“\*Beep\* Hey, it’s Silva. I know it’s the weekend, and there’s that whole ‘alien ship in the sky’ situation that you wanna watch, but I need you to clock in tomorrow. We had to shorten the deadlines, so we have to get everything shipped out as soon as possible…”

Cam stared down at his cheap cup of coffee as the voicemail played, it’s greyish-brown colour looking just as unappealing as the saccharine yellow of the empty sugar packets flanking it. The voicemail finished, and the speaker went straight back to announcing the news. Cam grumbled and held his head. God, there was nothing else he wanted to do less than go to work today. His body was already aching from the rest of the workweek, and now he wouldn’t even be done after friday. Cam would rather jump out of his window than clock in again. But that wouldn’t solve anything, would it?

He sighed, then looked around the drab kitchen of his apartment. Everything in it seemed to be some sort of shade of grey. Even the wood and appliances were trying their best to look as gunmetal as possible. It’d be an impressive feat of colour coordination if it was intentional. Cam always told himself to make his place more colourful, but he just never had the time. Or the energy, at least. The accounting firm always took everything out of him before he could go home; he could never muster up enough energy to do much of anything outside of work. No hobbies, no projects, and if he was being honest, no friendships. He didn’t know how his coworkers did it. How they maintained all those things despite working for just as long each day.

He stood up and walked to his kitchen window. Cam's apartment wasn't great, but at least it had a good view of the city skyline. And as of recent, it provided a wonderful view of the giant alien spaceship hovering over it, currently floating in front of the dawning sun. A couple months ago, several strange spaceships descended onto several major cities across the globe, "parking" themselves above their downtown neighborhoods. Each of them offered to negotiate with their respective countries' leaders, sending down strange creatures to act as representatives to their interstellar civilization. Outside of those few facts, Cam, nor the public at large, didn't know anything about the massive spaceships hovering over their cities. Both the aliens and the world's governments were keeping total silence over why the aliens came, or what they intended to do with earth.

That didn't stop Cam from being interested, though. He found himself looking at the spaceship every morning, studying it's vibrant colors and rounded edges as if it was a piece of art. It looked like it was custom-made to stand out among the grey and blocky shapes that made up the city below. Many people said it looked like a child's toy, but Cam thought it was more refined than that. The robot correspondents they sent down were similarly vibrant; bright colors seemed to be the alien's thing.

Cam couldn't help but have hope for what the aliens were doing here. Maybe they wanted to share technologies with us to improve our lives; maybe they wanted to unite Earth under their flag. Maybe they'd automate all accounting jobs so he'd be able to get some sleep. He let out a half-hearted smile at the thought, but it quickly died off.

He couldn't wish his way out of his job, so he turned away from the spaceship and back to the gray apartment. Cam walked to the table and took a swig of coffee, trying to get as much down without letting it reach his tongue. He was moderately successful, but he still felt a hint of that harsh, bitter taste wash over his mouth. So much for those sugar packets. He practically chugged the thing to avoid tasting any more, placing it in his sink as soon as he was done. He started walking to the washroom to get himself presentable when a blaring alert came through the apartment’s speaker, stopping Cam in his tracks.

“Warning! Warning! This is an emergency broadcast. The president has withdrawn from trade negotiations with the spacefaring forces within our borders, and has declared a state of emergency in case of retaliation. Unless you have essential duties, please stay inside your homes. Remain calm, and wait for further instructions. Warning! Warning! This is an emergency broad-”

Cam shut off the smart speaker before it could start repeating the same message again. He looked out the window, staring at the spaceship in the early morning sky. Nothing looked different; there were no guns pointed towards skyscrapers, or thrusters powering up. It was just as still as ever, floating ominously over the city. Whatever retaliation they were preparing for, it didn’t look to be happening. He shook his head. Well, at least he wouldn’t have to go to work today. A smile almost crossed his lips, before he felt a \*ding\* come from the cell in his pocket. He pulled it up and read the incoming text. It was from Silva.

“Our accounting firm has been considered an essential service by the government. You will still have to come in today.“ Fuck.

He sighed and put the phone in his pocket, any sense of joy eviscerated. He tried getting angry, but he could only do so for a moment. He didn’t have the energy to get as mad as he should be. All he could do was sigh and carry on. Maybe he could file a complaint or something later.

He heard a knocking at the door. Cam groggily looked towards the door, both irritated and confused. Who would be knocking at this time? Why would someone go to his door at six thirty? The sun’s hardly raised up yet. He shambled over and looked through the peephole, preparing a speech if his landlord got up before noon just to annoy him. He saw nothing but white behind the glass. Strange. Must be broken or something.

Cam opened the door, and then damn near had a heart attack.

The creature in front of him looked like the negotiators the aliens sent down - towering, humanoid figures with an appearance vaguely like an animal’s. Digitigrade feet, long tails, and features that looked somewhat reptilian, somewhat avian, and if you tilted your head sideways, somewhat canine. Their skin was unnaturally flat and smooth, made of some matte, synthetic material, and unlike the other negotiators he’d seen, was white and gold in colour. Also unlike other negotiators, this one had four arms, and their mouth was filled with vicious-looking teeth, made easy to see by it’s wide smile as it looked down upon Cam.

He was too frightened to move, or even speak. He could hardly process what was in front of him, let alone act on it. Thankfully, the alien being was more than happy to act first.

