

“Hello?”

“Perryman,” a muffled voice says. “How are you dear?”

“I’m good. I’m good, how are you?”

“Ehh pretty good pretty good. So okay you want to move in?” *That was a changeup.*

“Yeah, I’m ready whenever,” Perryman says watching the breath move from his mouth.

“Okay just know like we said they’ll be no heat or warm water.”

“That’s fine I’ll be okay. When though?”

“Hmmm... heat should be ___day and water ___day or ___day. The ++++++ move in then so we need everything ready.”

“Okay. Okay I gotcha. Well should I go over there now?”

“Yes, I just left. I left the door unlocked for you. I left keys also hidden too.” *Awesome.*

Wow I’m going home.

“Okay awesome thank you Ladybug really I really do appreciate this.”

“Yes of course Perryman. Let me know if there’s any problems.”

“Definitely. Well thanks again I’ll be in touch,” Perryman says with a big smile.

“Yes. Bye bye now.”

“Bye.” Perryman hangs up. “Sick.” He smiles looking upward to the sky. “Okay well let’s order a ride and go home.” He taps into his screen grinning and pulls at his luggage, walking off.

How and why did I end up way over here? Perryman steps through the cool shadows looking up to more buildings as cars slowly pass by in the crowded streets. *Where’s this dude at?* He looks to his screen as he stops beneath a scaffold rig. *Should be coming up right now?* Perryman looks over one of the pipes and out into the street. *Or maybe this way?* He turns his head. *No it’s the other.* He sees a car see him. *This is him.* He approaches the car and it continues by. *What?* He looks down to his screen. *Oh shit it is this way.* He turns back and sees the car approaching. *Here we go.* He stands with his luggage beside him as the car pulls up.

“Perryman?” The man asks to a nodding Perryman. The trunk pops open. *Oh I gotta do it myself?* He grins and lifts up the luggage and drops it in, shutting the trunk. He walks around and sits in the back seat.

“Hey.”

“Sup,” the guy says with a finely manicured beard and straight brim hat low to his eyes. *Okay no need to chat.* The car takes off and Perryman rests back. *Driving all day here would be wild. I suppose you'd get used to it though.* He puts in headphones and taps at his screen and then rests back, closing his eyes. *He really said he was going to tell people about me. Would he? What if he finds me? He's not going to do anything. You don't know though. People steal identities bank accounts. He could ruin my life. He wasn't a sociopath. I don't think.* Perryman opens his eyes to sun hit a tall brick building. *I have enemies now. I don't like that.* He looks to the dash and sees two screens each directing. *27 mins for 3 miles.* He looks to his right at a long line of cars hoods. *Shit I was just over this way. Yeah where you live is in this area. I forgot.* He looks back to the driver who takes a call, speaking in another language. *He's selling right now? Two jobs at once? Gotta diversify here. Money is king.* He shakes his head and looks back out the window. His eyes rest inches from the glass, reflecting off each other. *He'll never see you again Perryman. You're safe. You're going home.*

Perryman closes the trunk, and the car takes off down the one-way street lined with parallel-parked cars. He stands with his luggage and backpack and looks to the clean stone apartment wall. He swings open the small black metal gate and carries his luggage up the stoop. He looks to the electronic doorman. *What was the code? She never told me.* He pulls out his screen and taps. *What's the code for the front?* He stands and waits. He turns back and looks across the street to the line of apartment buildings that stare back. A dark man with long braids stands out on a stoop smoking. *Quiet day.* His hand vibrates *hash tag 7388 5 for enter.* *Cool.* He touches the small metal buttons *#7388 5.* The door unlocks and he walks through and heads up the steps. *Third floor. It's not bad.* He turns up a flight and then another and approaches his door. *3R here we are.* He reaches for the metal handle and pulls on it, pushing the door open.

The pale sunlight bouncing into the kitchen window greets him first and he turns to his left looking down the long narrow hall. His wheels smoothly roll on the wood, approaching his room. *Finally.* He walks in and falls face down onto the bed. The comforter wrinkles against the plastic wrapping beneath. *This feels so good.* Perryman rubs his face against the new stiff comforter. He exhales and then again, as his eyes seep to heavier and heavier depths. *9 days. 9 days. I'm finally alone and in my space. Wow. I did it. A lot of people helped. It worked. For whatever reason it all worked.* He rubs his hands beneath the pillow his head rests on. *This is where I live now. This is my life.*

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In checkered pants and a black t-shirt,

Perryman sits at the table with the faces being chased inside.

They converse through the clouds as Perryman pleasantly observes as one.

Calmly he drinks from his water and straightens reflecting silverware.

Black suited arms serve plates and the fine company begins to eat, proper and astute, calm and natural.

A face turns to him.

“You’re supposed to be here.” It resumes cutting at its meal. “So start believing.”

Perryman looks forward and across the white table to smiling eyes and warm hearts.

Beyond them is vast waters stretching as wide as the eye can see. In the horizon is the long stretching line of the bordering forest.

“P.”

Perryman looks to his right down the long table to a face staring. “Water and forests. That’s all we are.”

Perryman looks away and to above where a distant though nearing galaxy fluctuates.

“Space too.” Perryman says biting at his food. “We come from space. And grow here.”
Those around tap their glasses.

Perryman bends chewing at his plate and eyes around to all the vibrations.

“Nicely done. Nicely done.”

He looks to small running plastic toys ducking behind a plate.

The man sitting on his left to him where’s a plastic shoulder cast.

“These are my children,” he says. “They come with me from time to time.”

“As children...” Perryman starts. *Who did he make those with?*

The two stare at one another and then break contact.

