

A Virtuous Woman

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OVER BLACK.

Sounds of a woman grunting, drowned by the noise of a DSLR CAMERA clicking.

INT. GYM - NIGHT

WE'RE ON: The PHOTOGRAPHER, a round MAN sporting a BALL CAP backwards. He's An intense man, passionate about his work.

PHOTOGRAPHER
... Nice. Very nice.

The camera glued to one eye, he steps to the side, and snaps another angle of his subject -- who's in the middle of a squat workout...

ON: DESIRAE HARRIS, (28), an intoxicating hour glass shaped beauty, who isn't bashful to show off her curves. She Sports on tight black YOGA PANTS, and a tank top.

Desirae, bends over for another rep. Stretching out her tight pants, showcasing her shapely butt to onlookers.

PHOTOGRAPHER (cont'd)
Perfect. This is great stuff Des,
you're going to love this.

TWO men, ROSCOE and TERRELL stand behind her hypnotized. Feasting their eyes on every squat.

ROSCOE/TERRELL
(Tilting their heads)
Damn!

ROSCOE
... She liked one of my photos on IG
too.

TERRELL
Nigga stop lying.

ROSCOE
For real.

TERRELL
Let me see.

ROSCOE
My phone dead.

TERRELL

(Laughs)

Lying ass nigga. She could get the business though.

ROSCOE

Sho''nough! She thick as hell boy.

LATER --

Photographer packs away his LENS and TRIPOD.

Desirae scrunches up her face as she skims through the still shots from the photo shoot.

She's silent, but her face says everything.

PHOTOGRAPHER

What now?

DESIRAE

I'm not feeling any of these angles.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Okay.

DESIRAE

Like here.

Stops on a Photo.

PHOTOGRAPHER

What's wrong with it?

DESIRAE

My ass looks lopsided.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Des, stop it.

DESIRAE

I'm serious -- and this one.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Oh come on, that's the money shot!

She shoots him a look: *"Like hell that is"*

PHOTOGRAPHER (cont'd)

So what are you saying? You want to go again?

DESIRAE
You know the drill.

Photographer droops his head and sighs. "A here we go again."

Desirae moves into position.

DESIRAE (cont'd)
Ain't gon' have me online looking
crazy.

INT. GYM LOCKEROOM - NIGHT

Girls get dressed in the b.g. Desirae snaps butt selfies in front of a wall of mirrors.

ON HER PHONE: We see her typing HASHTAGS under a heavily filtered photo of herself.

Desirae pores over the photograph for what feels like forever and a day... Finally, she musters some courage, and taps "share"...

Takes a deep breath and watches her phone very closely. After a few moments her phone begins to populate "Likes"... Ten, Fifty, one hundred, and so on...

A mixture of relief and satisfaction comes over her. She nabs a towel and heads for the showers.

EXT. GYM PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Roscoe, and Terrell posted on Roscoe's car.

Desirae walks out the Gym. Her Phone plugged to her ear as she foots it to her car.

DESIRAE
(Into phone)
... I'm not even gonna' lie I'm nervous... Cause, you know our people don't do blind dates. But you know how dry it is out here.

ROSCOE
(Shouts)
Aye yo! Aye yo Mama what's good?! When you gonna' let me get them digits though?!...

DESIRAE

(Laughing)

I hope he ain't a cheap; basic ass nigga, cause I ain't got the time, and I'm not trying to be nobody's mama, okay.

ROSCOE

Aye! I know you hear me talking to you girl!

DESIRAE

Girl hold up.

Desirae twists around.

DESIRAE (cont'd)

Can I help you?

ROSCOE

What's up with them digits though?!

DESIRAE

What's up with them bank digits though?!

ROSCOE

Huh?!

DESIRAE

You heard me negro! Get your bank weight up, and maybe I'll entertain the thought of you speaking to me.

(into phone)

Broke ass niggas always trying to mac.

Terrell laughs at Roscoe. Desirae hops into her car and drives off.

