



RedCliff

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My Name is "Alan Redfield"i just turned 29 years old a few week ago...there is nothing special about me ...that I assure you

I work as a junior Lawyer at a small firm in New york city...the cases I'm usually assign to are your usual traffic violation ...missteminer... tax fraud ...basically nothing as exciting as those shown on "TV shows" or "Movies"...

But the pay is not bad and living at the big apple has always been my dream since I was a little kid...

My looks are not that special either ...I have brown hair...dark eyes and a small scar above my left eye which I got after a stupid fall I had when I was a little kid ... I was lucky I didn't pop an eye or something ...

I'm a single mannot that it matters anymore ..

And Today is the first of August of 2018....i know that because of the huge electric clock in front of me ...

Oh didn't I mention where I was...sorry I apologize...I'm currently on a passenger train moving through the country side ...I can't believe I forgot to mention this already ...haha...well you can't blame me...I wouldn't have known the date if it wasn't on the clock...so yeah...I wouldn't expect much from me if I were you...at least now at the moment...

I could have taken a plane you know but sadly my ...uh...bank account isn't really blooming right now ...so I was stuck between taking a train or a bus ...and the train just felt more comfortable I suppose ...

So yeah...here am...an uninteresting man telling you his uninteresting life ...are you sure you want to keep reading ...?

I mean it's summer time ...you could do pretty much anything elsethis isn't like the 18th century where your choices of entertainment is just going to a bar ...or having a fist fight with a stranger you barely know ...

You don't have to die at 37 years old anymore from some weird disease that some doctor who can't even write his name yet

gives you some snake oil he bought from a shady sales man with a top hat...i watch too much Old West movies I know

In this day and age ...you Have your Netflix...Youtube...spotify and if you're broke enough there is always pirated sites to use...

Not that I ever used anyever

Well...uh...I suppose there was this one timebut that doesn't really count ...I mean i was just trying to impress a girl and I needed to find this old song no one ever listens to anymore ...it's her favorite...and well...the price for the original CD was just somewhere in the hundreds of Dollarsyou might think that's not that much ...but for a high school kid...that was like a fortune ...

Plus this wasn't any girlThis was "Stella"...

Beautiful Gorgeous "Stella Zinman"...it been 10 years since I last saw her ...but I can remember every detail about her ...I remember her smile when she pretends to like my guitar solo or when I lend her my favorite horror Classic movies ...man I was such a cringy loser in high school...everyone could see that but myself ...I bet even Stella thought so..

Oh....No ...Don't worry this is not the cheesy typical story about a high school loser who was in love with The school's queen in secretoh no it's nothing that stupid ...I mean it's true I had feelings to "Stella" at one point ...but I was not blind enough to pursue her ...I know this sounds pathetic to say ...but sometimes " Friendship" can be more meaningful than love ...sometimes knowing your place and not seeking something out of reach is just the right thing to do ...

"Not everyone can be a Hero" as my sleazy old man used to say..

So after High school was over ...I just packed up my things and left my old town for good...I practically just said goodbye to my mother and informed my part time manager and left ...there wasn't a big Farwell party or anything ...in fact I doubt anyone noticed I was gone until the toilettes of my old part time job were flooding or needed cleaning or something

Yep...we all want to think that we're somehow special or unique ...but in actually we really are not ...if I died right now ...the whole world would just keep movingfrom the 7 billions on this earth not even one percent would notice I was gone ...I' nothing but a particle of dust in this vast Universe

Maybe this why...i....should.... just ...uh....

But before I could finish my last thought ...a gentle tap on my shoulder brought me back from my deep state of thought ...

"Excuse me sir...hey...I hate to bother you ...but all cabins are full and I just can't seem to find an open seat ...do you mind if I just.....uh..."

" I'm sorry miss ...I specifically rented a one person Cabin ...I don't think I"

" please sir ...I just had a rough fight with my jerk of a boyfriend ...and I just need to get away for a second ...I won't be long ...I promise " the girl in front of said with pleading eyes...

I really rented this cabin specifically to be alone with myself ...but after her long pleading ...I guess it will be monstrous of me to refuse ...plus how can a straight single man refuse a request from such a beautiful girl ...

"ah...all right ...go ahead miss " I said as I gestured for her to seat on a nearby chair ..

" thank you...thank you so much sir ...I'm so sorry for being a bother " the girl said as she sat in the chair in front of me..

She was clearly shaken up from her alleged fight with her boyfriend ...the troubled girl had her brown hair tied up in a ponytail ...she wore a white tank top with a denim jacket and jeans ...definitely not what you would expect a young girl to wear these days ...

I wasn't good with telling people's age but she looked like she was in her mid ...maybe late 20's ...I could be wrong but she had that vibe...

Upon noticing my stare...the troubled girl turned her gaze toward me and said :

“ I’m Kristen “ the girl said as she reached her hands toward me hoping for a handshake...

“ Alan “ I said as I reached my hand as well

“ Nice to meet you Alan “ the girl added as she shook my hand with a smile on her face ..

“ likewise “ I replied with a light nod ...

“ so...uh....Alan...where are you heading ? ” the girl asked as she started to fix her make up using a small mirror ...she sure adapts quickly to people ...

“ South”

“ well Duh ...we’re all heading South ...I mean where are you going exactly ? “ the girl replied with a chuckle

“ I’m heading to Orson, Indiana “

“ No way ...that’s where we going ...me and that jerk are heading there ...then you’re must be going to see the “Exit” right ? “ the girl added in joy...

“ the what ? “ I replied not sure what she meant ..

