

The white-hot sand radiated heat, reflecting the summer sun and forcing Fiona to untangle the sunglasses from her hair and cover her eyes. She couldn't help staring; the ocean called to her like a siren, sparkling and dancing, vibrant and alive, so different from her hours spent working in the ICU.

For the most part, the waves lapped gently in the breeze. But every few minutes the ocean gathered enough strength to create a wave. And Fiona watched, mesmerized, as it formed a barrel, as it gained speed, as it turned from crystal clear blue to bubbly white and finally crashed in on itself, rumbling and tumbling and speeding past the sand, reaching as far as it could, until finally, it pulled back.

Fiona's reverie broke as Jason elbowed her in the ribs. She whipped her head to the left. "Huh?"

The table's laughter drowned out the sounds of the waves. "Guess that screensaver just isn't the same, is it?"

The question came from across the table. It was strange, seeing all of her friends again. In person, not in an online game night or a FaceTime between her shifts at the hospital. Laughing and eating and soaking up the Maui sun.

"Oh, I dunno," Fiona shrugged, reaching across the table to select some vaguely fruity island drink. It was a pale orange and smelled like vacation and that's all Fiona cared about. "Back home there wasn't so much humidity."

"Yeah and this fresh floral smell is just making me mad," Jason said. "Like we get it Hawaii, you're amazing, calm down."

The rest of the table nodded solemnly, though a few snorted into their drinks.

"Honestly, I miss my air-conditioning and the old twelve by twelve space and - " She too dissolved into giggles. Fiona believed in Hell if only because she could imagine nothing worse than the last 16 months of global pandemic. Hell was enclosed spaces and hacking and coughing and the complaints of other people.

"You don't even get to talk about being cramped anymore," Jason whined. "Not that you don't deserve the luck or whatever, but really? I've been searching for months to find a house that isn't fifty thousand over asking and you find one without even trying. Did I tell you guys about the one I found just before we boarded?"

Jason prattled on, describing his perfect home in an impossible seller's market and Fiona returned to her waves. Surge, roll, crash, spread, repeat.

She took in a deep, salty breath and let it out, memories of her old studio apartment disappearing. If Fiona believed in Hell, she had to believe in Fate too. Or something, or someone, like Fate. She'd been driving home late after a 24-hour shift and her muscle memory must have short-circuited because she ended up in a neighborhood twenty-minutes off-course and there it was: the For Sale sign.

Then a glorious two weeks off work, perfectly coinciding with a trip she'd already planned, and now here she was on vacation. No longer an apartment dweller, but a homeowner.

Fiona dragged her attention away from the ocean only as her stomach growled. She scooped up two more spam musubis from the shared table and rejoined the conversation. Jason was still talking.

"Yeah, but now I'm alone in freaking Crossing Oaks and - "

"Aww, you miss me." Fiona cozied up to him, hooking her arm in his and nuzzling her head against his shoulder.

"Umm, no," Jason said, wiggling out from her embrace. "I missed you before you rubbed in the two thousand square feet, community pool, fucking doorbell cam - "

From across the table, one of the new boyfriends asked, "Oooh, you got a doorbell cam? I've been trying to convince Maria we need one."

"Nooooo!" Jason groaned.

Fiona shot him a snotty grin before slamming back the last of her drink and standing. "This is worth taking my phone out of airplane mode for."

Jason pantomimed his absolute agony at being forced to hear this again.

"The last owners had it installed only a month ago," Fiona said as she walked around the table. The upper right hand corner of her phone, hard to see in the blazing sun, showed her 15% battery quickly dwindling as the buzzing and dinging began. "Oh jeez."

Fiona stopped between Maria and her new boyfriend, extending her phone out so they could all see. She clicked into the app and then Maria brushed her own finger down the screen so that it would refresh. For a moment, it only buffered.

"Ooh, you have a package!"

Fiona gasped. "One sec," she said, pulling her phone back, her thumbs racing against the screen. "Mrs. Martinez - she lives across the street - she said she'd watch the house for me."

"Aww, sounds like you have sweet neighbors."

Fiona smiled, "I hope so, I only met her yesterday." She sent off the text, requesting Mrs. Martinez hide the package behind the potted geranium when she got the chance, then handed her phone back over for the couple to inspect.

"Especially because that would've been stolen in ten seconds at Crossing Oaks," Jason said.

