

GARE DU NORD

By

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Characters

David and Tyler

Gare du Nord Station, Platform 2, Paris'

David (32) and Tyler (31) are sitting next to each other on a lonely bench. It is cold and icy. David is downing a bottle of water, Tyler is smoking a cigarette knowing full well that he is not allowed to smoke but he does not care. Both of them have been stranded for three days. David stands up and begins to speak to the audience:

David: I'm telling you, this snow and ice, the delay, and me feeling queasy are all a sign. You know those days when you feel that God is giving you a message?

Pause

That guy sitting over there is my best friend Tyler. We came to Paris to see our old friend, Ken, someone we grew up with in London. He had just heard the news; the news that I'm getting married next summer; getting married to Tyler's cousin.

I know I have been saying for years that I ought to grow up, that I ought to commit; that the time is right for me to settle down. And Suzy is great, heck; she's his cousin and one of the best girls in the world. She's beautiful, intelligent, classy, doesn't snore, she can cook an amazing omelette and she sticks to her opinions; it's all good in my books. The most important thing is that she loves me, really she truly does. Every time we meet it's like she has never seen me before. And she always says '*please*' and '*thank you*' for everything even if it's simply buying her some toothpaste from Boots.

Thing is, I have to tell Tyler something and I know he is not going to like it.

Pause.

I've cheated on her. Wait a second, hear me out guys. I have cheated on her on numerous occasions. With hookers; that's right, I have paid to have sex with other women. I discovered it just about six months ago in Soho. You know those doors that lead to some stairs and on the side of the wall it says 'Models 1st and 2nd floor'? Well up there are hookers, loads of them. From all over the world; Spanish, Polish, Italian, Japanese, Europeans, South Americans, black, white, you name it. You can find whatever you want. And some of them are real fine. Most of them are nothing on Suzy but some of them would give Hugh Hefner a heart attack. And it's twenty quid a pop. Twenty bloody quid; I spend more on food in a day in London. Well, that's the basic missionary deal. If you want multiple positions it's thirty, twenty minutes is forty and it keeps going up.

I have my reasons. Before Suzy, I had only ever been with one other girl. Have any of you heard of 'second girlfriend syndrome'? Apparently man isn't truly a man until he has had more than two girlfriends. Personally I don't think that crap really exists. For me it's simpler; I just had to get myself out there more. I didn't want to marry Suzy and then get curious five years down the line. I wanted to get all my curious cat crap out of my system; get the pencil well and truly blunt. But when I started doing the whole hooker thing I found that I wanted more and more. Seriously it became an addiction. And it was perfectly manageable too. Work is only a twenty minute walk from the heart of the Soho action. So two or three times a week during my lunch break I am there. Sometimes I even go for a quickie after work. I just blame the trains. For me it's great, I get laid and miss the rush hour. I must have been with over fifty girls by now; they keep changing on different days so you never stop getting a constant stream of variety. Suzy's been kind of wondering why we don't have sex half as much as we used to. Truth is my dick is so damn sore after the Soho marathons. There is only so much a guy can take.

Pause.

God, I feel like such an arse, really I do. I mean, Suzy has been so loyal to me; heck she doesn't even look at other guys. She's always dressing so casually and doesn't wear much make up either. She's just so natural at looking and feeling like herself. And every day she tells me how much she loves me. And I love her too, really I swear it. But I know that this sex thing is in my blood. I feel like a vampire thirsting for his next kill. You would have thought this weekend in Paris would sort me out; just my close friends and I hanging out like we used to. Heck, Ken has been married for seven years; you'd think that meeting him would inspire me to end my sexual exploits. But even here I had to get my fix. I found a few hookers just around the corner from our hotel. One of them was really hot; she was black, big strong thighs and hair that flows like fire. I have never been with a black girl before and believe me it isn't the same. They are so into the booty. She was giggling that thing all over me. It was intense. It wasn't love, just intense lust. The kind of thing that you see in porn films rather than romantic comedies.

And that's all this is, intense lust. I only love Suzy, I honestly and truly do. But I can't get married to her this summer. I have to postpone it. And I know that we have got everything sorted, the whole family and all that bollocks but we have to delay. I still want my hookers; I can't function without it. I don't know, maybe the thought of one woman for the rest of my life has

scared the shit out of me. Suzy is fantastic but doing it with her all my life? I'm not ready. I can't do it.

Pause. David turns to Tyler.

Look at him; he's my best friend in the whole world. He once told me that we could speak about anything, fucking anything. But can I tell him about this? Surely a friendship can only handle so much. Everyone has their limits. I don't buy that *'friends for life regardless of what happens'* crap at all. There is always something that can shatter the glass.

Jesus man what the hell am I saying? It's pathetic what I am doing. Suzy is a great girl and Tyler is my best friend. I feel like all I deserve is for him to throw me onto those train tracks right now.

He sits down, hand in his hands. Then he looks up.

Sometimes being quiet is the best course of action. If I die I will ruin both Tyler and Suzy's lives. They will always ask the question: *'why did he do it?'* Suzy will have a nervous breakdown, might even become a hooker and Tyler probably an alcoholic and die before 50.

