

ANATOMY OF ANONYMITY

I prayed that you would not lose your identity in the ether. Your script was not fleshed out to fulfill the expected role. What was your hope? How could you maintain your composure? It didn't take much.

“What had your client figured out?”

“The body tells me nothing.”

This could have been your whole life: going along with protocol. It would show your weakness.

“Can I be weak if I don't even know that I am weak?”

I wanted to be myself. When I finally became myself, I was nothing. I had my own breath. I felt my heartbeat.

“What does this start with?”

“Do not be so mean?”

“It started as cruelty.”

“A circus.”

“Of constant pain.”

“Do you know what the spices are about?”

“You need to explain it.”

“LOOK AT MY TREASURES.”

“Everyone was hungry, so they would pay double for food.”

“What did you get?”

“GOODIES.”

“HELP! HELP! I NEED YOU TO RESCUE ME.”

“There were five levels of anonymity. 1.) I had lost myself in the darkness. You had an opportunity to say something, but you missed the opportunity. I could explain it to you. 2.) People surrendered to absolute fun. 3.) My anonymity would result in immortality. (I had brushed shoulders with greatness. That was not all. You might as well have been one in a million. A million.) 4.) There was partial anonymity. I knew this guy, but barely. He might have been anyone. He had a heartbeat. (Brice, this could be you.)

I thought that I knew you. But you were losing yourself in the fog of social interaction.

“You were a long shot.”

“Should we operate.”

5.) Stanza. “Is that all that you got? Is that all you asked for?”

“I was doing all that I could to emerge from the shadows.”

“Go for it, Stanza.”

Jimmy wanted to talk about his prowess.

“We were all around the table listening to him lecture.”

“You have some crazy things.”

“Take it from there.”

“Slam the door.”

“I feel as if I missed something.”

“They got you on the security camera.”

“What else is there to this?”
“Family, society, and politics.”
“Do you have anything else to say?”
“This is not going to be a lecture.”
“I do not like being lectured to.”
“Then I realize that there is nothing at all to me.”
“Turn me on.”
“You could tell me more than I know.”
“How substantial was Stanza?”
“I was gaining some real motivation.”
“Hello, I am Colin.”
“He could have been anyone.”
“Who was he?”
“None of this is going to go anywhere.”
“Anywhere.”
“Then my life fell apart.”
“As if it was once together.”
“Did you do the books.”
“Show receipts.”
“You needed better tax records.”
“Now, you are asking.”
“Those receipts are all rolled up.”
“Man of few receipts.”
“What do the accounts tell us about life?”
“I am missing this.”
“I have been cured.”
“Do you want to watch?”
“No one does.”
“This is too much to worry about.”
“I am dealing with people who were not ready for much of anything.”
“Life is not English class.”
“I love the way that you smile at me.”
“I wish that you were not in my head.”
“Do not even think about it.”
“Do you want to interfere?”
“Are you kidding?”
“Who else is on your team?”
“I could understand that.”
“She claimed that she could understand.”
“I understand.”
“Stanza understands.”
“I would give you’re the world.”
“The world.”

“Is the house furnished?”

“It looks very important, but it is not.”

“The circumstances could enhance identity. But this was a situation that offered no solace.”

“YOU WILL WORK FOR ME.”

“Keep talking.”

“WOW!”

“You are boring.”

“I’m barking up the wrong tree.”

“I have some serious things to discuss.”

“YOU HAVE IT ALL!”

“Get the last word.”

We were all brought into this room together, all of us students. From the beginning, it was pretty clear who was going to succeed and who would not. A few of us understood the teacher. The work was all pretty basic. It was challenging enough that it held our interest. But the rest of our classmates would look at each other and wonder what was going on. There would be people staring into space all day. And they were lost and staring into space and hoping that someone would rescue them.

Tempest summarized the experience quite clearly. She wanted some guy to give her that look and just lead her into the bathroom, lock the door, and seize her then and there. This was all part of her MO. She never wanted to look at the deeper questions here. If this guy could have his way with her so easily, how would he respond when a woman might resist his advances?

