

Gabe Eubanks

Quiet Wishing's Not Loud Enough

You are moments away from making the greatest decision of your life, or moments away from letting it pass through your grasp, unknowingly letting a lifetime of contentment slip away from you forever. But in this moment, you think nothing of it.

You sit on the subway, shuffling your playlist like you do every Thursday at 5:30pm. You like to stare out the window, watching the cement fly by as you make one stop after the other. Likewise, you enjoy this spot as you can see the reflections of figure entering into your cab. It is very uncommon that one of these people will catch your eye, and even rarer that they will make you turn your head.

But then he walks in.

There is nothing special about what he is wearing, nothing unique about the pace with which he entered through the doors, but he demanded your attention nonetheless. You have to wait a moment, though. It would be rude and even a little awkward to immediately stare at the individual right after he set foot in the subway. You pause your music.

After a few moments of silence, you turn your head slightly to the left and catch a glimpse of him out of the corner of your eye. He is looking down at his device, but his eyes quickly shift up to meet yours. You turn your head bashfully and click your music back on.

Through the reflection in the window, you can see his bashful grin. His gaze moves to your direction a few more times, unaware of you continuously looking at him through the glass.

You exit the subway at your stop.

The next day, you return to your same seat, looking out the same window, and shuffling through the same playlist as the day before.

Right on cue, he walks in again.

There is hardly any difference in his attire from the previous day. He sits in the exact seat he was in yesterday, and once again you are studying his reflection. He waves and smiles, and you quickly look down at your phone, blushing. He must have seen you through the reflection as well.

You want to talk to him. You want to leave your seat, introduce yourself, and start a conversation with this man you have never met before, but you can't find the courage within yourself to approach him.

You exit the subway and return home at your stop.

The next day, the man is not there. Everyday after work you go back to your same seat, but the man is never there. In a few weeks, you will have forgotten he ever existed.

Later on in your life, the man from the subway vanishes from your memory, and as it always does, your progression of existence continues forward. A few years after, you meet a man with an unclouded sky in his eyes, a temperament you were accustomed to, and a foreseeable future between you both. He proposes to you at his favorite spot on the top floor of the city's tallest building, and you cannot say no. The two of you begin your journey on smooth waters, building a house together in the city of his choice, that was the color of his desire, in a neighborhood that he fell in love with. You made his dream come true by birthing 3 beautiful children, Brooks, Angela, and Max. Your top choices of names become fitting middle initials when you file papers at the doctor's office. They grow quickly and you are convinced to stop working to pursue a full-time career of motherhood, admitting to him it is your ultimate goal in life. He comes home everyday to a warm meal, a warm household, and, of course, a warm bed you lie in waiting for him each night. The next year you lie alone. He takes majority custody of his children in a monumental court decision, and you live alone, except for the weekends. Your days begin to fly past you like the concrete outside the subway, as your beautiful skin forms wrinkles, and as your beautiful hair begins to reflect your life in gray strands. At last, you are looking back over your life on your deathbed, with a somber attitude of regret coupled with an unquenchable desire to change what has happened. Look what you have become. Where did you change?

One moment of inaction, a decision to *not* trust yourself, had led you to a lifetime of regret. But I don't blame you. It was a small decision under a mere circumstance that had a drastic outcome. It is impossible to predict the consequences of decisions made in moments like the subway, so all I can offer you is advice. Leave your seat, and go talk to the man before it's too late. You'll thank me later.