

leslie johnson

I RUN INTO YOU

One

WHEN I RUN INTO YOU AT THE GUGGENHEIM, I can't believe it. I haven't thought of you in forever. Years. I'm forty-six years old, which means you are, too, because our birthdays are two days apart. I still remember that.

You're strolling down the spiral walkway, and I'm heading upward against the flow, and before I consciously recognize who you are my body fills with knowledge: my scalp prickles, and the air in my lungs expands without taking another breath, pressing my heart.

It can't be you. Can it? Why would you be in New York, at an art museum no less? But it's you. Randy Craddock. Is it? Is it you?

You're wearing gray slacks and a sweater with the cuffs pushed up on your forearms and clear-framed glasses, brown loafers that look expensive. You're thin. There's a light stubble on your jaw, and your dark hair has the look of a men's salon cut, neatly shaved on the sides with textured fullness swept back from your forehead. You look like you belong here in the city, and how could that be? You always hated cities; you never even wanted to drive into Hartford or Boston for a concert when we were kids, let alone New York. When we were kids, you wore Levis and flannel shirts, always — to school and church and to hang out by the lake.

Yet, your face somehow looks the same. Your mouth, your brown eyes and dark eyebrows...even with those glasses...it's you.

I'm standing still. You haven't seen me. If you walk right by me without noticing, will I call your name?

But then you do see me. You notice me staring at you, and you stare back, confused, I can tell, your lips parting and your eyebrows drawing together behind the bridge of your glasses. I'm not holding my breath any longer; I realize I'm almost gasping, as if I've just run a long distance, and I have to concentrate on slowing my breathing, waiting for the second when you'll recognize who I am, and it comes: the line of your eyebrows separates and lifts, your chin draws back; one of your hands

lifts slowly, and we step toward each other.

It takes a long time, it seems, till we are standing close enough to each other to speak, and I wait. I want you to be the one to speak first, to say my name, and you do.

“Laura?”

I say, “Randy.”

You say, “I can’t believe it. How long has it been? Wow. *Laura*. What are you doing here?”

“I’m here with my friends. Four of us. It’s something we do, once a year or so. Take the train up from New Jersey to see a show. We’ve got tickets to Book of Mormon.”

You smile, and your smile is just the same, curling up on one side, your eyes squinting. “It’s funny,” you say.

I tell you that my friends are shopping, but that I came to the museum instead on my own because I never really liked shopping in groups of women, especially window shopping, I usually only shop when there’s something I need to buy. I’m more of a sight-seeing and museum person, but I’m meeting them for lunch soon, my girlfriends from Westfield, that’s where I live now, with my husband and two kids, both boys, and I can hear my voice rambling and feel my lips moving, but I am seeing us on the deck of your mom’s cottage in Woodlin, holding hands, right before your brother Frank and his buddies came stumbling around from the driveway. *Aw, how sweeeet.*

I let my voice dwindle to silence when I notice the way you are looking at me, taking me in, the person I am now after, let’s see, twenty-nine years, and I can’t tell what you’re thinking. What do I look like to you? I’m a middle-class mother who works part-time as one of the receptionists for an orthopedics group. When I bought the new outfit I’m wearing on sale at Macy’s especially for this New York day, I liked the way the blouse camouflaged the extra fifteen pounds I can never seem to lose, but now the synthetic fabric seems suddenly cheap, the style ordinary. My hair, which used to be long and straight and parted in the middle when we were young together in Woodlin, has been cut short for years now, probably since my oldest son was born.

But I don’t remark on how either of us looks, and neither do you. Neither of us mentions Woodlin, or asks about our families. My parents. Your mother or grandfather. Your brother. Frank. I feel dizzy suddenly, reach for the railing on the walkway.

You say, “My wife is in the gift shop.”

I imagine she looks like she belongs in New York, as you do, wearing a sleek jacket, perhaps, and linen pants. She might be perusing the shelves right now for an interesting hostess gift — a braided basket or coffee table sculpture — for a party the two of you will attend later this evening.

“I’m about to leave for the restaurant,” I say, “where I’m meeting my friends. Vico? Have you been there? Is it good? But I wanted to see one of the paintings up there again. I walked by it, but then I found myself wanting a second look. It’s a Kandinsky.”

