

Missing Eva

[WORKING TITLE]

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Draft section for Portfolio

Nick loved New York in autumn. The crunching of leaves under his feet, the early dusk, the naked trees - In some ways it felt like where he grew up in Newark, blending with the hectic buzz of New York. Autumn always had this sort of glow to it, he felt. An innate warmth in conflict with the changing weather. Rain also never really bothered him; He could never understand those who hated it. Sure, getting wet was a nuisance, but the rhythmic pitter-patter more than made-up for it.

It wasn't raining that morning, however, the day that Eva first went missing. Initially, Nick was unbothered. Eva was more than capable and scary enough to take care of herself in the city. She probably just had some errands to run, some friends to meet for coffee, or most logically, a work deadline coming up. Even though he was unconcerned, the idea of sitting in their apartment like some dog awaiting its owners didn't sit right with him. And so, with a graving for the fresh season, he took himself into the autumnal city beyond its confines.

Walking aimlessly like he normally did, the feeling of the warm sun cutting through the brisk wind had never felt so pleasant. He had worn a hoodie out, but quickly took it off

and carried it, allowing his arms to fully embrace the sun's rays. It bounced off windows from buildings, glistened against car wing mirrors, and light parted through the clouds, painting lines of gold onto the dirty pavement Nick walked.

A musician sat at a street corner. He was noticeably older than most were. A long, dirty grey beard, almost reaching as far as the ground. The skin around his neck folded over itself, its wrinkled texture visible either side of his facial hair. His back was slouched over, clearly causing him deep discomfort. In his hands, he wielded the most magnificent saxophone Nick had ever seen. It was black, a jet black kind of black. Each of its pedals, however, were the typical gold colour one would associate with the instrument. Its design mirrored that of the 'New York Palace' pens that sat in abundance on Nick's desk at home.

The moment the musician began playing, he transformed into the shining spirit of youth. Each note ebbed and flowed between the boundary of time. Nick couldn't believe a man of his age could play so elegantly. Mesmerised, Nick dug deep into his pockets for change. \$1.72. It was all he had, it was all he could give. The musician was a master of his craft. Nick slipped the change into the man's outplaced hat

and continued walking, indulging in the fainting notes behind him.

Before he knew it, he stood outside New York General Hospital, the hospital Steven had taken him to nearly six months prior. He remembered the young saplings by the front door, then freshly planted, now bearing its branches upwards towards the evergiving sun.

Nick turned to across the street, hoping to see Cafe Equinox again. Maybe he could relive that magical first meeting with Eva by walking through its doors. Better yet, maybe she would be inside, sipping on a cinnamon latte and waiting for him to join her.

But she wasn't there. More than that, it wasn't there. Cafe Equinox had shut down. By the looks of it, it happened a while ago. A 'For Rent' sign hung over its front door, the windows whitewashed out, moss growing along its walls. A carcass of a shop, butchered, forgotten, rotting.

Nick could hardly bring himself to keep looking. Cafe's shut down all the time in New York. It was nothing he hadn't seen before, but this felt personal, like someone was whitewashing a treasured memory of his.

Nick continued walking on, leaving the remnants of
Cafe Equinox to rot under the warm autumnal sun.