

DARKNESS
&
SUNSHINE

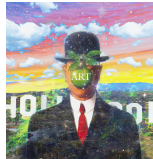
If a writer
falls in love
with you,
you can never
die.

Also by Julian Tyler

PHARAOH
PROJECT STARRY KNIGHT
ALEXANDRIA
MAGIC CIRCLE
CENTURY CITY

DARKNESS D&S SUNSHINE

PART 1



A postmodern novel,
by
Julian Tyler

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

This is a work of fiction.

The story, characters, names, and all events, are
a product of the author's imagination or are
meant to be referenced and read in the context of
parody, pastiche, satire, and/or fiction.

This is not a true story,
but it is about true love, and a real place called
IV.

DARKNESS & SUNSHINE

Book One of a Series

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Signed by Julian Tyler



www.JulianTyler.com

Dedicated to the magical community of Isla Vista

And the amazing people I met there



This book is for you



FOREWORD

A word at the fore, if you would. This novel was a labor of love. This is a love story. This story was conceived and first written while living in Isla Vista in 2003. First birthed from my mind as a screenplay, it was the first screenplay I wrote; written while in college. D&S was my first real literary work. Thousands of hours and decades of work went into this book. Countless drafts of a feature film screenplay, then a TV pilot, then, finally, the novel you hold today. This story and these characters have been in my head, brewing, ruminating, evolving, and gestating for so long, decades; too long. I knew my life would never be complete if I didn't birth this literary work. Hope you love my baby like I do. I conceived this literary baby in a love for that magical little place called Isla Vista...



While studying Film & Media Theory at the University of California, Santa Barbara, learning cinematic history, watching old movies, pondering postmodern musings of philosophical scholars, reading the writing of ancient and modern theorists and writers, studying on the beach cliffs with beers, smokes, and fellow students, I realized I too wanted to become a (postmodern) writer. I yearned to learn how to wax poetic about love and life and what it all means.

I studied and read everything I could. Then I wrote this book. Thus, this literary work, my great work, “Darkness & Sunshine” the novel, was born.

This story is loosely based on my college experiences at UCSB. And I don’t use the word ‘loosely’ at all loosely; this is very much a work of fiction. Set in a real place, with real events and real personal experiences mixed in, true stories I heard from IV party people, this is not a true story. The story is meant to be surreal, to feel real. The storytelling is designed to help reveal that even in fiction, there is truth and the love is real. The story is a Beatnik inspired fictional autobiography. Very much inspired by Holmes’ *Go*, and Kerouac’s *On The Road*, where the events and characters were real people. But here, in this story, none of the characters are based on any one person specifically, including me. Jason is a fictional character in whom I put a lot of myself. But I am not the Jason character, to be clear. None of the characters are me, all of them are amalgamations and decidedly fictional. The main character, the real star of the story, is very real however: the magical place called IV.



This novel is a love letter to Isla Vista. This is a love story. It is a story about coming of age in the postmodern world, becoming an adult, and figuring out what love and life are really all about.

The story is about defeating darkness and finding the light. The moral of the story is: Love is the light. Love is sunshine.

The *fabula* and *syuzhet* are composed of both darkness and light, both the sacred and the obscene, both elitist and base ideas, not to conflate them, but to deconstruct their meaning for us and reveal their purpose to us. The novel is both sexually graphic and spiritually philosophical, aiming to comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable, as a work of Art should. I mixed in all sides with good vibes, with hope and optimism, to excite emotional depth, pull heart strings, and nudge reader's minds truly, madly and deeply. Self-reflexive in style, the novel's structure and form is meant to be unconventional, avant-garde and in that way poetically postmodern.

As a fictional autobiography format, the story is written in the first-person and told from the perspective of the main characters. The story tunnels inside the mind of the characters, to give their point of view on the story. This non-traditional format is meant to be meta and postmodern, and to provide nuance, multi-faceted depth and psychological-Jungian individuation and character development. My goal with the format was a more dimensional, engaging, and enjoyable novel narration.

Lastly, I am compelled to warn you, dear reader, if I do not shock or offend you with something in this book, then I have not done my job as an Artist well and good enough. I'll be shocked if you are not thoroughly offended by something in this book. But, for better or worse, most people today are no longer shocked or offended by graphic sex, drug use, conspiracy theories, religiosity, vulgarity, profanity, or unorthodox epistemological ecclesiology. That said, as the old adage goes, "don't blame the author for what the characters say!" I don't agree with everything the characters in this book say and I fully expect the readers won't either! The book is meant to make the reader think critically about what they think and feel. The point of mixing the high and the low is to be authentic to the world; IV has both darkness and sunshine in its vibe.

This story is ultimately about finding meaning. My goal in writing this book is to forge a deeper, more meaningful connection with the IV community, and my reader-writer friends. I loved writing this book. Hope you feel the love and love reading it too!

Taken on Del Playa Drive, Isla Vista.



Peace. Love. Unity. Respect.

This is IV.

