

It was always the same for Jim Brown. Wake up, take a shower (with not so hot not so cold water) eat cereal, brush teeth, and wear the old beaver colored coat to go to work.

Work wasn't much of an amusement either. He had a nine to five schedule organizing returned books at the public library, in which he spent what seemed endless hours completely silent and making the minimum gestures when he felt forced to. Nonetheless, he had never caught any interest between the multiple title covers he held every day. From Moby Dick to Advance Quantum Mechanics, not a single one of the books was attractive enough for his simplistic mind. He had never complained to his superiors, or called in sick, or even interacted with the other workers. Yet he was there, lacking of a presence, as if he could disappear in a forest of shelves without anyone taking notice that he was ever gone.

After work Jim would silently check out, take his old beaver coat and head straight home. Always taking the same route and without any delay. He never took any alternate shortcuts, or stopped by any store for he didn't pay attention to whatever colorful display was on the showcase. That was how Jim lived. That was how he remembered every day of his life.

As he sauntered his way home one day, making way between the hectic crowds that moved along the city sidewalks, he found his usual path blocked by yellow tape that surrounded what seemed to be a lifeless body splattered on the middle of the street. He noticed how the group of spectators began to increase, women crying in shock, a couple of teens imitating vomiting sounds, and curious children excited to see the gruesome spectacle displayed. Without further thought or reaction about the

obstructing scene, he quickly turned around and took the shortest alternate route he knew.

Although he never used this path he managed to set course easily. With a sip of his unsweetened coffee every 10 steps, Jim found himself in pacing against the evening breeze as he crossed the city park.

It was then when he heard it.

A low note that filled his ears and slowly turned into a pleasing melody. He didn't stop walking or changed his pace, or looked around to find the source of such composition. The sound seemed to be louder as he kept walking. It became stronger, purer with every step and every breath. Filling his ears to the point in which not even his own boring thoughts could be heard. It was not long before he realized he had stopped walking, and that his coffee cup was already empty. He was now standing in the middle of the road, alone, with nothing but the melody that traveled with the soft whispers created by the trees around him. As it repeated itself in his ears he noticed it was not an elaborate piece, just an endless repetition of unchanging notes.

Using the little knowledge he had about music he managed to identify the single instrument that reproduced such an intoxicating sound. Those long, low notes could only be produced by the delicate friction between the bow and strings of a cello. However, he still couldn't pinpoint the location of the instrument and his musician. Jim allowed his eyes to scan his surrounding for any clue of where the melody could have been originated. He believed it couldn't be hard to find the source considering how loud and vividly it played, but it was to no avail. Eventually, Jim gave up to any kind of extra effort after

his thirty-second search. With a small sigh, almost too small for it to be either seen or heard, he began walking and continued his way home.

What was left after he crossed the park wasn't much. Took a turn to the right a couple of streets ahead and then entered his old brick building that could be confused with any of the other brick buildings that filled the street. As he entered his apartment he followed up with the rest of his routinely day. Take a shower; eat dinner, brush teeth and get back to sleep. It wasn't as if he wasn't able to accomplish any of the steps in his evening ritual, but there was something that made his mind feel uncomfortable during his activities. He couldn't exactly identify what it was until he was lying in his bed and ready to fall asleep.

It was then when he heard it again. The incessant repetition of musical notes that echoed in his head like a never-ending memory and easily made a room in the simplicity of his consciousness. Jim looked at the clock that marked 8:32. It was already two minutes past his bedtime and he couldn't find any sleep. He kept repeating the notes in his mind and tried to use it as a lullaby. It was futile. The sound of the cello reverberated in his mind the way a basketball bounced in an empty court. Jim shifted his position from his usual face up to sideways trying to find a comfortable way to fall asleep faster. It was impossible. After thirty minutes of restless shifting and concentration he stopped trying. The melody as loud as ever in his mind and with the same monotonous rhythm as the first time he had heard it that day. It was the first time in his life that Jim had trouble sleeping.

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Making his way back home from work the next day, Jim Brown seemed to hold his cup of coffee tighter than usual. His eyes more vivid and there was something different about the way his hairstyle, something small that changed the way his hair was combed since he was five. His pace was the same, however, without him realizing his legs were no longer taking the usual path that was blocked before. Instead they were leading him into the park. The only thing remaining unchanged was the song playing in his mind.

Expecting to hear the melody soon Jim kept walking through the same route as the day before. This time a bit more careful of his surroundings for any chance of finding the source of sound. He walked, and walked and soon began to notice that the only melody playing was the one in his head. Once he stopped he was already in the other exit of the park. Jim turned around, looking back to the road he had walked already twice and questioning himself if he had made any mistake. The time was the same, so was the route, so why didn't he hear anything like the day before?

He stared at his empty cup and reflected upon his actions and events of today. The song had appeared to him in the same place and at the same time that he had presented himself. It was only logical for Jim that it would occur the same as before.

Accepting how it had not gone as planned he sighed. He turned around, threw the cup to the trash and resumed walking home. His eyes returned to their usual darker color and his hair lost the little life it had that day. He hadn't noticed that by then, the melody had already stopped playing in his head.