INT. DESIRAE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Desirae once overs her outfit in front of a full length mirror, while simultaneously holding up her phone for live stream.

DESIRAE

... So what y'all think about this outfit? I don't know. I feel like these jeans are not working.

She twists around. Shifts up her tight jeans purposely.

INT. CAR - DAY

Desirae poses for a duck face selfie. Posts the selfie online. Moments later, a flood of likes come through.

USER COMMENTS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN --

MALE USER (TEXT)
*(heart shaped eye
 emoji's)*

MALE USER #2 (TEXT)
"Beautiful!"

MALE #3 (TEXT)
"Marry me girl."

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

The hand of a man drops seed in fertile soil. The hand covers over the seed with dirt.

WE'RE ON: the back of the man's head as he rises to his feet. He peers over his shoulder.

The first time we see his face -- EZRA, (30), bearded with an afro that's thick enough to pass for a lion's mane. His visage is youthful, yet has eyes of an old man.

He stares at Desirae -- who's on her phone taking selfies.

Desirae looks up. Embarrassed. She tucks away the phone.

Ezra moves past her. Sows more seeds.

Desirae stands there bored; not sure what to do. Searches for the right words.

DESIRAE
 (Looking around)
 This has been nice but...

EZRA
 You gonna stand there, or you gonna help?

Desirae's dumbfounded.

DESIRAE
 I think I'll go.

Without looking up at her.

EZRA
 Do what you have to do then.
 (Waves ahead)
 Hey Manny!

Ambling nearby is MANNY, gray bearded, (70's). He's dressed in all white garb, and grips a walking staff. He waves back to Ezra.

She glares at Ezra -- miffed by his nonchalance.

DESIRAE
 Sorry charity service isn't my idea
 of a romantic date.

EZRA
 What's your idea of a romantic date;
 glued to your phone fishing for likes
 on social media?

DESIRAE
 I wouldn't need to if this wasn't so
 damn boring. Who the hell takes a
 woman gardening on a first date
 anyways?

EZRA
 I do not know. I do know that charm
 is deceitful, and beauty is vain.

DESIRAE
 Anyways, this is lame. I'm out.
 (Murmurs to herself)
 Weird ass nigga.

Desirae walks off.

INT./EXT. DESIRAE'S CAR - DAY

Desirae slips into her vehicle. Rummages through her purse in search of something. She scoops a few items out. After a moment, she dumps everything out on the front seat.

KNOCK! KNOCK! on her window nearly gives her a heart attack. It's Ezra holding up her phone. She lowers the window.

DESIRAE
 (confused)
 How did you-

EZRA
 Vanities of Vanities, all is vanity.

He hands her the phone. Walks away.

INT. DESIRAE ROOM - NIGHT

Desirae snuggled in bed. Thumbs through her phone.

She posts a *Status Update* on her social media: "Where the real nigga's at? #nomoreblinddates"

LATER --

She snaps a BOOMERANG Duck Face. Adds it to her "My Stories"

INT. GYM LOCKEROOM - DAY

Desirae snaps photos in front of a mirror.

She adds filters to an approved photo. Thumbs down on *Hastags*: #postgymselfie#bigbootygoals#workhardplayhard#cake.

INT. SHOWERS/GYM LOCKEROOM

At a locker Desirae gets dressed. She grabs her phone and thumbs through her IG. To her chagrin there's no new notifications.

She thumbs down on the screen to refresh... Nothing.

EXT. GYM LOBBY - DAY

Desirae ambles along with her nose stuck to her phone. Subtle frustration forms over her profile.

DESIRAE

(Smacks her teeth)

What is up with this stupid thing?

Terrell and Roscoe turn a corner; pace towards Desirae's direction.

Desirae rolls her eyes: *"Tell me this isn't happening"...*

As the guys move closer, an inspired thought comes to her.

Desirae slows her pace; slips Terrell a coy smile.

Terrell and Roscoe proceed past her without a reaction -- Desirae might as well be invisible.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Upscale. Warm atmosphere. A place where young city professionals dwell after work for dinner and drinks.

