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Waiting

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WAITING

ALEXIS BROWN

“Thinking about someone special?” a young woman with big round brown hazel eyes asked me as I sat waiting for my time to come. I didn’t really have anything else to think about while I sat on the old moldy looking chair inside the 36B Airport Terminal. All I could replay in my mind was the thought of my wife smiling at me when I finally got home. That is, if I ever got home. I looked at the monitor sitting above the flight attendant’s kiosk and checked the status of my flight. Delayed, it said in big flashing red letters, ask attendant for further information. Again? I couldn’t help but let a heavy sigh escape from my lips; I just want to go home. I smiled back politely at the woman with the big round eyes and walked to the desk.

“Sir?” a small woman asked enthusiastically from behind the large blue kiosk, “is there anything that I can help you with?”

“I was just wondering when my flight was coming in. Flight 236?”

“Oh,” she said, crinkling her nose in distaste, “it’s stuck around Albuquerque in an ice storm,” she replied.

“Ice storm? That doesn’t sound right,” I answered quizzically. At least I didn’t think it was right.

“But I have good news, we can route you through Peoria instead.” She punched at her keyboard for a minute. “Done, hop on and enjoy your flight.”

For a brief moment, I considered just leaving the whole airport scene and just taking the Greyhound, but no, that was silly, and it was so much faster to travel by air. When I arrived in Peoria, I couldn’t help but notice that the strange fact that this airport looked nearly identical to the one before it. I sat in a new moldy seat and looked up at the

monitor. Delayed again. A fuzzy thought washed over me as I tried to remember exactly how long I had been wandering the airport terminals.

“Hey stranger,” I heard a voice say, “I guess our paths were meant to cross again.” The woman with the big round hazel eyes smiled at me and I wondered what the odds that we see each other again would be.

“On your way home?” she asked.

“My wife is waiting for me. She said she was going to make me dinner, but I’m sure now that it’s long cold,” I paused for a moment, noting the florescent world that I couldn’t escape. “Do you ever feel like you might be stuck in one place?”

She snorted and then that turned into a laugh, “All the time! You should talk to these guys,” she pointed to several figures sitting across from us, “they’ve been here for ages.”

When she brought attention to the people sitting across from us, it was like a slap in the face. I couldn’t remember how long it had been since I had seen people in the airport, like an eternity. I can’t believe I hadn’t noticed this before when the woman with the hazel eyes talked to me. Then I noticed something strange. The woman waved to

them and they didn't even respond.

"They're just shy, let me introduce you," she raised the arm of a blonde woman who had a perpetual look empty look on her face. "This lovely suburban mom is Dana, 31, married, not that it matters, and has a fun hobby that includes acrotomophilia." Off my look of confusion she explains, "Let's just say that Dana here can't look a gift amputee in the mouth. Well, maybe a little, I suppose it depends on what she's doing with them at the time. Veterans are her favorite."

"This," she steps over to the older man, "is Bernard, that's all he told me, but for some reason he's holding all his teeth in his right hand." I look and see dried blood caked

around his clenched fingers and decide that he's a friend I'd rather not have.

"What about you? Are you like..." these freaks? I think to myself.

"No, no. I've always been here, waiting," she replied.

"I don't think that I belong here," I said almost to myself. I tried to think back, when was the last time I'd been home? I couldn't remember. How long had I been in this place? And then I tried to think of her, my wife. She was lost long a sea of lost memories and doubt.

"You can leave when you want and be done with this, just walk out that door," I stood up and walked over toward the sliding glass doors as they opened in front of me, "but I really think you should know, the outside is a scary place. You might not like what you see." I took a step and placed a foot outside of the terminal and a bright white light engulfed me, causing me to remember.

I remembered how annoyed I was when I realized that I'd forgotten my cell at home. I was thinking she'd be mad at me if I just came home late from work without calling ahead. She said it startled her. I walked into the door and I see clothes strewn about. A man's clothes. I then walk upstairs and see the covers moving, thrusting, and dancing in a frenzy of passion. Passion I thought she had for me. They don't see me, but

it sees them. The cold metal roaring in my hand.

This is a world that feels too much. I know now that I don't want to ever go home. I take a step back from the door and that world, and they slide close in my face. I sit down next to terminal 36B and look up at the monitor. Delayed, it said in big flashing letters, ask attendant for further information. I allow the sea of disbelief and denial wash over again, and I wait.