

Downtown

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by Kyle Eggleston

Miranda rode on the bus to downtown. She had Joe's credit card and was planning on doing some shopping. Joe had given her a limit, whatever that meant, of three hundred dollars. He told her not to max out his credit card, again whatever that meant. She was just happy to experience a shopping trip like she had heard about on the television. Granted she didn't *need* clothes, Miranda had the ability to generate whatever clothing she needed for the day. But that took energy and she was growing tired of it.

Stepping off the bus, Miranda walked down the street until she came upon a clothing store. Looking at the mannequin in the window, she smiled. This would work nicely for her. Miranda walked into the store and approached a waiting sales woman.

The woman smiled at Miranda. "Hello my dear, what can I help you with today?"

Miranda pointed at the window. "I was thinking about that red dress in the window? Do you have it ... in my size?" She asked the woman.

The woman continued to smile. "Yes I believe we do. Give me a second and I'll go in the back and get something you can try on. I'll be right back." She walked away.

Miranda took the time to explore the store. She stopped at some scarfs, picking one off the rack she felt the fabric. It was soft, warm. She rubbed it against her face. "Oh this would be perfect." She said. The scarf was black and white with hints of red throughout. Turning the scarf over, Miranda looked at the price tag. It read fifty dollars. She smiled, it was within her budget.

As the sales woman reappeared from the back, she was carrying the red dress Miranda had pointed out. "The changing rooms are this way." She said leading Miranda over to a set of doors.

Miranda entered the changing room and closed the door. With a snap of her finger, her clothing disappeared so she could put the red dress on. Pulling it over her head she slid it down her body, it fit like a glove. She looked at herself in the mirror and twirled around, the dress flowed around her body. It really fit well. Miranda was pleased with the dress.

Walking out of the dressing room she approached the sales woman smiling. "I'll take it." She said.

“Wonderful.” The woman said. “You look lovely. Please follow me.” They walked over to a cash register.

Miranda put the scarf on the counter and removed the tag from the dress without looking at it, she placed it on the counter as well. “I’ll also take this scarf.” She said.

“That will be two hundred dollars please.” The woman said.

Miranda pulled out the credit card and tried to remember what Joe said about using it, or how to use it rather. She stared at the card machine a little confused. Was she meant to press the numbers first and then slide, or the other way around? She couldn’t remember. Then it clicked.

“Is there a problem miss?” The sales woman asked.

Miranda shook her head. “No, no I’ve got it.” She slid the card and went to enter a pin.

“Oh no pin needed, just a signature honey.” The woman said.

“Right.” Miranda smiled back. Picking up the electronic pen, she scribbled her name on the screen and pressed a green button. “Done.”

As the receipt printed, the woman placed Miranda’s scarf in a bag and handed it to her along with the receipt. “Here you are miss.” She said. “Have a nice day now. It’s so pretty outside.”

Miranda smiled. “Yes, yes it is. You have a nice day too.” She exited the store bag in hand. Stepping out onto the street, Miranda twirled around again in the dress she had just purchased.

Passing by a Tasty Treat, a small yogurt shop, Miranda stepped inside. The place wasn’t too crowded, it was a weekday after all. Walking up to the counter, she looked over the flavors. Miranda zeroed in on the flavor she wanted. Chocolate and vanilla. She ordered it and sat down at an empty table.

As Miranda enjoyed her yogurt she looked around the shop. There were several pictures lining the wall. She believed it was called art. Some of it was mesmerizing others was just confusing to her.

Finishing her yogurt, Miranda walked back out onto the street as a black van drove up. Two men wearing suits got out of the van and took her by the arms forcing her into the van. It then drove off.

Placing a gag in her mouth and a black bag over her head, the men tied Miranda’s wrists. She tried to struggle but found it difficult to do so. They had overpowered her too much. Who were these people? Miranda wondered. What did they want with her?

Miranda focused all of her energy on releasing herself from their clutches. The ropes around her wrists broke off and fell to the floor. Reaching up, she grabbed the mask and removed it. Quickly she reached for the throats of the two men who held her. Miranda snapped their necks in seconds, they fell to the floor of the van dead. Miranda spit out the gag.

Looking at the driver, she yelled, "Where are you taking me?!"

The man driving the van was stunned. What was she going to do to him next?

"Look lady." The man said nervously. "I'm just following orders."

Miranda shook her head. "I don't think so." Reaching from behind, he wrapped her alien hands around the man's neck and began to squeeze. The man struggled to breathe. "Pull over." Miranda ordered. "Now."

The man did as he was told pulling the van over before falling unconscious.

As the van came to a stop, Miranda opened the door and made a run for it. She ran all the way to Joe's apartment. Climbing the stairs, she raced as fast as she could to the safety of the apartment. Once inside, she locked all of the deadbolts and breathed a sigh of relief. Miranda wondered if she was followed, she hoped not.

There were too many unanswered questions. How did they know where to find her? Who were they? The government? Some secret organization? Just some thugs off the street? There was no way of telling.

Miranda sat down on the couch, she was shaking. She decided that was enough outside time for that day. Joe wouldn't be home for another four hours. Miranda wondered if she should tell him what happened or not. She was undecided.

If only she could get this shaking under control. Miranda was upset. She didn't understand these feelings she was experiencing. Miranda thought she should just be able to shake it off, but that wasn't happening.

This was by far the worst day she had spent on Earth. Miranda wondered when they would show up again. She feared that. Dreaded it. Hoped it wouldn't happen, but she had a feeling deep down inside that they would come for her again. Next time, she would have to be ready for them.

The End