Prices

certifiableGrimalkin

There are places full of people, social nexi, where people flow through by the tonnes. If one was to look for anyone, time would easily tell them the answers, for eventually everyone would go through there.

It comes naturally to some places, like cafés and marketplaces. This is not such a place. It is a dead-end side street of a side street, in the old center of the town. It has a sign, but the owner didn't have the willpower to repair it in a long time, and so its colours are bland, its writing indecipherable. Even if it were readable, the generic sign saying "Bookstore" wouldn't attract the attention of the sporadic lost tourist wandering through the street. The only reason this shop wasn't closed was the owner already having been retired, and still keeping it open for his own entertainment.

As could be imagined, the store didn't see much clientele. Not that anyone complained, for those who came were here for the solitude, or the owner's company. It was a private spot, isolated from the rest of the world, and in a stay way, magical.

The light shone brightly outside, but the buildings obscured the sun, leaving only a vestige of glow to enter the shop, when the door opened. The bell rang, steps filled the previously stagnating silence of the room. They were confident steps, going straight to a shelf and to the reading corner without a moment of hesitation. The owner didn't even bother to look up. He knew who it was, and she has been reading that book everyday, since she first came in five days ago. He tried to converse with her on the third day, but an angry shush stopped him. Maybe after she finishes reading.

After two hours her time was up. She stood up, this time more reluctantly, as she always did when she left, reshelved the book and went out. She entered a street of shade, even though it was the afternoon. Still, she put on her sunglasses, and marched on, into the sunshine of the mainer streets.

There was a car she had parked there, which she promptly entered, soon having to pick up her children from school. It was a nice car, although not as family-friendly as she hoped now. She bought it on a whim, and now slightly regretted it. It was wasting away, being used for only what it was now.

At a red light, another sports car stopped right beside her. It revved up its engine seeing her car, and she even entertained the thought of a race, replying to the call with the same. Then she remembered the police station, stationed nearby, and stopped herself. She had places to go, people to take care of, and the police-wait was nothing she, or others in her life, would look forward to. She looked wistfully towards the other car, to the young boy driving it. But there were consequences hanging over her, and she didn't want to take the risk

The light turned green. She stayed behind as the boy's car's tires screeched with his reckless start. However, he soon noticed the lack of competition, and slowed down again. It was a rather uneventful day for him, even though he had hoped it otherwise. He had a lot of energy built up, and was looking for some release, but for now there was none. He believed, just now could have been the moment of the day he was looking for, but it was just another disappointment. This suppression was starting to get on his nerves.

He made up a plan, a simple one, but the simpler the plan, the less could go wrong. He would drive out into the countryside, and speed his wits out on some solitary country roads. The only thing he had to do now, was to get out of this damned, clogged city, which wasn't easy.

The lights just turned green, but a pedestrian was still crossing the road. The boy honked, at which the pedestrian turned around, and showed him the middle finger. The pedestrian was late for a meeting, and no car-driving douche should have been honking at him, when he was in a hurry. The lunch break was just over, and he sat in the cafe the usual amount of time, completely forgetting the escalator having broken down this morning. There was another escalator, but for safety reasons they shut it down too, for inspection.

Now he had to think of arguments for the inclusion of the taxation clause, while walking up ten flights of stairs. He stopped for a while on the eighth, getting a cup of water and recomposing himself, looking at his reflection in the window. He saw something sparkle in the distance, on one of the rooftops, and though of the possibility of someone spying on the company with binoculars. But that was absurd a notion, so he continued up the flights of stairs, towards his meeting.

She held her breath while following him through the scope. She was still looking for the right room, when she found him looking straight at her. She thought he might have seen something, but he left normally. Suits usually didn't have the composure to stay calm under such circumstances, so maybe she was just being paranoid. Still, she had to finish the job quick. Paranoia was one of the things still keeping her alive. She checked the makeshift surveillance system she set up, but it seemed no one was following her yet.

She looked through the scope again, and reminded herself

it was supposed to be one of the upper floors. There, on the thirteenth she found the room, the conference, the person. It was a distance of eight hundred and twelve meters, and it was windy. It was always windy at such heights, but she had managed under worse conditions. She held her breath, and corrected for a few other things. Then she pulled the trigger. A fleeting thought about disarming the explosives before packing them back up, this time, went through her mind, as the bullet left the barrel

The wind roared around the bullet, as it spun through space. Gravity had been slowly gnawing at it, and was finally catching up with it. It zoomed past a few birds, getting them to relieve themselves. It breached the glass, flew through half a room, entered one side of a person's head and exited the other in a spatter, powered through a wall, and grazing someone's leg, finally embedded itself in an office plant.

In the room panic broke out. There was one person, however, who unlike all the others had another reason for it. He knew exactly what happened and why, and savoured every moment of it immensely, even if externally he ran for his life. The only thing he regretted, was that his victim didn't know it was revenge. She was too careful, she wouldn't let anyone get close. Well, this way his wife is avenged anyway. He was happy, as he elbowed his way through a crowd, still shouting in sham fear.

He was one of the first to exit the building and saw the few people beside him diving into a subway station, but he instead ran up to the parking across the street to retrieve his car. He was going home. It was a reasonable response to shock.

On his way there he nearly stumbled over another person, in order to look traumatized. He apologized, and the man replied with acceptance. The man was just going home after groceries, and was thankful the other guy didn't make him drop his shopping bags. He had still some way before him, and didn't want to have to carry all the single items in his hands.

He arrived at the door of his apartment about fifteen minutes later. He unlocked the door and entered, setting the bags on the kitchen counter. He turned the water cooker on, and unpacked some instant noodles into a bowl. He then took the sunflower seeds he bought, and went to the balcony. Jeremy was there, waiting for him.

Jeremy was a bird that lived on his balcony since before he himself lived here, and he liked to take care of him. It was somehow calming, watching Jeremy eat. The way the bird

picked up the seeds, sometimes breaking them in two, sometimes gulping them down whole, had a simplicity to itself, that he rarely saw otherwhere. Anyhow, he had to go to work soon, his shift was to begin at four.

Jeremy watched as the human left his domain. He liked this human. It was nice to him, unlike some of the previous humans. He grabbed another talonful of grub. He picked out the best seeds, he had plenty to choose from, nowadays, and ate. Then he started into the sky.

He flew, looking around, seeing the buildings of this city forming a maze of stone and concrete. He flew around, until he spotted one building in particular. It was still sunny, but the street seemed always to be in shade. He sat down on a bland sign, tucked in his feet, and closed his eyes, enjoying the coolness of the shade.

A sudden sound woke him up, startling him in the process. Jeremy looked up, and saw the sky had darkened. The sound continued, a mechanical whirring of shutters being rolled down in the windows of the shop, which's sign he was using as a seat. He cooed angrily, and set off towards his own territory.

The bookstore owner stopped rolling down the shutters for a second, and looked up at the white dove flying off, slowly turning into a black silhouette against the purple sky. Then he continued on, and closed the shop.