

11:00 PM, Tuesday Evening.

“*Exactly* on time. I don't know how you do it, Walter,” said Robert Dickens. He was Walter's boss, the manager of the Grand Central Station Third Shift Custodial Staff, although they were often crassly referred to simply as 'night janitors.' Walter simply smiled and opened his locker, retrieving his mop and the dark blue uniform he and his coworkers were known for, exiting the break room without a word to begin another night on the job.

Walter Fontsend fancied himself a perfectionist, though not a soul would have guessed it by looking at him. He was a short, paunchy man with a round face and pale skin. His eyes and hair were the same shade of grey, which was unusual for a man of thirty-six. Perhaps his most captivating features were the bags under his eyes – they were a light, sickly shade of purple and ended abruptly above his cheekbones. Walter was not very well-off, a fact that could easily be discerned by a quick glance around his apartment. The tidiness of the two-room suite could not disguise the shabbiness of the furniture, the dust settling on the untouched kitchen, or the slow peeling of the paint. There was only one thing in the apartment of any value: a table next to Walter's bed, originally his dining table, that had been transformed into a miniature world of model trains. The setup was astounding, there was a town, a river, and a mountain somehow crammed onto a three-by-five sheet of plywood. Walter's meticulous attention to detail, however, made the world seem real enough that it seemed all a person had to do was touch the table and they would shrink down and become a part of this miniature world.

2:26 AM, Wednesday Morning.

Katherine Hendrickson looked up from her netbook just long enough to verify that this wasn't her stop – she still had three to go to get to Grand Central. It was around two thirty in the morning, and

the 304 train was nearly deserted. Katherine, or Kat as her friends called her, was an intern at a hospital in Manhattan, studying to become a doctor, not a nurse - she was quite against the gender stereotyping of doctors and nurses. Kat spent the next fifteen minutes recording her video log on the netbook's webcam before the train rolled into Grand Central. She shoved her laptop into her bag and stepped out onto the platform. As the train pulled away, she caught sight of *him* on the opposite side of the tracks. He was a janitor, the mop and blue uniform gave that away, and while Kat had nothing against janitors, this one had made a habit of staring at her. It wasn't that she wasn't used to catching the occasional gawker – as a tall, athletic girl with dirty blonde hair, Kat cut an impressive figure – it was that the starers usually dropped their gaze after she drilled them with her piercing blue eyes. This man, however, had called her bluff. He'd drilled her right back, and she'd been the one to drop her gaze first. She felt her cheeks burn as she started up the stairs, his eyes still burning into her back, and she had half a mind to turn back and tell him *just* what she thought of his manners. She was already low on sleep though, and besides, he was probably gone by now. “*Next time,*” she thought, “*I'm going straight to his boss about this.*”

10:32 PM, Wednesday Evening

Walter's room was entirely dark except for one small haven of light in the corner – the train table. Walter was usually careful to keep the area lit during the day and dark at night so the tiny model people that dotted the map could maintain a normal sleep schedule, but he hadn't had much time to watch them as of late and was feeling deprived. The models, it seemed, were feeling deprived as well, and the people yearned for change, for some meaning to their lives of lead paint and plastic. That, Walter thought, he could not give them, but what he *could* give them was another nurse to their understaffed county hospital. He had wanted to wait until the blonde girl was through with medical school, or whatever sort of school nurses went to, but his injured citizens demanded a healer, and plus,

when she graduated she would probably not have to take the night train anymore. That would make *retrieving* her much more difficult. Walter said one last goodbye to his beloved train table before he set off for work – for tonight he had *quite* the workload planned.

12:36 AM, Thursday Morning

Kat strode past the staring janitor and onto the 304 train, walking with the grace that seems to come naturally to one who has just found love. The janitor could stare all he wanted, she didn't care, she hadn't paid for a *single* drink at the bar earlier – they'd all been sponsored by *Rob Phillman*, the quarterback for the NYU Bobcats, and quite possibly the cutest guy in the city, as far as Kat and her friends were concerned. They were going to be *so* jealous when they found out she had a date with him Friday – just one more day! As she sent out a frantic round of capitalized text messages on her phone, she failed to notice that the janitor had boarded the car behind hers, and was fixated on the rail map on the opposite wall. All she could think about was how long work would seem now that she had something to look forward to tomorrow night.

1:57 AM, Thursday Morning

Katherine Hendrickson left work, exhausted but still upbeat, and boarded the 304 train to Grand Central.

2:14 AM, Thursday Morning

Nobody knows exactly what went wrong with the 304 train on thursday morning en route to Grand Central. It appeared that the gentleman in charge of switching the rails had died of a sudden heart failure, but he was set in his old-fashioned ways and always kept the lens cap on his office security camera, so nobody can really be sure. At any rate, the rails had been switched entirely wrong,

and they sent the 304 train careening into a stockyard, where it derailed and smashed into a large pile of steel pipes at forty-six miles per hour. Authorities rushed to the scene, and helped a dazed but unhurt collection of four people off of the unlucky train. They insisted there had been a fifth – a tall blonde girl who was studying to be a nurse or something – but they were ignored due to their obvious trauma, so nobody looked under the rear-facing handicapped seat, where Kat's netbook had flown and become wedged during the crash. If the authorities had found it, they would have been quite interested with what they had seen on the last few seconds of Kat's video log.

2:22 AM, Thursday Morning

Walter Fondsend leaves work early. He attributes his departure to a sudden feeling of illness.

2:46 AM, Thursday Morning

Walter's train table receives a new nurse.

11:26 PM, SaturdayNight

Walter Fondsend sweeps up a “Missing Person” poster laying on the floor. Torn and wrinkled, it was difficult to discern the name and image of the unlucky person, but a set of careful eyes could make out the likeness of Katherine Hendrickson; for whom an assortment of posters was printed so that they could be put up and ignored by people from all walks of life.