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Living in Neon

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The bar was almost empty. The green and blue neon lights glowed in the corners and grey cigarette smoke still hung thick in the air. The dance floor was empty and the colored blinking lights were slowly being clicked off. The bartender wiped up a few spills from the countertop with a white towel and informed the few remaining patrons that the bar was closing. They shuffled slowly to the door, talking loudly and holding each other upright. The final person waved a sloppy good-bye and turned the bright orange BAR OPEN sign off as he left. The door clicked shut.

The bartender stood alone behind the bar, wiping glasses. The clock behind him next to the calendar read 2:17. He turned to look in the long mirror which covered the wall behind the bar, and he smoothed back his shiny black hair. His white shirt looked purple and green from the neon and his dark grey pants blended in with the shadows. His scuffed black shoes scratched across the tiled floor and caught on gum and grit. The vent hummed and sucked the smoke up through the ceiling. Soon, there was none left, but the smell lingered.

A waitress called to the bartender. She asked if she might leave early because she had a job interview in the morning. A well tanned hand waved her out, and she smiled, blew him a kiss, and closed the door behind her.

The D.J. called a quick “G’night,” as he grabbed his blue satin jacket with “Jack’s Bar” written across the back. He took one last drink out of his smudged glass and then ran to the front door. It banged against the frame as he left.

The bartender came out from behind and began clearing off the small wooden tables. They were covered with cigarette butts and crumpled napkins with discolored rings. There were several different kinds of glasses; wine glasses with lipstick smears around the edges, beer mugs, and tall glasses for tropical drinks with pieces of fruit still in the bottom. He collected them all on the large brown tray and carried them back to the bar.

There was a knock on the front door. The bartender put down his towel and removed the stained, white apron from his waist. He tossed it across the cluttered bar and headed towards the door. His steps were quick. He opened it, and the woman walked in.

She was tall and had black hair. Her diamond earrings and necklace and long grey fur coat on a worn wooden bar made soft clicking sounds as she walked toward him.

He went quietly to the gold flash light and the tinkling sound could be heard through the song and then went back to the woman beside his apron. She ran her fingers came up from behind her and put it slowly turned toward him in her store.

He led her to the center of the bar and the music was slow and smooth and waved back and forth and he moved holding her head. He looked into her and her head away. The song echoed danced on.

The song was old but familiar, a it all their lives. The beat was simple and the bartender softly spoke them into the beat away and he pulled her even closer relaxed in his arms and they just stood flashing softly across their silhouette.

Her head turned slightly, and she looked at her from across the room her mouth opened as if to speak. But her face coolly beautiful in the colors left.

The bartender walked behind the bar and picked up a broken pencil and marked several times. He turned off the music and the neon stopped flashing. He left the jacket, which had been shoved into the bar and picked up the towel. She looked at her from across the room and mouth opened as it to speak. But her face coolly beautiful in the color left.

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The room was black. He walked that came from the streetlights beyond checked the room one more time. He his way out.
Green and blue neon lights glowed in the still hung thick in the air. The blinking lights were slowly being a few spills from the countertop few remaining patrons that the bar the door, talking loudly and holding waved a sloppy good-bye and turned as he left. The door clicked shut. the bar, wiping glasses. The clock 2:17. He turned to look in the long he smoothed back his purple and green from the neon with the shadows. His scuffed black and caught on gum and grit. The up through the ceiling. Soon, there She asked if she might leave early the morning. A well tanned hand him a kiss, and closed the door as he grabbed his blue satin jacket back. He took one last drink out of the front door. It banged against the and began clearing off the small with cigarette butts and crumpled were several different kinds of ears around the edges, beer mugs, pieces of fruit still in the large brown tray and carried them dealer. The bartender put down his apron from his waist. He tossed it towards the door. His steps were She was tall and had black hair much like the bartender's, only long. Her diamond earrings and necklace sparkled in the light. He hung her long grey fur coat on a worn wooden hook at the door and she moved confidently towards the bar. The high heeled leather shoes she wore made soft clicking sounds as she walked across the dusty, tiled floor.

He went quietly to the gold flashing jukebox in the corner. Purple light glinted off the coin as he placed it in the metal slot. A small tinkling sound could be heard throughout the vacant room. He selected a song and then went back to the woman. She was now sitting at the bar beside his apron. She ran her fingers over it and fingered the ties. He came up from behind her and put his arms around her thin neck. She slowly turned toward him in her stool and the music began playing.

He led her to the center of the large empty dance floor. The rhythm of the music was slow and smooth and they hardly moved at all. Her hair waved back and forth and he moved his fingers into it until he was holding her head. He looked into her eyes and she closed them and turned her head away. The song echoed back from the dark, blank walls and they danced on.

The song was old but familiar, and they danced as though they had done it all their lives. The beat was simple, the words meaningful and the bartender softly spoke them into the woman's ear. The song slowly died away and he pulled her even closer to him and finally kissed her. She relaxed in his arms and they just stood there for a while, the neon light flashing softly across their silhouette.

Her head turned slightly, and she saw that it was 3:15. She pulled away from him and moved towards the door. He tried to hold her arm, but she didn't stop and he had to let go. He gave a slight sigh and walked to the bar and picked up the towel. She put on her coat and turned. He looked at her from across the room. His face looked strained and his mouth opened as if to speak. But then, he just smiled. She smiled back, her face coolly beautiful in the colored lights, and she opened the door and left.

The bartender walked behind the bar and looked at the calendar. He picked up a broken pencil and marked off the day that had been circled several times. He turned off the main power switch under the bar and the neon stopped flashing. He felt for and found his own blue satin jacket, which had been shoved into a cabinet under the mirror.

The room was black. He walked toward the light outside the front door that came from the streetlights beyond. At the door, he turned and checked the room one more time. It was silent, and he locked the door on his way out.