

Ed

Summary: A brief flicker into the life of Marty Jones, a 'J. Alfred Prufrock' of sorts, with an advantageous adaptation of his character in descriptive salutations.

wreck? A literal wreck of panic, Jones stumbled through the street.

"Get a hold of yourself, Marty," he said to himself. The wind whipped up on concrete sidewalk along Madison Avenue. He clutched at his overcoat and pulled it tighter. Always a crowd, he found wherever he was going the mass of people moved against him. "This will work out," he muttered.

He found out his wife was cheating on him earlier that morning. He knew all along. He also knew his children were not his children, but that took longer for him to recognize and come to terms with. When he saw Robert, her friend, look in her eyes at the Christmas party they held every year one year, and the look she gave him back, he knew. He then put together why John could build blocks so well and Janine was a wiz with mathematics. Marty taught history at the local public high school. So when Janine learned long division and John grew fond of automobiles and carpentry, Robert being a contractor, and Marty's wife a physical therapist, putting two and two together when he looked into their eyes and saw they were not his, Marty looked for ways to forget what he knew. He took classes at a local community college to learn science and parts and mathematics and electrical engineering. He was average, to a degree, though he carried a four point GPA. It helped him relate to his kids and help them with their homework.

- Chronology:
- 1) at Christmas party one year, look between Robert and X
  - 2) children have disabilities realize his
  - 3) he takes classes
  - 4) wife leaves

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

That morning <sup>home?</sup> his wife came over after having slept at her mother's and taking the kids <sup>fallen</sup> out of the blue the night before while he was grading papers and doing homework after helping the children with <sup>wash</sup> whatever they were working on. He nodded after she told him, which she did not expect; so flustered, taken aback, she packed her things as well as the young ones <sup>what?</sup> into a <sup>?</sup> suitcase and left. She ushered them out the doorway.

"Is daddy coming?" Janine said. John just looked back. Marty looked to his work, and the house was quiet when the door closed. <sup>who?</sup> Charlotte Jones, <sup>important?</sup> née Cheniér, came to the door with <sup>Is she his wife?</sup> Robert McNamara with <sup>why?</sup> divorce papers and a paternity suit. Marty signed the papers and agreed to the test. Robert grinned down at him with a sneer close to a leer, <sup>?</sup> though in good spirits. Charlotte looked awkward as if she wanted the five minutes to go by fast, <sup>?</sup> [after seeing no fuss was to be made]; she bowed slightly under Robert's hand. <sup>?</sup>

"You never had time for me, Marty. If you made time for me maybe we could work it out, but I've never felt connected to you." <sup>time? false? matter?</sup>

After signing the papers, Marty <sup>why?</sup> (Martin) Jones walked along Madison Avenue, before stopping at his favorite <sup>that had</sup> café he frequented since his early twenties to sit for a cup. Sandra-Shay was working. He liked her, as she did him. She never asked questions—just small talk. He liked that.

"The usual <sup>?</sup> Marty?" she asked. <sup>? is this how he treats people he likes?</sup>  
"Of course, you sniveling cretin. What did you think I was going to ask for, a rope?" <sup>would she know what going on?</sup>  
"Easy, Marty," she said. "You've never talked to me that way before."

"Then maybe you should do your job and get me a cup of coffee," he said. She seemed crestfallen, and abject, left to run his order <sup>?</sup> [to the baristas in the back of the shop from the patio-

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): *PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE* BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

area. <sup>Ⓟ</sup> Martin thought nothing. He was beyond thinking for this moment. [ So much was always there, but here, he could be nowhere. ] *huh?*

“Here's your cup, Marty,” she said, after returning with a mug and saucer.

“Thanks, you revolting waste; it's burnt. I've been coming here for twenty years and getting the same drink every time, and it's burnt; how hard is your job <sup>?</sup> Sandy—it's Sunday? Is that the reason? Maybe if you tried a little harder at such menial jobs as making a cup of coffee and whatever else brought you here, you would be something better with your life!”

“Marty, please, you haven't even tried it yet.” Tears welled beneath her sad, gleaming eyes. She worked this job and another while putting herself through school and providing for her family since she was sixteen after her mother passed. As a result <sup>of what?</sup> her father drank himself to death when she was twenty-two. “Please be reasonable,” she said.

