



ABE: THE NEW FACES OF HOMELESSNESS

The New Faces of Homelessness



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"J, I need you to come here," I called out, my voice filled with urgency.

It had been a few weeks since this strange phenomenon started. It began with my legs, which transformed into hard, immobile shells. Then, my thumbs and pinky fingers vanished into thin air. One would think losing a thumb would be enough, but no, fate had something else in store for me.

Another System Update popped up on my screen, and without thinking, I clicked on it. And just like that, my arms disappeared too. I was now trapped inside my own mind, my physicality fading away. It was a disheartening experience, as my once vibrant creativity started to dwindle.

However, amidst the chaos, an unexpected transformation occurred. My vocabulary began to exponentially expand, as if compensating for the loss of my limbs. It was as if I was metamorphosing into something that only exists within the depths of one's imagination. It's strange, I've never had the urge to masturbate before, but with my vanishing limbs, a desire for the impossible began to stir within me.

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Hana, my cat, has been acting strangely lately. She constantly circles around me, meowing incessantly, craving attention and a bowl of kibble. However, I am trapped and unable to move. Hana bites my hardening legs, meows, and then retreats into the corner and cowers. The walls of my prison are closing in on me, suffocating my creative spirit. The only creations that emerge are the countless pieces of terrible writing flooding my mind as countless wannabee writers chase an ephemeral hobby — as the first waves of AI torment me. It seems like everyone who can type now believes they are the next fucking Shakespeare, Shakespeare, not fucking Shakespeare, thanks to AI writing.

“Linds, you already did the ‘fucking not fucking’ bit,” J says.

“I know, but sometimes the humour needs to be emphasized for it to truly land,” I reply. J interrupts the conversation and → **Clicks Here**.

Suddenly, my office spins uncontrollably, and I feel a wave of nausea. I can’t hold it in any longer and vomit all over myself. The spinning abruptly stops, and J screams. I glance down and realize my legs have vanished. I have become a character much like one in Monty Python and the Holy Grail. *Come back here, I will bite your legs off.*

“Hop up here,” J says.

“Are you being cruel?” I snap back. “How the fuck, am I supposed to hop, I don’t have legs anymore?”

“No, I’m not being cruel, I love you, let’s go on an adventure,” J reassures me. J picks me up and places me in a cart.

It’s a beautiful day, warm and sunny. J pushes my armless torso for ten blocks until we reach a local McDonalds. I should mention just yesterday, I traveled back from Indianapolis (in the future) (Taylor Swift) to the present. Armed ~~Armless~~ with the knowledge Abe is an evil entity.

I need to eat.

I need to read.

I need to be myself.

J orders food and carefully settles me in a seat towards the back of the restaurant.

At the adjacent table, an elderly man and woman, looking relatively ordinary, whatever the fuck that means, sip on coffees. They are in their eighties. “I got us the smallest size, they are only \$1.00, it’s all we can afford,” the man solemnly whispers.

J feeds me, and opens a book on my phone, I'm amazed, I can now turn the pages with my mind. I overhear the elderly man and woman engaged in a soft conversation. It warms and breaks my heart simultaneously. The man speaks about food banks and how they only provide non-perishable canned goods and dry items, nothing fresh.

A tear forms in my left eye.

Their conversation carries a sense of acceptance, not defeat, as they come to terms with their diminishing place in the world.

My pulse skips a beat.

J feeds me another bite.

The man calmly mentions he has chicken at home, but as he ages, cooking chicken becomes a cumbersome task. The preparation and cleaning of the frying pan become too much.

I finish reading my book, "She's a Killer" by Kristen McDougall, it's now one of my all-time favourites. It tells the story of a near-genius, lamenting how wealthugees who are escaping crumbling, war -and greed-torn countries, are buying up all the land in one of the last bastions of paradise left on the planet (New Zealand), where only the rich, those who can afford Taylor Swift tickets for their tweens, can escape. The book is a discussion for another time.

J feeds me a fry.

Strangely, listening to the aging couple fills me with hope. Just before J is about to wheel me away, the man asks the woman if she'd like to come to his place, where he can cook her chicken and frozen string beans, and they can watch a video. If I had arms, the hairs on them would most certainly be standing at attention.

J pushes what remains of me down the street.

