

Extracts from:

The Heart of Town

She entered the unwelcoming home, all alone, but didn't know she was being watched. Maybe I should start at the beginning of the story... Hi! I am Traeh. People pronounce my name as "Tray". I am currently 17 years old and I live with my 19-year-old roommate, Lopia.

The cash register was placed on a broken table that only had three legs and was now being held up by two cardboard boxes.

The woman seemed to be in her 70's and must have been the most beautiful woman in town back then. Her wrinkles however, seemed to fold over her beauty and sag in despair. She used to have beautiful blue eyes, but now they looked lost and lonely. Her finger nails were nicely painted as to cover up the heaps of dirt and build-up, lying under her agonizing fingernails.

My eyes finally peeked open. It was dark and all I could hear was the thumping of my heart beat. All I could see was the crescent shaped moon. I was cold and my teeth were clattering against each other. I tried to move but every bone in my body was useless, every muscle was pointless. I reached out to grab the car door handle, and quivered the door open. Lopia was standing on the side of the car, weeping. She was rolled in a ball:

"What happened?" I asked weakly.

"You...You..."

"I what?"

"You hit the ongoing car."

Lopia checked in her mirror to make sure she had no scarring or injuries on her face. That's when a little piece of paper fluttered onto her lap.

I read it out loud:

Heart

I had been in the shower for about 5 minutes and suddenly the lights all shut off. I rolled my eyes out of annoyance and shouted:

"Lopia, go turn the switch on in the closet!"

No one answered.

We had only been here for a few months, and one of us was already missing.

When I was enjoying the calm and slow drift back home, I suddenly got a call and realised it was Falter. Falter was one of those people who you could always count on. He was one of those people that no one could ever find a valid reason to hate him.

The next morning, I woke up to a knocking at the door. It was a very sunny day and all the clouds in the sky could be seen racing to an invisible finish line in the horizon. Ironically, the turtle-shaped one seemed to be winning.

I crawled out of bed and went to the door to find Falter sitting at the door step.

“What are you doing here?” I said in a surprised yet very sleepy tone.

“I came to help” he said as he looked up at me from the ground.

In a matter of seconds, we arrived at the house. It was this miniature chalet at the edge of a mountain in the middle of nowhere. These big wooden pickets held the house up and it was almost as if a flying crow could knock the whole house down if its wing slightly skimmed the edge of one of these beams. But once again we approached the house, with slightly more caution this time, and decided to explore the place.

At first glance it seemed to be one of those houses from the 80's that no one dared approach because of some rumour that an old lady had been living in there for hundreds of years and that any child who should approach her house, would be eaten alive.

Lopia then continued her story which was even more intriguing than it had been beforehand, now that we knew who this mystery woman was.

“The day I was, so-called, kidnapped, was the day my mother had contacted me.”

“My mom’s a secret detective and had been undercover on a mission. That was until her heart problem reappeared for the second time.”

“Anyway, she knew she couldn’t seek medical help or her identity could potentially be unveiled, so she came to me. And she couldn’t risk you finding out about her so we were kind of in a loss of options.

My mom found her way to our power outlet and was able to temporarily disconnect the power for the whole house in order to get my attention. And that’s why the lights went off. As I went to the outlet to figure out what was wrong, I saw my mom sitting there in a corner and that’s when I understood she needed me.”

I didn’t want to move, I didn’t want to go home, I just wanted to cherish the moment I was sharing with my two closest friends. I wanted to sit there all day and hope that at some point our heartbeats would synchronize, the picture would freeze and this moment could forever be imprinted, with not one modification, in our hearts.