I start walking, and you fall into step beside me, and we don’t say anything till we’re standing in front of it: *Three Sounds*. I remember reading once, or maybe hearing it on a headset at a different museum exhibit sometime, that Kandinsky could listen to the colors of his paints, singing and speaking, moaning and whispering, as he swirled and dabbed them on his canvases.

I say, “Those triangles like pine trees. That could be the sound of needles rustling in a breeze. And all those little circles there. Like bubbles fizzing. Maybe tiny little popping sounds. But I don’t know. Would those arrows be a sound? He could hear the colors, you know. Kandinsky. Hear the sounds of them.”

You ask me, “Did you study art in college?”

I keep my eyes on the painting, on the largest blue triangle, its three shades of blue, trying to listen, to hear it. I say, “I didn’t go to college. Missy and I moved to Florida after high school. We got jobs at Disneyworld.”

“You were so smart, though. Smarter than any of us.”

My purse suddenly feels heavy on my shoulder. Inside is a pocket umbrella I remembered to bring because the weather channel said forty-five percent chance of rain. “Well,” I say, “I think maybe I was afraid to apply. I was afraid I wouldn’t get in. My GPA was ruined. I couldn’t do the school thing for a while, couldn’t stick with it, you know. After what happened.”

I let my eye rest on the checkerboard in the upper right corner of the painting... perhaps a clicking sound like chess pieces...or maybe piano keys, the bass notes. I imagine a deep minor chord echoing, widening like a canyon.

“What do you think they are,” I ask you. “The three sounds?”

When you don’t answer, I take my eyes away from painting, and see that you’re crying.

Two

When I run into you at Docksidiers, I can't believe it. I haven't thought about you in forever. At least a year. I'm nineteen now, which means so are you, because our birthdays are two days apart. I might have thought of you on your birthday, because it's right after mine, but other than that, I haven't thought about you.

And now here you are, in Orlando on a regular Thursday night, out of nowhere.

I'm making my way to the bar to order my usual, vodka gimlet, half price for ladies during happy hour, and you call out my name: "*Laura.*" And when I turn around, there you are in an open space beside the pool tables. You're standing with your hands in the pockets of your jeans, your shoulders hunched forward, wearing a grungy Ramones t-shirt. On the wall behind you, neon fake fish decorate a ropey fishermen's net. You look like you've been zapped in from another planet, pale and skinny among the Florida guys in their beach shorts and muscle tees. No, not from another planet. From Woodlin, Connecticut.

I'm frozen. You lift your hand like you're going to wave, but instead you drag your fingers through your hair, which has gotten long and even from a distance looks greasy, like you're overdue for a shower. I used to like it when you washed your hair with my shampoo — the green apple or herbal essence — and I'd comb it out for you while we sat outside on the boulder by the pond. I remember sitting behind you and smelling your clean hair and kissing the vertebrae of your spine on your smooth bare back.

I stand up straight now and put my hand on one hip, and let you take a look at me. I look good; I know I do. I'm tan and thin and my hair is feathered and volumized. One of my roommates has taught me how to use her blow dryer with a big round brush to get the Charlie's Angels look. I'm wearing short white shorts and a striped pink t-shirt and my new wedge sandals. You wince, like an invisible fist punched you in the chest, and my confidence disappears just like that. My stomach turns over. Nausea, a quick rush of panic. I breathe, shake it off. I toss my head, whipping my hair over my shoulders, and walk like a fashion model from the bar past the pool tables.

I say, "How the hell did you find me?"

You say, "Missy. She gave me a list of places to try."

I shake my head. "Missy. Jesus Christ. We both swore to god neither one of us would ever go back there, not even to visit, and now look. She's living in her mom's shitty house again. Probably babysitting for quarters."

“She’s got a job. At Ron-A-Roll in Vernon.”

“How long have you been looking? How long have you been here?”

“This is my second day.”

“Where are you staying?”

“I borrowed Mike’s car.”

“Jesus, Randy, you shouldn’t be sleeping in a car!”

“Whatever. Whatever. What difference does it make?”

I can feel something electric in your body. I don’t see you trembling, but I can feel it, something static and jittery in the air in between us.

“Well damn,” I say, “how the hell are you?” and I can see you don’t like it, the way I’m saying swear words. You’re curling your top lip, sort of a sneer, as if you can see right through me. You shake your head a little, and I get your message: *you don’t fool me, not for a minute, you haven’t toughened up so much as all that.*

But I don’t let it go. “Me? Thanks for asking. I’m doing pretty damn awesome. And you can tell that to Missy when you see her at the DQ. That’s still the big hot spot in Woodlin, right? So exciting, right, when the Dairy Queen opens for the summer season? I can’t hardly believe I’m missing it.”

