

# Funeral for a Friend

(Woman 1)

Mary stood alone in front of the grave. The rain was falling, but she didn't notice it. She was just staring at the little gravestone. She still couldn't believe it ...

"I always told him to avoid cars, but he never listened," she thought. "And why didn't the car stop? Why?" A little tear ran down her cheek, but she didn't wipe it away. She only thought of Andrew.

Since her boyfriend had left her, Andrew was the only one she could rely on. He comforted her when she was sad, he made her laugh, and, the most important thing, he always had time for her. But this was all over. Again, she looked at the gravestone. "This one has been my best so far" she thought. She looked at the other three gravestone, all with just the same name on it: Andrew. She never thought of giving them new names. This name was something important for her. Slowly, she walked home. She was soaking wet, but she didn't bother. The pain didn't make her feel the cold.

She opened the door and walked in. She took off her coat. She sighed. "It's time for another call", she mumbled while picking up the phone. Mary knew the number by heart. After a short ring, she heard a familiar voice. "Pets'R'Us, what can I do for you?" Slowly, she found her words. "It's me, Mary Graham. My old hamster died and I'd like to have a new one ..."

# Outbound Train

(Woman 1)

The train was long gone but she was still standing on the platform, her eyes gazing motionlessly to the point in the distance where she had seen the last car of the noisy, smoky train, disappear at the horizon.

He was long gone, gone to a place which was too far for her to ever reach. She was just standing still, senselessly staring with her sad look as if he would come back at the next moment if she just kept on standing there. She was desperately longing for him, she missed him so much that she sometimes thought about pursuing him ... but even if she followed, would they reunite at the far-away place where he now was?

The icy wind was curling her brown hair strands, while she was thinking about the last moments they had shared. Hopelessness, despair, fear and pure sadness all mingled in her mind. All those superfluous words they had spoken with each other, all those unnecessary arguments they had had with each other, all those beautiful moments and the incredibly strong love they shared with each other ... Had it all been just a waste of time? Wasn't it worth anything at all? What had been the last word she had said to him?

The train had arrived and he had suddenly jumped. He was dead at once. She was just standing there, staring at the horizon.

# Prejudice

(Man)

“Mr. Al-Thani, thanks for coming to this interrogation,” the old man said when I entered the dark, gloomy room with grey walls. There was just an old table with a chair on each side and a single light bulb hanging from the ceiling. I had thought that the CIA had better rooms, with glass and nice tables.

After the usual questions about date of birth, name and marital status the old man asked, “Where were you at the 14<sup>th</sup> of July this year?” Again I had to tell the whole story of this awful day. The day I had lost my best friend in an act of terror. We just wanted to spend our weekend in New York so we took the train from Philadelphia. Shortly before we arrived, a bomb detonated not far from our places. Fortunately I was at the toilet at the other end of the wagon at that moment. My friend had been killed immediately.

When I had finished my story, the old man stood up and walked thoughtfully through the room. Suddenly I got a hard punch into my neck, my head bumped on the table and I slipped from the chair. I was lying on the floor and the agent looked angry at me. “Stand up!” he shouted. So I slowly stood up and sat back onto my chair. I was totally dizzy and couldn’t think clearly any more. “Why were you on the toilet just at THAT moment? And why have we found a spark ignitor in your jacket?” “I don’t know what you are talking about! I don’t even know what a spark ignitor is!” As I later found out it is a fuse to detonate bombs. But how had it got into my jacket? Somebody must have smuggled it into it. That was the only explanation ... And now I was a suspect, and it would be really difficult to get out of this being half Arab and half American ...

The next punch hit me directly in my face ...

# Sharing Fate

(Woman 1)

I did not know what time it was, when I awoke. The only thing I realized, was that my head was aching terribly, and that my bag had fallen onto the floor while I was sleeping. Apart from the constant beeping of machines in the rooms nearby everything was still. Most patients in the rooms nearby would be sleeping by now. Sitting up, I turned my head to the window next to me, which triggered the motion sensor. The ceiling lighting went on, I could see again. I sighed and took my bag. Still feeling dazed I searched for my cellphone and checked the time: 11:45 pm. I had been there for close to seven hours ... and I had no idea how long I would have to stay there.

