

Nadia Fontaine
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My Apartment

Keys

“We should look at other apartments before we choose...”

“I’ll take it.”

The apartment building in the street next to the university, with the chipping baby blue paint and absurdly red painted steps was a place I knew I’d live.

Since first year walking past the Nanaimo apartments I would stroll past the slate gray condos that matched the concrete look and smell of the town on Third Street. Too expensive.

The charmingly modern, arbutus brown and caged decks on Uplands Terrace with a 65+ requirement. Too old for a 19 year-old.

The building with the discount paint job was going to be my first apartment. Inside the bachelor’s suite had fresh paint to cover the previous push pin holes from tenants’ posters.

Fake oak wood boards on the flooring, laid on a slight 160 degree angle separating itself from the box sized tile entrance.

This was my apartment as of July 15th, 2024. It was terrifying discussing the details of internet providers, BC Hydro and electricity. I didn’t know who or what to talk to. It will all have to wait until I get back from my trip two weeks before school.

Couch

TV

Table

70 pea sized plastic yellow ducks

Twisting the small key into the copper rusted lock made me excited to see the start of my apartment. I haven’t been here since I signed the lease before my trip to Europe.

My mum and brother saved me the tumultuous task of constructing the main furniture, all I had to do was order what I liked on [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) and have it shipped to my new address.

Their offer to construct my furniture however was not all my little brother had planned. William ordered 100 tiny, daffodil yellow, plastic ducks that were scattered in every corner of my apartment.

On the new table, in the new mattress, in the boxes of my junior year sweatpants - they continue to lay siege in my apartment to this very day. It was cute at first.

A duck here, a duck there. Once the first month of year two classes started to stress me out however, the once cute plastic ducks I was now stepping on in my shoes were not so cute. The pain of stepping on plastic legos from children is the same irritation I still deal with from my lovingly annoying, 18 year-old brother's ducks.

These ducks will remain even after the day I move to a new apartment.

Even with the dozens of ducks looking over me from the shelves I can't reach and in the cardboard boxes of belongings, there was a strange feeling to sleeping in my own apartment.

Paper thin walls that can hear neighbors shouting, or laughing in their own rooms. Footsteps outside of my door walking, then stopping, then opening doors to their own spaces.

I couldn't wait to go *home*, away from this apartment and strange town.

Cat tree

Litterbox

Food bowl

Harness and leash

Cat carrier

Cat toys

Only half a month into living in my own four walls and I couldn't help but feel lonely. The same routine; Go to school, come home, make microwave mac and cheese, call mum, and sleep.

It took only two weeks of living on my own to not want to live alone. After sociology class at 11:30 am I searched the closest shelter on my phone and hightailed it out of the VIU parking lot to find a new best friend.

There wasn't much thought to it. Lonely, plus an apartment that allowed cats, equals finding a cat. If I wasn't going to find another boyfriend in this town of mustache and mullet men, I would find someone better. A cat.

After going to the shelter I left with a confirmation and receipt for a kitten called *Tigger*. My mum didn't know or approve. Can she ground me in my own apartment?

The apartment was filled to the brim with his beige scratching tower, at least 20 toys I spent too much for from the pet store and a litter box that is four times the size of the kitten - I was prepared for my roommate.

Once he was carried up the three flights of stairs and unleashed from his zippered case, he looked around ... confused?

The mirror I've had since high school was the most interesting thing to him, that and the cardboard boxes that held the hundreds of dollars of amazon cat supplies I had bought for him to be comfortable.

He was happy with the space, the few choice pieces I chose *were* cool. It started to feel like a home with the lingering meows and messes of a kitten. This apartment was now his whole kingdom and I was responsible for everything inside these walls.

Coffee Table

Three funny

cat washroom pictures

1 carpet cat wall art

The following September of 2025 came too fast with a slurry of assignments and menial house tasks. Hand washing dishes, doing groceries and coming home from summer jobs all expedited this feeling of living.

As fast as everything moves, we did have some changes in the apartment however. Tigger had grown into a little man, whose body was too big for his small ears one day, then his head was too big for his growing body. He had laid full claim over his apartment.

The black and white *Santana* poster hanging over my shoes was torn to shreds by the teen angst cat. A solution was a carpet picture printed of a black cat with a light pink background that he could scratch without destroying.

I added some more cat images such as a framed series of black cats using the toilet with a newspaper, sitting in a tub and brushing their teeth in my washroom. I'm either a full fledged cat lady, or a lady simply with a cat.

The couch was now complemented with a fake birch ottoman coffee table. The apartment had moved from basic furnishings to *my* relaxing oasis.

That was until a man invaded on a cold February night of 2026. I had decided to use 'the apps' and find myself a potential partner. Why not? I'm young and organized, seems reasonable enough to explore.

He came over the same day we were texting and unfortunately the photos didn't match the person at my front door. Six feet somehow translated to 5'4 - my height. Height doesn't necessarily matter, so I let him in despite the inaccuracy on his profile.

We joked about school, flirted about interests - it was fine until he put his dirty, bare toes on my coffee table. On *my coffee table*.

Doing dishes for guests, sweeping the dirt in the entrance from their shoes, wiping the spots from their drinks without coasters, I don't mind any of that. That one action passed a line invisible to even myself.

After we watched a movie, of which I could only focus on his unclipped toenails on my table in my mind, he left and got a polite message saying we wouldn't work out.

Curling up into my cream cotton sheets with white pillowcases and my purring cat I realized a man is *never* coming over unless we are discussing marriage.

That made me realize, *this is my apartment*.

New Vase

With all of my spring cleaning craze I gave away almost everything from high school and first year. I accidentally gave away my only flower vase.

Every couple of weeks I buy flowers from the grocery store, and this week I bought a new \$3 glass ribbed vase to complete my apartment furniture.

It's taken a couple of years, but my dream apartment is a reality. The fridge is adorned with photos of my family, friends and places I've travelled.

Tigger has more toys than he'll ever play with and his towering scratch tower complemented with carpeted walls.

The walls are tastefully displaying a comforting amount of art that makes the space in between minimalist and maximalist.

I look forward to coming here, even with the chipped paint and the off straight plastic wood flooring. It's *my* apartment.

It tells my first years of adulthood and the aspects of my life I prioritize. I feel some guilt that much of my furnishings are from a [2.255 trillion dollar company](#), yet it's also a part of where I am socio-economically.

Many students find creative and innovative ways to make spaces *theirs* within their budget, and this is just my perfectly imperfect space that is truly mine.

Maybe someday I'll wish for a bigger space, or a dishwasher. Maybe I'll remain content with my routine of handwashing dishes. *Maybe* there isn't a need for more stuff, just the right accumulation of items collected over time.