If she wanted people to abuse her, and she claimed that it was consensual, what kind of guy would go along with this? How much would he demonstrate his concern for someone else’s consent. What if she was trashed? Would he care? Would any of them even pursue these behaviors if they weren’t blackout drunk? In their own way, they all welcomed this. They were living on automatic pilot. Their bodies would take over.

In some ways, they knew everything that was happening. But they would construct this story that they didn’t remember a thing. They would be all angry if things hadn’t worked out this way.

What was the transition from Tiffany to April? I wanted April to invite me to her theater. What was the exact moment when she knew? Did any of these guys really know?

“You’re coming home with me.”

“We both are lucky tonight.”

How lucky were any of them?

My buddy Will seemed to be playing along. If I stripped away the outer layers, what was there? He had a paint brush. He had skills. But he just let the feeling take over. It was like that with everything. There was nothing pretty here.

If you were looking for someone for the long haul, there was really nothing here, nothing here at all.

April introduced me to one of these guys. He could barely have a conversation. And he seemed all brash. And he was wearing a band shirt. But I thought what a waste of space. Maybe, he could have been my friend.

I heard that Christine had finished a new book. I was surprised that she had that resilience. She believed in herself. More than that. She believed in her philosophy. How much humiliation was she willing to endure. It seemed to stop short of the kind of thing that Tempest was talking about. But it was pretty much the same things

Colin had been sitting with me. And he was looking for nothing but a trick. As best as it ever looked, it was all about losing any form of integrity. Could that person ever have a real conversation? She could act all romantic. What was there? And Colin was looking around. He only wanted to discover that pretty package.

Colin had already found so much more. It still was not enough for him

He came back with Stanza. And I wondered how anyone could spend any time with him at all. What was she doing? But there was this point in her life when she wondered what she was doing. This was all that she needed. This was all that anyone needed.

“Haven’t any of these people heard of condoms? But they’re not about that at all. Down deep, they are all damaged. They’re used to taking risks. They love the edgeplay. It’s their way of saying that they’re free. But they’re even more victims of their trauma.”

“It all seemed like this adventure with April. If you wanted her, really wanted her, and she ended up with one of these guys, you would just wonder. You would keep wondering. What does he have? What does Colin have? That’s the point. It’s all this illusion that something is going on.”

“Then you have Vince Green. And he’s standing there with his erection. And nobody wants Vince, except some underage girl. And she never really wanted him. But he created this illusion in his mind. And he told everyone this one thing. What really was going on that night? If he went this far, how far was he really willing to go.”

Vince thought it was okay. He had got a hold of Burroughs novel. And he felt that he was a walking dildo. And he could go where he wanted to go. He was a horn dog. He was never stopping. He was begging for sex from a crack addict. He was picking up a woman from the Jack in the Box. What was in the box?

“I do not want to be alone.”

“And you got high every night. And that buzz keep you going.”

“I need to make this happen.”

“Buddy boy, show me what you’ve got.”

“I found this guy on the sex registry.”

“What does she have there? Is it subject to some form of interrogation?”

“Does April ever get really disappointed?”

“What about that woman in Atlanta? She brought those two guys home with her. And they victimized her. It didn’t get her to stop. She became a stripper. And guys were paying her to do the same thing. When do any of these gestures mean anything?”

“I want to baby you.”

What was April telling me? What was she telling anyone? That was what Bill needed. And this was getting me a whole lot of nowhere. And I realized that I was only one step away.

“If we talk about, we do not have to live it.”

“I am working on an erotic novel.”

“I am into fantasy.”

Her fantasy was all about being humiliated.

“I am getting off thinking about.”

“Christine, what is this really about?”

“You provoke my excitement. And I never have to think about this shit.”

“And you get off sharing these terrible stories.”