“*Don’t.*” Your voice is low and you step closer to me. “Don’t talk about stuff that doesn’t matter. Don’t act like we should be talking to each other like that.”

You squeeze your eyes shut for a moment, and my stomach clenches. *Don’t fucking close your eyes pussy.* And just like that, it’s back — my stomach heaves and I feel panic pushing up into my throat. I look around, and you touch my elbow, point to a table opening up and I follow you to it. Sit across from you.

You say, “I’ve got something to say to you.”

Bee Gees is playing on the sound system — *Stayin’ Alive* — and I push my chair back with a big grin and jump up and do a spinning turn, my index fingers jabbing the air like John Travolta, swivel my hips. I sit down again, fluff my hair. Fake laugh.

You don’t even smile. “Listen, Frank got discharged. Honorable, I guess, but the army’s done with him. Been back in Connecticut. For almost a month now.”

I don’t move a muscle; I hold my face still. “You’ve seen him?”

“Not yet. But I’m gonna.” You stare hard at me across the little table with the unlit candle in the fake coconut shell. We need drinks, I think. We need tequila. You say, “He’s staying in New Britain with Lindy and her cousin. He’s a drunk slob now, is what I hear.”

“So, what, you’re going to go over there?”

You swallow like there’s something you’ve just chewed. “I’m gonna go over and fuck him up, Laura.”

I shrug, look over at the bar, at the guys playing pool. Then, back at you.

You say, “I’m gonna go over there when he doesn’t expect it.”

“He’ll kill you, probably. Look at you. You’re too skinny. Even if he’s a drunk, he’ll still crush you.”

“Not just me, Laura. I’ve got it planned. I’m gonna have Mike with me, plus two other guys. Guys I’m gonna *pay*. It’s gonna be a *job* for them. I’ve got the money set. They’re in. They’re gonna do it.”

I’m waiting. I don’t say anything.

“I want you there, Laura. So you can see it. You’ll be so safe, don’t think for a minute you won’t be. I’ve thought about this a lot. Ever since I heard he was freeloading over at Lindy’s. You can be there and watch it. You can watch it while he gets what he deserves.”

Your face comes alive for a minute, your dark eyebrows lifting out of their scowl and you grab my hand on the table, and I let you hold on to it. “That way you’ll know. First hand. That I didn’t let him get away with it. And when the job’s done you can say or do whatever you want to him. Whatever you want. Just like —”

You squeeze my hand tighter. And I don’t tell you I’ve dreamed about it, what I would say and do to Frank for what he did. I pull my hand away. “I’m not going back, Randy. Never.”

“Not even to watch Frank get beat to shit? Don’t you want to? Can’t you taste it?”

I say, “Listen. I’ve got an apartment with three other girls from three different states and we all work at Disneyworld. And we all go to happy hours every night and we all go to the discos on the weekends. And we all don’t give a shit about our crappy hometowns and the assholes we went to high school with. We go to the beach. All year round.”

I push my chair back from the table again. And I start bobbing my head a little to the music, Donna Summer now, *Bad Girls*, and I keep doing it even though you look like you’re getting mad. Not angry, but hurt. Like I’m hurting you.

“I came all the way here for you, Laura.”

I keep my head bobbing.

You say, “I’ve been waiting all this time to get even, and you have too. I know it. I know you have.”

“You’re wrong. I never think about it. Never.”

And I stand up and walk toward the bar and then past it, and I don’t look back, but I think you know. I know you know. I’m glad you came. But I don’t stop. I push open the door and I don’t look back at you.

Three

When I run into you on Christmas Eve, I can’t believe it. I haven’t thought about you in forever. Years. I’m thirty-four years old, which means you are, too, because our birthdays are just two days apart. I still remember that.

I’m waiting in the cookies-and-punch line after the service with my parents when I see you in the corner of the community room with a small girl in a red and green plaid holiday dress. You’re reaching down to help her peel the tangerine that came from the Santa Claus sack after *Silent Night* and *Jingle Bells*. Is it you?

Why would you be here at United Methodist? You and your family were never church-goers.

