

Flutter

He wasn't sure what he was doing. He was just running. Ducking in and out of the arms of strangers, squeezing through the gaps in the crowds that patrolled the street like watchmen. He even had to jump over a homeless man curled up on the street, trying to get some sleep despite it only being five in the evening.

The entire city smelt like something foul that a sewer would cough up, but he paid it no mind. He just needed to get to the train station.

He kicked up snow in his wake as he ran, the light covering a foreshadowing of the holidays that were to come. Despite the lack of festive spirits among the people he scrambled by, almost everything was decorated with bright lights and red, green, and white regalia.

Finally, he saw it. The square purple sign and the black letter T, are like an arrow pointing upwards toward his aspirations. He raced forward and turned the corner, his heart suddenly dropping as he saw the congregation of people around the sets of double glass doors. Seemingly everybody was in a hurry to move, the last day of work before their holidays not wanting to be spared. They wanted to get home, but he had other goals.

He continued forward with determination, squeezing past children who had been taken into the city to see some of the spectacles before the cold air got to them in all of five minutes and they were being dragged from photo op to photo op by their tired parents. There was a lot of cursing in his direction from these parents. They clearly didn't care about making the nice list, and their children told them so, which only put them in an even fouler mood.

He finally managed to slip inside, pressing his face against the glass door while a particularly large man who could have passed as Santa Claus himself fumbled with his train pass. He already had his ticket out, pressing it against the scanner and hardly even waiting before entering the station itself, where huddles of people stood around their exits, anxiously staring at the train schedule, then their watches, then back at the schedule, as if even the slightest break in eye contact would cause the world to collapse.

He spun in a circle, looking for the familiar face he had put so much effort to see one last time. To speak to her one last time. To confess, for the first time.

His eyes finally settled on her, features he had seen in almost every one of his classes but never dared to speak to. Eyes he had often gotten lost in but never made contact with.

And she was looking for somebody too, glancing around but somehow missing him. Could it be possible that. . . she was waiting for him too?

Surged by this realization, he started walking towards her, trying to formulate what to say before being cut off by a gang of sugar-jumped children being led by a tired looking father. He took a step back, waiting for them to pass, staring at their little elf costumes with amusement. Then he looked back up and his heart soared. She was smiling, staring in his direction. He went to raise his arm before he noticed she wasn't looking at him, exactly.

Her eyes followed another path, turning to his right and landing on another man. He was holding two coffees and handed one to her. He said something and they both shared a laugh

before taking a sip. She shivered at the warmth before putting her head on his chest. He laughed and bent down to kiss her.

When they broke apart, her eyes landed on him. Confusion, then recognition spread across her face, followed by awkwardness. She gingerly put her hand up in a wave before taking her boyfriend by the arm and leading him to their track.

He watched all of this with a sense of defeat. His heart seemed to be crushed, stretched to the point of breaking before being left as a twisted lump in his chest. As he watched them disappear into the crowd, the only thing he could feel was his heart giving one last hopeful flutter.