Desirae and a THREE friends sit at a corner table.

LISA

Why don't you delete it then
reinstall it?

DESIRAE

Tried it already. It didn't work. I
even emailed them.

TONISHA

What they say?

DESIRAE

They can't find anything wrong with
my account.

TONISHA

Damn. I don't know what to tell you
girl. My IG working fine.

The girls chime in one by one: "Mine too"

ASHLEY

Okay, I found the quote. It's from
the bible.

LISA

I knew that sounded familiar.
Vanities of Vanities...
(ponders)
What does it mean?

TONISHA

(To Desirae)

Girl, I didn't know you was out here
fishin' for a Christian.

The girls all laugh.

DESIRAE

I wasn't.

THREE MEN. Tall, dark, and handsome approach the table.

TONISHA

(Mutters)

Well hello.

MAN

How you sista's doing this evening?

The Men ooze confidence. The girls melt.

TOGETHER

Good.

TONISHA

We're doing better now though.

The girls giggle; save for Desirae.

MAN

We ain't trying to disturb y'all or nothing.

TONISHA

Please disturb. Disturb.

Man flashes his pearly white's.

MAN

The fella's and I wanted to come over and tell you three ladies y'all looking beautiful tonight.

DESIRAE

(feeling snubbed)

Three?

Caught off guard -- the three men stare at Desirae as though she were an alien.

MAN

Oh, I didn't even see you sis. My bad.

INT. DESIRAE ROOM - DAY

Desirae on the phone in the middle of a Live Stream.

DESIRAE

Guys I went to bed last night with around two hundred thousand followers. This morning I woke up with less than a hundred. I don't know why this shit is happening.

She's on the verge of tears.

INT. CITY STREETS - DAY

A down cast and disheveled Desirae saunters down the street. As she walks towards the front entrance of a corner store, someone familiar catches her eye.

DEANDRE, (28), chats it up with some friends outside.

DESIRAE

Deandre!

Deandre squints his eyes at her until placing her.

DEANDRE

...What's good, Dezzy.

DEANDRE'S FRIEND

(Into his ear)

You know her?

DESIRAE

What's up.

DEANDRE'S FRIEND

I almost ain't recognize you.

DESIRAE

So that's how you feel now?

DEANDRE

(Laughs)

What you mean?

DESIRAE

What you mean what I mean?

DEANDRE

I'm saying I don't know what you're talking about.

DESIRAE

Don't do that. Don't sit here in front of your lil' friends and front like you don't thirst off every picture I post on IG.

The guys all laugh. Deandre plays it off.

DEANDRE

Man, whatever posts I liked was obviously false advertisement. Coming out here lookin' tow up from the flo' up. Girl go on 'bout your business.

Deandre turns his back to Desirae.

DEANDRE (cont'd)
 (To his friends)
 These social media thots off the hook
 these days.

DEANDRE'S FRIEND
 I keep telling these simp nigga's to
 stop gassing these birds up...

...Desirae snatches a brick. Moves to the opposite side of
 Deandre's car and heaves it through the driver's window.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Desirae slouched on a bench: She's been there awhile. She
 massages her temples...

A POLICE OFFICER walks over to her cell. unlocks the door.

POLICE OFFICER
 Count your blessings sweetheart.
 You're free to go.

DESIRAE
 Really?

POLICE OFFICER
 Someone posted bail.

She ponders this a moment.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Outside the entrance doors, Ezra leans against a wall.
 Desirae steps outside, and crosses to him.

DESIRAE
 How did you know I was in there?

EZRA
 I have my ways.

She shoots him a yearning glance; wishing to understand him.

DESIRAE
 Who are you?

A WHITE BUTTERFLY floats past them.

EZRA

Like the butterfly I float from one soul to the next. Imparting his words of wisdom to those who are in need of it.

DESIRAE

Any wisdom for someone trying to get their life back?

