

“Hey, Ryan! You have to check out this new song I found!”

The dingo’s ears perked up, an ear flicking as he looked around from his desk. He didn’t realize his roommate had come back, taking an ear bud out as he leaned back in his chair. All the lights were off in the hallway except the kitchen light they always kept on, and he hadn’t heard the door or the side door opening. Ryan let out a soft hum, scratching the back of his neck before standing up and letting the earbuds fall over the desk. His body pushed away from the chair with a soft groan, rubbing up to his ears before taking a quick glance out the window. Sure enough, there was his roommate Jared, waving with a laugh up to the second floor apartment. The dingo raised his brow, his tail flicking slightly in annoyance before he leaned over the window and called back down to the kangaroo.

“Let me guess – you forgot your keys. Again.” From the monotone unamused tone Ryan took, it was clear this was a common occurrence. Not that you could tell from the kangaroo’s reaction, as he let out another embarrassed laugh before holding up his phone, giving it a few shakes.

“Yeah yeah, make fun of me for it later. You HAVE to listen to this song! It’s 100% right up your alley, and it’s so incredibly good!!” He called up, holding his arms out as if trying to bargain with Ryan. It was almost like some game the two played, Ryan keeping his brow raised as Jared flicked his ears and thumped his tail expectantly. Finally, a set of keys seemed to fly down from their window, caught deftly by the kangaroo as he let out a chuckle of victory. “Thanks, man.” And he was gone, opening the window as his characteristic thumping could be heard from downstairs. There was some angry mumbling that Ryan couldn’t quite make out, most likely the landlord chastising Jared for his loud walking, followed by Jared quickly making his way through the door and proceeding to turn on the hall light. And the main room light. And the light in his room. And the overhead light in the kitchen...before finally entering Ryan’s room.

“Keys.”

“Ok, like I was say-Oh...oh, right.” Jared took the keys out of his pocket that he was mere seconds away from forgetting about and passed them over to Ryan. The dingo gave a quick smile, putting them on his desk before picking his earbuds up once more. He turned back to the kangaroo, waiting for him to go on his inevitable rant about this latest song he found. “Anyway, I was walking back from work down 82nd street and near the market when I ran into Julio, and she was talking about this concert she went to which had some weird crazy opener that only one guy was really into. It was pretty bad, and like...incredibly awkward because everyone in the audience except that guy gave the slow ‘hey you did the thing good job’ clap, so they took their time getting offstage, and-“

“Ahem.” Ryan cleared his throat, looking almost bored with the story already before Jared’s ears perked. He seemed to be taken aback for a second before his expression softened. He laughed again, leaning back against the wall with a somewhat sheepish smile.

“R-right, sorry.” He continued, opening his laptop bag before digging around in it for a few seconds. “So anyway, some guy outside was handing out sample CDs, and Julio loved the music so much that she wanted us to have one. She really thought we’d dig it, and I gave it a listen before work and...well, it’s DEFINITELY something you’ll dig. Go on, put it in!” He held the CD out to Ryan who proceeded to stare at it. The cover said something along the lines of *Silent Knight* or something similar, but he couldn’t quite make out the handwriting. It took him a few moments and a few nudges from Jared before he gave his roommate a soft smirk, taking the CD and quickly putting it in his computer. Jared was actually bouncing

up and down in anticipation, watching as Ryan selected the CD from the program before unplugging his earbuds and hitting play. It took a moment for the song to load, but when it did, the dingo shut his eyes and leaned back in his chair.

The music was somewhat soft, having an electronic base with some surprisingly muted tones. The melody was downplayed for a while, slowly building before the song started to gain more energy. It really took its time to build up throughout the few minutes, hitting a number of emotional highs and hits until everything seemed to hit an incredible climax of bass, vocal, instrumental, effects...everything melding together in the perfect decrescendo to end out the song. The two of them seemed to stay silent the entire time save for Jared's tapping of his paws on the ground and along his hips to the music. He was clearly enjoying himself immensely while Ryan showed little to no emotion. After the song played, Ryan paused the rest of the CD and leaned back again, taking in a soft breath before letting it out slowly. Jared stood there...waiting expectantly for his roommate to open his eyes. When the dingo finally did, he swiveled his chair to face Jared and gave a few short nods. "It's good."