"This is actually that red toaster I tried to order a month ago that was taken." Fiona said. "It'll look so much better now on allllll my marble counter space." She gave Jason a wink and he pretended to gag.

"Oooh, someone's coming over!"

Fiona glanced away from Jason's middle finger salute and rested her elbows on Maria's shoulders while they all watched.

Fiona's new house had a small porch, currently empty, save the one potted geranium and Welcome mat she'd bought herself as a housewarming gift, and a long, paved pathway extending out to the sidewalk. The doorbell camera was crystal clear, with a wide lens, up until the end of the street when it began to get grainy.

A second later, the app itself sent an alert, a message at the top of the screen declaring: *Someone was spotted in front of your house.*

"That's Mrs. Martinez!" Fiona said. She probably would've recognized her anywhere, what with that mixture of salt-and-pepper hair and dyed-pink tips.

"She's quick," the boyfriend said.

Fiona nodded. "She's sixty and still running marathons. She told me all about her training regimen yesterday."

"I want to be her when I grow up," Maria said.

"Same," the boyfriend agreed, and the three laughed as they watched Mrs. Martinez pass the geranium, nearly reaching the package.

And then, almost as if she knew they were watching from thousands of miles away, Mrs. Martinez stared straight into the doorbell cam. Half bent down toward the package, her eyes were firmly locked onto the camera. She tilted her head to the side, squinting more and more.

"Here," Fiona said, reaching out to tap the large red button in the center of the app's screen. "Thank you so much, Mrs. Martinez!"

To which Mrs. Martinez broke her reverie with a piercing shriek. Maria almost dropped Fiona's phone as the rest of the table quickly brought their hands up to their ears, wide eyes and open mouths directed toward the trio.

"Oh my god," Fiona said, grabbing her phone out of Maria's hands and pulling it close to her face. Mrs. Martinez, on the ground, terrified. Labored breaths came through the phone's speaker. "I'm so sorry, Mrs. Martinez, it's me! It's Fiona. I'm so, so sorry, are you okay?"

She waited a moment. Another. And again, still no response, only sharp inhales and too quick exhales.

"Shit, shit, shit," Fiona said, rushing off the beachside patio, down the stairs, and trudging through the sand. She scrolled through her contacts, searching for someone to check on Mrs. Martinez, realizing quickly that everyone she would have called was sitting back at the restaurant. "Shiiiiit!"

She switched back to her app, Mrs. Martinez now sitting up and, once again, staring at the doorbell camera. Rather than risk sending her into another panic, Fiona called Mrs. Martinez. The woman picked up on the second ring.

"I'm so sorry," Fiona said immediately and fluidly, as if it was all one word tumbling out of her mouth. "I'm so, so sorry. Are you okay? Do I need to call an ambulance?"

"No, no, I'm fine. I forgot the last family installed that just before they put the house up for sale," Mrs. Martinez said with a shaky breath, but not a labored one. "I must be due for a new prescription." She gave a little laugh, "Get to my age and you start seeing things."

Fiona laughed too, in that way where she wasn't sure whether to laugh, cry, or sigh in relief. She put her phone on speaker and switched back to her doorbell camera and watched as Mrs. Martinez slowly got to her knees. She seemed unsteady still, but said, "Here you go, dear," as she tucked the package behind the flower pot. Her voice echoed a bit, as Fiona had both apps up, but she continued, "Just text me if you get any others or want me to hold them at my house."

"I will, thank you so much and again, I'm so, so sorry."

"Don't you worry about it, really. Bye now."

"Bye," Fiona said, though the line was already dead. For a few more seconds she stared down at her phone, watching as Mrs. Martinez hobbled across the road, clearly favoring one leg. But even though Mrs. Martinez was no longer sitting on the ground, staring into the lens, Fiona still felt her gaze. A gaze. Some kind of presence lingering on her porch that forced the hairs on her arm to stand on end. She squinted at her phone, angling it away from the sun's reflection, trying to focus.

She blinked, her attention pulled away by a rolling, crashing wave and the soft ocean breeze on her face that always seemed to follow. Fiona sighed. It was beautiful. She wasn't stuck indoors and she was on vacation. Everything, she promised herself, was fine.