EZRA

Seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

DESIRAE

How?

EZRA

Go back to the Garden.

DESIRAE

Why?

EZRA

It's not my place to tell you why. But if you want the answers you seek, you must go back.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

The Gardens are deserted, save for An OLD WOMAN who attends to flowers on a pathway.

Desirae crosses over to her.

DESIRAE

Excuse me ma'am.

Without looking up at Desirae.

OLD WOMAN

Can I help you suga'?

DESIRAE

I'm looking for Ezra is he here?

The old woman stops and stares at Desirae...

OLD WOMAN

I don't know any Ezra.

DESIRAE

He volunteers here on the weekends.
With the a fro. Beard.

OLD WOMAN

(Shakes her head)
Never seen him.

OLD WOMAN (cont'd)

You sure you in the right place?

Desirae looks around, but not a soul in sight. Only in the distance...

WE SEE: An older gentleman dressed in white garb. He ambles along with a staff in his right hand.

DESIRAE

Who's that man over there?

Old lady lifts her hand over her face to block the sun.

OLD LADY'S POV: There's nobody in the distance.

OLD WOMAN

What man?

DESIRAE

The man in the white -- with the
staff.

(Points)

Old lady raises an eyebrow.

OLD WOMAN

Suga' you too young for them eyes to
be giving out.

DESIRAE

Thanks for your help.

Desirae starts off towards the old man... As she moves closer we soon realize the old man is Manny. He sows seeds in fertile soil.

Manny is a peculiar man with unquenchable joy about him. He has a distinct belly laugh that can make anyone smile.

DESIRAE (cont'd)

Hi.

MANNY

My name is Emmanuel, but My friends
call me Manny.

DESIRAE

Hi Manny, I'm looking for Ezra have
you seen him around?

MANNY

I have not seen the lad. I'm sure
he's floating around somewhere.

Manny takes a small seed out his pouch. Holds it to the sky
and examines it.

DESIRAE

What are you doing?

He drops to one knee. Grabs a handful of dirt.

MANNY

Whoever sows sparingly reaps
sparingly, and whoever sows
generously reaps generously... I sow
in good soil so that my work may bear
fruit.

He presses the seed into the ground. Covers it with dirt.

He struggles back to his feet. Moves along.

Desirae follows him. She finds him strange, but intriguing.

MANNY (cont'd)

Are you a virtuous woman?

DESIRAE

(Taken aback)

... I'm not sure what you mean.

Manny bursts out a belly laugh.

MANNY

You're not sure? Well you better find
out. For who can find a virtuous
woman? her price is far above rubies.

DESIRAE

Sound like I'm virtuous.

MANNY

(Chuckles)

With wisdom may you properly discern
the matter truthfully... For how much
better is it to gain wisdom than
gold!?

Desirae shugs.

DESIRAE

Why not have both?

MANNY

Joyful is the person who finds
wisdom. For wisdom is more profitable
than silver, and her wages are better
than gold.

DESIRAE

That sounds good in theory, but we
live in the real world.

MANNY

Not really... Nevertheless, we have
to make our own choices in the end.
The choice to be governed by the
spirit of wisdom, or by vanity; which
in the end is meaningless.

Manny walks ahead...

Desirae's phone buzzes uncontrollably. She pulls out her
phone.

Her eyes light up as she watches as hundreds of
notifications pop up on her phone: Comments, likes, and her
follower count all restored.

DESIRAE

(Clasps her mouth)

Oh my God! Oh my God! Ah!

Desirae jumps in the air with joy.

...After a long moment of claps and shouts, her joy fades to
deep thought.

She stares over at Manny who continues to sow seeds. She
stares back at her phone. Thumbs through photos of herself
half naked.

Then, the voice of Ezra rings in her head.

EZRA

(V.O.)

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

Desirae tucks the phone back inside her pocket. Crosses over to Manny.

As he takes out another seed to plant, Desirae cups her hand out. Manny drops a YELLOW MUSTARD SEED into her palms.

THE END