

Somewhere

by stephen hastings-king

He gambles even though he always loses and drinks even though alcohol makes his legs cramp. He has a much younger wife who doesn't care about him anymore. And he knows it. But still...but still when she whispers that going out now might put her in the mood later he unties from his mooring and sets them both drifting toward the gin-splintered latitudes. He watches her teeter across the suite toward the bedroom and envisions sunrise sex against a window that overlooks the city. But he knows the intimacy will not last, that their mutual orgasms or losses of interest will begin his slide back to being an old and outgrown thing. He lights a cigarette. This game is different than he had imagined. He blows smoke off the balcony. This game is already over.

They find themselves outside the hotel in the cold and rain waiting to be taken to a Somewhere. She is elegantly shattered and giddy. He looks for a taxi to emerge from inside concentric smears of streetlights. So occupied with themselves are they that when a cab pulls over to pick up an elderly gentleman leaning on a cane in front of them, they do not hesitate to take it. An elderly gentleman is no match for his daydreams of desire and her boozy insouciance. Soon the light that made him visible at all is moving away, caught in the constellation of her gems.

As they pull off the back compartment fills with the choral music that streams from the driver's cassette player. Her face momentarily disappears through the hole cut into the plexiglass then she falls back against the seat. She leans her head against his shoulder and closes her eyes. He focuses on the singing. It seems familiar, a segment of the past he cannot locate. He looks through networks of refractions on the window toward the canyons of light. He wonders where they are going. It doesn't really matter.

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