

Swipe Left
By Alexander Saxton

As you're swiping through, a profile catches your attention.

A professional-quality photograph of a person who is exactly, *exactly*, what you imagine in your head when you picture your perfect partner. The lighting's good: the photograph snapped at exactly that magic hour when the westering sun turns the leaves behind them golden-green.

They seem happy & healthy; their eyes gleam with intelligence, humour, and the evening light. You swipe through a few of their photos, trying to manage your own expectations, telling yourself that one photo was probably just a one-off. But no: each and every one of their photos, even the old low-quality ones, capture exactly that same essence. This is the person. This is the one you've been looking for for so, so long.

And then, as you reach their last photo, a stone of disappointment drops through your stomach. They're with someone else. Someone whose eyes also gleam with intelligence, humour, and the evening light. Someone who looks sort of like you, but more attractive, better dressed. Their partner. It's a couples' account.

Damn.

Still, just for the sake of might-have-been, you scroll back to the first picture and tap to read the bio. You feel it's worth the moment of your time to find out more about this person who you allowed yourself, if only for a brief & foolish moment, to imagine a future with.

At the top of the bio, written in all caps, is the disclaimer.

"WARNING. PLEASE READ *CAREFULLY* BEFORE SWIPING RIGHT."

"Jac & Jessa. Couples account. Young, fit couple, very much in love. Interested in books, philosophy, the outdoors, and [winky face.] Kink positive.

Looking for a new playmate. SPECIFICALLY, looking for someone to join us in the bedroom, and then strangle and dismember us at the same time, disposing of our mingled bodies in separate trashbags along the highway. The highway is part of it; a municipal road is not good enough. PLEASE do not swipe right unless you're willing to act in good faith."

You pause for a moment, not sure you've read all that correctly.

Then you pause for another moment, surprising yourself as you find yourself considering the idea on its merits.

It's... certainly not your thing. But aren't you out here trying to have new experiences? And mightn't it be worth it, after all, just for the chance to get to know, if only for one night, that one perfect person that you always hoped you'd meet?

Then the moment passes and you laugh at yourself, shaking your head.

You swipe left. For christ's sake, you're not *that* desperate.

... Not yet, anyway.