

ALLEGORY OF VANITY

Written by

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INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE - NIGHT

The front room of the house is lit only by the streetlights outside. It's an old, Victorian room that has been refurbished in a modern style, but the contents of the house are in keeping with the old age of the property. On the shelves are old fashioned globes, vases and pots, and on the walls hang prints of historic paintings.

The front door of the house opens and the light is switched on. JOE, a man in his thirties, dressed in designer clothes, a scarf, a beanie hat, and pulling an expensive suitcase, walks in while talking on the phone.

JOE

Hold on a sec, I've just arrived...
The audition's at 10am tomorrow. I
know some other people going, and
if they're anything to go by the
competition isn't going to be too
tough...

Joe looks around the room.

JOE (CONT'D)

I've just walked in, it's some old
house nearby. It looks like a
pretty weird place to be honest.

Joe walks over to a shelf and picks up an old candle, then looks up at one of the pictures on the wall. The framed prints are of historic VANITAS PAINTINGS from the 17th Century, a type of art that symbolizes vanity, the transience of life and the futility of pleasure. They include men and women surrounded by worldly pleasures such as jewels, purses, globes, musical instruments, scrolls and books, as well as skulls, extinguished candles and dead fruit, which are there to remind the viewer of the shortness and fragility of life. After examining the prints, Joe puts the candle down.

JOE (CONT'D)

There are some pretty strange
paintings on the wall, and the
flowers all look like they're
dying. The place didn't look so
depressing on the website... I'm
only here for one night so it'll
do.

Joe puts his suitcase on the bed and unzips it.

JOE (CONT'D)

Great, I'll let you know. Speak
tomorrow... yep, yep, bye.

Joe hangs up the phone and puts it on the bed, then turns his attention to the contents of his suitcase. Inside are immaculately folded clothes, a leather wash bag and a laptop. He opens the wash bag and takes out a small cosmetic product called FACE FIXER.

Joe takes the tube of Face Fixer and his laptop over to a table. He looks at the label on the back of the tube, then puts it on the table, opens his laptop and types 'Face Fixer' into the search engine.

He clicks on the first video that appears in the search results. It's a PROMOTIONAL VIDEO, showing young people with perfect skin using the product in the mirror while studying their reflections in amazement.

PROMO VIDEO (V.O.)

Face Fixer, the revolutionary new product from Vanitas Cosmetics. Just apply once and watch those blemishes and imperfections disappear forever.

PROMO VIDEO - FEMALE INTERVIEW

This product literally changed my life.

PROMO VIDEO - MALE INTERVIEW

There were so many things I used to hate about the way I look, and now they're all gone.

PROMO VIDEO - FEMALE INTERVIEW

My face is perfect!

The video finishes on a logo for the Face Fixer product, before auto-loading a review video about the product.

FEMALE REVIEWER ON SCREEN

Hi guys, thanks for tuning in for my review about FaceFixer. Hit like and subscribe to my channel... So, I first tried this a few days ago and was amazed by...

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

As the review video plays, Joe walks into the bathroom with the tube of Face Fixer. He looks at the product, and then up at his face in the mirror.

Joe inspects his face closely, then concentrates on A BLEMISH on his right cheek.

He opens the tube of Face Fixer and looks at the clear roller ball. He then turns his attention back to the blemish on his cheek.

Carefully, he ROLLS THE PRODUCT over the blemish, and amazingly, IT DISAPPEARS. Joe's eyes open wide, amazed by what he has seen.

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE UP of one of the vanitas paintings on the wall. An eerie image of a young, naked woman surrounded by jewels and gold. Her eyes appearing to WATCH ON.

The video on the laptop has now changed to another review video that is half way through, called 'WARNING ABOUT FACE FIXER'. The new reviewer has a serious, alarmed tone.

MALE REVIEWER ON SCREEN

...I've seen it happen to a lot of
people guys, you've got to
seriously watch this stuff...

CLOSE UP of another vanitas painting on the wall, showing a man in a room of treasures, along with objects signifying DEATH.

MALE REVIEWER ON SCREEN (CONT'D)

... this product has ruined
people's lives forever.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

FILLED WITH EXCITEMENT from the miracle he has just witnessed, Joe looks for more imperfections on his face that can be removed. He notices another small mark on his chin. He rolls the product over it and, again, it disappears.

He becomes even more EXCITED, and also less cautious. He is FILLED WITH ENERGY as he realizes he can make his face COMPLETELY PERFECT.

The cutting begins to speed up. First a shot of Joe removing a line next to his eye, then to another painting in the front room. Joe removing some slight darkness under his eyes, then a close up of the eyes of a young woman in another painting. With every shot of Joe excitedly deleting imperfections, there is a shot of the paintings, and the review video continues to play in the background.

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE - NIGHT

MALE REVIEWER ON SCREEN

People are becoming obsessed with trying to make themselves perfect, but it won't work. If you're using this stuff then you've got to stop.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Suddenly, as Joe becomes INCREASINGLY FRANTIC, he mistakenly wipes the rollerball ACROSS HIS NOSE, leaving a smudge mark across his face. He looks in the mirror in HORROR.

Cut back to the paintings, this time to the more SINISTER IMAGERY of skulls and death.

Joe tries to rectify the mistake by applying more of the product, DESPERATELY trying to blend areas in. After a series of CLOSE-UP shots of the Face Fixer rolling across Joe's face the ACTION STOPS. Joe's eyes widen in the realization that he has gone too far.

CLOSE UP of a painting - the most sinister image of the skull looking on.

Joe's face is then revealed in a WIDE SHOT. His features have completely disappeared, except for his eyes and mouth.

INT. FRONT ROOM OF HOUSE - NIGHT

Joe runs into the front room. He goes to his laptop and types 'Reverse Face Fixer' into the search bar. He scrolls through several results all saying a similar thing - 'once applied, the results of Face Fixer are irreversible'. EXTREME CLOSE UP on words such as 'IRREVERSIBLE', 'PERMANENT', and 'FOREVER'.

Joe types in 'Hospital' and it brings up a map on the screen. He picks up a scarf that he wraps around his face as a disguise, leaving only his eyes visible, and puts on his beanie hat.

He runs out of the house, SLAMMING the front door behind him.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Joe hurriedly walks down the street. He looks up at a man walking past and notices that the man is covering his face with a magazine.

He continues onto another road and sees a woman across the street, desperately holding her face in her hands as she rushes past.

Eventually he arrives at the hospital and runs in.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Joe runs into the hospital waiting room. At first he is reluctant to look up, afraid to make eye contact with anyone inside, but eventually he raises his head. HORROR fills his eyes. Inside the waiting room everyone looks EXACTLY THE SAME - all with featureless faces, just like him.

THE END