

THE APARTMENT

by

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INT. UBER CAR - DAY

A DRIVER jams through traffic as PAUL and SHIRLEY WATANABE, early 30's, tourists, type on their phones in the back seat.

SHIRLEY

Are you sure we're going the right way?

(whispers to Paul)

The app says--

PAUL

Not now, babe. Posting.

SHIRLEY

Don't forget to tag me.

(scrolls)

Ooh, another one of those dancing-in-public videos. They're on the escalator, no one can get by. Look at the people's faces behind them. Hate upvote.

PAUL

Inconsiderate twats, gotta love them. LOL.

A ding sounds.

SHIRLEY

(without looking up)

We're here!

PAUL

You sure?

SHIRLEY

Yep. The little car is on top of the building.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

They grab their bags, still typing on their phones. The driver goes to speak, but Shirley shuts the door.

DRIVER

Thanks and have a--

SHIRLEY

Decent driver. Nice conversation. A bit of a smell. Four stars.

The car takes off.

PAUL
Where did she say we would find the
keys?

SHIRLEY
"Under the Red Rock".

PAUL
"Under the red rock", what does
that mean?

SHIRLEY
That's what it says.

HOMELESS MAN #1 stands with a sign that reads, "Seeking
Humanity."

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Paul, look, our first potential
encounter with a real local!

Homeless man #1 looks hopeful as they excitedly rush over to
him. Shirley extends her selfie stick, posing beside him.

HOMELESS MAN #1
Spare any--

SHIRLEY
Selfie!

She snaps a picture. She and Paul examine it, Homeless Man #1
stuck in the middle.

PAUL
That's a good one.

SHIRLEY
Ugh, look at my chin, it's all
bunched under. Do over.

PAUL
Just edit. Maybe turn it back and
white.

SHIRLEY
Artsy.

HOMELESS MAN #1
I take donations--

PAUL
Sorry, buddy, no cash.
(to Shirley quietly)
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Don't get too close, I heard some
of them have mental disorders.

They walk towards the building, leaving him behind.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What about texting her?

SHIRLEY

No phone number.
(types on her phone)
Messaging her on IG again.

PAUL

(tries the front door)
Locked. My battery's low, I need to
plug in.

HOMELESS MAN #1

You want to get into that building?
I can get you into that building.

Paul and Shirley ignore him, still lost in their phones.

SHIRLEY

Just finished my island city in
Minecraft. Killed it!

PAUL

Ooh, seventeen "hearts" on the
picture already.

SHIRLEY

(types on her phone)
Eighteen!

Homeless man #1 pushes all the buttons almost in melody. It
buzzes. He opens the door, extending his arm.

HOMELESS MAN #1

Enjoy your stay.

Paul and Shirley walk inside, completely immersed in their
phones as he watches after them.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The door closes behind them with a thud.

PAUL

Red rock. Red rock.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Maybe she's got HBO Now? I'll deal with Netflix if I have to, but I refuse to miss The Last of Us. I'm invested and you know how I am when I'm invested.

He plops down in a chair in front of the TV. Grabs the remote. Clicks it. Nothing. Tries another button.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What's wrong with this thing?
(pulls the back open)
No batteries. Where's my laptop?

SHIRLEY

Small bag.
(on her phone)
Still no reception...

Paul opens it. Sits down with his laptop. Turns it on.

PAUL

What's the network?

SHIRLEY

I don't know. I can't see my e-mails without connecting. What networks are coming up?

PAUL

(clicks on mouse)
None.

SHIRLEY

(stares at phone)
For me either. Let me see my tablet.

He hands it to her. She turns it on. Stares at the screen.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Nope.
(calls into the air)
Alexa, are you there? Alexa? No one's answering.

PAUL

Alexa, hello?

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Alexa? Siri? Google
Assistant? Echo?

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

No one's there. This is so weird.

PAUL

Maybe we just have to reset the router. You see it anywhere?

(searching)

If I was a router, where would I be?

SHIRLEY

Maybe by the TV?

Paul walks over. Looks in and around the TV stand. After a moment, he steps back in horror.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

PAUL

This... isn't even a real TV.

SHIRLEY

What?

PAUL

(thumps it)

It's fake.

SHIRLEY

Well, that's not creepy at all.

PAUL

Why would anyone put a fake TV in here?

SHIRLEY

I don't like this. I knew something wasn't right as soon as I walked in. Go outside and call her, will you?

PAUL

Yeah. This is ridiculous. BRB.

SHIRLEY

Make sure you threaten her with a well-worded, angry review. You know how good at those I am. I would rate it a zero star if I could!

He opens the door. Walks out, but his steps only lead him back into the apartment.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

What are you doing, I thought you were going to call her?

He stands still, unable to compute.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Give me the phone, I'll do it.

She grabs it. Walks out. The same thing happens, back in the apartment as if coming in from the outside.

She goes at a more rapid pace, only returning inside faster.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

His laptop with "no connection" on the screen in his lap, Paul stares blankly at the fake TV as Shirley pounds on the wall.

SHIRLEY
Help, someone, please let us out of here! Something's wrong with our door, the window doesn't work, and there's no router! I repeat, no router! I need you to DM someone for me. Do you hear me? I'm @--

PAUL
Shirley, please, it's been hours. No one's out there.

