

I picked up my supplies on the way home from work: bread, lunch meat, soda, milk, and snacks that really aren't necessary. I already have some batteries in case I need them for the flashlights, candles are in the cabinet under the sink, and the gas fireplace in my living room has been in use since early November. It appears I am ready for whatever frozen hell Mother Nature wants to unleash.

Meteorology is a strange study. I never really understood how the predictions could be made when they were based on moving air currents and temperature changes. Maybe if I studied it more it would make sense; I don't need it to make sense, though. I will just continue to believe what the man on the news tells me and what the app on my phone predicts. My app says the snow will begin at 7 am on Saturday morning. I do not intend to be awake to greet the first snow flakes. I prefer to sleep in and be surprised by a blanket of sparkles covering the stillness outside.

I wake up at nine on Saturday. The meteorologist lied. Or made a mistake. Or the currents shifted. Or the temperature changed. Either way, there was no surprising snow to greet me on Saturday morning. The app now states that the snow will begin at two pm. I take a shower, then drink my coffee, staring out my French doors onto the blank patio that should have been snow covered.

I work on the usual Saturday household tasks: laundry, vacuum, clean the bathroom, wash the coffee mug and last night's dinner dishes, and go through the mail. These tasks consume minimal hours when you live alone in a two bedroom apartment. Three more hours before the snow begins.

I look through the stack of novels on my desk that I have not read. There are five; three novels, two self help or self improvement. I choose a novel, carry the novel and myself to my spot on the couch, stretch my legs out and cover myself over with a blanket, and open the book. I need my glasses. And the lamp. The cloud cover has turned the outside into a dull gray, making the inside of the apartment darker than usual.

I open the novel and begin reading. After about twenty minutes of reading, the dryer buzzes. Time to switch the laundry. The novel did not pull me in, so the laundry is a welcome distraction.

I set the novel aside and reach for the remote as I settle back into my spot on the couch. I opt for my favorite Amazon Prime series. Besides, I can read by candle light if the power goes out; television and wifi are available now. Anything to keep my mind occupied and away from the impending storm.

I binge watch four episodes and decide it is time for lunch. Looking out the French doors, I see the first flakes have begun to fall and accumulate on the patio table and chairs. Here we go. I eat my sandwich while watching the snow pile up on the patio. The snow moved in quickly and made its presence known. I open the patio door and pick up a handful of snow. It is the wet, heavy snow that typically leads to power outages or other calamities. Travel would be hazardous, but I do not travel during snowstorms—any more.

I go back to my spot on the couch with my blanket and remote, but this time I cannot focus on the tv. Snowstorms of winters past plague my mind, and I cannot suffocate the memories. There are the snowman building memories of my childhood, teenage snowball fights with my friends who lived down the street, the college memories when we stole cafeteria trays to use as sleds, and the adult memories of slick roads and rescue vehicles.

Time to fold the towels. I turn on music to drown out the memories while I complete the mundane task of folding and stacking towels and wash cloths on the bottom shelf of the linen closet in the hallway. It only takes two songs to finish the towels. I wish I had more laundry to fold. I used to.

Eventually, I fall asleep on the couch watching *10 Things I Hate About You*, one of my comfort movies that I watch when I need reminded of a time when life was simpler and hurt less. When I awake, there are nearly four inches of snow, with plenty still coming down. It is close to night fall. At least I still have power.

Dinner for one. I search the small pantry to decide what I want to eat tonight. It is pointless to cook dinner when I am the only one who will be eating, and no one will be able to DoorDash in this weather—I would not ask them to. I decide to fix a frozen pizza, hoping the power stays on long enough to complete the cooking.

Back to my blanketed spot on the couch. I feel like the “couch rot” I have read about may be an actual thing. Or maybe that was “bed rot”. Either way, I have been

extremely immobile today, but snow storms tend to have that affect on me now. They have cost me way too much.

A few more episodes and I will go to bed. Near the end of the third episode, the power goes out. Of course, the flashlight is not nearby. I unplug my phone and use the phone flashlight to navigate to the kitchen. I am glad I remembered to charge my electronics. I get the flashlight, three candles, and a lighter and head back to the living room. I light the fireplace and the three candles, and contemplate my sleeping arrangements for the night. I will need to be near the fireplace or I will be too cold. The couch is not comfortable enough for an all night sleep, and I am too old to sleep on the floor. Why didn't I think to drag a mattress in here earlier?

The queen sized mattress from my room is too heavy and bulky for me to move. Flashlight in hand, I stand in the hallway outside the closed door of the second bedroom. Taking a deep breath, I push open the door. The flashlight beam lights up the Lego table in the corner and the Lego mini figures on the shelf along the wall. The partially completed Lego Fortnite Battle Bus still sits on the table.

"Don't look at them," I remind myself. "Just grab the mattress and go." I pull off the Lego comforter, then drag the mattress off the bed, holding the flashlight under my chin. I make a trip back to close the door, then grab my pillows and blanket from my bed.

The mattress is set up in the middle of the living room, in front of the fireplace. I open my iPad, connect to a hot spot from my cellular service, and turn on a nineties sitcom—another comfort show. Tears soak my pillow as snow storm memories flood again. A power outage, laptop Disney movies, and the adventure of camping in the living room, snuggled onto the same twin size mattress. I cover my head with a pillow to drown out the noise and the memory.

I wake up early Sunday morning and see that the snow has stopped. Snow really does look beautiful in the morning hours, when the first rays of sunlight sparkle off the undisturbed surface, like silver glitter sprinkled onto the snow. It looks like there might be six inches of snow blanketing the world. Too bad I hate the snow.

The light over the stove tells me the power is restored. I get up and go to the bathroom, turning off the lights as I go. The mind is so conditioned to flipping light

switches, even when you know the power is off. I return to the living room, plug in my laptop, and settle back onto the small mattress. I turn on the tv, and fall back asleep.

Dreams plague my sleep, and I wake up in a fit with the blankets twisted around my body, sweat soaking through my shirt, and tears streaming down my cheeks. It's always the same dream. The drive home that night. Trying to convince him—and myself—that we were okay and would be home soon. I should not have let him sit up front. He was still too small. The other car slid toward us so quickly there was nothing I could do, nowhere I could go. I curl up and sob into his mattress.

I hate snow storms.