

Perri

written by

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EXT. COLLEGE DORM BUILDING, NIGHT.

A girl exits from a crowded party, pushing some guys out front out of the way. She's petite, blonde. She's wearing a dark crop top with dark shorts and Adidas superstars. Her makeup is heavy, distracting from her features. PERRI is 20 years old and obviously agitated. She continues to walk away from the party and the noises start to fade out.

PERRI  
(mockingly to herself)  
I'm not going to drink tonight and  
it'll still be fun!  
(normally)  
College parties aren't fun until  
you forget most of them.

Perri walks past a couple heavily making out against a wall and rolls her eyes in disgust.

SOUND of FOOTSTEPS RUNNING behind Perri but Perri doesn't turn around. A tall brunette girl, MANDY, comes into frame. Her outfit is more subdued than Perri's, as is her makeup. She looks effortless in the way that only money can make people look.

MANDY  
(out of breath)  
Where are you going Pers?

Perri stops walking and turns to her friend who puts her hands on her knees in exhaustion.

PERRI  
Home. I have work in the morning.

Perri is curt but not mean, she appreciates that Mandy ran after her.

MANDY  
It's not even one yet! And I  
thought you wanted to see Daniel  
again.

Mandy's voice is heavy with insinuation which elicits no response from Perri other than Perri playing nervously with her necklace which looks expensive compared to the rest of her outfit.

PERRI  
I saw him flirting with your friend  
with the bad highlights.

Mandy grimaces.

MANDY  
Oh. I'm sorry.

PERRI  
(still emotionless)  
It's fine.

MANDY  
I can't believe you're gonna let a  
stupid guy ruin your night.

Perri shrugs.

PERRI  
I'm not.

Perri starts walking again and the camera dollies with her, leaving Mandy in the background. We see Mandy shrug in the background and turn around and walk back to the party.

INT. PERRI'S HOUSE, EARLY MORNING.

An ALARM goes off (OVER)

FADE IN:

Bird POV of Perri reaching over to her phone to turn the alarm off. The bed is small with very colorful and childish sheets. It is Perri's childhood bedroom and it looks it. The carpet is stained and dirty and her belongs are scattered around the floor. Perri groans and sits up. She did not take off her makeup last night, so it's smeared into raccoon eyes, making her look garish. The camera follows Perri into the bathroom where she uses a makeup wipe to clean her face before splashing some water onto it.

Perri exits her bedroom into the hallway which is also rather messy. Perri is wearing jeans and a t-shirt, much more understated than her look last night. She walks down the stairs into the kitchen, and through her journey it is clear that the house is a cheap middle-class home.

A woman in her late 30s is standing in the kitchen. MONICA, Perri's mom, is perfectly made up and we see where Perri gets her excessive makeup/outfit proclivities from. Monica is in good shape, but has had extensive plastic surgery done, making her look older than she is. Her looks provide a stark contrast to the cheapness of the home.

Monica is drinking a mug of coffee and picking at half of a grapefruit with a spoon.

PERRI

What are you doing up?

MONICA

Your dad is taking me on a trip to the beach.

PERRI

Ew.

Perri goes to the cabinet and pulls down a box of fruity pebbles and a bowl. Monica turns to follow her.

MONICA

He wanted to invite you but, well, I figured that's how you would respond.

Perri walks to the fridge to grab the milk.

PERRI

What, he thinks attempt 300 at buying my affection is going to work?

MONICA

Perri...

Perri pours the cereal and milk into the bowl and grabs a spoon.

PERRI

Drop it mom. I'm not in the mood.

MONICA

(tired)

You never are.

Perri rolls her eyes and puts the milk back in the fridge as her mom talks. She grabs her bowl of cereal and walks out of the room, back towards the stairs.

EXT. MALL, AFTERNOON.

Perri's shift has ended and she looks exhausted. She's walking out of the mall with one of her coworkers, a tall surfer looking guy. BRENT has shaggy hair and wears cargo shorts with a muscle tank, but all that can't hide the fact that he's very attractive.

BRENT

What are you up to for the rest of the day?

Brent is flirting, but not very good at it.

PERRI  
Uh... sleep?

BRENT  
Late night last night?

PERRI  
Not really. Just a lot of super annoying customers. Did you see that woman who brought like, 12 kids in and just let them run around? It took me an hour to clean up the destruction they left behind. Rich people are the worst, I swear.

BRENT  
You're always so good with them, though.

Perri shoots Brent a censoring look.

BRENT (CONT'D)  
  
But it does sound like you really need a nap.

