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Chasing Windmills



Par Catherine Ryan Hyde
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Par Catherine Ryan Hyde : Chasing Windmills before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chasing Windmills:

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurSebastian, at 17, has never eaten pizza, never been to school, never even hung out with other kids. He rides the subway at night to escape his father's strict, possessive parenting.Maria, 22 and mother to two young children, has just lost her job. Afraid to confess to her violent boyfriend, Maria resorts to riding the subway when he thinks she's at work.And then one night, on an empty train, Sebastian and Maria make eye contact . . .ExtraitThis is the part thats going to be hard to explain: How can I tell you why two people who were afraid of everythingother people, open places, noise, confusion, life itselfwound up riding the subways alone under Manhattan late at night?Okay, its like this: When everything is unfamiliar and scary, your heart pounds just getting change from the grocery cashier. That feels like enough to kill you

right there. So the danger of the subways at night cant be much worse. All danger begins to fall into the same category. You have no way to sink any deeper into fear. Besides, consider the alternative. Staying home. Thats enough about that for now. I need to tell you about her. She got on the Lexington Avenue Local at what was it? I think Union Square. Funny how a thing like that can be so damned important, but you dont know its important until an instant later in the big scheme of time. Then you go back and try to retrieve it. You tell yourself its in there somewhere. But its really in that no-mans-land of the moment before you woke up and started paying attention to your own life. Im pretty sure it was Union Square. At first we looked at each other for a split second, but of course we looked away immediately. Its part of what makes us like the animals, I suppose. Ever seen two dogs circling to fight? They look right into each others eyes. Its a challenge. So when a dog doesnt want to challenge anybody, he looks away. In case I havent made it clear by now, we were two dogs who werent looking for a fight. But then, after we both looked away, we werent afraid of each other anymore. We knew we didnt have to be. I mean, except to the extent that we were afraid of everything. There was no one else on the car. It rumbled along again, with that special rocking, and the clacking noise, the lights flashing off now and then. And the heat. It was only May, but the heat had started early. It was after midnight, so I guess youd think it was all cooled off by then, but it wasnt. A little bit cooler up on the street. Not so much down there. It was stuffy, like more air would be nice. Every now and then wed hear a noise that could have been somebody opening the door from another car. And wed jump in unison, and look up. But it was never anybody. Just the two of us all the way to the end of the line. Once I looked over at her while she was looking away. Her hair was dark and thick and about down to her shoulders. Her face was thin, like the rest of her. I couldnt figure out if there was something angular about her face, or something almost delicate. Maybe both. I was trying to get a bead on how old she was. Older than me, thats for sure. I mean, she was a full-grown woman. But young enough, I guess. But maybe old compared to me. Early twenties. Every inch of her was covered. Except her face. Jeans, boots, some kind of shawl thing wrapped around her. Seemed like too much to wear in that heat. And a hat. She was wearing a hat over all that dark hair. A gray felt thing with a big brim. So all she had to do was dip her head an inch or two, and she was gone again. She could break off eye contact just like that. It seemed like such a great plan. I wondered why Id never thought of it myself. And on one cheek, a dark spot. Not exactly a bruise, but something like one. Like a shadow. Like shed had some sort of an accident. I think I remember feeling that it was a lovely face, but maybe Im adding that in after the fact. Its hard to go back and describe what you thought of such an important face the first time you saw it. The memory gets colored with all those other things you felt later on. Its hard to separate them out again. But whatever I thought about her face, I noticed it. And it held me. Then she looked up and I quick looked away. At the end of the line, we both waited. And neither one of us got off the train. You see, it says a lot about someone when they dont get off at the end of the line. When they just sit there with the doors open until the train starts back the other way. Right back toor past where they started out in the first place. That says a lot. After the train started back up again, she looked right into my eyes. She didnt look away and neither did I. Something happened in me. Im not sure how good Ill be at explaining what it was. But it was an actual physical something. Something in my body. And Im not going to go into any personal information about certain body reactions, because some things Im just not comfortable discussing. Some things a gentleman doesnt talk about. Or, anyway, thats what I believe. But something happened in my gut. Like all of a sudden something that used to be solid in there turned to water. Hot water. In my arms, too, around my elbows. And a little bit down my legs. Especially around my knees. I remembered hearing an expression about being weak in the knees, and I guess I understood it for the first time. And there was a tingling associated with all this. A kind of all-over tingling, but mostly in my face. Which felt a little hot, like it might be turning red. Then it was too much and we both looked away again. But not the same way we had before. We rode like that for another hour or so, and never looked at each other after that. I wanted to look, but I couldnt bring myself to do it. Then I woke up which was weird because Id never felt myself go to sleep and I was on that subway car by myself, and she was gone. I looked at my watch, and it was after three. All I could think was that I wanted to talk to Delilah about this. About what had just happened. But, what had just happened? What was I supposed to say? There was this woman on the subway, and she looked at me. But in the few weeks Id been talking to Delilah, every time I told her something Id been feeling, she seemed to know what that feeling was. It made me seem almost normal. ***When I got home, the apartment was dark and quiet, and of course my father was asleep. I came in on my tiptoes, even though its pretty hard to wake him after hes taken his sleeping pill. Youd almost have to be trying. But I was careful all the same. I looked at myself in my bathroom mirror. I wanted to look

