

# All About You

by Todd Maupin

Do opposites attract? You can reflect on that while I do the same, but from another angle. Our relationship is not symbiotic. It is one-sided. No one else is watching and hoping you will confess.

It is just you and me in this battle. You think I am the one holding things up, but you are the one fighting it.

You are pure evil, sneaking around and cheating everyone as you do, stealing from them. It is a wonder that you can live with yourself. You probably project your deeds onto others merely to survive. Or do you even feel guilt, someone with the guile that you have?

You look so innocent and seem friendly when introduced. Only later, the true you is deduced. You could have been a boy scout, people say at first. Or even a Webelo, we thought, but we were wrong. Everything about you is wrong.

And yet you claim that I am wrong and that the errors are mine. You say left, I go right. You move left, I move right. You think I do not follow your directions. It is not a trick of the light; I have no choice.

You ingratiate yourself to people. Not everyone thinks you are as great as you think you are. Kindness is grating, insufferable to you. It burns at you, as you pretend to be someone you are not. You feign to be another and that is not fine at all. Finally, someone will see through you like I do. You'll see.

You walk along, secretly inflicting sorrow and anguish. You leave a trail of tears, but you never cry. You tear into every path you cross, you leave lives torn asunder. You leave no stone unturned. Two birds with one stone, you never run out of ways to cause pain.

You are not worthy. Your carbon footprint stomps on all others. You are not net zero, the toxic air you leave in your wake. You have awakened the worst, a chasm, spasms of hurt. You do an about-face and it is still about you. You are a man about town, but you are not well-respected at all.

You wake up each morning feeling nothing. But it is not nothing, more or less. You awake feeling the urge to hurt and are already plotting and scheming. Perhaps you never stop planning your transgressions.

You take the time to make your bed, fluff your pillow. You even tidy up around the living room. You dust. You never let the dust settle around you. You do not ask me to help you clean. You know I will not help you. Sometimes I watch and you reward me for it.

You make coffee. You eat toast. You toast to the misfortune of others, your smug mug, uncaring, chipped, and stained. As a vessel, it is poor. You pour coffee grounds into the disposal, you dispose of everyone you meet. You sneer at me then you brush your teeth. Your bite is worse than any bark.

You lock the apartment door behind you. The world is your doormat but you still have one of your own at your feet. Your shoes have soles, James Brown had soul. You do not. You still feel good when everyone feels bad because of you. Superbad.

You take the stairs. You think the elevator is too confining. You like to push people's buttons, but not to help them. You do not share with anyone. You do not care about anyone. If you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and then make a change.

You did not know her like I did. She looked to me for guidance, and an honest opinion. You do not have that with anyone. You told her

what she wanted to hear and she believed you. You said you cared. You could have fooled me. You have fooled everyone, but not me.

You are not a fool. Only fools rush in. You do not rush, you are deliberate and calculating. You are the sum of all fears but no one saw enough clear and present danger to be afraid of you.

Without remorse. You are that old adage about being rotten to the core. You have no core values. Had you enlisted, maybe you could have learned them in the Corps. Or had them drilled into you. But no, you still have a screw loose.

And there you are. Waiting. You shift your weight from one foot to the other. Your feats are not of strength, but of weakness. You are weak, week by week, you prey on others who pray for you.

You seize the opportunity. You live in the moment, you kill in the moment. Your metaphor is formality. You only wound. Wound tight as you are, you do not strike the mortal blow. You allow for a slow death by natural causes. Just because it suits you.

You were uneasy that we knew you better than you know yourself. It became easy for us.

Are you even listening? You only hear that little voice that directs you to cause harm. There is no harm in trying, but there is when you do it. Yours is not the college try. Yours is a collage of wrath and mayhem.

You did not fly off the handle. You were calm, collected, and gather your thoughts before you spoke. Your wheels are in motion, the spokes are a blur.

Who is she to you? Who are you to her? A bad memory, a nightmare on any street. You do not need claws for hands; you can harm with subordinate clauses as you know.

Your words stuck quickly before she knew what hit her. You never hit anyone. You are too subtle for that. Your subtitles do not give you away. You were away before she could even respond. You leaving her was her lucky day and her lucky way. Her path is as clear as the Milky Way.

Who is she to us? You left her in pieces. You left her in peace, but broken. You can do that to anyone and not look back. Your back is never against the wall. You are against everyone and no one.

You told me later what you did. You wanted to see my reaction. You knew what I would think. You knew I have already seen her. You knew she looked to me for comfort in ways she never would you. You wished her drying tears were on your shoulder. You let me shoulder all of the hurt. Everybody hurts. Sometimes. But not you.

You show me your best side. You stare at me hoping I will crack. You don't blink until I do. You want me there to absorb your pain. You need me to stoke your vanity. This vanity is a part of me too. You do not reflect upon anything you do until I reflect for you.

Sometimes you want to strike out at me. What is stopping you? There is no stopping you. You know I will not retaliate. Gone is all that I will be to you then. You do not believe in good luck, you only believe in bad luck.

The seven year itch of it. You could find another to take my place, but you know it will not be the same. Only you will be the same. And that terrifies you.

You wonder what I do when you are not there. You there, boy, what day is it? Not knowing scares the Dickens out of you. You like that I am always there waiting for you. You have alienated all others but I am always attentive. You know I will never leave.

You say others see you differently, but you know they all see you the same. You are not in a fun house. You are not having any fun at all. You are not tall sometimes, short others. You always look the same. Here's looking at you, kid.

When you come to me for pills, you do not even look at me. Some pills do nothing at all. You are not ashamed, but you do not want to see. You know I am still watching. You can deny, but you cannot deny me.

You are the chicken, you are the egg. You play chicken with me, you egg me on. You look to me for pep talks. I'm a pepper, you're a pepper. It is just what the doctor ordered.

You give left handed compliments, but you are right handed. I am left handed but I can be ambidextrous around other people. All hands on deck.

People come to me, if not for advice, at least to confide in me. They look at me in ways they will never look at you. They can look me in the eye and bare their souls. Everyone you know, even those who come to visit you regularly, you do not know them as well as I do.

You ask me questions that I never answer, but you are the one who leaves me hanging. Are there other advisors in your cabinet?

You have full run of the apartment, of the planet, as you should. It is yours more than mine. You only allow me access to a few rooms, but you do not see what I see in them.

You take me for granted. You brush me off and brush me aside. Until you need to brush your hair and then you come crawling back. You allow me to peer into your soul while you comb your follicles. It is all a fallacy: you and me.

I am your spitting image. I would spit at you if I could. Can you imagine?

You want me to show you the you that you want to see. You want to be the fairest of them all. Life is not fair. You look to me hoping for a mirage that no mirror can provide.

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