CHAPTER 1

Jason

I'm Jason Arthur Bauer. This is my story. It's a love story. Hope you love it. People love love stories because everyone needs love, or they'll die. We love or we die. That's life. That's why I care, why I wrote this, and why anyone cares about anything, because of love. I love. That's my story and I'm sticking to it: Love. Love and let die, that's how you live. And that's the story, Morning Glory...

Humans, by nature, can't help but to love; can't help but to care about something. Care about love, because that is life; loving is the opposite of dying. Finding love is how you live your best life. Love is our sunshine. We need love to grow, or we wither and die like a houseplant locked in a dark closet. Too much sun, too much love, and we burn. That's the moral of my fable love story, and also perhaps ironically and paradoxically a call to action to burn, baby burn. Shine like the sun. It's fun, and it makes for a great story.

Born on May 1st, 1999, in San Francisco. I'm a Taurus sun and a Libra moon, and I always forget my rising sign because it's on the cusp and I don't know what that means. I grew up in Tiburon, Marin County, a salubrious suburb of San Francisco, but I did not grow up with a lot of money. It always felt like everyone in around had lots of money and my family was quite poor at times. Because my parents were young when they had me, and divorced when I was five, I grew up in two small apartments and no real home. I

have one sibling, one sister named Summer; ever the contrarian she's a cold Ice Queen. She's two years older than me. She lives in New York City now, our relationship is complicated and currently consists largely of liking posts on socials, which is sad. Such is life in the postmodern condition.

I had a dreamy childhood. Before age 12, I remember being happy, in a happy family, and never really cared or thought about money. Growing up, I remember times when my mom didn't know what to feed me and my sister, we didn't have money to buy food. But being hungry made me respect hunger. There is virtue in being hungry, it builds characters. We always got by somehow. We made homemade meals out of strange ingredients, and sometimes we enjoyed it. Sometimes we went hungry. Having money doesn't mean you're rich. Money can't buy you love. Money can't buy you a happy heart. Money can only buy you art; the meaning still has to come from your loving heart.

My parents never had extra money for fancy things, big trips or anything expensive for most of my childhood. Mom was a beauty school dropout who never really had a career. Dad was smart, he bought a house at age 20 and finally got his big promotion to an executive and then traveled all the time. He would appear and then disappear for weeks at a time. I think that's why my mom divorced him. My dad loved flying. He wanted to become a pilot he told me several times. Sadly, he died when I was 13. I'm not super superstitious, but I do get spooked by the number 13. I don't like it. And death and money became fused in my mind, which is probably why I developed a slight phobia and dislike of money. Feels like money took my family away.

My dad died in a freak plane crash accident, on a commercial flight. His death hit me at the worst possible time, he was gone when I needed him the most. We were supposed to finally spend some time together when he came home. And then he never came home. His death was a darkness which emotionally bludgeoned me nearly to death. Every beat of my heart still feels the sting of love lost. My father's death still feels completely unreal to me. It feels like he's still just out there, and one day he'll come home.

With my father died any semblance of family for me. My father was my home, my therapist said. My mother was never a good homemaker, that's why; but she definitely tried. She's the only child of two San Francisco hippies who now live in a commune in Half Moon Bay, they weren't homemakers either. Mom never properly learned to share, and Dad treated her like a trad wife and her few motherly instincts which did materialize, vanished with him. Dad was her home too. She's a woman who knows what she wants and how to get it, but after Dad's death she became extremely selfish and sometimes could not care less. There were times it felt like she was dead too. Once you grow up you can lift the veil and finally see your parents for who they are; you see past who you thought they were when you were a child, and into who they are as people, trying to live and love in this life. Even though Mom was long divorced from Dad, when he died, it hit her hard. She loved him. So did Sister. They were also never the same after death. And I think I reminded them of him, and they moved on from me too.

Mommy dearest, Sister suffragette, and I received a settlement from the life insurance and the lawsuits. We had a trust fund set up for us, accounts created for us, per Dad's will. Not quite

sure how much money is in it, or whatever, but I know my college is paid for, which is nice. I would rather have a father, a family, and student loans. Family matters most. Family is all I ever really wanted. But it's normal to want we don't have I'm learning. Some people would probably trade their family for cash any day, which is sad to think. That means they don't have love. We all want something we don't have. When we don't have love, we burn for it, one way or another.

Mom and Sister became totally corrupted by money; both are lost in darkness; lost in a dark fog of materialism fueled by alcohol, credit cards, sky miles, and prescription drugs. Summer moved to New York at 17. She basically just left the moment she could. On a jet plane. Gone. Mom took it really hard. She felt abandoned. I felt abandoned, too. You spend your whole life with someone and then one day they're just gone. Barely a warning or goodbye. Self-centered and financially self-sufficient, Sis didn't need Mom or me. Mom needed Sister but not me. So, Mom moved to New York too and basically moved out on me. I learned to get along well enough without them both before I moved out.