at myself the way someone else would look at me. I wanted to see what she saw. I discovered something strange about myself in that moment. The moment I caught my own eyes in the mirror, I looked away. It was hard to force myself to look at myself. I wasn't bad to look at. It wasn't that. I wasn't the handsomest guy in the world, but I wasn't ugly. I guess I thought I looked fine. But it was almost as though I'd never really looked into my own eyes before. Like it was as hard to look at myself as it was to look at somebody else. And I wasn't sure what that meant. Unless it meant I was the kind of dog who didn't even want to challenge myself. In the morning, I came to the breakfast table, and my father was staring at me. Taking my emotional temperature, as I like to put it. He only looked away once, to look at his watch. That was his way of telling me I'd slept too long. If he only knew. Then he went back to scrutinizing me again. I hate that. It makes me feel like I guess a worm must feel when some fisherman is about to stick him on a hook. Like you want to get away, but there's no way to get away, so you just squirm. It's no use, but you do it anyway. He said, Good morning, Sebastian. I said, Good morning, Father. I know how weird that sounds, but that's what I have to call him. He's not into any of that Dad or Pop stuff. I'm Sebastian, all three syllables every time, and he's Father.

And that's not negotiable. That is one of any number of things that are not negotiable. He was wearing his glasses at the table, his weird little round wire-rimmed glasses. All the better to stare at me, I suppose. And some of his hair was spilling down over his forehead. His hair was curly and a little unruly, like mine, but gray. Suddenly, it seemed. Almost as if every morning you could see how much grayer it was than the day before. And he was still studying me. It was as if he could see that something had changed in me. It was horrifying. What? I said, finally, when I couldn't take it anymore. You seem different. I don't feel different, I said. Lying. You seem different. Different how? I'm not sure. Like you were happy or excited about something. Ah, yes. That. The sin of being happy or excited. According to my father, we must guard carefully against such things. According to my father, these emotions are the equivalent of dancing on our fifth-floor window ledge. Clearly inviting a nasty fall. Well, I'm not, I said. Hoping that would be the end of it. It wasn't. I think you're taking too much sleep, he said. Sleep is good for you. You can tell because I've been so healthy. Think how long it's been since I've been sick. It's the running, if you ask me, and plenty of sleep. There's still such a thing as too much. I shifted tactics in mid-stream. I was up late last night. I couldn't sleep. Didn't get to sleep until after three... From Publishers Weekly

In the simple and captivating latest from Pay It Forward author Hyde, a chance encounter proves life-changing for two lonely New York City subway riders. Four months shy of 18, Sebastian Mundt has been held a virtual prisoner by his father since his mother died: his father home-schools him and doesn't let him have outside relationships. One night, with his father heavily sedated by his sleeping pill, Sebastian sneaks out to ride the subway and locks eyes with Maria Arquette, a young mother who is caught in an abusive marriage. The two share an instant connection and take to meeting on the subway almost nightly and tentatively planning a future in the California desert town that Sebastian remembers from childhood, where thousands of windmills stretch out across the horizon. Hyde gracefully alternates between Sebastian's and Maria's perspectives with gentle nods to this New York love story's precursors (Maria obsessively watches *West Side Story*). It is their voices at once utterly credible and heartbreakingly naive that make the book, and while this is being billed as an adult novel, its closest stylistic relative is S.E. Hinton's YA classic *The Outsiders*. (Mar.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.