She kicked off her flip flops and began walking back to the restaurant. The sand spread between her toes, burning slightly now that she wasn't so panicked, but in a way that made her feel alive. Every step she took, the milliseconds her foot was in the air, provided the perfect amount of relief, and then she trudged through the next step, and the next, and the next.

Before she even made it up the wooden stairs, her friends were waving from their table. Jason cupped his hands over his mouth and shouted, "Our AirBnB is ready!"

Fiona slipped her phone into the back pocket of her jean shorts, her shoes back on her feet, and raced up the stairs. Most of the table had already been cleared away. "You can buy my drinks tonight," Jason said, having covered her portion of the bill.

Although "drinks" ended up being a stop at the local 7-11 around the block from their rental since half the group - Fiona and Jason included - were hit with jet lag. Five hours separated Hawaii and Tennessee and they'd been traveling since the early morning. "We're not in our 20s anymore," Jason said, kicking the front door open, four bags of groceries hanging from both arms.

"Speak for yourself!" Maria piped up, the last holdout at 29.

Fiona held the door open with her foot as four, five, six more people walked through, mostly holding containers of booze. When they'd all settled in the kitchen, Fiona closed and locked the door, before throwing Jason the single bag of chips she still held.

He ripped it open and immediately began pouring and soon the alcohol was flowing too. Fiona was out of practice with binge drinking, though she'd gotten used to a single glass of scotch a night and passing out on her couch in front of the TV. It didn't take long, maybe four drinks, maybe less, for Fiona to stagger up the stairs of the three-story condo and crash onto the bed in her shared room, Jason's snores already filling the air. She crawled over the covers with a grunt, taking her phone out of her back pocket and hooking it up to the USB charger before passing out face down into the pillow, her hand still holding her phone.

Laughter and cackles woke her. Jason's snores, though loud, couldn't mask the clear party a few of their friends were still raging. They'd moved from downstairs into the room next door, the thin walls of the

AirBnB barely separating them. In the dark, Fiona patted around the nightstand table, searching for her phone. With one eye still closed, the bright light blared, indicating she had forty alerts. She groaned.

Fiona rolled over, pulling her phone off its charger and typing in her passcode. Five texts, a few emails, and over twenty notifications from her doorbell app. With the back of her hand, she tried rubbing the sleep from her eyes, as if she was seeing things. She blinked. No, there were still over twenty notifications. Unless someone was literally stalking her house, it didn't make sense.

At random, she chose one of the notifications, bringing up her doorbell camera. For half a second, all she saw was the dark night of her entryway and the package, in exactly the same spot from a few hours before. She blinked.

From the depths of the darkness, a large pair of eyes suddenly appeared on the screen, somehow focused and confused, just as Mrs. Martinez's had been. Only they were larger. Far larger and much closer. Red veins shattered and splintered across the giant white orbs, the pupils pulling Fiona in, inviting her to tumble into their abyss. She'd seen eyes like those before, in so many of her patients, just moments before the end.

Fiona dropped her phone. Her heartbeat drummed so loudly in her ears she hadn't even realized she'd screamed until Jason whipped upright next to her, shouting, "What, what, what is it? What's going on?"

The door burst open, light flooded into the room. "Is everyone okay?" Maria asked.

"I saw - " Fiona started, her voice shaking just like the rest of her body, humming in terror. "I saw..." But she didn't know what she had seen. A pair of eyes. She didn't remember a body, though surely there had to have been one. Her camera picked up something. Twenty times. She'd seen....something.

"What? What did you see?" Maria asked. Behind her, blocking the worst of the hallway light stood several more friends, their brows pinched, their eyes wide, their mouths closed in thin lines or biting at their lips.

"I don't know," Fiona finally said. Maria flipped on the light switch and Fiona blinked away the sudden pain as bright white light filled the bedroom. The first time she was seeing the space was as everyone filed in, inspecting doors and windows and checking under beds and inside closets. But of course, they found nothing. "I'm sorry you guys, I think I was just half asleep and my phone said someone was at the house and I think I just...I don't know."

"It's okay," Jason said, staring at Fiona. His concern, everyone's concern, obvious. He outstretched his arm and said, "pass me your phone."

Without questioning, Fiona handed over her device.

A few clicks later, Jason said, "Fi." He cleared his throat, looking back up at her, then around the rest of the group. He cleared his throat again. "Um, your doorbell cam isn't showing anything on its history. It's just..." he trailed off, but all eyes were on him as he scrolled through the timeline, hours back, none of the scenery in front of her door changing. "I'm going to turn off the push notifications, okay?"