Thank God I got into UCSB. Best thing that ever happened to me. So, in summary, a negligent corporation killed my dad with faulty parts to save money and the last vestiges of my family, my happy home, was officially executed when Mom signed for a cash settlement from an insurance company. I had no home after that. With a homeless heart, I was off to school.

I knew I had to be smart if I was going to make this college thing work. I was smart enough to know the best things in life are free; sunshine, meaningful relationships, real friends, true love, family, these things don't require money, and money doesn't make

them better. What makes life better, what makes us happy is a place we call home. There's no place like home. I was on the road!

Home in the darkness

Home in the sunshine

Home on the road

Ain't no home for me

Home in NorCal

Home in SoCal

Home IV will always be!



CHAPTER 2

Jason

Nothing behind me. Everything ahead of me. I drove off to a new life, to my future in IV. I left behind my childhood and entered a whole new era; a whole world; a new fantastic point of view! No one to tell me 'no', or where to go or say I'm only dreaming... A new phase of my life, a fresh man, I was officially adulting, titillating, and matriculating as a college freshman. I felt excited. My body tingled all over with new sensations, premonitions of sex, drugs, epiphanies and rock 'n roll concerts on the beach tickled me inside. *This is gonna be fun.* Driving down the 101 freeway, off to a college on the beach. Felt like a dream come true. I worked hard for this, and I planned on enjoying it. Moving to UCSB, with all my worldly possessions packed in the car, seeing the Isla Vista sign, and feeling the vibes take me, was when it hit me. *Isla Vista is my new home. Isla Vista is my chosen family.* For the first time in years, I felt happy. I felt home. *There's no place like home.*

"IV" is my ideal world; a fantasy world really, IV stole my heart. When I arrived, when I first entered her misty wonderland, I headed for the beach to check out the waves. Good waves, including from a surfer girl on her bike, wetsuit top down, string bikini top on, golden hair, sunkissed skin, and eyes like the seas after a storm, she waved. Holding a longboard, she winked at me, beacons me hither, into the wonder, and I felt the magic of this little island view beach community instantly. I had a dream-gasm, an orgasm of the mind. IV is my happy place, my den of kindred

spirits, my soul, and the defining center of my orbit. This is a love letter to Isla Vista. I love you, IV. I wrote this book for you.

“Welcome to Isla Vista,” the sign read.

What is this place? What is Isla Vista? I couldn’t wait to find out. I’d heard stories, but I had no idea.



Let me tell you. IV is a paradise. I would describe IV as a Postmodern Paradise, a physical manifestation and literal creation of the Postmodern Condition; it is a vista precariously perched on the crumbling cliffs of the Wild Wild West and Western Civilization at the end of the world; a quaint place where mostly post-pubescent, scholars from every corner of the globe gather in propinquity to party, learn about life, learn the arts and sciences, learn about ideas like Postmodernism, and earn degrees.

In fair Isla Vista, where we lay our scene... Things do get obscene, but here, this place, is the stuff of our wildest dreams.

CHAPTER 3

Professor Jean-Lucque Lorraine¹

“Le Poète se fait voyant par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens.” I spoke in my native French to set the tone. “The poet makes himself a visionary through a long, prodigious and rational disordering of all the senses... ‘*dérèglement de tous les sens.*’ Ginsberg called it ‘the greatest slogan in the last 200 years of French poetry.’ Deranging of the senses. I call it: Postmodernism. I see we have a question.” I invited the student to speak. This was how I met Jason.

“What is Postmodernism, exactly?” Jason asked the room.

“Sacré bleu! It seems we have a poet in our midst.” Jason smiled with the look of poetic genius. “If Modernism is darkness, Postmodernism is sunshine. If Modernism is order and the material world, Postmodernism is a disorder, the immaterial, aethereal and spiritual, you see? If Modernism is film, photography and the motion picture, Postmodernism is the omnipresent world wide web of digital media, cyberspace, and virtual reality... Postmodernism is the death of the real, and the birth of a surreal, phenomenologically hyperreal reality, literally and philosophically. If Modernism is the 3rd dimension, then Postmodernism is the 4th dimension...”

Jason’s eyes widen as he beams the glowing light of a mind finding meaning and inspiration. He gets it. While most would-be scholars in the

¹ Professor of the class on Postmodernism.

class are hopelessly seduced by the simulacra, lost in the languorous ecstasy of media communication that is postmodernism, consumed by bytes of consumerisms on their handheld devices, the passive victims of the obscene flow of images, and unable to engage with the idea of Postmodernism itself, in real life. Not Jason. Jason engaged with me. He heard what I said, unplugged from the matrix and downloaded divinity in learning about why Postmodernism is so important; I saw it in his eyes. To finally we see what sunshine is, is to glow up and become bright. I saw the light in Jason switch on. I smiled. *This is why I teach.* I teach for the students like Jason, and the joy of watching minds spark and blow open, explode in awakening to the beauty of touching meaningful Truth.