SHIRLEY
What are we going to do, Paul? You saw what happened. That's not like a broken lock or something, that's, that's... I don't know what the hell it is because I can't even look it up or ask some weird, niche community to investigate!

PAUL
Let's not have a nervous breakdown.

SHIRLEY
This was a bad idea. My stomach is all in knots. I feel like I'm sweating, am I sweating?

PAUL
I kinda feel sick, too.
(holds up his hand)
I'm trembling!

SHIRLEY
But, it's not even cold! I'm scared.

PAUL

Yeah, you've really gotten us into a mess, haven't you?

SHIRLEY

Me?

PAUL

Of course, you're the one that got us the trip to Los Angeles in the first place by filling out all of those e-surveys!

SHIRLEY

It was your idea to sublet!

PAUL

The woman had impeccable ratings on BNB Buddies! The vlogger that cries while he eats stayed here!

SHIRLEY

The one that no one's heard from in months?

PAUL

Yeah, he did kind of disappear, didn't he?

SHIRLEY

No one knows where we are. We have no way of contacting anyone. Why did I have to fill out so many e-surveys? God, I feel so stupid!

PAUL

Hey, look, it's not entirely your fault... We're going to be okay. There's got to be a reasonable explanation for all of this. Come on, give me an emoji smile face?

SHIRLEY

How about an emoji frown face! How can anyone possibly explain this? It's completely absurd!

PAUL

Confused emoji. What do you want me to say?

SHIRLEY

I haven't tweeted in almost an hour. What if they think I'm dead?

PAUL

I was supposed to be online ten minutes ago for a rematch with BulletzforBreakfast.

They remain silent for what seems like an eternity before Shirley quickly stands, panicked.

SHIRLEY

I need to get out of here, Paul! I need to get out of here and find someplace where I can connect!

(she itches herself)

I need it, if not I, I don't--

PAUL

Why are you scratching?

SHIRLEY

My skin is crawling!

(bursts into tears)

Maybe we could pray like they do on TV? That's a thing, isn't it? Isn't it?

(stares at him)

I've got to get out of here.

PAUL

Hey, your eyes, they look weird.

SHIRLEY

(in between sobs)

What?

PAUL

They turn green when you cry, I never noticed that.

SHIRLEY

You look different, too.

PAUL

I do?

SHIRLEY

Like you're in high definition, I can see everything.

PAUL

I feel like we're always together, but I've never really looked at you.

SHIRLEY
Well, stop, please.

PAUL
What?

SHIRLEY
It's making me uncomfortable.

PAUL
Me, looking at you, makes you
uncomfortable?

SHIRLEY
I'm not able to control the angles.
Or edit.

PAUL
Well, what if that's... okay?

SHIRLEY
In what universe would that be
okay?

PAUL
I'm just saying you look nice. And
maybe being stuck in here isn't
that bad. At least we're here
together.

SHIRLEY
Oh, Paul... isn't that the sweetest
thing you've ever said?

PAUL
I wonder if there are other things
besides the weird eyes that I don't
know about you?

SHIRLEY
Well, I--

A phone makes a noise. They make eye contact.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
My phone!

PAUL
Sounds like mine.

SHIRLEY
Trust me, it's not.

They run towards it. Paul grips it but stumbles. Shirley pulls his leg, dragging him away from it.

PAUL

Hey!

He smushes her head down. She reaches up, her hands wild, trying to poke out his eyes as he grabs it. She bites his hand.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Ow!

SHIRLEY

Drop it!

PAUL

No! Stop, look how we're acting.

SHIRLEY

(stops)

Yeah, you're right. I don't know what came over me.

She suddenly twists his nipple. Takes it from him. Starts typing as Paul nurses his hand and nipple.

PAUL

A nipple twist, really? And I'm bleeding!

SHIRLEY

(looks at phone)

You brought it on yourself.

PAUL

Well, what is it? Are we connected?

SHIRLEY

The page about the red rock is up.

PAUL

What does it say?

Shirley's eye winks rapidly.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Shirley?

Her whole body starts to twitch. She comes up beside him and snaps picture after picture of them.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

SHIRLEY
Selfie! Selfie!
(hits phone)
Post! Post! Post! Post!

PAUL
What are you talking about, have
you lost your mind?

He takes the phone away from her. She collapses on the ground, her head smoking.

Instead of helping her, he types on the phone before going into a twitch.

PAUL (CONT'D)
If you were a Disney character
which one would you be? Who is the
Thelma to your Louise? What does
your horoscope reveal about you?

SHIRLEY
I want to speak to your manager!

Paul falls to the ground beside her, smoke coming out of his head now.

PAUL
"Feeling cute might delete later."

SHIRLEY
Post! Post! Post!

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

HOMELESS MAN #2 joins homeless man #1, watching as the paramedics take Shirley and Paul out on stretchers, their eyes wide, still fiending for that sweet juice.

HOMELESS MAN #2
Man, what happened to those two?

HOMELESS MAN #1
Probably some kind of mental
disorder. I wouldn't get too close.

THE END