

Kenzie Glover
ARareMackenzie@gmail.com
07747 387228

A Train Station
by Kenzie Glover

Chapter 1: Where are we?

At one point in time, at one point in history, there was a train station. It had a single platform, and a single set of tracks went past the station. No one knew whether trains ran in both directions simultaneously, as people didn't tend to care. People just liked visiting this station. Some might say it was a tourist destination for particular people. This station's platform was long, with a small building placed right in the center. The building was made of brick, and was very simple. Several pillars placed apart with an angled roof to keep the weather at bay for travellers. A ticket booth was at one end of the station, with a grated window for an employee to speak to guests and hand out, as you'd expect, tickets. No one occupied the booth though. The train station meanwhile was incredibly standard; it served its purpose and it served it well. The focal point of the station was its location.

The station was surrounded by miles and miles of wheat fields and yellow grass. The wheat reached an average person's waist, so it felt almost like a huge shallow pool. The station was also placed within a huge valley, with two massive mountain ridges in the distance to the north and to the south. If a person would stand on the platform of this train station, they'd only see bright yellow for miles, until it reached the dark grey of a mountainside, followed by icy white snow caps. Like a huge skating half-pipe. To some it was magnificent, and to others it was alien.

A man stood alone on the platform. He stood observing his surroundings. Everything was quiet, and everything was still. He looked out towards the horizon, and saw a slight breeze that brushed the strands of wheat and grass gently around. That was the furthest extent of excitement

that came from this station. The man enjoyed this calming peace since it felt like a relaxing massage of the brain, away from all the business and chaos of what he just came from.

The man himself wasn't very noteworthy, it should be noted. He was simply a man, who continued to stand alone on the platform. He checked his watch from time to time, then went back to observing. He was waiting for someone, or something, or anything. He didn't know.

He took a few steps towards the platform edge, and looked down at the rails. Iron and wood, but it was all decaying. The iron was half dark-grey and half orange rust. The wood was chipped and slowly rotting. Clearly, it wasn't well maintained, as also evident by the yellow grass that was clawing its way into the gaps between the rails.

The first sign of life suddenly appeared in the valley, after the man of course. It was a distant locomotive. It had left the tunnel at the base of the mountain ridge, and was heading along the single rail towards the station, and towards the man. It was a tiny black dot in the distance for now, but it roared mightily, sending echoes across the valley. The smoke had begun to rise high into the ocean blue sky with a deeply contrasting black. As if someone was dragging a piece of charcoal on a blank canvas. The man observed it with disgust.

'Why ruin something so pristine?' he muttered without realising, before checking his pockets for something that wasn't there.

The train approached with haste to the platform and the man could see more of its details. He could see the deep red of its coat, with the gold trimmings lining the funnel and bumpers. He could see the blots on the coat that had chipped away with time. He could see the wheels too, which rattled forward along the tracks with speed. They were mostly black, accented with some bright silver that strangely looked clean and new. Maybe the wheels were the only part that had any form of maintenance, because maybe to someone that's the only part that needed to be kept up-to-date.

Before another thought could appear in the man's mind, the train had arrived. It screeched loudly on the rails, with a high pitched kind of sound that made people wince. Steam came from under the wheels, and from up above. A few seconds passed where the small train station in the middle of nowhere was covered in steam. Clearly this train had surpassed the small gust of wind for the most exciting thing at this train station, and the man stood overwhelmed at all the sights before him. He could now see what the train was carrying, which was people. He saw several passenger carriages and they were all full. At least that's what he could see from through the window.

He saw a tall man standing up and leaning against a chair in a full suit. The man had a short beard and his briefcase was resting on the floor between his feet. He had somewhere to be, but also managed to maintain his manners by letting other people use the seats. From the very brief glance through the window, he seemed quite young, and that made sense as to why he remained standing. There was a sadness in his eyes though, as if he wanted to say something to someone, but didn't. Closer to the window, and sitting on a chair, was an old woman. She was

hunched forward looking down at what presumably had to be the table. She was playing a game, evident by a wide smile on her beautiful, wrinkled face. It felt like it took a lot of effort for her to smile, and it made the man think about how brilliant the game was. Maybe it was time spent with a loved one that made her so joyous, and that was alright. She was enjoying herself. Finally, a young child sitting on the lap of an older gentleman. This child had a bright blue cap on, which was almost luminescent and he sat giggling away at whatever was between the aisle. The man couldn't see, but he knew it probably wasn't particularly funny. Children just have that kind of humour. A strange shaped line could set a child off on a laughing rampage. He missed when things like that were funny. He missed the days when a joke wasn't abruptly ended by the thought of rent, or a manager telling him to get back to work. Back when things didn't matter as much.

Not a single person got off the train though. Nor did the man get *on* the train. It felt like a duel at high noon. Both the man and the train were waiting; locked in what felt like an endless duel. Then he saw Emma.

Chapter 2: A Chance

The train was far busier than it usually was, especially for a weekday. People from all walks of life occupied the carriages, and Emma looked around slowly. As someone who struggled with keeping a low profile, it meant she was far more aware than the average person as to what she was doing at any given moment. She knew that quickly darting her eyes at the various passengers meant that people might think she's up to something, so instead she slowly gazed at the faces and characteristics of everyone. She saw a small child sitting on a gentleman's

lap, and noticed that he was holding a stick in his hand. The stick had nothing else on it. It was simply a stick. It was far too clean and perfect to be one that was just laying on the ground, so Emma thought that it must have belonged to something else like a children's playset, and that the kid had just stolen it from that. She smiled at the thought. There's some history in that stick, and even though it was probably not that interesting, it meant a lot to someone. *How sweet.*

The train made a loud screech as it slowed down at the station with no name.