“I'll take the coffee but I want you to know what a worthless life you are, Sandy; you are scum, do you hear me? You will never be anything in this life and that will always forever be,” he said. She sobbed and a tear streak from a drop traced her cheek into his cup as she leaned over it in proffered friendship as he said this. She went over to Benjamin, her boss, and asked if she could take a cigarette break. Seeing a crying woman, <sup>as would any man,</sup> he said yes, and followed.

Marty sipped his coffee and smiled. It was perfect. He waited a few moments and sipped. He pressed the button in his overcoat pocket, and the bomb underneath his vest exploded with an echoing ball of fire.

*Hitchcock: suspense vs. shock*

- what?
- why?
- why there?
- why at this way.

JULIE

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

I read T.S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", but I still don't get the allusion.

Summary: A brief flicker into the life of Marty Jones, a 'J. Alfred Prufrock' of sorts, with an advantageous adaptation of his character in descriptive salutations.

Wrong word not a noun  
An introductory clause  
modifying the first noun.

along Madison Avenue clutching his coat to protect him from the wind and crowds that pushed against him.

A literal wreak of panic, Jones stumbled through the street.

"Get a hold of yourself, Marty," he mumbled to himself. The wind whipped up on concrete sidewalk along Madison Avenue. He clutched at his overcoat and pulled it tighter. Always a crowd, he found wherever he was going the mass of people moved against him. "This will work out," he muttered.

Leaving?

He found out his wife was cheating on him earlier that morning. He knew all along. He also knew his children were not his children, but that took longer for him to recognize and come to terms with. When he saw Robert, her friend, look in her eyes at the Christmas party they held

If kids weren't his she cheated years.

this am. or Christmas party?

~~every year one year, and the look she gave him back~~, he knew. He then put together why John

kid's eyes

put together x2

could build blocks so well and Janine was a wiz with mathematics. Marty taught history at the

Run-on

local public high school. So when Janine learned long division and John grew fond of automobiles and carpentry, Robert being a contractor, and Marty's wife a physical therapist; putting two and two together when he looked into their eyes and saw they were not his, Marty

parts?

looked for ways to forget what he knew. He took classes at a local community college to learn

science and parts and mathematics and electrical engineering. He was average, to a degree,

though he carried a 4.0 ~~four-point~~ GPA. It helped him relate to his kids and help them with their homework.

JULIE

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

That morning <sup>returned from 2 night</sup> his wife <sup>packed 2 suitcase for her and the kids</sup> came over after having slept at her mother's and taking the kids out of the blue the night before while he was grading papers and doing homework after helping the children with whatever they were working on. He nodded after she told him, which she did not expect; so flustered, taken aback, she packed her things as well as the young ones into a suitcase and left. She ushered them out the doorway. <sup>she didn't pack the kids into suitcase</sup>

"Is Daddy coming?" Janine said. John just looked back. Marty looked to his work, and the house was quiet when the door closed. Charlotte Jones, née Cheniér, came to the door with Robert McNamara with divorce papers and a paternity suit. Marty signed the papers and agreed to the test. Robert <sup>smirked</sup> grinned down at him with a sneer close to a leer, though in good spirits. <sup>was smug</sup> Charlotte looked awkward as if she wanted the five minutes to go by fast, after seeing no fuss was to be made: she bowed slightly under Robert's hand.

"You never had time for me, Marty. If you made time for me maybe we could work it out, but I've never felt connected to you."

After signing the papers, Marty (Martin) Jones walked along Madison Avenue, before stopping at his favorite café he frequented since his early twenties to sit for a cup. Sandra-Shay was working; <sup>pleasent</sup> he liked her, ~~as she did him~~. She never asked questions—just small talk. He liked that.

"The usual, Marty?" she asked.

"Of course, you sniveling cretan. What did you think I was going to <sup>k</sup> as for, a rope?"

"Easy, Marty," she <sup>said</sup>. "You've never talked to me that way before."

"Then maybe you should do your job and get me a cup of coffee," he <sup>barked</sup> said. She seemed crestfallen, and <sup>dejected</sup> abject, left to run his order to the baristas in the back of the shop from the patio-

*Why is he on the patio if it's so cold?*

*reword*

*Why 2 suit? against M?*

*seems abrupt*

*SEQUEL*

*stronger verb?*

*dejected*

*It's confusing who is leaving enter who*

*Wrong is one or other*

*Why is he snapping at her*

Julie

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

area. Martin thought nothing. He was beyond thinking for this moment. So much was always there, but here, he could be nowhere.

