“MEN DON’T LUST AFTER ANY WOMEN”

“THY KINGDOM COME, OH LORD!!!”

“WHY ARE LIL WAYNE’S BARS ALWAYS FULL OF BROKEN BOTTLES?”

The large library desk was divided by vertical planes into compartments, four on a desk.

One of the female species of human beings was sitting at the other side. He noticed that her feet stuck out under the desk to his side because they were sitting at diagonal compartments. He raised his right hand at the elbow as though to copy a wing to get a more overt view of the tetrapods. He was at once struck by how clean they were, lying side by side there on the marble floor of the giant library known all over the western coast of Africa.

When her face rose briefly over the compartments on the desk, her forelocks were as handsome as those of a Hausa goat, lightly haired. Her eyes were clear and focused into space. She was a picture of perfection. And her lips were painted red. The vision dropped as quietly as it had risen.

A divination drops from the mouth of the Oracle!

LORD, LORD! That there just now was damn beauty. A beauty so civilized that it made the beholder to feel like a beast. I am going mad. What I have set my eyes upon! The machinery of my mind is falling through. I must stand up and see this lovely sight, he thought.

The giant library was entombed in silence. Quiet rustling of paper like dry leaves blown in the wind. Less frequent scratches of feet against the floor. Here and there were heads popped up slightly above the desk, incompletely buried in their book-lined spaces. Sometimes eyes met above the compartments, glancing off each other, or sticking together in abstracted concentration.

The tiniest ripple, he thought, would not hurt much against this pacific quiet. He scrambled up as meek as a lamb and leaned over the compartments towards the girl. When he got her attention, he asked her in a whisper – motioning at the same time with his hands – what time it was by her time piece. She touched her phone and showed him that it was 16:32. He motioned his gratitude and lowered himself into his own space.

Beast! he thought once he was hidden by the compartments. She was a beauty and he was a damn beast. That, just to get another look at her. As if he did not have a watch with him. Beast. He was pained to see how under his hulking, imposing self, she had hesitated as if a bit nettled, jolted out of her concentration into a brief spurt of uncertainty, so that she blindly cast about here and there before lighting on the phone. She showed him the time without speech. But he had gleaned much more in that time. He saw the softness of her hand, her bracelets, and that her finger nails were sprayed with light shiny pink. She had on a simple adire blouse without inscriptions and she was studying a Physics textbook. She didn’t look like she was preparing for a test or an exam. Even if that was the case, her coverage was simply admirable. She was obviously not studying like the girls in his department who read class notes, accompanying the act with gum-chewing, hand-wringing and the sort.

He had spied her pair of spectacles too, on the desk beside her phone. It was adorable and had brown horns. Besides her eyes did look like they had adapted to spectacles. What a wonderful girl, he thought. He thought about sneaking up again, raising one finger of excuse at her and saying, Hey my name is Maximilus and you are…? Marie, (after Marie Curie) he imagined that she would blurt, confused, but in the sweetest of voices.

He looked at her feet again. Plaid, lean, and unshod, like two fish sunning on a terrazzo beach in a futuristic world where the fish world had rebellious members who grew up to discover that they could breathe dry air, and even sun themselves golden on the beach stones. As a demonstration, that is, against the statutes of less evolutionary fish in the sea. The toenails were painted green. Red would have done justice to the analogy, he thought. Or maybe green, red, pink, and blue, all at the same time. While he was thinking this the girl withdrew her feet. There was the faint outline of moisture left on the floor.

He pulled himself closer to the desk and stuck his own feet through so the girl could see them on the other side. His were still shod, dirty and crossed at the ankles. He watched the top of her head – which he could see above the planes of the desk – go athwart while her face was pointed downwards in the direction of his feet. He gave her a moment to ponder them, then he raised his right big toe and twirled it in her face, causing her to sit up suddenly.

**Hunk**

He looked up and saw some students walking into the reading area. He remembered that 16:32 meant half past 4pm; and at that time it was customary (from a survey published in the school website) for students who intended to read far into the night to arrive the library. Around this time too, the students who read throughout the afternoon would be preparing to leave. As he was sitting facing the entrance into the hall, Maximillus watched the students arrive. The greater flow broke into the stem of the hall, between two rows of desks, and walked down, turning off one by one into available spaces. The leading man of the troop broke off and took up position for the night combat, now revealing in his place the grisly second lieutenant who marched determinedly on at the head of the troop, looking neither left nor right, until he came up right opposite Maximillus, just beside Marie.

*Please don’t stop please don’t stop please don’t stop*…. The boy claimed the seat like an ancestral throne. *Hunk,* Maximillus breathed.

Hunk was light complexioned. He had a punk haircut and sported a long-tailed shirt with matching trousers. His shoes scarcely made any sound when he walked. It made Maximillus think of paws.

“Hi,” Hunk said to Marie, not flippantly, but pausing to look at her directly and with interest even. Marie shifted in her seat slightly without responding. Hunk sat down without seeming to notice Maximillus, but that was unlikely because the latter was watching him quite fully and without reservation. Hunk was so big that most of his face was visible above the compartment. He had small feral ears, which were, with benefit of proximity, slightly pointy at the tops. His forehead was a growl of wrinkles and scars. His eyes were dirty and the part of his jaws that Maximillus could see were the hard and handsome features of his face.

*Me and you, Hunk*, Maximilus thought angrily.