

## Maybe Someday, Somehow, Someway

*I see her everyday.*

*We take the same bus to get to our different schools every morning. So every morning I look for her— not in a creepy way, just... in a curious way.*

*She's always surrounded by the same group of bubbly friends, always laughing and smiling. Everytime she smiles I can't look away, it's like the sun gave her a drop of its brightness and every time she smiles she lights up the room. I can't help myself, when I see her, my fingers itch to sketch her out.*

*Sometimes I draw her smiling, sometimes talking, or reading, or looking out the window. The bus ride isn't very long so I only get a few minutes every time, but that's ok. It's always worth it.*

*Today I quickly grab my backpack and my sketch book and run out the door. I nearly miss the bus, but make it just in time. Like always I choose the seat near the back of the bus, with the back of the seat against one of the windows, so I can face her usual seat right across from it. But this time, an elderly looking man comes in and takes her seat instead.*

*I frown and wait for her to show up, but she never does. I put my sketch book away and glance out the window instead.*

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*I see him everyday.*

*We go to the same cafe every morning and do our separate things. So every morning I look for him— not in a stalker way, just... in a curious way.*

He always sits alone, always hunched over a sketch book, a pencil in his hand. Sometimes he has charcoal and I see the way he always asks for an extra napkin because his fingers get stained by it. When he concentrates he gets this sort of look of determination, and I can't look away. And I can't help it, every time I see the way he gets a slight frown and his eyes trace the lines he draws so intently, I smile.

Sometimes I wonder what he's drawing if it's people, or things, or a landscape. He's never at the cafe too long, so I only get to see him for a few minutes everyday. But I'm ok with that, it's always worth it.

Today when I arrive at the cafe I see that he's sitting at his usual table like always. It's near the back of the cafe where it's quietest, but has the perfect amount of sunlight coming in through the window. I pick the table next to his, but he doesn't notice he's too focused on his art. I order my cup of tea and see as he finally looks up when a waiter asks him for his order. He orders black coffee, with two sugars, like always.

I smile when my tea arrives, giving him one last glance before looking out the window and taking out my book to read.

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*The next day repeats the same, and so does the next and the one after that. A week passes by and I stop taking my sketch book with me on the bus, if she's not there then there's no point in me lugging it around.*

*Just as I've decided that she probably takes a different bus now, she finally shows up. I can't help the smile that stretches across my face when I see her. She chooses her regular seat and looks out the window. I reach for my sketch book and remember I left it at home, I glance at her instead, but something's off.*

*That's when I notice that today, she came in alone. Her usual group of friends aren't on the bus, and instead of having a smile she's just staring at the ground blankly.*

*Her phone seems to suddenly ding because she pulls it out and clicks on it. She reads whatever text or message she got and closes her eyes. When she opens them they're shiny with tears.*

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The next day repeats the same. And so does the next and the one after that. Another week passes by and I can't help but try to sneak peeks at his sketchbook but he never lets it out of his sight even when he gets up to go to the washroom, he takes it with him. I can't help but look at him anyways, even if he never looks back.

Just as I've decided to finally go up to him to talk he looks up from his sketchbook and our eyes lock. I can't help the smile that forms on my face all on its own. And then realize that his charcoal grey eyes look familiar, as if I've seen him in a long forgotten dream.

His eyes flicker with something too, as if he recognizes me as well. But we both shake it off, and look away. He turns back to his sketch book and I look out the window. The moment is broken.

His phone suddenly seems to vibrate because he looks up from his drawing and presses something on the phone, which is resting on the table. He frowns at the message or email he just got.

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*I frown, and debate whether to go up to her to ask what's wrong, but end up staying in my seat instead. When the bus stops she quickly rushes out. I stand up too*

*and see that she's forgotten her backpack on the bus. I grab it and follow her out. I spot a blur of her hair behind a large tree and I tentatively walk over.*

*When I reach her she gasps and quickly wipes away her tears.*

*"I...um, you left this back on the bus." I say quickly handing her backpack to her.*

*She looks down at it for a second before taking it.*

*"Thanks," she says quietly, giving me a small smile, that is nowhere near her usual beam.*

*We both stand there a little awkwardly before we both blurt out.*

*"Are you ok?" "I should get going..."*

*We both pause.*

*"You go first," she tells me finally.*

*I bite my lip and run a hand through my hair, one of my nervous habits.*

*"I was just wondering if you were, you know, ok?" I say.*

*She looks at me a little surprised, "I...I'm fine." she says not too convincingly.*

*"You know," I say with a small grin, "'I'm fine' is the most commonly told lie."*

*She smiles sadly, "thanks but, I bet you don't want my sob story. You probably need to get to school or something, right?"*

*She turns to leave but I quickly call after her.*

*"I have time."*

*She pauses and slowly turns, a look of disbelief and a little bit of amusement flicker across her eyes. She gives me a half smile.*

*"Well...if you're sure. But this will probably take a while..."*

*I grin and we both sit down leaning against the tree's trunk.*

*As it turns out, her grandmother who she had been very close to had just recently passed away, and along with her parents wanting to move away and her having had a huge blowout with her friends, she's been feeling kinda down lately. And she's been staying home from school, which was why she hadn't been taking the bus.*

*By the time she's done explaining we've both sort of relaxed, and it feels more like we've been friends for ages rather than strangers for minutes. I tell her how I want to study art when I'm older and how my older brother is the golden boy in my family. How I'm expected to live up to his greatness.*

