

Down Heel

The disturbing sound of my alarm clock is waking me up at 8.30. Today, the 20th August 1962, is the most important day of my life. My dream of meeting and interviewing the most talented and charming singer has come true. Elvis Presley is my inspiration, my diamond geezer and my god of music.

I get out of the bed and take a hot shower, put on my red Yves Saint Laurent dress and my make-up. For today I choose to wear my brown teased wig and my red rockabilly high heels. One look at my watch tells me that I have to hurry and one glance at my reflexion in the mirror shows how extremely well I'm dressed. I grab my black clutch and leave my house hurriedly.

Exactly at 9.30 I'm waiting nervously in the lobby of the hotel ready to meet him. A young skinny blonde woman named Charlet takes me to room 365. As I'm allowed to enter I am completely speechless. There he is. Not realising that I'm speechless, he reaches out his hand to greet me. I clasp it absend-mindedly. We take a seat on the deep black couch and start the interview.

One hour later I leave the hotel but not with that exaggerated happy smile I had before. My perfect image of him was destroyed within minutes. How could I only think he would not be like all the others? He's such an arrogant moron and thinks he's something better.

Disappointed I enter the subway, take a seat and think about the frustrating interview. As my feet are hurting I take off my shoes. After some time I note that a young man opposite me is checking me out. Well of course that wouldn't be bad but this man looks like a typical rapist. He has greasy black hair and wears holey clothes. Suddenly he stands up, walks straight up to me und sits down right beside me. Oh God, what does he want? I'm afraid and I feel helpless. He starts to touch my arms and as I realise that the train has stopped I get out as quickly as I can. I look over my shoulder and see happily that he didn't follow me. But wait! Shit, I forgot my high heels. How bad can one day become?

Exhausted, barefoot and completely disgusted by men I enter my flat. I lost my idol, my pride and my favourite high heels. Can life be any worse?

Handful of Weirdness

It was a beautiful fall Friday evening and I was standing in front of the mall main entrance. My parents had brought me by car but were not able to pick me up, so I had to go with the underground later.

While I was waiting for my friends I was watching all the different people walking past me. Where were they going to? Who were they meeting? What were they thinking about? What had they been through? I often look at people, especially older people, and ask myself these questions. They must have been through so much and we do not see it. Sometimes I hate the other kids walking around in the yard in school. Walking around, only caring about themselves, oblivious to the rest of the world and not knowing how lucky they are.

I saw Jessica and Gertrude getting out of a car, talking, then they caught sight of me, waved and walked over. I was glad to see them. It had been a while since the last time we had seen each other. We were all busy with learning for school at that time.

In the mall we discussed the latest trends, talked about the celebrity styles we liked and debated which stores were on our shopping tour. Well, the other two did and I would comment here and there. I honestly have never been into fashion that much but my friends were, so it was okay for me, too.

We were almost through with our shopping tour, after fifteen different stores, and went into the last one. I was really tired and had already bought everything so I just looked around with not much interest. Eventually I just stood there next to a dummy wearing a hat, some pants and a shirt that was not matching in my opinion. After a while of standing around I started to get really dizzy and black spots started to appear before my eyes. Then everything went black and I passed out. I had this weird dream about me looking into my bag and seeing a hand. Not a real one, one of a puppet. I would just look into this bag and stare at the hand – nothing else.

When I woke up I was lying in a pile of extremities. I must have collapsed into the puppet I had been standing next to. My two friends were standing in front of me with shocked faces. Jessica ran right up to me and asked if everything was alright. I just nodded. This was really weird, especially the dream. Nothing like that had ever happened to me before. The first thing I did was looking into my bag. But I saw nothing unusual just the stuff I was always carrying around with me, no hand. They both helped me up and we went home.