Fiona didn't argue. Instead, she looked across all of her friend's concerned faces and gave a light, forced laugh. "Sorry you guys."

"Don't worry about it," Maria said, shooing the rest of them out of the room. "If you can't go back to sleep though, we're watching the Marblelympics in the other room." Muttered replies came from the hallway, some saying they'd join soon, others that they were going to bed, before the door clicked shut and Jason and Fiona were left in darkness.

A few minutes passed. "You're okay?"

"Yeah."

A few more minutes. The bed shifted as Jason crawled under the covers and the scratchy surface of the foreign comforter pressed against Fiona's stomach. She should lay down. She should fall back asleep.

The ceiling alit, washed in the pale blue light emanating from her phone. It was probably just her friends. Maybe a work email.

She fell back against the down pillow and turned her phone over, so that the room was once again enveloped in darkness.

But all she saw, even as sleep tried to overtake her, were those two eyes. All she saw, even in the depths of her dreams, in the plagues of her nightmares, were those two eerie white unblinking orbs. Entrancing her. Beckoning her. Haunting her. No matter the change of scenery, no matter the characters in her fantasy, all Fiona could do was stare, confused, as the eyes engulfed her.

Fiona awoke with a gasp and sat bolt upright. The bed was empty except for a sweaty imprint of where she'd been laying. Jason's voice floated up from the first floor, muddling with the jingle of her alarm going off.

In a haze, Fiona turned off her alarm, rose from bed, and staggered into the bathroom. She skipped over the mirror, not ready to see the bags underneath her eyes, and showered in cold water. It didn't wake her up, like she hoped, nor did it distract her from yesterday's memories.

After wringing the water from her hair, she threw it up in a towel and immediately picked up her phone. It didn't take long to find a cookie delivery company within her new house's radius, and she immediately set an order for a dozen assorted flavors to be delivered to Mrs. Martinez. In the Special Notes section, she typed, "I'm sorry!" once more. The estimated time of arrival was thirty minutes.

Fiona tossed her phone to the side, finally ready to face her reality. Bags, yes, she definitely had those. And visible blood vessels like that of the eyes she saw last night. Not as many, not as deep, not as vividly red or protruding, but they were there. She stared at her own reflection until another bark of laughter from downstairs jolted her out of her trance. In a hurry, she dressed, took the towel off her head, and walked down the stairs.

The teasing began the second she stepped foot into the kitchen. She barely had time to process the cool tile before the faux-shrieking began. Fiona wasn't sure who started it, but soon everyone had their hands to their cheeks, some were dropping to the floor and pretending to faint. Fiona lunged for the platter of Hawaiian rolls, tearing off a few at a time and chucking them at anyone she could. "Alright, alright, shut up!" She said, when most of her ammo had disappeared onto the floor.

Jason opened his mouth and motioned for her to toss. Fiona rolled some of the dough into a small ball and lofted it into the air. He caught it and swallowed, everyone cheered, and Fiona's night terror was seemingly forgotten by all but her.

To distract herself, Fiona prepared mimosas and sangria, Irish coffees and champagne, setting them on the island-themed placemats, ready for her friends. But with nothing left to do, she slumped into the closest woven chair and pulled up her phone.

"Ugh, Fi. You need a moratorium on that app."

"I know," Fiona groaned, glancing up at Jason. He set a large platter of sliced fruits down on the table before staring intently at her, cocking an eyebrow. Before he could question her, she said, "I just want to make sure Mrs. Martinez got her cookies."

"Oooh, so you feel *guilty* guilty, huh?"

"You have no idea," Fiona said, slumping even farther into her seat. The chair next to her scraped as Jason took a seat, no longer chastising. Instead, he waited and watched with her, and they waited and watched even while everyone else took their seats and began eating until eventually, the cookies arrived. The driver set them down, rang the doorbell, and drove off, and Fiona and Jason waited and watched some more. When Mrs. Martinez finally answered the door, she glanced down at the cookies, then back up again. And though Fiona couldn't make out her facial expressions from across the road, the doorbell camera just a touch too grainy, she didn't need to.

Mrs. Martinez didn't bend down to pick up the cookies. She just...stood there. Staring.

