

Sunflowers

I'm being watched. I can sense his eyes on me, studying my every move but I pretend I haven't noticed.

I've stopped at a cafe overlooking Lake Hoan Kiem for a bottle of water. The heat is intense and I fan myself with my hand as I sit in a tiny plastic chair, watching a group of elderly women gracefully practicing tai chi under the lush green canopy shading the riverbank. I gulp down mouthfuls of water greedily, sweat trickling down my back. I stare out at the bright red bridge arching its way across the water, which is as smooth as glass. *This is the place*, I think. *This is where he'd want me to do it.*

I pat my pocket for the fifth time since that morning, paranoid that the urn may have fallen out as I've been pedalling my way through the winding streets. I'm comforted to feel the bulky container of his ashes snug against my hip. I take it out and sit it on the table, hoping for some kind of sign that I've chosen the right place.

'Excuse me?' It's him, the man who's been staring at me.

I look up. 'Didn't we go to school together back in Australia? You're Kristy? I'm Dave Nixon,' he looks at me with wide eyes, hopeful that I'll confirm his guess.

Suddenly I recognise him, he's right. *We did* go to school together.

'What are you doing here?' I ask him, my heart thumping wildly against my chest. He laughs, staring at the ground for a moment.

'I'm a guy, I'm not supposed to admit to having my heart broken, am I?' he says with a tiny smile.

'Well, if that's the truth, why not?' I shrug my shoulders.

'And what about you?' he asks, sitting down next to me.

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'Me?'

'What are you doing here?' he grins.

'I'm here to spread my husband's ashes,' I say quietly.

'Oh wow, I'm sorry,' he says, blushing.

'It's ok. It happened a few years ago. I just...haven't gotten here until now,' I look over to my bike. 'I should be going,' I say, looking up at the ominous grey clouds rolling in above us.

'Sure. Right. Well, hey, it was nice seeing you,' he calls out as I walk to my bike. I ride off, leaving the urn behind, tears raining down my cheeks.

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'I want you to be happy,' he'd said as I'd stroked his hand, being careful not to move the cannula.

'If you meet someone, know that I'd be ok with that. And if his name's Dave, even better,' he'd forced a smile.

'Sunflowers will be my sign,' he adds. 'If you see a sunflower, know that's from me.'

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I pedal furiously in the stifling heat back to the café when I realise what I've done, my stomach churning. He's still sitting there at the table, a bunch of sunflowers from a nearby vendor in his lap. 'Forget something?' he grins, passing me the urn.