Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

If This Is How Love Feels: Part 1

Christopher · Monday, October 25th, 2021

Read the Intro to the series.

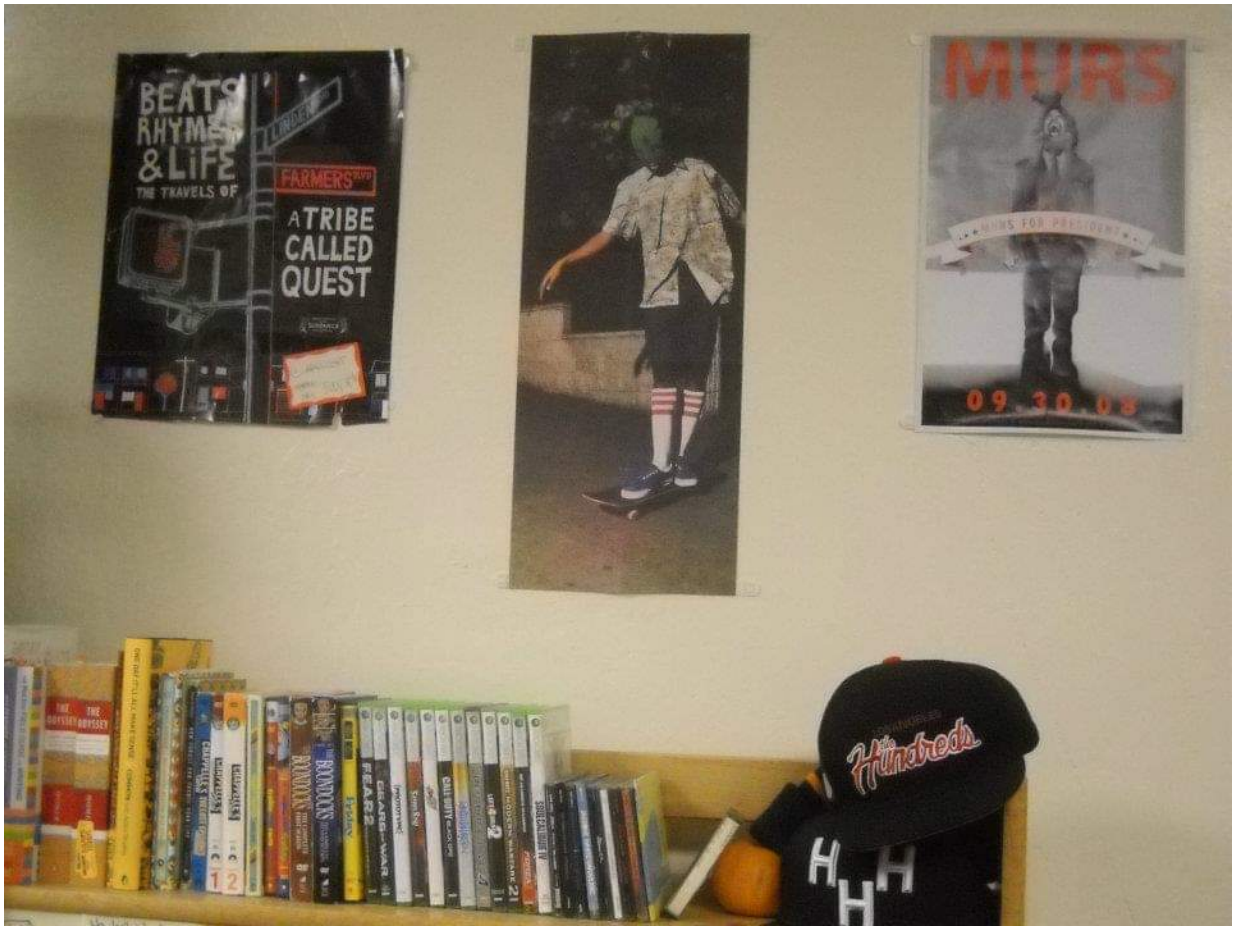
***

"I thought you were dead," is the first thing one of my college roommates, Philip, nonchalantly says to me after I finish putting all my stuff from my parents' car on my side of the room.
"Uh…why you thought I was dead?"
"I added you on Facebook a month ago and you didn't reply. I also sent an email, still didn't reply. Plus, you didn't show up on the first move-in day. So, my first thought, he's dead."

That is the most ridiculous logic I have ever heard. I mean, I'm pretty sure the average person would be wondering why a complete stranger eight hours away from Stockton, California would be adding them on Facebook. I didn't know how to respond to that, so I decided to just stay silent and continue to unpack my belongings.