The little girl runs across the room on tiny legs in red tights, her blond ponytail bouncing, toward the garbage can to throw away the bright orange peels in her hands, and your back straightens as you watch her. It’s you. Definitely you. You’re still lanky, dressed in the same kind of clothes, except your flannel shirt is tucked into your jeans with a belt. You have a beard, but it doesn’t change your face much the way it can with some guys. You look the same to me, almost exactly.

You don’t see me. Your eyes are still fixed on the little girl as she makes her way back to you through the crowd and you hand her the peeled fruit you’ve been holding for her and she dances away again.

Without realizing it I’ve stepped out of line. My parents are filling their plastic cups and paper plates, chatting and laughing with folks ahead and behind them. I want to straighten my sweater-dress on my hips, to feel at my hair to make sure the corkscrews of my new perm aren’t springing in the wrong directions.

You’re glancing around the room, hands in your pockets, and then your gaze trips across mine. You rock back on the heels of your boots, your head jerking slightly

forward in reaction. I lift my eyebrows and smile, fake surprise, and step toward you.

I'm walking straight toward you, and you're literally cornered. Your lips are working, curving up on one side as if by force into that lopsided smile of yours. You start shifting foot to foot. Are you nervous? Shocked to see me? Afraid to see me?

If you are, good. *Good*. Suddenly the knowledge fills me that I've been waiting for this, even if I didn't know it, even if I didn't *let* myself know it. I've been waiting to tell you exactly what I think of you. You and your brother. I march right over, step closer to your body than comfortable just to make you twitch and take a step back.

I say, "*Randy!* Oh my god. Merry Christmas! You're not a Methodist, are you? Geez. What are you doing here? Since when are you a Methodist?" I'm making my voice go *ding-ding-ding* like the bell-ringers during the candlelight procession, all high and shiny.

You open your mouth, but nothing comes out. And I'm just about to ask you in my bell voice about that little girl with the Santa tangerine but then a thought hits me: what if she's your niece, that child in her Christmas dress? What if she's the daughter of your brother and he's here, in this very room, shuffling through the cookie line just a few yards behind me. All the bravery seeps out of me; sweat is forming under my fuzzy green dress. I want to look; I want to circle around like a strobe light searching him out, your brother with his square face and pickle-green eyes between puffy lids, but I can't move. I'm terrified.

But then you clear your throat. "Brianne's Methodist," you say. "My wife Brianne is." And you blush, almost sweetly, and point across the room where card tables are covered with red plastic cloths and sprigs of imitation holly in the middle.

I turn around and see: she has the no-nonsense look of a young wife and mother with nothing she needs to prove. Straight brown hair pushed back with a headband, a department store blouse, a good-natured grimace on her face as she mops up something spilled on the tabletop by the little blond girl beside her.

You wave your hand till she notices and lifts her chin and smiles at you. Just a small smile to acknowledge that she sees you, perfunctory, the kind of smile you give to someone who already loves you. No need to flirt or impress. It makes me ill with envy, that smile of hers. The little girl is pulling on her sleeve, and the two of them get up and walk hand-in-hand through the entryway to the sanctuary where a few children are playing by the Christmas tree, their mothers chatting nearby.

I say, “How long have you been married?”

You say, “Four...no, five...five years, I guess.” And I can see your shoulders relax as you take a few breaths, maybe relieved that this might be easy. Small talk. “So how’re you doin, Laura?” you ask me, in the way you’d ask anyone at all in a church community room during refreshment time. Polite. Blandly pleasant. “You’re living in Florida, right?”

“I moved to New Jersey. Three years ago.”

“Oh, yeah? I think Missy told me one time you loved it in Florida. Never wanted to leave it.”

“I liked Florida. But Marriot offered me a career line in management if I relocated to Park Ridge, so I just went for it.”

“Uh huh. That’s cool.” You’re glancing past my shoulder, getting ready to get away from me.

I say, “Tell me something, Randy. Did your brother go to your wedding? Did you invite him?”

Your eyes snap back to mine, and then you close them. For a minute you stand there with your eyes closed, like a child wishing himself into invisible.

“Tell me, Randy. Fucking tell me.” My voice is low, almost a whisper, but any second now, I could start to scream. I can feel it.

“Laura.” You’re shaking your head, panicked, and take a step to the left, but I move with you, blocking your way.

I say, “How about your wife, Randy? *Brianne*. Ever tell her what he did?”

