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Arch 243
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Fabric: New York City
Locations: 2 Fifth Ave, Washington Sq Park, W 4th Street Subway
Agent 1: Myself

In order to even enter the city of New York, I first have to start in my hometown of Merrick on Long Island. After a short drive from my house I make it to the train station where I depart on the train going to Penn Station. "This is the train to PENN STATION." Eastbound: Merrick, Freeport, Baldwin, Rockville Centre, Lynbrook, St. Albans, Jamaica, Kew Gardens, Forest Hills, and finally Penn Station. I walk out of the station and up the stairs and look for the next step. I am not going to lie, I am not a seasoned New Yorker. Thus, the subway isn't my first choice of transportation. Panda Express, American Whiskey, and NY Pizza Suprema all indicate to me that I am in the right spot and looking towards lower Manhattan. I smell the sweet scent of nuts for sale, and moldy trash and it feels right. I look around briefly for a cab and flag one down as soon as possible. A few blocks over I take Fifth Avenue straight down to my first location.

I have been to 2 Fifth Ave multiple times. When I reach the corner of W 8th Street and Fifth Ave I see Le Pain Quotidien on my right and I know it is only a few steps ahead. As I walk about another hundred feet or so I arrive with the building on the right. I look up and see the bulky white tiles that make up the facade. I then enter the courtyard in which cars are pulling in and out. I walk in and I am immediately greeted by the doorman in the mail room. The first floor is also home to the library, gym, concierge service, and garage but these aren't aspects I am familiar with. I have had brief encounters with these locations walking in and out of the building, but have never truly sat down and got to know them.

21 floors but I only ever have been to floor 9. 343 units but again I have only been to one. It is a small unit. When I walk in at first I don't even see a bed. There is a small kitchen to the left, a dining room table in front of me, a living room decorated with eclectic art, bookshelves covering almost every wall, and a small bathroom in the back right. After a few minutes of standing around my friend sees the confusion on my face on where we were to sleep. She explains that there is a Murphy bed. I quickly type into Google "What is a Murphy bed?" because there wasn't much about that answer that seemed to clarify things for me. But simply a Murphy Bed is also called a wall bed, pull down bed, or fold-down bed, is a bed that is hinged at one end to store vertically against the wall, or inside a closet or cabinet. She then reached for what I thought was a closet for the TV and pulls down the bed from the cabinet. The bed in which we were going to be sleeping in was simply hiding behind a wall the entire time. Apparently this was something that was common to help save space in a New York City apartment but this was a foreign concept to me. I was used to a suburban town in which you walk into a house with multiple rooms and each bedroom had their own individual beds floating in the middle of the room. This concept continued to dwell on me. How

could an apartment sell for over a million dollars when it doesn't even have a proper bedroom? This concept of the dollar in real estate in New York City made no sense to me. The architecture, and facade isn't even what I would consider to be ideal.

As I walk out of the apartment and swing to the right there is a massive arch that is the focal point of Washington Square Park. From a distance the arch seems imposing but as I continue to walk closer I start to understand the scale of the arch more. It is 77 feet tall with an opening that is 47 feet tall. 9.21568627451 versions of me could fit stacked on top of each other to fit in the opening, and 15.0980392157 versions of me could fit stacked on top of each other to reach the top. I truly didn't understand the scale of the arch until I got closer and stood face to face with it. I felt unfamiliar meandering through a park I had never been to. There were so many new faces and smells and that were wafting past me one by one. This is a radial energy that is emitted the minute you enter the park. After walking under the arch the path is paved for me to follow towards the fountain located in the middle of the park. This physical scene was something I had only ever gotten to see or experience in movies. The tiled area around the fountain is fenced in by curved benches that are constantly taken. Trying to find a place to sit down and relax on a nice summer day is nearly impossible. But we picked up lunch and waited around until there was a time to jump in.

