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## Now You See Me

Kaelyn Buettner  
*Concordia University - Portland*

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# Now You See Me

*Kaelyn Buettner*

*Step one: Survey the crowd.*

The bartender is overworked and underpaid, with a wine stain on his left arm cuff. He notices my gaze and offers a gentle nod toward my direction. Sweet guy really.

An older gentleman is nursing what I believe to be an Old Fashioned, but with his sunken face that close to the countertop, I am unsure whether or not the glass is empty or full.

Feeling a little unsettled by his intoxicated sight, I further sweep my gaze to those around me.

*Ah.*

*Step two: Assess candidate.*

*There he is.*

He is one of the more handsome ones I've come across, I must admit.

Tall, seems to have medium build. So not overly strong, but definitely can hold his own. Good.

The beige-toned suit fits him quite well, notably tailored to his physique. Leathered shoes adorn his feet, seemingly just polished. As my eyes travel further up his torso, I catch sight of a flash of metal. The luminous molten gold caresses his wrist, peeking out just enough from his sleeve.

*Must be at least late twenties... Maybe early thirties? Not shy, but sure of himself.*

Curly chestnut locks frame his face, absorbing the light that seeps through the dusty windows. An almost halo-like effect is present, making his golden skin seem lighter than it is.

*So he travels.*

His fingers tap the top of his knee in a repetitious rhythm, legs crossed casually ankle-over-knee.

I rest my cheek to my hand, preparing myself for the inevitable.

*Step three: Let him come to you.*

I flutter my eyes at the floor and hesitantly lift my sights to his frame, starting from the feet up. By the time I get to his eyes, I see he has already begun to look back at me, matching my gaze.

Our eyes lock, and I quickly try to hide my blush at getting caught.

*Again.*

I sit up a little straighter, and cautiously turn my head in his direction once more.

We lock stares again, although this time I flash a small smile, letting my eyes linger on his lips.

I glance once more to his eyes, tempting him to take action with my interest. I quickly turn my head forward, attempting to seem embarrassed.

*One...two...thr-*

“I’m sorry for bothering you, but do you mind if I join you in a drink?”

His voice is deep with traces of a light rasp, but pertains a slight accent.

*American no doubt.*

My cheeks pink slightly, motioning my hand for him to sit beside me.

“Couldn’t help but notice an attractive specimen such as yourself looking at me, and I thought I could at least know your name. I’m Raymond, Raymond Lewis at your service.”

Raymond takes hold of my hand, raising my knuckles to his lips. A slight peck is given, and I pause to notice the softness of his lips.

I let a smile spread over my lips, reluctantly taking my hand back.

“I hope you give good service.” I sip the remainder of my drink, sweeping my tongue around my lips. “My name’s Alex.” My eyes dance with mirth, and he’s drawn in.

*Step four: Establish connection*

“Well Alex, how about I buy you a drink, and we can discuss the quality of my service.” He smirks as an arrogant air starts to swirl around us.

He waves to the bartender. “Can we get another drink here?” Raymond turns to me, an eyebrow raised as a questioning gesture. I slip my hand to his shoulder, lightly rubbing the nape of his neck.

“Order me a cosmopolitan.” I slide my leg to Raymond’s, our calves now touching.

The bartender overhears my order and jests, “You know a name that’s on the rise for that drink? The Graceful Gay?” He continues to chuckle whilst prepping the drink.

I give a slight laugh as well, and place my other hand on Raymond’s knee. Our gaze brings a familiar tension.

*Step five: Secure the prey*

I clear my throat. “So Raymond, what’s a free-spirited man like you doing in a place like London?”

*We talked for what seemed like days, but were really only a few hours. He was dazzled by my charm, and I in turn actually enjoyed his company. After hours of heated stares, brief touches and innuendos, we finally started the trek up to my room. As we gathered our things to leave, I heard a word slurred by the Old Fashioned man...*

***“Faggots...”***