Second chance

Michael wakes up hating himself. With sunshine beaming inside his room from the window adjacent to his bed. His sunshine falls on his carpet next to his bed. As he wakes up, opening his eyes, he looks for his wallet around the room. Confirms himself that all the money was still there and nothing was stolen by Aimee. Aimee had given him a great night yesterday, as he remembers. He sits down on the edge of his bed, and glugs down some whiskey down his throat. He had bottles on the bedstand itself. A couple of them actually. He stands up, half naked only with a pair of boxer briefs and walks to his balcony, lighting up his cigarette. Sits down. Looks. He just looks at the world around him, while dragging on his lucky strike cigarettes, his favorite. This was his favorite part of the day. Everything slowed down at this point. No distraction, no one screaming at your ears just to get you pissed off. No one, nothing, only peace.

It was a beautiful day, sun shining, birds chirping, people laughing. Putting his cigarette out, he gets back inside. Michael doesn’t like his job at all. His hobby is, interestingly enough, poetry. He spends his free time writing poetry. He hadn’t written anything for the past few days, much less any idea about what he would write about. He was clueless. Ripping open a nicotine patch, he slapped it on his right shoulder. Michael puts his regular white shirt on, same dress pants, and does his hair the same way that he would for the past year. Nothing. Locking his apartment, he walks out of the building with his “middle finger towards the whole world” look on his face.  
  
In philosophical terms, Michael was a pessimist.

pessimist: -  
/ˈpɛsɪmɪst/  
  
  
noun  
  
1) a person who tends to see the worst aspects of things or believes that the worst will happen

now, he was a pessimist in all aspects of his life, except one. Jasmine. Not the flower, a woman.  
she worked at the same office as Michael. Michael never smiled. He had a face which could be read as “what the hell are you even looking at, mind your own business”.   
Every morning when he would reach the office, everyone greeted him with a smile, and genuine ones too. But Michael never reacted, unless it was jasmine. When someone would say “good morning, how are you doing today?” his response was nothing more than a grunt and a “fine”. Each response from him was like walking into a wall again and again.

He would sit down in his small cubicle and start working. No one knew what his job actually was or what he did. “All that everyone knows is that he sits and works, what he did no one knew it”

Says john to the new employee. Ben says to him “he could be batman for all we know.” With his boring grunt like scoff to the new one.  
  
Michael sits there, just typing away. He looks focused with his thick brows frowning at the screen. He should feel better by the second as he was completing a task after another, but he was never happy. One could even say that he smoked all is dopamine reserves away with all the weed he used to smoke. Looking at his face while he was working was like looking at a black room which had no light. A room which was abandoned by its residents for a long time. Only the utter darkness and the infinite nature of it would simply stare back at you. That’s what you would feel when you would look at his face.

Although he was handsome, you could see his dark bitter soul at the edges of his eyes trying to creep out. Trying to escape the captivity, and to escape that body. The problem with him was people did like him, and tried to talk to him. But he wouldn’t open up. Far from it actually.

Maybe he just couldn’t get over his neighbour’s death.  
  
