

# I Am Very Pretty

Combined to a perfect hell of my own design.... it must be Tuesday. I look around the apartment I've trashed to find my missing link. *One day I'll find it...* I said yesterday. Did I ever have it? No one knows for sure now. Each day my soles wear thin, never finding it. Each day I know I'll find it tomorrow. It gets harder and harder to look in the mirror and not ask why. The boy I used to look at would say, *luck is preparation meeting opportunity*. Now I know that boy is a dunce; luck is predetermined. I never knew having your dreams come true could be the only thing holding you back. The spectacle of my life has exceeded me. And yet I still hold back; I still don't try; I still don't see a reason.

Yep... still don't see it... I quickly gave up the search in favor of a self-indulging self-loathing. My favorite activity when I'm bored in the house; it's comforting. I take the empty Glock I bought impulsively two years ago and put it to my head. I always liked how heavy it is. The dense, cold metal always feels good on my cheek. My jaw. My temple. I even like the sound of my teeth gripping, clicking, clacking on the barrel. I stopped caring about my teeth a long time ago. Some say the life I have been given is blessed... yep... still don't see it.

Almost delighted by my failure, I feel freer. Responsibility has been lifted for this day. For this day we failed. For this day, it doesn't matter. For without that which I was searching for, I am worthless. There is a freedom in worthlessness... but which kind? What kind? I wouldn't know. My life only exists in the next two seconds. A self-perpetuating existence recreating itself through time; always changing, but never different. That's different. I always felt weighed down by that; the feeling of cold difference. That side of myself that weighs me down the most... yes... I love that. The wet barrel on my forehead. I relapse. So cold. I pass out in bed. Another four hours gone. I was supposed to be in class.

In case it wasn't obvious, I am under a fair bit of stress. I rise knowing I need to leave my room; but I think incubation is a good thing for me. Marination is where I am. Despite my bad teeth, I still get more beautiful everyday. But I can't move. I can't breathe. I can't laugh. I can't even smile. I couldn't believe that. It always felt like my life was built on the foundation of the smile. At least it was supposed to be... or at least it should have... People would always open up to a smile... or so I thought. Don't get me wrong. People will open up for a smile; only... in a different way. The power given to me would always shine through with a smile. Others would engage in me. I became someone they wanted to know. I became a source of light for those around me. People loved it; I became their friend...

I never placed much value on friendship. That is personal value. Perhaps I am unlikeable, perhaps I don't like people, or maybe I just see friendship for what it really is. Friendship is a utility. Friendship can be as cold of a transaction as they come. Where others find comfort in placing large amounts of trust in another, I do not. Where others find comfort in having another around so as to not be alone, I do not. Where others find comfort in relying on another to get a job done, I find business. I have not seen a friendship where only one side is benefiting last very long. Everyone wants something for something. No-one gives something for nothing. We are all still looking out for ourselves first. While I don't have an issue with that, I can't help but not value friendship for what it is. And what friendship boils down to is, *can you do me a favor?* That is: using emotional capital to get another to do something for you. I prescribe to the crabby old saying that *in this life the only person you can trust is yourself*. It is the only way forward. I have no choice.

It's currently 1:12 PM. I missed my only class today and am ready to write the day off and chalk up my loss when I get a text. It's a girl from my graduate program saying she wants to fuck if I let her read my essay. I decide that's as good a reason as any to cure today's illness. I hop in the shower and clean up - everyone always noted how especially well I clean up. I get

dressed, put my bag on my back, and step out into the cold, indifferent yet stimulating streets of my city. Wind, I hate wind. I've hated it all my life, not sure why.

The streets are mostly empty due to the most recent viral pandemic. People have gotten used to staying indoors, wearing masks and scarves while outside, keeping distance between each other; all in an effort to stop the spread of the virus. Unfortunately this is only the latest in a series of disease outbreaks; they are just lucky this one is prettier than the last. As I walk the sidewalk I see a gang of loud city bikers (that's bicycle). They are joking, yelling, doing tricks, trading shots. Gangs like these have been on the rise with the roll out of new forms of public transportation, like rent-a-bikes. As they approach, they start calling me out from behind their masks, *Sup boss. Yo pops. Hey papa.* Just the usual recognition I get from strangers. I look at them from behind sunglasses as they disappear behind me, not acknowledging their existence beyond that. I've never been worried about catching any of the viruses or diseases that are becoming more and more prevalent. I've never needed to. I buy a couple packs of cigarettes from the local convenient store and roll my eyes on the way out the door when I hear the cashier call after me, *take it easy, boss.*

As I approach the university campus, the wind has died down, the temperature rises; it ends up being a pretty nice day. Near the entrance of the university there is an old man walking by. He looks like a local resident. He is about 75 years old, 5'5", his skin is decrepit. He looks like he could've lived a healthy life in his time, but that time has long since passed. The old man smiles at me, *good afternoon sir, you've got a friend in Jesus.*

Knowing the right thing to say, I stop, take off my sunglasses and ask him to repeat himself. You've got a friend in Jesus, sir. He beams at me.

