

## Forwarding References

## Chapter 2 Conditionally Safe Features

same syntax. For any given type  $T$ , whether the  $T\&\&$  syntax designates an *rvalue* reference or a *forwarding* reference depends entirely on the surrounding context.<sup>5</sup>

```
template <typename T> struct S0 { void f(T&&); }; // rvalue reference
struct S1 { template <typename T> void f(T&&); }; // forwarding reference
```

Furthermore, even if  $T$  is subject to template argument deduction, the presence of *any* qualifier will suppress the special *forwarding*-reference deduction rules:

```
template <typename T> void f(T&&);           // forwarding reference
template <typename T> void g(const T&&);    // const rvalue reference
template <typename T> void h(volatile T&&); // volatile rvalue reference
```

It is remarkable that we still do not have some unique syntax — hypothetically,  $\&\&\&$  — that we could use, at least optionally, to imply unequivocally a *forwarding* reference that is independent of its context.

### Metafunctions are required in constraints

As we showed in *Use Cases* on page 386, being able to perfectly forward arguments of the same general type and effectively leave only the value category of the argument up to type deduction is a frequent need.

The challenge of correctly forwarding only the value category, however, is significant. The template must be constrained using **SFINAE** and the appropriate **type traits** to disallow types that aren’t some form of a cv-qualified or ref-qualified version of the type that we want to accept. As an example, let’s consider a function intended to *copy* or *move* a **Person** object into a data structure:

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<sup>5</sup>In C++20, developers might be subject to additional confusion due to the new terse concept notation syntax, which allows function templates to be defined without any explicit appearance of the **template** keyword. As an example, a constrained function parameter, like **Addable auto&& a** in the example below, is a forwarding reference; looking for the presence of the mandatory **auto** keyword is helpful in identifying whether a type is a forwarding reference or *rvalue* reference:

```
template <typename T>
concept Addable = requires(T a, T b) { a + b; };

void f(Addable auto&& a); // C++20 terse concept notation

void example()
{
    int i;

    f(i); // OK, decltype(a) is int& in f.
    f(0); // OK, decltype(a) is int&& in f.
}
```