

The Politics of Salutations

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The gavel clamored against the hard, wooden desk at the head of the room, but attempts at attention fell on deaf ears. No one was listening, and everyone was quarreling. Men of prestige and power filled the many desks that faced each other in a semicircle around the desk at the head of the room. As prestigious as they were, they were at each other's throats with opinions of their own. Finally, the man with the gavel was able to start calming down the mob of legislators.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" he shouted accompanied by his gavel. "We need a decision on this. I know speed isn't our thing, but we're going to be left at the altar on this one."

"How the hell are we supposed to decide on something like this? This has just been dropped on us. We can't just flip a coin on this one," a man from the right logically pointed out.

"It doesn't matter how quickly it's been dropped on us. We gotta act now if we want it though. There's no halfway on this," a man across the room stated. "It's a beautiful option, there's no denying that, it's just I'm not sure of our capacities. Can we really handle this?"

The man at the head of the room was slumped in his chair, legs crossed, head in hand, leaning on the side of his nice leather chair slowly massaging his brow. "All valid points, all valid points." He dropped his hand and casually swayed his gaze to the side and looked at a man in circular spectacles. "What are the numbers looking like?"

The man hesitated briefly as he picked up a couple of notes and lifted up a couple of pages to see something underneath as if they were going to reveal some miracle answer to the problem at hand. "I gotta say not good. Not good at all. We are looking at a big gap here, and I don't think we can cover the difference."

"Men," a man's voice surely and stoutly addressed the room from somewhere in the back. "This could be a new day for us. We are on the brink of possibility. Numbers can't put this situation into perspective. We cannot allow fear of rejection to hinder our efforts. We must have the confidence to make a move here. Now I know we're all scared here. I'm scared too. But, I'm excited as well. Excited about what could be. We have no idea what could become of this. Rejection is completely inconsequential. So we take a hit to our pride. We can handle that. We've dealt with way worse than that and come out on top. We need to climb the



mountain of our own pride here, and there might just be a meadow on the other side.”

“And what if there isn’t?” a voice from the mob exclaimed with a bit of distress. “What if we fail?”

“Then we simply climb another mountain,” the man responded.

The man at the head of the room sat slumped over, elbows on his knees, his left arm folded across his lap while he made a fist on his bottom lip, and gave a nod of slight approval. “Thank you for your words,” he said half-genuinely, half-pessimistically. He’d been here before; he’d seen the same situation. “Well, I think we’ve heard enough,” he said taking on his studious duties. “Which leads us to a vote. All in favor?” A response of ayes scattered the room. “All those opposed?” A nearly equal response of nays. “What’s the tally?” he asked the clerk to his right.

“Forty-three for, fifty-seven against. Motion denied.”

The man at the head of the room slowly dipped his head backwards, lying his head on top of the back of his seat and slowly rotated back and forth in it. He whispered to himself, “Yet another girl slips our greeting.”

