

A Trip of Dying Embraces

“Aye, wassup young blood!” Fredo exclaimed as Quan made his way across the darkened basement. “You trynna hit this or not?” Fredo pulled the needle out of his arm as the rubber band tourniquet loosened. Fredo could feel the heroin flow through his veins and make its way up to his brain.

Quan hesitated as the thoughts of the video he just watched in class, ‘What happens to your brain on drugs’ repeated in his head. “Nah bruh, I’m cool.”

“You missing out on good shit, young blood.” Quan watched as Fredo’s eyes rolled back as the high took him to another level.

Quan had seen all the affects of probably every drug throughout his entire life. Surrounded by junkies, drug dealers, and skeezers, it was nothing new.

He walked passed Fredo, headed towards the bathroom. His eyes couldn’t help but notice the lack of good veins Fredo’s skin had. Fredo inserted the needle a little too deep this time, the blood surrounded the tip of what he liked to call his “doctor prescribed” because as soon as it entered his viens all his worries and pains immediately went away.

Quan couldn’t wait to get out of these Chicago streets. Nothing good was here, except for the Italian beef he could get every now and then from Portillos. He knew he wanted more from life than hustlin’ on these streets but little did he know his life was about to change faster than he expected it ever would.

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A junkie only cares about himself. They really aren’t different from anyone else though just a lil hiked up on life. They want the same thing as you and me; to be loved, to be rich, a burger from McDonalds, more junkies, they just happen to take the wrong turn while on this road of life. Fredo wasn’t always like that though. He had a good future, typical young black athlete on his way to college with a football scholarship but just like others he fucked it up. One night while at a function, Fredo and Quan were with the homies trynna scoop up some hoes. The darkened cellar smelt of sweat and Victoria Secret love spell (a hood girls fave), Quan lost Fredo in the hectic chaos of twerkin’.

“Aye bro, where Fredo at?” Quan asked his friend, Chance.

“He was in the back last time I saw him, with Kelon” Chance replied.

Fuck, why is he wit that nigga. Quan thought in his head making his way to the back. Kelon was one of the biggest drug dealers turned hike in Chicago. Quan opened the door and saw Fredo inserting the pink strip into his mouth. From then on, things changed.

He lost everything and stayed on the streets. Its crazy how one night can change everything and anything.

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Quan watched as Fredo took his trip. He never knew how Fredo would act. Sometimes he was overly enthusiastic or he was just depressed to a whole new level reminiscing of what could've been.

"Damn bruh, I could've had it all...we could've had it all" said Fredo, "I mean you still have a chance, you type smart."

"I know right." Quan nonchalantly responded, this wasn't the first time they had this conversation. Quan began to break down the swisher. He didn't do hardcore drugs but there was nothing wrong with a little Mary-Jane every now and then. Fredo couldn't be the only one chatting. He lit the tip and inhaled. *Ahhh*. It only took a few minutes for him to catch his high. His eyes began to lower and he turned on the television. The 5 o'clock news was about to broadcast.

"We have a breaking news report! The world as we know it is about to end! Several bombs will be thrown from aircrafts and everything will be destroyed. Why? It's simply time for the end," reported the anchor. "Say your goodbyes and enjoy your last few hours."

"What the fuck! this has to be some type of fucking joke" stated Quan. " This is the only fucking warning we get. Like 'Ya'll niggas bout to die, enjoy'."

"Least they told us at all, they could've just killed us." replied Fredo.

"Bro, I haven't even gotten to do everything I wanted to do!" said Quan.

"Ever wanted to do heroin?" asked Fredo.

"No, not really."

"Well, I kinda put some in ya weed. I thought you needed to relax a little."

"I relax enough when I'm high! You trynna make me go into a cardiac arrest or some shit!" said Quan.

"Doesn't matter now, we finna die any way." Fredo replied and shrugged his shoulders.

Quan wasn't even mad about the heroin that he just lowkey did but the simple fact that he had some much to do in the last few hours of his existence. He wanted a Picasso, he had caviar and silk dreams, but most importantly he wanted to fall in love.

He walked outside looking at the seemingly calm chaos being produced by the people within his neighborhood. There were only a few people freaking out but he assumed everyone else was just accepting the fact they were about to die and that it was what it was. He looked around and spotted a beautiful older women who looked about twenty-five years old.

“Excuse me, but do you think you would mind falling in love with me?”