In the underground I tried to recall what had happened and what the hand could mean but it just did not make any sense. The two had just got off after they had made sure that I was okay and I was sitting almost alone in the wagon. Some old man was sitting right on the other side in some seat in a corner. Next stop I would have to get out, so I stood up, put on my jacket and took

my bag. The doors opened, I stepped out and right before I was out of the train I heard something heavy falling on the train's floor behind me. Damn! I must have lost something. Before I could turn, the doors closed on me and horrified I saw through the window what was lying on the floor ...

I Can Make You a Man

Oh no! Where is it? Is it possible that I ...? No I haven't lost the gun, have I? Maybe ... it is still in the train ... But the heavy crowd made it impossible for Brad to get back to the train on time. When he arrived at the platform, the doors had already closed and the subway was ready to depart. He had to get into the wagon. Brad was still in his thoughts when the tube departed. At first slowly but moving faster with every second that felt like minutes to him. When the tube had finally left, only the diabolic grimace of the red rear lights made Brad remember his loss.

Noticing that the other people at the platform stared at him, he plodded away into the crowd patiently waiting for the next train to arrive. What the hell should I do now? No... My whole plan is a disaster now. I just wanted to spend a nice evening with Janet at the theatre and surprise her, but now... Right now, my surprise is making a little underground-trip. Janet will be pretty sad when she sees me like that. I have ruined everything ... Climbing the stairs to the surface felt like hours to him. While Brad was walking towards Janet the evening grew darker and darker as did his mood.

But then suddenly he saw his gun again. In the hands of a little child walking side by side with what appeared to be his mother. It didn't take Brad a second to react. He ran after the child but both mother and son disappeared into a huge apartment house. He started ringing every bell but nobody answered. No that can't be true! Crushed, Brad turned away and started to make his long frustrating way to Janet who was already eagerly awaiting him when he finally arrived at the theatre.

"Janet my dear! Have you been waiting for long?" She was glaring at him without saying a word. "I know I'm late but there is an explanation ..." Janet took him by the arm and dragged him to his chair. "I know you, Brad. That's why I have organised a set of water pistols myself." Smilingly, she gave him a filled water pistol. "And now, let the show begin."

(Not) Like Every Day

Argh!!! This annoying rattling monster terrorizes me again! – Snooze. Every morning the same. He is just doing his job but one night I will stand up creep up to him and scare him so he ... Argh!!! Got me again! Turn off. Light on. Twenty past seven. Definitely time to stand up. Wednesday. A normal day at work. Normal and boring. Let me forecast the day for you. I'll go to the bathroom. Like every morning. Meet Mrs. Hudson with her dog in the stairwell. Buy my newspaper from Greg at the corner and get my cappucino venti from Starbucks. Like every morning. I'll drive the stale and smelly tube to my boring job in the office and work there for eight ours. Like every day. Thrilling; isn't it? But I would bet 50 pounds that it will happen exactly this way. Deal?

Washed my face, brushed my teeth, and done my hair. Check. I'm opening the door and ... Woaah!!! Frightend to death! Just Simon. Like every morning. Has known me for seven years and still barks at me every time. Mrs. Hudson apologizes for Simon effusively. I'm going down and out. Good morning you dreary rainy London. I hate this weather here but I know I could never leave this town. A love-hate relationship of the finest. Greg sees me from far away and starts to weave. I like the zest of this old man. Stands there every day in the cold and sells his newspaper but is nice to everybody and we make some jokes about the "nice" weather here. I'm giving him some extra change. I'm asking him if we can see us again, the way you would ask after a first date and he replies with an exaggerated English accent and a tiny wink: "I'd be very pleased, Mister." Old but gold. Every morning. But now I'm walking with a smile on a face. He's a great guy.

I want to open the door to the Starbucks. But what's this?! Screams and many excited people are streaming out of the tube station. Many are in big panic. Some just stand there and do not know what to do. Just like me. Isolated screams: "A monster!" – "Four meters long" – "The ... bite ... nearly" – "Sizzled" – "Split tongue". Now the police arrives. And a car of the zoo. What the hell is happening here? The police seals off the entrances. A woman screams hysterically at an officer. "My son is still down there! Alone with the beast!" The officer and another one are trying to calm her down. But they are just affirming her that the child must be near them and that he will be found.