“The Modern world, the old world, before social media, before computers or smartphones, before the war, and all which came before, that world has passed on, is past and now gone. Postmodernity is Modernism’s aftermath; ‘post’ the modern world, a post-industrial, post-colonial, post-material, post-structural and nebulous place even... The hegemony of the simulation, the digital world, virtual reality, and omnipresent artificial intelligence is upon us. You are the denizens of the Postmodern Condition. The map has become the territory, because in 4-D reality, space and time don’t exist, there is only eternity. Zero and infinity are the same, you see? No one knows exactly what Postmodernism is, but we all know for sure that none escape Postmodernism.” A phone rang, an electronic tone echoing violently in the auditorium; a loud haunting, alarming ring which captured the attention of the class, poetically empathizing the point. “Just as none in this class can escape their devices. Jason... Does that answer your question?”

“Yes. Yes, it did. Thank you.”

Jason sat tickled with befuddlement, his infectious enthusiasm lifted up the entire class's vibe. I had the attention of every eye in the class, finally.

"Welcome to Film Studies One Thirty-Three... Introduction to Postmodernism. This class is pass or fail. I'll be your Postmodern Guru."

Laughs and laurels is what I live for really...

"All film school students must learn about Postmodernism. Because Postmodernism unlocks media studies and its philosophical context in the canon of your education. Postmodernism is all about learning to think critically, my dear young scholars... Postmodernism is Critical Thinking and it is Poetry. It is the disordering of your senses, disordering of your world, so that you may find the true and poetic order of your world. That is what education is all about, and what this class is about."

**Education Is Not A Product.
The Students Are Not Customers.
The Professors Are Not Tools.
The University Is Not A Factory.**



CHAPTER 4

Jason

“Oh for a life of sensations rather than thoughts!” That mad-to-write Romantic era poet John Keats, with his dark life early and death, said and inspired the Beats. And that Beatnik John Clellon Holmes, his seminal novel *Go*, inspired me. Any mad adventure [writing a book] justifies rebellion against conformity; a quest for the poetic, irrational, and existential. Modernism was all about rational conformity, and that gave us world wars, death camps, and world ending bombs. That’s why the Beats poetically sought to explore irrational nonconformity. Why not give the irrational a chance? Life is a dance, that’s what the Beatnik poets told me.

Postmodernism is a dance, a process, much like writing a book; and, like any good story, is more about the journey than the ending. Unlike a good book, the more you read Postmodernism the less you understand it. It’s a paradox; a *Catch-22* too. Sometimes there is no end, and no beginning. There’s only the tales of madness created by mad men who cracked the code to break it all apart and see if they can put Humpty-Dumpty back together again for the win. It never ends. How do we win at life? What is life? What is the meaning of this life? What is the meaning of my story? Only the mad ones ask such simple yet rabbit-hole deep questions... I asked myself these questions when I first arrived in IV, and I never stopped looking for the answers... That’s why I wrote this book.

In the dark a light becomes everything. In the darkness of my shadow work, I saw the light. Light is Love; Love is light; light makes might. The light felt right. I sparked a doobie and fought for my flickering flame to take hold, I fought to hold and pass the torch of all the writers who burned before me, and with me. Fire is our story. And as the Little Mermaid said: *What is a fire, and why does it, what's the word... burn?* I burned inside as I stared at the blank page asking myself: How do I tell my story? Where do I even begin?

Well, in the beginning was the word, right? So, the answer was searingly obvious (the good word) but also playfully elusive. "Write a story which must be told. Write something that will change a life, if only our own." The words came out as profound to me. Wow. The word is God, the divine creator. The word creates all things. This is good stuff. I typed away. Listening to my thoughts, not overthinking them, just writing them out, burning for guiding light, remembering all those crazy nights... This is gonna be good.

"I hope you're ready for my story," I read aloud to myself, as the words hit the page. "Because I, myself, sure as hell wasn't."

No offense, but this story is intense. In my defense, this novel is designed to challenge your senses and sensibility. There's graphic sex, vulgar mumblecore, raving ecstasy, divine religiosity, and a quixotic philosophical diversity of thought. The narrative is complicated because people are complicated. The story is intermixed and complex because relationships and meaning is intermixed and complex. In life we may not always know what something means, and we often need to read between the lines to glean hidden meanings in the prose and rhymes. The best writers hide all kinds of meaning for us to find. They are

poets, even if they don't know it, or if they don't blow it. Boom. I blew it. My flame just lit a fuse and I exploded. This story is da bomb because IV is so bomb. The blast radius here is the known world. Blast off. Wax on...

As I sat on my balcony, oceanside DP living baby, smoking and journalling my Gonzo tale of IV, the waves were looking great. The sound of crashing swells called to the surfers like a sultry Siren, and we all flocked to the beach, tar be damned. I had to flock and fly too.

"There's some surfable waves at Devereux, dude!" No way! "Let's go!" Closed my journal. No more writing today. Let's continue this story in another chapter. I'm off to Sands, bro. Surf's up. Olé!



