

It's been a long day. When I open the door to my apartment, I long to be able to sit down on my nice leather couch and kick my feet up. I walk the living room to find my seat occupied. I live alone, but it is not uncommon to see my friend Ivo on my couch.

From his sleeping patterns, he appears jetlagged when, in fact, it's laziness. He spends his days lying hopelessly in piles of blankets, drifting in and out of sleep. It drives me mad. It's beyond me why anyone would want to sleep their life away. I'm not exactly living my dream, being an insurance salesman, but at least I have the motivation to get up and go to work everyday. And it's my work that is supporting his sleepy lifestyle.

I guess it would be a bit of a stretch to say that he does nothing but sleep. He sits on my couch and worries. He has anxiety about being stuck in a confined space, which is kind of why my couch is in the middle of the room. He doesn't use electronics on the couch. He only does two things. Worry and sleep. Yeah, that basically describes Ivo.

Ivo's name isn't actually Ivo, I've just been calling him that for years. It's just a natural sounding name that completely fits him. Much better than his real name, William Vacio, does. I started calling him Ivo because when we first met, he used to introduce himself as, "Will-E-um Vaci-Oh." His over-pronunciation of the "E", "V" and "Oh" inspired me to call him Ivo.

Ivo does have an apartment, but it's really dingy because his parents refuse to spend any more money on a workless twenty-five year old who spends his days on a couch. He says he doesn't understand their problem. I do.

It's not like I want Ivo out of my house for good, I just think he should take breaks from occupying my couch, clean his place up and get a job. He's nice to have around, but someday I'm going to leave my apartment to buy a house with money I earn, and Ivo is definitely not coming with me. If he doesn't have a job by then, I'm not going to let him visit. He laughs at me when I tell him that.

"Ivo, could you scoot over?" I ask desperately. Ivo moves. I never ask Ivo to move. I bet if I asked him, he would. I just choose not to because he's a real slob. And he sweats a lot. If he ever decides to give me my couch back, I'll probably just sell it.

“How’s life?” Ivo usually tries to make conversation, but we customarily live without conversation. I guess he realizes that it’s been a tough day based on the fact that I’m sitting with him.

I chose not to respond. He doesn’t mind.

My choice to not speak has created an awkward silence in which we are both sitting on opposite sides of the couch, him bundled in sheets and pillows of every kind and me, sitting in my corner with my hands in my lap. My back is straight. I’m not relaxed, but it’s good enough.

My apartment is really small. It consists of my largest room, the one with the bare couch, a small, cramped kitchen and my study. My study has a desk and a very uncomfortable chair. I also have a bathroom. I don’t have a bedroom, because a long time ago, I thought I could just sleep on the couch. That lasted for a few months, then I got kicked off to the floor.

So technically, Ivo’s heap of sweat, blankets, pillows and food wrappers are all on my bed. If I pointed this out to him, he’d probably move, but I personally find the floor more comfortable.

Our awkward silence has reached the point where we are alternating stares at each other and stares in different directions, pointedly avoiding each other’s. I can’t help but notice that Ivo is constantly glancing out the window. Ivo is particularly fond of that window, though the only view you get is of the busy road and the trashy apartment across the street. He doesn’t really leave the house, so I suppose that that is a treat.

I sigh. Ivo glances at me, but immediately jerks his head back towards the window. “What’s his problem?” I think, but I’m too lazy to voice my thoughts and begin a potential argument. I just get up and watch Ivo pathetically glare across the street.

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Today has been considerably better than yesterday. I’m not tired, and I’m actually quite motivated to go home and get work done. I open my apartment door, practically grinning.

“Sup, Ivo!”

Apparently, my day has been much better than Ivo's, though I'm not sure how a day can go wrong if you spend it on a couch.

"Ivo?" Maybe he's actually gone to go do something with his life. I slide into the large room, only to see my couch completely stripped of blankets, sheets, and more importantly, Ivo. I smile to myself. It's about time Ivo did something willingly. I should probably go to check on him, and make sure he doesn't end up breaking himself in half because he forgot how to use his legs.

But a sight stops me. The couch is just so plain. So empty. It's sunken pretty far, but that's not really what I'm concerned about. The couch is *clean*. This strikes me as odd. Why would Ivo clean the couch after he got up? He's mindful, but he doesn't care that much.

I shrug it off. Maybe Ivo's turned a new leaf. I guess I should look into this, but now seeing my couch clear of everything, I desperately want to nap on it. Something doesn't feel right. That something is more than a small doubt, because it's enough to drag me downstairs.

I justify my paranoia as helpfulness and support, but I'm just lying to myself.

I finally get to the bottom floor of our apartment complex. I turn the corner and see Ivo's apartment. I ring the doorbell, but I don't think it works, so I slam my fist against my door. Nobody answers.

"Ivo?" Suddenly, I'm getting tense. Where is Ivo? I hope he didn't go and do something stupid and Ivo-ish. I hit the door some more. There is no sound of life from the apartment, but I try to believe that he may have headphones and not hear me, but Ivo's apartment is literally a single room. Everything echoes off the wall. He's not in his apartment.

I know that there are hundreds of reasons he could be out of the house- he might have gone to the store, a restaurant, a job interview- but all of them fade against the worst conclusions. He's missing, he's killed himself, he's been killed.

Dread makes you frantic. I hit the door and yell Ivo's name until the lady from the apartment next to his comes out and shushes me. I step back, defeated.

I go to walk back up the stairs. "*He went out.*" I repeat that to myself, but even that's not reassuring because if he did go out, he'd probably get lost. He hasn't been out

in a while. By the time I reach my apartment, I've gone through a couple hundred reasons to call the police.

This may seem like overreacting, but it's not. Ivo doesn't leave the apartment. That is like... an unspoken law of his. But now he's gone. And I'm stuck here with no clue where he is.

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It's morning. Day two of Ivo's disappearance. Maybe now I can declare him a missing person. I could get a whole police investigation, but I haven't even really looked myself. I've just been sitting on my couch and worrying. I've taken Ivo's place.

At least I don't just sit and stare off. I try to occupy myself with my iPad, but I end up checking the news to see if someone was found dead in a river or something.

Worry can drive you insane.

Worry is currently driving me insane.

I swipe my finger across the screen, flipping through local news. No murders or dead people yet. If there was one, then it would surely be front page news. The front page is occupied by something else, however. I scan it briefly, simply to get my mind off Ivo.

The article is actually surprisingly comforting. Truly surprising, considering how it was about the man across the street selling illegal drugs to children. He had been arrested after a surveillance operation lasting a couple of months it seems. The cops must have been smart. No one ever saw anything and the dealer never knew he was being monitored. Come to think of it, I had walked down that street every day and never saw anything. The news agency had interviewed the people from the neighborhood and they were all equally mystified.

I smile to myself.

That cop is really something.