?! ]

"Here's your cup, Marty," she said, after returning with a mug and saucer.

"Thanks, you revolting waste; it's burnt. I've been coming here for twenty years and getting the same drink every time, and it's burnt; how hard is your job, Sandy? It's Sunday? Is that the reason? Maybe if you tried a little harder at such menial jobs as making a cup of coffee and whatever else brought you here, you would be something better with your life!"

?! (circled)

"Marty, please, you haven't even tried it yet." Tears welled beneath her sad, gleaming eyes. She worked this job and another while putting herself through school and providing for her family since she was sixteen after her mother passed. As a result her father drank himself to death when she was twenty-two. "Please be reasonable," she said.

maybe not the best placement for her backstory

"I'll take the coffee but I want you to know what a worthless life you are, Sandy; you are scum, do you hear me? You will never be anything in this life and that will always forever be," he said. She sobbed and a tear streak from a drop traced her cheek into his cup as she leaned over it in proffered friendship as he said this. She went over to Benjamin, her boss, and asked if she could take a cigarette break. Seeing a crying woman, as would any man, he said yes, and followed.

great concept remove great vocab

Marty sipped his coffee and smiled. It was perfect. He waited a few moments and sipped. He pressed the button in his overcoat pocket, and the bomb underneath his vest exploded with an echoing ball of fire.

Why?

WELL, THIS IS CERTAINLY AN EXPLOSIVE STORY. WHAT DO YOU WANT THE READER TO COME AWAY WITH? NICE VOCABULARY! WOULD WORK BETTER AS A LONGER SHORT STORY. IF FLASH FICTION, NEEDS FEWER CHARACTERS. WHY WOULDN'T HE SET BOMB OFF NEAR WIFE, ROBERT, OR WAITRESS? YOU NEED MORE TIME TO DEVELOP HIS STORY, HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WAITRESS, AND THE UNRAVELING OF HIS MARRIAGE.

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): *PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE* BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

Francis-

*I read these opening three pages. It was just as difficult the second time to believe the story, and, most importantly, I can't come up with a reasonable succession of suggestions to make it more believable.*

*First of all, grammar and sentence structure might seem a pain to deal with, but if you want reasonably literate readers, you have to follow the accepted rules of grammar. You might spend some time reviewing the basic rules of common language.*

*Then there's the story. Your desire is to share the experience of a duped man who seeks revenge. The motive is understandable. The guy is upset and needs an outlet. As the story goes on, the guy has lost touch with reality and goes out in a ball of flames, taking with him innocent people. I wondered if the hostility he showed to the waitress was an act of compassion, to make her leave the dining area before the bomb went off. But, if he's compassionate, he'd just go to a different place to set the bomb, and himself, off.*

*If you are to be successful with this story, the reader must have some compassion for the duped husband and father. In this draft of the story, there needs to be a major revision. We are told how he feels, but not how he experiences those emotions, and by default, the reader can't experience them either.*

*I guess a real concern is to have the main character, who the reader is supposed to connect with, is dead three pages into the story. Where can you go from there? You might have painted yourself into a corner.*

*Consider this a good first draft and use your time to re-think the plot, and, most importantly, review the basic rules of grammar, sentence structure, and sequence of action.*

*Good luck*

*Dave*

**Summary: A brief flicker into the life of Marty Jones, a 'J. Alfred Prufrock' of sorts, with an advantageous adaptation of his character in descriptive salutations.**

A literal wreak (*word choice?*) of panic, Jones stumbled through the street.

“Get a hold of yourself, Marty,” he said to himself. The wind whipped up on (*the*) concrete sidewalk along Madison Avenue. He clutched at his overcoat and pulled it tighter. *Always a crowd, he (dangling participle) found wherever he was going the mass of people moved against him. (re-word – Wherever he was going, he found that he was moving against him.)*

“This will work out.” he muttered.

