

Chapter 1: Orson

There are certain people that you see, that you know you'll never meet. Depending on who you are, or how you view yourself, these people may be classified in a couple of ways. People who you'd never associate with, or people who would never associate with you. Depending on where you put yourself on the curve, determines how many people are on either side.

Then there are the people that you do meet. Some of them are obvious friends, the ones that match who you are. Then there are those who you consider “less than” somehow, and that you are somehow doing them a favor by being their friends. And, of course, the ones who you never thought would be your friend, much less talk to you. Depends, once again, on where you put yourself on the scale.

So. To break it down. Five different types of people in the world. Those you'll never meet who wouldn't talk to you anyway Those you'll never meet who you wouldn't talk to. Those you have met who won't talk to you. Those you have met who will talk to you. Those you have met who you won't talk to.

I suppose there's those out there who would talk to, and you would talk to them, but you've never met them. I try to avoid that one. Because that one opens up a spinning world of could've beens and never was's. Infinite parallel universes. Soul mates out there who's souls are so far apart they've never met.

Mates they'll never meet.

That's where my head starts spinning. There's a lot of fucking people out there, and it's difficult enough to communicate with them when they're sitting on the other end of the couch with you and crying for some reason that they can't communicate to you, but has something to do with not offering to go to a movie last week, when it was obvious that there was nothing else for the two of you to do.... or, whatever. Let alone trying to communicate with your “soul mate” when they're half way across the world. Or to be less dramatic, in

another state, say, Kentucky. Or down the street. Or right next door. The neighbor you never talk to, but you see sometimes taking out his recycling or walking his little lab terrier mix.

So. When you think you meet this person. Sorry. This person you'd probably never met, and you think they'd talk to you, and you'd definitely talk to them. You're "soul mate" for lack of a better term. When you meet that person. You've got a definite choice to make. Talk or don't talk. The ball's in your court, boy, because for all you know they have no idea that you might be their soul mate... they might have turned the wrong way at the wrong moment. Glanced over at the Cinnabon instead of the other direction towards the Old Navy that you were passing by at that very moment. A simple turn of the head. Not even conscious. Just a casual turn of the head.

Try it. In a large crowd of people. Be suddenly aware of which way your head is turned. Think of all the people you're NOT looking at. Then think of that old chestnut, "Love at first sight." You only got one chance to catch that. They may be starting at the back of your head, sending you mental vibes to please please turn your head around. But, there you stand. Aware that you're head is looking in one direction, and feeling the burning sensation that there quite possibly is the person that will make your life the fullest and happiest it could be... and that person, is just now, turning their head and walking away.

It'll drive you nuts. Don't do it. I really suggest you avoid those kind of thoughts. They just drive you to inactivity. And I've had enough of inactivity. I am, today, this very day, motivated. No more will I let the stream of life wash over me as though I was a smooth rock in a river of rocks... No, I shall be a leaf!

Well. Motivate myself anyway. I work in a law office in downtown Chicago. Everyday I take the same route to work and look in the same direction. This is to avoid the dizzy crazy feeling I get of the endless possibilities of people I haven't met. Of course, the rest of the city seems dead set against me having any sort of continuity to my commute. There's always different people on the train I'm on, no

matter how consistent I am with my arrivals and departures. Where I stand on the platform seems to make no difference to these people or the universe, for that matter.

Some people follow the rules. Stay consistent. Some are people I will talk to. Some would never talk to me. The usual assortment.

But, today, I will be a leaf. What made this difference? What would jog me out of such a lifestyle rut? A book. A book by Jack Flannery. “Make Your Own History”.

Chapter 2: Jack

Excerpt from “Make Your Own History”

Introduction:

I know what people think of me. I know, specifically what ladies think of me.

Some hate me. Some pity me. Some love me. Only a precious few understand me. But they all think that someday I'll change. They've bought into the movie. The big picture. The idea that somehow movies have got it right. They nailed it. Ain't true, my friend, ain't true by a long shot. And I ain't even talking about the crazy movies with aliens and shit. I'm talking, specifically here, about romantic comedies.

In these films I fall firmly into one category. The handsome, yet cocky bastard who manages to find plenty of women, but can't seem to lower his guard down enough to find “true love”.

These people are lying to themselves. The people who write, produce and act in these movies are lying to you. They are perpetuating the lie.