“ The Exit dude....the new hot Band ...i thought you’re going to see their first Live performance too ...for some weird reason they chose Orson to be their first town to sing at...but hey after listening to their first Album...I don’t mind going to the end of earth just to hear them live ... “

The exit ...never heard of them...and what kind of Name is that ..i bet they are one of those Hipster bands that pretends to be all edgy and stuff ...

“No...uh...no I’m going there for that “ I replied as I shifted my gaze back to the country side ...

“ I see ...so you’re just going to visit Family or something ...I mean what else can it be in Orson ...am I right ? “ the girl added with a laugh ...she sure is an energetic person ..

“ Not exactly “ I replied as I kept fixating my stare at the country side ...I should probably say more if I don’t want her to

think I'm some introvert weirdo on a train...but I really couldn't find the energy for small talk ..

" you don't say much ...Do you Alan ? " the girl added with a puzzled voice ..

"....."

"oh come on ...cheer up dude ...what's wrong ? ...did your girlfriend dump you or something ...you can tell me you know ...my friend all say I'm the best listener ...hehe" the girl added leaning forward with a smile on her white porcelain face ...

" it's ...uh...nothing...I just have some stuff on my mind " I replied with a reassuring smile ...

" Okay dude ...Whatever you say...look I should probably go ...maybe get a bite to eat before we reach the station ...and hopefully by some miracle my idiot of a boyfriend would have came to his senses by now ...we can all hope right !! " The girl said as she stood up from her chair ...

" oh...I see...have a great concert then " I replied with a slight nod...

" thanks for everything Alansorry to be a bother and hey ...maybe we'll see each other again at Orson...you should definitely come to see the "Exit"...their music are to die for ...and Who knows maybe you'll meet a cute girl there... help you forget about that breakup and everything " the girl said with an energetic cheerful voice ...not sure why is she so confident that I just had a breakup ...

" oh...sure ...that sounds great "I replied with a smile

The Kristen girl turned around and opened the Cabin's door to leave but before she stepped out ...she turned around one last time and with a big smile on her face she said :

" Cheer up Alan ...Life is full of possibilities ...so never lose hope

After thatthe trouble girl named "Kristen" was gone ...

Yepthis "Kristen" girl was Definitely a 20 years old something girl ...only people in their twenties had this

mentality in their head ...something about Life being a playground of full possibilities ...or the whole "YOLO" movement that started couple years ago ..."let's have fun and not think about tomorrow"oh well...I've said my share of idiotic things too in the past ...

I took a long deep breath as I stared through the window ...

But There it was... Orson city Stationafter a 7 hour train ride ...I was finally here ...

I quickly stood up from my place and reached to pick up my blue backpack ...This simple cheap backpack was everything I brought with me ...not that I needed much anyway...

With the sounds of the train slowing down and an electronic voice confirming our Arrival...I pushed myself through the other passengers ...

In a matter of seconds ...the train doors opened widely and I pushed myself out ...

I stood there for a second ...watching my surroundings ...

It been 10 years since I last saw this station ...I could notice a few changes in the color and some signs here and there ...but it was the same old station overall ...simple and adequate ...the same as everything else in this town

After 10 years in New York Cityi was finally back Home ...

Chapter 1: The Blurry Faces of Memory Lane

As I kept going down the road with my hands firmly in my pockets...the sun was setting down at the old Orson town...

The only thought that was going in brain was how much this cursed Town didn't change ...to my right I could spot the old man "McLister" infamous barber shop ...closed three times by authorities for tax evasion ...the old crook McLister always claimed to be a descendant from a native American tribe ...thus giving him the right to not pay Taxes like the other British colonist as he called them ,unfortunately for him the IRS didn't share his crazy views ...

To my left I could see the crazy old lady "Sue" as everyone calls her ...she was sitting on her bench as always ...God's know what's she is staring at all day ...I remember believing she was an evil witch when I was younger ...I even spend a whole day watching her and hoping she had a magical broom or something ...man I was such a Harry potter nerd ...

As I kept moving down the road while comparing my old memories to the actual town...it didn't take me long to reach my old house address ..."1345 evergreen avenue "...

This was itthis was my house ...just like I remember it ...

A small wooden home with a white pain and a crooked brown fence...the front yard looked like it wasn't mowed for ages ...not like it ever was when I was living her ...the small window on the second floor was still broken too ...how long has it been since my father and his drunk friends broke it playing a stupid game of baseball in the front yardthe lazy old man didn't even bother to fix it even though it was his stupid mistake in the first place...

And why would he...after all it was only I living on that floor ...only I had to deal with the freezing cold coming through it on winter days ...only I had to suffer ...!!

As I tried to block the bad memories slipping into my mind ...the front door suddenly opened wide ...and a young boy probably in his teens walked outside ...

"uh...Hello there " I said not entirely sure what was the right greeting in this situation ...

The adolescent kid looked at me for a second ...then turned around and started running inside the house while yelling as loud as he could:

" The Asshole is back....the Asshole is back "

Following his words ...another softer voice yelled out inside the house:

" Language Christopheryou better watch that mouth of yours"

The second voice started coming closer and closer to the entrance ...until suddenly the door was opened once again and this time a short middle aged women with short hair opened the door :

“oh My God “ the woman yelled with one hand on her mouth ...

“ Hello mother ...you..uh...look well “ I replied with a smile on my face ...

“ Alan...it’s...it’s really you “ the woman came closer in shock and gave me in a big hug ...but due to our height difference she was actually just hugging my stomach ...

“ it’s good to see you too Mother “ I said as I tapped her back ..