CHAPTER 5

Jason

“The only people for me are the mad ones,” Beat Generation literary legend Jack Kerouac said in his raw, rambling, salacious and sentient work *On the Road*. Jack ran across America, into the depths of darkness and back again, in car, hitchhiking... he was one of the mad ones. Stark raving mad. Mad to write, mad to talk, and mad to be saved. Me too, Jack. I too am desirous of everything at the same time. And I too love “the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars...” Loved that. Jack was whack, but he was a true writer. He was dying to write his books, and he *burned burned burned* to write his books with everything he had. He followed his inner moonlight, and he didn’t hide the madness. Jack’s story and his writing inspired me. *On the Road* really is a literary work of Art. I felt on the road of life myself as I rolled into Isla Vista and enrolled at UCSB.

“None of us understand what we’re doing, but we do beautiful things anyway,” said the fellow Beat Gen writer, Allan Ginsberg. “I believe that we are put here in human form to decipher the hieroglyphs of love and suffering... to take that risk and love without reserve or defense.” I started reading the Beats while high, in high school, but I found meaning in the literature while living in the dorms and IV, and after talking to my Professor about Postmodernism. My film studies professor, a Postmodern Guru, really got me thinking. Left my phone in my room, brought only

my journal and a pencil, and I took a walk to the beach. As I write this (in my journal), I'm sitting on at the beach, smoking a spliff with a fellow truth seeker, staring at the ocean, lit and pondering Beat lit. It was in that lit spirit, staring at the infinite sea, that I decided to write a book. Be fucking bold. Write. Burn bright.

I was so high but also so grounded with my bare feet in the crystalline sand, the energy of the earth and sky met in the vortex of my beating heart, and in a start a fire in me did ignite. Sparks. A flash of divine light. I felt inspired, truly madly deeply inspired, for the first time in my life. It was like flames. Flames! Flaaaames...on the side of my face, breathing, breathless, heaving breaths... I lit another spliff.

The Beat Generation were "the mad ones" for sure. They came of age right at the end of World War II, and were beat down by a crippling depression and two world wars, but they were smart. They were optimistic and inspired, incredibly well read, and far too educated to be conformists. The Beats were proto and in toto Postmodernists who rejected all that came before and saw promise in the great frontiers of the unknown West. They wanted something better. I completely relate so I dig that vibe so deep. I completely resonate with their beat. I identify as Beat Neuvo and for me, GenZ are the Neo-Beats. We are also so beat down by Postmodernity it isn't even funny really. I debated a hitchhiking adventure across America, keeping a journal and writing a book about it like Jack, but realized I don't really wanna follow Jack's path per say. Not today. Jack's not a role model, but he was a diehard writer, and a great American novelist. That, being a diehard writer, I love.

Reading Jack's *On the Road* made me trip and think about writers and their stories... What makes a story great?

The story behind the story, the story hidden in the story, and the spirit captured by story are what make a story great.

Deep inhale, I exhaled all doubt and wrote it out. Thus, I begat the book. Lit, on literature and chronic, I wrote in my journal. I was officially inspired to write a book. It's the question that drives us... And the answer is the story.

I was mad to write, and I burned into darkness writing until the sun and sliver moon had set and I could no longer see the sea. I walked back to my dorm room, half asleep, dreaming while awake, fully woke about what to write about. I crashed out.

CHAPTER 6

Jason

I died, you know? You will. You'll see. Darkness is being lost in shadow, without love's sunshine, without unencumbered light of consciousness. I was in a dark nightmare I could not wake up from. I could not find the light. I was living unconsciously; I didn't have a clue what life was, until I faced death... Death showed me the light. I drifted toward the light, hoping I wasn't dead. I chose life. But the shadows took me.

I choose life! Wake me up, please!!

I finally woke up. Was that a dream? Did I black out?

Where am I? I asked myself.

I must be over the rainbow. Gravity's Rainbow?

Let's go back. I'm getting ahead of myself here. We'll circle back to death. Postmodernism is an intellectual circle and also a rollercoaster. You will want to get off the ride at some point. For sure. But you can't get off the ride. The ride is life. Buckle up, yo. Nobody fucking said life was easy... Much like writing a book, life can be quite difficult. How does anyone do it, like live life for real?

The only way to do it is to live through it. So, off to write I go.

After reading this awesome novel called Pharaoh, by Julian Tyler, a super cool, eerily prophetic, fantastically epic story about a postmodern Alexander the Great and the secret magic of Egypt, I was inspired to copy his format for my novel, and do a rotating first-person autobiographical perspective for my book. I like the

first-person perspective, because it feels more personal. I like to talk to the reader directly. Hi, you :) Can I just tell you, you're obviously a super cool person to be reading this. Like legit super cool.

Call me by your name, or call me Jason, or Jay. Hey. *How you doin'?* I chose to break the Fourth wall because the barrier into the fourth dimension, the Outer Limits, cracks in Postmodernism; we are in Postmodernism; it's a Brave New World post-crack of the cosmic egg. In this story, the reader goes into the mind of the characters, including mine own. In we go. We're going deep, like full *Being John Malkovich* inside my head. Read. Dead!

