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AN EXCERPT FROM *EVENTS THAT NEVER TOOK PLACE*

Corey was removing a stroke of brush when a couple of knocks rapped at the door. His room naturally contained many trashed canvases, aborted artworks that had become prematurely. Blotches of grey, blue and black were splattered on his jeans. His hair smelled of the day before yesterday. An attempt at carving foam boards lay heaped in the bricked cornered walls. Turpentine laced the air, oppressive as bad BO. His moth eaten wool sweater sagged on his slim figure. His hands were sturdy and worn, with the exact precision of a surgeon.

Corey's turning head was complemented with the opening door. Mark was here. Mark... they say much about Mark. Bachelor's in Literature, terrible alcoholic, spiritualist although not Christian, former bohemian, racked brain, reserved a ticket for hell, likes songs of solitude, enjoys Mediterranean, says the glass is half empty, still can't guess what Pat is, feels refreshed in mountain air, wonders about the Heavenly spheres, gay, a dreamer, admires intellects and practical people, drinks a lot of soda, wears various hat styles, prefers import beers, liberal, thinks spiced cologne smells nice... yes... much do they say.

Two seconds clicked before dislike spawned on Corey's sun blown face. Intuiting Mark's reason for being in his apartment, Corey cut out the intro.

-I only have fifteen for you.

-At least that will get me something.

Corey leaned forward while those sturdy hands reached around to his back pocket. Mark, dressed as lousy as ever in cheap black jeans and a stretched out tee, unzipped his wine colored back pack. A copy of a text by H.P. Lovecraft poked out. Wrinkled from bad packing, Mark pulled out a drawing book that he had worked on during the weekend. By the time Corey got out the money Mark had flipped open the book revealing charcoal pictures. Corey's attention shifted to the image of a dark strange figure with legs pressed against the chest and a rope tied from the head to the heels. With the turn of a page, another figure braced itself on a chair. A cloth was anchored on the face, which stretched over the head and pulled to the ground at the back. Apparently the highlights were done with white charcoal. Corey remembered a painting by Fuseli called *The Nightmare*. The final picture was a graphite drawing. Corey's eyes followed the rubber tubing and wires running all over the image. Hanging from the piercing wires was naked man in sexual embrace with woman who had cords coming out of her mouth.

-Sex is death, remarked Corey. Is it dark humanism?

Mark smiled in return.

-There is nothing really dark in the human world. They are gray. They may be corrupt, but never truly dark.

-So it is a corruption?

-I wouldn't say corruption, but one portrait of the many faces of humanity.

Corey looked at Mark's face. His jet black hair appeared almost green or blue. He had thick eyelashes with brown irises and his facial hair contrasted heavily with the milky white of his skin. One could view the musty north through him. Seeing enough of the face, Corey gave Mark the money and turned back to his work which contained only a backdrop for what appeared to be a night scene of old ruins.

-I'll meet with you later and talk about your pictures then, said Corey.

Mark nodded in agreement and replaced his drawing book in his school bag. Quickly

glancing at his obsidian metal watch, Mark read ten pass four. He then left the Francis Bacon trashed studio, and thumped his weighty steps down the steel stairs that echoed with great volume. Upon opening the door at the bottom another individual standing against the outside wall flicked a cigarette onto the sidewalk with a wisp of smoke coming out of his breath.

-Let me guess, not enough to buy anything hard, the man commented.

-Well we can always buy a case of low-rate beer, responded Mark.

The man was named Xavier. Xavier had a reverse diet that consisted of drinking beer and eating as much microwavable pizza as he could stomach. His high metabolism kept him slimmed down to a nice one hundred and eighty pounds, which Xavier said was his reason for his intake of 'healthy' foods. If he didn't then one day his body might just as well eat itself up and Xavier never had a taste for cannibalism.

'Friends' is not the word that would best describe Mark and Xavier's relationship. Neither expressed any emotional bonding nor a helping hand to each other in a time of crisis. What kept them together was their interests in the occult, philosophy, and a small check paid equally at the beginning of the month for a two bedroom apartment. Xavier's flow of red flaming hair made up for the complete lack of warm blood flowing in him. Tender, kind, considerate, and sympathetic were heresies before the Lord Xavier. 'The natural state of man is war' declared this fine Lord. "And if you look more closely we, mankind, are merely made to pass information on genetically," announced the genetically fine Lord.

Mark and Xavier stopped by the liquor store, with a walk in and walk out- this town never checked identification cards. Within a few minutes, bottles were cracked open in a shabby apartment that knew no architectural design. A few drunken comments accompanied the David Lynch film that played on the lousy AV television. Mark was a Lynch fanatic. He always dreamed of painting a film.

Sometimes others have wondered if Mark knew no difference between the flights of thought and reality. Of course 'reality is what we tell each other it is. But for Mark and Xavier, life has always been gently flowing down the stream. As the intoxication wore on, so did their minds sleep.

An irritated and flushed Mark woke up to the racking of an alarm the day after. It pulled his strings hard enough that the snap ended with a fifteen dollar loss. Mark bounced right out of bed and landed in his clothes: it was common for him not to shower in the morning. One leg kicked open the bedroom door while the other fell upon the gas pedal at sixty-five miles per hour. Upon arrival to the college he unknowingly walked two lockers down from his. Backing up to his own, the lock clicked right, left, and another right. His possessions greeted him happily. As he approached the classroom the art professor scented his coming and made for the door before Mark could reach it. In his attempt to turn the handle he raised his head to see the professor's negating face in the window locked in expression as she had done with the door. Mark, baffled, struggled to break the handle.

-Your art will damn us all to hell, spoke the professor through the glass. She sounded a few grunts and groans before turning to the classroom.

-Those who love me, follow me!

The students madly splashed against the door, barricading the entrance. A chimera of heads and limbs gripped the handle with the strength possessed only by Hercules. After roughly a minute Mark's energy fell depraved of all might. His only rebuttal to the populace pressed against the door was the thought, 'What would Caesar have done?'