“Oh...this is an amazing surprise...come in ...come in...what are you doing just standing there for “ mother said as she pushed me inside the house...then she quickly turned around and once again started yelling :

“John....John...come down here right nowJohn...John”

Following that ...I could hear loud footsteps walking down the stairs after that a tall man with a messy beard emerged from another room:

“ what did I say about Yelling in this house Joanna...for god sake the place is too small...just go to each other and talk without bothering the others ...some of us are trying to watch the game of the year here ...”

“ well ...I’m sorry John but I though you should come greet your son...you know... the son you haven’t seen in a decade “ my mother replied with a sarcastic tone ...

“ my...what ? “ the tall man said as he came closer to me gazing thoroughly at me ...I was at a fair distant from him...yet the smell of booze coming from his breath was intoxicating ...

“ Hello....it’s good to see you again father” I said as I covered my nose ...

“ oh...well who do we have heremister big shot City boy...fancy seeing you herei thought you’re out there

enjoying the good life with those Yankee cowards “ the old man said stuttering in his words...

“ now that’s no way to greet your son John...he came all the way here to see you “ my mother said with great anger on her face...

“yeah ...yeah...whatever ...I’m going back to watch the game now ...do not disturb me ...you hear “ the old man said as he turned around and clumsily went up the stairs ...

“ don’t listen to him Alan...your dad is just going through some stuffyou see...a new Mechanical shop just opened across the street ...and your dad has been losing clients to them but don’t worry as your grandfather use to say...”it’s all but a passing phase “ “ my mother said as she showed me to the living room...

“oh ...I see “ I said as I took a seat in the living room ...it been 10 years since I sat here ...but the whole thing looks exactly the same...

“Soooo...tell me Honey...how’s work ...how’s New York City ...you know your Aunt visited it once and she said it was fantastic ...she went to the “Empire Building “do you know it ?...well of course you know it ...do you live close to it ...are you seeing anyone ...oooh...don’t tell me you’re getting engagedthat’s why you returned home ...right ...right ...??” my mother said asking her usual million question ...it didn’t matter where I been... school ...or just to the store ...my mom would always ask her million questions and one to every detail...i guess he hasn’t changed at all ...

“ I’m sorry mother but I’m not engaged or anything ...that’s now why I’m here ...and work is ...well...good ...I’m still a junior attorney at my law firm though” I replied trying to mimic a smile...

“oooh...a junior attorney ...what a fancy name ...your dad once fixed this guy’s car ...he was wearing a suit and everything ...much like those you see on TV...maybe he was a lawyer too ...I should give you his number ...maybe you could work together or somethingoh...oh...I tried to call you many times

to see if you're coming to the Zinman daughter's wedding but you never returned my calls It was always that weird answering machine of yours " my mother added as she babbled on even morewait ...did she just say ...??"

" Zinman daughter's wedding ? are you talking about Stella ? "I replied with confusion written all over my face ...

" yeah ...you still remember her ? oh my godher engagement Party was so amazing ...She invited everyone ...even your grumpy dad had a blast there ...she is getting married to the Sherrif's sonwhat was his name again ?....Mike something something....i can't seem to remember "

My mother kept going on and on....but my mind was fixating on one thingStellaStella is getting married ...I don't know why I'm so shocked...she must be 29 years old as well....it's no surprise to find her married or engaged at this age...but I suppose somehow in my mind I just kept picturing her as the 17 years old I girl I always remember...

And hey before you go askingthis isn't those kind of Senarios where a guy returns home to find his old crush getting married then he rushes to her and somehow convince her cancel her marriage and fall in love with him instead...again this is real life ...not a ROM-COM movie ...

I have no intention in doing something this dramatic...I'm just surprised ...that's all....just surprised ...

"so what do you think honey ...are you coming too ? " my mother suddenly askedCrap I wasn't following what she was talking about ...

" come to what mother ? "

" the weddingwhat else...weren't you listening to me all this time ...you know that's not very politeyour little brother Christopher does this kind of stuff all the time ...but he is a teen so we kind of expect that of him ...but you're an Adult Alan ...so I expect better "

" I apologize motherthat was rude of me " I replied while mimicking a look of regret on my face ...

“ that’s okay....so are you coming or not ? ” my mother asked insisting on this question ...

“ I don’t think so mother ...I’m not staying here for long ...I just came to Orson to see you guys before I go to my final destination ” I replied with a distant look on my face ...

“oh...that’s too bad ...I’m sure Stella would have loved to see you again ...she is the one who asked me to invite you “

“ I would love to ...but I can’t ...please apologize to her on my behalf ” I added with a slight smile ...

“ as you like Honey...now let’s get that backpack off you and prepare a comfy bed for my boy ...you must be exhausted from your trip all the way heretomorrow I’ll like to hear all about your life in New York Cityoh....we missed you so much Honey ” my mother said as she took off my backpack and started cleaning the nearby room ...

I mean the old man seems to be occupying my old room upstairs ...I bet it didn’t take him one hour to turn that whole thing in to his home studio or his recreation space ...lazy old goon ...

The time was reaching 10 pm....it wasn’t that late especially since we’re in summer....but after that long trip here and all the bad memories that surfaced from seeing this cursed town againmy body and mind was reaching its limits ...

If everything goes right ...I should be out of this cursed town by tomorrow eveningyeah there was one last thing for me to do before I move on ...

one last person ...

Chapter 2 : My Closing Argument

Waking up on this house again felt pretty weirdno loud traffic noises in the distance ...not even the distinctive sound of your apartment neighbors arguing with each other in the hallway ...

