

Ageless

Curled up in bed, hot, snugly, music pounding, make up dripping in the heat, hot chocolate skipping down the side of a cooling cup. Not easy keeping it all under control. Too many things to handle. I tickled Snoopydog behind the ear. He was nearly as big as I was. Nearly as hot. He'd been a present for my fifth birthday. From a boy I used to know.

Horny, sexy and got my own Viagra. Not sure what any of that meant but it certainly got hits. My social networks were alive and well, stinking hot beneath the sheets. I made friends. I was twenty three, exotic and willing to try anything. My biggest fear was the battery of my iPhone running down.

But I wasn't twenty three. I was twelve and beautifully innocent, except for the fact my fingers twinkled and drew me into fantasies I could no longer count. I claimed to be twenty something. But so did they. You just never knew.

Social networking took so much time. I couldn't stop. I slept through my math's exam, forgot my cigarette in the break until it burnt my finger tips. It was non-stop. I kept typing, snapping away. How many likes can you build up in an instant.

Then one of them wanted to meet me. I'd promised him all sorts of things I had read about, but never experienced, and had no idea what they meant even after watching a couple of blurred videos.

I couldn't refuse. I stole one of my parents condoms but it went all sticky in my fingers. Maybe I shouldn't have taken it out of the package before hand. Soft, slippery, skiddy; like my social relationships it didn't really seem to fit properly. I never knew how to manage them, tighten them up, dispose of them afterwards. There were real people out there, but they were all getting mixed up. My antivirus probably needed updating: who the hell knew who was who. So many friends and thumbs up and petitions for more friends and messages and photos. Avoiding my parents was becoming harder and harder: it took so

much time just to keep up with it all. And sending the photos. The demands kept coming. In class, in the shower, wet hair, dry hair, smirk, wrinkle, dazzle. Photos, comments, similes, requests wouldn't ebb, a tsunami that never retreated. And they expected me to study as well? I virtually had no time for anything else. My parents just didn't understand how demanding it all was.

I'd stolen the house keys one night and crept out of the flat, down to the park. He looked scary. I had the good sense to run home. He looked pretty mad. He unfriended me. Didn't matter. There were many more where he came from. My Smartphone wasn't all that useful suddenly.

When you get tugged out to sea and realise the shore is too far behind and the next one is across an ocean, that is when you realise you weren't as strong a swimmer as you thought. The sun began to set behind the ghost of a riveting beach, somewhere beyond the shoreline, over the horizon which wasn't boasting a rainbow or a crock of gold as compensation.

He pasted a photo of me on the street, around the corner from my front door, all bare naked, horrible words scribbled over the top. All the neighbours saw it. My parents couldn't avoid it. We could never find him. I couldn't leave my room for days.

I was so happy when my parents unplugged the wi fi. I could finally rest in peace. I just hoped he'd leave me alone and I still wasn't sure I could just close it all down, walk away and pretend I didn't exist online. A good book would help. I fired up my Kindle. A little fantasy wouldn't go astray. It would be nice to stay in, huddled up in bed. It wasn't the season for going out. It might be nice to find a book on learning how to surf. I could probably teach them a thing or two. I closed the bedroom door. Then I locked it just in case. Snoopydog needed a wash, but what teddy bear didn't.

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