

To Whoever Finds This,

The story begins with a man driving a double-decker bus that influxes heavy traffic daily, in the gigantic polluted mess known as New York City. The man is neither short nor tall but average in his appearance. So average that you would keep looking forward when you walked past him on the street. His hairless face was frail looking, but his green eyes showed the stress weighing down on him, juxtaposed to the redness of what should be whites. Quietness was a powerful skill he had mastered as a Bus Driver, allowing him to just drift through life. Long monotonous rides through the same daily route made him depressed and zoned out on the job. His name tag read “Zig” but that was not his name. Nobody called him that anyway, let alone talked to him, but it was Zigmund! Zigmund Zagger! Cool isn’t it? I at least thought so. Anyway, he never went by that name. I am getting off track from my original purpose though. He was a frail-looking young man. An average frail-looking young man that nobody would be thinking twice about at the end of the day. He was 26 years of age and had been working as a bus driver because college was not an option. This was due to the fact that the average loan needed to be collateralized fifty percent if you wanted to pay for an education, which has become exorbitantly expensive in the last twenty years. The workday began for Zig at 5 am and ended at 7 pm. This was normal for a person during this time. The 40s saw a huge rise in the average workweek over the whole span of the decade. And by the year 2050, it wasn’t uncommon to find a person working a fourteen-hour workday.

These work days had been completely routine with the exception of one special event. This event would unknowingly be the spark of a series of history-changing events that unfolded like Jacob's Ladder. The catalyst was an older man, a man who had run onto the bus while Zig

was finishing up for the day and closing his fourteen-hour shift. The man stated that he needed to be dropped off near the bus garage and was generously given the ride until the sirens turned on. The loud, militant police sirens. The lights froze Zig in his tracks and put him in a fight or flight response. The only two people inside the bus were Zig and the older man. This caused Zig to pull over immediately and open the doors. The man, totally unexpectedly, burst out into curses at the New York Sovereign State and began to sprint out the door. Zig looked in the mirror instantly for a reaction from the police. They began to draw their weapons and immediately fired on the man while he attempted to flee. His now lifeless body dropped like any other middle-aged man would when shot in the back while running away. Sitting in the driver's seat had now become unbearable for Zig as he started to profusely shiver from anxiety. He ran to the police and started crying, asking what had just happened and what he had just gotten himself into. They explained to him that they had been watching the old man, and he was a well-known commie. Something that in the general social consensus, was punishable by death. They had been following him after he fled his arrest hours earlier. The police took the bus driver's full name, Zigmund Zagger, and told him he was free to go but that there was the possibility that he would need to come to the station to fill out paperwork eventually.

The ride home was completely nerve-racking and caused Zig to keep replaying the scene of the man dropping while running... over, and over, again. He was thinking that just moments prior to the man's death, he had been interacting with a communist enemy of the state. He had heard it himself, directly from the man as the sirens began to ring, and before he had sprinted out of the bus's open doors. When Zig parked the bus, he sat in it for a short while with his face buried in the palms of his hands. After this shock-induced reflective period, he stood up and noticed a thick novel on the first seat of the bus, where the man had been sitting. He flipped the

black leather book over, and it read only two words on the front cover: “The Bible,” written in gold lettering. He decided to pack it into the bag he had and took it with him. A decision that would also be a catalyst, in itself.

Home was not very far from him, his apartment that is. People don’t really own much anymore. Nobody owns anything in New York, and those who do own anything... Do not live there! There is a major landlord crisis, one that Zig is very familiar with. His apartment or room is most of his salary and he works just to get by. He gets home every night with a beer and some silence. This silence was so deafening, especially after the police shooting, that he figured that maybe he should read the Bible to ease his mind... as any other christofascist would do. This abruptly was interrupted when Zig had the shocking revelation that this was not the Bible at all, and instead it was something he was much more unprepared for. It was a phony bible. This bible was just a bible on the outside, and on the inside was literature from the 20th century. It was work unheard of by Zig at the time, and probably intentionally so. This story was named *Animal Farm*. A novel by socialist dystopian author, George Orwell.

This finding made Zig sweat profusely. He was holding literature that could very well make him end up like the now-dead man that previously owned the book. He felt as if the weapons had already been drawn and aimed, just being in his position. In reality, the almost scariest truth was clear... nobody had an idea he had it. Zig was now faced with a responsibility to keep this unawareness at the same level it was at, forever.

