Halloween, kind of

I had a whole plan to stay in, and then a lobster and a taxi showed up and ruined it.

So I almost skipped Halloween this year. Like, fully had a plan to skip it. Stay in, put a movie on, maybe write a little, go to bed at a normal hour for once. That last part was never going to happen but it was a nice idea.

Then Saturday around six my phone starts going off. Tyler, then Megan, then Tyler again. There's a party in Bushwick, a friend of Megan's has a big warehouse space off Flushing Avenue, and apparently I'm going. I said I didn't have a costume. Tyler said "that's not my problem" and hung up on me.

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Okay so the costume. I had about forty minutes and nothing in the apartment that wasn't black, grey or denim.

What I ended up with was a white t-shirt, my leather jacket, jeans, and a comb in my back pocket. And then I slicked my hair back with way too much product. That's it. That was the costume. When people asked I said I was a guy from a movie in the fifties. Which movie, they'd ask. I'd say "all of them, kind of."

Megan looked at me when she opened the door and just said "wow, you really tried, huh." She was a full lobster. Like, a whole foam lobster suit with claws she couldn't really use. So she couldn't hold her drink or her phone or anything, and Tyler had to carry her stuff all night. He was dressed as a taxi. A cardboard box with straps, painted yellow, with a little light on top that blinked. He said it took him three days. I believe him.

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The subway was the best part, honestly. We got on the L at Bedford and it was packed with costumes. Two witches sitting next to a guy in a suit who was clearly just coming from work, looking so tired. A full group of Ghostbusters standing by the doors. Somebody dressed as a slice of pizza fell asleep against the pole and nobody woke him up.

Tyler's taxi box didn't fit through the doors the normal way. He had to turn sideways and kind of shuffle in, and a guy dressed as Batman held the door for him. Which was nice of Batman.

Megan couldn't hold the pole because of the claws, so every time the train jerked she'd just fall into me a little. By Lorimer she gave up and leaned on me the whole way. I was basically holding up a lobster for four stops. Not complaining. It was a pretty good lobster.

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The party was huge. Like a real warehouse, kind of like my place but bigger and way less heated. String lights everywhere, a DJ on a platform made of shipping pallets, a fog machine that was turned up too high so half the room looked like it was underwater.

I didn't really know anyone besides those two, so I did what I usually do. Found a wall, stood near it, talked to whoever came over.

Around one I ended up talking to this guy named Kevin who was dressed as a giant moth. Big brown wings, fuzzy antennas, the whole thing. He was really nice and kind of quiet, like me. We talked for maybe an hour about bikes and about how neither of us likes parties that much. Then some light got turned on by the DJ, this one bright

white lamp near the corner, and he just stopped talking mid-sentence and walked toward it.

Like, slowly. Not even joking. Just drifted over. Stood under it for a second. Then he looked back at me and said "I'm so sorry, I had to" and I laughed so hard I had to sit down on a speaker. Best costume commitment I've ever seen. He gave me his Instagram after. His bio is just a moth emoji. Of course it is.

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The sweetest thing was later, close to three. Megan's claws had finally come off, she'd taken them off and put them on Tyler's taxi light so it looked like the taxi had a lobster on its roof. She'd been dancing for like two hours straight. She came over and sat next to me on the speaker and put her head on my shoulder and said "I'm really glad you came."

That was it. She didn't say anything else. Just sat there for a minute, sweaty and tired, with her lobster tail kind of folded under her. I was glad I came too. I'd have stayed on my couch and it would have been fine. This was better than fine.

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We left around four. Tyler and Megan got a cab, a real one, which Tyler thought was very funny. I said I'd walk. I wanted the air.

The city at four in the morning after Halloween is kind of beautiful, kind of gross. Fake spiderwebs pulled off stoops and blowing down the street. A plastic sword in a tree. Somebody's devil horns sitting on top of a mailbox like they'd been left for whoever needed them next.

It was cold, my jacket wasn't really warm enough, and my hair had gone stiff from all the product. I looked like a guy who'd lost a fight with the fifties.

I passed a bodega that was still open and got a coffee and a bag of chips. The guy behind the counter was wearing cat ears. He didn't mention it. I didn't mention it. That felt right.

By the time I got back the sky was just starting to go grey over the water tower across the street. I sat at the kitchen table with the coffee and wrote for a little bit, mostly about Kevin the moth. I don't think I'll ever stop thinking about him walking toward that light.

Next year I'm putting more effort into the costume. Probably. Maybe. We'll see.

— Shay

Thanks for reading. There are more of these on my site, one every couple of weeks.