

Olivia Seger

RESTLESS

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1

This is my story. However, I would like to give you a warning in advance. If you expect some momentous events, lyrical treats, and life-changing wisdom or even some sort of logical conclusion, I'm afraid to disappoint you, because this is simply a story about a somewhat chaotic girl with a particular fondness for Camel filter cigarettes...

With quick, somewhat clumsy steps, I trudged through the deserted streets. No wonder, it was six o'clock in the morning and Mother Holle would do her best. At this time of the day and in this weather, you wouldn't even send a dog out the door. Hastily I pulled my scarf up to better protect myself from another approaching gust of wind. At last, and through the snow flurries, I could make out the large glowing letters that formed the word train station. I slowed my pace. A glance at my watch told me that I had reached my destination far too early. Again. Annoyed, I bounced from one foot to the other in an attempt to beat the creeping cold. After what felt like ages, the

longed-for lights of the locomotive finally lit up. Searching, I let my eyes roam over the wagons, but nothing was happening. I grumpily pulled open the first door I came across (Yes, you read that right, my story takes place in the 90s of the last century, thus there were no automatic doors in the trains back then.) and rushed inside. With each compartment I trudged through in vain, my bad mood increased. Finally, after umpteen carriages, my search had come to an end. Annoyed, I threw my bag on the bench in front of me and settled down on the more or less soft cushion. Shortly thereafter, I lit a cigarette, (Smoking was also still allowed on the train at that time. A privilege, which in my opinion, could have been preserved by all means...) to calm down a bit. My seat neighbor stretched and looked at me sleepily. Startled he looked up.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, somewhat dully.

"Well, what do you think?"

"Is it that late already? I thought I'd take a nap until your stop...must have overslept."

"Sure looks like it."

"Well, not a big surprise, in this sort of weather!" With a wave of his hand, he gestured out the window and for a moment I

watched the drifting snow before my eyes fell back on my counterpart. We had known each other since we were born. And this wasn't even a lie because our mothers had been in the maternity ward at the same time. Slany, however, was born three days before me. He was earlier, but I was faster. The latter had not changed until today. Nineteen years had passed since then, but in that long time there had hardly been a day without us seeing each other. Some people believed that we were brother and sister, others believed that we made a perfect couple. But that's maybe a different story...

"How are things with Edwin?" Slany snapped me out of my thoughts and looked at me questioningly. I had to stifle a laugh because his cynical undertone had not gone unnoticed.

"Nothing... Haven't heard from him in a while." It was the same thing time after time. Over and over again, we swore to each other to allow ourselves absolute freedom when it came to the matter of love. Which worked out pretty well. At least until one of us started a new relationship....

"Come on sweetie, pack your things, we've got to get out." We left the train and I strolled

behind my friend. Lost in thought, I reached into my bag to pull out one of my most beloved Camel filters. At the same moment I gasped in shock, threw my bag into the snow, and rushed back into the carriage. I managed to get out just as the train had started moving again. Slany shook his head with a grin. We walked the everyday way to the university in silence. Once at the entrance, we said our goodbyes, as from then on, we parted ways. I shuffled down the colorless hallway. Somehow everything seemed a bit bleak to me. Why on earth was I sitting in this dungeon day after day? I had asked myself this question more than once in recent times. But it was too late. I had decided to study psychology and now I had to go through with it willy-nilly. At least until I had a better idea. Initially, I was really looking forward to my studies. Finally, I could devote myself to what I was interested in and no longer had to deal with things that I found boring as hell. But in the meantime, it had turned out to be not as great as I had originally envisioned. Slany was completely different in this respect. He literally flourished with his study of history. Those 'old stories', as he used to say, fascinated him. His enthusiasm was so great that he even

managed to cheer me up a little when I happened to be feeling down again.

"Violet!" A shrill voice jolted me out of my thoughts. I slowed my pace but didn't turn around. After all, what was the point... There was only one person who could manage to pronounce my name as wrong as it could be. "So, did you ask him?" She looked at me expectantly. I nodded lamely and at the same moment a happy glow swept across my counterpart's face. Lisa was undoubtedly as beautiful as it gets. Should one ever consider undergoing plastic surgery, one would not have been ill-served to have given the doctor a picture of her as a blueprint. Similarly, the male species felt that she was well worth sinning for. I knew no one in the world who could resist her. Although, that wasn't quite true. Lisa had set her mind on charming Slany with her piercing voice, but apparently Cupid's arrow had not yet reached him. And so, she decided without further ado to take matters into her own hands. Which in this case meant that she approached the best friend of the victim, pardon, the adored one in question. In which case, that was me.

