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by stanley lieber

Stan never tampered with the mail. He did his job. It was the same every day. Mostly he kept his head down and avoided fraternizing with the other mail carriers. After some bad experiences early in his career he realized this was best.

On a typical day he went home after work and hit the Doritos pretty hard. Often he'd just sit there in his La-Z-Boy until it was time for bed. Sometimes he'd even wake up there in the morning. Most of what he needed when he woke up was within reach.

It wasn't strictly necessary to speak to anyone at work. Most days he didn't. Most of his conversations occurred between himself and the people who lived on his route. These conversations were by necessity short. The nature of the business dictated that soon Stan would have to move on to the next house. Still, he remembered most of their names, most of the time.

Stan thought that there must have been a lot of people out there living their lives in a similar fashion. Maybe, sometimes, they got lonely. He'd never know, and he didn't particularly need to.

He didn't really feel lonely. It was true that he was unique. Most storks (ibises?) didn't bother to live to his age, never grew to his size, or for that matter ever acquired human speech. He wasn't sure he'd want to talk to them anyway. He found that he didn't have much in common with other members of his species. It was better to keep himself at a remove from the goings on of the stork world.

That was what he told himself as he drove the mail truck down the street.