

The Man Who Wears All Denim And No Shoes In a Public Library

The Man Who Wears All Denim And No Shoes In a Public Library grasps at the memories hidden away in his mind, the ones from his youth that he won't remember for much longer. He hadn't always been so old, he hadn't always had such a strange disheveled look about him, with his rough and patchy white head of hair, accompanied by a stubble that he hadn't made an attempt at grooming in over a fortnight. He pulls at the memories, desperate for some consolation, finding that nothing comforting resides in those old things. Instead what he finds are painful reminders of his poor youthful choices, ones that asseverate the divide between himself, and his youth.

The Man Who Wears All Denim and No Shoes In a Public Library has never responded well to authority. He had been a rebellious nonconformist, all the while latching on to his working class identity, cherishing the values that he had been taught as a child. When he was young he never had issues with the women, had them at his choosing. Each time he was with a woman, however, he would hear his father's voice, echoing in his mind. The drunken yells of a man who raised his children through lessons of fear, the yells being thrown at his wife, an anguished woman who would meet her maker at the bottom of a bottle of sleeping pills. It was this, to The Man in Denim at least, that affirmed he would be better off alone.

The Man was never able to hold down a steady job, despite his efforts. He floated from one place to the next, often on a whim, constantly in and out of unemployment and poverty. Unsurprisingly though, he had always had large aspirations, as most painfully poor, youthful, and hopeless, men do. He dreamed of being a writer, even now, with more yesterdays than tomorrows, he yearns for his big break.

He's always written science fiction, with no exception, maybe it had been a product of his time, maybe it was a form of escaping his self-forged reality, nonetheless, it is all he has left.

His novels are derivative, or so he has been told in the countless rejection emails he's received from a slew of publishers, editors, and literary agents. They weren't wrong at all, of course, they often aren't, much to his dismay.

Understand that The Man Who Wears All Denim And No Shoes In a Public Library had once fallen in love. Despite his vow to a life in his lonesome.

She had a curly black pixie cut, one that oftentimes made her appear more similar to a man rather than a woman, a trait that also could have been blamed on her lack of a chest. She was stick thin, sometimes concerningly so, and would be seen in only two outfits, a light blue dress accompanied by a pair of workmens boots, or a pair of worn flared jeans and a camisole. If The Man Who Wears All Denim And No Shoes In a Public Library recalls correctly, she smelled of honeydew, and tasted of mango each time they kissed, a product of her flavoured bright orange lipstick she often sported, no matter the occasion. She had The Man in over his head, her touch staining his skin, and her laughter playing on repeat in his mind.

They had been in love a long time ago, when they were still young and beautiful. She had been optimistic and naive, and he, a constant wreck of concealed worry and stifled anger. Together. they had planned a life, one where they would travel up and down California's coast, children in tow, seeing sights, and feeling all the freedoms the world had to offer. However, during one of their nights together, The Man began to remember. He remembered his mother in the corners of their cerise carpeted living room when he was a child, curled into a fetal position, with bruises trailing down her long and prominent spine. He remembered how he had learned in

those years to become a shadow, visible but insignificant. He remembered his swollen and blistered hands, tender from being briefly dipped into pots of boiling water as punishment. It was when The Man began to remember, he began to notice. He began to notice his own fits of anger, his urges to hit and to throw and to destruct. Despite his carefully crafted facade, he began to notice his father's son. No longer in his memories of the past did he see his mother's face, he saw his lovers, bruised from the fists of not his father but of him. He recalled his vow he had made, and understood its meaning. A man of his kind didn't deserve a woman of hers. So he left. In the night, a shadow hidden in the shadows, never hearing from her again.

So we return to the emails, thousands of them piled up, criticizing his repetitiveness. The repetitiveness they speak of is one of a woman, in each and every one of his stories, his beautifully sculpted plots that he cherishes more than a mother her child, is a woman. One that the protagonist, be it human, alien, robot, or cyborg combination, stumbles upon early in his journey. Oftentimes she's a love interest or something of the sort, sometimes she's a character of seemingly little significance, or sometimes she's just a face in the crowd the protagonist describes with a little more detail than the others. Nonetheless, in the last chapters, she always emerges, a call to the past before the protagonist lost his path and was forced to find it again, each time with a tinge of regret.