The women said nothing at first and looked around not knowing if this young man, dressed in baggy dark denim jeans and a slim fitted white tee, was even talking to her. There were a few other people waiting with her at the bus stop: an elderly woman with prayer packets she was trying to hand out, a little kid wearing a batman backpack with his mother who was reading him a book, a teenage gang banger, and Fredo. Quan didn't even know how Fredo got there, Fredo probably didn't even know how he got there. They were all, well most of them, were waiting for the bus. The bus was already 15 minutes late and was probably never coming due to the current circumstances. She would normally be upset and pacing back and forth with thoughts of “Why me?!” but today was different. Today the world was ending.

“I don't know you.” she replied.

“You could get to know me.” said Quan. “We have an endless amount of time, what would you like to know?”

“You have two hours!” Fredo panically chimed in. They both ignored him.

“How about you start with your name?” she replied.

“Saquan, but everyone calls me Quan.” Quan responded. Quan stuck out his hand as in a formal greeting and waited for her to take it in hers. She looked at it and scuffed up her eyebrows and forehead. His fingernails were a bit dirty and his hand was twitching but that was only because of the lack of sober veins roaming through his body. She couldn't tell he was off something though, he was pretty collective for his first trip.

Hesitant, she took Quan's hand in hers.

“Lauren,” she said. “Nice to meet you Quan.”

Quan felt something when her palm brushed against his. He didn't know what it was but it felt good, like he was exactly where he was supposed to be. He rose her hand close to his mouth, and kissed it as gently as he could. So gently that Lauren didn't even feel that he did it, but she knew he did. Is that what love is supposed to be, not feeling but knowing?

BOOM! Bombs began to drop. Lauren gripped Quan's hand and he pulled her in closer as they both watched the planes fly above their heads. Still gentle with his embrace, Lauren felt safe.

“Are you always so gentle?” she asked.

“No, not really but with all the chaos, a little gentle is needed. And I just figured this will make you fall in love with me.” Quan replied with a smirk.

She laughed and backed away from him.

“So, why me? Why do you want to fall in love with me or at all?”

“I never have.” Quan replied simply.

“Wow, really? Not even teenage puppy love?” she asked.

“Nope.” Quan said. “I’ve told some girls I loved them but never meant it. Anything to put a smile on their face or to get inside them. You know how that goes. I just want something real now.”

“You think this is a good time, huh?” Lauren said sarcastically as the sound of another bomb dropping made her cringe.

They both smirked at the thought. Buildings were caving in all around them, dust was gusting throughout the streets. Things were escalating quickly. The mother embraced her son, putting her arm around him and covering his ears. Glass shattered. The planes were coming closer to where they were.

“Have you ever been in love?” Quan asked.

“Yeah, once. We almost got married.” Lauren replied.

“What happened?”

“Life happened. Sometimes things just aren’t meant to be. I’m not even sure if it was real. I would constantly question myself. Some days I felt like I couldn’t live without him but others I was like why do I even bother.” Lauren responded while blankly staring as if she was in deep thought. “Are you supposed to be with the person you love or the person that loves you?”

Quan never thought of love in that manner. He hesitated before replying. Just as he was about to say something, they noticed the plane was a block away. Lauren fell back into Quan’s arms as he pulled her in as tight as he could.

They both shared the same thoughts of being with each other for the rest of their lives. To wake up next to each other, his hand in hers and her hand in his. For his lips to be the one that pressed gently against her neck every morning. He imagined going everywhere with her; movies, dinner, the park, family reunions, spending their Thursday nights cuddled up watching Scandal. Anything to make her happy, and anything to make him happy. As long as they could see each other every day. In that moment, they both wanted so badly for the world not to end. They wondered if this was what love was, was that all it took to fall in love, were they really in love with each other?

They just stood there in each others arms and waited for the inevitable.

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Fredo threw water on Quans face. “You’ve been gone bruh! You okay?” he asked.

“What?” Quan asked. “Where’s Lauren?”

“Who the fuck is Lauren?” Fredo replied. “That stripper from Pink Monkey?!”

“No, did the world end?”

“Does it look like the fucking world ended?” Fredo responded sarcastically. “That shit took you on a crazy trip huh, bruh?”

“Bro, I thought the world was ending. Damn.” Quan responded relieved but sad because he wanted it to be real. To feel love for the first time is what he yearned for. He wanted to see Lauren again.

“You enjoyed it?” Fredo asked enthusiastically. “You can always take another trip.”

Quan wanted to see Lauren again. Reluctantly, he hit the blunt once again and waited for her embrace.