

## Identity description

*Observe someone you do not know. Try to describe hir as well as you can - not just what you see but what you imagine about them.*

[This task is too entertaining considering Ming and i do this every time we get together...]

First, my prejudices..

- I have spent too much time in identity politics and i often deconstruct people along the axis of sex/gender/race/class/sexuality almost immediately. I also recognize that my own identities affect how i view all of the people. In fact, its hard not to start this asgn without calling myself on my privileges and identities and how i attempt to perceive the world. My beliefs and worldview frame every statement i make about the people that i view.
- I am fascinated by how people perform their identity and personality and how one reads one another. As the reader in this asgn, i recognize that all of my stereotypes and beliefs are coming out and i decided to just run with them, even if it hurt to put it on paper. I am also really interested in power and agency along forms of oppression and tend to watch people for that...

The setting:

- Diesel Cafe in Davis Square, near Tufts University. A coffeeshop, hangout with pool tables, couches, boothes and tables, counters. Serves sandwichs and all things cafe. Has a front door like a garage door that opens up during the spring. Definitely stylized, sorta like industrial chic. Perfect place for regular Melissa Ferrick. Dyke hangout, place where folks study, hangout. Not smoky. Most patrons in their 20s, mostly women, a queer friendly place that sells dyke-icon music and where women feel comfortable kissing one another and draping arms, holding hands. More lesbians than your average Starbucks. Features various artists on the walls. Poetry board, call for artists. Bathrooms are non-gendered. High ceilings showing piping. Local posters (ie: for housing, cars, etc) on the walls, many are from Hannah's List. Hip place with many shi-shi patrons. Many people here in pairs, the rest singles (no groups).

"The Sleeping Guy."

- Man. Mid-30s. Blonde hair, reddish complexion - Euro, maybe Irish. Average height, average build, solid. Stubble on his face (blonde). Receding hair line. Blue beat-up jacket with fur trim, possibly from 70s, at least from Salvation Army. I'm guessing blue snow pants. All Navy. Solid, new boots, black, with a type of tread that is made for romping, probably steel-toed. Dressed appropriate for the weather. Gloves and hat sitting next to him. Coffee and some notebooks besides him.
- He's sound asleep although he's shifted position multiple times, alone, asleep on a couch in Diesel Cafe. His sleeping appearance is one of exhaustion, as though this is the first time he has relaxed in a long time.
- Is he homeless or a blue-collar worker? I'd bet on the latter. Why is he sleeping here? A rough day? (Mental impression changed when i saw the notebook. Initial questioning of homelessness disappeared.)
- Initial thought: construction worker, but what do the books mean? Who else walks around in this type of heavy clothing? Must work outside.. Or might he be an overtired student who has an interesting sense of fashion? The coffee implies that he must work (they don't sell cheap coffee at Diesel). Why did he choose to hang out

here? They tend not to bother their customers.. he must know this. He seems like he knows where he is, as though this is normal.

- If he's a student, is he a good student or a bad student? If he's a student, he is probably going back to school and working full time. Or am i reading his age wrong? We are right by Tufts. Remember, Matt doesn't look 22, nor does Wendy... Visual age has a peculiar relativity
- I don't think he has a lot of money, regardless, probably lives very frugally. He doesn't shop at the mall - definitely a part of the Salvation Army world.. but that's retro so what does it mean?
- He doesn't seem to be consciously performing, just living.. He seems like he has a rough life, like things aren't easy. I bet he works hard for his money and that he's a part of a union, trying to get better wages and real health care. Or maybe he works per hour and doesn't even get health care. I don't think he has family or kids.. or maybe he has kids but they aren't with him now. He seems like he's alone in the world.
- [He just woke up, grabbed his hat, coffee and walked out.]
- His hat was one of those two-ear flaps that tie types.. He was definitely wearing a snow jumpsuit with some of the seams falling apart. Definitely seems very rugged and tired.
- Seems like a loner.. probably likes beer every few days. Kinda in those Irish pubs type of way.. He likes sports, things like football, very American and with the buds kinda things. He likes beer, and to burp and put his hand down his pants, be typical American midwestern type, not really a city kind of guy, probably just lives here to make ends meet. He shovels his own driveway, if he has a driveway. He does everything for himself, except that he probably doesn't cook, probably buys food out, takes too much effort to cook. Bowling would be too active for him..
- He seems powerless within the system, run down and tired, not willing to fight. But he doesn't seem to complain about his position in life, just take it with flow, not a self-as-victim kind of guy.
- He's not deranged or stupid. In fact, i would guess he's pretty average. Not some sketchy guy on the T, just a regular joe with a hard life.

"The Star-gazing Lovers."

