

Let Me Take a Selfie

For Ian

By TheSpiralledEye

A balding middle aged man discovers instagram and the power of selfies; magically turning into a duck faced, youthful woman in the process.

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I sat slumped in my recliner scrolling through photo after photo. After months of being lonely and depressed the bartender at my local watering hole had suggested 'modernising' to try and meet people. Apparently, the days of just going down the local pub and striking up a conversation with people was 'creepy' now, especially if you're a balding man in your late thirties. It was hard enough finding a few blokes to chat with, let alone a lady.

Sick of being my sad self, he'd decided to give it a go. I had plenty of money to afford one of those new high tech smart phones, so off to the shop he'd gone. Now here I sat with a brand new phone, several new social networking profiles and no idea what I was doing.

Facebook required you to have friends to add, so that had been a bust and TikTok had given him a headache. Instagram seemed like a good idea; looking at people's pictures and having a clear in to comment and start chatting without being a weirdo but...what on earth were these pictures?

He scrolled through an endless parade of food, travel photos that were too good to be true and selfies. So many damn selfies. So many overly contoured women pursing their lips, heads tilted to the side as they stared into the camera. I clicked a few profiles and found that almost every single picture they posted was the same; the clothes and setting changed for sure but it was always the same face, the same angle, arms outstretched to hold the phone above them.

So stupid.

Was this really my choice? Either be a lonely slob or degrade myself posing like that? Even the guys were doing it! At least, the ones who weren't literal walls of muscles. They tended to just stare at the camera looking slightly constipated; then again with all the steroids they probably took, maybe they were.

He kept scrolling and to my surprise a new emotion began to well up inside me looking at all the young, beautiful women in the picture; jealousy. They had their whole lives ahead of them; they were beautiful and that was all that mattered, I bet if I looked like that I would be able to walk up to strangers and chat without being considered creepy.

I bit my lip; I lived alone, nobody could see me...maybe I could give this whole selfie thing a try. Who knows, maybe I'd like alright! A little confidence boost wouldn't hurt. I grabbed a random picture, a beautiful blonde with the pinkest, glossiest lips I'd ever seen and opened it up in the corner of my camera app to copy, then started to manoeuvre it into position above my head.

It was surprisingly hard to get the correct angle, the woman in the photo made it look so easy but it was hard to tell how exactly she was holding the phone with only her bunched shoulders to go by. Eventually, I found the angle and started to experiment with my face. I could feel my cheeks burning with embarrassment as I pursed my lips like the woman; no, this definitely didn't look right on a balding man ten years her senior. Still, I had to admit, there was something about the image that made my face more appealing.

I tilted my head to the side so that my chin didn't jut out so much and was amazed by the difference; my jawline almost seemed smoother, my scratchy stubble hidden by some sort of AI filter that seemed to automatically apply. I could feel it though, itching against my skin and all of a sudden found it unbearable. I'd never been a clean shaven sort of guy but now all I wanted was some moisturiser and razor to make my face as smooth as the woman in the photo.

I tilted my head left to right then back again and gave a little gasp...the itching had stopped and with it my stubble had disappeared. I thought it was just the filter getting better the more it saw my face but as I ran a finger over my jawline I was met with smoothness. It made no sense, but my lips quirked into a smile regardless. I already looked better! I never realised just how much older than little bit of hair made me look.

I forced the smile from my face and went back to trying to master my selfie face and pursed my lips. Understanding flooded me, now I could see why women made this face, my lips looked beautiful like this. Maybe it was a bit weird to describe a man's lips, especially my own, as beautiful but they were. Pink, smooth, full...almost luscious. The tip of my tongue darted out to lick at them and was met with an artificially sweet strawberry flavour. I didn't question where the gloss came from, it looked too good for me to care.

It really was magic, how just looking into this camera was making me feel. I snapped my first selfie and giggled, yes, giggled. This was fun. I took another, this time with a hand atop my head, fingers threading through the rapidly growing hair on my skull; I didn't question where it was coming from, only that it looked great. I documented it as much as possible, taking snap after snap as it went from short and punky to long and straight. It was

dyed a number of blondes and browns in different streaks giving it a natural sun bleached look.

It perfectly matched the golden, sun kissed hue my skin was taking on as I continued to pout and take selfies. I pushed out my chest a little, drawing the camera back so that it could capture more of me than just my face. The next few included my lovely sloped shoulders and pink tank top; perfectly matched to my glossy lips.

I could feel my jeans tightening around my new curvy frame, my clothes better fitting the contours of my lovely new body. Somehow I knew my body was getting younger and more importantly, female.

I recognised that I should have been shocked, outraged even, not to mention confused. Men didn't just turn into women randomly after all but honestly, I couldn't care less. I was looking better and better as the seconds ticked by and my confidence and happiness seemed to increase with my appearance.

I could feel the years melting off my skin, the laugh and age lines fading. The crinkles around my eyes smoothed over as my lashes grew out, turning dark and slightly heavy with mascara and liner. With my youth, came style, or so it seemed. I batted my new lashes and giggled again, I just loved how they looked!

I experimented with different angles, small changes made such a difference. Making my eyes go heavy lidded made the pout look flirty, wide and innocent made me look peppy and approachable. My cheeks were now smooth and sharp with a little roundness around the edges, enough to give me an air of youth and vitality, but also cuteness. I was slowly becoming the perfect mixture of cute and hot!

I was now almost a perfect twin for the woman in the photo; even my clothes were changing to match; a frilly edge to my singlet and if the scratching feeling across my now soft thighs was any indication, a matching frill was being added there too. There was a pinprick of pain and earring formed in my lobes, adding a much needed point of sparkle to my selfie. I almost had it perfect....I just needed the right face.

There!

The perfect pout, the slight tilt of my jaw, the ever so subtle curling at the corner of my mouth to give off the barest hint of a smile behind the full lips. Perfect! I hit the button only for my wonderful visage to be hidden behind a pop up.

'YOUR STORAGE IS FULL, PICTURE NOT SAVED'

Not saved? How could my storage already be full! I hadn't taken that many selfies already, had I? I giggled, okay, maybe I'd gotten a little carried away. I began to sort through them all, experimenting with filters and effects until I had crafted the perfect first post. With a flick of my finger it was sent out into the ether and within seconds the love and comments started to pour in.

I licked my strawberry lips in anticipation; I knew this was just the beginning.