

*Today marks an important milestone*

*I have a blanket.*

~ The Maw of the Void

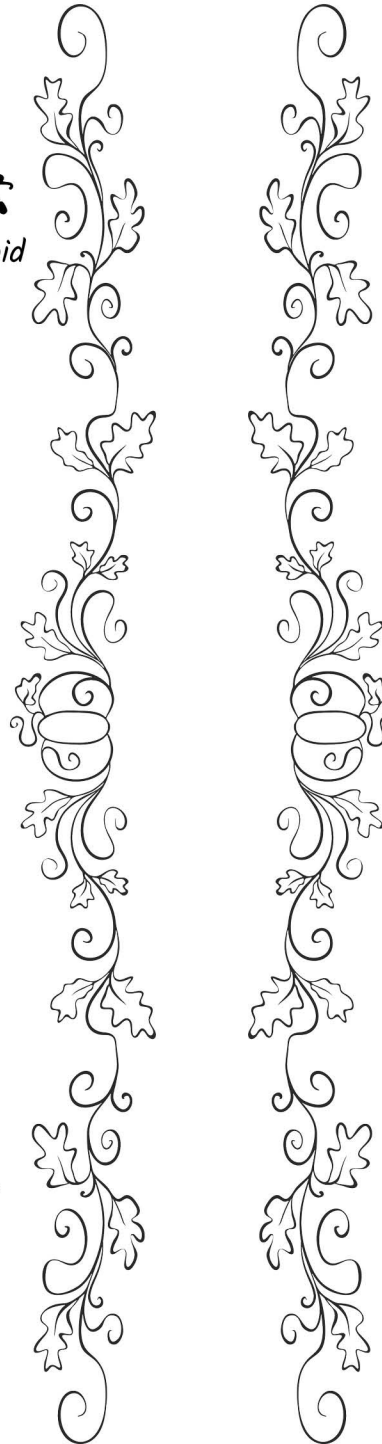
I bought this blanket. It was not given to me, loaned to me, taken from a charity. I went to Target and looked at blankets and chose one blanket in particular and purchased that blanket with my money that I earned and is mine. The blanket belongs to me, and no one else may lay any claim to it. No one else is responsible for it.

It is comfortable. There are more comfortable blankets. Some of them were even cheaper than this blanket and I could have chosen them. But this is the one I wanted. Now it is mine. I did not have to beg. I did not even have to ask. I said "I will take this one," and was told to pay and sent on my way.

This all probably sounds ridiculous. Please understand that I have NEVER HAD MY OWN BLANKET BEFORE. I have had hand-me-downs and gifts and loaners and never, ever, a blanket I owned that was mine that I bought that no one could take away ever under any circumstances.

*Having a blanket is important.*

It is a symbol of triumph over a life of bullshit. Not only do I have money I can spend on things. I chose to spend that money on something that, while wholly unnecessary for survival, greatly improves comfort.



It's a symbol of triumph over the kind of mental illness that says "I do not deserve this." For years I decided my comfort and well-being was secondary, because I had it drilled into me that anything I wanted was the least important thing possible. Other people mattered more, I was dirt. Now I have a blanket. I got it for myself, because I deserve it.

It's a symbol of triumph over the kind of poverty that people don't believe exists outside of Africa and Indonesia. It's a symbol that whatever help I might need, I no longer need support for basic necessities. For most of my adult life, I've been on the streets, begging people for a way to survive one more day. Now I have a blanket. I didn't need that money for food. The blanket was all I needed and I got it.

Moreover, I wanted it. It wasn't someone else's cast-off detritus, or a beloved but impermanent loaner.

That makes it a symbol that I have the power to choose what I get, even if it's in trivial ways. Before, comfort and even survival came with a caveat: this is what you are getting because it is what we can afford to give to you. Now I have a blanket, and it is exactly the one I wanted to purchase. I could have picked any blanket they had in stock. This is the one I wanted. I saw it and made my decision immediately. I checked the others and considered them. But this one is the one I decided on. So I got it.

Buying a blanket that I wanted with money that is my own says, in short, "I win." It doesn't matter if I lose later or not, I have this tangible proof that for a time, I rose above.

*It's a big day.*