

The Existentially Unjust Life of a Croissant

It's not been easy - this life. All the whisking, the burning heat, the groping. It's all I've ever known, but somehow, deep down, I know there is more out there. More in this life - there *has* to be. It can't all be just flour, yeast and baking paper. Piles of dough and mixing bowls; all this preparation and effort, just to end up stationary, on display. Waiting - like a pathetic, unwanted show-pony - for some greedy soul to stumble upon me and decide (as if they are doing *me* a favour!) that they want me.

Most of the time I'm not even their target; these heartless, hungry creatures want a hot drink or an overpriced iced concoction. They don't *desire* me, not really. They see me as a 'treat'. A nice, spontaneous 'add-on' to their day. Something they could live without. How insulting; after spending so much time being thrown around, chucked into a boiling pit of fire full of crusty oven-grit, left to stand, naked and afraid, before being strung up for auction and bought for spare change. It's no life.

It's not what I wanted for myself. I dreamed of being a real eye-catcher - a wedding cake, perhaps, or at least a collection of bespoke, carefully-crafted cupcakes, made for a special occasion - and instead I'm here. My prospects are limited. I'm either going to end up on a plate (possibly heated up but this is not guaranteed) awaiting the slopping chops of some regular Joe, or in the bin. That's the worst bit: the fact that being purchased and consumed by some nobody is the *preferred* option. That is - and I feel sick to my stomach to admit it - the *goal*. If this depressing dream is not realised by the end of a working day, it's off to the rubbish for me.

Tossed in a bin bag, left in pure darkness, and thrown in with all the other unwanted waste. Just one sad reject amongst many. If I'm particularly unlucky, I might get eaten by a rat; a clever rodent that has managed to sneak into whichever industrial-grade bin I find myself in. I, in all my glory, ripped apart by oversized teeth, destined to turn into foul-smelling pellets. Is that better than slowly rotting away in a skip somewhere? Is *this* - this violent and disease-ridden death - more humane than being left, unwanted, to have my skin harden and grow clusters of mouldy spores all over my body?

Maybe I should be more grateful to the piggish humans. The ones that line up near my cage, occasionally bobbing their precious heads down to glance at me and my bredrin. They lament my price (*Two pounds fifty for a plain croissant? Fuck me, that's steep.*) and debate my existence (*I prefer a pain au chocolat, to be honest, plain croissants are a bit boring to me*). Sometimes, the smaller humans press their snotty faces against the glass and try pathetically to grab me with their dirty, grasping hands. All this may be true, but surely they're better than rats?

At least they're able to talk with one another, though most of their discussions are quite banal and domestic for my taste (the price of fuel; various, problematic politicians they disagree/agree with; what they plan to do for their anniversaries). There are rarely discussions on high art, classic literature, or what it means to be alive. I suppose this isn't the right setting for such conversations. I have known no other home, but this particular human-eating location seems to be on the lower side, quality-wise. There is a main road in front of the building; cars at high speeds thrash past each other all day, every day. Not exactly what I would call a 'view'. And the furniture leaves something to be desired; old vinyl chairs with tufts of fabric sticking out, tables so rusted with stains they never really look clean, laminated menus with uncleanable smudges baked into them. It is a hell on earth, really, and so I can at least *understand* why the people who frequent such a shop aren't exactly eager to talk about life's riches.

I should take what I can get. Whatever happens to me, it's very unlikely I will feel any sense of accomplishment about it. Maybe that's just not meant for me, the feeling of 'pride'. Perhaps my role is purely functional; no bells and whistles, just something to be made, displayed and then devoured. Some would say my mistake has been exaggerating my potential. That my issue is not my place in this life, but, rather, my inability to accept it. Others are quite happy with this lot. I've seen many-a pain au raisin practically bursting with glee at the prospect of being bought and eaten. Gleeful cannolis, optimistic vanilla crowns, cheese twists with genuine, overwhelmingly positive leases on life. They know the game and have no qualms about playing it, regardless of their role as simple pawn. Maybe I should just reduce my expectations, forget about my dreams - silly as they are! - and just pray not to end up as landfill.

Who is to say what is the best way to deal with my situation? I certainly have no answer, and you - *you*, standing there, glancing at a menu of overpriced coffees and overly complicated protein shakes, with your hungry eyes and barren wallet, deciding if I'm worth the equivalent of a single bus fare - certainly have no idea. Sure, you can try and empathise with my struggle, but in the same way the birds no not of the plight of the worms, you will never truly understand me. Hell, you probably won't even try. I am nothing to you - am I? Nothing at all. So you just get on with your day, and I'll be here, waiting for your lunchbreak. I'll be here, dwelling and internally debating what any of this is all for.

I hope you're happy.