

Red Can't Even Grab a Starbucks

by Steven Gowin

Red stops me in French in Saint Lazare. I'm carrying a Starbucks.

Her accent's worse than mine, but her grammar's better... She has auburn hair, the thick rich kind. She's slim and tall, sure of herself, but a little rushed... She carries her baby, an almost newborn baby, in a harness over her breast.

Where did I find my Starbucks? she asks, and I answer in English. Walk across the square there, near the Metro stairs... just beside the hotel... three minutes, that's all. There's another around the corner, just around the corner. They're everywhere now.

Now I see the husband ahead of her, a big French type not walking with her, but walking ahead of her. I see his look, his impatient look. I know the type. You meet the type sooner or later. He's not all French men, but he's a type of French man... the always right type.

She's living here now, she says, and can't find a Starbucks in her neighborhood, can't find one anywhere, and can't spend five minutes to walk to the square to find one now, and I see he can't wait for her, has already waited too much, he thinks.

And I see that she'll do her best, is doing her best... that she's dreamt the dream..... the charming husband... life here... all of this, after all. But she bears too much already.

The end's already begun; Red can't even grab a Starbucks.

