

*How did I ever feel comfortable in this shithole?*

Most of the hallway was covered by this old unhinged door sprawled across the floor across some tarp. The fresh coat of paint kept the door from looking like a hobo with leprosy died while lying on it for the duration of a student film about some hipster douchebag sitting on a couch giving some inner monologue about how his trust funds don't fulfill his soul. But the hinges were still so rusty that if I put the door back up into the doorway I feel like it would fall down if I stared at it with an excessively judgmental gaze.

Wait, something on the top hinge is sticky. Jesus Christ, why is it sticky?

"Hey, Ivan?" I screeched towards the downstairs.

"What's up?" be echoes from God knows where.

"Get up here!"

I hear the sound of things fumbling and something getting knocked over. God damn it, was he laying on the couch? Is there a single part of this house that makes him think we are anywhere near done? Did he make one iota of incremental progress on some corner and convince himself that he made his contribution for the day, conveniently ignoring that most of this place looks like some kind of Tweaker den if the Tweakers didn't bother leaving a space to make their "feel-good juice" or whatever slang term is currently being used?

After entirely too long my dear brother Ivan, in all his lanky, stumbling glory makes it up the stairs. I stare up at him.

"Why is this sticky?" I point to the top hinge.

Ivan shrugs. Of course he shrugged. That's roughly 76% of his reactions.

"Did something occur in this bathroom that I should know about?"

Ivan's eyebrows furrow. Oh boy, indignant/defensive mode engaged. Now every simple question is going to be registered as some kind of vile personal attack on his character.

"Wait, Laura, makes you think that was me?"

I make a simple gesture from the top of my head towards the top of his head to the empty sprocket in the doorway where the top hinge used to be to humbly suggest he is nearly a foot taller than me and that it was physically impossible for me to have made much interaction with a top hinge I could barely reach.

"It could have been any of my friends during any of the times we had people over. Which was every day, pretty much." Ivan threw his hands in the air. "That's what happens when our place was basically the central hub of our entire social circle."

“Well, if it wasn’t for... *our* social circle, Gramps might’ve let us stay here.” I put some paper towels under the faucet and soak them in warm water. I slap the soggy mass into Ivan’s hands. “Here, clean it off before I start thinking too hard about what it actually is.”

Ivan looks at the soggy paper towels and down at the door. “Where are you going?”

“I need to make sure the U-Haul isn’t here yet. We can only afford like an hour with them so I’m not missing a second” I hurry down the stairs and see the pile of boxes and binders piled by the door. Oh Jesus, getting these into the U-Haul is going to suck rancid dick.

I open the door and step outside. No truck yet. Well, it should be here soon, might as well start pulling some of these boxes to the curb.

It turns out saying “might as well” to yourself makes the task seem a lot more nonchalant and easy than it is. Turns out carrying or pushing boxes down dilapidated brick steps built in the 1940s is actually the worst thing. The worst thing. It also turns out that a thin, overloaded cardboard box is not terribly resilient against brick steps, which can lead to the box breaking apart and all my posters falling out and spilling across the sidewalk.

After spewing an excessive number of obscenities that would make Gramps cry if he still had any hope or expectations for us, I gather the posters together. I’m pretty sure it’s not humanly possible to spill a pile of books or posters onto the ground without opening and looking at at least one or two before packing them back up. Maybe the half-unraveled poster I open to gleam at will be thematically appropriate and relevant and give me some newfound inspiration and perspective to this shitty situation.

I’m losing my home. My Grandfather hates me and thinks my brother and I desecrated his legacy with how we treated the house he grew up in. Now I’ll have to actually pay real rent rates and Ivan won’t be any help with that until his Lawn-mowing Enterprise or whatever his currently weekly Grand Calling is. But maybe this poster I’m slowly and dramatically unraveling will cause a beam of light to come down from the heavens and bathe me in epiphanies.

*Who’s Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?* Damn it. At least if it was *Streetcar Named Desire* I could pretend I was the Stella to Ivan’s Sta- wait, no, gross. Even if Ivan was my husband and not my brother he doesn’t even hit me, he’s just an idiot man child.

“Laura?”

I turn and see Ivan coming down the steps. He looks at the poster and points to Elizabeth Taylor.

“Isn’t that the old lady from the *Flintstones* movie?”

It takes a moment for me to process with everything wrong with what just happened.

“Do you, do you get off on pissing me off?” I say with an earnest that even I’m surprised by.

“What?” Ivan stutters.

“Is saying or doing things that frustrate or upset me the only way you can get it up or something?”

“There is absolutely no answer I want to give to that question” Ivan mutters.

I take a breath.

“Okay, first, this is a feature adaptation of a play by Edward Albee, who just died, so show some goddamn respect. Second, the fact that you see legendary silver screen icon Elizabeth Taylor, and the first thing you think of is her appearance in a godawful movie like that, I just-“

“I’m sorry.”

I stop. That, that wasn’t even an aggressive or defensive apology designed to stop an onslaught. That just... sounded like defeat. Ivan sits on the sidewalk and sighs. Great, now I feel like an asshole.

“Okay, I’m sorry too.” I say as I sit next to him and look at the old house. It really is a nice house. Run down, but it’s large and you can feel a certain... history gleam from it. Gramps was right, we took it for granted and didn’t deserve it. “I’m just... bummed. I’m gonna miss this place, I feel like we didn’t even get to say goodbye to it.”

“Yeah” Ivan sighs. “Maybe we should have listened to Gramps’ warning. All seven of them. At least the three warnings that he insisted were his last.”

Suddenly, my phone rings. I answer it. I listen. I hang up.

“So... the U-Haul got in an accident and won’t be here today.” I said.

Ivan looks at all the boxes sprawled out on the sidewalk. “Well, guess we have time to say goodbye then?”

I accidentally smile. We start rummaging through the boxes.