Waking up here felt peaceful and quiet ...i guess this is the difference between a southern town and a busy city in the east coast ...

The peace and quiet could also be due to the fact I woke up at 6 am ...god knows that lazy old man won't wake up until noon the same thing for my good for nothing brother Christopher ...yep little bro is going right in to the steps of his old man ...

My mother on the other hand will be awake any second now ...

So I should definitely go before she does ...I'll come back later to say goodbye before I definitively leave this shit hole ...

With these last thoughts on my mindi quickly washed my face and put on some fresh clothes and left ...

It was barely past 6 am but since this was summer ...the outside were pretty much illuminated by the early sun ...

I kept moving down the road watching shopkeepers getting ready to open up ...until I finally reached my destination ...

I stopped on my place for a second and I lifted my head upwardthe sign was still the same ...i mean she was always a fan of tradition and pretty much anything old and dusty ..."Old but Gold" was her favorite "go to phrase" ...

With these warm memories surfacing back from the dept of my memory box ...I couldn't help but smile a bit as entered the dinerthe "Gold Times " Diner ...as the sign always read ...

Inside I could spot a few customers drinking their morning coffee or biting on their favorite beagle ...surprisingly they were the same clients I always seen 10 years ago ...

I came closer to the counter ...and after clearing my throat a bit I called out to the waitress with a loud voice:

" One cup of tea....please "

My sound echoes in the quiet diner ...the waitress quickly turned around and started heading toward me :

" I'm sorry sirbut we don't serve Tea here ...we never will because"

“ because Coffee is the true American Drink “ I smiled as i finished what she was going to say...

“huh ?.....you’reuh....no it can’ be” The waitress said as she looked at me in shock...

“ you look as gorgeous as everStella Zinman” I replied with a sincere smile on my face ...

“ oh my God Alanit really is you ...” Stella added with the same shocked look on her face ...it seems this is the standard response I been getting lately ...

“ yep...in his flesh and blood...or is it blood and flesh ...I could never get this straight ...” but before I could finish my lame joke ...all the Sudden Stella dropped her tray on the counter ...came closer and gave me a big tight hugyep ...with no height difference between us this is exactly what a real hug should be...

I’m no expert on hugs ...but I felt as if this was getting a bit longer than it should be ...I didn’t really mind actually...but her beautiful blond hair was tickling my nose and I really don’t want to be sneezing all over her silky coconut perfumed hair ...

So I gently pushed my face away from her as I kept my hands on her shoulders and said :

“I Missed you too ...Stella “

Noticing the odd looks the elderly customers were giving us..Stella quickly regained control of herself and took the seat on my sideand with her bright beautiful smile she said :

“ I have sooo many questions to ask you Alan...I just can’t believe you’re herei never though you ever come back “

“ me neither Stella ...but here am “I replied with a smile on my face..

“ yep there you are “ Stella said as she stared at my eyes ...

I’ll be honest here ...I never regretted leaving Orson and moving to New York ...that was probably the easiest choice in my life ...but as Stella kept staring at me with her beautiful

blue eyes and her innocent pure smilei couldn't help but feel a bit of regret ...no matter what New York had...Orson will always have the one think no other town or city could ever dream of procuringthey will never have " Stella "...

" so" I said...

" so..." Stella as we kept looking at each other ..

" my...uh...mother told me about the Wedding ..." I said

" the weeding ?...oh right the Weeding ...yeah...I'm engaged to Mike ...you remember Mike righthe is the Sheriff's son "

Oh..i remember him all right"Mike Jones "...the "Cool" guy...or at least that we thought about himself ...he was a nothing but a moron who loved to steal his father's pistol just to show it to his friend and brag about his father all the time ...of course that was in elementary school ...by the time he hit puberty he would just use his father's position to do whatever he liked....he must have thought he was invincible just because his father was a cop ...and as much as I hate to admit that ...that was....kind of true ...!

" yeah of course I remember himgood guy ...congratulation to both of you " I replied hoping my smile wasn't that transparent ...

" thank youi'm really glad you're home Alangod knows i been bugging your mom day and night to get you to attend the weeding...but she always says she can't reach you ...you know parents ...always bad with new technology I suppose....oh... look at me ...I'm talking your ears off and you just came here for some breakfast ...but You know we usually refuse to serve Tea....but I won't tell nobody if you don't " (wink)

And so our conversation continuedwe stayed there for hours talking and reminiscing about the past ...I could barely feel time passing by ...at what one point during the day I felt I was distracting her from her work ...so I decided to put on a uniform and just help out around the Dineryep a junior lawyer serving tables ...and to be honest it brought me more joy than that old fancy job ever did ...

And so...in what felt but a few hours ...we had reached closing time ...

“thank you so much Alan ...we were so understaffed these last couple days...you practically saved us “ Stella said as she closed down the diner ...

“I’m just glad to see the old diner doing so good in this rough Economy ...plus it was very fun to work together like old times” I replied as I stretched my body ...

“yeah it really was ...I really wish you haven’t disappeared to New York all the sudden...i’m still mad at you you know “ Stella added as she pouted

“ mad at me ? why ? just because I left “

“ no ...not just that ...you didn’t even bother to say goodbye ...I mean I had to hear the whole thing from your mother the next morning ...you could have at least sent me a text or something “ Stella said as she pointed her tiny index at me ...

Well to be honest ...I went to her home to say “goodbye” ...but her mother told me she went to some party with “Rusty” ...her boyfriend at the timei’m not sure why...but I just figured I shouldn’t disturb her with the news of me leaving when she is enjoying her high school graduation with her friends and boyfriend ...

