

## **Inescapable and Ultimately Destructive**

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“Don't ask questions you already know the answer to.” I said.

“Um...” you don't respond with an actual thought.

Instead you leave the room. You go sit in the next room alone. I hope you spend the time pondering my single retort. You don't easily brush off those kinds of statement. I can't pretend I know that as fact, after all what do I really know these days.

You walk back in, give me one look with those eyes of yours, and walk back out. You must still be in shock.

Finally, it has been hours, you walk back in. You take a few steps towards me and sit on the floor.

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

etc... an entire conversation without a transcript. Just blank glaring stares, our typical conversations. Why do I even bother to expect an apology? I bet you are thinking the same thing.

“Well?” I say, breaking the silence.

It was too many words. You get up to leave the room again, but not before stabbing me with your eyes until I concede. I blink. You never quite turn your back to me as you leave. Your hand reaches the first knob in front of you.

You slam the door behind you, but it is the wrong door. You are now in our closet. But it is devoid of your possession at the moment, so it is really my closet.

Your stuff is in a big red duffle bag on the foot of the bed. You don't even bother folding most of it this time.

Your anger screams from the door, but you are too proud to admit your fuck up. Instead you stand in the 4x4 box: your personal catacomb for the moment. I imagine the worst part for you is that it smells like me. My clothes cohabit the space. It is dark, and the light switch is on the outside.

You sit down. I can picture your back pressed against the door. The light comes on. You lock the door, not wanting to deal with me. It is understandable; I'm kind of being a prick right now.

I imagine our moments flashing before your eyes. First slowly like an old projector warming up. Towards the end they get fuzzy, the bulb is burning too hot, then suddenly dim. The last few seem like a glow or a shadow. It occurs to you that you don't know how the old projectors you are envisioning work. You feel a drop drag across your cheek; it was pulled down from your eyelash by gravity. At least you can rationalize it in that sense. There must have been some good moments in there, but you don't know anymore. Do you remember a time I wasn't such an asshole?

You feel the door vibrate when I softly knock. I want to believe your hand moves towards the knob to unlock it and then lowers just as your fingertips feel the cold bronze knob. You don't unlock it, but it doesn't matter.

"I'm going for a walk" I tell the closet door.

I don't have to say anything else before I leave. I could say something; I often say unnecessary things. You constantly attack me for saying extra things. You expect me to say something.

No, I made my point.

I don't want to leave the house, but you might stay in that closet all night if I don't. I wonder what else will be broken when I get back.

Part of me wants to trick you, open and close the front door and sit quietly until, like a mouse, you come crawling out. There are two problems with this. The first is that there would be nothing to gain from watching you come out; the second is that I can't deceive you. That's your game. I don't play it.

You hear the bedroom door close. Even the contact that the door makes against the frame carries the passive aggressive tone you consider synonymies with me. You press your ear against the closet door and listen for my footsteps. You try to convince

yourself that I am still in the room trying to trick you. You hope I still want to talk, even though you don't want to. You finally step out of the closet and into the empty room; it is lit by a single cheap old porcelain lamp that belonged to a relative of mine. There used to be a pair of them, but one of them “fell” off your nightstand.

Standing outside the house, I see your silhouette through the white curtain covered window. I wonder if that is what drew me to you, I didn't know better. I cross the street and proceed on my walk. Each step with my left foot affirms that tomorrow I will believe that tonight never happened. Each step with my right foot begs the question ‘how many times have I taken this walk?’

Left. Right Left. Right. Monotony.

I step in a puddle left by a neighbor's running sprinkler; the recycled water gives my right footprints a trail. A momentary record of half of my walk.

There is no moon in the sky tonight; instead the orange glowing streetlights illuminate the pavement and cover the stars' gentile glimmer. I don't bother looking up; instead my eyes follow my feet as I wander.

Meanwhile, at some point, you finally get out of the closet. You are angry. You will probably break something before I return.

At about 1:47am I decide to start walking back. The road appears empty, so I cross in the middle of the road. Two cars come careening down the street. They must be drag racing because they are going fast. I feel like I am a deer on the freeway. All I see are lights getting brighter as they move towards me. Thumping bass pounds out of one car's window. I don't have the cliché moment where my life is suppose to flash before my eyes, and then neither car hits me. I see their red tale lights disappear around a corner.

I almost died. Then what would have happened? More importantly, what would have happened to you? Would you even miss me? I don't know which question incites my panic, or if it was just the reality of my own mortality. Regardless, my heart it pounding out of my chest. I can barely get myself to move at first, but I flush crisp air into my lungs until I can feel my feet again.

My heart starts relaxing as I walk back to our house; the one my uncle owned and we moved into when he retired to Florida. You have packed your things and left that house so many times. I don't know where you get all those suitcases; it seems like you are always packing into a different suitcase. I've come to associate this act with a taste; I guess I've developed a taste for heartbreak. It is the taste of cheap hard cider; it starts almost sweet and gets drastically worse with each drop. It quickly starts to taste like piss. It is warm and disgusting, every time you try to move out.

I see a raccoon picking its meal out of a trashcan. She and I exchange the first tensionless eye contact of my night. She seems to know that the trash is not mine and that I am too worn out to step any closer. My feet are dragging at this point.

Meanwhile, you've been hard at work. You've caused your usual collateral damage. You've collected the rest of your things into a second duffle bag. You wonder how so much of your stuff made it into our/my house this time. You contemplate taking the cat with you this time, but you know that Harris has never been your reason for returning. He likes me better anyway. 'What a dumb name for a cat' you think. I named it. You remember voicing your contempt when I named it, but I didn't care. I didn't listen to you. You wonder if I ever listen to you. You wonder if I value you at all.

You grab your bags and drag them to the garage door. You throw them into the trunk. You forget to close the trunk. You open the garage door; you get in the car. Even though you can't see through the back windshield with the trunk door in the way, you back out of the garage.

Time passes.

I return back to the house and notice my window is dark. You must have broken my uncle's other lamp. The garage door is open, and your car is halfway down the driveway, backed into my old green Ford's front bumper.

You didn't even leave before you came back this time. I'm relieved. It's harder to sleep without you.

I sneak back into my own house. You've had a bad night and I don't want to wake you. As usual, the fridge is wide open, and most of its contents have been tossed around the kitchen. Harris is sitting on the shelf in the fridge.

“Silly cat, get out of there” I say to him.

He looks up at me. Then he jumps out of the fridge. What a strange animal. You picked him out.

I clean up. Not very well, I don't put anything back on what you consider the “right shelf.” After all, if I did, then what would we fight about in the morning?

I let you keep my bed to yourself tonight. I crash on the couch.

“Goodnight” I call out from the living room. It’s just nice to share our bed with you, even if I’m not in it.

“Fuck you” you mumble back from behind my door.