“Oh my God! You’re adorable!” It cried, in a surprisingly high voice. “They never told us you’d be so small!”

“What?” Was the only thing Cam could stammer out.

The alien picked him up and gave him a four-armed bear hug, burying his face in their shoulder. The monster was surprisingly soft, which was fortunate, considering it felt like they were trying to break Cam’s ribs. “Aww, I could cuddle you forever!”

“What?”

“I’m supposed to take care of you while we invade your planet.” They said, walking into the apartment, flicking the door closed with their tail. “I’ll make sure you’re nice and safe while we depose your government.” They smiled and nuzzled the poor human, taking a seat on the cheap couch of the apartment. “I can’t believe I got assigned to someone as cute as you! Aw, I’m never gonna let go, little guy.”

“Wha-” Cam’s brain finally caught up with the situation, and his eyes went wide. He started fruitlessly struggling in the monster’s grip, each push and pull getting absorbed by the four massive arms keeping him in place. “Let go of me! Get out of my house!”

The creature frowned and lay flat on the couch, letting Cam rest on his belly. “I'm sorry buddy, but I can't leave you alone.” They let one arm go, opting to gently pat his head as he struggled for his life. “It’d be really dangerous if you went outside while we invaded. You could get shot, or bombed, or something!”

The human turned his head towards the apartment’s windows. He couldn’t see much from his angle except for the spaceship floating in the sky, just as still as ever. Memories of old alien movies flashed through his head, making him think of lazer beams and burning cities. “Oh god. You’re gonna kill me. You’re gonna kill me!” He cried out, shoving frantically against the alien’s grip. "I said let me go! Please! I don't wanna die!"

The alien's face turned from disheartened to worried. \*Maybe you shouldn't have mentioned bombs.\* "Fine. If you don't wanna cuddle, then we don't have to cuddle. But I can't let you leave the apartment."

The monster got off the couch and sat the human down on it, keeping a firm grip on their shoulders with their upper arms. They stared into Cam's eyes, getting his attention. "Okay, I will let go, but I need you to promise me to stay on the couch for five seconds. Promise?"

Cam nodded yes, terrified.

The alien let go of him, then after seeing Cam stay moderately still, slowly walked backwards towards the apartment's exit, keeping eyes locked with the human. Once it bumped against the door, they sat down against it, blocking it off with their own body. "There. I'll sit here, making sure you don't leave. Meanwhile, you can do… I dunno. Laze about. Relax. Enjoy yourself."

The alien only got a confused, silent look from the human. The monster sighed. "Trust me, I won't do anything to you if you don't want to. I just wanna keep you safe, little guy." He flashed a smile to Cam, hoping to calm him. All he got was more confused looks.

"Whatever. Do what you want, Imma go take a nap here. If you try and step over me and open the door, I'll wake up and cuddle you into submission or something. Yeah..." He yawned, then laid down in front of the door.

Cam stared at the sleeping creature for a while, too worried about it waking up to move or make a sound. He kept expecting it to jolt to life and attack when he wasn’t looking, or something else insidious. Cam didn’t know how to react, otherwise. It was acting so strange, so casual about barging into his home and not letting him leave that Cam could only conclude that it was acting casual so Cam would let his guard down for an easy killing. Or… something like that. That line of thought didn’t make much sense to Cam, but in his terrified state he couldn’t think of anything else.

He felt his eyes drooping. Immediately, he shook himself awake, focusing again on the sleeping alien. Before long, his eyelids started to close again. With a bit less force, he opened them again. Cam felt exhausted, despite only waking up an hour or so ago. He wondered if it was some alien mind control making him feel sleepy, but then quickly realized it probably had more to do with the 4 hours of sleep he got last night. Mind control or no, he still had to remain vigilant, else the alien may try and harm him while he wasn’t looking. Cam had to keep his eyes on him as long as possible. Cam felt his eyes close again. He shook himself up again. He had… to remain… vigilant…

“Hey.”

Cam stirred a little bit, shifting in his sleep.

“Hey.”

He let out a grumble, content to stay where he was.

“Hey.”

Cam opened his eyes slowly, only to see the monster staring right into his eyes. He let out a short gasp and crawled back away from him. “W-what do you want!?”

The monster looked surprised at the reaction, taking a few seconds to gather himself before responding. Cam could’ve sworn he muttered something under his breath; something about not scaring the human again. “I.. er, I just wanted to sleep on the couch. Figured I could push it infront of the door and sleep on it instead of the floor.”

Cam looked back, confused at the banality of the request. “Uh… sure.”

He slowly got off the couch and walked around the alien, keeping his eyes locked in it’s direction. All he saw was the alien loudly, yet quite easily, pushing the couch in front of the front door, and unceremoniously flopping down on it. Cam walked backwards until he hit his bedroom door, subsequently feeling for it’s handle with his eyes still towards the alien. Cam got it open and quickly slipped inside, locking the door almost immediately.

“Have a nice sleep.” He heard from the other room, followed by another yawn.

Cam stared at the door. Why was the alien acting so calm? Why is he waiting so long to do something? Shouldn’t he be attacking him, or abducting him, or something? What kind of alien invasion is this?

He looked back at his bed. God, he was still tired. He couldn’t hope to think through any of those questions in this state. Cam walked over and got himself under the sheets. Despite his worry, he found himself drifting away within minutes.