Pause. Brent is working up his courage while Perri pulls out her phone and starts scrolling through.

BRENT (CONT'D)  
Hey, uh, I was wondering if you, maybe, sometime

PERRI  
(not looking up)  
You need a ride again?

BRENT  
What? Oh... Sure, yeah.

PERRI  
Dope.

They arrive at Perri's car, an older model but still nice, and Perri opens it with the automatic key.

INT. PERRI'S ROOM, LATE AFTERNOON.

Mandy throws her backpack down and then throws herself dramatically onto Perri's bed where Perri's sleeping.

Mandy's dressed preppy, having just come from class. Perri groans and pushes Mandy off of her.

MANDY

Are you done being passive aggressive? I need someone to commiserate with.

Perri rolls out from under her blankets, wearing her tshirt from earlier and some running shorts and walks to her closet.

PERRI

I was done, but now I'm not so sure. Anyway, I thought we had more important things to do than commiserate.

Mandy puts her chin in her hands.

MANDY

I wish you would enroll in some classes with me Perri. That way we could commiserate about the same things.

Perri emerges from the closet wearing a loose pair of jeans.

PERRI

(hopefully)

I should have enough saved up in a year or two.

Mandy rolls off the bed and goes to stand in front of Perri.

MANDY

Orrrrrrr you could just take your dad's money and get the education you've always wanted.

Perri dodges Mandy and looks around the mess for her shoes.

PERRI

Mandy, you know I can't do that.

Mandy bends down to help Perri look.

MANDY

You're no fun.

Mandy finds a shoe and throws it at Perri.

INT. PERRI'S ROOM, NIGHT.

Perri enters by herself, kicking off her shoes. Before she's able to sit on the bed, her mom pokes her head around the door. Monica has taken her makeup off and is wearing a silk kimono over plaid pj pants.

MONICA  
Hi baby girl.

Perri doesn't turn around.

PERRI  
Hi mom.

Monica takes that as an invitation to come in. She leans against the door frame as Perri puts her hair up.

MONICA  
How was the movie?

PERRI  
So good. I can't believe Mandy gets to watch Wes Anderson films for class.

MONICA  
You could be watching those for class too.

Perri pauses.

PERRI  
Lay off it, mom.

Both of them look away, refusing to break the stalemate first. Then Perri sighs and turns toward her mom.

PERRI (CONT'D)  
How was the beach?

Monica reengages with the peace offering.

MONICA  
(pouting)  
We only got halfway there when Lisa called him about some "emergency."

PERRI  
(mockingly)  
Lisa? You mean dad's wife.

MONICA  
Don't be a bitch, Perri.

Monica stands up straight and wraps her arms around herself. Perri doesn't respond so Monica turns and starts to head out.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
Whatever you think he's done to you, he's still your dad, and he cares about you.

Monica leaves and Perri throws herself dramatically onto the bed.

EXT. MALL, AFTERNOON.

Perri rushes out of the front doors of the building. She's stomping aggressively and clutching her bag to her body. Brent rushes out of the doors behind her.

BRENT  
Perri, wait!

PERRI  
No, Brent! I'm done.

BRENT  
Chris says if you leave now you're fired.

PERRI  
Great, it'll spare me the trouble of quitting.

BRENT  
I can clean it up. Don't worry about that okay?

Perri spins around and Brent almost runs into her. She grabs his shoulders, trying to talk sense into him.

PERRI  
No! You shouldn't have to clean it either. Cleaning up someone's disgusting mess in the Hollister dressing room isn't in either of our job descriptions and they can't make me do it.

BRENT  
Don't you need this job, Perri?

PERRI  
Not that badly. I'll figure something else out.

Brent feels abandoned and lashes out.

BRENT

Must be nice to have a backup plan.  
If you need me, I'll be cleaning up  
the dressing room cause I need this  
job.

Brent turns around and walks back towards the mall. Perri is gobsmacked and just stares after him. Finally, she turns back around and walks out of frame. After she turns around, Brent looks back to see if she's still watching him. When he sees that she's turned around, he shakes his head and walks into the mall.

INT. PERRI'S ROOM, LATE AFTERNOON.

Perri slams open the door and throws her bag down, but then seems to lose her angry energy.

MONICA (V.O.)

Perri? Can you come back  
downstairs?

Perri collects herself for a moment. Putting on her game face, she heads towards the door.

INT. PERRI'S KITCHEN, CONTINUOUS.

Perri enters the room to find her mom leaning against the same spot on the counter. Perri looks around the room and we see her grimace. The camera moves to reveal a 60ish man, COLIN, wearing an expensive suit.

