

NEW YORK IS A FRIENDLY TOWN

First Ten Pages

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EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE WALK-UP BUILDING - DAY

ALEX, mid-thirties and dressed sloppy business casual under an old parka and stocking cap, jiggles a key in the lock of a front door that won't budge.

A well dressed, attractive YOUNG COUPLE stand behind him, shivering and growing impatient as Alex struggles with the door.

ALEX

Sorry.

A bitter gust of wind swoops in as Alex continues to work the lock.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Sometimes these keys get copied so much they don't actually work.

Alex pauses to blow on his hand for warmth as the YOUNG MAN'S phone rings. He answers.

YOUNG MAN

Hello? Half-hour? We should be able to make it. OK.

He hangs up.

ALEX

Unfortunately, I don't have the Super's number and I don't think he actually lives in this building...

YOUNG MAN

Are we getting in or what? We have to go see another place.

Alex stops working the lock and turns to the couple.

ALEX

What place? I have access to everything. I can show it to you.

YOUNG MAN

This guy says it's an exclusive.

ALEX

What company? I'll work it out, we'll co-broke.

YOUNG WOMAN

Can we just see this place already?

Alex turns back to the door and inserts the key. Nothing.

Alex's phone vibrates, the caller ID reads "Jeff." Alex ignores the call and continues to work the key.

Desperate, he runs his hand up and down the length of the apartment buzzers, calling to each apartment.

The tactic works and someone buzzes them in. Alex breathes a sigh of relief and pushes open the heavy door.

INT. GREENWICH VILLAGE WALK-UP BUILDING - STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Alex and his clients make their way up a dark and narrow staircase.

YOUNG MAN

What floor are we going to?

ALEX

Sixth.

YOUNG WOMAN

We said we wouldn't go above the third.

ALEX

There's nothing that low in your price range.

YOUNG MAN

This other guy says there is.

ALEX

Trust me, he's either lying or the place is a dump.

As they round the corner on the fourth floor landing an OLD MAN sticks his head out his door.

OLD MAN

(In thick Eastern European accent)

You do my buzzer?!

Alex and the couple try to ignore the man and keep moving up the stairs.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)  
You motherfuckers always doing  
this! Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!

ALEX  
It's not my fault, tell your Super  
to fix the lock!

Another flight of stairs and the trio finally arrives at the door of the apartment, winded.

YOUNG WOMAN  
The sixth floor is too much.

ALEX  
Naw, you can cancel your gym  
membership, and your ass will look  
great after just a couple weeks!

Alex cringes at his own words.

YOUNG WOMAN  
My ass already looks great.

Pretending to not hear her, Alex inserts the apartment key, opens the door and subtly checks out her rear as the couple enters the apartment ahead of him.

INT. VACANT GREENWICH VILLAGE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Alex stands in the center of a small living room in a vacant one bedroom apartment. The radiators clang as the couple revolves around him, disapproval on their faces.

YOUNG WOMAN  
It's too small.

ALEX  
Like I said earlier, this is about  
as good as it gets for this  
neighborhood in your price range.

YOUNG MAN  
It looked bigger in the pictures.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Are the radiators always this loud?

YOUNG MAN  
And hot?

Alex cracks a window and points outward.

ALEX

Great view of the Empire State  
Building!

They ignore him as his phone buzzes, "Jeff" again on the ID.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I have some great places in your  
price range just a little further  
North.

YOUNG MAN

Why do you people keep doing that?

ALEX

Doing what?

YOUNG MAN

Trying to talk us out of the  
Village?

ALEX

Because what you want doesn't  
exist.

YOUNG WOMAN

Our friends have a great place a  
block away. We know we can do  
better than what you're showing us.

She enters the tiny kitchen and opens the fridge, revealing a smattering of dead cockroaches. She slams the fridge door shut.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

We're going.

YOUNG MAN

Thanks for wasting our time,  
asshole.

ALEX

I'm not an asshole.

The young couple makes a bee-line for the door, leaving Alex all alone in the vacant space. He looks out the open window, watching them exit the building below, moments later.

As they turn down the block he notices LOU, early thirties, clad in hipster attire topped off by big Mars Blackman style glasses and carrying a six-pack shaped brown paper bag.

Lou passes the couple then stops, craning his neck for a longer look at the Young Woman. Alex opens the window all the way now and sticks his head out.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Lou!

Lou looks around.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Up here!

Lou looks up, notices Alex and raises a fist.

LOU

What's up, man? You live there now?

ALEX

Naw, I'm on the job.

LOU

Can I come up?

ALEX

6C, I'll buzz you in.

Alex walks across the room to the buzzer. His phone vibrates as he waits for Lou to make his way up the six flights.

