

Veronica Vargas Zaraza

“HE”

I was walking quickly down the street. That day I made the erroneous decision to wear a thinner amount of clothing than needed, and I was paying the consequences. This made it one of those days when you forget the existence of your surroundings by the exaggerated cold you are feeling. Eventually, I saw the metro station and I immediately started walking even faster. Metro stations usually cause repulsion in me, but the warmth getting inside my body, made me ignore the disgusting place surrounding me. While I was going down the stairs I heard the metro approaching and running I went down the stairs and barely made it into one of the cars. Disappointed, I saw that the only seat available was at the far end of the car; I moved through the metro car, and as I sat, relieved, I smelled the tobacco coming from the person next to me. However, the guy sitting perpendicular to him was a whole different story.

He was the type of guy that made you look twice. I could only see a side of his face, but believe me, it was enough. He looked so peaceful with his eyes closed as he listened to music, his head resting on his arm. Undoubtedly, I felt that if I looked at him for more than 3 seconds he would notice, and judge me. Nevertheless, he probably was used to it; he was probably the type of guy who had many girls behind him, maybe even a girlfriend, or maybe he just got out of a relationship. Unlike others who would talk to him and start a conversation, I couldn't. I would make a fool of myself. So I just wondered what it would be like if he would notice me, and how that would be.

Who else than me would think that he would actually turn around, and see me, smile and start a conversation, which would lead off to him taking my phone number? Later on we would go on a date and have a great time. That one date would become a second date, and then a third one where I would kiss him for the first time and then feel like I didn't want to kiss other lips ever again. The dates would keep coming, and we would get closer and closer. Later on, I would meet his friends, and they all would joke about how I was too good for him, as if that were possible. And one day, under a starry sky and a bouquet of roses I would be asked to be his girlfriend.

The first months were great, incredibly great; we had time for each other and I felt like every day I learned something new about him. I still blushed every single time he complimented me. After around a year and a half, he grabbed my hand and told me that we should move in together. My mother wasn't very happy with the idea because even though she liked him, she said that we were moving too fast. Our dates were consistent; our feelings, pure. We didn't care who paid what, or any social construct, we just were. Every once in awhile, he plans spontaneous surprises; so do I. I was truly happy.

Everything wasn't perfect, but we always recovered, like the time I lost my job. While crying out of desperation when I was told for the tenth time that I wasn't getting the job, he saw me and said “Don't worry about that my love. It's just an interview. You probably deserved way better anyway”, but it didn't do much, so he continued, “You know they say that when you're really pretty is harder to pass an interview with people of your

same gender.” He was wrong, but he still made me laugh, and if you think about it, it’s ironic how a comment like that can lift up your mood.

Time passed, the spark started to die, but I just didn’t *know* about it. Until the day when I went to his workplace to surprise him with lunch since I knew he always forgot it. I didn’t find him wrapped up in work, instead I found him wrapped up with the new intern. I didn’t say anything; I just left without letting him explain half a word. I held back my tears until I was alone in the darkness of my room, closing my eyes, isolating myself from the rest of the world, until I felt a hand touching my shoulder.

It was the man whose tobacco smell permeated the space. I was looking blatantly at the floor while distracted; he had arrived at his station; and I was blocking his exit. Like me, the guy sitting perpendicular to the tobacco guy turned around; his eyes were even more beautiful than I imagined. For the first time during the whole ride he laid his eyes on me, but I nervously avoided eye contact while blushing. It took all the courage inside of me, to look at him again, while his eyes were still in me. I smiled, and for a moment everything felt like a dream, until I heard the voice of the metro announcer. I had arrived at my station. Giving him one last smirk I left, inwardly saying goodbye to all the chances I had foreseen.

Maybe it was the right thing to leave. Maybe he had a girlfriend. Maybe his lips wouldn’t make me want to kiss other lips ever again. Maybe he wouldn’t have told me he loved me under a starry sky. I repeated this to myself while arriving at my destination and that was the last time I thought about that guy, or at least in that matter. I guess it’s because at the end, I understand that guys like him don’t get close to girls like me.