Our dorm is in Area 1, Cypress Hall, room 206 on the east side of main campus. Area 1 consists of four halls that are notoriously known for having wild parties and freshmen who just don't give a fuck. Just my luck, Cypress Hall is the worst out of the four dorms because (according to a couple of high school friends that had been attending CSUMB for a year already) the RAs didn't care what residents were doing as long as nobody died. Every room on the second floor is a triple – meaning there's a total of three people per dorm. Philip had already set up his corner, and it looked as if our other roommate had already come in and set up his.

"Mmm……" It sounds as if someone is mumbling from inside the room.
"Wait…What the hell was that?" I say with a weird Scooby Doo like expression on my face.
"Oh it's Derek. Our third roommate," Philip says.



I internally start freaking out. I heard of crazy roommates, but does this mothafucka have an imaginary friend or something? I knew it was a bad idea to watch that scary movie, "The Roommate" before I came out here. It's always a ghost with a simple ass name too, like Billy, Bob, Joe and now, Derek. Who in the flying 187 fuck is Derek?

"…Derek?" I say while looking around the room as if there's a booby trap hidden somewhere. For all I know, Phillip could be batshit crazy. My older sister, Jasmine, had a crazy roommate while attending California State University, Northridge. Her roommate attacked her with a knife over some jealousy shit.

"Yeah…Derek. He's in his bed." Ok now I'm losing it. This makes no sense. I see no one in this bed. Suddenly, I hear a yawn and see Derek's white arm appear from under his thick green and blue cover; he proceeds to remove the pillow that is covering his head.

"…Oh…Um…Hey…I'm Derek," he says while getting out of his bed, rubbing his eyes.
"Holy shit dude, I didn't see you in your bed. I was kinda freaking out!"

We all start laughing.

"It's all good man. Sorry for not being up and ready before you got here."

Phillip proceeds to prop our dorm room door open so we can meet everyone that is moving in on our floor. Next door across the way we see a couple of girls moving into room 207.

"Hello!" Philip says as he waves at the girls.
One of the girls responds, "Hello! How are you doing?"

“I’m doing good! My name is Philip, by the way.”
“Nice to meet you! My name is Alina. It looks like we’re neighbors for the year!”

Derek then introduces himself to Alina as well. Honestly, I am a little reluctant to introduce myself. There have been too many times where I would attempt to introduce myself to someone and I would end up doing some random action that would make me look weird and sloppy. For example, back in high school, there was a girl named Leah. We met by participating in the school play production of *Copacabana*. I never really talked to her, we just had a couple scenes together. She was a tall, Black and Asian girl, with long dark hair. She could sing, she could dance, she was funny, and everyone enjoyed her company. I thought I wasn’t good enough to be in her presence. One day, during the play’s tech week, I was sitting by myself in the rehearsal space listening to music as she randomly approached me.

“Hey…hey, Chris.” She said, as she waved her hand to get my attention.
“…Hm?” I took off my headphones and looked up.
“Oh…hey, Leah!” As I said that, I don’t know what happened, but I started to drool! Saliva just came out of my mouth and onto my clothes.
“Uh…I just wanted to know if you wanted some food…I’m collecting money and DJ is driving to Taco Bell.” She said with a disgusted look on her face.
“Oh…uh…I’m good. No, thank you.” I wiped my face as Leah walked away.

So, with experiences like that in mind, I hoped Alina wouldn’t approach me or extend her arm for a handshake, or worse, a hug. It would be a tragedy to accidentally drool on her hand or on the expensive white and green varsity jacket she was wearing. Needless to say, I kept my distance by staying on my side of the room while she was across the hall.

I yell, “Hello! My…mnn…mun…blah. My name is Chris.” Once again, I fucked up, but this time through a tongue twister! How the fuck did I get a tongue twister on such a commonly used phrase? “My Name Is _____.” That’s literally all it takes, My. Name. Is. _____. How the hell can Slim Shady say it so clear, while rapping about stapling a guy’s ballsack to a stack of paper, but I fucking can’t?

“Oh…hey, Chris. Nice to meet you, too! And I’ll catch you boys later, I gotta head out and take care of some stuff. Y’all have a great day! Bye!” Alina locks her door and leaves the building.
“Alright y’all I’m about to head out, too, and meet some people.” Derek says.
“Yeah, me too. I’m going to visit an old friend.” Philip replies.
“Oh, ok fasho. I’ll see y’all when y’all get back.”