She couldn't live without offering me a confessional. Could I just tell? What about Defina. She was right there. She had the great smile and the sidewinder dance routine. She was so flexible. Did he know? He was unwrapping her, but what was really going on.

“I don't want to answer anymore questions.”

“You have not completed the exam.”

“Get me off in the bathroom.”

And Tempest took over. What happened to the First Philosophy?

Dusk could explain it the best. But when it came to the full explanation, there was this guy sitting in the chair trying to complete the assignment.

“Are you large?”

“I can keep this going all night.”

“And I think about work.”

“Take this. It will get you hard.”

“Get me high. Get me hard. Get me sweet.”

“I am going to find love.”

“This is how you get yourself back.”

You had this idea for half a second.

“I want someone to get me off. I want the world to get me off. I want the world to fuck me. I want all the guys in here to eat me out.”

“This is your job.”

“My name is Lancer.”

“You are whoever we tell you to be.”

“I want to be a cock.”

“The top cock.”

“I want to be a pussy.”

“I fucked your girl.”

“That is how it is supposed to be.”

You thought that you were going to find love from this.

“It was the caring touch.”

“Oh, my God.”

“Shit.”

“Get me out of here.”

“You cannot escape. Take one of these.”

“There is nothing else.”

“Stroke me.”

“I am glad that you can understand that.”

“Are you encouraging me to have sex with everyone in here?”

“Reach out, and touch.”

“They do not want you.”

“You failed the exam.”

“Do I have some kind of disease?”

Vince Green and Todd Davidson were lurking in the shadows. They were both villains from horror movies. Except this was all real. You could take it back ten years, twenty years, or thirty years, and there would be someone just like this lurking in the shadows. What monster would emerge from Tempest story? Wasn't she evoking a similar horror. What did it mean to participate in one of her scenes? How could she prevent it from getting out of control? Even if she tried to control everything, it wouldn't take much to encourage her partner from acting out the same behaviors on a reluctant partner. This would never stop being some kind of strange game. What were the odds for Christine? Was she's facing the same kind of challenges? The enactment only got more bizarre.

What if the observer took it back to Robin? What was she losing over the course of a night? What did these characters have to offer? She could pretend. But they were never on the same page. They were all about the obliteration of self. That was why she was afraid of the Vince Green. It wasn't so much what he did. It was more about her familiarity with this kind of behavior in others. If she had been so aware of what was going on, she probably wouldn't have been as tolerant of this kind of behavior as she was. But she embraced the chaos as if it was the mother of invention. And she waited for what might come from one of these wild nights. It wasn't all that different from Tempest. Each one made a bargain with the devil.

On a worse note, the devil could just let loose. Robin tried to present it as an innocuous experience. What was she protecting--nothing? Christine made the odds much riskier. What was she afraid of? She seemed to embrace humiliation. Why? Well things could get worse. With Tempest it wasn't any different. But who could emerge from this dark cave?

This was where Todd Davidson or Vince Green took their cue. If hedonism had no limit, this kind of cruelty could eventually become a practice. And that was frightening in itself. Fundamentally, this monster defended his unrestricted pursuit of fun.

Colin felt that he was not that vulnerable. Stanza offered him another point of view. And that connection was related to his artistic discovery. That's why he was still attached to his idea of the muse.

For Stanza, this was her chance to realize her own creative impulses. Who else could assist her to realize her vision?. Colin would claim that he was immune from the wild desires that influenced Tempest. How could he explain it? Tempest might've seemed just as susceptible to foolhardy appeals, but she also send a little more grounded in her mission. .

April tried to shade her own development to match what was going on around her. On her view, things could be more vibrant. But her story had the potential to offer her even more. Did the pursuit of pleasure only level out all the distinctions? Was this the real conflict that seemed to motivate the narrative?