I have to do something. I feel it deep inside. It's my profession. This tube entrance is the exit of my boring so called "life". This is my time to be a hero. There are only two officers at this entrance and both are busy to calm down the mother. I'm starting to run, shouting "I'll find him"

and jumping over the sealing off. “Stop! You ...” But then I’m too far away to hear the rest and down on the platform. Deserted. A flickering lamp. A cold breeze. Dumb idea. What moved me to go alone? Come on! Pull yourself together!

I’m doing some steps. They are echoing on every wall. I’m listening closely. There! A voice! A little kid’s one. A tail peeps out from behind a column in the middle of the platform. Just one second and it disappears behind it. I’m sweating. Cold sweat. My whole body is trembling. I’m drawing nearer to the column. I’m jumping the last steps. The boy. The snake. It looks hungry at him. He holds the head away from his body. Smiling. I’m jumping forwards and... Wait! Smiling? And the snake doesn’t move either. I’m bending down and touch the snake carefully. Feels strange. Some kind of rubbery. I’m starting to laugh. All tension falls away from me.

All this chaos because of a toy snake! I’m calming down a bit. “Hi, I’m Mike” – “I’m Jamie”, the boy says. I’m explaining the situation to him. The first police officer arrives and gives, obviously relieved, the all-clear. Together we are bringing the boy back to his mother and she cuddles him with a sigh. She thanks me a thousand times. The woman says she wants to invite me for dinner as a thank you and gives me her number with a little wink.

Sarah. Finally in the tube I’m smiling at the small piece of paper with her name and the number. Today is a great day. Not like every day. And yes, you’ve won the bet.

Sunlight

The train stopped once more, and the doors opened. Some people left, some people entered, as always. Sometimes I count them, just for the sake of doing something. There had been a time when I found it interesting to observe all the different people here and to imagine their lives. But this was during the first weeks of my life in the metro. Now I'm rather bored of it, well, bored of everything.

But this stop an old man wearing yellow flap trousers came into the metro, he immediately aroused my attention because he looked very similar to my former owner. He sat down diagonally opposite of me, not noticing me, like nobody ever had noticed me here. Except the two teenage boys the day before yesterday's evening, or was it already three days ago? They found me lying under my chair, they were a bit drunk I suppose, and had fun kicking me around the metro corridor. Every kick hurt. I had never had a such humiliating experience, maybe except when my beloved former owner forgot me in this metro.

By the way, the man was still sitting there, staring at his mobile phone. He reminded me so much of my former owner. I could really see him in front of me, cutting grass, digging soil, planting plants. This was my life before he had forgotten me here, I was lying on the desk in the garden, enjoying the fresh air all day long, and looking at the growing plants, the changing seasons, and at my owner working in the garden. Twice a day he filled me with water and poured plants. Once a week he had packed me and some other garden tools and went to his plot of land three metro stops away. I've always loved it there, so many plants which all needed to be poured. But one day when we were taking the metro he was phoning his wife and they were arguing, he was very angry and nearly lost his temper. When we arrived at our stop he stormed out of the metro, shouting something in his phone, and totally forgot me inside on the chair he had put me next to him. Time was freezing when I saw him leaving and realized that I wouldn't. The doors closed and a man put me under the chair to sit there. Since then my life has totally changed, no more nature, no more plants to pour and what I miss most: no more sunlight.

When I think about my life now I feel so useless, every day in this dirty wagon, just waste in a Londoner metro. I wish I could die, but unfortunately watering cans aren't able to do something on their own.

When I was sadly sunken in these depressing thoughts, suddenly there was no more bottom under me. Somebody had taken me and was carrying me outside the metro. I felt a strong grasp of an old women's hand. We were climbing upstairs and then I felt it again after such a long time ... sunlight.