

T H E F I R S T F R I D A Y

I wake up to the sound of my alarm at 7:17 am, as I do everyday.

It is my fifth day at university.

My first class begins in the next forty-three minutes, so I rush out of bed and quickly get dressed.

As I walk to class, I stop momentarily to buy my daily, mandatory cup of Starbucks. The barista looks to be another university student. He has a determined expression as he meticulously measures the ingredients. It's like he's programmed to make the same cup of coffee over and over again. While I wait for my coffee, I see a girl holding an all-too-familiar red (fake) *Chanel*. She is surrounded by a crowd of people (possibly her friends) and is busy making plans for the evening with them. My twin sister looks towards my direction but doesn't acknowledge my presence. I imagine asking her why she hasn't spoken to me in the past five days and the conversation would go something like this:

"Hey, why haven't you spoken to me in the past five days?" I'd ask.

"Sorry, I was too busy attending classes" she'd reply.

Already knowing her answer, I quietly slip away into the rain. The sky is overcast with grey clouds and smog. Just as a whiff of earthly musk reaches my nostrils, a sudden blaring alarm on my phone reminds me that I have class in five minutes. I rush towards the liberal arts building and then find myself seated in the third row, five seats from the right. Next to me sits a boy whose eyes are glued to his Facebook feed on his *iPhone*.

Class gets over at 9.30. It's Friday today, which also means that for business majors, we'd only have to attend one lesson. Friday is supposed to be our "networking" day. But having made no close friends yet, I head back to my dorm room. My roommate has classes till 3 pm that day, which means that I'd have the room to myself until then. So I decide to take a shower. (Luckily my room has a bathroom attached, so I won't have to use the common ones.)

The warm water doesn't wake me, nor does it soothe me. It's just there to wash away the dirt. I used to sing in the shower, but I haven't in a while. Knowing that I was all alone, I begin to sing the tune of some trendy old pop song that my dad used to play to make my sister and I dance when we were little, but I stop after the first few verses. I just stand there blankly, unable to think of anything. Soon enough, I dry myself and change into a pair of worn jeans and an old white T-shirt, which belongs to my sister. I put away all the soaps and shampoos that I've just used, and switch off the lights as I step out of my bathroom.

"By the way, the chorus is: *wake me up before you go go*."

I shriek in surprise.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you, I'm Noboru Watanabe." A slightly older-looking boy with shaggy hair and bright clothes is perched upon a chair in my room. He introduces himself to be my roommate's partner. I make a mental note to remind her not to give him the keys to our room. "You sing well," he continues "why did you stop?"

"I couldn't remember the lyrics," I lie. I just didn't feel like singing.

"Can you imagine what would happen if a pop-star couldn't remember lyrics to his/her own song!" The white barren walls were a stark contrast to the energy that this guy exudes.

"I'm not sure how the audience would react if that actually happened." I reply, unable to comprehend the situation.

“So what have you been doing in this exciting world of opportunity?” he asks. Strange question upon meeting someone for the first time.

“It’s only my fifth day, I haven’t done much yet.” I answer.

“Well on my fifth day, I was almost rusticated from college.”

My eyes widen. “What did you do?”

“The night before I had too much to drink. Under the influence, I attended class, and I pushed aside the lecturer and started singing some song. Apparently, I had an imaginary ensemble, and that was enough to get me started on my legendary one-man show. However, I forgot the lyrics half way through. It was the perfect interlude to allow the lecturer to drag me to the Dean’s office. The rest is history—you can probably imagine how I behaved.”

I nod in agreement—but I don’t have the slightest clue about what could have happened. We continue to exchange pleasantries, but I want to be alone, so I make it quite obvious that he needs to leave by constantly checking my phone for nothing.

“I can see you’re busy, I’ll come again later. Say, we’re planning to go out to a karaoke bar tonight, do you want to come along?” he asks earnestly.

“That sounds like a lot of fun, but unfortunately, I’m busy tonight. Maybe next time.” I respond, trying to make my lie as convincing as possible.

“You know what I think? I think you hear, but are you listening? You look, but are you seeing? You exist, but are you living?”

He plants a seed of doubt into my mind.

After an awkward silence he says “Anyway, see you around.”

He leaves, and I begin to regret my reply. I get back to pretending that I’m working, and busy myself with nothing.

Afterwards, I never saw him again.

A pair of parallel lines have a lot in common, but they never meet, which is pretty sad. But a pair of intersecting lines meet only once, and then they drift apart from each other forever, which is pretty sad too.