

Kristin Grenfell

Homeless Hearts

Annabelle glided lazily into the bright, cream-colored kitchen and saw that her dad was in his usual place at the table. He was reading his daily newspaper at the round, smooth table and peered over his half-moon shaped eyeglasses and smiled up at her.

“Hey princess. Did you sleep well?” Her dad was always so cheerful in the morning.

“Yup. I’m going to help myself to some Apple Jacks.” Annabelle pulled the half-empty box of Apple Jacks from the cupboard and poured herself a bowl. Just thinking about the name ‘Jack’ in the cereal’s name made a slight smile grace her face. “Daddy, can I have a section of your newspaper?” she asked as she sat across from him. He passed over pages 5 and 6- the crime pages. Sweet. Forget the cartoon pages- Annabelle was too old for them now. She wanted to read the mysterious stuff, like the crime scenes in Philadelphia, where she worked. She needed to read it...just in case. Just in case. Skimming over the two pages, she skipped over the robbery and gun stories. Her eyes eventually landed on a small story- a homeless guy, 19 years old, stabbed by some drugged-up guy over money. *Wait...Could it be him?* Annabelle’s heart sank. Placing the paper onto the table, she stared at her Apple Jacks until each piece of cereal became soggy, sinking beneath the milky surface.

After graduating college, Annabelle started her internship at PNC Bank in Philadelphia to become a financial manager. She took the R3 train from Swarthmore to Suburban Station every day because to her, it was inexpensive and convenient. Suburban Station was often dirty and smelled like garbage, but it was located near her workplace

and it only took her ten minutes to walk through the station. Often times Annabelle would pass homeless people begging for change or food, but what could you expect in a city? Annabelle couldn't let the homeless people bother her too much-everyone dealt with them in the city. It was best to ignore them.

On one hectic Tuesday morning, Annabelle walked quickly through Suburban station, late for her internship meeting on FDIC regulations. Her heels clicked across the stained cement ground and she held her purse close to her hip, just how her mother taught her. As she was about to climb the linoleum steps to exit the station, she saw a guy out of the corner of her eye, walking towards her. "Hi sweetie, how are you? Long time, no see!" the man told Annabelle. Feeling uncomfortable and disgusted, Annabelle quickened her pace without looking at the man. She ran up the stairs, looking for a cop or even another person, just in case the man kept bothering her. *You never know what a homeless guy could do to you*, Annabelle thought to herself. After all, she read in the newspapers that homeless guys would kill and rob people - most of them were crazy and didn't know what they were doing. As Annabelle walked out to the busy streets of Philadelphia, she inhaled the stale city air and fingered the pepper spray keychain dangling from her purse. *Ugh, I'm so paranoid*, she thought as she ran across the street to the PNC Bank.

Please contact me for finished story.

kristingrenfell@gmail.com