The energy was just a tad chaotic. There was a juxtaposition of the concrete jungle of the pavement and the extreme amount of lush trees circulating in the park. Trees were everywhere. You could walk through a majority of the park without even being touched by the sun. There were screaming children, aspiring musicians, calm NYU students trying to get homework done, or simple residents taking a break from their apartment to come enjoy the day. At 12:00 pm the park was busy, but it was our time to go. I went on about my day and roamed the streets of New York City. Around 3:00 pm I returned back to the park, and again was faced with a new crowd. I could overhear conversations of people talking about french fries, and the selections of sauces they had to offer. While at the same time there was a group of friends and strangers gathering around in a circle watching local jazz musicians. And, you can always find two people catching up to have a mid-afternoon coffee. Being in the park gave me a sense of community.

The demographic around Washington Square Park has a large range. There are NYU students in their twenties, old married couples who have lived in Greenwich Village for years, new families looking to find a friendly place to settle down, and a large homeless population. It was crazy to me how in a large place like NYC that all these people were able to gather together and be a community. We stayed around to dusk, until things started to settle down and silence was more prevalent. Crisp air, and calm skies. This was our call to head back to the apartment. People migrated out and went about their day.

At the end of the time it was time for me to return to the suburbs of Long Island. As much as I liked pretending to be a true New Yorker I am not exactly cut out for the lifestyle. But then again, when does one get to consider themselves a true New Yorker? Five, ten, fifteen years? Who knows. Aside from that I had to get home. My friend can be instructed on how to get back to Penn Station and it involves the subway. The subway as I mentioned before is not my primary choice of public transportation, but there I was faced with that as my only option and I wanted to play it cool. She

walked me to the west 4th street subway station which was only a couple blocks away from her apartment. We said our goodbyes and parted ways. I walked underground and entered the subway.

The smell was interesting, if I wanted to act polite, but truly it was hard to resist the urge to plug my nostrils. It was cold, and wet and not an environment that I was dying to emerge myself in. There was nothing special about the design or the architectural value of the space. It was something placed into the ground to help increase the rate of transportation, not for artistic value. I guess maybe people don't care because to a naked eye above ground it isn't visible but nonetheless I went forth. Reluctantly, I made it to the bottom of the stairs to wait for my train. It was 7:00pm, only a little busy. I could tell more people were beginning to trickle in. As the sun set a new crowd entered the terminal. I saw familiar faces from throughout the day that came to congregate in their new home. The homeless moved from the park, and migrated to an indoor location of the subway.

There was an endless array of green columns scattered throughout the platform. Benches dispersed as well to give a little comfort to the people waiting. Others paced around waiting for a train to come. And others made themselves at home and set up their beds next to their favorite bench. Delay, delay, delay was a word spread amongst the constant murmurs. This seemed to be one topic of conversation that everyone had in common. The man in the suit would start talking to the student blasting music in her airpods with her bookbag. The mom was taking her kids under her wing trying to shelter them from the outside world. Then there was me. I stayed quiet and tried to mind my own business. As someone who isn't native to the city I felt that was best.

Finally, my train pulled in--I got in. The subway cart itself was similar to the platform, cold and not the best smelling. It was lined with benches to sit, and overhead railings for people to hold on to. It was packed to say the least. I definitely picked the wrong time to move back uptown to penn station. It only took 30 minutes with all the stops but it felt much longer. I again got to observe and see people come and go from every spot. It was interesting to watch the demographic fluctuate from each block. I finally arrived at Penn Station, and the area of the city I felt most comfortable. I knew exactly where to go and exactly how to get back on my train to merrick. I completed my routine by stopping at the bakery in the train station to get my dad banana pudding and waiting until they announced my track.

"Track 20" was put up on the board and I went. I got comfortable in my seat and reflected on the long excursion I had that day. "This is the train to BABYLON." Westbound: Penn Station, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens, Jamaica, St. Albans, Lynbrook, Rockville Centre, Baldwin, Freeport, and Merrick. I got off and returned to my normal life.

I am an outsider in New York City. I see things differently than most. To what someone may look at as a normal occasion, I see it sticking out like a sore thumb. I don't know the best spots in town unless I look at yelp. It is interesting to observe the city from the outside. No one knows who I am and I don't know who anyone else is. I am merely another set of eyes just wandering through the city.