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

He **found** out (*discovered that*) his wife was cheating on him earlier that morning (*was she cheating on him earlier this morning or did he discover that she was cheating on him earlier that morning?*). He knew all along. (*So he didn't just discover the cheating. He knew all along.*) He also knew his children were not his children, but that took longer for him to recognize and come to terms with. *When he saw Robert, her friend, look in her eyes at the Christmas party they held every year one year, and the look she gave him back, he knew.* (*Awkward phrasing*) He then put together why (*his son*) John could build blocks so well and (*his daughter*) Janine was a wiz with mathematics. (*new para*) Marty taught history at the local public high school. So when Janine learned long division and John grew fond of automotives (*automobiles?*) and carpentry, Robert being a contractor, and Marty's wife a physical therapist; putting two and two together when he looked into their eyes and saw they were not his, Marty looked for ways to forget what he knew. He (*who?*) took classes at a local community college to learn science and parts and mathematics and electrical engineering. He was average, to a degree, though he carried a four-point-o GPA. It helped him relate to his kids and help them with their homework.

That morning his wife came over after having slept at her mother's and taking the kids out of the blue the night before while he was grading papers and doing homework after helping the children with whatever they were working on. (*run on sentence*) He nodded after she told him, which she did not expect (*she didn't expect him to simple nod when she told him she was leaving*); ~~so flustered, taken aback, she~~ *She* packed her things as well as *and* the young ones into a suitcase *her car*, and left. (*awkward phrasing*) ~~She ushered them out the doorway.~~

"Is daddy coming?" Janine ~~said~~ (*asked*). John just looked back. Marty looked to his work, and the house was quiet when the door closed. (*Actions in this sentence are out of order*) (*new para*) Charlotte Jones, née Cheniér, came to the door with Robert McNamara with divorce papers

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): *PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE* BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

and a paternity suit. Marty signed the papers and agreed to the test (*what test?*). Robert grinned down at him with a sneer close to a leer, though in good spirits. (*This is a very odd sequence*) Charlotte looked awkward as if she wanted the five minutes to go by fast, after seeing no fuss was to be made; *she bowed slightly under Robert's hand (what happened under his hand?)*.

“You never had time for me, Marty. If you made time for me maybe we could work it out, but I've never felt connected to you.”

After signing the papers, Marty (Martin) Jones walked along Madison Avenue, before stopping at his favorite café he frequented since his early twenties to sit for a cup. Sandra-Shay was working. He liked her, as she did him. She never asked questions—just small talk. He liked that.

“The usual Marty?” she asked.

“Of course, you sniveling cretan. What did you think I was going to as for, a rope?”

“Easy, Marty,” she said. “You've never talked to me that way before.”

“Then maybe you should do your job and get me a cup of coffee,” he said. She seemed crestfallen, and abject, left to run his order to the baristas in the back of the shop from the patio-area. Martin thought nothing. He was beyond thinking for this moment. So much was always there, but here, he could be nowhere.

“Here's your cup, Marty,” she said, after returning with a mug and saucer.

“Thanks, you revolting waste; it's burnt. I've been coming here for twenty years and getting the same drink every time, and it's burnt; how hard is your job Sandy—it's Sunday? Is that the reason? Maybe if you tried a little harder at such menial jobs as making a cup of coffee and whatever else brought you here, you would be something better with your life!”

“Marty, please, you haven't even tried it yet.” Tears welled beneath her sad, gleaming eyes. She worked this job and another while putting herself through school and providing for her family since she was sixteen after her mother passed. As a result her father drank himself to death when she was twenty-two. “Please be reasonable,” she said.

“I'll take the coffee but I want you to know what a worthless life you are, Sandy; you are scum, do you hear me? You will never be anything in this life and that will always forever be,” he said. She sobbed and a tear streak from a drop traced her cheek into his cup as she leaned over it in proffered friendship as he said this. She went over to Benjamin, her boss, and asked if she could take a cigarette break. Seeing a crying woman, as would any man, he said yes, and followed.

*(The entire scene in the coffee shop is so bizarre it defies any kind of logic. Please think about this section and revise it to represent a more believable sequence.)*

Marty sipped his coffee and smiled. It was perfect. He waited a few moments and sipped. He pressed the button in his overcoat pocket, and the bomb underneath his vest exploded with an echoing ball of fire.