He decided that he was too far gone and cracked the book. This book was very short in comparison to The Bible... which it fit right in the middle of. He began to indulge in all of the roughly 100 pages. Chapter by chapter, his reality started to increasingly deteriorate. By chapter 4, he had to slam the book shut and take a break, not from boredom... but from terror.

Most information has been suppressed and deemed Satanic, so Zig had not seen anything like Animal Farm... EVER. There was one book that really mattered... I'll give you a hint, it wasn't the Quran or the Torah. White Christians and their theocratic ethnostate LOVE the one book about their King of all Kings, Jesus Christ. They are pretty paranoid about contradictory viewpoints that make people question their reality. Rightfully so, you can only keep the system going if everybody acts like an obedient sheep. A sheep, which Zig finally realized while reading, was not actually important to the state... they just die for the cause like a pawn.

Chapter 5 began enlightening Zig on authoritarianism and fascist ideologies that he had been living somewhat blind to. He was quite a rule follower, and not much of a free thinker. He followed every rule his oppressors pushed down his throat, yet he had done one thing most of his whole life that was contradictory to the fine tuned rules of society. This one rule was a major rule that could get him killed, but he seemed to unconsciously defy it out of love, instead of disobedience... but we will get to that a bit later. Well as we get back to the story... The groups that could be so seemingly wrong in hindsight were the ones that ruled with the most fear. He began to really see this first hand as he dropped the book and looked from his window, not being able to tell which was a better plot of a fiction novel: what he was reading or what he was living. The militant group wins over the peaceful ones, no matter if they are right or wrong. A lightbulb had gone on inside Zig's head. A lightbulb that could never go out... unless it was put out by force. Spoiler alert, it may or may not have been put out by force.

Zig read further into the Orwellian literature and realized how close society can be to a utopia and how quickly this plan can be sabotaged in a way of selfishness and lack of empathy. He left to go grab some food, to bring it back to his sister... which is me. He really did say that thing about not being able to tell which was a better plot of a fiction novel, it was a bit terrifying,

but we'll get to that later. Zig was not hungry himself; in fact, he was actually quite sick to his stomach. With this in mind, he left for a few hours. Upon returning, he arrived back with some beer, deli meat, and bread for dinner. These beers were not sealed though, it was obvious by the way he stumbled in the door. He had actually already drunk the entire six-pack and was carrying the empty cans with him. He appeared miserable and not able to keep his secret anymore.

He was never good with secrets. Ever since our parents "disappeared" in the destruction of Washington DC, he was not much of a closed book anymore. I was all he had now, and he broke the rules of society everyday to keep me by his side. Going back to what I mentioned earlier... that was the one rule he broke. My parents "death" was in the 2030s. A long time ago, most of my life ago. I have lived a short life if you would call it a life. The reason why Zig gets me my food instead of myself is that... I don't exist. I am not a real person. I have been legally dead for a while and Zig took care of me all that time in secret. I would be super legally dead if I stepped outside our one-bedroom apartment anyway. I am not quite sure what I have, but it is not good. Intense muscle spasms and speech issues, that is what I live with. I am deemed unfit, a malfunction to the eugenic reproductive code of society. Many people like me are killed on television for the state to watch. I truly don't want to know what is wrong with me, it would just make me fear for my "life" more anyway...well, I don't have a life anyway. I have had a certain lens to see society through, and this is metaphorical... because I have not actually been able to see society with my own eyes. Due to my ailments, I have been locked away for good. I have viewed life with not only pity for myself, but empathy for the world because of my heightened awareness of just how cruel it can be. I chose not to talk much about it to my brother because we didn't talk much on that level. Like I said he was bad with secrets and I felt as if he had a

different view on society than I. He was a slave going through the motions without questions, and I was a prisoner with no motion and only had questions.

