



STRANGE(R)DISTANCE

WEDNESDAY

Eyes in Alcohol

It was her again. Max felt how his breathing slowed down and sped up. Every day she got on the bus 18A in Raba stop exactly at 8:44. Like they had a secret meeting.

She sat down next to the window, opposite him. She wore a woollen headband and a big winter coat. She had always so many things. Max had no idea, what she was carrying or where she was going.

She put her canvas bag next to her. Her black backpack sat on her lap.

At first, she was just looking around, as if she was looking for something or someone. She seemed to want to know what was out there for her today.

All Max could see were her eyes. The rest of her face was covered with a big pink scarf and face-mask. Her eyes were lively, nothing about them was static. Pupils grew and shrank and followed every house and dog and human on the street.

Her irises rotated out of excitement as if she was Alice in Wonderland, entering into a rabbit hole and not just taking a bus to school or work.

But maybe she wasn't. Maybe she was, in fact, riding the bus to wonderland every morning. Max imagined her as a musician or actor. Creating worlds using sounds or making a story come to life on the stage. But he never knew. She was not famous, and he didn't ask.

Talking to strangers on a bus just wasn't something he or anyone would do. The distance between their knees was barely 10cm, but it was already too much. She was another planet, and he couldn't interfere with her atmosphere. So he continued

looking at her eyes, her eyelashes like curtains to another world, lids that covered whole other life that was sleeping under.

After looking out of the window for a while, she took out a book — easy reading book in French- and sunk right in.

Max was happy. Taking a bus with people who didn't know him, who didn't expect anything from him was blissful. The girl, whose eyes were looking around as if she was desperately trying to connect, was familiar and warm. He liked the moments when she seemed to forget herself and rested her eyes in his for a millisecond just to continue their trip right after.

He wanted to get to know her, but Max was not the kind of person who would talk to strangers. Especially not to strange women. He was married and travelled every morning seven stops to fill the coffee machines all around the town. He liked to think of himself as a coffee provider for the whole city. Everyone was walking around with a cup in their hands at one point of the day.

He got the list of machines that needed to be filled every morning and set off to work. It was a dull job, but at least he knew exactly what he had to do, and no-one expected anything more.

*

His wife had stopped talking to him about two months ago when another attempt to make a baby had failed. For him, it was not a big deal. Just as if there was the next bus, and the next coffee cup, there was the next time to try again.

But she didn't think of it like that. During these

two years full of failures, she had cried, shouted, been angry, blamed herself, him, climate change, pollution.

She was heartbroken every time, but after about a week she started to talk again. She started making plans for the next cycle, started taking vitamins, exercising and eating healthy again.

This time there was no shouting, anger or blame. She just shut up and not only about the baby but about everything.

When Max reached home, she went to the living room. When he came to the living room, she went to get ready for bed, when he reached bed she was already sleeping. During breakfast, she scrolled her phone. When Max asked something she nodded or shook her head. When she lifted her eyes from her phone to listen to his question, he noticed that her eyes were static, dead.

*

Max needed to find a way out of his life. One day when his wife was out for groceries, he entered her office. She was a biologist and worked mostly from home.

She was not the type of biologist who runs around the meadows catching butterflies and frogs. Her speciality was death. So her home office was filled with jars filled with organs and animals. Nothing was alive in here.

He was looking for a book. At the beginning of their marriage, they had planned to visit Paris. It was her dream. Her wife had studied French at school, and from time to time, she still had played some songs or had a list of new words in one hand while stirring the soup with another.

But that was a long time ago. For some reason, the

trip never happened.

The shelves in her office were filled with biology books. The titles read: "A Theory of Death", "The Question of Death", "Cell Death", "The Process of Dying Explained", "Clinical Death".

A tiny bird skeleton decorated her desk.

Then he saw a carton box next to her desk. It was filled with stuff she intended to throw away. Extremely organised, she did inventory in their house every month. The box was filled with unworn baby clothes. Peeking out behind the toy elephant was an easy readers version of "Les Trois Mousquetaires".

*

Max couldn't properly explain it. If asked, he would have said "eyes" or maybe "life". But no-one asked. No-one knew much about his life.

He just needed to let her know that he existed. He didn't want to talk to the woman on the bus. He had nothing to say. Nor was it a good idea to follow her. It would have just scared her, made him look like a creep.

