window, shattering it. The money, cigarettes and glass, spray upward and outward from the human pile-up.

The bagman quickly picks up whatever dollar bills and cigarettes that are near him before running out of there as fast as he can. The gunman, sitting flat-ass to the concrete, was doing the same, until he spies the silver dollar with the hole in it. Just before he moves to pick up the coin, a small hand reaches forward and clenches it from the sidewalk and broken glass.

Enraged, the gunman drops the candy from one of his hands, grabbing the small boy's wrist, "give me that!" "It's not for you" the young boy replies, clenching the coin even tighter. Leaping up, the gunman jerks the boy up off his knees. Bending over, face to face with the young boy, the gunman flings the other handful of stolen money onto the sidewalk, trying to pull the gun from his back pocket.

A thunder clap breaks through the sky as the first few raindrops fall. A woman, emerging from the damaged adjacent storefront, screams wildly for the police. The gunman scrambles to run away, empty handed, cursing, briefly looking back.

[SCENE 5]

The young boy slowly unclenches his fist. With his other hand he picks out the coin from the drips of blood and shards of glass.

He holds it out in front of him, turning it one-way, then the other, then back-again. He brings the coin down to his eye as he turns his head toward the lightning. His eye, inside the hole, moving closer, and closer, until it is filled with the blackness of his pupil. A white flash illuminates the boys face, leaving shadows on the pavement. The coin shines back to the sky, brilliantly focused, like a beacon across a stormy sea.

The rain starts to come down more forcefully, yet the young boy remains unaffected. He sees the future of everyone he knows. The good. The bad. They all play their part. Past and future lives unfold before him. He is now, and forever, a part of them. He is unafraid.

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