Just as I began looking around for someone else a door nearby got opened. I could hear her, before I saw her. The noise her high heels made on the stone floor, was disturbingly loud. The first thing I saw was her grey trench coat, the second was her dripping wet dark brown hair hanging messily into her face. She looked confused as she turned around obviously searching for an employee, before she saw me. "Excuse me, Sir", she asked politely. "Do you know where the reception desk is?" "Straight down the hall and then left. Follow the hall to the next right turn. Can't miss it." "Thank you", she said and disappeared with several noisy clicks of her high heels on the stone floor.

After a while I decided to follow her. I found her sitting on one of the those uncomfortable benches in the foyer which except for a tired looking receptionist was empty. Stepping forward, the woman at the desk gave me an annoyed look which I ignored. "Who are you looking for?", she asked, making it obvious, that she didn't really care. She was one of the people who had definitely picked the wrong job. "Amanda Brooks. They called me eight hours ago but they didn't let me in to see her, yet" After typing something into the computer, she looked at me again. "Im sorry, Sir. They just finished the operation a few hours ago. I don't think it will be possible to see her today. It would be better if you went home and got some sleep." I nodded. I knew I wouldn't go home. I just couldn't.

Without bothering to ask if the seat was vacant, I sat down onto the bench next to the woman. She didn't even look up and as nobody bothered to say something, we sat in silence. I took a closer look at her. She was younger than I had expected. Thirty at the most. Her hair was lighter than I had thought at first and a pair of piercing blue eyes was staring at the wall. Who she might be waiting for? A husband? A relative, just like myself? "Are you a teacher?" She had turned towards me and her eyes met mine. I looked at her surprised. "Is this so

obvious?" She smiled at me, "It's the bag." I laughed. "I knew I shouldn't have bought it", I said and glanced at my bag. "Let me guess. Maybe something like ... music? Or literature?" "Physics and Maths" I corrected her. "Oh."

She smiled at me for another moment, unsure what to say and then turned away. She looked so helpless as she sat there on her bench staring sadly at her feet, and I knew she needed someone to talk to because I felt the same way. "Can I get you a coffee?"

# Voices

(Woman 2)

“Hey, you look cute. Can I invite you to a cocktail?”, the man asked her. But Barbara, a 30-year old woman who looked very good, almost like a doll, was shy. Even though she thought that he didn’t look bad, she shook her head, spun around and wanted to go. But suddenly the man grabbed her arm and didn’t let her go. Barbara tried to get away from him but he was too strong. She looked at his face and asked herself why she thought earlier that he looked good. Now he just seemed weird and scary. She shouted for help but no one could hear her in that narrow small alley.

Something in his hand flashed. “Oh no!”, she thought. “Why me? Why me? I don’t want to die yet.” She screamed at him as piercingly as she could. The man was so surprised that he released his grip. Barbara kneeled down and started to cry. Her head was spinning. She again heard those voices. Suddenly she stood up, looked straight into the man’s eyes, made two steps towards him and thumped her right fist into his face.

When she had closed the door of her apartment, she started looking for her 6-year old daughter. “Oh, I think Lily is hiding again from me,” she smiled. As she had suspected Lily was again in the wardrobe. “You needn’t look so afraid”. She took Lily onto her arms and went to the kitchen. She gave Lily a pill with water. “Don’t grow, darling, stay my cute child forever. Do you hear?” Each time Lily swallowed these pills, she cried and complained that her whole body was hurting. Barbara comforted her child and held her closely in her arms until Lily stopped crying and fell asleep. She took Lily to her bedroom, lay her down and also went to bed herself. Shortly before she fell asleep she heard those voices again.

The next morning. Barbara woke up and looked at her daughter who was still sleeping. “My darling looks so cute, but why doesn’t she grow? For the last two years she hasn’t grown anymore.” But Barbara didn’t want to bring Lily to a doctor. She was afraid of hearing that it was her fault that Lily didn’t grow. She was afraid of the criticism that she didn’t care enough about her daughter. She went to the kitchen and started to make breakfast. And then her head was hurting again. She pressed her hands against her temples but the voices didn’t go away. She wanted to give Lily another pill but the bottle was empty. Barbara was desperate and didn’t know what to do. The voices became louder. And then she saw the big knife on the table. “I want her to be my cute little daughter forever ...”