He was secretly observing her many weeks before he decided to take an action. He was not brave. He was scared that she's going to avoid her, that she starts taking the earlier bus and he will never see her again.

So why was he doing it? Why did he want to break this quiet routine?

The answer was: he wanted to go with her, wanted to leave in her stop and descend through the rabbit hole into another, more pleasant life.

*

The morning he had planned his action was darker than usual. Cold crystals bit their sharp claws into his flesh and didn't let go. His heart was beating in his ribcage like a bird who knows it dies when it tries to escape.

He felt the sharp contours of the book in his backpack. His breath, everyone's breath made bus windows steamy. Steam calmed him. He wished there would be so much steam in the bus that he would not be able to see her.

When she got on the bus, the grey reality acquired some colours. Again, she sat down and stared out of the window. Then her eyes wandered around in

the interior of the bus. Max forced himself to look away.

She was sitting opposite from him, as usual, and after looking around for a while, she opened her backpack buckle with a loud click. A book emerged from her leather bag. She was reading it slowly. Sometimes looking up a word from her phone. Finally, she closed it. The next stop was hers.

Slowly Max opened the zip of his bag. She put her book back when he took one out. He gave it to her. Without looking at her, he felt that she took it. He let go and looked up. She was looking at him and this time more than just a millisecond.



THURSDAY

Three Stripes

When I was in my early twenties, I created my own reality. I couldn't care less about the 21st century with all its modern conveniences like smartphones and self-service cashiers. I didn't sign up for life in a science fiction movie, where people float around with flying scooters, and humongous screens are hanging above our heads showing how nature looks like. I detested people in casual clothes, their laxity and absolute lack of manners. I couldn't understand why should anyone on earth carry a plastic bag, go to a gym or wear ugly white sneakers? Why had they all given up?



I guess I knew the answer. They had no choice. Just like I had no choice. Here I was, sitting on a bus 34A to Muuga. The bus was white and green like a space ship or like a school toilet in the 90s. Why did all good things belong to the past?

But at least I didn't let this world to rule over me, to swallow me, chew me up and spit out empty, looking just like everyone else around me— given up. No, I was not going to let it happen. Even if I had to go to this grisly grey warehouse every single day and put together bundles of god knows what kind of electronic parts that simply didn't exist in my world. I cut these moments out of my life. They were insignificant and didn't exist. Disposable. Even though I had to go to work, I stayed true to my beliefs. I was a writer in the 1920s.

My bus went every day at 6:25. Sadly, there were already too many people out at that time. With their ugly parkas, they really ruined my aesthetics. But I couldn't do much about it. I just sat on a single-seat, knees tightly together, small handbag on my lap and waited the day to be over.

I could have done it differently, wore pants and sneakers, like most of my colleagues, because eventually, I cut out the moment anyway. But see, I didn't do it. It would have been too easy. Instead, I wore black shoes with a tiny button on the side. I had woolly tights on, and the dress or narrow skirt was always combined with comfortable grey men's cardigan. My hair was pinned on the back of my head, and it was always just a bit messy. Yes, you got it! My world was long gone 20s, but I was not your regular housewife. No, I was a bohemian writer who tended to not always following the rules. Exciting, wasn't it?

Until I had to start working my life was basically perfect. I studied art history, browsed books with nice pictures, immersed myself into writing essays and taking notes in art classes. Non of my classmates were ordinary. One thought of himself as a reincarnation of Andy Warhol, the other refused to wear or own anything that wasn't black, the third one couldn't stand small talk and was always after deeper meaning. I and my obsession with the 20s was fine and accepted. No one batted an eye. Then I met Oliver, a violin player in national opera. He was not very talented nor hardworking, but a romantic soul who was crazy about my obsession with "lost times" and my ambition to be a writer. He played me every evening Louis Armstrong from vinyl records. We danced and thought about what life would be like if it would actually have been the 20s.

