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Loves Company

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“Okay that wraps up this session,” Mike smiled at everyone in the circle. “I think we made some progress here today. Same time next week everyone.” He stood up and clapped his hands. “I think we made some real progress.”

Everyone started gathering their things and getting up to mingle, have coffee and cookies. Mike had started the group five months ago, hoping to find others like himself. There were seven people that came to his meeting tonight, six of them were like him. There was one he wasn’t sure of, the woman was quiet and reserved, this was her second meeting, and he just knew her first name, Rose.

“Mike,” Janice a local doctor and someone who has been inflicted with the same gift of sight came over to her and shook his hand again. She had been with him since his second meeting, “I can’t thank you enough.”

“I’m glad I could help. There is nothing worse than experiencing something like this and think that you’re alone.”

“I agree.”

“There has to be some kind of scientific reasoning behind this.”

“Hopefully we can find it together. I heard there might be another one of us up north.”

“Maybe they can join us next week?”

“That’s a great idea. I’ll reach out to them and see what I can do.”

“Let’s have some coffee,” he nodded to the table with refreshments. Janice nodded and followed him over to it.

Pouring himself some coffee, Mike noticed that even though Rose wasn’t mingling she was lingering, and he thought she might just be shy. Crossing over to her, he gave her his best smile.

“Hey there,” he nodded.

“Hi,” she pressed her lips together into a forced smile not looking at him directly.

“How long have you had this unique gift of sight?”

She cleared her throat and her big grey eyes looked at him. Fear, they held fear. “Six months.”

“How did it happen?”

“I just woke up and noticed my vision wasn’t right. Like the others, my left eye sees this reality and my right eye is always tuned into another universe.”

“It does take a while to get used to,” he nodded.

“That’s an understatement. I just wish I knew why this was happening to me.”

“That is one of the questions that we all would love the answer to. Marcy mentioned that a couple of days ago her vision returned to normal for two minutes. She thought it was just her imagination but if that is true maybe there’s hope for the rest of us.”

“Mike,” she paused.

“Yes?”

“I haven’t heard anyone else mention the man.”

“The man?”

“Yes, you know right?”

He shook his head, “No I don’t think I do. What do you mean?”

“Six months ago, when this happened to me the next day, I noticed a man was watching me.”

“What? Really? What did he look like?”

She swallowed hard and looked around then lowered her voice, “He’s tall, bald, not really attractive, he wears a dark business suit, a dark long overcoat no matter the weather, and a dark fedora.”

The hair on the back of his neck stood on end. He had seen that man a couple of times.
“He watches you from across the street?”

Her eyes widened as she slowly nodded.

“Hey everyone,” he called to his guests. “Has anyone else see the tall man all in black watching you?”

A few of his guests paused and looked at him, nodding. How did this not come up sooner? “Raise your hand if you’ve seen this man?”

Everyone raised their hands.

Mike didn’t know what to think. “Has anyone talked to him?”

Heads shook no.

“Is it the same man?”

People looked at each other and started sharing stories. Rose reached out and touched his arm, “No Mike I don’t think so.”

“So, we have eight people in this room that all see clearly, no eye problems, no mental health issues but we all see this universe with our left eyes and another universe with our right

eyes. It all happened around six months ago and to boot we all have men dressed in black stalking us? None of this makes any sense.”

“It does if we’re just the government’s Guinee pigs and they have experimented on us,” Rich one of the others nodded.

“What do they want with us?” Vince asked the others.

“Calm down, let’s not jump to conclusions,” Janice waved a hand. “Let’s think about this together. What do we all have in common?”

“Location?”

“No, I live out of town,” Vince said. “Where we work?”

“No,” Janice frowned. “Was everyone born here?”

“No, I was born in BC,” Rose shook her head.

After an hour of sharing information, they realized they were no further ahead. They were a mix of men and women, different ages, background, religions, they had nothing in common except that they are were viewing another universe at the same time. None of it made sense. Plus, they all had some weird man in black watching them. They all agreed that approaching the man wasn’t a good idea.

“Maybe we should buddy up?” Janice suggested. “Share our phone numbers and keep comparing notes. There has to be a common thread somewhere.”

Everyone agreed, Mike ended up buddies with Rose. They exchanged phone numbers and texted each other a test text.

“Alright everyone we will meet here next week? Same time?” Mike asked the group. Everyone agreed. He stayed behind and cleaned up the area. Rose came back in after everyone had left. “Sorry I forgot my phone.” She went over to the chair she was sitting on and found it.

“Night Rose.”

As she was about to leave the room, she turned. “You know what they say?”

“What?”

“Misery loves company. Night Mike.” She nodded and left.

Looking around the room, everything was back as it was. This was the common room his apartment building had for its tenants to share. You could rent the space for fifty dollars as long as you cleaned up afterwards.

What were the odds that eight random people would come together in Ottawa and share the same problem that is completely unfathomable. There had to be a link somewhere. They were all just so different; it didn’t make sense. He sat down in a chair and looked at the empty room. Closing his eyes tight, he rubbed them and then opened his eyes.

One space! He was seeing only one space! Quickly he grabbed his phone and checked the time. Standing up he walked around the room, and it was just this reality he was seeing. How? Why? He blinked and the other one was back. Checking his phone, it had lasted two minutes. Someone else had mentioned that happened to them too.

He gave the room a once overlook then turned the lights off and closed the door. Heading upstairs to his apartment, he felt hopeful. For the first time in six months, he felt a little hopeful that this wouldn’t be permanent.