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80 years. 80 whole years, Todd.

It'll be your 80th birthday when either you open this, or some young, spunky carer you can no longer be bothered telling to dial down the enthusiasm a touch brusquely reads it out, or maybe delicately places it into your withering, gnarled hands.

Let's hope you don't hold the same disdain for old age and similar fervently hedonistic values to my own, otherwise you really must not be enjoying yourself right now, let alone the ages-old voice of an insufferable juvenile you probably try to forget.

Anyway, back on topic, Todd – we do only have one letter, after all. – If you asked me now, I'd tell you that by age 80 the type of person I'd like to be is both successful and happy, yet there is a peculiar, yet balanced duality to be found there. Would I be the lion who exhausts himself every hunt, works his way up to rule a fruitful and rewarding, but tiresome kingdom and eventually perishes at the top of his game, where, however, it is famously lonely, or would I be the lion who concerns himself not with a kingdom, who perishes watching the sunset, his mind clear of insecurity, surrounded by his cubs who lament of the great time they have shared together. One finds glory and is the best of the best, but ultimately becomes numb to the positives of it, and the other finds peace and does what makes himself happy, but he has no purpose and achieves very little. I realise that now is the time for me to dictate that, and it's a strange time indeed, a scary one, even.

The world is an admittedly strange place to inhabit – not just in general, but especially someone of our generation. After all, from what I hear I'll struggle to find a job, my house will cost a ridiculous amount, crippling debt blah blah blah I'm sure you understand. Neither of us care about that too much, nor do we especially like hearing about it all the time, yet I fear that when others my age are writing letters like this, they will feel the same effects but tenfold, and will lack the vigour required to push through it. I daresay for us these threats only serve as a reason to actually put the effort in, but for others, I suppose time can only tell, but a part of me still yearns to see political and economic recalibration in England, to see the *gunpowder plot* of my time.

I suppose you hold your own concerns about the world by now. I hate the idea of old age, of slowly seeing yourself slowly wilt. Likely you have health concerns, maybe you even know the cancer that'll kill you, much like your father and his father and his father before him. If the possibility I am writing to a dead man weren't so sad, I might even laugh about how much of a lashing your genetics

have given you. Then there's money and family. Two things you'll probably have more than enough of to build an army – a beautiful thing in your youth, but at your age all it'll do is suffocate you. If I'm honest, I'm a firm believer you leave your family nothing. Live in peace, away from the things you don't care about, use your money greedily and give yourself some me-time. You have a known tendency to put yourself in the thick of it, and I'm telling you now it's the last thing you'd want to do.

Speaking of old age tires me, so let us speak of adolescence, of *boyhood*. A time you look on either with disdain and embarrassment, or likely wistfully, with the same rose-tinted goggles I find myself wearing even now when years passed cross my mind. In truth, it's a time of instinct, where you follow your heart more so than anything else, where your emotions get the better of you. I'm sure you really get a kick out of remembering that part of life, thinking about your freedom, but in truth I can't wait to get older. After all, there's a world for me to sink my teeth into yet.

Finally, I hope you noticed the address I sent this to. I know you far too well, Todd, to doubt for a second that the ever-present teenage boy inside you didn't decide almost comically to go straight to the biggest, meanest city he could find, and most certainly stayed there. Cliché as your actions may be, it is comforting to know that I have a prominent presence within you still.

For both of our sakes, I hope the future holds, or rather held, a life that more than anything did not and is not boring you to death faster than old age can drag you.

Sincerely,

Todd