

Thud. Thud. Thud.

A typical Sunday evening for Sue consisted of the following: approximately two and a half cups of Earl Grey tea that were to be accompanied by a quick thirty-minute TV watching session and her nightly puzzle. Before Sue indulged in her nightly puzzle activities, she would dim the living room light, turning off the displeasing fixture which took up an absurd amount of space on the ceiling. She always thought it to resemble a cow udder. The way it drooped down and greeted her each time entered her living room was *utterly* disgusting. Its hue was rather sterile and viridescent. It reminded her of the cold atmosphere which wafts through infirmaries. She thought its presence to be unsettling and much preferred the company of a mismatched assortment of raggedy vintage lamps. Despite the mysterious stains and unsightly holes her lamps had acquired over the years, she was quite fond of them and found their presence to be quite comforting.

Following the dimming of her unattractive light, Sue sat down, crisscross on her shag carpet. Its vivaciously red dye often rubbed off on her white clothing, permanently staining it. These annoyingly aggressive stains led her to only purchase socks in the shade of red. Sue laid her eyes upon the coffee table, examining the two puzzle options that she had laid out. One, a touristy themed puzzle picturing several locations in France. The other, a painting of Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, each pixelated paint brush stroke toppling over the other in hues of navy blue and bright yellow. She was perplexed, this decision would determine how she would spend her next week or so.

While mulling over the choice in her head, a large thud sounded at the foot of Sue's oddly decorated home. With the reflexes of a spooked feline, Sue twisted her neck to face the door, searching for clues as to where the sound had come from. In the absence of any subsidiary noises, Sue deciphered that the thud was merely a desultory occurrence, and she should pay no mind to it. THUD. Sounded again. Even louder this time. Sue's heart started to beat at a tight pace. She got up silently, walking on the tips of her feet so as to not make any noises. She crept towards the door with the stealth of a mouse being stalked by a hawk. The doorknob was now within inches of her fingertips. Her heart now beating with a strong pounding force at the pace of a knife chopping onions. She creaked open the door. The sweat of her palms made the smooth metal doorknob feel as it had been smothered in oil. To her surprise, she was not greeted with a familiar face, but a flat package sitting on her doorstep. She picked up the package with caution, carrying it over the coffee table with the same fearful steps she had just a few moments ago. She moved aside the two puzzles and set down the package. Grabbed her boxcutter knife and slit along the edges, feeling the resistance against her hand each time the blade encountered a sliver of tape. Sue pulled the lid off the box. It was hiding a sight that stopped her breathing cold in its tracks. Edge to edge, the box was filled with a completed puzzle. Sue stared open-eyed at each piece, the Van Gogh and the France, the holes in the lampshade cloth, the cup of earl grey tea, the vivaciously red shag carpet, all illuminated by the dreaded fluorescent green light.

THUD. The door sounded for a third time.

THUD. A fourth time.

THUD.