With you in mind, I'll try not to be an unreliable narrator. A reliable narrator tells it like it is for the reader; an unreliable narrator maybe lies and hides things. Any lie I tell is a noble lie, but, let me tell you, some my friends may ignobly lie by omission, but I'll let you decide and let them speak for themselves in this story. The reader decides, the dude abides. I'm the Dude.

No narrative herein is a metanarrative (one narrative explains it all); postmodernism rejects metanarratives, as does this novel. Welcome to the multiverse of madness. Taken together, however, all the narratives are a reliable narration and holistic Unified Theory of the novel's united narrative and theory of the Postmodern Condition. If that doesn't make sense to you, don't worry, it doesn't have to. Not everything in life makes sense, and some things never will. Deal with it, we must. Trust the process. And remember, I'm just here for your entertainment.

As I said, I'm Jason, I'll be your reliable-ish narrator. This isn't just some story in some book, this is a true story², and my reality. As I said, this story is graphic, sexually explicit, implicitly unfiltered, and perhaps sometimes unhinged, so sorry in advance if you are triggered at some point shortly herein. Don't say I didn't warn you that Postmodernism has a dark side.

Postmodernism is both virtue and vice, ecstasy and horror, blessing and curse, naughty and nice, elitist and base, mighty and mid, and it works in mysterious ways. Postmodernism is a drug, and it can trap you in an oubliette of recursive darkness forever if you are not careful; with demonic technology it can lock you in a bubble you cannot escape; but it can also ignite your soul's sunshine, Postmodernism can light a flame in you that illuminates profound happiness and unlocks for you your true purpose in this life. Postmodernism is a choice between darkness and sunshine.

Choose life! Choose sunshine!

I chose love. How do you know if love is true? You feel it, like sunlight shining on you, you can feel the radiant energy warming you, raising your vibration. If you think and feel you are in love, then you are in love. It's that simple really. But True Love is rare and magical. True Love is touching a love that is hyperdimensional, infinite and eternal. If you find True Love in this life, then you have truly lived. I found True Love. That's what this story is about: How I found my sunshine.

² This is a work of autobiographical fiction, a true story only to a fictional character. Unreliable narrator disclaimer!

CHAPTER 7

Jason

Am I crazy enough to think I could be one of the mad ones? Do I prefer to burn hot and shine bright, live fast and die young, or, do I prefer a long steady life which never flames hot enough to explode across the stars or forge greatness but manages to last to old age? Am I crazy to want the heat? Of course not. Burn baby, burn! I'm burning for you, my love. I burned to live a good story to write about.

When you party in IV you become one of the mad ones too. You burn for fun. Another bonfire on DP... third one this week. Kinda an issue maybe. But we love the flame jumping. IV loves the *burn burn burn* hardy darty by day and party all night social life of mellifluous vice; and so, virtuously, burning on DP is where my wild rumpus began. And, in IV, like a true Beatnik, drugs found me. I found the *mad one's* drug that is Postmodernism, and the rest is history.

Dying to live, I burned for that IV good life. And live I did. Drugs are darkness, but paradoxically sunshine-fire exists in them... Balance is the key to life. If I balance my darkness and sunshine I can thrive and write my novel. Right?³ If drugs don't kill you or permanently scramble your brain, drugs work great, right?⁴ And to be a Beat writer like Jack, and write a great

³ Wrong.

⁴ Technically wrong

American novel, all I really need is a typewriter, Benzedrine, and a cool story, right?⁵

Write! I had to write to live and live with fire right. And so I did.

⁵ Most definitely wrong.

CHAPTER 8

Jason

Wearing my Isla Vista hat I sipped a beer. Breathing the salty sea air makes me happy. I adjusted the paper in the typewriter. Ready to type the first sentence. My first novel. Here we go. "Chapter 1". I paused to admire the typed text and the typewriter I bought for a song from a little antique shop on State Street. I felt like a Beat writer, ready to pound out a book one stroke at a time.

I accidentally hit a key. *I didn't mean to type an "a"*. But I did. Crap. I can't delete it. No backspace. Fuck. *Typewriters are scary*. No spell check; no cut and paste; no inserting a word you missed; no undo! Dude, this is crazy. Type your book, but don't make a single fucking mistake or you ruin the page.

I pulled the paper out of the typewriter and crumpled it up. Writing is hard enough as it is, I can't write a book on a typewriter. How did Jack do this? *Oh right, amphetamines*. I gave up the romantic and completely unrealistic idea of writing anything on a typewriter like a Beatnik writer. Modern technology has clearly ruined me... Sigh. Postmodernism strike again. I sipped and smoked, sad. How can anyone write a book on a typewriter?

After the typewriter trauma where I lost the words and had my first existential crisis as a writer, I realized I should keep it simple. I just need to find the words and my book shall be perfect. Word. Words are so crazy. I went outside. Island views. That's IV. The air was still and crystal clear. I saw the details of the Islands. The bay waters glittered calm. I set up on the weathered patio

furniture, which dissolved slowly in the ocean air, colors bleached by sun and salt burn. I lit a vanilla-flavored cigarette given to me by a roommate. I inhaled it with the golden coast breeze. I closed the patio door (don't want smoke in the house) and opened the window in my mind. "This is the story" I thought to myself. The Island View life. That's IV...