I received a message, straight into my mind, from a person whose writing skills could use some improvement, to put it mildly. They asked me to fix their shallow and meaningless words. It's enough to make me want to scream. I can't help but wonder what kind of dire circumstances would necessitate writing as a matter of life and death? I find myself constantly pondering how Abe managed to infiltrate my thoughts so effortlessly.

A niece/cousin messaged me last night, informing me that she's in town, and if I can find the time, she'd like to meet with me. Her friend Cassidy would be joining us. I feel like an afterthought. I childishly don't reply.

The reverberations of my friend's words from Gummy Friday shook me to my core, jolting the very cart I was riding in as they echoed through my mind. I struggled to maintain control, the weight of their impact becoming increasingly evident. It dawned on me then, with undeniable clarity, an apology would forever elude me.

We find ourselves in the forest, surrounded by love. ↓↓↓

Leaving the woods, just a block into our journey home, we spot two young girls with a lemonade stand. A duck stands in front of them, inquiring if they have any grapes. One of the girls politely tells the duck no, and the duck waddles away.

Two women stand on the corner, engaged in conversation. One of the adorable lemonade girls skips up to them and asks if they'd like some delicious lemonade.

In a display of ignorance that only occurs when answering a simple question, one of the women says, "I'd love some lemonade, but my doctor has advised me to cut down on sugar due to my borderline diabetes." The other woman takes a deep breath and proceeds to explain, in an eighty-word monologue, she would love lemonade as well, but she never carries cash.

The adorable lemonade girl, who probably doesn't understand the meaning of the next word, exasperatedly becomes frustrated by the fact two adults responded to a simple question with over one hundred words.

I pushes me another block. A former coworker named Suzie had messaged me, kindly asking how I am? We hadn't talked in three years. I feel warm. I reply to her an hour later thanking her for thinking of me. Tears are flowing in her message back to me, her pain stains my screen. She hasn't seen her son, who is suffering from addiction issues, since May, it's now August. I will talk to her more soon.

| | I'll be back later to write more. I'm not sure how I'm typing this, and I won't attempt to explain (with me not having arms or hands) – I just am. Enough said.

I'm back.

Life can be absolutely terrifying. As we find ourselves consumed by fears of Abe's potential world domination, it becomes increasingly evident countless individuals are slipping through the cracks of society's support systems.

In our desperate attempt to make sense of it all, we yearn to pass judgment. We yearn to assign blame to drugs, or perhaps to mental health issues. And so, I turn to the vast expanse of the internet, anxiously searching for answers that might shed some light on this perplexing phenomenon. There are thousands of articles on it ↓↓↓

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The Graying of America's Homeless: An Alarming Trend
Number of unhoused people 65 and older could triple by 2030.

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Gentrification is a global phenomenon, where cities are selling the same entertainment districts, cleanliness, and low crime rates, turning them into mere replicas of one another. The residents of these cities are seen as nothing more than an inconvenience.

Welcome to |insert city name here|, where you can immerse yourself in our vibrant arts scene, explore our craft brewery district, and indulge in endless luxury. To ensure a brilliant visit or a new life here, we have prioritized cleaning up our streets and eliminating the blight of homelessness.

"I managed to get us some \$1.00 coffee, as it's all we can afford. I wish I could buy us better coffee, my dear eighty-year-old friend, but ever since I lost my job to a robot seventeen years ago, life has been a constant struggle. Could you please read to me this letter from my landlord? My eyes aren't what they used to be."

The letter is torn open.

"It says you have three months to vacate the premises because the landlord plans to renovate. You can move back in once the renovations are complete, but the rent will triple."

Tears well up in the elderly gentleman's eyes. He regrets every decision he has made in his life. His mind fills with thoughts of what could have been. "I suppose I'll die on the streets before I even turn eighty-one," he mourns.

The man and the woman leave McDonalds and head back towards his place for dinner and a movie. As they walk, a van passes by, and someone yells, "Get a job, bum!" at the old man. The world is no longer a place that...

Little Timmy asks his parents, “Where are grandma and grandpa living?”

“In a tent,” his father replies.



“Did they have drug or mental health issues? —Timmy asks. “Can we go camping daddy?” He points his tree branch gun at a gaggle of Canada Geese and goes, “Pew. Pew. Pew.”

