

Pretty Perfect

Written by

J.E. Clarke

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Janetgoodman@yahoo.com  
917-328-5253

**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

The HUM of Friday night festivities. Dim lights illuminate tables populated by SINGLES dressed to meet-cute.

Speaking of cute: KIRK sits at a table with three MALE FRIENDS. Dark blond hair. Designer threads. GQ good looks.

Kirk leans towards his pals, mischief in bright blue eyes. Quips something (MOS). His buds fall all over themselves laughing. Must've been an awesome joke.

A female voice (SAMANTHA) interrupts.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)  
Mmmm. The jury's in, Girl. I'm staking that one as mine!

"Girl" - aka ALICE - responds in a world-weary tone.

ALICE (O.S.)  
"Mmmmm"? This isn't the cooking channel, Sam. You don't even know what "boyfriend" said just now.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)  
His posse's cracking up. That means he's got a sense of humor. Meaning-  
(makes a yummy sound)  
He's as tasty inside, as out!

ALICE (O.S.)  
Or, he surrounds himself with sycophants.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)  
Maybe. But I'm calling it. Stud muffin and me - tonight!

Across the room, Alice and Samantha nurse cocktails at a table. Unlike Kirk's entourage, the two don't quite match:

Alice sports perfect makeup, long hair - a vibe that screams "girl's night out."

Sam's short cut's more utilitarian. Though her workout tank and toned physique accent every curve.

The two check out Kirk's table. One of the men looks back. Alice and Sam hide behind menus - whisper back and forth.

SAMANTHA  
He's looking! Whatever you do - don't look back!

ALICE

That's why we're hiding behind  
cocktail menus. Duh. You know, if  
you're so set on Ken Doll there -

SAMANTHA

Don't judge on appearances! A sense  
of humor means he's smart!

ALICE

Another assumption. You can't KNOW.  
If you want the 411, march over  
there, Sister. Introduce yourself.  
Talk him up!

SAMANTHA

Not until Nina's here.

ALICE

Since when is Nina your babysitter,  
Ms. Take Charge?

SAMANTHA

She's bringing a friend, remember?

ALICE

And... your point?

SAMANTHA

Do the math. That makes FOUR of us.

She waves towards Kirk's table, counts.

SAMANTHA

One. Two. Three. Four. Each of you  
can wing-girl one. While I zero in  
for my "Ken Doll" kill!

The two peek over menus. Alice assesses Kirk's crew.

ALICE

I refuse to be your decoy. None of  
those Yahoos is my type.

SAMANTHA

Some "friend" you turned out to be.  
I'm not asking you to have sex.  
Just... flirt. Keep them occupied...  
just awhile.

Kirk stands, saunters towards the bar. Sam gets an admiring  
eyeful of his butt. Fails miserably to hide her smile.

Alice elbows Sam out of her fantasy.

ALICE  
And YOU bitch about being  
objectified!

SAMANTHA  
I appreciate his gym results. It's a  
compliment, is that so wrong?

Above their heads, someone clears their throat -

NINA (O.S.)  
You guys plotting something I should  
know about?

Alice and Sam JUMP! They swivel towards NINA: cute prep-girl  
petite. Nina smirks at their guilty looks.

NINA  
Lemme guess. You scarfed the  
appetizers, didn't wait for me?

Alice eye rolls towards Kirk's table.

ALICE  
Define "appetizer". Metaphorically...

Sam kicks Alice under the table. Pushing out a chair for  
Nina, she forces a smile.

SAMANTHA  
We're just whiling away the time,  
taking in the... fantastic view.  
(beat)  
What's with the solo act? Weren't you  
bringing someone from work?

NINA  
Yeah. She's at the bar.

MARLA approaches, drinks in hand. A blend of Sam and Alice,  
Marla's long hair frames flawless makeup. The muscles in her  
sleeveless dress pop. She's beautiful - and TRANS.

Marla hands Nina a glass. To Sam and Alice, she flashes a  
"glad to meet you smile".

MARLA  
The bar sends its best. Hi, I'm  
Marla! And you are?

NINA  
That's Alice, and over there's -

Alice waves. Samantha takes in Marla's appearance. Frowns.