The lie is that I'll somehow “change”. Now the more cautious out

*there will claim that they don't want to change me. And I believe them. They want me to change myself. They all want that happy ending. But, really, who's the happy ending for? Them? Me? It's them. And what am I left with? A lifetime of living out **their** dream life.*

It may be wonderful. And maybe there's millions of you out there who've found that special someone. But, not me brother. This cowboy's got a range to ride, and there's far to many fields to plow before the day is done.

Chapter 3: Rainbow

The airport was larger than she expected. She's not sure what exactly she suspected, but it wasn't this. Smaller for sure. She expected maybe 4 gates and a security station, with a friendly portly guard in a crisp blue uniform. She could ask him where to go to find the right gate. He might even be nice enough to walk her to her plane. His mustache framing his jolly smile as he walked her to her seat. Seat 15b. His name would be Officer Samson, but he'd insist that she call him Max.

But reality was chaos and confusion. She'd forgotten her glasses at home and had trouble reading the signs. She could have kicked herself twelve times for that by now. Knew exactly where they were too. Sitting peacefully on the top of her dresser. She could even picture the way they were facing. Towards the door. Watching her go. Watching her rush out in the pale blue predawn light. Without them, she couldn't see farther than twenty feet. The world was a blur of color and noise.

Combine that with the first time in an airport. The first time away from home by herself. Not the first time she's run away, but the first time she'd taken it this far.

She'd stolen her mother's credit card and bought a ticket on line. Not really “stolen” she told herself. Her mother has spent so much

money on her so far and would only spend more. Really by just paying for the one ticket now and leaving for good, she was actually saving her mother money. Plus, she had used Priceline and found a pretty good bargain.

Now, with her over-packed orange canvas backpack, oversized Michigan college sweatshirt, and no glasses she stood at the entrance to security baffled by what do next. She'd gotten past the ticket check in without a problem. The new touch screen automatic check-in system has saved her ass. Swipe of the card, press the right buttons, and she was on her merry way. But now she had no idea what to do.

And, she was petrified of doing something wrong. At fourteen she felt she could pass for a young... very young eighteen. Or, at the very least an independent sixteen year old who might be wandering around the airport without her parents, but certainly knew where they were and certainly didn't need to be “helped” by security. It was important that she looked confident. That she act confident. Just follow the flow of people and do what they do. Just keep moving.

This was the point that someone was going to look at her boarding pass, or ask for her ID, then ask where her parents were, and why they weren't there with her, and shouldn't we give them a call and confirm that you're supposed to be getting on this flight. And she couldn't have them calling her mother. That would be the end of this, very short, yet harrowing and brave, adventure she'd been on.

She stood frozen about 20 feet away from the security check in. People streaming past her. A steady stream of confident people, aware of the rules and protocol, passed her. Confirmed safe to fly off to wherever they were bound; Florida, Spain, Newfoundland.

The boarding pass was crumpled and sweaty in her hands. She was suddenly very aware that her heartbeat was not normal. As if she suddenly had to think about it. She was aware of every intake and exhale of breath. In fact, now that she thought about it, her breathing was incredibly normal. Terribly normal. And now she was

thinking about it, and a feeling of terror filled her that she might have to *think* about breathing for the rest of her life. How would she get anything done? Everything, from now on, by definition would be multitasking. And then one day she would forget. Forget to keep her breathing going nice and steady, and that would be it. Dead on the floor. Dead like everyone else before her.

Chapter 4: Patricia

Patricia Wilson woke with a start. The dream fading the moment her eyes opened and she took her first gasping breath. Fading. Fading. Something about a pale blue sky. A plain of craggy rocks. A cliff. Wings? Falling. There was a face in a stream of water. Fading. Gone. All that was left was the feeling in her stomach and a sensation of loss. The tingle in her fingertips of going too close to an edge catching yourself, and looking over.

The room was dark. Her alarm clock, placed on the other side of the room as get-to-work-on-time strategy too blurry to see. She fumbled in the dark on the night stand for her glasses. Her fingers still tingling with the sensation of falling weren't cooperating. Glasses. On. 4:40 a.m. Or at least she thought it was a.m. Her confusion was all encompassing. Suddenly she wasn't quite sure if she should be getting up from a nap, or if it was Saturday, or if it was Summer or Winter. The more she thought about it the more possibilities came up. The idea that maybe the past 20 years of her life were a dream floated through her mind like an optimistic balloon.

Familiar snoring to her left put things into focus. She was who she was. It was 4:40 in the morning. She wasn't late for work. She was instead being cheated 2 hours of well deserved sleep.

