

At the bank I wish I was a little more social like a normal person.

Not just for me. I feel bad for the teller. She's already used up her small talk and I didn't have any to begin with so now we're sort of ignoring each other amongst the hanging rugs and plaques, the half alive plants and the silent but aptly placed HDTV behind her. It's situated right between two black orbs that are clearly cameras, the joke being that you naturally look up at the tv and allow them to get a nice clean shot of your pretty face in case you decide to act like an animal.

"You know, when I was a kid, my mother wouldn't let me play with these." I say, more for myself than for her. I'm clasping the pen attached to the counter top, moving it back and forth making literal waves out of the tiny silver balls.

"It's kind of childish, yeah, but we all want to do things we're not supposed to. Until we're allowed to and then it's like, who cares, am I right?"

I'm still sort of waving it once in awhile while I talk. I get a legitimate smile from her and I can see that she's someones wife by her look and her ring. A little older, a little beyond the subject matter, she's probably had this talk with twelve year olds.

I realize that I betray something innate about my personality by saying what I have and then continuing to make waves on the marble countertop. The feeling of being caught, my special common secret, fades away and is replaced by apathy on fire.

I'm the only person walking down a highway with no cars.

"Did you need anything else, sir?" she asks me, politely.

I realize that the vast part of this conversation has taken place in my head, i'm already forgotten as anything but an obstacle as soon as the words have hit the air.

I don't want to do my part and be courteous, but I do, because i'm not an animal.

"No, thank you. This is good. Have a nice weekend."

"That'll be 8.43."

I reach out to accept the customers money and even though my hand is right there, he drops it on the counter.

He's not even looking at what he's doing, fiddling with the candy bars near the cash register that he has no intention of buying.

My hand hangs out in front of me a little longer than I mean it to, I'm looking at him a little harder than I should but he's completely absorbed in his own world. I have time to assess him. He's a tall pale man with a handlebar mustache and a dirty camouflage jacket overall deal that I can smell from across the counter.

He's a good salt of the earth sort of man.

Fuck this guy.

I can see his clothes, worn on the joints and bags under his eyes, just the same way I saw him toss his DVD onto the counter and immediately move on, assured that I, an esteemed TradeBoss employee, would no doubt fetch his entertainment posthaste.

I am not a person, I am a green shirt and a half hearted greeting.

I'm not the salt of the earth, I work in an air-conditioned nightmare.

He knows I'm not someone who could make it in the woods. I'm someone who has to bow and scrape if the apocalypse happens and I'm left to fend for myself.

Same as the teenaged kids with the tight clothes who were short five cents on their sodas.

Same as the lady wheeling around her three kids, same as the guy who writes my checks. All of them toss their money onto the counter like my giant hand is a dirty catchers mitt left in the rain, my hand not the hand of someone attached to anything of any merit.

My brain an answering machine explaining the store policy.

He's still not even looking at me.

I wonder if he knows that I thought about hurting him for being that way, looking at the scissors for just a second before realizing it. I wish I could at least make myself just say, "Hey, man. My hand is right there, don't be rude."

He looks around briskly as if coming back to earth and then up at me, realizing that i've been looking at him.

"...Do you know about the TradeBoss guarantee on movies?" I say. I feel my self respect diminish, physically, like a meter in a video game.

"Yeah, but tell me again anyway, bubba."

It's not my name, my name tag says my name but be honest.

Even you don't care about that.

A girl might not ever respond to your texts.

A person might not acknowledge that you have the right of way when you go to cross a street at night with your daughter in your arms.

Someone may lie to you and swear that you that they need money for medicine, even as they reek of booze.

Life is just like this, it's so full of moments that make you wonder why you have to be civil and they all get to slowly and steadily make you used to living with animals.

The secret is that I am not an animal.

I'm only visiting the zoo.

I do this every once and awhile.

The next day at the bank the chain link pen has been removed. The bank teller won't make eye contact with me. She looks into my eyes when she speaks, she sounds almost the same as yesterday but she isn't connecting to anything in me.

Parrots aren't actually speaking to you either, they just remember repetitive things so they can do their tricks.

I decide to go back onto my medicine tomorrow morning.