"And? What did he say?" Curious, she pressed herself against me in the lecture hall.

"He was all smiles."

"And what else?" God, she sure fell for him. What was I supposed to answer her? That Slany had been flattered, but his interest was merely tending toward zero? For me, it seemed a bit harsh to say this straight to her face. But before I could think of the right words, our professor entered the room and was about to begin the lecture.



Lost in thought, I sat in the cafeteria. What was I going to do with my life? Was being a shrink really the way to fulfillment? If only I had an answer to this question. All morning I had been completely absent-minded, as those nerve-wracking thoughts had been running through my mind over and over again. The only thing I knew for sure was that if there wasn't something radical or groundbreaking happening any time soon, I was no longer able to guarantee for anything in the future.

"Man, Violet, I've got something totally crazy to tell you!" Slany, beaming, threw himself onto the vacant chair next to me. Puzzled, I looked at him. "I got a job during my semester break. Now guess where?" Dispassionately, I

shrugged my shoulders. "In London! Well, what do you say?"

"Great!", I replied, my statement sounding more like a stale statement which had Slany frowning at me.

"Is something wrong with you? You look like you got stuck in seven days of rainy weather."

"What?" I was visibly still not mentally present but only physically. Slany shook his head and rose again.

"Let me know when you're responsive again." I nodded mechanically. So now, it wasn't enough that I couldn't cope with myself, no, the whole universe had to add one more matter on top of it. My best friend simply walked out of my life and left me alone. Thanks for nothing. I felt rejected by the whole world. Yes, I was good at bathing in self-pity. I pulled a cigarette out of my pocket and lit it. But even this seemed to have conspired against me because it just would not light. After the third attempt I gave up. It became more than obvious that something was going on.



I was lying on my bed and staring out the window. The snowfall had turned into rain and the drops were now slapping so loudly against the windows that I could no longer understand my own words. It almost seemed as if they were asking to be let in. Who knows, maybe these drops were enchanted people who could only return to their normal form when they were let into the warmth. Inspired by the thought, I jumped up and opened the window. Immediately, the cool wet dripped onto the floor, where a small lake formed within a few minutes. In vain I waited for something to happen. (For example, that one of the drops turned into a beautiful prince). Sullenly, I gave the window a shove and crawled under my covers. Before my imagination could get the better of me again, there was a knock at the door and Slany poked his head in.

"Hey sweetie, are you feeling better?" I nodded, but I guess it didn't seem that convincing. "Now come on, lighten up a bit." He threw himself down on the bed next to me with gusto. He was trying his best to put me in a better mood. But the attempt was about the same as teaching a cow to fly. "Relax." Slany began to massage my back. That had always

worked so far. In fact, I became a little more sociable. I even let myself be persuaded to tell him what was bothering me.

"Well, don't take this too seriously. I'll only be gone for three months." Again, this was so typical! He didn't get what it was all about at all. Why the hell did men always think that everything had to be about them? Annoyed, I got up and trudged to the kitchen to make myself a hot chocolate. Slany probably thought it best to not follow me. I sat in front of my cup for about half an hour when I heard footsteps in the hallway.

"Gotta leave again!" Before he even finished the sentence, the door slammed shut from outside. Gone he was. But it did not bother me much. On the contrary. I didn't feel like having more of these little chats anyway.



The sun tried without success to dispel the wintry cold. I leaned against the banister and dreamed of distant places with my eyes closed. I was lying on a beach and enjoying myself.

"What cloud are you floating on now?" Slany's voice brought me back to reality.

"Destroyer!", I hissed at him, to which he merely grinned. "Can we go now?" I picked up my backpack from the floor.

"No, I promised Pat I'd wait for him."

"Pat? Pat who?" In my mind I was rattling off all the names and faces, but a Pat could not be found by any stretch of the imagination.

