

The Lonely Package

a fictional story taking place at Peloton apartments

Peloton was Brian's first experience living alone and once he made the jump, he didn't regret it—he loved the in-unit washer and dryer, the gym just downstairs, and the convenient and secure package locker. Speaking of the package locker, he loved its automated reminders so much that he always ran down and got his packages right away. But he was in for an awakening when he went out of town.

He flew to Phoenix for a convention—he worked as a project manager in the solar panel industry and this was their big annual meeting. He was having a great time networking, attending the presentations, and even going bowling, but then he received an email.

It was from Luxer One. "You've got a package," it read. Brian snapped his fingers. "Shoot!" he said to himself. He didn't have any friends in the building yet who could pick it up, but he figured the package could wait.

Among the next day's presentations and free buttons and branded water bottles from the booths, he got another email. "Your package is still waiting!" He didn't think much of it as he was just being swept up into a cocktail hour. But the next day it said: "Your package misses you." He grew worried. He called the leasing office to see if they could get his package for him, but the leasing woman, Ashley, suggested he put a hold on it with the Luxer One website. He went there only to realize that he didn't know his password. He felt uneasy but distracted himself with a woman he had met; it was now his turn for the ubiquitous "convention hookup."

After the convention he went to see his friend Rob in Phoenix, where they packed for a trip to hike through the Grand Canyon. With the occasional service he got, Brian saw some concerning emails each day:

"Your package is crying."

The next day:

"Your package is having dark thoughts."

He showed the emails to his friend. "Isn't this weird?" He asked. Rob scoffed at him.

"Yeah man, that's pretty weird," as if Brian were making the whole thing up. So Brian didn't tell Rob the next day that he got an email that said, "Your package is afraid it will die alone."

Brian spent one final night at Rob's place before he flew back to Portland in the morning. That morning, he received an email from Luxer One.

"Your package wrote a poem for you," it said.

The poem went like this:

*I sat in a warehouse waiting for love
An owner to fit me like a glove
One day someone put me in a box
I shouted to my neighbors, "This rocks!"
I moved along in a bumpy van
Commiserating with the lonely box clan
There were whisks, lotions, and garden gnomes
They all were headed to loving homes.
When we reached my stop they all waved
goodbye
The iron shouted, "Think of us from time to
time!"
But when I arrived in the Luxer locker
I was in for a very grave shocker
Nobody at all came to embrace me
I thought, "Did my new owner replace me?"
Now I sit in this locker alone and cold
Wondering if I'll leave before I grow mold*

"JESUS CHRIST!" Yelled Brian across the room. Rob came in and said,

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah," Brian said. "Just work stuff. New hire, very incompetent."

"Uh huh," said Rob.

Brian got back late that night. He was unbelievably tired but he didn't want another package notification, so he forced himself to walk to the lockers and pick it up. He couldn't even remember what he had ordered.

He opened the email with the poem in it; it made him wince. But he took note of the number, typed it in on the keypad, signed his name as a meaningless squiggle, and heard the locker click open seven feet away. It was a small Amazon box; he ripped it open with his keys to find the six-pack of sponges he'd ordered.

Oh yeah, I remember ordering those, he thought. He put the box in the courtyard trash can before going upstairs and falling asleep.