Jared stared. He had almost no reaction for a few moments before his ears flopped out to the side with a frustrated sigh. "It's good? C'mon, man, it's amazing!! I could tell you were enjoying it so why don't you freak out and go crazy about it like I was in the coffee shop??" Ryan blinked, giving his roommate a concerned and confused look before shrugging and crossing his arms.

"I said it was good, man. It's not like I'm knocking the song or anything."

"I knooooow, but come ON. I've seen you at parties and at clubs, I know you can go really crazy with songs and have a great time."

"...Yeah. And?"

"And how come you never show that kind of excitement anywhere else?? It's so weird, man." He threw his jacket playfully at the dingo before walking out of the room, leaving his CD as he bounced down the hall. "You're confusing, Ryan. Put the CD in the kitchen when you're done so I can burn it."

"Night to you too, Jared." He laughed quietly as his roommate left the room, standing up to close his door before settling down again at his desk. His paws folded in front of his muzzle, staring at the computer screen with that song highlighted. He stared at it for a few moments, running through a couple of thoughts in his head before opening the top drawer of his desk to pull out a noticeably nice looking pair of headphones. Once they were plugged into his speakers, he put them around his ears with a bit of struggle before leaning back in his chair again. He double-clicked the song to play it again, waiting for the intro to start before letting out a single, long breath.

And he was gone.

Ryan wasn't the type of dingo to get excited too easily. Things rarely affected him in a noticeable way, and he often played through everything in his head before letting it show on his face. And when it came to music...he went to a whole different world entirely. He kept his eyes shut, a soft smile creeping across his muzzle as he very barely tapped a paw along the floor. He was dancing to the music...in his head. The world started to spin around him, colors flashing all around him as he let the music fill his very soul. His heart practically soared to the air as he played through the dance in his mind, his arms swaying almost elegantly across his body while his muscles tightened with every beat, hitting the rhythm every single

chance he got. His body was like water, flowing and waving across the ethereal floor while his tail wagged and flicked in time. His every move was thought out, planned almost but still so expertly timed to the tune of this song he'd only heard that one time.

His world was the music, letting the rises and falls take him away to his fantasy world, seemingly resting in his computer chair but living a whole different life of emotion, rhythm, and unbridled emotion inside of his mind. He had his own dancefloor, no one to be seen for miles as the fog and lights filled him with life in such a glorious and magnificent way. He could really feel the emotions behind every single beat of the song, letting the rises lift him up and guide his arms and body along the flow of the music. His ears even flicked in time with his movements, every single twitch and sway of his fur in time with everything surrounding him in that universe. He could feel the song coming to a close, still working through the sways and flows of the song as that final hit was coming. Closer and closer it came, building up heavily as his movements started to flow a bit more heavily. He was hitting harder, his limbs waving along the air before pounding against that note, swaying and moving and stomping until the music built up to that final crescendo, and then-

"Hey, could I have that CD now actually? I wanna listen to it while I work."

The yelling broke through the noise cancelling headphones, making Ryan's eyes shoot open with a soft breath as he was pulled from his fantasy world. He was panting softly, his ears flicking with those headphones on as he had to take a minute to think on having been pulled from his day dream. He quickly pulled the headphones out of his ears, placing them on his desk before running a paw across his head with a sigh. "Y-yeah, give me a sec." He called out, trying to hide how shaky his voice was from that sudden reality check. He shook his head a bit, taking the CD out of his computer before putting it back in the case. As he stood up in front of his desk, Ryan took a deep breath in before letting the air slowly wash out of his muzzle. Within a few moments, his facial expression was back to that stoic, blasé sort of demeanor everyone had come to expect from him. He pulled the CD into his paw before walking down the hallway, leaving his door wide open. It wasn't exactly right to say he was emotionless, as he fully knew how to show and express what he loved and appreciated. The stoic dingo knew how to be social and have a good time, but there were a lot of things he kept close to his heart. There were some days he even wanted to let loose more often and be a more open person with his emotions...but he just couldn't. Besides, as he smiled while he walked down the hallway, he remembered the only person he ever had to make happy was himself. And even if someone didn't understand how he showed his emotions...

...that didn't bother him in the slightest.