It might seem more appealing than the experience described by Tempest. In some respects, Tempest seemed much mechanical. It was the way of the flesh. Even though there was something totally anonymous about the situation, April would make every effort to make things distinctive. She might share stories from her high school years. But there was so much that wasn't being said. Why bother? Was it even worth it? This was never about getting to know

anyone. People like Brad could pretend.

What did it mean if living in the moment meant all these guys were cardboard cut outs, and what was price? Was it all a horror movie? She had less and less connection to the self. There barely seemed to be a story. She would hear about things that someone else did, and these exploits would be attributed to her. Would she really have any recollection? It all became more and more confusing. Who was Brice? Who was April? She could've seemed ready to tell her the story. There was other points of view. People could pretend to be something.

For his part, Colin had finally walked into romantic a comedy. This was all about erasing past history. Vince Green had tried to offer a more conventional narrative. But it never held together. It was all about crossing boundaries, abusing others, and trying to manipulate their desires. There was always some kind of trespass. This was the basis for his voyeurism. It was always a threat.

Any kind of stability seemed to be out the window. If people wanted total exposure, where did it stop? They wanted others to participate in their fantasies. This was all characterized by their nature. These fantasies were built by total personal degradation. They embraced the humiliation.

Vince Green took it to another level. He was recording it. He wasn't just witnessing victimization.

"In some deep way, do you want to celebrate what he was doing? There was nothing else here. It was abuse pure and simple, but everything seemed too chaotic. If Vince Green could live in this world, who else could get away with these behaviors? Todd Davidson has certainly made an imprint, and his terrible actions seemed to echo everywhere. Where was any of us going?"

For a time, everyone had been running around here with cameras. Who would be willing to take the risk? The downside was more than obvious, but everyone seemed attracted to this kind of revelation. For the moment, the benefits seemed to hide the drawbacks. That did not diminish the dangers. How did Jimmy manage this? What about Sly? There was a deeper pattern here.

Everyone wanted to be seen. Each person wanted her crimes to be confessed in public. This added another level of estrangement. It was next to impossible to escape from this network. Everyone felt paranoid. And everyone was a voyeur."

"Is this how things are supposed to be going?"

"Can I join in?"

"This is not working for me?"

We had a story.

"What is your problem?"

"I hear this place is fun. I need a drink."

"You clean up well."

"Where is this headed?"

"I can help you."

"If you wrote more of this at home, it would probably be more of a fantasy."

"Are you the teacher?"

"I have a question."

"Do you love me?"

“How did I end up here?”

“You had a milk shake.”

“Why are we watching this?”

“You are such a stud.”

“I can have anyone that I want.”

I started out looking for a more persistent reality. Then I realized that I had nothing to work with.

“Here, have some of my tater tots.”

“This is getting more exciting.”

I hoped that I was going to get what I always wanted.

“Where is this headed?”

“Do you want to watch me go to the bathroom?”

I was afraid that the story would end up behind a closed door.

“You could get arrested for doing this in a public place.”

“This is not my own story.”

“Are you trying to influence me?”

“I want to tell you something important.”

“Are you going to finish that off?”

What would it mean if I wanted to get to know you?

“Everyone wants more fun.”

“Where is this headed?”

“This all gets a little tricky.”

“Robin, you turn me on.”

“I found someone new, who only thought about humiliating me.”

She wanted to have a better understanding of the law. She had an app, which described the shit that was happening in her vicinity.

“Is your name Vince?”

“Are they making a horror movie about you?”

She wondered if this was all accidental.

“I want it to be a little less confusing.”

“Who else is here?”

“Who is encouraging this guy?”

“I obey no rules.”

It all seemed like a horror movie. All the victims were willing. Where were the constraints?

“What do you for fun?”

“Do you want to come back and do this again?”

“Just put the quarter in.”

I wondered what I was doing with my life. I ended up in this hell of my own making. And it did not feel as good as I wanted it to

“Am I really under arrest?”

“I do not need an explanation.”

“You have been stealing money.”

“I am your friend.”

“Don’t touch me.”

I wanted to explain what was going on.

“You did something very bad.”