*Is that right?*

*Well... uh.. yes sir. I guarantee it.*

*How can you be so sure?*

*Because sir... I have a friend in Jesus. He loves us all.*

*There it is! I knew it!* I laugh and hug the man. He is slightly alarmed, telling me to keep some distance. Yes, of course, *I got carried away,*

*Well that's alright sir. You look healthy. I don't mind.*

*It's just... look at you.*

*Well what do you mean sir?* He asked, smiling bashfully.

*I mean that you're an old, useless sack of shit. What the fuck would Jesus want a friend in you for?*

Surprisingly the old man doesn't react much to this. He squints his eyes, scans me up and down and starts telling me how little I knew about Jesus and the Lord. As he is talking I see that he is about 60 years old and 5'7". He is wearing expensive clothing and jewelry, which has become increasingly more rare as the recent outbreaks of disease have taken their toll on the world economy. His posture straight, carrying himself with authority, maintains a clear connection when talking, and is well-spoken. The last detail I notice is a small embroidery on his jacket - it appears to be a seal or coat of arms - at which point I begin to feel slightly ashamed for how I spoke to him.

*Are you listening to me? ... say how old are you?,* he asks, noticing I have not been listening.

*24... sir*

*I see. Well you seem to have it all figured out. Don't you, son?*

*I...*

*You're a handsome one, aren't you? Looks like you have your wits about you, at least. I like that in a young man. What makes you say what you did?*

*Jesus is supposed to be the perfect man.*

*He is.*

*And you say the perfect man has a friend in every person on Earth?*

*... yes, I believe so.*

*Then the question I have is... should the perfect man on Earth be homeless?  
What?*

*I mean that if the perfect man has a friend in every man on Earth, he will surely soon be depleted of all his wealth and resources. Every man, woman, and child who comes his way will ask for his assistance. Money, time, energy. You name it. Others will take it.*

*Well if he has a friend in every man, then he can simply ask for help from others in return right?*

*But does the perfect man ask or assistance? ... I personally would say no. And you would say the perfect man would set an example for other men, a sort of role model or leader, yes?*

*Yes, of course! But see son, you're missing the point. You are showing you may not know what it truly means to be a man in the first place... let alone a perfect man. Now, I like you. I think you could be doing better than whatever graduate degree you're working on. I want you to come visit for dinner at my house this evening. I have what you need son; but really I must be going now.* The old man gives me a card with his phone number and home address. He tells me to come by around 8 as he unlocks his car, gets in, and drives away. He fucking drives a brand new Porsche.

I get what I need from campus, go back to my apartment and start cleaning.

My face is... hard to describe. I have long black hair - parted somewhere in the middle - and light brown eyes. I have a large forehead that is mostly flat with a strong brow. Resting on the brow are two clean but thick eyebrows. The cheek bones are well defined and extend forward and my jaw, while not huge, is sharp and visible. This not only makes my cheeks hollow (typical of a model look), it creates a very special effect. Two lines. Two lines on each side of my face start from the top of my cheeks and continue all the way down to my chin, creating a wide V on my face. The lines of the V on my face almost touch each side of my mouth, creating an almost perfect frame for my plump, soft, red lips - which look like a budding flower. There is an air of gravitas to my face that puts others around me down, making them feel inferior. Pretty.

The long, twisted path of my life up to this point has made waves. Unfortunately not all good ones, things got crazy, and I had typical growing pains. People have been hurt. I never asked for this, and even now, I am unsure if I wanted this; but, for better or for worse my face is the reason why I am where I am today. My face is controversial. It has uncovered parts of human nature I would not have known if I didn't have this face. My face has made women fall in love. My face has made women lust. My face has made women turn against each other. My face has made friends turn to enemies. My face has started war. Simply put, my face is how I know God hates us all.