

MAX PARADOX

THE ABSURDITIES OF BEING A TEENAGER

A QUIETLY BRUTAL OBSERVATION OF
GROWING UP TOO LOUD, TOO FAST, and IN PUBLIC.



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INTRO

Being a teenager is a full-time job you didn't apply for, can't quit, and aren't paid for.

The salary is exposure.

The benefits include anxiety, acne, and the constant feeling that everyone else got a manual you somehow missed.

Adolescence is marketed as a time of discovery.

What it actually delivers is confusion, mood swings, and a deep suspicion that your own brain is working against you. You wake up one day and your body has joined a startup without consulting you.

Things grow.

Voices crack.

Emotions arrive without warning and refuse to leave.

Nobody explains the rules because nobody remembers them correctly.

Adults say things like "enjoy it while it lasts," which is unhelpful advice for someone whose main daily challenge is choosing the wrong hoodie and emotionally spiraling for six hours.

Teenage life exists in a strange limbo.

You are told you are too young to understand anything

important.

You are also blamed for not understanding everything immediately.

You are expected to behave like an adult, think like a philosopher, and obey like a child.

Ideally all before breakfast.

School becomes a performance space.

Not for learning.

For surviving social experiments conducted by other teenagers who are just as lost as you are, but louder about it.

- Everyone is pretending to be confident.
- Everyone is watching everyone else to see how confidence is done.
- Everyone is failing quietly and posting selectively.

Your phone becomes both lifeline and weapon.

It connects you to your friends and reminds you that you are not invited.

It shows you beauty standards invented by algorithms and reinforced by strangers.

It promises validation in tiny red numbers that never arrive fast enough.

Privacy stops existing.

Your thoughts are screenshots waiting to happen.

Your mistakes are archived.

Your past self is always available to embarrass you at the worst possible moment.

Adults call this "character building."

Teenagers call it Tuesday.

You are told to "be yourself," right up until yourself is inconvenient.

Then you are advised to "tone it down," "grow up," or "stop being dramatic," which is a fascinating request considering your brain is currently under renovation.

- You feel everything intensely.
- You are mocked for feeling everything intensely.
- You are later criticized for becoming emotionally distant.

Time behaves differently when you are a teenager.

Five minutes without Wi-Fi feels like exile.

Five years into the future feels imaginary.

Everyone keeps asking what you want to be "when you grow up," as if growing up is a scheduled event rather than a slow, awkward leak.

Teenage confidence is a fragile illusion held together by memes, sarcasm, and mutual agreement not to talk about how scared everyone actually is.

Everyone is performing maturity while quietly Googling things like “is this normal” at 2 a.m.

This is not a guide.

There will be no solutions.

No advice.

No uplifting conclusion about how “it all works out.”

This is an observation.

Of the pauses before sending messages.

Of the overthinking after conversations.

Of the exhausting effort it takes to look like you don’t care.

- You care deeply.
- You pretend you don’t.
- This lie consumes most of your energy.

Being a teenager is not preparation for life.

It is life, happening loudly, awkwardly, and without rehearsal.

And if it feels absurd, overwhelming, unfair, and strangely funny at the same time—

That’s not a bug.

That’s the feature.

Chapter 1 - The Sudden Arrival of a Personality You Did Not Order

At some point, usually without warning, you wake up as a teenager.

Not metaphorically.

Literally.

Yesterday you were a child with simple needs and predictable reactions.

Today you have opinions.

Strong ones.

About things you did not care about twelve hours ago.

Your personality arrives abruptly, like an unwanted software update.

You didn't click "accept."

It installed anyway.

Suddenly you dislike things you loved last year.

Music sounds wrong.

Clothes feel embarrassing.

Your room looks like it belongs to someone you no longer respect.

- You outgrow your past self faster than you can replace it.
- You are haunted by who you were five minutes ago.
- You feel embarrassed by memories that are still loading.

This new personality is unstable.

It changes depending on who enters the room.

Around friends, you are loud.

Around parents, you are silent.

Around strangers, you forget how walking works.

Nobody tells you which version is real.

Probably because none of them are finished yet.

Adults say things like “you’re just finding yourself.”

This sounds reassuring until you realize you have no idea what you’re looking for, and the search radius appears to be infinite.

Teenage identity is experimental.

You try on versions of yourself the way you try on jackets in a store.

Quickly.

Publicly.

With witnesses.

- You adopt interests overnight.
- You abandon them just as fast.
- You deny ever liking them in the first place.

One week you are deeply into something.

A band.

A hobby.

A belief.

It defines you.

The next week it feels cringe.

You distance yourself emotionally and pretend it was ironic.

Irony becomes a defense mechanism.

If you never fully mean anything, you can never be fully wrong.

Your personality develops layers.

Most of them are protection.

Sarcasm to avoid sincerity.

Indifference to avoid disappointment.

Confidence to hide confusion.

- You act like nothing matters.
- Everything matters.
- This contradiction runs in the background constantly.