*Hours pass by that feel more like seconds, and suddenly my phone rings startling us both. I pull it out and see that it's my mom calling me, probably wondering where I've been.*

*I glance at her sheepishly, "looks like I have ten minutes before my parents send out a search party."*

*She laughs and finally gives me one of her real smiles. She glances at her watch and her eyes widen.*

*"I can't believe we've been here for so long!" she exclaims, I nod grinning.*

*"It was still kinda cool."*

*She smiles, "thanks for... listening. I haven't met a lot of people who know how to do that, and you seem to be very good at it."*

*I smile, "anytime."*

*I only realize we never gave each other our names when I arrive home.*

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I bite my lip and hesitate wondering what the message would say to make him frown. As soon as he finishes his coffee, he calls a waiter, asks for the check, and gets

up to leave. He hurries out of the cafe. I notice he's left his sketch book behind and I quickly go over and grab it.

I can't help myself, I open it and leaf through the pages. Beautiful landscapes meet my eyes, most of them made in pencil but some with charcoal and a few even have colour. And that's when I reach the last few pages. The pictures there are different drawings, they're not of a place but instead of a person.

They're sketches of a girl with long hair. She's smiling in all of the pictures, she's always sitting down. I stare at the drawings. There's a few and all of them are drawn in detail. I shake my head, thinking there must be some mistake because the young girl on the papers are all... me.

Me from years ago, before my family moved away from our old town. Back when I was fourteen years old. I blink, still staring at the pictures and then something jogs in my memory. About how I used to take the bus to go to school... when I met a boy who was the only person to ever listen...

I gasp, and look towards the door where the owner of the sketch book just rushed out. I quickly follow him out of the cafe, sketch book clutched tightly in my arms.

I look around wildly, hoping that he hasn't gone too far yet. I ask around to see if anyone's seen him and a street vendor tells me she saw him heading towards the train station a block away.

I quickly run to the station, just as I hear the whistle of the train about to start moving. I arrive and look around on the platform searching for him. I finally spot him boarding the train. I rush over and hurry in. I look for him and find him sitting near the back of the train next to the big windows, he's looking out of it clearly lost in thought.

*The next day, I smile and grab my sketch book as I rush out to get to the bus.*

*When I get there I smile when I see her but as soon as I do my smile slips away.*

*This time she's sitting at the very back of the bus and I can see the tears rolling down her cheeks. I go over and motion towards the empty seat next to her.*

*"Is this seat taken?" I ask.*

*She looks up at me startled and her mouth opens surprised. She quickly closes it and shakes her head moving her backpack off the seat so I can sit down.*

*"What happened?" I ask, after a few minutes.*

*She laughs a little bitterly, "my parents decided they want to move away from our entire lives, and didn't think to mention it until last night."*

*I feel my stomach drop. If she moves away then... that would mean I never see her again.*

*"I'm sorry," I say.*

*She shrugs and surprises me by leaning her head against my shoulder.*

*"I'm just kinda tired of pretending I'm ok I guess..." she whispers, "you know?"*

*I nod. We talk the whole ride on the bus. I find out she's leaving on Monday and tomorrow is the weekend so that means, today is the last time I'm seeing her. When the bus stops we both hesitate and then part, to our separate schools.*

*When Monday comes, for the first time ever, I wish I didn't have to take the bus. I leave my sketch book behind and put in my earphones to listen to music, sitting in my usual spot. I glance out the window and suddenly feel a tap on my shoulder.*

*I pull out an earphone and turn. I freeze when I see her.*

*"Is this seat taken?" she asks, smiling, and pointing to the seat next to mine.*

“I—uh—no,” I say quickly.

She sits down and I tilt my head.

“I thought you were leaving today?”

She nods, her smile fading. “I am but...” she hesitates, biting her lip, her cheeks turning a little pink, “This is kind of silly, but I wanted to see you again? I’m sorry that’s kinda—”

“I don’t think that’s silly,” I say, interrupting her, grinning.

She smiles back. As the bus slows to stop though, the silence grows heavy.

“This is me,” she says, her voice quiet. I nod, my smile slipping too.

She stands and takes a step toward the door, but I reach out and grab her hand, she turns to look at me, her eyes wide, and a little confused.

“It’s just...” I bite my lip, not ready to tell her the truth, changing my mind I quickly say, “You never told me your name.”

She smiles, “You never told me yours either.”

I open my mouth to tell her that it’s James, but she shakes her head.

“Don’t tell me. Not yet, but... how about if one day in the future, if we ever meet again, somehow, somehow— then you’ll tell me your name and I’ll tell you mine. Until then we’ll keep them a secret.”

I nod, “but how will we know if it’s us?” I ask.

She smiles, “We’ll know.”

With that she turns and gets off the bus. I sit there staring after her. As the bus starts up again, I finally smile and look out the window.

Someday I’ll know the name of the girl in my sketch book.

*Someday, somehow, someway.*

*I just know it.*

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I smile, my heart racing and slowly walk over to him.

“Is this seat taken?” I ask.

He glances at me and then does a double take, freezing. He shakes his head.

I sit down and hand him the sketch book, he wordlessly takes it and looks back up at me.

“You’re good at art,” I say, smiling, “You left that back at the cafe so I thought I’d give it back. My name’s Adallie by the way, but you can call me Addie, what’s your name?”

He grins, and that smile is unmistakable.

It’s *him*.

“That’s a very nice name you have, Adallie,” he says, his voice is deeper but I still recognize it, “I’m Jameson, but you can call me James.”