Flopping her head down on the pillow. The comfortable blank state of sleep was all she really wanted. But her heartbeat kept her up. And just on the edge of her mind, the dream. Like a word you can't quite remember, or a song's chorus you repeat can't complete.

She certainly couldn't get back to sleep now. Fuck. 2 hours of lost

sleep. She stared at the ceiling, gray in the predawn light. I’m not accomplishing anything just laying thinking of a dream I can’t remember, she thought. Might as well watch something on the tube.

She swung her legs out of the bed and felt around with her feet for slippers. Grabbed a Donald Duck oversized t-shirt from the floor and pulled it on, the coolness of the fabric waking her. The smell of her husband who had worn the shirt before bringing her even more back to reality.

She plodded down the hall to the family room. She noticed her daughter’s bedroom door was shut. It wasn’t until she was in the kitchen considering eating a bowl or two of Apple Jacks that she realized that her daughter’s closed door might be significant.

Rainbow insisted her door remain, at the very least, open a crack. She needed night-lights and confirmation that people were nearby. Even at 14 the habit endured. Most teens would be more than happy to shut their parents out of their lives completely. During the day all bets were off with hours spent behind closed and locked doors. Mornings spent pounding on bathroom doors. But the bedroom door, while sleeping, was always open. An unspoken constant.

And now the door was closed. Strange.

Patricia shuffled back to Rainbow’s room.

It was probably nothing, she was certain. But between the falling dream, and that feeling of... something... loss?

And... Rainbow’s was door closed.

Chapter 5: Jack

Excerpt from “Make Your Own History”

There’s a certain type of woman who’s the prize catch, and it’s not

who you think. Sure there are platinum blondes. Models who could suck the chrome off a bumper. Wrap their legs around you three ways 'til Sunday. But they know that they're a catch. They know that men classify them as "unattainable", and they thrive on that. Of course, they also hate it, and you can use that to your advantage. But more about that later.

We'll cover unattainable supermodels in Chapter 12. (p.s. Spoiler. No one is "unattainable")

Supermodels aside. The women I'm talking about is just about the most unassuming woman you'll run into. I call her the Fate-Sucker. Your typical Fate-Sucker has had a series of relationships. Not too many that she's earned a "reputation", but not so few that she's considered a prude. But, by the time you've met her, she's resigned herself to "Fate".

This is based on one deadly assumption (she'd refer to it as a "fact", but she'd be wrong. Facts can't be changed.) She assumes that she'll never find Mr. Right, and furthermore that Mr. Right is out there somewhere... she'll just never find him. She is destined to be alone.

This is truly an unfortunate situation for a woman to be in. And, believe me, I feel for them... okay okay, I can hear you all now calling me a hypocrite, and you're right... I don't feel for them. But, I do understand them. They are victims of expectations. Movies. Books. Fairy Tales. On and on. The truly unfortunate thing for them is how many "Mr. Rights" they've carelessly tossed away.

It's at this point, when they've given up all hope, that they are simultaneously the most difficult, and perhaps the easiest of prizes to catch. Remember the key "fact" that she's bought into. She can't find Mr. Right. But, more importantly, Mr. Right exists out there somewhere.

That's your in.

Chapter 6: Orson

There are people who can talk to people. There are people who can't talk to people. People in the second category need to befriend people in the first category.

I've yet to find that person.

Chapter 7: “Orson”

EXT. A small quaint independent coffee and pastry shop (THE EARLY RISER) Painted in bright blues and yellows. DAY

A light rain is causing people to duck their heads and hurry. JULIET hops off a bus that has just pulled up to the EARLY RISER. She ducks into the shop.

INT. THE EARLY RISER DAY

Patrons are scattered about the shop. “The Regulars” BEARDED MAN slowly sips a cup of coffee and stares out the window. HIPSTER MAN and WOMAN in matching glasses, are animatedly discussing some foreign film. PETER an unenthused slacker working behind the counter watches as JULIET walks hurriedly past them all to the back room.

PETER
You're late.

JULIET
(from back room) I know. Bus was late. And I had to help Mr. Peterson with his dog.

PETER
Who the fuck is Mr. Peterson?

JULIET

(from back room) Peter, please, we have customers.

PETER

They don't know who Mr. Peterson is either.

JULIET

(entering) Whatever. You're relieved of duty.

PETER

Yes sir. Aye aye, Captain.

PETER salutes and exits. JULIET gets ready for her shift, rewriting a chalkboard that PETER has screwed up, arranging the menus and generally cleaning up. She tosses her long black hair over her shoulder and casually puts it into a ponytail.