Perryman looks past him

a black vortex pulses with purples and then greens
at the end of the never-ending table.

Whose eye are we in?

What a beautiful pupil.

Underground, Perryman rides beneath dim yellow lights. He taps into his screen as headphones buzz in his ears. *I napped gonna just go to the store now and get some bedding stuff and etc. type things.* He looks up to a bobbing head, a young thin dark-skinned kid with a skateboard and another dude in headphones. He looks back down. *Ladybug also asked me to get a broom and she’ll take it out of rent.* He puts the screen down and sits back into his music.

Coming up the stairs into the dusk cold evening, Perryman’s hit by a wall of frigid wind.

His coat hood is tied tight over his head, and he slices through the invisible force. He squints his eyes as he looks forward towards the distant orange glow. *I need my gloves. But the screen again.* He walks along the sidewalk putting on his gloves. *I need better gloves.* He continues and eventually finds the store.

Inside he looks for the entrance. *Was it on that floor? Should've I gone down the escalator?* He walks along looking at faces and then stores. *It's like a maze.* He heads back up the escalator.

Now in the store he passes along another escalator with his cart. *Shit is wild over here. No it's just new. Get what you need to get and let's go.* He walks down the bedding aisle and browses sheets, comforters and pillowcases. *Just get the pillowcase and sheets. You still don't really have that much.* He grabs a set of light blue t-shirt style sheets and goes on. *Should I get candles? They're expensive. It'd be so nice though. No. What else. Water jug?* He passes a food aisle and sees hot sauce and put it in his basket. *Probably need toilet paper. That kind of stuff.*

\$60.83 the green little digits pop up on the little screen. *Ughhh.* Perryman hands over his card and waits for his bags. The woman stuffs things in many.

"You can just try to get it all in one if you can." She nods.

"And the broom?"

"I'll just carry that," he says.

Perryman walks backwards into the wind down the streetlight lit sidewalk with two large bags and a broom in his grip. *The station was just straight ahead. I know it is.* He keeps walking as few people pass by, covering up their warmth. *Few more blocks. I know it.*

Underground he sits on the ride as others do, paying no attention to anybody.

Walking through the wet tunnel he approaches the tall dark staircase leading to the surface. He takes each step quickly and passes a liquor store, heading on his way down the dark sidewalk. *If anyone comes up kick them in the knees. Shoot your foot right through their kneecap.* Perryman turns left and walks straight down another darker street lined with apartments. *4 more blocks.* The sidewalk ever so slightly slowly descends. A few figures walk across the street, some on block corners. Perryman continues until seeing the lights of the corner shop on his street. *Chauncey.* He turns right and walks towards the black gate.

Inside the bright light on the high ceiling falls down the white walls, filling the room as Perryman stretches the soft blue sheets over the full-size mattress. He steps back on the smooth wood floor, smiling and frames a shot. He taps his screen and smiles looking at it. All set up he taps and looks at the bed and then jumps on it. *This is so nice.* He grins rubbing under the sheets. *This comforter is actually really nice.* He rubs his feet together as the sensations ride through his body over shocking his brain.

Walking down the hall he looks to the thermostat. *63. It doesn't feel that cold in here.* He walks into the kitchen and pulls out a water jug. He grabs a glass from the cabinet and pours it. *These plates and glasses they gave aren't bad either.* He puts the jug back and sips the water. His hand vibrates and he looks at his screen. *Looks nice! How is it in there?* He taps. *Not too cold. I might try to take a shower real quick.* He sets down the screen and looks at the microwave. *That's kinda old though.* His screen vibrates. *Try to warm up some water if you can I used to as a kid when I had to.* He looks back at the stove and then taps. *The stove and gas aren't set up.* The screen vibrates quickly. *Use a microwave maybe.* He looks to it again. *Hmm that'd probably work.*

Perryman opens the big glass door to the shower and runs the water. *Fucking freezing. My goodness.* He laughs. *No chance I'm doing that. Just fill up a bowl a few times and put it in the micro.*

You can wash your face and feet.

Perryman watches the large glass bowl lightly touch the walls of the microwave, as the spinning is impossible to notice. As the microwave dully hums, Perryman spins on the soft wood. He looks up to the high ceiling. *This is so crazy I just live here now. And have a job. Like actually live here. Siῶva's going to be here. We're finally going to have our own space. In this world too.* He looks at the square mirror hanging on the wall. *Wow. It all just happened too.* The microwave dings and he slides over to it. He touches the water *okay 7 minutes was good.*

Sitting on the black tile of the shower, Perryman rolls up his sweatpants and dips his feet in the warm water. *Ooohh. It's like a hot tub.* He leans back on his arms, scrunching up shoulders with his hands resting on the cold tile as he tries fitting his feet entirely in the bowl beneath the water. *Just a few days of this. It's kinda funny.* He leans forward and scrubs at them with body wash. *Just do the same thing for your face.* He continues scrubbing. *Maybe 8 or 9 minutes though.*

Under sheets Perryman rubs at his legs for warmth. *It is cold in here won't lie. It's okay you'll be good.* He reaches out beneath the sheets for a pair of socks on the floor and puts them on. *You have your own bed. How amazing.* He looks up to the high ceiling. *You're alone and you have your own space. Can sleep in. Can do anything.* He curls up with the comforter eyeing down at the bottom of the bed to the tall thin window. *Your little nook in the universe right now. Be happy and grateful.* He closes his eyes and slows his breath as the warmth from inside exudes from his body, loosening the tight grip his mind bears. *Relax.* His hands lay limp and he pleasantly drifts away.

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