As much of a jackass he sounded like, he wasn’t. he always had a connection with strangers. But people closest to him could not get through his wall. They never got him. As hard they tried they couldn’t, and god knows that they had tried. The neighbour was a sort of comfort for him, in a weird sense.  
Beautiful, in a short dress, a woman was walking towards his cubicle. She was gorgeous. She dropped a pen just as she was walking by Michael’s cubicle. “oh shit, I dropped it’’ exclaimed the beautiful lady out loud. She slowly bent down as she picked it up. She was slow as a snail, making sure that Michael gets a good look at her and can feel her presence. Out of desperation she was already exploiting her assets. All the men were looking at her direction as she stood up, obviously, but Michael. He didn’t even move a muscle. He kept typing. The lady finally spoke out, saying with some true feelings behind her words saying, “good morning Michael, how are you today?” Michael looks up and says, “oh sarah, I didn’t see you there”.  
“that’s the problem” said sarah to herself quietly in her own nervous mind.  
“I’m good”, says Michael  
“you coming tomorrow right? Maybe we could go together, I’ll pick you up or the other way around, whatever suits you” says sarah in a slightly happy tone  
Michael was looking at his computer screen already, and says “yeah about tomorrow night, right.” Michael turns his head slowly and hesitantly, with no intention of stopping his work, and says “I don’t know about tomorrow, I’ll see if I can, but you still could go with someone else, if I cant . there will be other guys.  
But in the mind of jasmine there only existed one guy in the whole god’s not very green earth, that was Michael. She said “cool…catch you later, busy right ?”   
Michael doesn’t even give a proper response, but a dry and underwhelming “hmm”.  
Sarah didn’t have to say anything at all, it showed in her eyes, how much disappointed she was. She wanted to take back all she had said but couldn’t. If she was a wizard who used to blow dumbledore every morning, then maybe, but again she didn’t.   
Thoughts which ran around constantly in his mind, were “odd” . he was an anti natalist. And being truly honest, I didn’t even know what that is until ten seconds ago. It basically means that a person who doesn’t believe in the existence of human beings, and believes that humans should basically “self-destruct” into extinction. He kept on thinking what was jasmine doing. Maybe she was thinking about him.

Michael smiles. Now that is a very rare sight to see.

Ben walks by and gives him his everyday coffee. Michael loved his coffee exactly like his soul-- dark, bitter and leaving a stench whatever it has come in contact with  
Michael doesn’t even look up, Ben was already adjusted to that. “not even a thank you? You ungrateful piece of shit” thinks Ben. Ben was a nobody, but everyone smiled at him or nodded at him sincerely, or even thanked him. But Michael, not a chance.  
Michael keeps typing his life away…..  
  
Jasmine is walking toward Michael’s cubicle . Michael looks up, ‘my god she is gorgeous’ says to himself as jasmine walks slowly, gracefully and elegantly . As she passes his cubicle, Michael says to her “good morning jasmine, how are you doing today?”. Jasmine didn’t realize where the sound had come from. She turns around and sees Michael.   
“I am great Michael, what about you?” with a smile, says jasmine.  
“cant complain actually” says Michael, “you coming tomorrow right?”  
“oh about tomorrow, I will see if I can”  
“we could go together you know?” suggests Michael.  
“sure, I will see what I can do” replies jasmine as she walked away slowly.  
  
In Michael’s mind he was damn happy, and smiling. He thinks of all the good things that could happen tomorrow, but obviously the bad possibilities overcome his positive thoughts once again. Realizing he was getting nervous, Michael starts typing again.

After work, as Michael enters his apartment, he dives on his bed and lays there for a few minutes. He takes his packet of lucky strikes and walking out to his balcony, sticks a cigarette on his dry lips. Before lighting it, he stares at the house in front of his balcony. The same house his neighbour used to live.  
  
the most interesting part about their relationship was, they never exchanged a single word with each other, not a single proper conversation with the man. But in some ways what they had was more intimate than just lifeless words. Something deep. Something truly profound.

When his ex girlfriend would just keep on screaming at his blank face for every small thing, coincidence or not, his neighbour would be on his balcony and looking at Michael’s apartment. Michael saw him each time. Michael saw his screaming girlfriend’s face and 10 meters behind, his neighbour smiling. His smile was a rare one. It comforted Michael. Such beautiful eyes could make anyone happy, it always gave him comfort.  
Each morning, when Michael would wake up from a terrible night, and smoke on his balcony, with tremendous self loathing. His neighbour would be there. Waving and smiling. Michael would do the same upon seeing the man. He would smile and wave too.

Michael flicks his cigarette butt and gets back inside. His phone was ringing. “AIMEE” was the name that popped up on his screen. Aimee had given him a great night, however costly, its worth couldn’t be questioned. But Michael had hopes now. He declines her, in an attempt to play the heroic man who is abandoning all earthly pleasures for a woman he desires. He had already prepared the speech he would give to her, if jasmine and him could be together, a dream which was dreamt long enough.  
Michael sits down on the chair next to his window, which faced the streets. By now it was all dark. The only source of light on the roads were the headlights of the cars which were driving past one by one. Pouring himself a glass of Jameson, Michael chugs it down. Pours and gulps down another just after four seconds. Lights his joint, already prepared beforehand in his desk drawer. Starts typing. Just sitting in his dark room, in his underwear, Michael types away all his bullshit poetry which comes to his creatively awakened mind. He would keep typing until he passed out. Which equals to half a bottle of Jameson and at about 3:00 AM.  
Michael wakes up at noon, not wanting to do anything, but go on that party later with jasmine. Goes out to his balcony hoping to see his neighbour, lights his cigarette and sits down while realizing that the son of a bitch had already died. He brings his typewriter out and continues on his poem. Him still being in his underwear made him look naked, but he couldn’t care less. Girls giggling by when passing just past his balcony.   
A smile spreads on michaels face. He feels overwhelmed with the joy over a little thing. The little thing being a slight possibility of going to some random party (which he didn’t give a rat’s ass about) with beloved jasmine. God, her face was floating in front of Michael’s eyes. He puts his head on the chair’s back, and closes his eyes. Sunrays fall on his face and lips, spreading a slow smile on his handsome face. He simply felt wonderful.

It was 6 PM. Michael gets ready with his formal dress and readily waits for jasmine. His phone ‘blings’, Michael looks and sees a text from jasmine. His excitement couldn’t contain itself, and he opened her text immediately. Michael upon reading it, slowly sits down with his phone in his hand and a smile on his face.  
this smile was very different than the one he felt on the balcony. Michael felt it’s difference too. Jasmine told him “sorry Michael, I won’t be able to make it, I got some work to do, you can enjoy”. He felt like walking into a tunnel, and walking on and on and on with the hope of the light at the end of it and it never arrives. There is no light. It’s a never ending tunnel which is of the length of infinity. Michael’s beliefs are confirmed once again.  
Picking up his phone Michael calls Aimee.

“you can come over sweetheart”.

“why weren’t you picking up my call” came the reply.  
“nothing, just busy. Don’t worry, I will be awake this time when I will pay”  
“sure honey, coming right over” said Aimee.  
  
“Thanks” said Michael, but the phone was already hung up.

Michael is lying in his bed next to Aimee. His shoulders and calves out of the covers, a feeling a felt comfortable with. Her arm resting gently on Michael’s chest. Michael takes another drag on his cigarette while looking lifelessly at the ceiling. The street lights, entering his room through the window, like the outstretched arms of a prisoner trying to reach out of his cage, lighting up Aimee’s face. Michael slowly looks at her without expression and puts his cigarette out with an elongated exhale. He looks back the ceiling and closes his eyes.

Next thing that Michael remembers is waking up alone on a cold bed, and looking over his right shoulder to see no one at his side sleeping peacefully. Realizes that Aimee has left already.

Walking through the glass door, Michael notices Sarah talking to Ben. Sarah was trying hard to show Michael that she was no longer available and was busy with someone else. But who is she kidding everyone knows that she is talking to some poor old sod, even Sarah knew it. She had noticed Michael enter the room, and not being able to resist herself, she looks at him just for once, and receives something very unexpected in return. She saw Michael already looking at her and was smiling. What made it even unique was that he smiled at a woman other than jasmine. Sarah did not even realize that a similar smile had also spread upon her lips. Sarah, without saying anything to Ben just walks away, towards Michael. Michael was ready for a new beginning, a new life, a hope which was perfectly similar to the smile the Sarah had on her red lips. With new hope on his newly warm heart, Michael said to Sarah with his devilishly charming smile..  
“good morning Sarah, how are you today?”.