Resistance is Futile

By S.K. Dubois

The demonic presence materialized from the remains of what had been a cozy fire on a rainy day. Green smoke, red eyes, sulfuric stench.

Miss Emily frowned at the burst of ash that sifted through the room. She set her half-filled cup of tea on the table.

"Resistance is Futile." The demon's voice thundered through Miss Emily's tidy drawing room. The creature loomed above her, menacing and forbidding.

Miss Emily let the echo die before she asked, "Are you Satan? The real Satan?"

"I am Zogdrazak." The demon, expecting abject terror, lost his concentration for a moment but soon reignited the swirling flames around his torso. "I sit on Satan's right hand. I have come to…"

"So not Satan, then."

The red glare dimmed by a noticeable percentage of lumens.

"Not as such. But I sit on Satan's right hand," he said sternly.

"Satan's right hand as you're looking at him, or actually on Satan's right?"

The demon looked thoughtfully from one claw to the other.

"If Satan is here, I am here—just beside his right hand." The memory seemed to embolden him, and the glare rekindled. "And I have come to drag you to the Pit…"

"Is Satan right-handed?"

"Eh?"

"Well, right-handed people coined this whole business of sitting on someone's right hand. They'd put the most trusted on their right side. It's easier to strike from right to left, so the untrustworthy go on the left, where a right-handed person can easily strike them. But Satan being Satan and Hell being Hell, everything is sort of contrariwise. I'd assume Satan to be left-handed—left-hand path and all that—so, to be on his right would be in a position of distrust."

"That's ridiculous. Satan trusts me implicitly."

"Okay."

“Doesn’t matter.” Zogdrazak clutched at what remained of his bluster, sparking a few embers from his claws to build self-esteem. “I am here to take you to the Pit of Doom. Resistance is futile.”

“Get on with it, then.” Miss Emily folded the crochet project she’d been working on—a pristine white doily with an intricate pattern she planned to present as a wedding gift to her great-great-granddaughter. “No one is resisting.”

“Perhaps you’d like to beg for mercy or tell me you’d do anything I asked or something of that nature? You know I’m going to drag you to the Fiery Pit of Hell, right? Are you sure you don’t want to resist? Just a little?”

“You said resistance is futile. Why waste time? Besides—just a guess, mind you—but the management of Hell seems long overdue for a shake-up. I expect the entire place could use a good dusting at the very least. I was about to tidy the kitchen, but I see I may be needed elsewhere.”

“What could you, a mortal, possibly do for the Dark Lord?”

“I could do this. I could drag people to Hell. I’ll be quite good at that.”

“But that’s my job. I sit on…”

“Yes, yes. You sit on Satan’s right hand, but we’ve established that is not the plumy position you thought it was. Have you and Satan had any disagreements lately? Any little tiffs?”

Zogdrazak frowned.

“He did question me quite sharply just yesterday, but it was a silly misunderstanding.”

“And, of course, Satan is a patient employer. Always willing to forgive and forget such misunderstandings.”

The demon’s red glare extinguished entirely. He stepped abjectly from the fireplace, a shadow of his former terrifying presence.

Miss Emily patted the seat beside her.

“Have a cup of tea,” she suggested, kindly. “Maybe I can help.”