

There All Along
by
Aoibheann Schwartz

INT. DARKNESS - NIGHT TIME

A laptop screen is open on a desk, filling up most of the screen, showing a Youtube video of white noise. We can hear the white noise hissing, and the Youtube video shows a picture of a colorful galaxy. There are no other sounds. The laptop screen snaps shut suddenly.

EXT. FADE IN - GRITTY, POT HOLED ROAD OF A STREET WITH HOUSES LINING EITHER SIDE, IN GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN - EARLY EVENING

A few cars rattle over the pot holes and the gritty road, and over a circular ramp. A girl is sitting on the steps in front of an apartment. She is wearing a red backpack, a striped black and white top, and black leggings. The apartment is green, slightly "shack" like, old, not in great condition, but characterful. The row of apartments are flat rooved and their facades are in the Italiante clapboard style, each a different color.

The girl is sitting with her elbows on her knees, hands clasped in front, looking to one side. Cars continue to pass every few seconds.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DARK

Someone opens the front door of the apartment into the hallway, and the girl slips in behind them into the hallway. She crouches down by the base of the staircase, swings her bag round, and rummages through it. She is looking for something, but can't find it.

EXT. APARTMENT STEPS

The girl is back sitting outside on the steps, looking bored. She flicks through her phone, chin resting on her palm, elbow propped on her knee. The occasional car passes by.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE SAME STREET - BY THE HUDSON, INDUSTRIAL AREA

She walks along the street, clasping her backback straps. She turns a corner and walks along a quieter street, by the Hudson water's edge, and past a block of very fancy, luxurious, amenity filled apartments. She walks past and stops further on, turning and looking up into them - they have glass windows, so she can just about see inside into the nicely decorated kitchen and dining rooms of each floor.

EXT. APARTMENT STEPS

The girl is back sitting on the steps. The door of the apartment opens behind her, and a girl steps out, and walks down the steps past her. She has a pixie haircut, a small black bag on her back, is wearing a white t-shirt and beige shorts which end just above her knee. She is holding half of an avocado and eating it in scoops using a small spoon. She stops and pauses at the end of the steps, facing the other girl still sitting there, and beams at her.

GIRL 2 (PIXIE HAIR)

Hi there! How you doing!

GIRL 1

Hey. I'm good, thanks. A bit tired, but...

GIRL 2

Oh, me too! Tell me about it. I'm just off to grab a few beers now.

GIRL 1

Sounds like you've the right idea. I just moved in, last night, actually. Pretty late, at like, 11pm.

GIRL 2

Damn!

GIRL 1

Yep. Now I'm locked out - I lost my keys somewhere in the mess of it all, couldn't find them this morning in my pile of clothes, I just sort of dumped everything down. So I'm waiting for one of my roommates to get back now.

GIRL 2

I'm so sorry! That's so annoying. Moving is just so stressful, isn't it!

GIRL 1

I just wanted to get it done and over with as quickly as possible...The weird thing is, I was sure I had left the keys outside the door last night while moving things in...

GIRL 2

Damn. Where did you move from?

GIRL 1

Just down the street, actually. My office is in the neighborhood, my last sublease was up but I wanted to stay in the area. It's so nice over on this side, isn't it?

GIRL 2

Sooo nice. I've been here almost 3 years now. I love having a few beers up on the roof.

GIRL 1

Oh, there's a roof?

GIRL 2

Yeah! Well, it's not really a roof, but, it is kind of - you'll see!

GIRL 1

I didn't know there was a roof.

GIRL 2

Yeah! You should check it out. What number are you in?

GIRL 1

4 something...right at the top.

GIRL 2

I'm at 3L! Knock on the door anytime you like.

GIRL 1

I will, thanks. Yeah, my room is right at the top, facing out onto this street. There's a lot of noise from trucks and stuff going past, isn't there? I literally barely slept at all, I think I managed 2 hours.

GIRL 2

The road's in such bad condition at the moment, right? Have you tried a noise machine?

GIRL 1

I tried a white noise soundtrack on Youtube, but it didn't really help. I wear earplugs normally, but couldn't find them last night.

GIRL 2

Yeah, you should definitely try a noise machine. They really work. I need both the machine and a fan to help me fall asleep at night!

GIRL 1

I'm such a light sleeper...

GIRL 2

Me too. So, are your roomies passing by soon?

GIRL 1

I have no idea. This is the second time in two days I've been locked out, too. Last night, when I was moving all my stuff, I went out onto the landing for a couple seconds, forgot to put the latch on the door, and it locked behind me. I couldn't get back in. And I had barely started getting everything moved out and packed up. Then my mover didn't show up. It was the worst move ever.

GIRL 2

Sounds like it. And movers are so expensive.

GIRL 1

I paid him \$60.

GIRL 2

Ha! Well, I'm gonna head off. I hope you get sleep tonight! And again, I'm on level 3. I'm sure I'll see you on the roof sometime, especially now with the summer weather.

GIRL 1

For sure. Good to meet you. Yeah, I'll have to check that roof out.

GIRL 2

Do! It's not really a proper rooftop, but it's a roof...see you soon!

She walks away down the street. The other girl stays sitting. After a few minutes, she slips back into the hallway when someone opens the door, goes to the end of the staircase, and looks up.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRCASE FROM THE TOP - LOOKING DOWN TO THE BOTTOM.

She walks up the stairs. When she gets to the top floor, she stops in front of a ladder leading upwards, and climbs up, tentatively, trying the rusted structure.

EXT. ROOFTOP - BRIGHT LATE EVENING SUNSET

She peeks her head out, onto the roof, pauses and looks around. The view of Manhattan is magnificent. She climbs out, walks around a bit, and sits down, looking out. She does a few yoga poses, attempts a handstand, takes out her camera and takes a shot of the skyline, sits back down again, scribbles something into a notebook. Her phone buzzes. She takes it out, and reads a message: "Oh! I found a pair of keys outside the door this morning. I put them under the mat." The girl sighs, then shows a small smile. She looks out again at the skyline, before getting up slowly, taking her backpack, and heading back towards the ladder.