

Stranger

By Stephanie Ginger

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FADE IN:

EXT. CHURCHYARD - VALENTINE'S NIGHT

Sound of children singing. Bell chimes six. Shadow rippling across gravestones becomes a running, hooded MAN (30s, five o'clock shadow, grim expression). He flings open Church door.

INT. CHURCH HALL - NIGHT

Bursts into a 'Beavers' Meeting, pushes aside the Scout LEADER (40s, earnest, necktied) and seizes a wide-eyed BOY (7) from a group of singing CHILDREN waving home-made envelopes. The singing dies as the Boy's hauled out. The door swings.

INT/EXT. CHURCH HALL/CHURCHYARD - NIGHT

POV Leader: Silhouetted against gravestones, Man and Boy vanish into the night. The Boy's cries grow fainter. The Leader hits *call* on his cell-phone.

EXT. STREET/UNDERGROUND STATION ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A Police Siren wails as the pair explode from a dark alley into dazzling light. The Man darts down the steps to the Underground, pulling the whining, gasping boy after him.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - NIGHT

Running footsteps echo; Feet hurtle down escalator; The Man elbows past RAILWAY SECURITY GUARD.

GUARD

Whoa there!

Guard turns to see the Boy stumble and drop the envelope.

INT. UNDERGROUND PLATFORM - NIGHT

Man and Boy burst from the tunnel, the Man lifts the struggling boy into the waiting train.

BOY

No, no, no!

(CONTINUED)

The Boy wriggles free, jumps off; dashes back down the platform. The Man squeezes through closing doors, races after him, catching him at the steps. They stare each other down. The Boy breaks first. He brushes away angry tears.

BOY
I HATE YOU! I WANT MY MUM!

INT. UNDERGROUND TRAIN - NIGHT

The clanking, swaying train, Man's grip steely on the Boy's shoulder, their eyes fixed on the orange train display:

CLOSE UP: ... AIRPORT TERMINALS 1,2,3...

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - NIGHT

Unintelligible announcements boom. The Man moves the Boy through the bleached wilderness of the concourse; nervous, sweating, eyes everywhere: SECURITY GUARDS finger their holsters; Sound of Army Boots marching. Blurred figures approach glass door. It slides open.

The Boy breaks away, ducks under railing, sprints towards THREE SOLDIERS (in Desert Combat gear) striding towards him. He buries his face into camouflage trousers.

CLOSE UP: WOMAN'S HAND RUFFLES HIS HAIR. WEDDING RING.

POV Boy: His weary, sunburned SOLDIER MOTHER (20s), laughs down at him.

BOY
(tearfully)
Daddy made me lose your card!

INT. UNDERGROUND - NIGHT

Guard studies the Valentine Card. Radio crackles. He smiles.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - NIGHT

The Man's arms envelope both his wife and child. He KISSES HIS WIFE, long and tender.

MAN
Hello Stranger. Welcome home.