*(Total lunacy, but unbelievable lunacy.)*

Jean Rogala  
Comments

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): *PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE* BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

**Summary:** *A brief flicker into the life of Marty Jones, a 'J. Alfred Prufrock' of sorts, with an advantageous adaptation of his character in descriptive salutations.*

A literal wreak of panic, Jones stumbled through the street.

"Get a hold of yourself, Marty," he said to himself. The wind whipped up on the concrete sidewalk along Madison Avenue. He clutched at his overcoat and pulled it tighter. Always a crowd, he found wherever he was going the mass of people moved against him. "This will work out." he muttered.

He had found out earlier that morning ~~out~~ his wife (her name) was cheating on him ~~earlier that morning~~. He knew ~~suspected~~ all along. He also knew his children were not his children, but that took longer for him to recognize and come to terms with. Three years ago. When he saw Robert, her (wife's name) friend, looked ed in her eyes at their annual Christmas party ~~they held every year one year~~, and the look she gave him back, he knew.

But discovering his children were not his was devastating. He then ~~put together~~ realized why his son John could build with blocks so well, and his daughter Janine was a wiz with mathematics. Marty taught history at the local public high school. So when Janine learned ~~aced~~ long division, and John grew fond of automotives and carpentry, Robert being a contractor. ~~and Marty's wife a physical therapist~~ putting two and two together when he looked into their eyes and saw they were not his,

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Comment [PHS 1S1]: Vary sentence starters

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Comment [PHS 1S2]: I don't see how his kids' skills helped him make the connection. Many kids have different skills than their parents. Maybe have their eye color be a hint. Or their hair color.

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): *PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE* BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

Marty looked for ways to forget what he knew. He took classes at a local community college to learn science, and parts, and mathematics, and electrical engineering. He was average, to a degree, though he carried a four-point-o-4.0 GPA. It helped him relate to his kids and help them with their homework.

That morning, his wife came over after having slept at her mother's and taking the kids out of the blue the night before while he was grading papers and doing homework after helping the children with whatever they were working on. He nodded after she told him, which she did not expect; so flustered, taken aback, she packed her things as well as the young ones into a suitcase and left. She ushered them out the doorway.

"Is dDaddy coming?" Janine said. John just looked back. Marty looked to his work, and the house was quiet when the door closed. Charlotte Jones, née Cheniér, came to the door with Robert McNamara with divorce papers and a paternity suit. Marty signed the papers and agreed to the test. Robert grinned down at him with a sneer close to a leer, though in good spirits. Charlotte looked awkward as if she wanted the five minutes to go by fast, after seeing no fuss was to be made; she bowed slightly under Robert's hand.

"You never had time for me, Marty. If you made time for me maybe we could have worked it out, but I've never felt connected to you."

After signing the papers, Marty (Martin) Jones walked along Madison Avenue, before stopping at his favorite café. He had frequented (Cafe name) since his early twenties to sit for a cup. Sandra-Shay was working. He liked her, as she did him. She never asked questions—just small talk. He liked that.

"The usual, Marty?" she asked.

Comment [PHS IS3]: What's parts?

Comment [PHS IS4]: 4.0 GPA isn't average

Comment [PHS IS5]: Watch the word echo.

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Comment [PHS IS6]: Break this up. Sentence is too long.

Comment [PHS IS7]: Were was she going to live? Her mother's? with Robert?

Comment [PHS IS8]: How old are the kids?

Comment [PHS IS9]: Where is his emotional response to this event?

Comment [PHS IS10]: Is Charlotte the wife?

Comment [PHS IS11]: Does the wife normally serve the papers? Isn't it someone from the court? I honestly don't know.

Comment [PHS IS12]: He agreed so easily? Plus at the top you say he just found out that morning. Did she leave him and serve papers on the same day?

Comment [PHS IS13]: Passive voice. Make more active. Once Charlotte realized Marty was not going to make a fuss...

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"Of course, you sniveling ~~eretanc~~retin. What did you think I was going to ask for, a rope?"

"Easy, Marty," she said. "You've never talked to me that way before."

"Then maybe you should do your job and get me a cup of coffee," he said.

~~She seemed crestfallen.~~ and object, ~~she~~ left to run his order to the baristas in the back of the shop from the patio-area. Marty ~~in~~ thought nothing. He was beyond thinking for this moment. So much was always there, but here, he could be nowhere. - ? confusing.