"He's only been studying here for a week...", Slany reassured me. "...and also needs to head our way."

"And..."

"He studied at Oxford first, but then... Ah, here he comes, now you can ask him anything you want to know yourself." Slany pointed to the front door, where a lanky guy with glasses was just stepping out. I couldn't help laughing. Slany poked me in the ribs, which I also promptly choked on.

"May I introduce Pat to you?" By now he had joined the two of us. "Pat, this is Violet, the greatest girl anywhere around." I had halfway recovered and even managed a croaky 'hello'. But at the same moment, another coughing fit struck me. Pat handed me his Coke. Gratefully, I took a sip and calmed down again.

"That's our Violet in the flesh. She always has to put on a little show." Slany grinned, to

which I gave him a punishing look.

"Well, now that we've got everything sorted out, we can finally get going, can we?"

"It's certainly not up to ME, sweetie." Now, that was enough. I glared at him punitively, and as I did so, his glazed eyes caught mine.

"Oh my goodness, what's wrong with your eyes? Do you have an infection?" Score one to zero in my favor, buddy. I knew full well how he hated being embarrassed in public, and that's exactly what I had accomplished. Smugly, I grinned at him. In return, he angrily glared at me and stomped away.

"Suit yourself, but aren't you forgetting something?" Abruptly he stopped, turned, and without words snatched his bag from my hand.

"Take it easy, make a point and... smoke a joint! " I just couldn't help it.



"Knock, knock, anyone home?" Cautiously, I opened the door.

"Go away!"

"Oh, is my little teddy bear still mad?" Sulking, Slany sat on his sofa, staring at the TV screen. I sat down next to him. A few minutes

passed without anyone saying a word. Then I got bored. Cautiously, I crawled forward until I was sitting directly in front of him. He tried to ignore me, but I made a bunch of faces until he finally had to laugh uncontrollably.

"So, friends again?" I held out my hand to him conciliatory. Yielding, Slany chimed in.

"Actually, I wanted to surprise you today. But I guess I'll have to reconsider."

"What is it? Come on Slany, don't make me suffer!" But he remained steadfast. "Oh you... please, please, tell me." Theatrically, I fell to my knees in front of him.

"No." He took full advantage of my curiosity. "What are you offering?" So, that's how it was supposed to go down now. No problem, he could demand whatever he wanted.

"Anything you want, great master. But please, don't keep teasing me." My whining finally seemed to show some effect.

"O.k. it's all right. I've got a job for you in England. Am I the greatest, or not?" Slany enjoyed the role of benefactor. I turned pale; I was speechless. I had really not expected this. All of a sudden, I seemed to understand, and I stormily fell around Slany's neck. After I had overcome the first shock, I found my voice again.

"How in the world did you manage this?"

"Well, you know, I got some connections here and there." Slany pushed his chin forward in a ceremonially self-important way, which honestly looked pretty stupid. I had to laugh.

"So, so, your connections. And who would that be?"

"Won't tell." He tapped my nose with his pointing finger.

"All right, then at least tell me what your mystery job is all about." Slany took a deep breath.

"Well, you know, there's a lot on offer these days, so of course it takes flair to find the right one. After several searches..."

"Slany! Get to the point!"

"You got a job in a bar. It was the obvious thing to do since you've been bartending at Blades for some time."

"Sounds tempting."

"It not only sounds like it, but it really is. Pat told me it was a top-notch place." I smiled. Slany was the greatest guy on earth after all. Who would have bothered to look for a job for someone else? When you got right down to it, people had a point. The two of us just belonged together. Although I didn't want to

admit it to myself, I was very attached to Slany. I felt abandoned when he was sick. The three months would have been pure torture for me. Which should not mean, of course, that I cowered immediately, if my best friend was not there. On the contrary. I was one of those people that everyone respected and liked. But although I got along well with all of them, none of them could replace Slany. We were a crazy couple. And now we were going to London together. I still couldn't believe it. In the back of my mind there was still the thought that I was just dreaming all of this and that I was going to wake up at any given moment. Three months in England, three months of absolute fun. So many times, we had dreamed of hanging out together at Picadilly Circus (don't ask me why of all places exactly there) and now it was actually about to come true.

