

She pressed snooze and turned over. Nine more minutes in bed, nine more minutes under her quilt, warm and comfortable. It was 6 am, it was Monday, her weekend had been good and she had been late to bed. The cries of seagulls seeped through the double glazed windows, the faint orange light of the rising sun finding the gaps in her curtains, bathing her in it's soft, gentle light. She closed her eyes and felt herself drift.

There was a faint click from the kitchen as the boiler kicked in, sending hot water through the apartment's heating system. The metal pipes warming and creaking as the water flowed gently through them. A slow drip sending droplets of water to the laminate floor with a tick, Like a slow-running clock. Disrupting her doze. It was 6:01.

Her mind wandered, thoughts of work invading the comfort of her slumber. The dripping picked up its pace, the water spreading on the floor. It was 6:02

She turned again pulling the quilt over her head, desperate to block out her thoughts and the drip, drip, drip. 7 more minutes and she begged for sleep, just seven more minutes, please. The l.e.d. flickered, 6:03.

At 6:04 she developed an itch right in the centre of her back. Arggh, why? Why there? Why is it always where I can't reach? She lay on her back, pulling her shoulders forward and wriggled, trying desperately to build up enough friction to ease the frustration. 6:05.

She sighs and drags herself up, kneeling, she grabs her quilt and stretches it tight between her shoulder blades pulling it quickly left and right, rubbing it against the itch. Her eyes half-closed she lets out a sigh of relief and collapses, face-first into the soft warmth of her pillow. 6:06, 3 minutes. 3 minutes to rest, to snooze...

She turns on her side as the dog starts to bark, the dog isn't hers. Why would you have a dog in a flat? Why?

6:07. drip, drip, drip, the escape of the water speeds up. The dog downstairs is barking and whining, begging to go for a walk. She slaps her hands to ears and kicks down on the bed in frustration. 6:08.

A bus trundles past, the first of the day, it's engine humming and straining along. A bang as a door slams below, the dog runs outside barking in greeting its friends. A chorus of howling begins. She grabs the ends of her pillow and pulls them up, covering her ears, pressing hard.

6:09 her alarm sounds again. Louder and faster, beebabeeep beebabeeep beebabeeep. She turns, slamming her hand on the clock. Lying back on her bed, she lets out a cry. Are nine minutes too much to ask?

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