"Here's your cup, Marty," she said, after returning with a mug and saucer.

"Thanks, you revolting waste; it's burnt. I've been coming here for twenty years and getting the same drink every time, and it's burnt; how hard is your job Sandy—it's Sunday? Is that the reason? Maybe if you tried a little harder at such menial jobs as making a cup of coffee and whatever else brought you here, you would ~~have done~~be something better with your life!"

"Marty, please, you haven't even tried it yet." Tears welled beneath her sad, gleaming eyes. ~~She worked this job and another while putting herself through school and providing for her family since she was sixteen after her mother passed. As a result her father drank himself to death when she was twenty-two.~~ "Please be reasonable" "What's going on?," she said. "You okay?"

"I'll take the coffee, but I want you to know what a worthless life you are, Sandy; you are scum, do you hear me? You will never be anything in this life and that will always forever be," he said. ~~She sobbed and a~~ A tear streak from a drop traced her cheek into his cup as she leaned over it in proffered friendship as he said this. She went over to ~~Benjamin,~~ her boss, and asked if she could take a cigarette break. Seeing a crying woman, as would any man, he said yes, and followed.

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R Marty sipped his coffee and smiled. It was perfect. He waited a few moments and sipped. He pressed the button in his overcoat pocket, and the bomb underneath his vest exploded with an echoing ball of fire.

To much ~~telling~~ telling, not enough showing.  
If you want it to be flash fiction  
you need to decide what can be cut so  
you can add more depth.

We get no emotion from Marty.

**Summary:** A brief flicker into the life of Marty Jones, a 'J. Alfred Prufrock' of sorts, with an advantageous adaptation of his character in descriptive salutations.

A literal wreek of panic, Jones stumbled through the street.

"Get a hold of yourself Marty," he said to himself. The wind whipped up on concrete sidewalk along Madison Avenue. He clutched at his overcoat and pulled it tighter. Always a crowd, he found wherever he was going the mass of people moved against him. "This will work out," he muttered.

He found out his wife was cheating on him earlier that morning. He knew all along. He also knew his children were not his children, but that took longer for him to recognize and come to terms with. When he saw Robert, her friend, look in her eyes at the Christmas party they held every year one year, and the look she gave him back, he knew. He then put together why John could build blocks so well and Janine was a wiz with mathematics. Marty taught history at the local public high school. So when Janine learned long division and John grew fond of automotives and carpentry, Robert being a contractor, and Marty's wife a physical therapist; putting two and two together when he looked into their eyes and saw they were not his, Marty looked for ways to forget what he knew. He took classes at a local community college to learn science and parts and mathematics and electrical engineering. He was average, to a degree, though he carried a four-point-o GPA. It helped him relate to his kids and help them with their homework.

**Comment:** Not sure that character is developed enough to get sense of how Marty is a Prufrock – other than that's he outlandish.

But Prufrock is considered the prototypical modern man—overeducated, eloquent, neurotic, and emotionally stilted. Can you play up these characteristic in Marty? Story ends too quickly for us to get a sense of who Marty is/what he represents.

**Comment:** ??

**Comment:** awk.

**Comment:** awk.

**Inserted:** ,

**Comment:** Build a little suspense before giving it away?

**Comment:** When he saw the look she and her friend Robert exchanged at the Christmas party XX years ago, he knew.

**Inserted:** ir annual

**Inserted:** X years ago

**Comment:** Awk.

**Comment:** This isn't all along—how long ago was this?

**Comment:** Clumsy → realized, then it dawned on him, etc.

**Comment:** This sounds like he figured out re: kids right after he figured out she was cheating. But above you say it took longer to figure out the latter. Clarify. Did he know she was cheating before that look she exchanged with Robert?

**Inserted:** h

**Comment:** Misuse of semi-colon.

**Comment:** This makes no sense as one sentence. Separate out different clauses and build tension.

**Comment:** ?

**Comment:** then why is he average?

**Inserted:** assist

**Comment:** How old are these kids that the basic math/science he would know isn't enough to help them with their homework?

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

That morning his wife came over after having slept at her mother's and taking the kids out of the blue the night before while he was grading papers and doing homework after helping the children with whatever they were working on. He nodded after she told him, which she did not expect; so flustered, taken aback, she packed her things as well as the young ones into a suitcase and left. She ushered them out the doorway.