He was a son of rich parents, but they were dead. His mum had cancer, and his father died in a car accident. By the time they died their business was already bankrupt, and all that was left from the better days was their huge wooden house with antique furniture, gramophone and a specific smell that you may have smelled in your grandmother's wardrobe. We moved in, played records and drank whiskey from the fine crystal glasses. Life was grand. I wore slightly too big shirt dresses, oxford shoes and wrote all mornings in my sunny room while Oliver was rehearsing in another room. I wrote until I couldn't work anymore, took my coat and went for a walk along the canal. I staggered on cobblestones, watched ducks and life going by. Not for too long though. I didn't want to see the modern parts of it, obviously. When I saw a mobile phone, I pushed my hands deeper into my pockets, looked down

and hurried past as fast as I could. In the evenings, when Oliver was free, I organised gatherings and parties. They were often theme parties like New Orleans in the 1920s or brothel in Paris or famous people. There was always a creative aspect in such gatherings: people read their writings, told stories, played music or showed diapositives of mushrooms. We tried on hats and gloves and drank a lot. We didn't have any worries until Oliver found out that with the house his parents had also left him some steep debts.

We didn't have a choice. Oliver had to take shifts in a gas station, and I had to find work. Inexperienced as I was, the only job I could get was in the warehouse one. I protested, but there was no other way. We were just two young people with no savings, and the bank refused to give us a loan. A young musician and his young writing wife were not their dream customers.

All of a sudden, my obsession with the 1920s was not cute but costly.

"Why can't you just wear sneakers and a backpack like a regular person?"

"Do you have a clue about how much leather costs?"

I hadn't. I stayed quiet and kept a low profile. After all, these were hard times.

There was this one time I wish I would have let my obsession go. It was on a Thursday morning. I wore my green velvet hat with a veil and long black gloves. I'd just found the beginning of my story. Into my brown leather notebook, I scribbled: "Annie went to buy flowers for herself". I smiled. The story was there, it was flowing out of me, finding its form in front of my very own eyes. I was ecstatic.

I looked out of the window and admired the snow-

capped branches, white streets and noisy trams passing. Even the amount of cars and ugly colours on buses didn't bother me this morning. Then someone touched my knee.

"Excuse me, are you a writer?"

It was a young man with only a hint of hair on his head wearing a hideous black Adidas tracksuit with three stripes running from neck to heels. He looked deep into my eyes.

I was shocked, gasping air, didn't get if he was high or just stupid. We were on a bus for god sake, not at a social gathering. How arrogant!

But I knew I couldn't just ignore him. Besides, I couldn't put earphones in. I simply didn't own a pair. So I replied politely. "Yes!"

"Would you mind me reading some of your work?"

Was it a way to get a girl in modern times?

He was probably a psychopath. I stayed polite.

"Sure."

"Here is my Facebook name. Feel free to send me something."

I stared at him. Lunatic! Since when were people interested in my scribbles? I took the piece of paper, smiled and got out in my stop. Without thinking too much, I threw the paper in the nearest trashcan.

I had an e-mail address of course. You couldn't escape from that I suppose. But Facebook simply didn't exist in my world and would never exist as long as I lived. That I knew for sure.

But his name somehow stayed with me and some 20 years later to my surprise I discovered he'd become a famous publisher who was impossible to approach without an agent or recommendation. I gathered my courage and wrote to him only to get an automatic reply from his assistant saying he's sorry, but he's not going to read unsolicited manuscripts.





FRIDAY

His Destiny is Pizza

He made it. Tim had to run 200 meters to catch the last bus. He leaned against the backseat and took deep breaths. There was no-one on the bus, so he took his mask off. The inside of the bus was yellow. It made these typical pulling and pushing sounds. Tim was going to be home safe and sound. What a night, though. So crazy. A great story, for sure. He closed his eyes and felt that the warmth of Kadi's hug was still in his bones. It was a regular hug, just lasted a tiny bit longer than you'd hug your friend. Well, maybe not that regular after all. She was different, something else, hard to comprehend.

"Next stop Soolahe tee," announced the pre-recorded voice in the bus. Every stop took Tim further from the hug. The bus drove him away from the lovely girl with red cheeks. It felt like someone was tearing the fabric.

What the hell was he doing on the bus? Kadi had said he should stay at the party. That she liked talking to him. Did she really? Yes, she had laughed at his jokes. She was quite lovely too, putting her hand on his and everything.

The thing was that he didn't plan to go to this party. He was tired and about to go home, have a pizza and pass out in front of the TV. But his friend kept texting. He was already drunk, and it seemed like the party was pretty decent.

"Come here. Let's get hammered!"

Well, he could go for a couple of hours, check it out and pass out right after. The only thing was that the friend didn't live very close by. He lived in Kakumäe, which meant he had to sit for one hour on the bus.

