

Anxiety

Written by

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INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

The lid to a black permanent marker pen is removed. STEVE, 14, handsome with dark hair and eyes first takes a hold of it in his right hand, writing in large unmissable letter 'FUCK YOU,' onto his left hand.

Blowing down onto the letters, he gives it a second letting it dry.

He now switches the pen over into his left hand and writes 'BITCH' in equally large letters on his right hand.

He looks around the classroom, filled with boy and girls his own age every available seat is taken. They're all nosily chatting amongst themselves.

Steve is the only one on his own. He shows off the words to those around him. No one reacts, as though the words weren't even there at all.

The door to the classroom opens and a tall beautiful TEACHER, 30, with long blonde hair enters.

The class falls silent, most pulling out textbooks and pens at the ready.

Steve watches the teacher as she moves over to her desk and sits down. He raises both hands high above his head showing off what he's written.

She glances over at him.

TEACHER

Usually we only raise one hand in class and that's only when you're trying to answer a question. But as I haven't asked anything yet, you can put them both back down.

Steve does as he's told, placing both hands down flat onto his desk.

A few of the other students around him smirk and snigger at him.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Modest, ultra clean. At one of the counter tops KELLY, 42, short and heavy is adding the finishing touches to a steaming homemade plate of food.

KELLY

Just try it. I've made you this before and you inhaled it down in seconds.

Steve sits at a wooden circular table behind her. Relaxing back into his chair he puts his feet up, resting them on another chair opposite.

STEVE

I'm not hungry. I told you. I don't want anything to eat.

Kelly grabs some cutlery and brings it over with the plate of food. Setting it all down in front of him.

KELLY

Just try it.
(joins him at the table)
You still haven't told me anything about school today, how was it?

Steve picks the cutlery up, those words still written onto the back of his hands.

STEVE

I'm done with it. I just want to leave. Everybody has the same face. I never know what they're thinking or feeling. Everyone around me is just so plastic.

KELLY

Oh, I'm sure it's not that bad. Just keep being yourself. You'll make friends and you'll start having a much better time.

He shows her the words on the back of his hands but she turns away, forcing herself not to see.

STEVE

I don't want to make any friends with anyone there. They're all the same. But I'm not, I'm different.
(digs his fork into his food)
There's no one else in the world like me.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Crowded with people out shopping, stores, cafes and restaurants all cramped together on either side of the road.

Steve sits alone on a bench, watching the many different people go by.

He shows off the back of his hands, some people turn their heads to see but quickly turn away again, ignoring him and pretending not to have seen.

Steve pulls out his marker pen and mobile phone. Using its screen like a mirror he writes the word 'depressed' across his forehead in large thick letters.

He does an excellent job of it. Still watching the people go by, it's the same as before. A few people look his way, see what's written only to turn their heads sharply away pretending not to have seen it.

ELLEN, 14, short cut black hair, cute with an oversized backpack on stands on the opposite side of the road. Her hands in hips she stares at him tilting her head over to one side.

He sees her. He shows her the back of his hands.

She comes over to him.

ELLEN

Why do you have that on your hands.
And Why do you have that on your
head?

Steve is taken aback, utterly shocked.

STEVE

You can see it, you can see this?

ELLEN

Of course I can. Why would you have
that on you and why were you waving
your hands at me in the first
place?

STEVE

I don't believe this. How can you
see?

ELLEN

Do you need help. Is there anyone I
can call for you?

He gets up, walks away but Ellen follows him. He glances back and sees her keeping close behind him.

STEVE

Leave me alone, what do you even
want?

ELLEN

Why have you written words like
that on yourself, I don't
understand.

He stops turns around to face her.

STEVE

You shouldn't be able to see what I've written. Everyone else pretends like they can't. You're the first. There has to be a reason you can see me and no one else can.

ELLEN

I don't know, honestly. I have no idea. It's not like you're invisible.

STEVE

But what I write, no one see it. You're the first.

ELLEN

I don't know if that's true. There has to be someone else and I bet you there is.

STEVE

No you're special like me. Me and you, we're the same I can feel it.

She looks at the word on his forehead, furrows her brow.

ELLEN

I don't know if I want us to be the same.

STEVE

I think we should team up together. At least until I have all this worked out.

ELLEN

Have what worked out?

STEVE

This. The reason why you're the only one who can read what I've written. I think we have to stick together.

