

My Dear Old Bastard,

I write to you from a strange scene of natural anarchy and grotesque abundance. The duck pond retreat has transformed into a simmering cesspool of filth and feathered madness. I swear to God, these ducks are multiplying faster than a Mormon's wet dream. What began as a tranquil oasis is now a screeching, flapping circus of beaks and webbed feet, driven by an insatiable, primal hunger. Every morning, it looks more like a goddamn Hitchcock film—ducks packed wing-to-wing like commuters on the Tokyo subway. They've developed a sort of duck mafia hierarchy, with the largest drakes ruling the pond like feathered Tony Sopranos. They stare at me with eyes full of dark intent, like they know something I don't. It's unnatural, I tell you.

Now, I could pack up and leave this waterfowl Armageddon behind, because I might be returning to Spain. Just cleared stage 2 of the technical interview. At least I *think* I did. It's hard to say with these bastards; they keep their poker faces better than any Vegas pit boss. I could be their golden candidate, or they could be passing around my application for office laughs, mocking my syntax like a herd of ivy-league hyenas. Corporate sadism at its finest.

If that doesn't pan out, though, I'm considering going full rogue—posing as a Digital Nomad somewhere in Southeast Asia. Just think about it: a laptop and a smile, floating through the jungles of Vietnam like some tech-savvy vagabond. Although we both know I'd likely end up veering off course, chasing some vice or other, until I find myself nose-deep in the groin of a Thai ladyboy and then face-first on the grimy floor of a Bangkok prison

cell. I can almost smell it now: the mold, the rotting fish, and the acrid scent of broken dreams. But who's to say? In the land of the living Buddha, anything can happen.

In either scenario, the fish and fruit would be miles ahead of what they're passing off as produce at the local Rewe supermarket here. Jesus Christ, the apples here taste like they've been crossbred with a potato and left out in the sun to bake. And don't even get me started on the fish—some sort of unholy Frankenstein's monster of river sludge and expired cat food. It's almost enough to make you embrace vegetarianism, though I'd rather gnaw on a leather boot.

Honestly, I can't even bring myself to turn on the TV anymore. It's like someone pulled a plug on humanity's creative cortex and replaced it with a brain-dead monkey president. I'm better off reading horror novels and watching the ducks enact their own perverse little drama. At least then the terror is authentic.

Spain sounds like the safer bet, doesn't it? A land where the sun burns away the bullshit, and I can keep an eye on Gibraltar. There's something to be said about proximity to that narrow strip of water—like a pressure release valve for Europe. If things really go sideways and the apocalypse unfurls in its full, hideous glory, I could be swimming for the coast of Morocco with a knife clenched between my teeth. It's good to have options, you know? And the sea is the ultimate option. Build myself a seaworthy craft and head out to the horizon. Who's to stop me? The Spanish coast guard? I've charmed my way past worse.

I suppose that's all for now. The ducks are beginning their evening ritual, circling the pond like a gang of tiny sharks. The

sun is setting, casting a blood-orange light over the water. It's almost beautiful, if you ignore the squawking and the raw stench of overpopulation. I'll sit out here with a cigarette and pretend, just for a moment, that I'm at peace.

Write back soon, or don't. Either way, this whole damned carnival keeps turning. But it'd be nice to hear a friendly voice through the madness.

Yours in squalor and expectation