“I’m sorry...I was in a kind of a hurry that day ...I apologize “ there was no point in telling her the truth ...

“ a sorry won’t cut it this time Mister “Redfield”the only way I could ever consider forgiving you is if you agree to come to my weeding next week “ Stella added with a sly look on her face ...

“your weeding ? so it’s next week huh ? “ I replied as I avoided looking at her in the eyes ...

“ yeah...didn’t your mom tell you ...anyway you have to be thereYour my “made of honor “

“ huh ?”made of honor”but shouldn’t that be a girl ...I’m pretty sure a “made of honor “ is always a girl “ I replied in confusion ..

“ oh you’re thinking about the old ages Alan...we’re in 2018...gender equality is the new thing ...any person can be a bride’s “made of honor “....so I want to hear no complain from youif you don’t do that for me I’ll never forgive you” Stella replied as she tried to mimic an angry starebut shaming me to do things were the oldest trick in the book of Stella sly techniques

“all right then...i won’t miss this chance for the world “ I replied with a smile..

“ really ? “ Stela quickly replied as she hugged once again ...this girl sure loves hugs

As we parted ways ...Stella kept waving goodbye until she was out of my sight ...I probably was smiling like an idiots the whole time too ...

Her “made of honor”...the irony to this is just immeasurable ...

Yeah...nothing better than being the bride’s mate for the girl you always dreamed of marryingthere is no doubt in my heart that what I felt for Stella is more than just “friendship”...i knew how I felt toward her the moment I laid my eyes on her on 3rd grade ...I knew deep down that someday I’ll marry this girl and love her for as long both of us lived ...

So why am letting her marry another person you say ?

Why am not just stopping her and confessing my love in a Hollywood matter ?

You want to know the reason ? you want to know why I lied about attending her weeding next timewhy I didn’t just grab her and kiss her right on the spot ?

The answer to all these questionsis the same answer to why I came here to Orson 10 years after I left it for good

Chapter 3 : Under a Bright Sky

The hour was closing to 10 pm in the evening ...I was once again at my old train station ...wearing my old backpack ...but this time I wasn't going home ...no I was going the other way ...

After saying goodbye to my mother and promising her that I'll be back for next charismas ...she finally stopped pressuring me to say and I was on my way to my ride

The next train should be in 5 minutes or so ...so I was just sitting on wooden bench looking up at the beautiful country road stars...it's true what they say ...the country sky has no equal ...I could even spot mars ...oh yeah I remember reading that Mars was extremely close to earth today ...

As I kept ogling as the stars above ...all the sudden a weird sound caught my attention ...

Huh ? am imagining things now ?

I turned around trying to locate the source of this sound ...and there at the end of the platform I could see a woman sitting with her head between her legs and crying and sobbing like a drowning cat ...I'm not trying to be insensitive but that was exactly how she sounded ...

Feeling a bit horrible for making fun of her ...I stood up from my bench and walked closer to the sobbing woman while calling to her :

" are you okay Miss....is something wrong ? "

" huh ...miss...miss....are you all right ? "

When all the sudden the crying girl lifted her head and yelled :

" leave me the fuck alone ...can't a girl cry in peace in this backward town "

As the light shined at her face ...I could notice her mascara running and her lipstick all smudgy ...but there was no doubt in mind... it was her....it was ...

“ Kristen ...is that you ? ” I replied with a surprised look on my face ...

“ Alan ?...you’re Alan from the train ride ” Kristen said as she wiped her tears away ...

“ what’s wrong Kristen ? what are you doing here crying ? is everything all right ” I added as I came closer

“ yeah...everything is all right ...I just love to cry sometimes for no reasonyou know as a fun hobby ”

“ really ? ” I replied confused ...

“ of course not you fucking idiot ...I’m definitely not all right ...even a blind person can see I’m not ” Kristen yelled back at me ...so much for the energetic happy girl image I had of her

“I’m sorry I was just trying to help ” I replied as I took a step back...

“ I know ...I know ...I’m sorry I just had a rough night” Kristen added as she tried to stand on her feet

But fearing she might fall off the platform I decided to help her up ...

“ what happened ?...i thought you’ll be at that concert thing of that band with the weird name ” I added

“ you mean “Exit ”yeah I was there all right ...I was having a blast until I saw that sleazy Asshole kissing some Goth chick with an earring in her noseright fucking in front of me ...” Kristen added as she kicked a stone in front of her ...she really was pissed ...

“I’m...I’m sorry to hear thattruly” I replied trying to think of more helpful words than sorry ...

“ it’s not your fault Alan ...it’s not even that Asshole’s fault ...it’s all my faultfucking “Kristen Hobss”...the brilliant girl who always chooses the most unfaithful snakes she could find ...and then date them ...yep...a Fucking Genius...step away Albert Einstein ...you get shit over me ” Kristen yelled as she

clined her fists ...she even looked sober too ...so you can't even write it off as a drunken speech ...

After yelling a bit more ...Kristen finally calmed down and her yelling and anger turned in to unstoppable crying ...

Not knowing how to act in these kind of situation I just came closer and started rubbing her back ...I mean this is what my mother used to do when I was upset as a kid ...

When all the sudden ...before I could even realize it...Kristen leaned her head at my chest as she kept crying ...not knowing what to do with my hands ...I just continued to rub her back like a little baby ...

As the stars illuminated from above ...there I was on the empty platform ...holding a crying girl between my arms ...holding who I thought was the embodiment of Youth and Happiness ...there she was a day after I met her ...sobbing like a little kid who just found out that Santa isn't real ...

