A Train To Catch

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The chirping of two tiny sparrows rumbles through the long aisles of a jam-packed Chatrapati Railway Station, as they flutter amid the chaos. The station harbours five lanes for the trains, with some of them being occupied already. Many travellers stand patiently atop a platform alongside an empty train track, waiting for their transport to arrive. There's a sensible order to the chaos present around them as if people knew where they had to be and things to do. The only sound that could pierce through all the noise was the occasional "Garam Garam Vade Lelo!" and the bizarre station microphone advertisements.

The waiting crowd reveals a hefty office man in his formal attire with a satchel slung around his body. He scratches his messy beard as sweat trickles down his brow and dampens his face mask. A patch of sunlight that broke through a crack in the ceiling highlighted his brown skin. The station has skylights, which illuminated it with a golden hue as the sun's rays filled the space. The large iron beams above resonate and echo from the flutter of a few pigeons and other birds that sat upon them.

Besides the man stood a fashionable lady boasting large dark sunglasses along a loose white top and a cute hand-woven mask, drenched in sweat. Quaint sounds spew out from her cell phone; she is on a call. Beside her was a young teenager, lost in his Gameboy. The crowd around these individuals moved and swirled. The sound of every kind of footstep from every kind of footwear rumbled through the station. Suddenly, "BWWAAAAAAAAAAAAAM!!!" every head turns towards the sound. Some faces look happy while some look annoyed. One of the incoming trains occupies lane 4 and as it stops, it relieves a considerable amount of steam and pressure from its engine, which slowly floats

and sinks into the atmosphere above. Instantly the crowd roars alive as an armada of people shove themselves and others into the train compartments. The dreary stench of sweat soon fills the train as sweaty people stand stuck to one another.

The entrepreneur, woman and the boy look at the train but once again retire to their activities with a subtle grin across their faces. The sound of the station was once again silent and far away traffic sounds cloaked the station again. “Dil me mere he darde disco” the sound cuts through the station ambience as an unanswered ringtone runs rampant. People didn’t seem to care. As the sound stops, shifting sounds of heavy crates fill the room. A few porters dressed in their plume reds load a large, worn-out wooden cart with goods. Occasional police radio transponder static added to the melody of the train station mix, its nature was cohesive.

“AREEY CHORR! KOI ROKHO USE!” a man yells as he desperately chases after another man who scuttles through the crowd with a large velvet bag in his hands. People stare but none seemed to care, they only move aside as the two cut through the crowd.

By now, lane 2 was boasting a mighty and noisy crowd. Different fabrics rustled through the crowd as people stood in a disorderly fashion. The moment the entrepreneur held up his hairy arm to reveal a silver watch, the ear-piercing sound of a train horn gauged in the distance. Some people lean out the side of the platform, eager to check whether their transport has arrived.

“A-gaya, A-gaya” the people cheered and a sigh of relief swept through the crowd. The crowd swarms into the train and within seconds it departs, leaving behind a trail of dust.