Enter ORSON. He is unassuming, but confident. He casually enters the coffee shop, in search of something, perhaps coffee, but his eyes betray his real reason for entering.

ORSON's eyes lock with JULIET for a brief moment, then he hurriedly looks away and walks towards the pastry display.

JULIET has taken no notice of him.

ORSON looks casually at the cream cheese danish all the while knowing that his soul mate is on the other side of the counter... and she has NO IDEA that her soul mate is on the other side of the counter studying the cream cheese danish... studying longer than any normal, rational person would study a danish.

CUT of ORSON's face.

The concern is evident. His eyes shift back and forth. Sweat beads on his brow.

ORSON (V.O.)

This is it. Now is your moment. Just stop looking at the danish and say "Hello." What's the worst that could happen. Think of it? What's the absolute worst? ... She could leap across the counter and stab you...that's stupid, why would she do that.... I.... I don't know, but there could be a reason.... you asked "what's the worst?"

JULIET

May I help you?

ORSON

(shaken out of his inner monologue.) Hello. (smiles awkwardly.)

JULIET

You let me know if you need something.

ORSON

(standing straight now.) Juliet. (she gives him a momentary strange look of suspicion.) Your name tag. That's right, isn't it?

JULIET

Yes.

ORSON

I've been a regular here for a couple of weeks now, and I've finally built up the courage to talk to you. I would like to ask you out on a date.

JULIET

(with a wry smile) Stalking me?

ORSON

Absolutely not. Simply building up courage. A woman of your beauty can be intimidating even to the most courageous of men. Fear of rejection as well as the normal difficulties of socially acceptable communication. But, I've finally built up the internal fortitude to talk directly to you in hopes that you'll give me a chance.

JULIET

That is the single sweetest thing a man has ever said to me. Of course I'll give you a chance. As long as it's not coffee.

They laugh together.

ORSON

My name is Orson. And I would like to invite you to a wine tasting event tonight.

JULIET

I get off work at 7:00, will that be okay?

ORSON

Perfection, Juliet. Perfection.

Camera pulls back, their conversation becomes muddled in the ambient noise. They are smiling and laughing. JULIET touches her hair, straightening it, then touches ORSON's hand in a joking and flirtatious way. If there exists magic in this world, this moment is what it would look like.

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What would Jack say?? Weak. Weak and pathetic. "in hopes that you'll give me a chance."?? Even in your fiction you can't be assertive. There's no way she'd respond to that. If you can't get your fictional self together how're you ever going to get your real self together??

Chapter 8: Dwayne

Well, what the hell else was he supposed to do? She left a note saying where she was going. It was in her handwriting, so she wasn't kidnapped. She's 14 for christsake. It's not like she's 7 and kidnapped. Just a kid running away for awhile. She wasn't in trouble.

So he went to work.

The warehouse wasn't going to stock itself.

Besides. Based on this latest news, who the hell was he to Rainbow anyway?

Apparently, the kid who he thought was his kid, wasn't. When he played it over in his head -- over and over and over -- it sounded like a crappy daytime soap, or an episode of Jerry Springer.

He wasn't the father. Apparently. Hell of a time to find out. 14 years after the fact. Somehow, he felt like he'd be less pissed off if the information had waited another 4 years. Then he could just toss up his hands and say 'the hell with you all' and not feel a bit of guilt.

Damn. Women can hide anything can't they? It was enough to make him believe that maybe nothing any female had ever said to him was true. Why would he? They all work on subtleties and exceptions to the rules. They give you just enough information to hang yourself with.

He had been sitting in his car in the parking lot of WeltCo. for thirty minutes. Late, but fuck it, he was the one who drew up the schedule. He could be late if he wanted.

He had gotten this far, and ran out of what the hell he was supposed to do. As his coworkers walked past his car, he pretended to busy himself with something in the front seat. Like he had dropped a pen, or an important note, or was just listening to the last little bit of a song, or waiting for the answer to a trivia question on WITI. But, pretty soon, his coworkers were going to start asking where the hell he was. Rick would be first, no fucking doubt about that. Rick's the one to fuck up anyone's fun. He was the one to put an end to the March Madness pool. He was the one to announce to everyone that benefits had been calculated wrong for the past two years and we all had one less day of vacation than we thought.

A douche.

And, he'd be the one to.--

Sure enough, here he comes.