Zig worked fourteen-hour days to keep me alive, and for that, I am very grateful. That did change though when he finally confessed about the book to me. He told me about these pigs named, “Snowball” and “Napoleon” in his drunkenness. He said we lived in Napoleon's society when instead we should be living in Snowball's. This did not really make sense to me because I did not get a chance to read the book. But then he told me all about it and told me to never tell anybody. Kind of ironic, seeing how I am more of a secret than the book. This book seemed to have a profound impact on him though. It was like he had gotten a glimpse into my dark view of the world, and that scared me. Darkness was never the best way to live an already heavy and monotonous life. It is pretty inarguable that ignorance is bliss... but anyway, he was very worried for me and very worried about staying in New York. He told me of the man on the bus and the origin of the “Bible” that had found its way into his possession. Zig then fixated on that man's fate, and the image of his lifeless body filled his mind over and over again. I could tell. It really disturbed him, he was not hiding it well at all with the six brews filling his empty stomach. He was basically a truth serum spitting verbal vomit. I had never seen him like that before, and never wanted to. He usually drank one beer after his shift and that was it. One beer and six beers makes a major difference. One beer loosened him up. I saw it every night. But almost two weeks ago, when he drank these six beers, It wound him up to a dangerous level in which I began to fear for my life and his...

My brother really wanted to escape this society that he was in, I was quite numb to it because I hadn't existed in it anyway, though from what he translated out of the book to me, it made me feel a little more hopeless about my own destiny. Not that I wasn't already hopeless of

my destiny, but my one hope and care giver had now reached levels of awareness that were on par with myself. The only dangerous part was that he was able bodied enough to naively act upon his impulses.

His fit of rage and passion was short-lived because he finally succumbed to his intoxicated exhaustion. It was just a temporary relief for me. He woke up from his long day off of reading, enlightenment, and paranoia with just as much enlightenment and paranoia... except paired with a daunting hangover. He decided to skip work, which meant there was no bus driver. He did not care if he lost his job, he wanted out of this system. He wanted out of this state. A dangerous combination to say the least.

Zig left again for a few hours to get food again. This felt like days though. I remember thinking he was growing increasingly more unstable, which paralyzed me with fear. I was as good as actually dead if Zig was not around... not whatever this pretending-dead I had made a reality of was. Once he finally returned, he was belligerent and angry. The opposite of what I'd like him to be. He was packing up everything in the apartment and demanding we leave that very moment. I tried to rationalize with him and explain that his irrational behavior could blow our cover... my cover. This brought him back to reality and he began to sob. I'm sure he had finished the book by now and was totally acting in disbelief at what he had learned. All of the information was a bit surreal for him at that moment. I couldn't truly grasp what he must have been feeling then. I wish I had read the book myself, other times I'm glad I didn't. Although, the reason I can never read the book is a bit harsh to bear. That following day, when Zig awoke, he totally let his rage get the best of him and stormed out of the apartment. I like to fantasize about what happened next, but I truly don't know... What I do know is that he took the book with him and is never coming back. Ten days have passed since my brother stormed off. I heard on the television

of a communist getting killed by the police that day he left, but I could never get any more information on that. The police don't give out names, they want their perpetrators to be forgotten. He must have been caught with the book, and been taken care of. If it was he who had been killed that day, then they must have found the book on him. It is the only thing that makes sense for him to be given the title of a communist. I know he is dead. I know this because he would not have left me alone while he was still alive. I know I was his priority more than anything in this world, I was the last of his family that was "alive". He never left me for more than a day ever since our parents had died in Washington D.C.... It's a shame that I never truly got confirmation of my parents death, and it appears I will never get confirmation for my brother. I don't really know if it is poetic or just tragic, maybe a mixture of both. I do know whatever I was clinging on in the past is over. Everything seems to be just about over.

I wish I had food... I wish I could leave this apartment. There are a lot of things I am wishing for right now. I am wishing to be out of this mess. I wish for my brother to be alive. I wish to be back to a normal family. I am wishing that my wishes will be granted. I am wishing that I did not have to be making wishes. I wish that this was not my only option, but unfortunately, it is. I have been starving for days now and this apartment could be raided at any time. To continue this way would be utter torture to me mentally and, most importantly, physically. I have lived a life of not being alive, yet I feel the most alive I ever have been writing this. To die a victim in this corrupt society is a fool's game. I will not starve until my fake death meets my real death. I will not leave this room and become a victim of my unwantedness. I will depart on my own terms and let these words be my legacy. The proof I was alive all along. The proof will live in such irony because I will have had no life to prove it. I will finally be dead in a world that wanted me dead from birth, except they could not kill me. They will want to punish

me for this, but they can't now. It's too late. Life doesn't have a happy ending anyway, though my words will be as alive as a dead person could ever be.

Godspeed,

Amy Jade Zagger