I don't know how long we been standing there ...but no train had arrived ...there was nothing and no one there but the two of us ...

Sometime later ...Kristen wiped her tears away ...I'm not sure if she stopped feeling sad or she just ran of tears to shed ...but she stood up in front of me with her eyes puffed up and red she said :

" I'm sorry...i...i didn't mean to ...uh..."

" it's okay...I understand " I replied as I looked down ...my black shirt had a big stain from her tears ...I just pray to go it's not snot ...

As she kept wiping her tears away ...Kristen looked around for a second and then said :

" what were you doing here anyway Alan "

" actually I was waiting for the 10 pm train ...but looks like it's running late " I replied as I looked at the distance ..

“ huh ? haven’t you read the sign in front of the station ...all train are off tonight ...there is some sort of an accident on the tracks few miles up ahead ” Kristen added as she looked me in the eyes ...

“ what ? really ?...” I replied in frustrationjust my luck ...the only time I decide to travel ...this kind of stuff happens ...

As I kept looking down in frustration ...all the sudden I felt a soft sensation in my right handi quickly turned my head to notice another smaller hand grabbing tightly to my hand ...and it wasn’t any hand ...it was Kristen’s ..

“ Come Alan ...I’ll give you a ride back to New York”

Chapter 4 : The Blessing of Ignorance

The electronic clock in this beat down truck was showing Midnight ...we were officially on a new day ...as I sat there on the passenger seat ...there was one question I couldn’t stop myself from asking the beautiful brown hair girl sitting on the driver’s seat next to me ...

“ who’s car is this exactly? ”i mean if it was her ...they why take a train here when she had a car in the first place...

“ would you believe me if I said it was mine ? ” Kristen said with a slight smile on her face ..

“ no...not really ” I replied instantly ...

“ then maybe you should be asking me some other questions instead ” Kristen said with an odd calm voice ..

Well it doesn’t really matter if she stole the whole thing or not ...not to me ...not anymore ...

“ so Mister Alan ...do you always give intimate back rubbing to girls you barely knowor am I just that special ” Kristen added with a smile

“ uh...I didn’t mean to do it in a creepy way ...I just didn’t know what else ...uh....”

“ relax dude...I’m not angry ...in fact I’m giving you this free 12 hours ride to New York city as a thanks for helping with that little Nervous breakdown...it also helps that I was going back to New York in the first place ...hehe “ Kristen said followed by a small chuckle

“ I’m actually not going to New York exactly “ I replied as I stared out of the window

“ huh ? what do you mean ? I thought you’re a New Yorker “ Kristen replied confused as she turned her gaze toward me ..

“ yeah am....i just have one last stop to visit before I go back”

“ really ? at this hour ...are you going to a bar...or are you one of those Super spies that help young girls in order to cover their tracks ...I mean you do give the vibe of danger....” Special Agent “ Alan” ...no last name ...last names are for communists “ Kristen added barely being able to contain her laugh..

“ no ...I’m just going to meet some buddies of mine on a small mountain a few miles from here ...I promised them to go camping together before I leave to New York “ I replied with my eyes still fixating outside ...

“ Camping on a mountain huh ? I never pictured you as the camping type...you have the air of an office worker or a boring lawyer ...you know ...a suit job “ Kristen said with a calm voice..

“don’t judge a book by the cover Kristen Hobbs “ I replied with a big smile on my face ...

Kristen looked back at me for a second ...then turned her gaze at the road...

After this ...a long silence filled the car ...it almost felt a bit awkward ...when all the suddenwith a cold emotionless voice ...Kristen said :

“ You won’t believe this Alan...but I’m actually a Teacher in New Yorkyep I just started teaching a few years ago “

A teacher ? really ? ...it's really hard to see her as a serious teacher in a classroom...maybe a music or an Art teacher perhaps ..

“oh really ? what do you teach ? “ I said out of curiosity ...

“ I teach at a High School in Manhattan ...I was hoping they'll let me teach History ...but I'm stuck teaching some boring Geography...actually one of the reasons I came here was to inspect this cool Site few miles from here that the school considers for a school trip”Kristen added as she turned her gaze at me once again

“ oh I see...that's cool...so there is more to you than meets the eye” I replied with a calm voice ...

“ yeah ...we'll be passing the Site in a few minutes ...it's a Legendary Cliff ...it said to have been the site to the most brutal battle between the Native American and British Colonists...they call it”The Red Cliff”... scary stuff ...don't you think ? “Kristen added with the same empty cold voice of before...

“ Yes truly Fasinating ...maybe I'll convince the guys to visit it before we leave to New York” I replied ...

“ Tell me Alan ...why would a group of Campers ...meet at the camp site instead of going there together ...and while you're at it ...explain to me why they 'll meet at midnight ...” Kristen added with a suspicious all over her voice ...

“ What are you saying ?” I added trying to act as calm as possible...

“I'm saying why are you going the “Red Cliff” all alone at midnight “Kristen replied as she turned off the radio ...

“I told you...I'm not going there ...I'm heading to a nearby mountain to camp with some high school friends “ I replied

“ I told you Alani work as a Geography Teacher and I came here to investigate the Red cliff for a possible school trip location ...that and attending the first live show by “Exit”...I

can tell you will all certaintythere is Absolutely no mountains around for at least a hundred Miles ...so I ask you again... why are you going to the “ Red cliff ” alone at mid night “ Kristen Added with confident words ...it almost felt as if she shifted in to a total different person

“...” I went quiet after thati couldn't think of anything else to say to her ...