“At least, I dressed for the experience.”

“Where do you want me to put you?”

“I have some questions.”

“This was fun.”

I was in the hotel with this guy. And I felt terrible about myself.

“You need to figure this out on your own.”

“I am going to spend some time in a half-way house.”

“They brought you to the show.”

“I will never do this anymore.”

“This is way beyond me.”

“It is called laugh therapy.”

“Now, I need to know.”

What was going come of this experience?

“Was there a crime?”

“That happens all the time.”

“Are you sure?”

“You can take a hike.”

“Where did this start?”

“There is no love lost between us.”

“Where is this headed?”

“You are going to have to spend some time in the cage.”

“I have an important question. Is this voluntary?”

“I did nothing, so I did not feel all that good.”

“There is a place for this kind of thing.”

“I want to know: did that guy turn you on? Is that all that there is to your life?”

“I want some potato chips.”

“No one is ever going to like you for who you are.”

“There isn’t much of a story here.”

“I was a little more careful.”

“Then it all got out of control.”

“Why am I here?”

I did not want my life to keep on this way.

“You are hot.”

“I think someone turned on the heat.”

“No, I mean I like the way that you look?”

“I realized that I was a terrible person.”

This trivialized my life.

“What did you do wrong?”

“Did you bring me a cupcake?”

“How does that work?”

“I do not want to eat that shit.”

“We are all in hell together.”

“It was really fun.”

“I don’t understand.”

“I am not a sociopath.”

“What are you up to in there.”

“Quit being a drama queen.”

“Can you take me to the piano room?”

I was not sorry. I did not want to admit that I had not done anything wrong.

“They were shocking me.”

“How is that?”

“This is impossible to talk about.”

“Take care of me, lover.”

“Who else is involved?”

“I quit.”

“I do not understand. You are a terrible lover.”

“Good.”

“I am moving to another state.”

“The state of distress.”

“I am sorry that I did this to you.”

“We share something.”

We saw the world in different way.”

“We all have done some terrible thing.”

“I am not getting what I want.”

“I hate doing this.”

“This is not the best thing that happened in my life.”

“Are we going to say that more is happening?”

“Marriage was supposed to put everything in place.”

“I am getting to the root.”

“Who made you the writer of this story?”

“I was hired.”

Had voyeurism replaced knowledge? What was the difference? The suffering of others could provide the circumstances for personal pleasure. That was the foundation of Tempest’s outlook. But the same ideas were embodied in Christine’s novel. It was becoming a constant practice. These behaviors could hide the ability to be more self-critical. Self-awareness only provided the basis for greater stimulation. There was no effort to craft an alternative way of espousing biology. These impulses were primary. They could be enhanced, but they could not be fundamentally altered.

This direction might have seemed evident. Colin offered the perfect ideology. The muse was there to feed these fantasies. It emphasized the primacy of the observer. This was the basis for the pleasure principle. It was all about creating these more jubilant scenes. Accountability was lost in the extremes of these adventures.”

Had Stanza shut down this belief on Colin's part. Would Tempest yield to sentimentality? April wanted to create this nostalgic picture. What was missing from her portrayal. It was one thing to have this vision. What would happen after repeated scenes? Could Tempest sustain this kind of abuse? This seemed to be a manifesto for some kind of transfigured body. Each attack would allow regeneration.

Colin admitted that he enjoyed suffering. It led to the growth of the self. This was part of his artistic vision. He might seem to be self-effacing, but he could take advantage of his own sentimentality. That gave suffering an added poignancy to his vision.

"What are you working on?"

"A song about a girl who sailed away."

"What is that about?"

"I want emotions that make sense."

"Who is in the audience?"

"I don't want to look."

"Where is this even appropriate?"

"The best is yet to come."

"Are you going to declare?"

"I do declare."

"Trouble is coming."

"I wanted you to point me in the right direction."

"I get what is happening."

"Do it to me one more time."

"The door is open."