My brain stormed through all the words I could think of. I pondered the creation of language from drawing on the walls of caves to hieroglyphics carved on temple walls, Aristotle's Poetics and all the Philosophies of meaning and reason, the Hero's Journey, and the great works I need to read, and what it means to be a writer. Why do people write? From Shakespeare, to Jane Austen, to Emerson, W.B. Yeats, and the typewriter pounding Beats... so many books I need to read. I wondered if I've read enough books to write a book. How many books do I need to read before I should write a book? How many licks does it take to get to the center of the tootsie pop? Puff puff think. Double blink. Wink wink... What if my book stinks? Impossible. It smells like teen spirit and smells fresh as hell. People eat up the juicy fruit of sexy storytelling and we all love to savor the sweet smell of delicious young love as it blooms before you like a loving hug.

I thought about that alcoholic Jack and how he wrote *On the Road* on a typewriter, typed onto a single 120-foot-long scroll, largely in one marathon sitting, working on it day and night for basically three weeks straight. That's a special kind of crazy. Novelist cray. Nov-cray for days. How anyone could write a book on a typewriter continued to baffle my scroll-fried mind. Jack is a legit Lit Rock Star. And he wrote a book which has taken its place

among the firmament of shining lit novels. I wanted to be like Jack. Crazy to write. And so I was. I hit the road, Jack!

I sipped, quipped, and optimistically ruminated on being a writer. Beat-inspired, beat down, beat up, but still hard to beat, legit IV lit. I dropped a beat, and typed like a writer.

“Hey, Jason! You coming to our party tonight?” Erin asked.

“You know it,” I raised my red cup in cheers.

“See you there.” Erin is a cool chick. She went to high school in Maryland, on an island, at school called ‘Island High’. Her story would make a great TV show is all I kept thinking when she was talking to me. I’ve met so many interesting people in IV... I love it.

CHAPTER 9

Jason

When you notice something distinctly and experience it so vividly and completely, it becomes perfect to you, and sacred in you; it completes you. Isla Vista, California, county of Santa Barbara, locally “IV”, became sacred to me. IV completed me. Sacred for so many reasons and in so many ways... In my mind, IV is a perfect place; a dream-like beach town that isn’t quite real when you’re there, but beckoningly real and magical once you’re outside the bubble. Life in the bubble is beautiful. While you get older, IV stays eternally the same age... I love that.

When you live in Isla Vista, and once you party in mythical IV, on DP, it changes you. IV is a shamanic Shambala, a surfer’s paradise, a student community on a precipice, forever crumbling into the sea; the frayed edge of Western Civilization; it’s the end of the world as we know it, but we feel fine... It’s a party vibe. Everyone can feel the vibe, but words cannot describe. If you were there, you understand. If you partied on the edge of a cliff, maybe went to Woodstock’s pizza at midnight, lit after a keg stand and pong sesh, after partying all day, and ate pizza sprinkled with entheogenic mushrooms while they played your favorite tunes, and you were always going going and gone to *Where the Wild Things Are*... you too may have truly, madly, experienced IV. You may have had a magic romping good time too profound to describe to someone who has no idea where the wild things are... We are the wild things. I am the thing that wilds, watch me. The wild things

come to IV, and love it here. That part is clear. I felt like a wild thing, completely mad to dream, mad to live, mad to party like it was 1999, the year I was born. I bet IV in 1999 was just insane... I wish I could have seen it, and partied in that magical place.

I'll never forget the first night I partied in Isla Vista. Perhaps the best night of my life, this night changed my life. That first night in IV inspired me to write this story. That night inspired me to write about IV, and the incredible feeling of peace, love, community, and unity I felt in this community.

From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step, and I stepped and jumped in the deep end, foolishly unafraid of the depths of the dark waters below. I wanted to burn burn burn and explode like a party popper, pow! Watch me burst like a firecracker of fun.

Stepping into IV was for me, entering the post-world; my own private postmodern theory panacea. Post-childhood but pre-adulthood, post-virginity, sexually awakened, slightly drunk, asleep at the wheel of restraint, full-blooming mind, heart on my sleeve, I was ready for the brave new world of adulting.

IV is where I completely lost who I was and found my true Self. This place was my safe space, a place for burgeoning adults to bond and bloom together, to go to edge and be wild and free to get lost in studies, culture, nature, surfing, social scenes, and parties, ideally all of the above in a balanced approach.

Off to Never-Never Land; I feel like Peter Pan; I'm flying...

Someone gave me some magic pixie dust and suddenly I can fly!