“ you can stay quiet all you want ...but if you don't tell me the truth I'm not going to stop until we reach “New York City”...so either you start talking or you can say goodbye to those fictional camping buddies you have “ Kristen added as she added more speed to the truck

After a brief silence ...I decided there was no other choice...I knew Kristen for merely a few days but I can tell this is one stubborn meddling woman ...so after a deep breath I opened my mouth and said :

“ if I tell you the truth...do you promise not to intervene ...not to meddle in my personal business ...I'll only tell you if you promise that “ I said as I turned my face toward her ...

It didn't take Kristen long before she smiled and said :

“ I promise Alan “

“ Okay...I'll like to remind you again that you promised and I take promises extremely seriously “

“ yeah ...yeah...just get to it Alan...we're almost at the Cliff” Kristen said unaware of the story that was going her way ...

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Writer's Note :

What's coming next is an important moment ...for better understanding of the story's climax ...

It is recommended you read it while listening to this song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7odYSkYKBLw&list=PL9VcABGCG8oZl5LkvUCui3SLs7uTRjuLo&index=6>

“My full name is “ Alan Redfield “...i’m a junior lawyer at a small firm in Brooklyni mainly handle small cases such as tax fraud ...public urination...that kind of crap ...but a few months a go ...I was assigned to kind of a major casea murder ...this was the first big case I ever worked on as a part of the team...needless to say it consumed all of my time ...day and night ...this case was the only thing on my mind ...at around this period I started having these weird headaches and sometimes my vision will get kind of blurry ...but nothing too serious ...the whole team gave their 100 percent and so did I ...and in a surprising turn of events ...we actually wonthe evidence against our client seemed condemning but that’s only because they were planted by a crooked cop ...so not only did we save an innocent man ...we also exposed a dirty cop ...”

Kristen remained silent as I kept explaining the story ...

“after we won ...the senior partners took the whole team to a fancy restaurant on the upper east side and we just had a big celebrationthis was the happiest moment of my adult life but it was the first time I fell unconscious ...fearing I had Alcohol poisoning or something ...my colleagues rushed me to the hospital ...there they took some test ...and the good news was I had no Alcohol poisoning ...yaay...the bad news they found something else at the seize of a ping pong in my Cerebral IRM”

“it was a Tumor “

As soon as I said that all the sudden ...Kristen pulled the breaks as fast as she could ...the car swirled left and right before it finally reached a complete stop

“ What ?.....What are you Talking about ? “” Kristen yelled as loud as she could ..

“ I have Cancer....Kristen “ I said as I turned my gaze at her ...

“ Cancer?....” Kristen barely being able to talk ...

“ at first I thought ...hey a lot of people have Cancer ...I’m still pretty young...so they could just take it off and everything will be all right...but sadly doctors told me the Cancer in my brain was just a secondary Tumor ...the real Tumor was in my lungs

and it had spread everywhere in my body ...it was already too late to do anything “ I added with a calm voice ..

After a brief silent ...I could notice Kristen’s hands shake as they held the steering wheel...she then turned her gaze toward me and with a truly petrified face she asked :

“ How Long? “

“ 3 monthsmaybe more ...maybe less...they are not exactly sure but they all agree I won’t be present this Christmas “ I added as I turned my gaze away from the petrified girl ..

Seconds after ...Kristen opened her Car’s door and walked outside on the freeway as she locked her hands behind her head

Following in her steps ...I decided to exit the truck and follow herafter all the story isn’t over yet ...

When all the sudden she turned around ... the moon light shining at her face ...I could see the tears drifting down once again ...she is really going to hurt her body by crying so much in one night

“Why ?...Why did you come here for ? tell me !!!” Kristen said trying to stop her tears but no avail

“ in a few months ...I’ll barely be able to leave my bedfew months after that ...I’ll be gone ...even if I live for 6 months ...a year ...I’m nothing but a dead man walkingso I came here ...I came here seeking “Peace “ I replied as I kept looking at the crying girl in front of me ...

“ what do you mean ...seeking “peace ?” Kristen asked as she came closer ...

“after sitting in my apartment surrounded by all my diplomats ...surrounded by all the accomplishment I dreamed of having one day and drinking myself to oblivion ...I finally realized the meaning of everything ...the meaning of my life ...the meaning of every choice I made so far ...so I decided to go home one last timevisit the 2 only people who genuinely cared for me....my mother and old friend ...after giving them a proper good bye ...I

would come here ...to the famous “ Red Cliff “ I said as I stared at the high cliff in front of me

“after I’ve done everything I shouldi would come here and end my life with my own hands ...decide my own destinyif I can’t stop myself from dying ...I’ll at least choose the way I want to go “ I added as I felt the wind coming from the cliff on my face..

“i....i...I don’t understand” Kristen suddenly yelled

“ you wanted to know the truth ...You could have just left me here and went on your name thinking I’m just meeting some camping buddies ...but you refused Kristen ...and now you know ...I’m sorry if I upset youbut you left me no choice “ I said as I faced Kristen ...

At this moment we were both standing in front of the high Cliff ...there were many danger signs and barriers ...but anyone could easily climb over them with no problem ...

“ You....You shouldn’t do that Alan ...this is wrong ...this is so wrong “ Kristen yelled as she grabbed me from my arm ...

“ it’s not Kristen...it’s really not ...I ‘ve thought about this very well “ I replied with a calm voice ...

“ what about the people who care for you ?....what about your mom...what about that friend you talked about” Kristen yelled with Anger ...

