

The Fake

written by

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Character Name	Brief Description	Age	Gender
Chris	Three months into his new career, post-college. Corporate, suit, tie, buttoned-up	22	M
Jason	Three months post-college and still looking for a path. Bathrobe, disheveled.	22	M

The apartment of CHRIS and JASON, friends who have recently graduated college. They have shared the same apartment for the past several years, and it shows. While not messy, it is definitely lived in. The couch is stained and thread-bare, the easy chair was probably found on the side of the road. There is a coffee table, with a half-empty case of beer, a projector, newspapers, a costume crown, and travel guides strewn atop it. Stacks of books, a tripod, a couple of bottles of rum surround the chair. Barely visible on the floor behind the couch is a portable screen.

At rise, JASON sits in the chair, unkempt and typing things on the phone. He's eating a bowl of cereal. CHRIS enters, carrying a briefcase, just home from work.

JASON
Yo!

CHRIS
Hey.

JASON
How was your day being Chris The Corporate Monkey?

CHRIS
Exhausting. I haven't seen you in a few days, how's the job search going?

JASON
(taking a spoonful of cereal)
Uh-uh, I'm on vacation.

CHRIS
Jason, don't you need to have a job first?

JASON
I have a job. I'm in that awkward moment post-college and pre-employment period where I have no responsibilities and nothing but time and cash. I am living all the stories that I will ever tell. Every story that starts, "When I was your age..." Or, "This one time, when I was hammered..." It's a very important, nay critical, societal role, and I'm fulfilling it.

CHRIS sits on the couch, and pulls a beer from the case on the table.

CHRIS
When did that gem come to you?

JASON
Right before "Supermarket Sweepstakes."

CHRIS
(beat)
What's happened to you, man?

JASON
(shoving cereal into his mouth)
What do you mean?

CHRIS
Six months ago, you were all focused on finishing school, getting out into the real world, and doing things, and I don't know, accomplishing...

JASON
Accomplishing what?

CHRIS stands, gathering his thoughts.

CHRIS
I don't know... Something. Now, look at yourself, you haven't left the apartment in weeks, you don't get dressed, and don't think that I haven't noticed that your last shower was ages ago. You're going to have to start paying off your loans, aren't you? Any minute now, right?

JASON
This is a good speech. What's your point?

CHRIS
Dude, this isn't the Jason that I know. When did you change?

JASON
May 24th. About two thirty in the afternoon.

CHRIS
Wow, that's really specific.

JASON puts bowl of cereal on the table.

JASON

Yeah, my graduation party. I was talking to my uncle about my future plans, and all that, when I realized that he wasn't listening to anything that I said. He's just looking at his phone. So I told him, with the straightest face that I could pull off, that I was hired by a firm to poach unicorns in Zimbabwe, grind the horn into a fine powder that would, when taken in pill form, give you the sexual prowess of a young Michael Herbert and let you fart glitter.

CHRIS

Who's Michael Herbert?

JASON

I have no freaking clue! This is the kicker: My uncle just keeps looks at his phone, says "Uh huh," Cash App's me two grand, and leaves.

CHRIS

Why did he give you two grand?

JASON

No idea, but I'm not about to look a gift horse in the patoot.

CHRIS

You got the fifty bucks you owe me?

JASON

(ignoring him)

Anyway, I look around and realize that no one was listening to anyone. My entire family, and everything I knew about their lives, I learned through my phone.

CHRIS

So, what? Blah, blah, blah... Faces in phones. Blah, blah... No one talks anymore. You came out two grand better for it. Besides, it's not like you're going to change it.

JASON

Oh, no. I don't want to change it. I want to exploit it.

CHRIS

Explain.

JASON

How have you managed be in your twenties and avoid all social media?

CHRIS

What can I say, I'm never really sure if my food is worth taking a picture of. Well, that and I have a life.

