

Train Letter

To.....

By

Tricia Coxon

It was on the 10.46 that dullness left me. The train was busy, only one seat. You moved your laptop nearer to your side of the table. I smiled.

Busy, you said.

Yes. I replied.

Silence. Minutes passed. There are hints of dark amongst your greying hair. Looking up you smiled. Open. I open.

Come far? I asked.

You told me. A town in Yorkshire.

How lovely, I replied.

You know it?

Yes, the gardens, Turkish baths, a rather splendid cafe.

The space opens between my words and your grey tipped head. My hair belies my age, salt and pepper grey, there is no cover up. I am not heavily wrinkled, nor scrawny necked. I am filled out to what I used to be and slower, forgetting now where never before. Dulled with routine. The routine of age with no adventure. No spark, no sparkle. I eat well, and walk with purpose. Your shirt is open at the neck. Jacket sits loosely at your shoulders. I see you glance from me to the window. Laptop is dormant.

Day out? You asked.

An exhibition. Coffee. Probably lunch. I replied

Exhibition?

Yes, the Museum of Modern Art.

I used to live near there, near the Bridge.

I used to work near there.

I was a student. You smiled again.

I loved being a student.

Where were you a student?

Backwards and forwards, words. A light opens. It's been dark too long.

Here we are then, you said.

Already? Disappointment in my voice.

It's late. I will have to get a taxi. You packed up your laptop.

I thought we were on time, I said.

It was, till it stopped.

It stopped.

Yes, fifteen minutes.

Why had I not noticed that the train stopped? Where were my senses for fifteen whole minutes?

Goodbye, have a good day.

You too.

A smile as you move away. Then a backward glance. I peer out a window. No sighting. Gone. My heart has not stopped. It thumps inside my chest reminding me of life. Of a better life. Then I shiver against this encounter. Too reminding. Too reminiscent of losing control. But this is for now. Not then, nor forever.

Same time, same train. Same compartment. Same laptop.

Text Notes

But how does another writer think that the story develops? What questions could be asked?

Are the characters free to develop their relationship?

Does the powerful and immediate attraction change or develop into something more conventional or mundane? Or, is this impossible for one reason or another? Can such a relationship survive? What could happen to give the story more power and satisfy the reader? Is the relationship doomed, damned and dangerous or can desire win the day?