Why do we even stop here? No one gets on or off. Just feels like we are wasting five minutes of everyone's time. She thought for a moment, before noticing the eery silence of the carriage as everyone waited for the train to close its doors and move on to the next station. You could hear a pin drop, and definitely a stick. Emma didn't even want to keep looking around at the surrounding passengers, as she felt as though everything was frozen in time, even herself. A movement could upset the balance. Whatever the balance was, it would be upset.

Emma decided to slowly move her eyes, and her face that followed, away from everyone and towards the window. She observed, still very slowly, the station they were at, and the station to which not a soul had gotten off or on. It looked quaint. The roof made of wood, that angled to protect the passengers from both the sun and rain, had a small hole near the train-adjacent side. The hole was perfectly circular, as if a cannonball had shot right through the station. Emma almost looked down to the ground, to see if there was in fact the remnants of a cannonball, but her eyes were then caught by a vending machine. It lit up somehow, even though the sun beamed down from above on the surrounding fields of grass and wheat. It lit up as though not a single

light was surrounding it, but, again, it was definitely surrounded by light. It was angelic. It was also a simple vending machine. Beyond its strangely angelic glow, it just stood. It offered snacks and nothing more.

Who was buying anything from that? Surely it's all out of date. Both Emma and Liam thought. Then they locked eyes.

Liam, who was standing alone on the platform, first caught a glimpse of Emma's eyes. He wouldn't remember the colour if she asked, but he remembered so many details about them. Her eyelashes were curled and darkened, as if she went to a salon earlier in the morning. Her pupils were dilated, as though the sun was just hitting them and she was still adjusting. Liam knew she couldn't see him, so he stared more at her. He didn't have long until she noticed him back properly and when that happened she would probably start to think that he was weird for staring. He didn't want to seem weird. Not in front of her because she was mesmerizing. Her auburn hair flowed down to her shoulders in a particular style he couldn't even attempt to guess. He thought it was a wolf cut, because only cool people get wolf cuts, and this woman in the train window was very cool.

A few moments passed, and the sun's glare had finally disappeared. It was a second duel at high noon. Emma and Liam locked eyes. Liam had a headstart, and so Emma did some catching up. She observed the way he stood at first, which was almost crooked but not entirely. He was clearly tall, and he didn't know how to show it off. *People love tall guys* she thought before gagging in her mind. She could see the birthmark that graced his cheek. A small light

mark that ran a few centimetres up from his jaw. Then she realised how small that mark must have been, and how strange it was for her to notice. Why was she looking there of all places? Not anywhere special like his eyes or his lips. His tiny birthmark. It fascinated her though, like she was studying a person and wanted more time to study. It might have even been the first time in her life that she wanted to keep studying something, rather than just give up and move onto something else.

The train hissed again, and with a small but sudden jolt, it began moving. Liam, who was absolutely motionless when he gazed at Emma, then fell forwards a small amount. It was as though he took a single step, then missed where his foot was aiming. The train picked up speed, and although it didn't go much further than a speed at which a car could outrun it, it meant that Emma's eyes had vanished before the carriage. The meeting was at an end. Until Liam's legs started to move, almost without any thought. He started to run.

Chapter 3: Marathon

He thought about the last time he ever sprinted. Probably many years ago now. He also thought about Emma. He kept her face in his brain, as motivation, but it wasn't working. The distance between him and the train continued to grow. It was either picking up speed, or he was losing his own. He definitely hadn't been exercising as much as he should, and even though he never thought he needed to, he began to realise he was wrong. Possibly the most important person in his life was slowly disappearing.

A small bird soared overhead and cried out loud. It felt as though it was cheering Liam on. It worked. Liam's speed began picking up, as sweat started rolling off his forehead. He chased with all he could and frantically waved his arms around, hoping that the driver would notice before it entered the tunnel at the base of the upcoming mountain. The tunnel was perfectly sized to fit the train and nothing else. This meant Liam couldn't run alongside and catch up to get the driver's attention. His time was running out.

Eventually, and very luckily, the train slowed down to a halt. It had reached a station. As a matter of fact, it was the same station as earlier, exactly. The same building in the center, the same surrounding waist-high wheat fields and the same decaying, old tracks. Liam looked around and wondered where this station had come from, since he definitely couldn't see it on his run or from where he stood just moments ago. The only things from back then that he could see in the distance were more tracks and then the tunnel.

Liam looked back and saw nothing but the wheat fields and the mountains. He had somehow appeared back at the station. The long run he just endured felt immediately pointless. He hadn't gone anywhere. What was this place?

He stumbled over to the train window, sighing heavily. Emma wasn't there though. She had vanished. Liam looked around at the other passengers, all of which were the same as he remembered, but no Emma. A few moments of panic passed by, as Liam stood there still. A few more moments passed, until Liam dropped to his knees in defeat. 'All was lost' he thought.

“Come on, get up. Come with me.” Emma then said, standing behind him. She walked away from the station and into the wide, open fields. She walked slowly, to let Liam catch up, and to make sure he wasn’t sprinting like he was after the train. She was considerate, and Liam was very aware of that fact immediately. Liam stood, and walked up to Emma, smiling the whole way. He was starting to forget what her face looked like, since she walked with her back turned. He wondered what to do, should he ask for her name, should he take her hand? Should he do a small gesture of kindness, or a big one? He made up his mind quickly. Liam took Emma’s hand, and without any pull of force, Emma spun around to Liam and locked eyes with him. It felt as though all of time stopped right then and there, as both sets of eyes seemed to open up to infinite universes. Each pupil a vast galaxy of light and colour.

“I don’t know who you are,” asked Liam.

“We’ve got all the time in the world for that,” replied Emma.

They kissed.

The End.