Text from Jeff: *Your 78th St deal just died. Get them back out to see more ASAP!!!*

ALEX (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Alex pulls up a contact on his phone, calls and is sent straight to voicemail.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey Matt, this is Alex from Manhattan Habitats. Looks like we lost that place on 78th, but we just got a bunch of amazing new listings come in today that are gonna be just as great as the place on 78th, so we should get out and see some more places today! Call or text 646-382-0209.

Seconds after completing that call his phone vibrates again, with an unfamiliar number on the ID.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Hello, this is Alex!

He listens for only a moment, sighs and abruptly hangs up as Lou enters the apartment. They greet each other with a hug and big pats on the backs.

LOU  
How you doin'?

ALEX  
Gettin' by, you know.

LOU  
Beer?

Alex nods as Lou sets the bag down on the counter and pulls out a couple cans of beer, tossing one to Alex before cracking open his own.

LOU (CONT'D)  
What a dump.

ALEX  
I've seen worse around here for more money.

LOU  
You couldn't pay me to live in New York again.

ALEX  
Yeah, what are you doing here?

LOU  
Picking up a few things I have in storage. I'm in an AirBNB down the block.

ALEX  
You're in Detroit now, right?

Lou nods and smiles.

LOU  
You gotta come. We're building something there.

ALEX  
I can't give up on New York just yet.

LOU

I can help you find work, if that's what you're worried about.

ALEX

Seems too trendy for me.

LOU

Nah, just the right amount of trendy. Creative people are runnin' shit back there. Y'all are just wasting your talents sticking it out here.

Alex nods and thinks about Lou's pitch for Detroit over New York.

A young, sharply dressed female RENTAL AGENT and another fashionable YOUNG COUPLE enter the apartment.

Alex slyly puts the beer behind his back and nods to the agent and her clients, all with a perplexed look on their faces upon stumbling onto this scene.

Alex motions to Lou that they should leave. Lou picks up the remaining beers and they exit.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Alex and Lou exit the building and share a dude-hug.

ALEX

Good seein' you again.

LOU

I'm serious about Detroit. I want all you New York people to follow me West and we'll run the fuckin' place.

ALEX

I'll think about it.

LOU

Yeah you will.

They smile and Lou turns and walks away.

Alex puts on a stocking cap and makes his way through the frigid streets of Greenwich Village.



Old and new New York crammed into one small neighborhood: deli's and bistros, boutiques and dollar stores, bodegas and leather/sex-toy shops.

He stops outside the subway entrance to check his phone before descending the stairs.

INT. MANHATTAN HABITATS OFFICE - DAY

Alex exits an elevator into a modest-sized, bustling workplace lined with a few rows of desks peppered by a handful of Plexiglas enclosed cubes.

A couple dozen men and women of all ages and ethnicities fill the office space nearly to capacity.

Alex takes a seat at a desk in the very middle of the room next to BINX; mid-20s, bearded with well-groomed longish hair and dressed in pastels. A bit of a dandy, he speaks in a slight Southern accent.

BINX

No luck?

Alex shakes his head.

ALEX

They're unrealistic.

BINX

I don't even post ads for the Village anymore. Nothing but terrible clients.

ALEX

Yeah, but it makes the phone ring.

BINX

True, but how often have you been able to turn a cheap Village person into a Clinton or Upper East Side person?

ALEX

Never. They're the worst.

BINX

Right. So if you advertise for nice but not hot neighborhoods, you'll get more reasonable clients and do more deals, even if you're not getting as many calls.

A phone slams loudly into its cradle behind them.

JEFF; late 20s, sunken eyes, pin-striped suit, storms out of his glassed-in cube over to Alex, a few feet away.

JEFF

What the fuck are you doing here?!

ALEX

They weren't interested.

JEFF

Why didn't you call me? I could've given you something else to show them?

ALEX

They were unrealistic.

JEFF

Don't be so cavalier about this! You never leave a client without calling me! You know that!

ALEX

They left me! Called me an asshole.

JEFF

Really? But you're not an asshole.

ALEX

I know, I told them that!

BINX

I've never thought of you as an asshole.

JEFF

I've been called an asshole many times, but that's just me.

BINX

(Pointing at Jeff)  
Asshole!

JEFF

Shut the fuck up, Binx!

Jeff and Binx laugh.

ALEX

It's like they truly believe I'm trying to pull something over on them.

JEFF

Just stop posting ads for the cheap Village apartments. Those people are all crazy.

Alex nods in agreement.

JEFF (CONT'D)

What's up with the 78th clients?

ALEX

I left a message.

JEFF

Did you text?

ALEX

Yes.

JEFF

E-mail?

ALEX

Yes, and smoke signals and passenger pigeons too.

JEFF

Keep trying. I don't want to lose this deal.

Jeff's phone buzzes as he storms back to his glassed-in cubicle.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Hello, this is Jeffrey!

BINX

That dude's gonna stroke out one of these days.

Every desk phone in the office rings instantaneously and every agent hand races to pick up first. Binx wins.

BINX (CONT'D)

Hello, Manhattan Habitats, this is Binx!