CHAPTER 10

Jason

IV is where the wild rumpus starts, more than just girls gone wild, or wild young bucks running free, IV is the world gone wild, really. A fantasy land of kindred peers and parties... I stood with a guy I just met and now live with, my dorm roommate, Brad, we stood on the start of Del Playa Drive, "DP," and soaked it all in. Other freshman sauntered up shyly from campus, coming from all directions, holding red party cups upside down.

Brushfire fairytales by Jack Johnson playing nearby. I hear Darude Sandstorm, Sublime, Tupac, 80's music, and a club mix of Bob Marley's Sun is Shining... So many parties to choose from. Every house had a party it seemed. Just. Wow. DP was building to a pulsating frenzy, and the night was so young hungry and full of—

"Let's go find some more beer." Brad said, ready to rage.

"Come to 6503!" Two beautiful girls wearing barely any clothes approached us from behind they touched us. One girl was that surfer girl Erin. She stopped. I froze. Her smile warmed me inside. "Come to the freshman welcome party. Wait an hour or so before walking down DP. Dudes are throwing water-balloons full of Jello and spraying freshman with super soakers," she warned us. So nice of her... I love her. "See you guys."

Shrieking cries of pain. A block away. A girl got hit. It was just a water balloon. Five guys up on a makeshift balcony, sitting on a couch which is partially burned, throw more water balloons at unsuspecting targets. Pop. Pop. Pop. Wet but okay, the freshman

soldier on. But one girl screams again because she's embarrassed. She's mad. Her girlfriends calm her down, kinda. Others are hit too. Just water. It's a rite of passage apparently to harass the freshmen as they wander into IV, down DP before 10pm. But the dudes learned their lesson when the wet girl walks up and sprays them all with mace. They didn't see it coming. One guy fell off the platform onto DP. Ouch, bro. Way ouch. The angry wet mob came for him with water guns. He was a soaked and broken mess... People helped him up. Truce was called. The battle ended five minutes after it started and five minutes later raged again. The skirmish ended but the water balloon wars still raged on for blocks. So many wet hot bodies... So much fun.

6503 Del Play sits on the edge of IV, and the edge of a cliff, and the party on that cliff edge looked enticing. They have kegs back there; we could see them. It's the first party we can see, the path of least resistance, we slid in with the others sliding into the DMs of the IV life. Flashes. Selfies. Postings. Hashtags. Tag. BF4L. So it begins. The party starts on social media first with this crowd.

We make our way to the back. People play beer pong, on a Ping-pong table, laughing and screaming, pouring and drinking beer. Inside, a cornucopia of hard alcohol and competing music and party scenes. At the pointed edge of the patio, lovers sit, looking over the cliff to the ocean below. They kiss. Love is in the air. The air is thick with anticipation and chronic. It's too crowded to see where the keg is. Keg stand sends legs into the air. There it is. The guy hands me the tap. I become the master of the keg, Master of the Universe, I control the flow of beer. I never felt such power and want before. But I had no cup of my own. I had to pass the baton. Too much pressure. Cheers. Tears for fears. Stars in the

sky above. Eyes glitter with a desire for love. It's great to be alive and young. Hands hold me, to make sure I stay close. So many faces. It's overwhelming and wonderful. Smiles. "We need a cup."

"You guys need a cup?" A girl said to us. Veronica found us.

We look at her. I know this face. She's in our dorms. It's that girl... She got me beer. What's her name? "Veronica." I said.

"Glad you guys came." Veronica hugs me.

"This your party?" I asked.

"One I helped organize, yeah. If you had come to my room, I could have gotten you guys wrist bands for all the events."

I didn't know what to say. Brad looked away. Veronica sensed something, princess sensed the pea buried deep here, that pea under the mattress was Brad's and my little secret.⁶ Veronica has a cutting intellect; she knew what's going on immediately. Sexual satisfaction is a rare vibe in our GenZ tribe. Brad's uncomfortable.

"Here," she reaches into in her clutch and pulls out two wrist bands and puts one on our wrists. "Follow me." Veronica leads us to the keg. "The wrist bands mean we cut the line, and they fill us up with the good stuff." Veronica grabs the tap from a plebe.

"This is good beer," I yell so they hear. I hear nothing but a thousand conversations and music blasting inside my head.

Brad drinks. Veronica and Brad talk but I can't hear what they're saying. I see more people from our hall. Someone passes me a pipe. I puff and pass. Holy shit. Blue lotus chronic. Gone.

I turned, stoned out of my mind, and for the first time, met the IV legend they call Stoner. So many characters in my story. Stoner is one of them for sure. Such a fascinating character. I love a

⁶ I'll tell you this little secret later.

wicked smart person who's so intelligent they feel divine. He's always high but never stoned. He has a magical mind. It's a fucking superpower I must make mine own. I'm stoned out of my mind. I looked around at the faces around me. They all looked so happy. We were all having so much fun. My new best friends, my peers and fellow travelers in this thing we call life, we all danced in a moment I will remember forever. I felt free. I felt alive. I felt love. I danced on the edge of the world to the edge of reality.

This is my happy place. What a dream it is.

This is IV. Where I will forever be.

This was my first night in IV.