

Purgatory Preview

By ALR

A single man awakens in a white void. He's alone, naked, and unscathed. He finds no issues with his body as he gets up to his feet, but there's a pain that permeates his body that he can't quite pinpoint. Looking around, he only sees white as far as his vision could go. With no other options, he starts to yell in hopes of finding someone who could help him. But the deafening silence is the only thing that responds. Eventually he stops, as he can't tell if he's even being heard. He can, of course, hear his voice, but there's no echo. There's nothing to indicate his voice is traveling. In fact, he's beginning to wonder if he's even making any sound at all...

He sits down and tries to remember anything he feels that can be useful to him. That's when a memory flashes inside his mind. He's in the city with his friends. They're laughing and talking, but the words sound foreign to him. Then the memory disappears. He tries to focus on that memory, seeing glimpses of scenes hidden by the dark fog of his mind. There was drinking, dancing, flirting, talking, laughing, and then darkness. With a loud grunt at his failure to remember anything else, he starts talking to himself.

"This is just a dream." He says reassuringly. "A weird fucking dream. I'm dreaming. I got fucked up and now I'm asleep in my bed. Or maybe someone else's bed. Hopefully a cute boy's bed..." He sits there quietly before an idea comes to his mind. "Wait if I'm aware of the dream...doesn't that mean..." He trails off as he extends his hand in front of him. Before his eyes, a bottle of Jack Daniels appears in midair, within his grasp. He laughs and begins making random objects appear around him. First, it was simple things like utensils, plates, clothes, and food. Then he starts going to bigger things, dressers and mattresses. Before long he was making cars, trucks, and even small houses appearing. The joy of his newfound power got him to think of something even more bold. The items surrounding him only made his growing loneliness more apparent. And before he knew it, he was lifting both of his hands in hopes of making a new companion to enjoy these new toys with him.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you." A naked figure with no genitalia walks up to him from seemingly nowhere. "Trust me on this one. You'll definitely regret it otherwise."

The figure definitely startled him. Not only did he appear from a location he was sure was empty (well everywhere is empty given his location) but he was also just looking over there. There was no one there and yet, it looked like this individual was just there. As if he was always there, and the man just didn't notice him yet. "What? What are you, my subconscious or something?"

The figure stares at him with visible confusion. "Subconscious? What are you," He pauses, "wait, you haven't figured it out yet?" He walks over to him and gently caresses his face. "You were having so much fun I thought you knew." Images begin to flash inside the man's head. "Jason, it's time you realized your situation."

Jason begins to remember the rest of the night. He remembers leaving the bar after celebrating his 27th birthday with his friends. He remembers bar hopping for the next 2 hours, getting more and more drunk. He remembers getting picked up by his boyfriend at 3 in the morning. And while laying in on his back in the car he started vomiting. And he remembers drowning in silence.

Jason falls to the ground, tears welling up in his eyes. "No. No, no no no no no nononononono. I'm dead? I can't be dead, I can't be. I have an interview for the manager position tomorrow. My mom was dropping off some food for me this weekend. I promised Judy I'd take her out to get over her asshole of an ex. I was going to move into this beautiful house next month with my...oh Alex." The tears start falling uncontrollably. "Alex, you were right there. Oh my god Alex, I'm so sorry. I'm so so sorry. You told me I had a problem. You told me..." Jason silently sobs, head in his knees. "I'm so sorry baby, you didn't need to see that...I'm so sorry..."

"Hey..." Jason didn't know that the figure had sat next to him. He was gently holding him. "Listen to me. You were a good man, and you were only drinking so much because it was your birthday. And even then, it was less than your normal amount. Remember, you even cut yourself off at the end of the night."

"You...you're right..." Jason wipes the tears from his face and hugs the figure. "But Alex...he was right there. He must be devastated."

“Hey you, listen to me.” The figure scoops up Jason’s face in his hands. They were firm, yet soft, and it gave Jason comfort. “You may have many regrets, but there’s nothing you can do about it now. Right now you’re in the afterlife, and here you can do whatever you want.”

“Where...am I anyway.” He asks as he begins wiping away his tears. Jason looks around and notices that all the stuff he made before was gone.

“Ah right.” The figure stands up. “You mortals would call this place purgatory. The nexus to different planes or whatever. It’s a realm that exists beyond time. Here, let me show you.” The figure waves their hand, and a mirror appears. “By all means, take a look.” He gestures to the mirror, a reassuring grin on his face as he helps Jason to his feet.

Jason is understandably nervous. He went from convincing himself he was in a dream to now realizing that he’s passed on. And now he’s being told that he exists in a place beyond time by a figure who appeared out of nowhere. And said figure is asking him to look through an admittedly large but normal mirror. But with no other ideas on what to say or even do he laments and leans closer to get a good look. As he looks at the mirror, it starts to glisten. The light of purgatory reflects off the glass, preventing him from seeing anything. Surprisingly though, the light that reflects off of it doesn’t blind him. Instead Jason feels it calling to him, as if asking him to come closer. He looks at the figure, and they nod, as if knowing what he was thinking. Jason nods back, still nervous, but trusting the figure. He gets closer, and the light begins to dissipate and he can make out a person in the mirror. At first he thinks it is himself, but as his eyes adjust he recognizes the person as his mother. He grabs both sides of the mirror getting ready to call out to her, but notices she’s significantly younger.

“Your mother, 27 years ago.” The figure cheerfully says. “On the night you were conceived with your father, although as you can see right now, it isn’t “that” time yet.”

Jason nods in agreement as he watches his mother diligently and furiously type at a computer. He starts to laugh as he thinks of all the times he saw his mother typing away at home with the same intense look on her face. His laughter turns to a silent sob though as he gently touches the mirror. Then the mirror disappears. “No no” Jason frantically waves his arms around trying to summon the mirror back. “I want to see other things. I want to see-”

“Alex?” The figure floats up behind Jason and places his fingers on his shoulders. “I can show you him, but you wouldn’t want to see him upset...would you?”

Jason looks to the ground. “I...but I can see him when he’s happy though...Right?” He turns and faces the figure, grabbing their hands. “You can show me a time when he’s happy right?” He stares into the figure clear crystal greenish eyes, and the figure simply nods, a warm smile on their face. “Thank you, thank you so so much.”

The figure disappears, and in his place a mirror floats. Jason looks through it, and watches as a happy Alex drives down a highway, listening to his favorite song. Jason can’t help but sing along, a single tear falling from his eye. He knew that was Alex’s favorite song. Something he’d only put on if he was in a good mood. He watches as Alex makes it downtown, parks his car, and walks into a cafe where he sits and waits. That’s when the smile on Jason’s face fades from his face. “What is he doing? When is this? That cafe looks familiar.”.....