- Two women replaced the sleeping man on the same couch. Mid-30s, Professional. They have been hanging out for a while this evening, probably went out to dinner before coming to Diesel. Came in together, very together.
- One has long blonde hair, wears a shawl, skirt, high heels, white knee-highs, a lot of white clothing. Jewelry. Would be perceived as straight if not enraptured. She's definitely the femme.
- The other wearing silky blue shirt, khaki pants, black shoes. Short brown hair. Definitely the butch of the two, but not that masculine, not stone.. Just sorta knows how to operate in the world, confident, secure.
- In early stages of relationship - all touchy feely, still each other's super focus.. Not at the comfy take things for granted stage of the relationship, still have lots to share.
- They are cuddled up on the couch, sitting extremely close together, sometimes touching, legs in contact. Every now and then the blonde woman touches the other one. Body language makes it seem like they are the only ones in the world to one another. Eyes deadlocked in each other's.
- Using simple body language, gesturing to one another, joking, smiling, laughing. Putting on a show for all of the watching patrons, including us. Proud in the performance.
- The focus is not the drinks, although the butch is drinking coffee (with milk). Seem to be here to get to know one another better, to bond.
- Imagine what they are like in the relationship... The butch seems to look away more

often, the femme is always watching her. The butch watches women that walk by. The femme never breaks the gaze. The butch has the drink, something else to do other than focus on the femme. The butch also looks down at herself, fiddles with her pants, etc. I can imagine that this is their first night of lover-like behavior, definitely going to be kissing, but i don't know about sex. They are friends before this but this romantic stuff is new. Or they have had a brief encounter before.. The femme is much more certain about the sexual closeness than the butch.

- Both are highly educated, probably work in an office. The femme could be in management, something personable. The butch seems less involved in the person side of professionalism, no nonsense, focused on her work, definitely professional, maybe she's a lawyer. They have their lives together and it shows in their interaction, their mannerisms, their dress - dress of confidence..
- Maybe they work in the same company, a company at Kendell. Nobody in their office knows about them and the butch doesn't want people to know.. she is much more reserved. Or maybe the butch is less invested.
- They like good food, the good life, definitely HRC types.. This is because of the way they dress, their formality. Definitely educated, but probably not activists. They make quite a bit of money. They are involved in their own lives. The femme has cats (ok.. this is a lesbian stereotype, but also because cats take care of themselves, but the femme wants teh companionship while the butch doesn't need it). I think the butch only has brothers, definitely got to pal around - she has no problem with holding herself confidently. They like going to plays and theatre, being a part of the upper class. The femme one owns pearls and nice dresses. They are both college educated, and the butch probably has a higher degree. The butch doesn't seem to have emotions flowing out of her, but she seems focused and is probably the type of woman that needs something to focus on, and education seems like a good option. Education was obvious for both of them; their families expected it. But the butch had to work harder, family less prepared for it (shows on her teeth.. no braces).
- They both like to lie in bed and read, probably read more books than magazines. Although they are fascinated by each other, they seem to be really involved with thinking, analyzing. They are analyzing each other, mentally interacting. Don't seem to be TV types. They probably have books piled next to their bed. They were recently single, so they probably had free time to read. The femme could be a part of the Oprah book club, while the butch reads more non-fiction to go with her no-nonsense personality.
- [A friend walked up wearing jeans and a stylish jacket. The femme perks up to talk to her friend. The friend also appears to be a lesbian (note \*lesbian\* not dyke- true for all three women) with short hair and big hoop earrings. They said something about an Internet startup. Their friend looks a bit more artsy. They seem to have networking within the area. The friend is talking primarily to the butch but the femme and her know each other. She seems to have broke up a moment and the femme is talking to her but not as thrilled.]
- They may have a common circle of friends, but they probably have known each other, were friends before.. they are definitely comfortable talking to the friend, as though they know each other for a while.
- The femme has a nose ring!!!! Maybe she is more laid back than i thought.. less professional per say, more HR-y.
- The third woman has joined the two on teh chair and they are being loud and anxious. The femme and new girl are moving their hands vibrantly overtop the butch.. all on top of each other. Definitely part of the same circle, maybe they went to school together or work together. The femme has totally switched gears and is no longer deeply involved, extremely social.
- Maybe the femme is management in HR, definitely wears a suit to work, but often one that involves a skirt; her job probably requires that. She doesn't seem that she is

involved in the Internet startup, but more a big company, a conglomerate. They both seem to work in places with business hierarchies, places they can climb. They seem to be a part of the establishment and like it, based on their clothes and maneurisms. [A fourth friend petted the new friend on the head but walked away.]

- They seem to be interested in status, in performing who they are as crucial members. They are in Diesel to be seen, to see people, to be a couple in a lesbian space. They are happy people with nice apartments, kinda plush. The femme seems to perform more, less care-free, more worried about image. Their audience isn't just one another, its everyone in Diesel.
- They both seem very powerful, within their social community & in their professions. They have a great deal of control and self-awareness, a lot of agency to make change. Not the kind of folk who whine about homophobia. Probably not active feminists.
- Neither have been married, but i can imagine that the femme has dated men before.. her feminity rings Wellesley in stereotype... but this is not her first girlfriend.
- I identify closer with the butch, think we could probably get along.. her no-nonsenseness is appealing and she seems to be in better control of things. She seems to avoid the drama of the whole lesbian scene.