Roommates

Four months have passed since he was honorably discharged from the army. Five months have passed since an IED blew the transport truck carrying him and his squadron. Three long years have passed since he first joined the army, and yet every morning since then has been the same. Be it a shouting commanding officer or a buzzing alarm clock, something forced Matt Dane out of bed at precisely 5 a.m. each morning.

As he got on his feet, he made his bed and took a shower. By his speed and discipline, it was obvious he was a former US soldier. After brushing his teeth and taking a shower he was greeted by the smell of coffee in the kitchen, made by his roommate Adam Nett.

“Rise and shine, sweetheart.” said Adam with his rough voice and recognizable British accent.

“Not in the mood, Adam...” Matt replied, taking a sip of his coffee. “What makes you get up so early anyway?”

“Couldn't sleep. Spent the whole night thinking about what’s truly real. Do you know, that by some scientists we're all just an illusion? Think about it, ninety percent of an atom is empty space, so what does that make us?”

“You need to find a new hobby, seriously.” Adam said walking out of the dining room to get changed and go to work.

Matt hated working a desk job, but there was no alternative for him. The injuries he sustained when an IED blew the truck he was in while serving in Afghanistan were too serious for him to be medically cleared for any physical job. He was also diagnosed with PTSD caused by the sight of his dead friends after the explosion.

After returning home from his job, he sat in his armchair and turned on the TV. The news was reporting of an attack on a US military division on patrol in northern Afghanistan. He immediately turned it off.

“Bad memories, eh?” asked Adam.

“Don't wanna talk about it.” Matt firmly replied.

“Tell me,” continued Adam as if Matt said nothing “did you kill anyone back there?”

Matt looked at him gravely.

“I told you not to ask me about that. Ever.”

“Surely you did?” he persisted.

“Adam, you're walking on thin ice... I'd be careful if I was you.”

“Is that a threat or a warning? Did you give those to the men you murdered? You didn't, did you?”

After that Matt burst, but instead of hitting him, he decided to leave the apartment and take a walk. Sometimes he walked the streets of his hometown at night time just to clear his head from all the thoughts stuck in it.

As he was climbing down the stairs his landlord showed up at the building entrance. He didn't talk much, in fact the only thing Matt ever heard him say was:

“You got the rent, pal?”

“Come by tomorrow, I don't have it on me now.”

As he was walking down the streets, Adam's words constantly echoed in his head.

“Surely you did?”

Soon his head started to hurt. His walk turned to a jog, then a sprint and suddenly he seemed to have lost consciousness.

He woke up in his bed not knowing how he got there. He had a few PTSD episodes but none this serious, and more worryingly he realized his alarm clock hadn’t woken him up.

“What the hell happened?” he thought to himself.

But this was just the beginning of his confusion. As he entered the living room, he saw something that made the blood in his veins freeze. The walls had “you DID” painted all over them.

“Did Adam do this? Come to think of it, where the hell is he?” Matt asked himself.

His thoughts were interrupted by the doorbell ringing. As he opened the door, he saw his landlord.

“You got the rent, pal?”

“Yeah, wait here, I'll get it.” he said hoping he wouldn't notice the writings on the walls.

“Here it is.”

As the landlord was leaving, he surprisingly turned back and said: “Oh and Adam, do keep it down a bit, the neighbors said you made a lot of noise last night.”

“Adam? He's my roommate. I'm Matt.” he replied confused.

“Roommate?! I don't know of any roommate! The apartment is registered to Adam Nett. You signed the papers yourself!” the landlord shouted.

Dazed and bewildered, Matt had no idea what was happening.

“Yeah, of course. I must still be half asleep” he said hoping the landlord would go away.

“I signed the papers myself? But Adam told me he’d settled all the paperwork. What the hell is going on?!”

As he wandered around the apartment, he found even more writings on the walls saying “you DID” with ‘did’ always being capitalized.

He was late for his job, but that was the least of his worries.

“Why would he do this? And what was the landlord talking about?”

Suddenly he heard a familiar voice.

“Hello sunshine!”

He turned around to see Adam leaning against the doorway.

“What the hell did you do here last night” Matt asked loudly.

“Oh, I did nothing,” he said cheerfully “but the same couldn't be said for you, eh?”

“What are you talking about?”

“You DID this Matt, you DID all of this.” he pointed at the paintings.

As Matt looked at them, he turned around to reply but found that Adam had left.

“What is he talking about? Where is this coming from? He was never like this!” he thought.

Bewildered beyond belief he called his psychiatrist who told him to come over right away.

After explaining everything that had happened, and after a couple of hours of the psychiatrist examining him the doctor told him:

“We have a problem, Matt. I don’t think the war left you with just a PTSD. I believe you have what’s called a dissociative identity disorder. You may have heard of it before, it's commonly known as DID.”