Fiona turned her head slowly, eyes wide in Jason's direction. His own eyes were squinting as he watched her camera, his brows furrowing together in that way he hated so much. When Fiona glanced back, Mrs. Martinez was still there. Staring.

All around them, the others ate and chatted and cleaned and laughed, their glasses clinked together and their forks scraped against their plates, the coffee pot gurgled and the dishwasher swirled, and all the while Mrs. Martinez still stood in the doorframe of her own house thousands of miles away. Staring.

Jason's hand shot out and grabbed Fiona's phone, setting it facedown on the breakfast table before either of them could change their mind.

"Okay, yeah, that was weird." He said.

Fiona buried her face in her hands, trying to rub away what she'd just seen, what she'd seen all night. *None of it was real*, she tried telling herself. Just bad dreams brought on by too little sleep, being overworked, and the stress of the move. She was seeing things.

Mrs. Martinez had seen something too.

Fiona stood abruptly, declining Jason's offer of pancakes. "I'm gonna go for a walk."

"Where?" He asked.

"The beach," she said. "Need to clear my head a little." She gave him a small smile. It seemed reassuring enough for the rest of the group but not Jason. They'd known each other for too long, had seen the insanity of college applications and undergrad midterms, old cul-de-sac neighbors passing away, and the heartbreak of failed relationships. There was little they could hide from each other.

So Jason just kept looking at her. More staring. Though at least his eyes seemed to be studying. Blinking. Alive. When he finally nodded, Fiona did the same, and moments later she was out the door, rushing down the stairs, and trudging through sand.

One step after another, faster and faster. The morning sun blazed and sweat rolled down Fiona's forehead, but she didn't stop. One step, and another, and another, and another, until she collapsed onto the white-hot sand. She kept her eyes closed, not sure if it was sweat or tears streaming down her face.

Minutes passed, maybe hours, time hadn't seemed to matter the past sixteen months so why should it start now. The waves rolled gently and sand whistled near her ears as she opened her eyes and turned to face the ocean. To stare at its countless shades of blue.

During the height of the pandemic, when she didn't have time to leave the hospital and had to squeeze in stolen hours for sleep, she'd turn on a white noise app. She always chose the ones that sounded like a beach. There weren't any seagulls in Hawaii, no gentle caws, but it was better this way. More soothing. She reached down, grasping a handful of sand in her palm, and slowly let it fall back to earth. She breathed the humid, salty air in, counting to four, then let the breath out to the count of six.

Her phone dinged.

Fiona couldn't even muster the strength to be surprised, only dread filled her veins, icy despite the island's warmth. She sat up, brushing the sand from her arms, her face, her hair.

Her phone dinged again.

Someone was spotted in front of your house.

Fiona stopped breathing. She stopped hearing the waves. She watched, detached, as her thumb hovered over the alert. She pressed the button.

No one was there.

She waited for the eyes to appear.

They didn't.

A piercing, shaky inhale filled her lungs and Fiona breathed out in such relief she sagged backwards onto the sand. The solace lasted until she worked up the courage to check the history tab.

No one was there. No one had been there. Not even Mrs. Martinez.

The cookie box still sat on her doorstep, tied together with a pretty pink ribbon vibrant enough that Fiona was certain it was the same order. She kept her thumb on the phone, scrolling up and down and up and down but Mrs. Martinez had never left her house. Not even however many hours ago, when Jason and Fiona had both seen her.

The live feed finally switched to night mode, an eerie green glow cast across her front porch.

Someone was spotted in front of your house.

Tears streamed down Fiona's face that she could no longer pretend were sweat. She wiped her face with the back of her hand, bits of sand sticking to her cheek. Her fingers took over, slamming down on key after key until she found the number she needed and the dial tone rang.

"Hi," Fiona said to the non-emergency police hotline operator. "I'm not home, um, I won't be home until the end of the week, and my doorbell camera keeps saying that it's seeing someone? I'm not seeing anything but, um, my neighbor thought she saw something when she went to check. Mhmm. Yeah." The tension in her shoulders released and a nervous chuckle escaped her lips as she gave the operator her new address. "Yeah, if an officer could swing by tonight - oh my gosh, thank you so much. Mhmm. Bye."

A shrill ring erupted from her phone and Fiona dropped it in the sand with a shriek of her own, but it was only just a call. A normal call. From Jason.

