

## **The Perfect Spot**

**by Rachel Lu**

He woke up at three in the afternoon, rolled out of bed and staggered into the bathroom. A ghostly, unshaved, pale face with a pair of puffy, swollen eyes stared blankly back at him. It had been 5 days since he last showered, and the body odor combined with microwaved pizza and leftover take-out was beginning to become so overwhelming that Phyllis the cat wouldn't even come near for a scratch behind her ear. Even the potted plant that usually stood cheerily in the corner shriveled away when he walked past it. He knew it was time.

Freshly showered and shaven, he proceeded to kitchen and grabbed a trash bag. First he'd start with the TV room, then the bedroom, and lastly everything else in between. Having hibernated in the apartment for over two weeks without any outside contact, except with the delivery guy, and no sunlight, it wasn't surprising to find the entire place blanketed in a foot deep layer of disgusting filth. Empty styrofoam cup--trash. Couch pillow with a crusty ketchup stain--trash. Piles upon piles of used tissue--trash.

For over three hours, he straightened up and cleaned, vacuumed and polished. Until he stumbled upon it. It was a painting of a light and carefree day, the sun shining brightly, waves crashing and roaring. Looking at it, he could clearly hear the lull of the water, smell the salty air, and feel the warmth of her hand in his. A second of happiness quickly turned into a dark, dull pain that slowly teared through his chest. The painting had been sitting in the hallway waiting to be hung with the rest of his collection. He had been putting it off so he could decide on the perfect spot for the painting to call home. But the decision making had been put to a sudden halt.

The ladder groaned under his weight as he stepped up to hang it above the TV. It didn't look right. He moved the painting into his room, next to the window and above his desk. It didn't belong there either. Next to the radio was no good. Aligned with the rest of paintings in the hall was too tacky. The blue in the painting clashed with the wallpaper of the bathroom. There wasn't a wall or corner he didn't try.

Hours and hours passed until he finally accepted the hard truth. His home was no longer the painting's home. It didn't fit into his life anymore. It was out of place.

The front door slammed shut with a loud boom. A lone painting sat outside on the doorstep with a little sign: take me. I'm looking for a new home.