Well, if he had decided something, he did it, no matter what.

There he met Kadi, a fun lively girl with some interesting thoughts. Tim had a feeling he had met her before. Like they were childhood friends or something. They talked about it, and it was fairly impossible — she was from an island, he from the hilly south.

There was just something familiar in her— a secret locked deep inside. So he kept talking to her, asking all these questions about her life and studies and music taste. He wanted to get to know her as if there was a key to life buried under all her thoughts. And then, out of nowhere, she hugged him. Just when he started to get dizzy, thinking if it was all the wine he'd drunk or the girl, Kadi's phone buzzed, and she moved away from him. Her friend was lost. She had wandered out for a stroll and now didn't know where she was. "She said, there are only trees all around, and her phone is dying."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to find her. Duh!"

"I'll come with you."

Because what else?

It took them some time to locate her. They trudged through deep snow and the full moon hanging over their heads kept quiet. Bastard! He must have known full well where this half-brained girl was roaming in the middle of the night.

"Why did she left the party alone?"

"Don't know. She gets easily paranoid."

After what felt like hours of walking, hours that he would have preferred to spend with Kadi in a different context, like maybe in the sauna or somewhere away from others, they found her sitting in the snow against a huge tree, sobbing.

"Mari, what happened to you? Come here!"

"I don't know. I took something, and now I really don't feel well. I'm afraid it's something strong. Am I going to die?"

Kadi gasped, she grabbed her head, then pushed her fists onto her temples and shook her head.

"You did what? God, Mari, you have a personality disorder. Your doctor told you specifically not to take alcohol or drugs with these meds. God."

That was bad. Seeing Kadi freaking out, Mari started to shake and cry even more.

"What now? Am I going to die? I don't want to die. I cannot breath."

*

Tim had no idea what to do. But he didn't have to do anything. Kadi wiped her tears away and asked me to call a cab. We were going to an emergency. Stupid Mari! Who takes drugs with anti-depressants? The party had been so mellow and effortless, Tim could really go with the flow, trust the flow to take him into another reality without worrying where it all was going. But he liked the way it was going. Well, now it was going to the emergency room where the lights were too bright and people moaning. So much pain and unhappiness compressed into so little room.

When Mari was in the doctor's office Tim and Kadi just sat there behind the door and the girl put her hand on his.

"Thank you"

"For what?"

"That you came. Sometimes I feel I cannot do it anymore. Cannot be strong for her. I know she thinks I'm smart and fearless and strong. But I'm not. I'm confused and nervous. Every time I think

she's not going to make it. I'm so afraid."

She had long blond hair, and when she sat there, elbows on her knees her hair almost touched her legs.

*

Haabersti. A group of Russians shared chocolate. They were too close to him, sniffing. Tim wanted to be alone with his thoughts. He had a feeling the chocolate eaters could listen to what he was thinking.

•

When Mari came out of the office, she was calm again. They gave her some water, told her to drink a lot and go to sleep. "If I start to feel bad I can always come back. But right now I'm fine," she said looking sleepy. Her voice had worn thin.

Tim didn't know what to think, but he saw how something had happened with Kadi's face. Every single muscle seemed to relax at the same time. She hugged Mari and made sure she was safely on a taxi home.

They stood under the blinking neon sign of an emergency. Ambulances came and left. Some with signals, others quiet.

"And now?" Tim asked.

"Now what?"

"What do we do now?"

"We continue partying of course!"

So they climbed on a bus that was already filled with happy party people. The mood resumed. Outside in the dark and quiet Kakumäe street, Kadi made some dance moves and sang a song about city lights or was it about island lights?

"You know I'm from the island, right? Have you ever

been to?"

Tim nodded. Most of the Estonians had been there. She looked a bit disappointed. Tim felt he should have lied, maybe she would have wanted to take him there, to show around.

When they were back to the house, Kadi drank two shots of whiskey and they danced in the kitchen. Now it was the time to resume, go back to the romantic scene that they'd left off, but somehow it felt too risky for Tim. Besides, he had promised himself to come only for a couple of hours, have his pizza and pass out quietly. Like that nothing could go wrong.

"Where are you going?"

"I need to go"

"Already?"

"The last bus"

"Damn it. You're fun to party with."

