

Sakizzie

English 1010

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A Journey of a Thousand Miles...

It was 2017.

That ain't important for you to know, but I need to remind myself that back then I was lonely.

Real lonely, damn lonely – the kind of lonely that might drive a man to do something silly, like take up golf... or old hobbies. Yep, I was lonely, off work, staring up at the ceiling and just breathing in the bouquet of fresh paint, fake leather, old but clean carpet, and the hint of fresh, sweet air brought down from the mountain that wandered through the two open windows at either end of my home.

This wasn't the plan.

I peeled myself off the fake leather of my half-sized couch and glanced up at the freeloading AC unit lounging on the wall above my half-sized kitchen. It was hot.

Real hot, damn hot – the kind of hot that would have been a bit much in August and was downright unwarranted for early October. I turned my head left to view the rest of my glorious first apartment. My small television sat on the kitchenette counter, running its thousandth play of 'The Forbidden Kingdom.' The film was one of my favorites, but I wasn't enjoying it. Beside the TV my wooden drawing board slumbered, and past that, the too soft queen-sized bed I didn't use stretched almost to the wall. Strewn across the bare mattress were soulless items needed for my despised occupation, and my sketchbook. At the foot of the bed stood my bookshelf, filled with all the art theory books I'd previously pored over with passion, now just as dusty as my desk. This was my castle, and if anyone asked, the kingdom was thriving. A heavy despondence draped itself over my shoulders. People generally didn't ask.

I stretched out my back, painfully, then stumbled my way past the bed and bookshelf to get to the window. I fumbled with the blinds, got 'em open and let the warm orange light of an early autumn evening flood my little studio. Seared my retinas in the process.

"What am I doing?" I growled the words with uncoordinated lips through a throat scratchy from a full day's deliberate lack of use. When you talk for a living, performing soliloquies to the fourth wall in your free time tends to lose its appeal.

I turned around, blinking away ocular overload, and slipped back past the bed and the bookshelf to the kitchen. I made myself a sandwich and sat, chewing and swallowing without tasting my meal. Just ticking down the hours 'til I'd be back on the clock instead of being where I wanted to be. Then the voice crackling out of my tiny, tinny TV spoke directly to me.

"Gung fu – Hard work, over time, to accomplish skill."

I fixated on the screen. I was listening.

“The painter can have gung fu.”

My gaze shifted to the empty spread of my drawing table, merely a foot from my shoulder. The dust, undisturbed. The pencils, waiting.

“Or the butcher, who cuts meat every day with such skill – his knife never touches bone.”

I stared at my sketchbook, open on the bed, with two pages drawn of an aimless, incomplete idea, but the only one I’ve had in months that didn’t come from feelings best left unexpressed. I remembered the challenge written in one of the best books on my shelf. A challenge for the reader.

“Learn the form, but seek the formless.”

My mind tuned out the audio behind me as I picked up that book and opened it. I knew the film’s lines by heart, but they weren’t the most interesting thing in the room anymore.

“Twenty-four hours. Twenty-four pages.” I smiled as I re-read Scott McCloud’s call to action.

“Hell, why not?” I dropped the book and grabbed my sketchbook, a blank lined notebook, an eraser, and sat down at the drawing board. “6:28 PM, and time starts.... now!”

Graphite scraped across paper, scrawling my way back to the path.

‘Page 3: Panel 1. (2/3 page width, heads + hands of Cap + Malone.) Cap and Malone kneel, hushedly whispering a prayer- Cap with a Patron Saint’s Medallion, Malone with his Rosary...’