JASON

Yeah, the life of a seventy year old. Ok, it's like if reality is dictated by what comes out of people's phones, then it's what goes into the phones that is doing the dictating. Here, like this.

JASON pulls his phone from his pocket and starts typing.

JASON

(continued)

"Hey, guys! Did you hear about Chris' promotion? Way to go, Buddy! Senior Vice-President before thirty!" And...Send.

Pause.

CHRIS

That's not going to do anything.

JASON

Ten...Nine...

CHRIS

So, you update your status...

JASON

...Eight...Seven...

CHRIS

...And the world totally changes?

JASON

...Six...Five...

CHRIS's phone beeps.

CHRIS

You're delusional. Hang on.

CHRIS pulls phone from his pocket.

JASON

...Four...Three...

CHRIS

You're really making an assumption about how dumb people are.

CHRIS looks at his phone.

JASON
...Two...

CHRIS
Text from my boss.

JASON
...One.

CHRIS
(reading)
"Chris! Just heard about the promotion! Looks like you're gonna be supervising me on the Peterson case!"

Silence.

JASON
You're welcome.

CHRIS
(slowly)
What did you do?

JASON
(proudly)
I made sure you were paid what you are worth!

CHRIS
I don't know enough to lead the Peterson case!

JASON
No one does! Delegate!

CHRIS
I'm not qualified to be the boss!

JASON
Well, to be fair, we've all said that about our bosses.

JASON picks up a big book, flips through a few pages until he finds the right picture, and hands the book to CHRIS.

CHRIS
Well, true. But I always figured that I would get there on my merits.

JASON
You don't have that kind of time.

JASON positions CHRIS's hands and the book so that his arms are straight out front and the picture is facing forward.

CHRIS
I've only been on the job for three months!

JASON
And you're very good at it. This promotion is totally deserved.

JASON pulls his phone from his bathrobe, squats in front of the book, and takes a picture.

CHRIS
What are you doing?

JASON
Selfie!

JASON takes another photo.

CHRIS
(reading from book)
Matira Beach, Bora Bora... Really?

JASON
I told you, I'm on vacation.

CHRIS
The only reason anyone thinks that you're on vacation because they read it on... Aw, crap.

JASON
Uh huh, see? I'm right! This is how the world works now.

CHRIS
But it's lying!

JASON pulls the screen out from behind the couch and begins to set it up.

JASON
No! It's giving people what they believe! Listen, people know that we worked very hard our last semester. People know that we're working really hard at our new jobs...

JASON opens the screen to reveal a larger image of a beach with an island in the background.

CHRIS
(interrupting)
Well, I'm working really hard.

JASON sets his phone on the table,
points the camera at the screen,
sets the timer, and walks in front
of the image.

JASON
(continuing)
And people want us to have a good time right
now. I'm just giving them what they want.

CHRIS
And what do they want?

In one move, JASON rips open his
robe, revealing that he is only
wearing a tight fitting swim brief
underneath, and poses.

JASON
Frozen drinks, Baby!

The camera goes off.

CHRIS
Frozen drinks?

JASON
Yeah, like margaritas and daiquiris and stuff.

CHRIS
I know what frozen drinks are.

JASON
Then why did you ask?

CHRIS
This whole thing you're doing, you gotta stop.

JASON
Oh, no. I got plans. I gotta meet this girl
tonight. I think it's gonna happen, Dude.

CHRIS
No, it isn't. You know why? Because tonight,
you're gonna be sitting on that couch, eating
week-old take-out and watching the game.

JASON
(with an exaggerated wink)
Right!

CHRIS
(starts typing on phone)
This is ridiculous. Two can play this game.

JASON
What are you doing?

CHRIS
(typing on his phone)
Ending this. "You guys know that Jason is still in Jersey, right?" And... Send.

JASON
No one's gonna believe that.

CHRIS
We'll see.

CHRIS's phone beeps.

CHRIS
(continuing)
OK, here we go. It's from Monica.

JASON
Aw, that's nice. How is she?

