

Bourne
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creative writing
workshops

Last Station

a timed exercise

by Mia Sundby

"Don't worry Sandi," said Terrey, as the train lurched forwards, "as long as you get to the office before Caren, you'll destroy that letter and she'll never know."

Sandi grimaced. She only hoped Terrey was right. Planting her feet, Sandi pushed against the jolt of the train car as gravity attempted to throw everyone inside to the carpeted floor. She stumbled, her blood-slick boots slipping. Her overcoat snapped taught around her as Terrey grabbed the back of it to keep her upright.

"Thank you," she muttered over her shoulder at the tall, heavily-built man.

Terrey nodded. "Don't mention it."

Sandi would add it to the list of things she shouldn't mention today.

The train car exploded in chaos around them. Lamps bolted into the wood-panelled walls flickered, passengers screamed, some leaping from their seats to rush towards the connecting doors in search of answers and some sense of productivity, whilst others clenched the leather of the car seats with white knuckles.

"My only concern," Sandi called over her shoulder, as the screaming grew louder and the roar of air rushing past the train rose to an almost deafening pitch, "Is that it might be difficult--"

Terrey leaned closer, frowning. "Pardon?" He yelled.

Sandi shouted back, "It might be more difficult to get to the office now!"

Terrey nodded. "Is that because we're plummeting towards a cliff?"

"Precisely!"

"Well, old bean," Terrey grinned. Sandi noted the slight sheen of grim hysteria in his eyes, and wondered if her own expression reflected it back. "I'll see you this morning!"

The train skittered, rocking violently. It had reached the partially-constructed railway bridge, then. The driver was no doubt drinking, as he had been yesterday, and hadn't paid attention to the rail switch some two miles back. Sandi would have to remind Terrey to hide the driver's whisky flask tomorrow.

Around them, passengers began sobbing as well as screaming. A few of the gentlemen inside the car had begun attempting to launch any objects of significant weight at the windows. One of them smashed. Sandi looked away before she watched them kill themselves in a slightly different way.

It had been the same yesterday. And the day before. And the day before that.

It would be the same tomorrow.

It would be the same today.

Tilting her head, Sandi smiled at Terrey. "I'll meet you at the train station?" She yelled over the rucuss.

Terrey nodded, a dimple appearing in his cheek as he looked at her. "I look forward to it."

At last, the train collided with the lake.

Sandi gazed at a snail making its way across the train window.

"Excuse me, terribly sorry, old bean." A familiar voice muttered as an elderly man nearly dropped his battered suitcase on Terrey's shiny shoes. There was no blood on them this morning, Sandi noted as she turned around.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, young man--" The old man sputtered.

Terrey squeezed the man's shoulder with a friendly grin. "Don't worry, old bean, don't worry. Mind the dog."

The man's wrinkled features furrowed. "Mind the--?"

Terrey sat down just as the yappy white lapdog a few seats down began to growl at the old man.

Sandi smiled as Terrey seated himself opposite her. Setting his hat down on the lacquered wooden table between them, he inclined his head.

"Good morning."

"Good morning, Terrey." Removing her gloves, she opened her little leather diary. Before this bizarre time loop, it had contained dates and times for work meetings, for family engagements and lunches with friends.

Now, it contained notes.

She dragged a finger to the first one. It read, 'stop Caren.'

Sandi glanced up at her time loop companion and smiled. "Ready for another day?"

He sighed. "Always."