

Sleep Mode

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*PC/Mac. Very light on the slash. Short and sweet. PC's POV.
It's strange to see Mac asleep.*

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1 - Sleep Mode

PC likes the idea of “early to bed, early to rise”. It’s very practical. It suits him, and it’s a good system to live by.

Unfortunately (and oh, does he ever know this well), no system is without its glitches.

He crawled into Mac’s bed after a little friendly networking hours ago, but for whatever reason, Sleep mode just isn’t taking tonight. Maybe he has too many things going on in his task queue; maybe it’s just that it’s weird trying to fall asleep in Mac’s bed without Mac being there as well. He, PC’s learned, doesn’t do the “early to bed” thing at all, so when PC turned in for the night, he was still up in the living room, blogging or Photoshopping or whatever it is he does when more sensible machines have called it a night. PC rearranges himself for the nth time, trying to quiet his processors and just relax. It’s not happening. Which, at this rate, means he’s going to be cranky in the morning, and he hates that. Best to start off the day in a good mood – he has an important job, after all. Lots of people to work with (even if he is deeply underappreciated sometimes).

He turns over again, presses his face into the cool white surface of the pillow, and groans.

It occurs to him then that Mac, who’s always hanging out around Wikipedia and knows all kinds of bizarre things, might be able to suggest something. Some trick for beating the insomnia. It couldn’t hurt to ask, he finally decides, and hefts himself out of bed with a wearied sigh.

He finds Mac right where he’d last seen him, on the couch, but he’s gotten more...horizontal since then. All the things he’d been working on are still out, strewn across the clear coffee table in front of him; apparently PC was right about both the Photoshopping *and* the blogging, and left out at least three other programs. He can’t understand how Mac does it.

Right then, though, the only thing Mac is doing is snoring, very quietly. It almost looks like he started slouching at some point and it just evolved from there, to the point that he’s now laid out in a curious, half-twisted sprawl across the couch. Something about that strikes PC as strange; it takes him a minute to realize that what’s coming off as odd is how spontaneous it looks. Unplanned. Mac didn’t just decide he was done for the night; he actually dozed off in the middle of his “work” (PC tries to give him credit, but he still mentally adds the quotation marks around that most of the time).

It’s strange to think about Mac being tired.

It’s also strange to see him so still and quiet. It’s not that he’s normally hyperactive, just...active. Constantly. Even when all he’s doing is “kicking back” with iTunes, he taps his feet, or air-guitars, or hums under his breath. He stays up late and runs ten programs at once, and geez, sometimes it makes PC tired just to watch him. Right now, though, he’s actually at rest, eyes closed, motionless beyond the steady rise and fall with each slow breath. Sleep is not a particularly remarkable state, even if Mac is the one in it, but now that PC thinks about it, when was the last time he actually saw Mac like this? When they end up in bed together, it’s usually the result of being *in bed* together first (the italics make all the

difference), and after that PC is without exception the one to conk out first. He can't help it. That kind of networking is exhausting. He gets up early, but so does Mac – PC has to go to work; Mac likes to go jogging. He never seems to need the naps PC indulges in when he can find the time.

Come to think of it, has he ever actually seen Mac asleep before?

He moves a little closer, tentative, steps lighter than they need to be – Mac is definitely out cold here – and shifts to sit in front of the couch. Huh. He always thought Mac looked perpetually relaxed, but he's even moreso now – which makes plenty of sense but still manages to be surprising. He's barefoot, but still dressed. His hair's falling into his eyes, with his head tilted against the armrest like that.

And he really does look tired.

Mac squirms a little, and PC unthinkingly holds his breath, waiting to see if he'll wake up, if the proximity of PC in his wireless network has pulled him out of Sleep. But then he sighs and stills again, and PC lets out that breath. Mac's expression changed for a moment too; now it's gone blank again, and PC finds himself thinking.

What's going on in Mac's head right now?

It's a strange question to consider, and definitely more philosophical than PC's prone to, but it's late and it's quiet and something about that atmosphere is just right for this kind of pondering.