Marla and Nina sit, making Sam's planned girl quartet complete. Yet - suddenly - Sam's in a sour mood.

Nina grabs a menu.

NINA

What's the plan, fam? I vote French Fries. I'm starving. Gimme carbs - quick!

A WAITRESS drifts over. Nina points to the menu. The woman jots it down. Turns to Sam, who waves her off.

SAMANTHA

No thanks. I'm... not hungry now.

Alice shoots Sam a "what's up" look. Explains to the others:

ALICE

Sam's busy on the hunt. Right before you came in, she zeroed in on Hunk of the Night -

Heading back to HIS table, an oblivious Kirk breezes by. Alice hides behind a menu, points him out.

ALICE

That's the guy. Here's the tricky part: Sam wants US to act as bait!

SAMANTHA

Not ALL of us are qualified for that.

Marla freezes. She caught the drift. Awkward silence spreads across the table. The four exchange embarrassed looks. Who will break the moment first?

ALICE

Sooooo... you work with Nina, Marla?

Marla's eyes dart from Sam to Nina's cluelessness. Then finally land on Alice's artificially cheerful face.

MARLA

Um, yes. I transferred to her department five months ago.

SAMANTHA

(growls)

TRANSferred? That short a time? How cute.

(MORE)

SAMANTHA (cont'd)

But how do you know it's right for you? Maybe it's just a phase you're trying out?

Nina chokes on her drink. Did she hear that right? Marla looks mortified.

MARLA

(soft)

For me, it's the right choice. That's my life.

SAMANTHA

Are you familiar with the phrase "imposter syndrome", Marla? Who did you REPLACE in that job you took?

NINA

(snaps)

Sam - don't!!

SAMANTHA

Don't what? We're talking work. Imposter syndrome is something some-  
(glares at Marla)  
PEOPLE feel when they take a role that deep down they know they don't deserve. Or fit.

Marla groans, stands up.

MARLA

I came here for onion rings and ambience. Not transphobia. That's it. I'm out.

Nina grabs Marla's arm.

NINA

Please stay. Sam's going to apologize.

SAMANTHA

(crosses her arms)

No. I'm not.

NINA

Oh, you absolutely, positively are!

Marla tries to pull loose. Nina holds on tight. Arm extended in a tug of war, she hisses across the table to Sam.

NINA

You pull a hamstring on leg day, or something?

SAMANTHA

What the hell do you mean by that?

NINA

*Something's* got your Sear's undies in a bunch. What the fuck's your problem?

SAMANTHA

Isn't it obvious? The problem's him!

Alice and Nina gasp at the misgendering.

MARLA

"Him"?

SAMANTHA

Well, your name is *clearly* not "Marla". So pardon me if a pronoun's all I've got!

Nina jumps up, stands indignantly besides her coworker.

Kirk and entourage glance their way. Alice grabs a menu, hides her face once more.

ALICE

Oh man. Here goes.

SAMANTHA

"Man"? At least YOU get the gender right!

NINA

I give you one last chance. Apologize.

SAMANTHA

If anyone should apologize, you first!

NINA

For what? Wanting a *quiet* night on the town, for once?

ALICE

Sam, Nina's right. What did *she* do?

Sam waves dismissively towards Marla.

SAMANTHA

She told us she was bringing a woman she knew from work. Friends don't false advertise like that.

Marla winces, turns to Nina.

MARLA

You call these people friends?

ALICE

Make that "person". Singular. I'm not cosigning this right wing BS.

Nina glares daggers towards Sam.

NINA

I had no idea you were such a bigot!

SAMANTHA

And I had no idea you were willing to sell out womanhood. For what?!? So you can virtue signal, pretend you're woke?

Sam's voice rises - attracts attention. Alice face-palms as Sam and Nina snarl it out.

NINA

What's "woke" about respecting people's choices and identity? I call that decency and respect.

SAMANTHA

There's nothing *decent* about asking people to lie about who you are. Unlike your co-splaying coworker, I'm an actual woman, thank you very much!

ALICE

Sam, you've had enough to drink.

Alice grabs Sam's cocktail. Samantha snatches it back. Blue liquid splashes in Alice's face.