You grab my forearm, squeeze, and whisper back at me. “Laura! Look where we are...I can’t...we can’t —”

“Let’s go outside then.”

Your eyebrows pull into a dark line, scowling at me.

“Or I can go over and talk to *Brianne*.” I let my voice get louder. “And those other women over there. I feel like talking about it,” I say, and it’s true. I feel like I could tell. In all these years, I never told anyone, not one person. Not even Missy, who was my best friend back then, and not any of my new friends since. But now all of a sudden I want to tell someone. *Brianne*. My parents. I could stand on one of these plastic chairs and shout it out to all of the Christmas Eve congregants as they eat their cookies.

“Okay, okay, okay,” you’re saying, still in your whisper voice.

As we head toward the side exit, I spot my parents at one of the tables and my dad catches my eye, smiling and gesturing for me to join them, and I hold up my index finger to signal *just a minute!* I catch the quizzical look that sweeps his ruddy face as he realizes I’m following you to the door.

In the church lobby I stop at the coat closet for my jacket, but you don’t take yours, and I have to stop myself from telling you the obvious: it’s cold; you’ll be sorry.

Outside we stand in the small clearing between the building and the side parking lot. It’s dark except for the one light by the church entrance that shines down on a four-foot cross.

I say, “You saw everything. You watched it.”

“That wasn’t...they were holding me on that chair. When I kicked off of it they had me down on the carpet. That one friend of Frank’s, that fat one, he fractured my wrist, holding me down there.”

I stomp my foot, as if my words are stuck there like a nub of gum on the bottom of my right high heel.

“But afterward,” I say, “After, you never said. You never said anything.”

“*You* never said anything. I thought you didn’t want anybody to know. You never told me you wanted me to say anything.”

Your arms are crossed, hands rubbing on your biceps. I can see your breath in frosty puffs, but not my own and I realize I’m holding it. When I let it go, it comes out like a sob, and you wince and cover your own mouth with a fist.

“Did you ever say anything to *him*?” I ask.

“To Frank?”

I look away, hating the sound of his name.

You shrug, in a helpless sort of way. “The thing is, Laura, I don’t know if he even knew what he did exactly. He was so totally wasted. I don’t think he really...I mean... he was practically in blackout mode, you know? And my mom was a wreck that year, you know that, and Frank was leaving anyway for the army. He was leaving anyway.”

Your arms are crossed,
hands rubbing on your
biceps. I can see your
breath in frosty puffs,
but not my own and I
realize I’m holding it.

“But he came back. At least for a visit, right? You let him come to your wedding.”

“My mom invited him.”

“You should have told her.”

“He wasn’t, you know, wasn’t much a part of our life really. And he changed, too. He did six years of active. And the times I saw him he didn’t seem like the same kind of person anymore like he used to be. A lot quieter. Kinda weird. He stayed down there in South Carolina.”

“Does he still visit though?”

Even in the dark I see the way you shift your jaw. You reach up and tug at that stupid beard you’ve grown, and I feel sick. “God, Randy, he’s over at your mom’s house right now, isn’t he? For Christmas.”

It’s starting to snow, light flurries that whirl and evaporate in the brittle air before hitting the ground. I say, “We should go over there. Right now. Make him say what he did.”

“Laura...”

“Well I’m going. I’m going over there. I want your mom to know. I’m going to tell my dad the whole thing and have him drive me over to your mom’s place. Right now.”

I spin around and start walking to the church door, but you call out: “Laura! *Wait!*”

I stop and look back at you. Waiting. The snowflakes are getting thicker. In minutes, probably, they’ll be sticking to everything.

Four

When I run into you at Starbucks, it isn’t an accident. I haven’t seen you in forever. Decades. I’m fifty-seven years old, which means you are, too, because our birthdays are only two days apart. April 11 and 13. I’d forgotten that, but Missy reminded me.

I’m sitting in the corner by the window, glancing at an ugly view of the parking lot on the Berlin Turnpike in Newington, not far from your job at a roadwork company called Costello Industries. Your expertise, according to your Facebook page, is Pavement Rehabilitation. When you walk through the glass doorway, you’ll be expecting to see Missy, your old Woodlin High buddy, but here I am instead. *Surprise*. Waiting for you.

My stomach suddenly turns; maybe it’s the tepid coffee or artificial sweetener. Maybe it’s nerves. What I’m doing here? Why did I let Missy talk me into this?