“No, my dear son. They simply grew old, and society has deemed them disposable because they don’t contribute enough through consumerism.”

The entitled and privileged elderly are exempt from the purge, as they continue to contribute significantly to society’s coffers by constantly renovating their mansions with the latest trends.

The world descends into a pristine hell.

The new cities shine brightly.

The denial of youth and the greed of the privileged erase any understanding that one day, they too will become old and disposable.

When I was in my thirties, a recruitment agency told me I was getting too old to work.

In my fifties, people started assuming I was retired.

At sixty-three, Wendy’s fast-food restaurant informed me I didn’t fit their future plans, and the first question from a recruitment agency was, “How old are you? Currently?”

Abe was not meant to be the main focus of this manuscript, but as I type and “mind” these words onto the screen, Abe’s story has become crucial, and his nefarious actions need to be addressed.

I fear homelessness. As my situation becomes increasingly precarious, I wonder which came first: homelessness, drugs, or mental health issues?

Today, 3,295 aging citizens of the city have registered for government assistance. Lights flicker in Abe City Hall. This cannot be allowed.

The cracks are widening. 8,898 aging citizens are now relying on dollar stores for their basic needs.

The lights in Abe City Hall begin to explode, and sirens blare.

At 3 AM, a man performs a one-man play ten stories below my still indoor home, passionately portraying every obstacle in his life. His performance is worthy of an Oscar.

A young man passes by, chasing after a woman. He sneers and taunts the suffering man before returning to the woman, attempting to persuade her to come back to his place. He is a predator. Little does he know that later in his life, he will be performing his own life story in the dead of night, a sight a sanitized city would likely reject.

The sirens at city hall continue to wail.

Three massive cargo trucks emerge from beneath the depths of city hall, rounding up the aging citizens who registered for government assistance and those shopping at dollar stores.

The city must remain pristine to attract those who still believe in a fading dream.

With the trucks overflowing, speeding past the affluent shopping district, the privileged elderly sip on \$13.00 cappuccinos, pulling out their wallets from designer bags worth \$9,000 while wearing \$1,200 shoes. They are spared from the purge. They embody the delusion everything they have in life is solely earned through their own efforts.

The trucks relentlessly pound down the street, tossing the seniors around like bingo balls. Is this any better than treating them as mere rag dolls? Many of these seniors will not survive this journey.

A few seniors manage to evade the roundup. But have they truly escaped? Following behind the cargo trucks is a convoy of 66 pickup trucks, each equipped with fishing rods sturdy enough to reel in tuna. The fishing rods are baited with prescription heart medications.

As the elderly couple strolled away from McDonalds, their destination was abruptly interrupted by the arrival of a speeding truck. Unbeknownst to the man, he had been unknowingly enticed by the allure of the bait of heart medications, only to be flung onto a pile of discarded seniors as the truck passed one of the cargo vehicles.



Today, he would not be enjoying the companionship of his friend, a lovely dinner, and a video.

Meanwhile, the lady companion, still in a state of bewilderment, spun around in search of her vanished friend. The reality hit her like a ton of bricks as the truck screeched around the corner, leaving her alone. Collapsing onto the lawn of a nearby apartment building, she unleashed a torrent of tears, fully aware her own fate would soon be sealed.

The city prided itself on its pristine appearance, believing eliminating the suffering of its inhabitants, it could achieve world-class status. This was the justification for the merciless cleansing that was taking place. But at what cost? Wisdom? Compassion? Empathy? Kindness? Understanding? Love?

Eventually, the cargo trucks arrived at the gates of a distant city, where the surviving seniors were unloaded. Out of the staggering number of 12,194 who were forced on this harrowing journey, only 3,234 had managed to endure. As the gates of their new home swung open, a familiar face greeted them from within - none other than George Carlin.

J continues wheeling me back home, and as luck would have it, the man from my floor who had once shared the news of India landing on the moon is making his way towards us. Spotting me, he greets me with a genuine smile and a friendly wave. A wave of guilt washes over me as I realize how ignorant I had been to mock him in the past. It's moments like these that make me wonder if I'm finally maturing. Perhaps, just maybe.

I miss my arms and legs.

Abe must be stopped.

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To be continued . . .