

## the siege of troy

Alitra fell to her feet, and he told her to rise.

Come, said Iman. Sit down.

This was not the first of her visits. She had often come in her youth, but this occasion was for a matter of much more consequence. Years had worn her lips with such idleness that all her features had seemed to have turned pale.

Iman, she pronounced, when will I find him?

Who?

The perfect man.

Child, he will find you, if he hasn't already.

How will I know?

Iman released a soft sigh, almost chuckle, and disposed the following contents,

He will come on a white horse.

Really?

No, laughed Iman. He had started his usual routine for a long discussion and sighed heavily.

By searching for love we first look for beauty, then continue to the beauty of the unseen. From there, we learn to love the expression only love can produce, that of thought.

This vast sea begins to unfold as we look for the infinite, simple, everlasting perception of beauty not existing in any being but beauty in its own flesh.

But the perfect man does something quite different - he begins with your soul.

He will first seduce you with his flowery language, his charm of poetry, his hidden compliments, his letters of beauty proclaiming your own beauty.

He will work backwards, which you cannot comprehend. For you have grown accustomed to society telling you that it is your own duty to mold a man into these qualities.

From there, he will show you the depth of your soul before he endeavors to forge a single kiss. He will show you your soul more deeply than any priest, beautician, or friend could ever fathom.

You will kiss him upon this discovery, and consummate words into a new meaning, a new beauty, a love beyond any limit of physical

attraction - because he started with the utmost beauty that no marriage ever conceives or comes to.

They dream this end as a fictitious ideal that one should strive through the terse years of time.

But the perfect man will work backwards.

And after seeing the beauty of the soul, the perfect man will profess his love for you. And he will beckon your own being to one in the same.

You will experience every joyful kiss possible. You will think love could not be extended any further - because every direction and every depth has already been explored.

Every kiss will devour these souls that have been sewn together, making the expression of desire a single action - like a word defining all of existence, which he will tell you is love.

But he will also show you the pleasure and beauty of your body. And he will cast away the concept that pleasure is sin.

But society has naturally stereotyped man

as the center of vice and faulting in virtue.

And you will be the most hedonistic of creatures concerning your beloved, being dominated by desire and enslaved with pleasure. Your only aim will be to obtain the greatest amount of pleasure possible, at the expense of your lover, and you will cripple him.

You will always seek to make him weaker and feebler. And these defects will be for the purpose of your own selfish pleasure.

If these qualities are not innate, however, you will cultivate them for the sole purpose of exacting as much pleasure as possible, for you will not deprive yourself of present pleasure or the expediency of the moment. You will soon be jealous and debar the perfect man from any activity other than your own enjoyment.

You will then deprive him of philosophy, so that he may not increase his wisdom, but so that you yourself may prevent him from possessing any knowledge that may produce contempt. And by his ignorance and dependence he will be your perfect man turned into stone.

And the source of this will have been not your own cunning but society's - for lack of

personal charm it created artificial cosmetics. For lack of the full understanding of love it created love in its own conception, that of vicious, selfish love. For lack of hope it said that the perfect man was nothing but a fairy tale.

And so the perfect man, because he began to work backwards, will become the imperfect man, by means of your own accord.

You will handicap him into society's conception of beauty and society's conception of love. And his virtue, which you thought to be his vice and claimed it as such, will turn into vice.

And so he will continue to work backwards, but instead of putting physical beauty as the last part of an edifice he had built with a delicate finishing touch, he will add the last bricks of his building with the corruption you had instilled upon him.

Instead of physical beauty being a small piece to complete in a symphony, it will be the last phase of decadence that will destroy him.

And the sacrosanct act of sex, which he had saved in his infinite wisdom, will no longer be a consummation of physical beauty, but a vice that will drain his existence and

meaning of love.

The perfect man will become nothing more than a reflection of your façade. And as a cripple he will be wanton with the last portion of a portrait never completed - he will become a lustful, lewd manifestation, a Caliban of the carnal. Because it was you yourself that exploited him for your own pleasure.

You say you're looking for the perfect man? He already found you, and you destroyed him.

**B**ut you will nevertheless shun him, believing him to be the most pathetic of all creatures.

You will not seek to cultivate him, as he cultivated the beauty of your soul.

You will not save him. Like flowers, your beauty will fade and your passion wither. And with each season you will grow farther apart.

And you will condemn him, and say that his self worth should not be measured or dependent upon another person - when such a truth you kept yourself before you corrupted the perfect man. That he was *your* existence.

That nothing, neither heaven or hell, could have separated yourselves, but you - of your own accord - left the perfect man after you destroyed his incredible insight of beauty and profound depth of the soul.

**A**nd Alitra wept. And Iman held his sorrow.