SAMANTHA

You bet I've had "enough" - of men trying to take everything from women! Our bodies. Our wages. Now they want our identities, too? Anyone can see Marla's not one of us!

Gulping the rest of her cocktail, Sam slams the glass down, "cowboy style". Growls up at Marla:



SAMANTHA

Lemme guess: judging from those muscles, you transitioned so you could box in the women's league and beat up little girls?

MARLA

Fuck this toxicity. I'm going to the park to jog this shit off... alone!

Marla yanks free, storms for the exit. Sam yells after her:

SAMANTHA

My bad. You're training to be an Olympic sprinter? Cheating women runners, that's so much *more* fair!

Nina flips Sam the double bird. Gesturing to Alice "I'll call you", she trails after Marla.

NINA

I'm coming with you. And I apologize on Sam's behalf!

SAMANTHA

(yells)

Nina, you're leaving - so soon?

NINA

Not soon enough. And screw you!

With that, the two are gone.

All eyes on their table. Alice sinks in her chair.

The waitress returns with a plate of fries and a disapproving look. Alice groans, shoves the food away.

SAMANTHA

What now?

ALICE

That was really, really... gross.

Sam grabs a fry, chows down.

SAMANTHA

They taste good to me. Though Jalapeno ketchup would spice it up.

ALICE

You know what I mean. That performance!

SAMANTHA

(chews, snorts)

Yeah. Who does he think he's kidding?  
"Marla"? Scrape off that makeup, he  
looks more like "Monty" to me.

Alice pulls cash from her purse, throws it down.

ALICE

Nina and Marla had the right idea.

You stay. Do -

(looks towards Kirk's  
table)

Whatever YOU find "amusing". But I  
don't wanna help out anymore.

Sam shrugs, stands.

SAMANTHA

Don't leave yet. I'm heading to the -

(emphasizes the word)

little GIRL'S room. When I'm back,  
we'll talk this out.

Sam beelines for the bathroom. A mortified Alice slurps the  
last of her drink alone.

A tap on the shoulder makes her jump. Swinging around, Alice  
finds herself...

Face to face with Kirk!

She gasps: from surprise. And up close - Kirk's REALLY cute.  
Especially after he flashes that million watt smile.

KIRK

That looked - dramatic.

ALICE

No shit, Sherlock. To say the least.

Kirk reverse straddles a chair. He smiles again; displays  
perfect teeth. Alice can't help but melt. A tiny bit.

KIRK

My name's Kirk.

ALICE

I'm Alice.

KIRK

And your friend?

He pokes a thumb towards the ladies room.

ALICE  
That's Sam. But I wouldn't say "a  
friend". Anymore.

KIRK  
(chuckles)  
"Sam"? Real shocker.

He watches women walk in and out of the restroom, squints.

KIRK  
They don't mind him being there?

ALICE  
(beat)  
Him?

KIRK  
You know - Sam. Your not-anymore  
"friend."

Alice's eyes widen at the implication.

ALICE  
Wait. You think Sam is -

Kirk taps his temple.

KIRK  
Think? I know. A guy can tell.

He watches as Sam exits the bathroom. Sam spots Kirk - her  
face lights up. She veers left abruptly, towards the bar.

And hastily orders two drinks (MOS). As the BARTENDER pours,  
Sam glances over her shoulder - tries hard to look coy.

Kirk smirks. Watches. Waves. Eyes Sam's toned arms... nods.

KIRK  
(to Alice)  
I mean, who does he think he's  
kidding? No woman has those biceps.  
And that hair's a dead giveaway. The  
way he slammed down that glass  
before, you'd think this was a  
fucking saloon!

Sam collects her cocktails. Eyeing her crush, she approaches  
the table slowly. Invests flirtation in each step.

Kirk snorts at the performance.

KIRK

Look-it him go. Fakes like him are  
parodies of true womanhood.

He swivels to Alice, flashes bedroom eyes.

KIRK

I dig the real kind. Like you.

Alice glances between Kirk and a hopeful, approaching Sam.  
Despite herself, she chuckles in dark amusement.

ALICE

Sam, you may be a bitch. But Karma's  
way, way worse!

FINAL FADE OUT: