

In The Night Bus

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Night moves slowly like time.

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My flimsy woolen coat did little to protect me from the onslaught of snow. Waiting for the evening bus, I wondered where I could stay the night. I knew that this day would come; it was inevitable. I just did not expect it to happen so soon. Upon arriving home, I saw him happily carrying the child in his arms. It was his child with the other woman. I loathed her to the core but he loved her to the roots of her being. I could not compete with her, for I was a past he tried to forget. My reflection on the bus window reminded me of death. I thought, "No wonder, I am definitely her daughter." I rubbed the ring on my finger, my most prized possession. The only remnant left from our house. My mother died two years ago, and with her, died the father I knew. My father served the military for ten years before returning home. My mother wept with joy upon his arrival. He seemed so fixated at her that he did not bother to look around. He did not notice the curious stare I directed at him. He stayed at home most of the time. There were no laughs from him, only the occasional greetings. I was brushed off most of the time but my mother had his full attention. When they would eat out, my father would insist to leave me alone. I would not like to be left in the house. However, seeing my mother's hopeful face made me change my mind. My mother died in a car accident. She was crossing the street when a truck crashed into her, sending her to instant death. My father was greatly traumatized, refusing to come out of his room for months. I was left to attend the funeral alone. Since my mother's death, a therapist visits our house once a week to check up my father's mental health. A house cleaner comes during the weekend to clean and do the laundry. Everyday, I was forced to take care of myself. I never did try to ask help from my father. But everyday, I wished that he would get better. Eight months after mother's death, father showed signs of being better. First, he ate all of his meals. Second, he goes out of his room and works at mom's garden. I was relieved but how did all of this happen? Did father have an epiphany? I decided to investigate the matter by observing his actions more closely. He offers to do the groceries and tend the garden. He takes me to community meetings and church services. Did father suddenly care for me? I almost wanted to believe it until one night I saw him outside the house talking to a woman. This woman was our neighbor who works as a cashier at the supermarket. She always complimented mom's garden, admiring her roses in full-bloom. She is a staff at our community and an active Christian. Overall, she was a lovely woman. Then it all clicked. She was the reason for

dad's change in behavior. It was never because of me. It was never about me. It was never for me. I would never be number one in his list. What did I ever do to deserve such a treatment? After seeing that incident, father became bolder and bolder each day. He would invite her to dinner at our house. He would take her to the movie house. He would bring her coffee to work. Until today, I have never discovered how the two ever met. I never bothered to ask dad and I would never ask Aunt Rosalie. Aunt Rosalie transferred to our house after dating dad for three months. She acted like a second mother to me, caring for needs and well-being. She did not love me. Instead, she pitied me. My father acts paternal. However, I see the lingering sadness in his eyes, every time he talks to me. They only felt pity, sadness and regret. Am I not worthy to be loved? It was difficult to continue living in that house. I felt more like an outsider each passing day. I did not consider myself a part of that family. Furthermore, the new child will be the one to bring them joy. I am fully aware that I am a fragment of the past. Nothing can change that. Now, I have accepted that I can never return. This ring on my finger will always remind me that I was once a member of a family. It was time to move on. My father can start afresh with Aunt Rosalie and their baby. As the bus continues to move along the night, I wonder where I can start anew.