CHRIS
She's good, thanks. "Chris, stop being stupid. Jason's in Bora Bora."

CHRIS looks at JASON and he shrugs.

JASON
A picture will convince them every time.

CHRIS
A picture?

JASON
Worth a thousand words!

CHRIS
Stop this, alright? I don't care if you wanna disappear, I get it. You deserve it. But not like this, man. The truth matters.

JASON
But it doesn't matter. It honestly doesn't. You can tell all the "truth" all you want, and people are just gonna believe what comes through the magic talk box in their hands.

CHRIS
But can you live with yourself?

JASON

Yes. Because I'm on an island about to get laid.

CHRIS quickly snaps a photo of JASON.

CHRIS

Ha! Now I've got the photo!

JASON

(warning)

Chris, what are you doing? That's dangerous!

CHRIS

I'm fixing this!

JASON

Not if I get to it first!

JASON and CHRIS are now lined up across from each other, paces apart. Their fingers are poised above their phones, like fingers twitching above their six-shooter. They squint at each other, the tension is palpable. Somewhere, a crow caws. Somewhere else, a clock chimes.

JASON begins to whistle a western showdown tune.

CHRIS

What are you doing?

JASON

Seems appropriate.

CHRIS

Are you gonna stop? Are you gonna undo it?

JASON

Never.

CHRIS

Well, partner, you leave me no choice.

With a flash, they both start typing furiously.

CHRIS

(typing)

See, guys? Here's a photo...

JASON
 (typing)
 Bummer news about Chris.

CHRIS
 (typing)
 I took this pic in our living room.

JASON
 (typing)
 He's just been diagnosed with... SEND!

CHRIS's phone starts to ring.

CHRIS
 (reeling like he's been shot)
 AH!!!!
 (answers phone)
 Hi, Mom... No, I'm fine... You heard... I'm
 sorry, I have... No, I'm... Can I call you
 back?

CHRIS hangs up the phone, and
 slowly turns to Jason.

CHRIS
 (slowly, clearly)
 You told my mom that I have syphilis?

JASON
 Yeah. I was surprised I could spell it too.

CHRIS
 Text her back.

JASON
 Oooo... Yeah, can't do it. Texts are sacred.
 You might as well tell me to rewrite the
 Upanishads.

CHRIS
 I'm gonna kill you. I'm gonna kill you and no
 one's gonna come looking for the body because
 they all think that you're in Bora Bora.

JASON
 (moving to hug Chris)
 Shh... it's ok, just accept your new reality.
 It's easier.

CHRIS' phone starts to ring.

CHRIS
 (pulling away, pointing at
 swimming suit)
 You keep your frozen daiquiri away from me.

JASON

I always knew that you were more of a Mojito fella.

CHRIS

You are a horrible person!

JASON

Whatever, Dude. You got syphilis on the first day of your new job. That's some really bad luck.

CHRIS

(answering phone)

Monica? No, it's not true! Look, I'm on my way over, it will all make sense when I explain it to you. Actually, maybe it won't, but I'll explain it to you.

CHRIS hangs up phone. Grabbing his jacket, he moves toward the apartment door.

CHRIS

(continued)

I'm leaving.

JASON

(waving goodbye)

Better stop for some penicillin!

CHRIS

(glaring at him)

Who's head just goes to syphilis? Fix this.

Slamming the door, CHRIS exits.

JASON picks up the crown, puts it on his head.

JASON

Fix it? Dude should be grateful for all I did for him. New job, more money. Probably a nicer car. I even got him laid. OK, that didn't go so well, but whatever. I'm on the other side of the world on an island, for cripes' sake. Expect me to fix his life for him? Whatever. Besides, I'm the king. Your majesty! Does Bora Bora even have a king? Who cares, they do now. And the people... They love me.

JASON holds up his phone and strikes a "Who, Me?" pose.

Selfie!
JASON
(continued)

Camera flashes.

Blackout.

The End.