

Too Much Eyeliner

by Shawn Main

“I want to wear too much eyeliner.”

“What?”

“Look at those little hipster kids out there. I want to do that. Can you teach me how?”

“Those kids aren’t hipsters.”

“Whatever.”

“They’re goths.”

“Even better. And leather pants. How badass would that be?”

“You might as well walk around in a black cape and avoid crossing intersections.”

“What?”

“You’re a fucking child.”

“Look—”

“No. Listen closely. You’re a fucking child. You never killed a man. You’re barely a week old. You’re still talking like you’ve got braces on. You’re in denial about what this really means and you’re acting like I’m your mother. You don’t get to play Bela Lugosi. You don’t get to seduce naive lolitas. You’re just as pathetic as ever. All you’ve got is a helluva lot more time to be pathetic. Enjoy.”

“Sorry.”

“Forget it.”

“It’s just hard to take. Hard to believe.”

“I know... and look... I shouldn’t explode like that. Everyone goes through it. Hell, when I was your age, we all wore medieval tunics for some reason...It’s easy to be a cliché. Probably comforting. I’ll get you some eyeliner. You’re young and that shit’s fun.”

“No. I just expected things to change more. I was expecting secret orgies and jumping out of dark alleyways.”

“Look. You get a few good years. Once you figure things out you get to be a teenager again. Concerts. Alcohol. Drugs. Sex if you’re lucky and they’re putting out at the moment. Maybe you’ll try murder. But it’ll get old. It all gets old.”

“And then?”

“You’ll settle down. Somewhere quiet. The world will pick up speed and pass you by. You’ll fall into a routine. Television until 8. Then you’ll come out to a bar where old men in loud shirts talk about crossword puzzles and how they don’t understand the internet and if we’re lucky Donald will tell the story about the time he screwed Lady Caroline with Byron in the other room. You’ll get good at pool. Good at darts. You’ll hear the same jokes ten thousand times over.”

“And then what?”

“That’s it. You’ll think about doing something with all the time: writing a novel, mastering go, travel, but really you’ll care more about who wins on Jeopardy.”

“That’s it then?”

“That’s it.”

“Seriously?”

“It’s that or you write some sappy poetry and climb a mountain to watch the sun rise.”