So The Man wrote, and he wrote, unable to share his creations with the world, but still being able to find solace in them. Sometimes, when he's been writing, he rereads what he's written, and finds traces of his life, his regrets and his shames, hidden in his words. And in these moments, he is forced to reconcile with himself, ashamed that his life has been a waste.

The Man Who Wears All Denim And No Shoes In a Public Library looks around him. His mind getting the best of him, the memories he has been trying to grasp swallowing his thoughts whole in their pangs of conscience, he tries to withdraw. Withdraw from the world in his head and observe the world around him, one that has for so long felt foreign.

The area of the nonfiction section of the Library which he writes in is divided into small wooden cubicles, each person has their own personal space. Some of them have computers at them that the Library has provided, however, The Man prefers to write with his own. (It is a small laptop that has a purple case and dark blue keyboard that he had bought off craigslist circa. 2015). The area is mostly empty, which is reasonable, considering it is about 1:45 on a summer Monday. Despite this, he takes note of a family sitting 2 cubicles ahead of him, each of them claiming their own computers. Two young boys, about 12 and 7, are playing games, clicking obnoxiously at the keyboard and the mouse, mumbling insults to each other under their breath, so their mother wouldn't hear them. The mother is at computer herself, every once and a while looking up from her work to stare in adoration at her children, love radiating off of her gradually, the kind of love they won't understand until they are much older, the kind of love that, even in his advanced age, The Man in Denim himself does not understand. Together the three of them create a whole, each a specific piece of the puzzle that fits so seamlessly together. The Man wonders what that feels like.

Along with the family, around him sit a handful of university students, staring attentively at their computers, or staring harshly at their cell phones. Each of them seem not to notice The Man and his strange appearance, nor would they have recognized him when he was their age.

He can't help but notice the striking differences between himself and the world around him, a sort of divide and separation that formed long ago but only truly came into effect when his youth left him.

He wonders to himself what will happen to those around him when they leave the library. When they go home, far from him and his lonely stories, will there be dinner waiting for them? A husband? A wife? Will there be a life outside of these walls that they take for granted, up until their last years, when they look back and recount on these more complicated good old days?

The Man Who Wears All Denim And No Shoes In a Public Library doesn't know. What he does know is that he will walk, barefoot, the hot cement pressing up against his feet, to an empty home. He will walk up to an almost empty fridge, and grab his bottle of skim milk, and pour it over a singular bowl of cornflakes. Then he will walk past an empty room containing an empty bed. A bed that is always empty, and always made perfectly. A bed that looks as though it is waiting for a visitor. A bed that so blatantly accentuates his loneliness that it pains him too much to sleep in it, so instead he opts for his lounge. The lounge is the only piece of furniture in his living room, and he's had it for 50 odd years.

So he dreads it. He dreads his home, his room, and his furniture. He dreads the mornings when he will awake. He dreads the nights when he'll sleep, knowing that he'll dream of his youth, and awake in the winter of his life. He'll walk through his days aware, that he has wasted what he should have been grateful for, his youth, all the whilst destining himself for a dotage of despondency and regret.

In life, as well in fiction, The Man Who Wears All Denim And No Shoes In a Public Library knows that there must always be a villain. In his case, he, deep down, as well as right on

the surface, knows who it is. Himself. It is him, the version of himself that had flourished in his youth, that made the decisions that have led to him becoming an odd and sorrowful old man. His villain has left him nothing to live on, taken away everything that he could have had, and ignored every opportunity he should have taken. At the end of the day, as well as at the end of his life, he knows that his fear, his cowardice, his inability to move past his traumas, are what has left him the man he is now. The kind of unkempt abnormal man that the world at large takes pity on, all the while still crossing the street when he comes their way. It is him that has done it all, and he has done it to himself.

The Man Who Wears all Denim and No Shoes in a Public Library is a lonely man. His age baffles him, his isolation traps him, and his dreams, as well as his past, haunt him.