He smiled. She smiled too. Tim took his jacket and said goodbye. Then it happened. Kadi hugged him tightly. It felt like she wanted to come with the boy. But he didn't invite her.

Tim felt like he was floating in the air when he stepped into a cold white night. Snowflakes fell everywhere.

*

People were looking for love from their phones or maybe they played songs that brought back good memories.

Taksopark. Soon he was back in the city centre. The further Tim got from Kakumäe, the stupider he felt. He'd felt good at the party. Why to leave? What was wrong with him? What about the secret that was hidden inside of this girl with the pale pink puffy jacket? He wanted to know more about her, feel her

warmth, dance. Going home felt like someone was pulling a band-aid from the wound.

Tim was doing it all wrong. What was he even doing here?

He jumped out of the bus and decided to go back to the party. His fingers were moving slowly on the frosty timetable. The last bus to Kakumäe went at 00:01. The time was 00:11. That was probably a sign. He had missed his chance. Kadi was not his destiny after all. Tim's destiny was waiting at home, with pizza.





MONDAY

Don't Hire Me

The story I'm going to tell you is in no way special. Quite opposite. What happened to me on that Monday has happened already a couple of times. So why am I telling you this? I just like you to know it before you consider hiring me, just to show you who I am and maybe also help you. I think it's in both of our best interest not to waste each other's time. And I'm really bad at bringing it up during conversations. What I mean is that often people just don't listen or don't care. They probably think it's a question of discipline. But it's not.

So, as I told you, it always happens the same way, follows the same script. First, I get a call from a company that wants to hire me. They like my CV. They are impressed by the work I've done and the awards I've won. They see that I'm educated and a good worker.

If I could, I would interrupt them right there and ask them: how do you know? All that my CV says is that from 2008 to 2018 I was hired by a news agency and after that, I worked as a freelance. The last bit is not true, by the way. That's just something the job agency advised me to write there so that people would not ask more questions, wouldn't be suspicious. Because having a two-year gap in my CV is not such a good thing. According to the job agency, employers think I was in jail.

So they look at my CV, nod approvingly, and hire me without a single question about my freelance life. They like my long experience. The thing is that the person who worked at the news agency from 2008-

2018 was not me. Not the real me, or at least not the self I am now. Let's put it in this way— I was my own previous version. Was I performing better back then? Probably. Was I happier? Probably not. All I know is that back then I was a foetus, an egg, I hadn't broken the shell yet. I sat behind my white desk in the office, and the wire of my headphones connected me to my mum, the computer. All I could do was to type, select, pictures, edit texts, do layout, preview and publish. I published five articles per hour. Music was pushed from the computer into my ears, and I was determined not to cut the cord that connected me to the mothership. I didn't go to the toilet during my shifts and kept my lunchbox close by. Even during my breaks, I stayed connected. That wire connected me to my work quite literally, and I considered that connection holy.

The first day is easy for me. This is usually the only time that they want to walk you through the place. They show you how different programs work, send you to sign a contract, you have to move from person to person who all show you something or teach you certain skills. I don't mind to bounce between different office corners like a ping pong ball.

The trouble starts when they send me to my desk and give me a pair of wireless headphones. Every time I see those headphones, I know how it's going to end.

A man with short curly hair and small round glasses excuses himself and tells me to use the company's chatroom in case I have more questions. "You'll be fine," he says. It's meant to be an encouraging smile, but to me, it feels uneasy.

I open the program and put on the headphones. I know exactly what to do, and slowly like a rusty machine that hasn't been used for a while, I get to work.