Later that night, I get on Oovoo with some old friends and begin chatting with another friend on AIM. I am too scared to socialize because it’s the first time I’ve been on my own. I have no idea what to do, so I decide to stay inside. I put on a front to my friends saying that I’ve had a blast my first day. I even make a post on Facebook saying that everyone needs to go to college “It’s soooo fun!” When truthfully, my first impression of college was that it was a very strange place where almost anything goes. Outside my window, I can hear some really loud, obnoxious music I have never heard before. It sounds like some weird electronica or house music. I also hear a bunch of people screaming and yelling. Is the apocalypse coming? I look out the window, but can’t see anything; it’s too dark outside. I turn around and a girl has randomly walked into my dorm. She didn’t knock or anything, just walked right on in; she looks like a deer in headlights. We make eye contact, and before I ask her what she is doing, she runs out. I run to the door and made sure it’s

locked. A few minutes later, Derek comes through the door wearing a sombrero.

“Where did you get that from?”
“Uhh…I…I don’t even know dude. I’ve been high this entire day…you look stressed out already.” Derek says as he takes the sombrero off his head. He grabs his car keys off his desk and asks, “Hey you hungry dude? Me and some friends are about to get something to eat.”
“Uh…hm…”
“C’mon it’s gonna be chill. Plus, you can meet some new people. Instead of being here all night.”

Normally, I would decline, but he’s right. I can’t hide in my own shadow for long.

“Um…yeah, sure. I’m down.”
“Okay forsure. Follow me to my car, Betsy 2.0.”
“Betsy 2.0?”

Betsy 2.0 is an old 1995 red Honda Civic with paint chipping off of it. The car is dusty and has bird shit all over it. Also, the back door on the passenger side of the car is busted, so me and two of

Derek's friends, Bree and Alexandra, had to get in from the driver's side while his other friend August got the front seat. Not to mention, the inside of the car was a fucking mess. Believe it or not, according to Derek, "Betsy 2.0" is an upgrade from the original Besty. God rest her soul.

"Alright, is everyone good?" Derek asks as he turns his engine on.
"Yeah, I'm fine." Bree replies.

It's times like these I always feel like the universe is testing my patience. I give, but I won't get back. I'm always in some cruel, sick and twisted lose-lose situation. Not only did I get the "bitch seat," sitting in between the girls in the backseat, for some reason my stomach starts acting up and I need to fart. Now, we all know how this can play out. It can be a "silent, but deadly" or it can be "loud and not so deadly." At the same time as this dilemma, everyone is panicking because Derek is lost and doesn't know where the fuck we goin' on the highway. There's no street lights and the trees are swaying back and forth because of the heavy wind. Come with us, he said. It'll be fun, he said. You would get to meet new people – I DON'T EVEN LIKE PEOPLE.

"Yo, Where are we? And why is it so dark?" August asks.
"This area look this like it's straight out of the twilight zone." As soon as I say that, we lose the radio signal and we ride to the sound of static.
"Ahh shit…this is how it always starts." Bree comments.
Derek changes the station, and some creepy sounding classical music starts to play.
"Welp, it was nice knowing y'all for a couple hours." Alexandria sarcastically remarks.

Everyone starts to laugh uncontrollably. In the midst of our laughing I notice that I accidentally let my fart out. I couldn't hear if it was a "loud and not so deadly" or if it was a "silent but deadly." I start sweating bullets, praying to Jesus and all his disciples that no one will smell anything foul. The thing about a "silent but deadly" is it can be a sneak attack. A few minutes after the action of releasing takes place, anyone within a 40-50 inch radius can smell the deadly invisible flumes.

"Hey, I see some light!" August says with excitement.

The light that randomly appeared on the right side of the highway is coming from the Del Monte mall. We pull up to the parking lot and decide to get Chipotle. While inside, August just bombards me with a bunch of random questions.

"So, Chris, where you from?"
"Oh…I'm from LA. Where you from?"
"Oh ok, cool, man. I'm from Orange County in Anaheim. You got any hobbies or interests?"
"Oh that's dope. I have some friends that's not too far from Anaheim, and I like to write poetry and make music with some friends back home."
"Oh cool! You heard of Atmosphere?"
"Atmosphere is fucking awesome, dude." Derek interrupts.
"Yeah, I think Atmosphere is dope." I say, replying to August's question.
August, Derek and I continue to bond over our love for the hip hop group, while the girls Alexandra and Bree are getting to know each other.

We all finish our food and leave Chipotle to get back on the creepy highway. Somehow, we manage to get home with little to no heart attacks. The next evening I'm at home by myself, and Derek and Philip are gone once again. I'm getting ready for the first day of school putting paper in my binders and pens in my backpack. Anxiety is creeping in my head, but I manage to keep myself

calm listening to the melodic sounds of Neo-Soul, R&B group, KING and their song “Hey.” Selecting what clothes I want to wear for my first day of classes, I hear a knock at the door. I stop what I’m doing, turn the music down to open the door, and I see Alina.

This entry was posted on Monday, October 25th, 2021 at 6:13 am and is filed under Prose
You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.