

Short Story Contest

November 2021



PROMPT: You live in a busy city, where the sound of traffic is constant. One morning you wake up to complete silence . . .

10:52

by **Devon Marchand**

10:52 AM

By: Devon Marchand

Prompt 2

It all began the day I woke up to silence.

I didn't notice it at first when I woke up and looked at my alarm clock: 10:52 am.

It was a Saturday, I didn't have to work that day, thankfully. I never set my alarm on my days off, I prefer sleeping. Thank you very much. But, it wasn't until I went to the bathroom that it really set in.

There was no sound.

I rushed over to my window and popped it open. I waited a second. Another second. Another. A full minute passed before I understood. The streets were as silent as a tomb.

Normally there would be a chorus of honking cars, revving engines, chatter of birds and people alike; and other sounds that blended together. It was beautiful at first. That damn road would keep me up more nights than not. It was frustrating.

Maybe the road was closed today?

I slipped into the bathroom for a quick shower. It was not until I got out and I looked at my alarm clock that I noticed something was wrong.

10:52 am.

Maybe my alarm clock was busted?

I went into my living room. My apartment only contained a bedroom, a kitchen, a living room and a bathroom all squished together into 600 square feet. With a ban on wall decorations or repainting the walls the apartment always seemed dull to me. But with a tv and small art studio in the corner of the living room, it did its job.

I tried to turn on the tv and nothing happened. That was odd, the power was on. I flicked the lights on and off with light dancing on the walls a few times.

Nope, the lights work.

That didn't make any sense. Why would my lights work but not my tv or alarm clock? No, the cable has to be out right now and my alarm clock kicked the bucket. Yes, that's what happened.

Time to go shopping for a new alarm clock. Wait... the door won't open. The door had recently been upgraded to open at the scan of my fingerprint. The landlord said this was due to security reasons. Great, now I'm trapped.

I took a second to sit down and stare at my apartment. What should I do?

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Nothing had changed since this all began. The alarm clock still stood at 10:52 am, the lights were still out and even the amount of light going inside of the apartment had stayed the same.

With no way to track the time I grew bored. I can't even use my hunger or tiredness as a gauge.

All my books had been read, puzzles finished and even the crosswords completed without any guidance.

Maybe I will try painting something?

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I'm all out of paint. I don't even know how I managed that.

All of my canvases have been filled with decreasing sanity. The colors turned out pretty with hints of pinks, purples, blues, whites and even some neutral tones thrown in for blending. But it ends with just blacks, whites, and maybe a hint of red or blue as I ran out of colors and patience.

The strokes also got increasingly more frustrated with less dabs and strokes and more of just slamming the paintbrush into the canvas. At the end it was just me tossing the paint brush onto the canvas and seeing what it made. Sometimes it would be just a little dots and other times the paintbrush would pierce through the canvas with paint splattered around the edges.

I am so bored, so damn bored. What the hell am I supposed to do?

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The time did not pass sequentially with one thing happening and then another thing happening. It doubled back, looped around and twisted itself together into a tapestry from hell. It was torture.

I was sitting up against the wall with My head in my hands. I... I don't know what to do anymore. Nothing makes sense.

I can't remember how much has passed. Maybe it's days, weeks, months, years. Maybe an entire millennium has passed by since I was trapped in this damn apartment.

Although, I can't seem to remember life before this prison. I don't remember my job, my friends, my family, nothing. My name? What's a name? I can't remember what it was. I don't even remember my appearance as my mirror got broken by a stray paint brush. There is even glass around the floor like flower petals. Knowing my luck I'll cut myself on the pieces if I try to clean it up.

I can't believe I'm saying this but I miss the way life was before... well this. For years I would drag through the twisted marathon: work, home, and sleep; work, home, and sleep; work, home, and sleep. I would imagine what I would do if I never had to work again; all the trips I would take, all the paintings I would paint and all the moments I would live in bliss.

This isn't a fantasy, it is a nightmare! A nightmare created by the Devil himself for my eternal torment.

The alarm clock is still there, still saying 10:52 am.

It takes all of my strength to not have it become acquainted with my walls.

Tears stream down my face as I run to my bed. It starts out slow, like a small trickle but explodes into a symphony of despair.

What do I do? WHAT DO I DO?

At some point I must have fallen asleep as my consciousness was caved over with nothingness.

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The stay in the empty void of nothingness did not last as I eventually woke up. I felt miserable after the sob session and nap combination. I looked at my alarm clock out of sheer frustration.

10:53 am.

Wait a second? 10:53 am?

It can't be.

It was also then that I noticed the sounds coming from outside the window. Honking horns, engine revving, the coo of pigeons and the conversation of hundreds of people was just what I needed.

I tried to remember what happened, but it was faint. As faint as a nightmare. I guess I had a pretty bad one then. It's not uncommon for me to get them, but this one was nasty.

After a trip to the bathroom for a quick shower, I went into the living room. Maybe I'll watch some cartoons after that nightmare.

Something crunched underneath my feet. I looked down to see broken glass greeting my slippered feet.

It can't be...

Sure enough the army of paintings greeted me from every nook of my living room. Some reasonable and pretty, others chaotic and monotone. The trash can contained countless empty paint containers and destroyed paint brushes.

That wasn't a dream... was it?