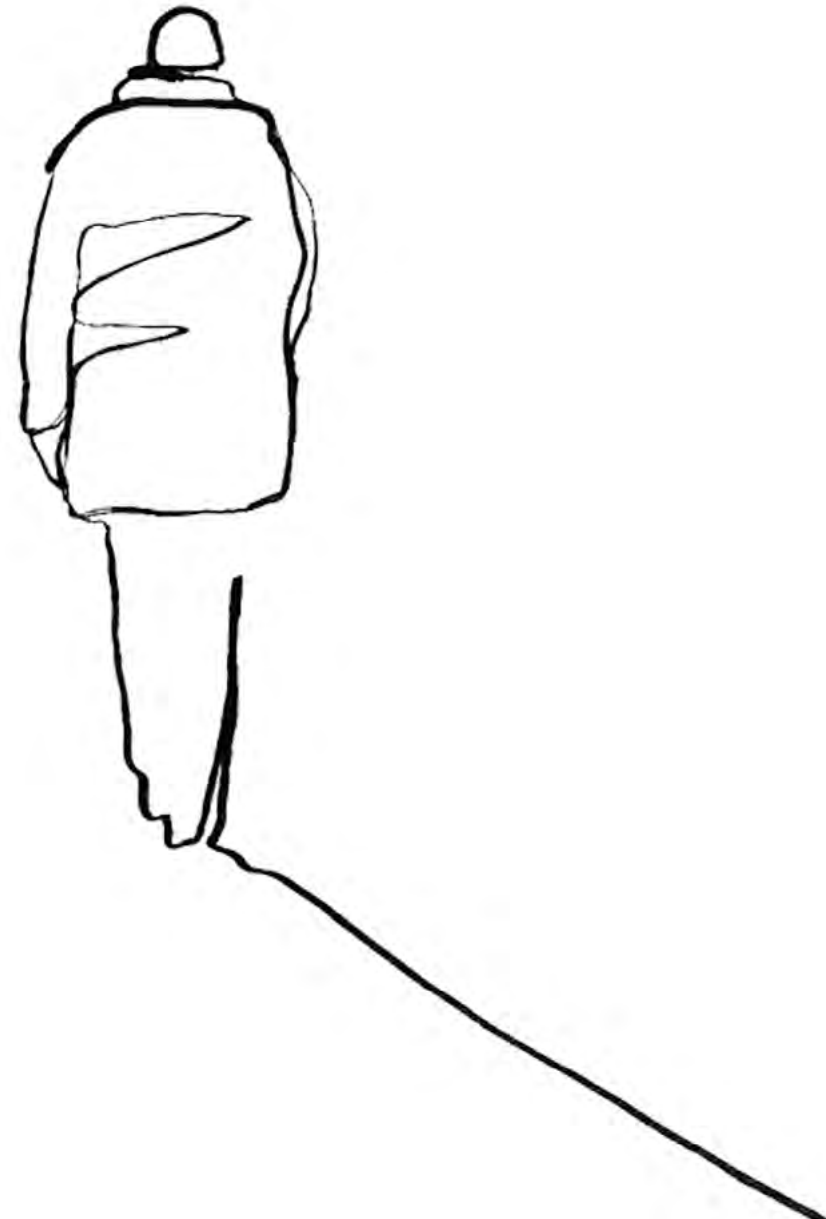
Music blasts through the earphones into my ears, creating distance between me and the work e-mails. Slowly the text of news pieces freezes on my screen, and fluffy white clouds behind the window catch my attention. I let them carry me away. Then I get up. Nothing stops me. The stupid earphones continue playing even when I walk to the kitchen and place my cup under the coffee machine. In order not to just stand there and wait, I go to the toilet, and after that, with a steaming cup in my hand, I walk back to my desk. Leaving the cup there, I grab my bag and go for lunch.

I don't go back to the office that day. I sit in the cafeteria looking through huge windows at how people are passing by, and can't wait to join them, to be one with the crowd, to be taken by their thousand arms and get carried away. And then I am there, on the other side, moving. Without any other direction than the direction of the crowd, with no aim, no will of my own. They take me with them, carry me over the roads, stop me before red lights, reflect me on dozens of glass windows, guide me through revolving doors, down the stairs where like a river, we head to the bus schedule. There they stop to take a breath all together before they branch to tens of streams moving all to different directions onto their busses. Quickly I take a glimpse of the board.

Beep-beep-beep. The first line gives me a clue. Bus number 44 from platform 4 direction: P. Pinna. I step onto this unfamiliar bus to ride it until the end. From the bus window, I see the world go by: the

houses and trees, dogs and old leaves. The doors are closing and opening, people keep coming and going and this organised chaos lasts until there are no more buses to take. Until the last bus vanishes from the board and there is one direction left to go: home. Whenever I don't have to go to a test day for a new job, I give myself to the hands of chance and let him do whatever he wants with me.

As you can probably guess— I got fired and had to go back to the job agency and start all over again. Well, now you know why it's better not to hire me.





TUESDAY

Friend Zone

Martin had just clicked the start button of his game when he noticed Andres a few meters further. He stood there with his familiar orange hat and blue jacket, laughing at something on his phone.