**Comment:** Is this unusual? Suspicious? Why is it noteworthy?

**Comment:** Long/clumsy sentence.

**Comment:** Told him what? Not clear to reader what's going on – running risk of losing reader.

**Comment:** This reads as if she put the kids into the suitcase!!!!

**Inserted:** asked

“Is daddy coming?” Janine said. John just looked back. Marty looked to his work, and the house was quiet when the door closed. Charlotte Jones, née Cheniér, came to the door with Robert McNamara with divorce papers and a paternity suit. Marty signed the papers and agreed to the test. Robert grinned down at him with a sneer close to a leer, though in good spirits. Charlotte looked awkward as if she wanted the five minutes to go by fast, after seeing no fuss was to be made; she bowed slightly under Robert's hand.

**Comment:** The real Robert McNamara?? Secretary of Defense under JFK + LBJ??

**Comment:** Trying too hard to “writerly”/consciously literary – forced.

**Comment:** This could make for very dramatic opening ☹ then explain that Marty had always suspected something.

**Comment:** Misuse of semi-colon.

**Comment:** Not sure what this means?

“You never had time for me, Marty. If you made time for me maybe we could work it out, but I've never felt connected to you.”

After signing the papers, Marty (Martin) Jones walked along Madison Avenue, before stopping at his favorite café he frequented since his early twenties to sit for a cup. Sandra-Shay was working. He liked her, as she did him. She never asked questions—just small talk. He liked that.

“The usual Marty?” she asked.

“Of course, you sniveling cretan. What did you think I was going to as for, a rope?”

“Easy, Marty,” she said. “You've never talked to me that way before.”

“Then maybe you should do your job and get me a cup of coffee,” he said. She seemed crestfallen, and abject, left to run his order to the baristas in the back of the shop from the patio-

**Inserted:** k

**Inserted:** as she

What's w/ the attitude?  
says he likes her

area. Marty thought nothing. He was beyond thinking for this moment. So much was always there, but here, he could be nowhere.

"Here's your cup, Marty," she said, after returning with a mug and saucer.

~~"Thanks, you revolting waste; it's burnt. I've been coming here for twenty years and getting the same drink every time, and it's burnt; how hard is your job Sandy — it's Sunday? Is that the reason? Maybe if you tried a little harder at such menial jobs as making a cup of coffee and whatever else brought you here, you would be something better with your life!"~~

"Marty, please, you haven't even tried it yet." Tears welled beneath her sad, gleaming eyes. She worked this job and another while putting herself through school and providing for her family since she was sixteen after her mother passed. As a result her father drank himself to death when she was twenty-two. "Please be reasonable," she said.

"I'll take the coffee but I want you to know what a worthless life you are, Sandy; you are scum, do you hear me? ~~You will never be anything in this life and that will always forever be,~~" he said. She sobbed and a tear streak from a drop traced her cheek into his cup as she leaned over it in proffered friendship as he said this. She went over to Benjamin, her boss, and asked if she could take a cigarette break. Seeing a crying woman, as would any man, he said yes, and followed.

Marty sipped his coffee and smiled. It was perfect. He waited a few moments and sipped. He pressed the button in his overcoat pocket, and the bomb underneath his vest exploded with an echoing ball of fire.

**Comment:** What does this mean? Another example of trying too hard to be writerly

**Comment:** Mundane and repetitive. Can you rephrase – maybe as Sandy returned with his [insert name of usual drink.]

**Inserted:** I

**Inserted:** , he spewed

**Inserted:** "

**Inserted:** How

**Inserted:** ,

**Inserted:** ?

**Inserted:** It's

**Inserted:** .

**Inserted:** for your incompetence

**Inserted:** could

**Inserted:** do

**Comment:** I think it's obvious she's sad; no need to state the obvious.

**Inserted:** had

**Inserted:** and

**Inserted:** H

**Comment:** Why is this conversation continuing? Why doesn't she call the manager? The police? Walk away?

**Comment:** Overkill

**Inserted:** "

**Comment:** ??

**Comment:** but why doesn't ask what's the matter?? Isn't that what any man would do???!!??

**Comment:** Then why attack Sandy? What was the point of that scene?

**Comment:** Connection to his divorce? Or otherwise motivated? He just got the papers that morning so how did he have time to build/get a bomb? Hint as to motivation? Why upset his friend before he kills her? So many unanswered questions in readers' mind!