And it's interesting to think about. PC is very aware of himself – it's important to be, isn't it? He knows his own background processes like the back of his hand. He could probably list them out without even having to check Task Manager. Even asleep, he is reliable. It doesn't make him the quietest sleeper in the world, and he does tend to move around a lot as those processes do their respective things, but routine is routine and he's content with his own. It's built right into him.

Mac, however, is a mystery, as he so often is. He runs programs PC's never heard of, saves his files with extensions he swears can't be real, and operates on a whole different framework. It's a good thing he never seems to get sick, PC has thought in the past, because he wouldn't have the slightest idea of what to do. Another PC, someone from his side of the family, and he'd be fine with it. But Mac? Mac is like nothing he's ever dealt with before. Sometimes it's vexing. Sometimes it's interesting. Right now it's a little of both, and he can't stop wondering. Does Mac have background processes? Does anything keep running while he's this deeply idled? Do Apples dream, to paraphrase, of iSheep?

PC doesn't know. He doesn't even know why he wants to know, but he does, and he loses track of time just watching Mac sleep.

When Mac moves again, half-rolling over with a mumble, it draws PC from his thoughts. There's something on those quiet features, but he can't quite read it, not with Mac's hair half-obscuring his face. Something that might be curiosity, or maybe not, gets the better of him; he reaches out and gently tucks Mac's hair behind his ear. People rarely associate PC with subtlety, but his fingers just barely brush Mac's cheek in the motion.

It's to his considerable surprise when Mac reacts, crinkling his nose and slowly blinking his eyes open.

He looks groggy. He looks like he's lagging, something PC can recognize in a heartbeat but almost never sees on Mac. On himself, it's irritating; on Mac, it's inexplicably likeable.

"PC?" he slurs, blinking again, whirring his way back to awareness. "What...mmf..."

"You fell asleep," he explains, then adds, "You left all your documents open. I was afraid they might get corrupted." Actually, he just didn't realize Mac was such a light sleeper, but that's a pretty good excuse. Mac seems to buy it, which PC chalks up half to his own quick thinking and half to the fact that Mac clearly isn't all there yet. Mac yawns broadly.

"Oh, geez. What time is it?" His clock still hasn't quite caught up.

"Twelve forty-two," PC answers promptly. Mac shouldn't look down on *his* "bundled apps", he thinks, feeling quite useful right then. Mac's synced back up before it even turns to forty-three, but still. PC got it first. He likes that.

"Seriously?" Mac fights back another yawn, but loses to it in the end. "Mmn. Wait, why are you up? Is everything okay?"

"Trouble sleeping," he replies simply. Ah – in his waking-up movements, Mac's gone and knocked his hair into his eyes again, and once more PC reaches forward to smooth it back. This time, Mac's awake to watch, and does so, looking curious. He could assume it's just PC being detail-conscious, putting things in order. It's actually PC being affectionate, but he doesn't need to announce that. Mac's smart, after all, and if he really were just straightening him out for neatness' sake, he wouldn't have been so tender about it.

"Will you come to bed? You'll sleep better there." Judging by the sound Mac's back makes when he sits up and stretches, PC's got that right, and he nods wearily.

This is a definite improvement over sleeping alone, PC thinks as they get settled under the covers. He's tired, and Mac's tired, so it's a little funny that they both reach for each other at the same time, that their hands bump and tangle and just like that they're networked, like it's the most natural thing in the world. Mac sighs and squirms closer, till he's tucked against PC's side; PC turns to accommodate, letting go of his hand in favor of draping his own over the other's waist. It's nice, the way they fit together.

" 'Night, PC," Mac murmurs.

"Sleep well, Macintosh," he answers softly. He can actually feel Mac blink against his neck (which is roughly where he's ended up, in their sleepy cuddling) and registers it as surprise. It's always just 'Mac', after all. But that felt natural, and judging by the way Mac burrows closer against him, he approves.

In the end, PC only gets a few hours of sleep that night, but he wakes up feeling wonderfully well-rested.