ELLEN

But I don't even know you.

STEVE

Well I want to get to know you.

ELLEN

I think you're reading way too much into this. We don't need to do anything.

He frowns. Nostrils flare.

STEVE

No, I don't want to hear you talk like this. I know what I'm saying.

(Takes out the pen.

Removes the lid and hovers the tip in front of her face)

Do you want to try it?

ELLEN

No. Don't you dare write anything like that on me. I don't even know why you would write words like that on yourself anyway. What's the point. Why would you want to do it in the first place?

STEVE

I only ever write what I'm feeling at the time.

ELLEN

You really feel depressed. That's so sad.

STEVE

Sometimes I do yeah. Are you trying to tell me that you've never felt that way?

ELLEN

Well I get sad of course I do, but I've got family and friends to cheer me up. You must have somebody?

STEVE

Well no, I don't.

ELLEN

Seeing that on your head. It makes me feel so awful. If you really have got no one you can at least let me try and help you?

STEVE

Yeah exactly. We should team up. That's what I've already said. But writing this is what makes me feel better. It always has, I write it to stop feeling it I don't know any other way.

ELLEN

You just shouldn't do it, it's weird and you're not going to write anything like that on me so don't even think about asking me again.

STEVE

At least I can show how I'm really truly feeling. Others can't do that. Haven't you ever noticed, we live in a world full of plastic faces. I'm not like everyone else and you're not either. We're special, we're better than them.

ELLEN

If no one can see what you've written what's the point in doing it in the first place?

STEVE

Well that's where you're wrong because they can see it. It's the way their eyes move. I know they've seen it. They just don't react like I would. They force themselves like they haven't seen it. It's acting.

ELLEN

Why would anyone do that? If I couldn't ignore it how come everyone else can?

STEVE

It's a kind of magic that I have.

ELLEN

Well then I think you're wasting it.

STEVE

What would you even know about this, I don't like you talking to me like this.

ELLEN

Well at least I'm not ignoring you like everyone else does. Have you ever thought, the reason why no one reacts is because of the nasty things you're writing. I mean look at your hands. That's horrible.

STEVE

What does it matter?

ELLEN

It might matter a whole lot. Have you never thought about this?

STEVE

No. I don't know. What does it matter what I write. It's always the same.

ELLEN

But I bet you everything you write is ugly. That's all you're showing people.

INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM - DAY

Dimly lit, a mop and bucket in one corner. A warning slippery floor sign in another.

Steve stands in front of a row of sinks. The hot water running. Soaking his hands he first cleans off the writing on the back of his hands before cleaning off his forehead.

He stares at himself in the mirror. He considers. Reaching inside his pocket he pulls out the pen and holds it ready to use.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Just as busy as before, people crowded together out shopping. Steve sits alone on a bench and watches the many different people pass by.

On his forehead he has written 'Fuck you.' And on the back of his hands has 'Sad' and 'hate'.

He shows it to the passing people. Just as before, a handful turn to see but instantly pretend like they haven't.

INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM - DAY

Again at the sink, steam rising high from the hot water Steve scrubs himself clean much faster and much more vigorously than before.

Getting himself clean, removing the words.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

In and out, big deep calming breaths. Steve once again on the bench is watching the people go by.

Getting out the pen he writes 'smile' on his right hand and 'laugh' on his left. Now taking out his phone and using the blank screen as a mirror he writes 'Love' in large letter across his forehead.

People glance over, he shows them the back of his hands. They each take longer to look at him now, everyone who does turn to face him either breaks out into a spontaneous smile or laughter.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Rundown, broken glass on the floor. Only half of a pinned up timetable is visible, the rest hidden under dirt. Ellen waits as Steve approaches.

She turns her head and sees him coming. She sees the writing on his forehead and hands. She too breaks out into a smile and laughter.

ELLEN

Wow, now don't you looks so much better.

STEVE

You were right.
(holds his hands out to her)
And this did this because I knew you were going to be right.

ELLEN

You look a million times better but I'm still not going to let you write on me.

STEVE

I don't need to, you're perfect just the way you are.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

They head off together, turning down into a quiet empty side street.

Slowly Steve reaches down brushing his fingers against her.

She looks over at him and smiles blushing.

Not now grab a hold of her hand, interlocking their fingers. Ellen let's him.

They share a look before quickly turning away from each other.

Continuing on neither speaks, there's no need to.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END