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Dreamer

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Dreamer

It was late at night, and the metro was unusually silent. Only the footsteps of rushing businessmen could be heard. They walked by with briefcases in one hand, coffee in the other, their faces blank, passing each other without a word. They were too busy. None of them noticed the fat mice searching hungrily for food on the metro floor. None of them noticed the lonely woman hidden in the shadows.

She was on a bench, her shoulders hunched. Her arms were wrapped around her thin body and her chin was pressed tightly against her chest. Blond strands of tangled hair hid her nervous face. She was studying the metro floor, in a desperate attempt to pass time. The woman stared vacantly at the ancient cigarettes, which littered the entire floor. She noticed the unwanted pieces of gum that were stamped onto the benches and half of a ham sandwich that lay a few inches in front of her. Flies hovered above the sandwich, devouring the moldy treat. She groaned in disgust, but continued to scan the details of the metro. She studied the metro inch by inch, until there was nothing left. When she was so nervous that her hands shook, she closed her eyes briefly, and thought about the future. Only then was she mollified.

For most of the hour, she was alone. Some strangers passed by her occasionally, stopping to ask for directions or lighters. She did not smoke, and she did not know the metro well enough to help them. When she apologized, they sighed, and stomped away, angry because their time had been wasted. Most of the strangers, however, didn't even bother to say hello.

She did not mind the aloof strangers. They were strangers after all. She only cared about those she loved, because they cared about her. The only important thing in the world was love. Most of them laughed at her, and called her foolish for falling in love with him. But she knew the passion existed, and it was her only reason for living. Growing up as an orphan, she was never truly loved. She did not know what love was or what love felt like until she met him. But now she had no worries. She was sure this was love. She had waited long enough for it. Twenty years. She was ready now. Tonight, for some peculiar reason, she was nervous. She laughed at herself for not trusting, and tapped her fingers nervously on her knee. She continued waiting, battling her tiring eyes.

Soon, she was half-asleep, in-between the worlds of dreams and reality. She thought about the times she had with him. She remembered the time he picked up her pencil at work when she had dropped it. He did it with such grace. She could recall every move he made. First, he leant over the table. He was wearing black pants and a red tie. Then he used his thumb and index finger on his left hand to slowly pick it up. When he stood up, he handed to her and smiled. He said, "Here, kiddo," in the most angelic voice. There was another time. He was chewing gum, and he offered her a piece from his desk. He didn't charge for, just gave it to her. She tried not to cry. His friendless and love for her was overwhelming.

Now she was waiting. She saw him read her note that Tuesday. He had laughed. She remembered seeing a fire light up in his eyes. Once she saw his eyes, knew he was coming to visit her. They were only a few hours away, after all. Nothing

could stop love. Nothing, she thought happily. She felt her eyelids drop, as her body begged for sleep.

Then suddenly, her head jerked up. She heard something. At first it was faint, but then it grew louder. She saw a light emerge from the darkness. *It was here! Finally here!* She flew off the bench, and ran madly towards the light. Her heels barely touched the metro floor as she danced towards the doors and waited. Her heart nearly stopped as she saw it come to a halt and let out a cloud of smoldering exhaust. She paid no attention to the exhaust, even though it choked her. Why should she care? Everything was going to be fine now. She waited, with one hand over her chest to calm her racing heart. At last, the doors snapped open. She did not blink. She did not breathe.

Only saw a small stream of strangers exited the door. Then emptiness. She pressed her hands together and gazed upwards towards the lights of the metro. Then muttering a few words, she closed her eyes for a few moments. Five minutes passed. Then ten. Fifteen. There was nobody left, she was sure of it. Her watched ticked loudly and annoyingly, scolding her for her failure. The doors closed, and once again, the metro was silent.

Her shoulders dropped. Tears clouded her eyes. Every ounce of hope died. It was clear now. She tried to swallow the truth. He had not come.

--Sandy Liang '07