"Where the fuck are you? It's been three hours!"

"I'm....," but as she looked around, she realized that nothing was familiar. Nothing but the ocean. And the eyes that seemed to haunt her if she didn't blink them away fast enough. "Um, I'm at the beach."

"No shit, Fi. Where on the beach?"

"I don't know."

The silence on the other line was deafening, louder than the ocean's waves, louder than the million thoughts running through her head.

"I'll start walking," she said.

"Do you remember which way you turned?"

"Right."

"Okay, I'll come your direction."

"Okay."

"Fi?"

"Yeah?"

The silence grew louder. Finally, "Nevermind. We'll talk soon."

"Okay."

The rolling, crashing waves no longer calmed her, and the blistering sand didn't make her feel alive, but as she walked, she didn't think of her phone. Of her house back in Nashville. Of Mrs. Martinez or the past sixteen months or her doorbell cam.

She thought of nothing until a figure in the distance waved, a bottle of water in each hand. As she got closer, Jason passed her a breakfast bar. "Eat," he commanded and so she did. "Drink," he said and so she did.

"I don't think you're crazy, Fi," he started, as he turned around and they began walking the same sand he'd just covered. "But you're acting kind of crazy."

Her sharp laugh sounded delirious to her own ears, if not crazy.

"It's okay," he said, wrapping an arm around her shoulders as they trudged through the sand. "You've been stressed out. We all have. We lived through a fucking pandemic and you saw...I mean, you saw things people shouldn't have to see." His voice hitched a little and he didn't continue on.

They walked in silence for a while, just the crunching and spilling of sand underneath their feet. Jason dropped his arm and they continued walking.

He glanced sideways at Fiona once. Twice. "Maybe you should just turn your whole phone off."

"I know," Fiona said with a sigh as she stared down at the screen. "But I'm waiting for a call."

"Oh?"

She didn't want to tell him. She knew what he would say. But it was taking enough energy to stay awake, to fight from seeing the eyes everywhere, in all the faces of the people they passed, the beach now littered with crowds. "The cops are doing a wellness check on the house. That's something people do in the suburbs."

Jason couldn't muster anything more than a bark of laughter for a few seconds, looking at her sideways. He laughed again. "Oh my god, you're bougie now! That is so bougie."

"I know! I know!" She groaned.

Her phone rang, shrill, but not as scary now that she wasn't alone. "Speak of the devil," Fiona said.

"Literally," Jason agreed. "Put it on speaker."

"We can't be those people."

"Oh my god," Jason said. He stopped walking and gave an exaggerated hand wave, "Pick it up!"

Fiona clicked and brought it up to her ear. Jason squatted down so that he could hear.

"Hi ma'am, I'm the officer who performed your wellness check."

"He sounds young," Jason whispered and Fiona elbowed him.

"I found a plastic bag floating around your entryway. I think that might've been what set off the motion sensor. It's been real windy here lately and we've had a problem with some rolling debris and, uh, yeah. Everything else looked fine though. I walked the perimeter and didn't see anything wrong. Although you might want to change the latches on your backyard gates, they look a little rusty."

"I just moved in," Fiona said.

"Oh, well then you'll definitely wanna replace those. There's sessions led by our officers on how to keep your home safe. I'll stick a flyer in your mailbox."

"Okay, thank you!"

"No problem, ma'am. Is that everything I can do for you?"

"Um, yeah. I think so. Thanks."

"Sure thing. Take care."

"Bye."

"Boooooogie," Jason said as he stood to his full height. "But okay, it's just a plastic bag." Neither of them mentioned Mrs. Martinez.

"Yeah."

They watched with rapt attention as Fiona switched to the doorbell app. The officer looked both ways before walking out into the street and toward the driver's side of his patrol car. Fiona skipped backwards 20 minutes, when the officer first pulled up. It was there. The history was there. No large eyes, no Mrs. Martinez, but there was the officer, as he stepped out of his car, as he walked up to knock on the front door, as he grabbed the plastic bag stuck in a corner where the camera couldn't see. He didn't look at the doorbell camera, not once, and then he was calling her number and she remembered all the rest.

For some reason, Fiona didn't feel better. Even as Jason smiled and said, "See! Everything's fine."

She didn't ask him about what they both saw together that morning. Instead, she turned her phone off completely, slipped it into her back pocket, and gave him a tight-lipped grin and said, "Let's go!"