COLIN

Hi Perri.

Perri nods, then looks inquisitively towards her mother. Monica raises her hands in a declaration of innocence.

MONICA

I'm going to let the two of you  
talk.

Monica passes Perri as she leaves the room, and Perri grabs at her sleeve as if she were a child, but Monica keeps walking.

COLIN

How've you been?

PERRI

Oh, the same.

COLIN

I don't even know what the same is,  
Perri.

PERRI

I refuse to take the blame for  
that.

COLIN

Of course you do.

Perri turns and walks out of the room. She walks past the stairs and into the laundry room. Colin follows some ways behind.

INT. PERRI'S LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is dark and grungy. Cleaning supplies litter the shelves and storage boxes take up half of the floor space.

COLIN

What are you doing?

Perri rips her clothes off and drops them onto a pile of laundry. Colin turns away when she starts undressing but Perri is unashamed. She's in a sports bra and boyshorts but grabs a large tshirt from a nearby drying rack and throws it on.

PERRI

Better?

COLIN

What the hell, Perri?

Perri picks up the clothes she stripped off and hurls them at Colin.

PERRI

Those are the clothes I had to wear  
to my retail job, at the mall,  
where someone took a shit in the  
changing room and I was supposed to  
clean it up.

Colin's mouth curls in disgust.

PERRI (CONT'D)

So while you're busy abandoning Mom and scamming people out of their money, I'm trying to create a life for myself that doesn't rely on you.

COLIN

I didn't abandon your mom.

PERRI

Paying for her boob jobs doesn't mean you actually care about her.

COLIN

This is our arrangement. And I couldn't take her to the beach because your half-sister failed out of UNC so I get to clean up her mess, once again.

Perri raises her eyebrows.

COLIN (CONT'D)

For all your faults Perri, I've never had to clean up after you. I want to help you. Let me pay-

Colin reaches down and picks up Perri's shirt and pants from his feet and places them in the laundry machine. Perri fingers the necklace around her neck.

PERRI

Pay? Dad, you can't fix this with money. I'm not mom or Lisa, another prius isn't going to make me happy.

COLIN

Will college make you happy?

PERRI

Putting myself through college, maybe.

Perri grabs laundry detergent and pours some into the machine, turning her back on Colin.

COLIN

Everyone's parents are paying for their education. It's the least I can do for you.

Perri swivels back around, getting into Colin's face.

PERRI

It really is the least, isn't it?  
If it makes you feel better, okay,  
shell out a couple hundred thousand  
and I will go get my degree in  
something you think is useless,  
like English or Classics.

Colin puts his hands up in proclaimed innocence. Perri goes to turn on the laundry machine.

COLIN

Whatever makes you happy.

The laundry machine makes LOUD noises. Perri rests her hands on the vibrating machine, collects herself, and does not face Colin throughout her speech. She has to speak very loudly to be heard over the laundry machine, which eventually turns into yelling. During her speech she continues to clean the room, sorting laundry into piles with aggression and organizing the cleaning supplies.

PERRI

Having a dad who came to my  
presentations in elementary school  
would have made me happy. Or one  
who knew I hated math, so didn't  
sign me up for a summer course in  
computer science when he could have  
been teaching me how to drive. But  
I'll take your money. I need it.  
And I know it'll make you happy, so  
you can go to your real family and  
roll your eyes at how your  
indulgence of their every whim has  
ruined them and congratulate  
yourself for at least getting it  
right with me, because now you've  
done right by me! All those years  
of only showing up when convenient,  
you can forget them all with one  
simple donation of half a  
percentage of your wealth. How very  
convenient for you.

Perri whirls around and sticks out her hand.

PERRI (CONT'D)

It was a pleasure doing business  
with you.

Close up of Perri's hand waiting in midair.

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - A FEW MONTHS LATER.

The camera moves through the crowd, eventually landing on Perri and Mandy sitting with a few other college-aged girls at a table. All the girls are wearing college or fraternity tshirts and leggings or athletic shorts, including Perri. The AMBIENT NOISE of the mall covers up anything distinctive that the girls are talking about but the girls chatter as they finish their smoothies and get up, heading back towards the stores.

Perri and Mandy hang back from the rest of the group, taking longer to throw their cups away. They follow the other girls, talking. As they walk out of the food court, Perri locks eyes with Brent who stands on the other side of the mall concourse, outside the Hollister storefront. Perri stops walking and shoppers pass between her and Brent. Brent smiles, an invitation for Perri to come talk to him. Perri offers a soft smile back, ducks her head, and walks away.