Sometimes the bad guy doesn't pay for his crimes. This isn't a Hollywood movie. No one knows what I've done. Heck, I can get married next summer and love Suzy for the rest of my life. Do I really need to tell Tyler my horrible crime? Look at him; he's already as pissed off as I've ever seen him. Sometimes people don't need to know the truth. Heck, just tell that to the soldiers fighting in Iraq or those idiots in America who think Lee Harvey Oswald single-handedly killed the President of the United States. Sometimes you don't need to know the truth.

I can marry Suzy and slowly get used to the idea. I still have six or seven months to cut down on the hookers, maybe even quit full stop. She hasn't suspected anything yet, why should she in the future? No one needs to know anything.

Pause.

Only two people know what I've done, God and I. And in the end it's going to be him who decides my fate. No one else knows. Well, also those fifty or sixty hookers I have been shagging. But they can be discreet. They are hookers for God sake.

David sits down. Tyler finishes his cigarette and stands up.

Tyler: Fucking French! They really piss me off sometimes; making us wait for three fucking days. A little bit of snow and the whole Eurostar goes to hell; it's a bloody disgrace. It amazes me how easily we can get screwed over by the weather here. I don't understand how the Russians can deal with snow so easily and with just a few heavy snowfalls here and there the entire Eurostar is suspended.

Gosh, I'm tense. I hate waiting for so long. I'm not the kind of guy who likes to be kept waiting. Not since Tanya. That girl kept me waiting for over a year; that's right over one fucking year. I told her I was in love with her. It was one of those movie moments; the whole world became still and all I could see was her in the universe. Looking back now I know how stupid I was but back then you don't have the gift of hindsight. Hindsight, now that's a laugh. If I had the knowledge I have now at 31 back when I was 21 I could have been Prime Minister by now.

Life is all about learning from mistakes. And waiting for Tanya was a big mistake. I was a complete loser at that time too; had no steady job and had dreams of becoming a filmmaker. She was an art student who I met at a film festival in London. I exchanged numbers with her because I needed help making a website for my production company. I went over a few times to her house and I don't know what it was but there was something about her. I could never put my finger on it but there was something. Anyway, I met her a few times after that and then one time I was driving back with her in her car and suddenly this intense feeling of joy came through my body. I knew then that I was madly in love with her. I had to see again; I wanted to be with her.

I became so obsessed, of course I say the word 'obsessed' now but back then I really didn't know, that my every waking moment was her. I sent her an anonymous letter confessing my love for her. I figured being an artist she might appreciate the romantic nature of it; hand written words of love with pictures of her favourite cartoon characters drawn by yours truly. I remember being so nervous wondering how she would react to it. I waited for three painful days, though those three days really felt like a week. Finally she got back to me, said she needed more time. It definitely was not a 'yes' but it was also not a 'no'.

Anyway, she said she needed more time. Now I knew that women need to take their time, more than men. They say a man knows if a woman is 'the one' within two weeks whilst a

woman doing the same for a man can take over two years. So I knew that might have to wait for a while. But come on for god sake, two fucking years? I was completely devastated. I even had to get a therapist to help cope with her waiting. During those two years, nothing else mattered to me. I was in touch with her from time to time but never mentioned the letter. Occasionally she would call me up saying she was depressed and I would bail her out. Deep inside I was hoping she would come round to seeing that I was the man who could save her from the darkness; I was the keeper of 'The Forest of Mystery', a sacred place where only the most special people go. I guess you could say that her artistic nature had rubbed off on me; now I was being very imaginative. Hell, one time I even thought I was a Night Elf and she was my future queen of the forest.

I have learnt now that when you are in love, that kind of shit happens. I had lost all focus and had replaced it with this blind romantic trash. I swear, reading those old e-mails now and remembering my obsession is fucking painful. Anyway, I waited for two years for her. At the end of the two years I put some pressure onto her; I felt that I deserved an answer. I had been loyal to her throughout; no other woman came close to my heart. And then she turns around and says to me that she felt that I was not ready to start a 'real' relationship and that somebody else was in her life; some guy names Peter, who was also an artist.

What the hell was all that about? I had said 'I love you' on numerous occasions. Did that mean that my intentions were pure and that I was ready? Women often claim that men are less mature and struggle more with relationships. Fair enough the first part is true; we are less mature. I still feel like a 21 year old university student. I think maturity can nowadays take a man an entire lifetime! But the second part, 'struggle more with relationships' is a load of bollocks. They simply think differently. If I was a girl I wouldn't make someone wait for me for two years. That selfish bitch was simply using me as a back-up in case Peter decided to bail, which he did by the way.

Tanya came on her hands and knees after Peter was gone. She claimed that she always loved me blah blah blah! I almost gave into her bollocks but by then I had met Vicky. So I turned her down and got together with Vicky. I love Vicky so much, heck I think that she was sent by God to save me from that manipulative bitch. Sure wish God could help us now; the snow is beginning to really get on my nerves. Fucking French!