For the rest of the trip, she kept the phone turned off. Work emails could wait, texts would still be there. She stuck with Jason as they hiked up volcanos and day drank and tried to surf for the first time. But at night she didn't sleep. And during the day, she barely ate. The same dead eyes seemed to follow her everywhere, awake or dreaming, and she no longer felt the ocean breeze or cared about the sand. When she returned home, she wouldn't be able to tell her friends if the water was cool or warm, how clear it was, or any of the wonders she'd marveled over the first few hours before she ever checked her phone.

She zoned out most of the plane ride home.

The blaring beep of the bag check broke her trance. "Oh, that's mine!" She said and Jason jumped a foot away from her.

"Jesus," he said, bending over at the waist. "You've barely spoken all trip and then fucking yell."

"Sorry, sorry!" She waved a chaotic hand in the air as she weaved through the crowd. "That one's mine," she said, trying to push past. Her hand fastened around the turquoise suitcase and she yanked it off the conveyor belt.

Jason's eyes bore into her as she wheeled her bag toward him. She averted her gaze. "I didn't see yours," she said.

"That's okay." Putting a hand to his chest, he said, "I'm fine. Are *you* okay? Like, are you sure you're okay? You can always spend the night with me in Crossing Oaks."

Fiona barked out a laugh. "No, I'm fine, I'm fine. Really."

She turned her phone on for the first time in nearly a week. She ignored the notifications as they popped up, instead pulling up Uber. Jason let out a whistle. "Fifty bucks? That's what you get for being bougie."

"You'll have to be my first guest soon," she said, clicking on the button to confirm the ride.

"You know I'm too old to sleep on the floor. As soon as your furniture gets delivered, I'm there."

"Deal," she said, giving him a hug while still not looking into his eyes. She turned away and gave a wave. "See you later!"

"Bye!" He called. She didn't look back.

The ride home was long and quiet. The bright, neon lights of the city gave way to the more spread out, yellow lights of the suburbs. Her own neighborhood was mostly darkness, only a few street lamps lit at the ends of roads. "Thanks," Fiona said to her Uber driver.

"No problem. Have a good night."

The driver u-turned, his headlights shining brightly onto Mrs. Martinez's house. The cookies still sat, untouched, in front of her door. Fiona gulped, blinking back the memories of her eyes. The same ones she saw in the doorbell camera. The same ones as in her dreams.

The car turned the corner, most of the light going with it. The streetlamp four houses over blinked on and off. A pure white. Fiona blinked again, seeing the eyes in the light. She turned and wheeled her suitcase up the driveway, past her old beat-up Civic. There was still a dent in the grass where the For Sale sign used to be.

The whirr of the wheels against the concrete blended with the chatter of cicadas until Fiona stopped in front of her door and took in a long, deep breath. As she reached into her purse to grab her keys, the hair on the back of her neck began to rise. Shivers tingled down her spine. The pull of the eyes was stronger than ever before and no one else was around. She took another breath, a quicker breath. Her keys jingled and clanged, but she couldn't quite find them. Something behind her rustled and Fiona shrieked, whipping around, ready to wield her purse as a weapon.

A plastic bag, tangled in her geranium. Fiona's shriek morphed into deranged laughter as her eyes also found the package, her new toaster, undisturbed.

Her right hand finally grasped her keys and she pulled them out, ready to spend the second night in her new house. The long gold key fit perfectly into the lock, but just before she stepped inside, Fiona noticed the doorbell cam. The light had gone out. She tilted her head, inching closer, inspecting it. She was certain it lit up the first night. The round camera lens reflected the porch, what little could be seen in the darkness. She squinted and peered and finally she saw what she hadn't realized she'd been looking for.

A pair of eyes, large and unblinking, dead and laced with red, veiny streaks, stared at her through the doorbell camera. Smaller eyes dotted the outskirts of the lens, wide with abject horror, as the veiny, unblinking, dead eyes grew larger and larger and larger.

Fiona's mouth dropped and she started to shriek again until she was on the other side, watching herself standing there, shrieking.

The her that wasn't her closed her mouth and Fiona saw with absolute certainty the same pair of haunting, unblinking, dead eyes, staring back at her. And then they turned their focus away, walked over the Welcome mat, and into her empty home.