

VERONICA

Description: a highly ornate picture frame, about the right size for an eight and a half inch by eleven inch sized piece of paper. Both the frame and the 'glass' are both made out of Bakelite (a synthetic plastic). VERONICA registers as *different* on esoteric scans, but not really magical.

Powers: looking through the transparent 'glass' reveals the True Platonic Form of everything. Fortunately, the 'glass' is cloudy enough that the item being viewed must be touching VERONICA (while still being visible) for the effect to work. Looking at the Platonic True Form of a living creature for too long is contraindicated.

This Edwardian piece of metaphysical engineering was originally designed to determine the 'true form' of pieces of correspondence; the idea was to hold VERONICA over, say, a letter, and then read that letter's True Form. It was supposed to be a lie detector for printed material, in other words, and as such it failed miserably. Oh, it showed the True Form of the letter, to be sure; but if the letter was a forgery or incorrect, then the True Form was likewise one of a forged or incorrect letter. Useless, in other words. Useless, filed away, and generally forgotten.

Until now! The problem was that Bakelite in the 1910s was simply not transparent enough to work. Clear plastics are **so** much better; they're also perfectly capable of being manipulated in the correct way to make VERONICA 2.0 work. The black-bag project in question is thinking sunglasses, in fact. Sunglasses with specially-ground lenses, which when put on will allow people to see the True Platonic Forms of everything that they see. The project even has a batch of them to test on people.

And that will probably... end badly. There's a reason why humans can't see True Forms, and it's related to the question 'What is guaranteed to drive human beings irrevocably mad?' Which would be bad right there, but here's another problem: do you have any idea how many awful things an irrevocably mad, yet fully trained metaphysical engineer can do in an enclosed space before he or she is put down?

Well. If you don't know *now*, you probably will. Soon.

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