Dan Lacks Drive

His life was quiet, never loud. Dan was comfortable but knew life could be better. He knew, sitting at his kitchen table eating leftover pasta, he lacked drive. Successful people were driven—empowered by a compulsion to succeed, to ignore anything not on point. Comfortable and compulsion do not mesh.

He painted–was good–but lacked the drive to market his work: find a gallery, start a website, cultivate influencers. Dan especially enjoyed painting portraits, getting faces, expressions, clothing right. He spent weeks on a painting. In that, he was obsessive. But obsession ended there. His walls were full of his work, as was his garage. Friends and relatives had some.

Dan wanted fame. He wanted his work recognized. But the effort to get there was strangely uninvolving. It was for his own good but he did not care. Dan was not lazy, just not ambitious. Or greedy. He would give his paintings away if it would gain him acknowledgement. Indeed, he tried giving them away, people wanted them, but it never went past that.

Dan sat in his living room, watching a movie he'd seen before. Was he a failure? Was living comfortably not success? Would fame make him a better person? Happier? Frustrated, he chose the classic North American solution: he hired someone. The man had drive aplenty. He created a website, put copies of the paintings on Amazon, encouraged influencers to blog about them. Dan grew famous–the subject of incisive articles, posters of his paintings everywhere, also on calendars and coffee mugs, on a postage stamp.

Dan found fame a pain.

His inbox was full of messages from strangers, people wanted his signature on their posters, his doorbell rang into the night. His life was no longer quiet.

Dan went to another city under another name. No photograph had been taken of him, he could disappear. He purchased a nice condo, invested his income, kept painting and regularly watched movies he had already seen. He left fame to those who needed it.

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