Susan

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

12:25

*Summary: A brief flicker into the life of Marty Jones, a 'J. Alfred Prufrock' of sorts, with an advantageous adaptation of his character in descriptive salutations.*

- needs emotion  
- this could be used as an outline for a novel

- show us what's happening step-by-step

A literal ~~wreak~~ wreck of panic, Jones stumbled through the street.

"Get a hold of yourself, Marty," he said to himself. The wind whipped up ~~on~~ along the concrete sidewalk ~~along on~~ Madison Avenue. He clutched at his overcoat and pulled it tighter, ~~pushing against the mass of people~~. Always a crowd, he found wherever he was going, the mass of people moved against him.

Comment [s1]: A bit awkward-I reworded

"This will work out." he muttered.

~~Earlier that morning, He~~ found out his wife was cheating on him ~~earlier that morning~~. He ~~knew-suspected~~ all along, ~~though, and knew for sure~~. ~~When he saw Robert, her friend, look in her eyes at the Christmas party they held every year one year, and the look she gave him back, he knew.~~ He also knew his children were not his children, but that took longer for him to recognize and come to terms with. ~~When he saw Robert, her friend, look in her eyes at the Christmas party they held every year one year, and the look she gave him back, he knew.~~ He then put together why John could build blocks so well and Janine was a wiz with mathematics. Marty taught history at the local public high school. So when Janine learned long division and John grew fond of automotives and carpentry, Robert being a contractor, and Marty's wife a physical therapist; putting two and two together when he looked into their eyes and saw they were not his, Marty looked for ways to forget what he knew. He took classes at a local

Comment [s2]: I don't know-can you come to terms with that?

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

community college to learn science and parts and mathematics and electrical engineering. He was average, to a degree, though he carried a four-point-o GPA. It helped him relate to his kids and help them with their homework.

That morning, his wife came over after having slept at her mother's and taking the kids out of the blue the night before while he was grading papers and doing homework after helping the children with whatever they were working on. He nodded after she told him, which she did not expect; so flustered, taken aback, she packed her things as well as the young ones into a suitcase and left. She ushered them out the doorway.

"Is daddy coming?" Janine said. John just looked back. Marty looked to his work, and the house was quiet when the door closed. Charlotte Jones, née Cheniér, came to the door with Robert McNamara with divorce papers and a paternity suit. Marty signed the papers and agreed to the test. Robert grinned down at him with a sneer close to a leer, though in good spirits.

Charlotte looked awkward, as if she wanted the five minutes to go by fast, after seeing no fuss was to be made; she bowed slightly under Robert's hand.

"You never had time for me, Marty. If you'd made time for me maybe we could've worked it out, but I've never felt connected to you."

After signing the papers, Marty (Martin) Jones walked along Madison Avenue, before stopping at his favorite café he frequented since his early twenties to sit for a cup. Sandra-Shay was working. He liked her, as she did him. She never asked questions—just small talk. He liked that.

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"Easy, Marty," she said. "You've never talked to me that way before."

is that all she'd say after he spoke to her like that?

**Comment [s3]:** To this point, there's so much to show! This is a third of a book in itself.

**Comment [s4]:** Hard to tell what is taking place when. I think this would work much better if written in scenes and, for the most part, in chronological order.

**Comment [s5]:** Break up. Start with how his wife took the kids out of the blue to her mothers. Then new sentence, that she came back home, although all of that could be a scene, not just a sentence or two describing what had happened.

**Comment [s6]:** So the wife and kids left, and then a lawyer and the wife's lover showed up at the door?

**Comment [s7]:** So Charlotte is his wife? That's not clear.

LITERARY (FLASH FICTION): *PANIC ON MADISON AVENUE* BY FRANCIS DESTEFANO III

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“Thanks, you revolting waste; it’s burnt. I’ve been coming here for twenty years and getting the same drink every time, and it’s burnt; how hard is your job Sandy—it’s Sunday? Is that the reason? Maybe if you tried a little harder at such menial jobs as making a cup of coffee and whatever else brought you here, you would be something better with your life!”

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