Rick knocked on the window of Dwayne's salt encrusted driver's side window. It seemed to Dwayne that a good 45 minutes passed while he thought of exactly how to respond to the knocking. Ignore it? Flip him off? Open the window and tell him exactly what the problem was? Lie? Punch Rick in the fucking face? All viable options really. Finally, he decided to let Rick take the lead. He flipped the switch on his automatic window and it slowly rolled down.

“What?”

“You coming in to work today?”

“I'm here, aren't I?”

“You coming in? Gus and Trey don't know what the fuck to do, so they're just sitting in the break room shooting the shit. And Steve is--”

“I'll be in in a moment.” “Okay.”

“Okay.”

.....

“Was there something else?”

“Just waiting for you.”

Dwayne rolled up the window and sat for what seemed like 20 more minutes, but according to the clock on his dash was closer to 3. Rick waited outside. In an impulsive moment, Dwayne suddenly decided to tell Rick the truth, and instantly regretted it.

“My wife cheated on me 14 years ago.”

And that’s how Rick and Dwayne ended up spending the morning in Dwayne’s car talking about life, women, and the pursuit of happiness all morning long.

Gus and Trey took so many fucking smoke breaks, they broke a personal record.

Chapter 9: Jack

Excerpt from “Make Your Own History”

Daily Challenge: The Eye Contact Exercise.

It’s just like practicing free-throws. Over and over again. Repetitive movement gets the muscle memory going until the skills are second nature.

Eye contact. It’s what they want. And by “they” I mean women. Men don’t want eye contact. Eye contact to men is a challenge. Eye contact to a woman is an open invitation. Are they two sides of the same coin? Perhaps.

Don’t read any further until you’ve picked a number between 1 and 10.

I’ll wait.

You picked 7, didn’t you? Doesn’t matter either way. If you picked a small number you’re an insecure puss-ass, if you picked a big number you’re an egomaniac. That’s why most people pick 7.

Today’s exercise. You will make eye contact with that number of women. Some you are now wishing you picked a lower number.

You must make and maintain mutual eye contact. That’s the tricky part. Any asshole can make eye contact with someone, it just takes staring at them long enough. The challenge is for you to present your face and your demeanor in such a way that they’ll **want** to return the eye contact, and maintain it. That they’ll **need** to maintain it.

That’s your challenge for today. 7 women for most of you, or 1 woman if you’re a puss-ass.

Chapter 10: “Orson”

Excerpt from the screenplay “Reboot Days”

EXT. A post apocalyptic landscape. Everything is on fire. Everything is lit in orange and red.

CU of a wall. Adobe and ancient. Orange and dusty.

A woman’s hand breaks through the wall. Grasping around feeling for danger or escape. The wall crumbles around the hole. More of the wall busts away, ripped by the woman’s hand.

Her face pushes it’s way through. She has long dark hair and haunted eyes. She is exotic and beautiful.

Cut to: ORSEN’s boots landing solidly on the ground, kicking up dust and presenting a formidable force of heroism.

CU of ORSEN’s face.

ORSON

You made it out. You’re stronger than we thought. Now, grab my hand and we can finish the job.

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OR:

ORSON

Everything has an opposite. Yin-Yang. Black and white. I’m trying an experiment. Writing like Jack, but from the point of view of someone who has nothing Jack has. Someone closer to me. The polar opposite of Jack. Every reason in the world to be not confident and yet writing with the over-confidence of a man with everything.

Excerpt from “MouseFucker” by Orson Wilson

Chapter 1

The neighbors are having sex again. I don’t like to keep score, but they’re winning. Judgin by the way she’s screaming and carrying on, he must be huge. By most standards, when comparing my penis to others, and believe me I compare a lot... every chance I get; YMCA showers, bar urinals, the morgue I work at... I am small. Stunningly small. A joke. Literally the punch line to a joke.

Are you familiar with Kraft Macaroni and Cheese? Picture a single noodle - a small uncooked curved tube - maybe 1/2 inch long. That is strikingly like my penis.. only macaroni is larger. Throw in two wrinkled wasabi peas for my nuts and you have the complete picture of my junk. Want to feel better about yourself? Take your dick in hand and picture a mac n’ cheese noodle and two wasaubi peas - there, but for the grace of God go ye’-- feel better?

Good. Fuck you.

I wanted to be known as the MouseLover, but I’ll forever be called the MouseFucker by the established media. Branded with the moniker, “MouseFucker”... My life ruined. But, was it worth it? Hell yes.