“ they will be devastated either way Kristen...I’m not some crazy desperate suicidal person ...I’m already dead ...I was dead the moment I was diagnosed ...it’s only a matter of time “I said as I stared at the beautiful stairs in the horizon ...

“ thenWhat about....Me ? “ Kristen said as she looked down in despair ...

“ what about You Kristen ?....i understand that seeing someone kill himself is unpleasant to any human being ...but we only know each other for a few daysmy death will have no major consequences on your life besides some temporary emotional

trauma ...” I replied as I patted Kristen back ...the same way I did before ...

“No....No....this can’t be happening ...I won’t let you do this Alan ...suicide is wrong ...no matter the reason “ Kristen said but her voice was less stronger than before ...I can feel her giving up and accepting reality little by little ...

“ you promised Kristen ...remember ? you gave me your word “

“ No....No....No....you can’t kill yourself ...because ...becausei...I Love you “ Kristen yelled once again but her voice was even lower this time

“ I know you think you mean well by this...but you should never lie about something like thatyou can’t love me Kristen ...we just met a few days ago....remember ? “ I replied with a big smile on my face ...

But the moment I said that ...Kristen’s energy had finally been drained out of her body and she fell on the ground hugging her knees ...the situation must have exhausted all her mental power ...

I came closer to the exhausted girl and I sat next to her...I knew it was my fault for telling her such heavy stuff all the sudden ...and as much as I tried to blame her for forcing me to talk about them...there was a selfish part of me who really wanted to tell someone ...to tell someone this pain ...this suffering I been hiding deep within my heart...I wanted someone to share this burden with me ...to hear my story ...to have my existence ...my legacy... survive in that person’s memory and thoughts forever...I’m sorry Kristen...

As I said that to myself ...I came closer to her and putted my arms around her ...I don’t care if we have to stay here all night ...I wasn’t going to leave her at this state all aloneso I’ll wait ...I’ll wait until she recuperates ...I’ll wait until she’s safe and sound ...I’ll wait as long as it takes

Final Chapter : Exit

I don't know what time is it ...there isn't any clock in my sight and I haven't brought my phone because I wanted to be free...if not for just one day in my miserable life

After being shook up for a while ...Kristen slowly started to adapt if you like to call it that ...little by little she started talking to me ...what started as few words mingled with tears turned in to long deep conversations

Before I knew it ...we were telling each other stories of our past and childhood...nothing special really...just any story we could think off ...the weather got a bit cold ...so I went to the truck and found a small blanket we both used together to stay warm as we sat on the top of the "Red Cliff" gazing at the stars ...

" tell me Alanhave you ever been in love ? "Kristen suddenly asked ...

" well....i guess I did ...but it was a one way thing ...so I'm not sure if that counts....why the sudden question ? " I replied..

" it's that old friend isn't she ...the one you mentioned before right ? " Kristen said as she looked down ...

" yeah ...Stella....i loved her since I first met her in grade school...when were just little kids I suppose " I said ...

" ooooh ...childhood love ...very poetic mister Redfield too bad she stuck you in the "Friendzone "Kristen said as she let out a small chuckle ...

" well ..here is more comedy material for you ...she s getting married next week and she asked me to be her "Made of honor" I replied with a small smile on my face ..

"you're kidding right"Made of honor " ?....isn't that"

" yeah ...it's a woman thing ...the female version of being a best man ...but she insisted ...saying that we're in a new age ...and something about gender equality ...I don't know " I replied as I turned my face toward Kristen

“Haha....man this this friend of yours is brutal...not only didn't she see your feelings toward her ...she even wanted you to be her “Made of Honor” in her own wedding to another man...talk about a double friend zone situation “ Kristen said as she turned her face toward me as well ...

“ she didn't do it on purpose i'm sure ...maybe I'm just that good of an actor ...that no one could tell my feelingxthe master of acting “ Alan Redfield “ at your service I replied with a smile on my face....

“oohh...Master actor you say ...can you read my feelings right now....Master actor “ Alan Redfield “” Kristen asked with a smile ...

I couldn't tell if it was due to her intense crying episode or something else ...but I could see a tint of red in Kristen's cheeks as she said that ...

“Emmmm....you'rehuh....Hungry “ I replied ...

“ try again ...master actor “ Redfield “ Kristen said as she came closer ..

“ahhh....sleepy maybe ...all that crying would make any person sleepy for sure “

“nope....false answeryou fail again master actor “ Kristen said as she came even Closer ...

“i...i...I don't know “ I replied unable to shift my gaze away from her stunning smile ..

“ do you want to know how I feel right now ...Alan Redfield “ Kristen said with a shy smile on her face

“uh....yes...I think do “ I replied ...

I didn't need to check the time ...because at the moment I said those words.... a ray of light erupted in the distance sending it's warm sunshine on our cold faces ...after we stared at the sun rise for a few seconds ...our faces were once again facing each other...

Kristen smiled once again ...it was the same smile I saw many times already ...but for some reason ...this last smile one felt strange ...I've experience many moments and feelings in this journey ...from joy to utter pain ...and now I'm sitting here on the edge of " Red Cliff" ...facing a brown hair girl wearing a denim jacket and jeans in what could be my last hours on this earth...but somehow ...someway ...I feel almost glad ...almost satisfiedi feet almost at peace ...and when I thought these feeling couldn't get any stronger "Kristen Hobbs" the geography teacher slash "Exit" super fan dropped the final notes to this tale...Kristen came closer to me and said :

" Close Your Eyes....i'll Show you "

THE END

Written by : L.fouzi

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