

THE CARTOON

Written by

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INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

A single car waits under weak, BUZZING lights.

High heels CLICK as someone approaches. CLAIRE DIMS, 20's, pretty, classy, strides across the concrete toward the car. Before she can get there, a THIN MAN, 30s, bearded, pops up from behind the car.

THIN MAN

Excuse me. You're Claire Dims?

CLAIRE

Who are you?

THIN MAN

I'm a great admirer of Claire Dims.
Is that you?

CLAIRE

No, that's not me. Now, step away
from the car.

THIN MAN

I'm sorry, but I thought this was
the car of Claire Dims.

CLAIRE

It's not. Now, step away.

THIN MAN

I'm sure this car belongs to Ms.
Dims. If you drive it, then you
must be Claire.

CLAIRE

She loaned it to me. Now, please.

THIN MAN

I do not like to be lied to. It is
bad manners.

CLAIRE

And I don't like people hiding
behind a car. Now, STEP AWAY!

THIN MAN

I must explain why I admire the
cartoonist, Claire Dims. She does
fantastic work.

(pulls a sheet of paper
from his pocket)

Like this.

He shows her the sheet.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)
This is very fine work. You see?
It looks much like the prophet.

She glances at the page.

CLAIRE
If you say so. I'm no critic.

THIN MAN
And it is very funny. You see the
scimitar in his hand? The Arabic
markings look real.

CLAIRE
I'm glad you like it, but I really
have to go. When I see Claire,
I'll tell her you're a fan.

THIN MAN
Then, you must tell her also that
it is a blasphemy. It is an
abomination in the eyes of the
faithful.

Claire slips her hand inside her purse.

CLAIRE
Since when is a cartoon an affront
to anyone?

THIN MAN
The book is specific. No images
can be made. It is sacrilege.

CLAIRE
That is crazy. A cartoon never
hurt anyone.

THIN MAN
The eyes of god see all. The words
of the book cannot be undone.

CLAIRE
Tolerance is the watchword of true
faith. If faith is so fragile it
cannot withstand a cartoon, how
great can it be?

THIN MAN
I do not write the words. I do not
interpret them.

Claire pulls a gun from her purse.

CLAIRE
Step away from the car.

THIN MAN
You are Claire Dims, aren't you?

CLAIRE
I don't want to shoot you, but I will. I'm not going to apologize for any cartoon. No damn religion trumps free speech. If you can't take a joke, you're beyond redemption. NOW STEP AWAY FROM THE FUCKING CAR!

THIN MAN
(reaches into pocket)
I just want to -

BLAM

The gunshot echoes through the garage.

The Thin Man quakes, hand in pocket, unhurt.

Claire's hand shakes badly.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)
No, no, nothing, nothing. I mean no harm. I want only to show you this.

He pulls out a sheet of paper with a cartoon on it and thrusts it at her.

THIN MAN (CONT'D)
I drew this. I thought, I thought you might...

CLAIRE
You draw?

He nods.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
You want me to...?

THIN MAN
Tell me if it's good.

He holds out the sheet.

She takes the sheet and looks at it.

CLAIRE

You drew—

The Thin Man lunges and sinks a long knife deep into Claire's stomach.

THIN MAN

Do. Not. Mock.

BLAM

The bullet rips through the Thin Man who collapses to the pavement.

Bleeding, Claire staggers to the car. She drops the gun and pulls out her cell phone. She dials 911.

911 OPERATOR

What is your emergency?

CLAIRE

I need help. I've been stabbed.

She slowly sinks to the pavement, staring at the Thin Man, and the blurry cartoon by his head.

FADE OUT