

NEW DAY STARTING

It's been 81 days and 147 nights that I've been living in heaven. In heaven, the nights are spread out through the days. Sometimes, there will be 3 nights in one day, and on other days, there'll be 21 nights. It all depends on when the sky feels tired. We don't know when the days end, only when they begin. When a new day begins, it is broadcast on Channel 5 News. A single still frame with a blinding red light flashes and stays up for about twelve seconds for every new day. It says "NEW DAY STARTING" in bold 12pt times new roman. During those twelve seconds, a man's voice is played to repeat saying "what a shame." It is heard four full times, and on the fifth repeat, it cuts out before the word shame is heard.

Upon moving to heaven, I was placed in an apartment with one room that was completely bare all except for a small television that I found in the corner. This room functions as my living room, bedroom, driveway, grocery store, and tennis court. There's a kitchen and bathroom in there too. I am fond of the tennis court in my apartment, but I would have preferred something else. I don't really play tennis, so it is rather a place where I go to feel alone and reflect rather than exercise. As of lately, I have been growing a garden in the middle of the tennis court. I'd always had a vegetable garden before I came to heaven. It doesn't feel like home without one, and the vegetables are doing better than I thought they would, considering I planted them in concrete. The squash has been growing up to be so beautiful. I don't really have the option of playing tennis anyways because I don't know how. Before I started the garden, I put up a couple of online listings desperately looking for a coach so I could at least put the court to its intended use, and eventually, I did find one. I heard a knock at the door and opened it to a man in a suit carrying a briefcase. The first time he came over, he said that he was very concerned about me. Why are you concerned about me? I asked. You just don't look like someone who'd play tennis

very well, he said back in a voice that sounded all too familiar. Do I know you from somewhere else? I asked. No, he said. You don't. And then he left. It was the quickest that someone had ever given up on me. It made me feel insecure, so I put away my interest in learning how to play tennis. Clearly I can't even look the part, and that matters. The second time he came over, it was unannounced. I found him knocking at the door, wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase, as he had before, but he had his mouth stitched shut spoke with his eyes. He would roll them back in his head until paper fed out in tears, much like a receipt. It'd come printed out in motor oil with text in bold 12pt times new roman that, when read, had me hearing his voice speaking to me inside my head. When he came over that time, his ink cartridge was getting low, so the voice in my head was very quiet.

Dear you,

You are absolutely hopeless.

Sincerely,

Us

He cried this letter out of his eyes, which I kept and put away in the nightstand beside my bed. This man wore a suit, and never has anyone in a suit been wrong about anything. The rejection hurt my feelings a great deal. I used to talk about my problems to my vegetable garden. They were always there for me, but I realized that I couldn't put all of my emotional baggage on them anymore. I was very depressed until I turned around and looked in the mirror and made a friend. I'm not really sure who that person is, but I always know where to find them and they'll always listen.

When I moved into my one-bedroom apartment, the television that I found in the corner was already on and tuned to Channel 5 News, but it wasn't plugged into the wall. Come to find, it wasn't even run through electricity. There wasn't a power switch or a way to turn the device off, and there was no way to change the station. The television was found to be so heavy that it could not be physically moved at all. It was even indestructible. For instance, there was a time when I had a fight happen in the kitchen between the air and myself. I was mad at the air because I found out that it wasn't paying rent. I agreed to let it stay under the promise that it'd help with the apartment bills. I got angry and I kicked the air and I punched the air until it was bleeding on the ground, but it kept getting up and fighting back. The spectacle attracted hundreds of citizens who came to watch the violence unfold. They flooded into my apartment and set up bleachers. Some time in, one man in the crowd wanted to take part. He fired a gun into the air, killing it. The bullet went right through, going on to hit the television's monitor, which was innocently sitting behind. The bullet bounced off and combusted, left spread around in smithereens of dust. A grave was set up for the bullet and a funeral took place three days later. The ash was collected and dusted over the sky from a cloud, bringing with it a beautiful meteor shower.

I hear the routine "what a shame" playing from the corner of my one-bedroom apartment, signaling that a new day is starting. I can hear it all the way from the tennis court, where I am watering my garden. It's my 82nd day in heaven. The morning news airs after the broadcast of "NEW DAY STARTING," and I always try to catch the first Channel 5 News report of the day. I'm a good citizen. Usually they start with the weather and then move on to the new news. Everyone should keep up with the new news. Yesterday, a woman was kicked out of heaven for swearing with the voice in her head. She was sent to hell. Good riddance. I walk around into the living room as I hear the second-to-final repeat playing to find that the television is off. I hear a

knock at the door and open it up to the man with the stitched mouth. He's found a way to speak aloud without a voice. "What a shame," he says, "what a—" he stops mid-sentence. I hear the word "shame" play in my head. His suit is well-tailored. His briefcase is leather. I want to look like the kind of person who is right about everything. But I don't. I know you. No, you don't. He walks in and turns the television on, tuning into Channel 6 News. "You Are Absolutely Hopeless" plays from the television and the screen flashes out into a mirror. I look in and see a man in a suit talking to me with his eyes. I don't know who you are. Yes, you do. No, I don't. The mirror flashes out into a blinding red light. **"NEW DAY STARTING."**