



Housing Headache

GENERAL FACTS:

Kiran and Quinn were both college students at Southern Arizona University (SAU). They met online through a forum for students at SAU. When they realized they were both looking for a roommate, they agreed to get a place together. They found a house near campus and moved in together last August, signing a 10-month lease. Rent at the house is \$1800/month, which Kiran and Quinn split equally.

The two had very different majors and interests, had separate social circles, and were busy with their own activities. They never became especially close friends, but they were respectful and were good roommates to each other. However, upon returning to the house after the winter break, Kiran was surprised to find Quinn not there. Quinn's room was cleared out and Kiran found an envelope left on the counter with a note inside. It read:

Hey Kir,

So, I've got some news—I'm actually leaving school and moving out of the house. I know, it's kind of sudden, but I've got some personal stuff I need to sort out. I left a check for \$1800 on the kitchen counter. It's two months' rent, all I could scrape together. Hopefully, it'll help cover things until you find someone else to share the place with. I'm really sorry for leaving you hanging like this. It wasn't an easy decision, and I'll miss living with you. Take care, okay?

Catch you later,

- Q

In the envelope, Kiran found the check for \$1800 and deposited it in their checking account. Kiran used the \$1800 to cover half the rent for the first two months, but there are still three months left on the lease and despite Kiran's efforts to contact Quinn or find a replacement roommate, the room remained unfilled.

This month Kiran only paid \$900, half the rent, and informed Shannon, the landlord, of the situation. Shannon was sympathetic but stood firm. Shannon informed Kiran that each roommate was individually liable for the entire rent amount, and suggested Kiran needed to find Quinn or find the money elsewhere. That doesn't feel fair to Kiran. Now, Kiran is late on rent, and Shannon is breathing down their neck with threats of additional fees and even eviction.

At this point, Kiran owes half of this month's rent, and has 2 more months left on the lease. Kiran reached out to a trusted professor who recommended they look at a legal clinic on campus that provides mediation services. Kiran contacted the clinic director, who was happy to set up a mediation session. Kiran called Shannon, who agreed to attend the mediation to find a solution.