Admit it, Missy said to me, poking my shoulder. *You've gotta be a little bit curious. I mean, he was your first boyfriend, wasn't he? Randy Craddock?* I shrugged, rolled my eyes.

Missy came to my father's funeral last week, and afterwards it seemed like the most natural thing in the world to start dropping by her house in the afternoon like I used to after school when we were kids. In the mornings I've been helping my mother clean up the house for when she puts it on the market, making her lunch before her afternoon nap, then gravitating to Missy's. By the third day I was letting myself in Missy's front door and helping myself to a Pepsi or the box of Chablis in her fridge.

I glance toward the door again. It's 3:10. Missy arranged this meeting for 3:00 p.m., just a quick coffee break, she told you, and twisted your arm till you agreed. She needed you, she said, to help her with the Woodlin High Reunion; she told you she was on the "Where Are They Now?" committee, and that part was true.

I'm sipping at my Skinny Vanilla Latte Grande, remembering Betty Crocker cupcakes with frosting from a can and rainbow sprinkles. You met me at the picnic tables by the lake in the evening, just starting to get dark, exactly halfway between the times when each of us were born, and you lit the candles with your cigarette lighter and we held the cupcakes on our palms and watched the little flames flicker in the night breeze. The colored wax melted down into the sticky frosting but we ate them anyway. Forty years ago. We were seventeen.

After that day, the day your brother did what he did to us, we never spoke again. Did we? It seems so odd, but I think that's true. We never spoke again, not about what happened, or anything at all.

I remember I stayed home for a week or so, pretending to be sick; you called once or twice, at least once anyway. I remember my mother calling from down the hallway that you were on the phone, but I didn't answer. I couldn't bear the idea of standing there in the kitchenette tethered to the plastic phone chord while my parents hovered in the background. I couldn't bear to find out what you would say. About *it*. Or not say. I couldn't do it.

The day I went back to school, there was a minute in the hallway between classes when you started walking toward me and our eyes met. I remember it, how suddenly everything around me seemed to swell up: an assault of lockers slamming, a sudden surge in the air of perfume and cologne and teenage sweat and that piney

cleaner the janitor used on the linoleum floor. I felt like I was going to throw up and I lifted my hand at you: *stop*, and you did. I shut my locker, slowly so it only made a click, and went to sit in the nurse's office till the hallway cleared. And after that day we never looked directly at each other again. We never spoke.

It's 3:15. I've been here for at least twenty minutes, and have watched six customers so far served their coffees and teas.

Maybe you've decided not to come, maybe you never intended to come. I can see another customer approaching the door, but it's a woman again, alone.

If you do come, I've practiced a quick summary of my life after Woodlin. My wild years in Florida, working in Orlando and even learning to surf, can you believe it? Klutzy me, actually balancing on a cresting wave? Not that I've tried it in years, but still. My move to New Jersey for my job with Marriott. My husband, our two boys, grown now, one working in New York, the other in graduate school. You should see them. Here, I'll say, I have pictures on my phone.

It sounds pleasant, the story of my life playing in my head, and it is, I suppose, not like Missy's saga of loves gone sour and life savings squandered and a daughter in court-ordered rehab.

It is. Pleasant. This is true.

Then the Starbucks's heavy glass door makes its "*whussh*" of a slow push open, and I see you, a balding man with a mustache, paunchy stomach under a workman's canvas jacket, one eyebrow lifting as you step inside and take a glance at the counter with its display of tropical tea ware. Is it you? I would never recognize you in any other location, but you're standing there near the entrance, hands in your jacket pocket, scanning the room now, looking, I assume, for Missy.

I drop my head, pretend to be searching for something in my purse. I unsnap the inner pocket, letting my fingers claw inside at nothing in particular. *Close your eyes Laura!* I remember you shouting that out to me, your voice frantic, strangled, your head twisted to one side against the floor. *It's gonna stop!* Forty years ago.

Maybe it's not you. Maybe it's some other middle-aged man looking for someone he was supposed to meet in Starbucks. If I look up and you're still standing there, I'll keep looking at you, waiting for your eyes to find mine. And then we'll know.

My fingers keep moving inside my pocketbook. A chapstick tube, a stray Certs, an old keycard...*it's gonna stop!* I hear it, and I hear it again. *Whusshh.* 🕒