Finally! Martin already thought that Andres will be late today, but here he was.

The black information display was full of orange text. There you could see the time and when your bus arrived. The numbers next to the bus number said which platform you had to go to catch it. Martin knew the whole system very well already. He started to go alone to school when he was eight years old.

Finally, the bus pulled in. He jumped on and looked around for two empty seats. The bus filled quickly with people, and Martin prayed to god that no-one would come to sit next to him. What was taking him so long?

Here he was. Like a little monkey, Andres was making his way through a thick mass of people. He straightened his hat and jumped on the seat.

"Hi, Martin!"

"Hi, Andres!"

As soon Andres had sat down, he pulled out his phone to show the funny dog video that had made him laugh earlier.

"Look!" he said.

The dog was chasing its tail. He ran like crazy and barked. Then he sat down and rotated on a spot as if scratching his ass.

The boys laughed until their faces were red, and they were out of breath.

"Do you have a dog?" Andres asked.

"No, but our neighbours have one. He is really evil and once he bit my grandfather."

"Really? Is your grandfather fat?"

"Not really. Why?"

"Because dogs love to bite fat people. There is more meat," Andres giggled again and told Martin a story of how a small toilet brush shaped dog once bit a fat lady and how the lady screamed. Another burst of laughter shook the bus.

All the other people on the bus were grownups. They were quiet, serious and boring.

"Hey, did you get the right answer to the math homework?" Martin asked.

"No way! I was working on it for like four hours, but it didn't come out. It must be a tricky assignment," said Andres.

"Yeah, even my father couldn't solve it!"

"Really? Then it must be super tricky!" Andres said.

"He thinks that there's a mistake in the textbook, but I don't think so. He always thinks he's right even when he's not," Martin said.

Then they were sitting quietly for a while, both looking at their phones.

Two funny looking big girls came in. One had a too big jacket, the other too long scarf.

"That scarf is too long even for giraffe," Martin said, and they both laughed. The girl had probably heard them because her eyes narrowed and she was looking at the two boys with an angry face. That made the boys laugh even more. The girls made faces and mocked them but couldn't come closer because the bus was full. Between them and the angry girls was mum with a baby carriage. Luckily the mum didn't move until their stop so the boys got out of the bus alive.

"They would have beaten us up for sure! Their eyes were like bursting fire!" said Andres. Then he waved: "Gotta go!"

The school-gate was wide open, and children entered from all directions. Some of them even threw their backpacks over the fence and climbed in. Andres vanished into the crowd. Martin went to the wardrobe and started to take off his winter jacket. His classmates were all high-fiving each other and chatting happily while pulling off their boots and lacing up their sneakers. Girls had developed a new habit to hug each-other every morning. Maria and Elviira were hugging right now as if they didn't see each other just yesterday. They walked up the ugly chlorine smelling stairs and took their seats in the classroom. In Martin's class everyone, but he had someone to sit with. He took the plastic bag out of his backpack and put it on the chair next to him. He called his neighbour the ghost.

Andres sat at the table in the middle of the boys' group and showed card tricks.

Margit was picking her nose. She looked at the booger and then ate it. Martin smiled. He made a mental note to tell all about it to Andres tomorrow morning on the bus. He looked at Andres one more time. He was Martin's best friend.

Then the teacher came, and the first lesson started.

Stories:

Anete Kruusmägi is a poet, writer and traveller who is currently experimenting with short forms of fiction. She is also a passionate public transportation user and keen to spread the word about its benefits to the environment.

www.volcanolove.org

Drawings:

Aleksandra Ianchenko is an artist who is currently working on her PhD research about art on/of public transport at Tallinn University in the frame of the research project «Public Transport as Public Space.»

www.sasha-art.com
www.putspace.eu



About the project:

During one week authors were observing the atmosphere on/of Viru Bus Terminal, the major public transport hub in the center of Tallinn.

In order to capture elusive atmospheres of transit space at the time of keeping distance, Aleksandra did quick sketches on the spot. She focused on strangers who were temporary dwelling at the terminal until buses took them away. Their unknown, strange routes were traced in Anete's stories which she conceived and wrote immersing herself into the atmosphere of the terminal.

The project is the result of the residency program by Vent Space, student-run initiative of Estonian Academy of Arts.

February, 2021



