

OLYA AMAN



A DROP
— OF —
RAIN

Love in a blind disguise

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Love in a Blind Disguise

Olya Aman

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Contents

1. [Story](#)
2. [About the author](#)

Story

A man approaches the curtained window in a small apartment. The drops tap on the window sill, creating a melancholic melody.

Outwardly, the man could be 32-34 years old, but he looks haggard. Dark circles are visible under his beautiful green eyes. Shaggy dark hair and bristle indicate that he is either too busy or sick, or he simply does not care about himself.

He wears simple blue jeans and a warm gray sweater of large knitting. Despite the fact that it is comfortable in the room, he opens the curtains and being unable to hide his trembling, crosses his arms trying to warm up. The monotone melody did not deceive him. It is raining outside. One after another drops roll down the glass like tears on cheeks.

The man looks out the window. A young guy without an umbrella is standing on the sidewalk and getting wet in the rain. He does not even try to take cover. The man sees from the window that young guy's windbreaker is soaked through. But the young person does not move. He only turns his head from side to side, as if he is waiting for someone, and the emotions from the upcoming meeting are much stronger than those inconveniences that he feels because of the incessant drops of water.

Observing this view from the window, the green-eyed man recalls an episode from his life.

The same kind of rain was flooding the streets of New York in 2005. People who were caught by its cool drops. A couple was rushing under the umbrella in tandem, embracing each other. A little further, an elderly woman with an old-fashioned hairstyle was covering her head with a plastic bag so that her hair would not get wet. A man with a briefcase, in a formal suit and raincoat was running to the building. The drops created a whimsical pattern of vertical lines of a darker color on his light gray jacket.

The railway station was not very crowded. Rush hour, when office clerks were going home, already passed.

Comely ladies, far beyond even middle-age, gray-haired and bald men, on whose faces life left the numerous autographs of wrinkles. Loving couples were embracing without paying attention to others, apparently having decided to not lose a second of the precious time, which was provided by fate for their romantic relationships. Trembling young mothers with small children kept leaning towards their flesh and blood to make sure that their hands were warm, and all their skin was securely covered. Teenagers were quietly talking about something in the corner, hiding from the rain. All these people wanted to get home as fast as possible to brew their tea or even drink a glass of wine or whiskey to warm up in this bad weather.

A guy about 20 years old was sitting on the bench and typing something quickly on his phone. He was wearing the usual, unremarkable classical clothing of casual style. A tweed shirt was hidden under a thick blue sweater. His dark trousers were ironed neatly, the boots were clean, even though it was raining outside. He lifted his green eyes in the frame of long eyelashes from the screen and, as if verifying the data, looked at the clock hanging over the arch, from where everyone was waiting for the train to appear. The scoreboard winked with orange numbers. The time was 20:00. A slightly breathless middle-aged man in a formal suit with a long coat sat down on the bench next to the guy. The young man put the phone into his pocket, turned to his neighbor and, smiling, started a routine conversation of people who meet by chance:

- "The weather's bad, isn't it?"

The man supported an eternal and inexhaustible "weather" theme:

- "Yeah! This rain unexpectedly caught a lot of people but I expected it and put on a coat before going out."

- "Oh, yeah, you're lucky." – said the guy. After a short pause, he asked, - "Do

you know when the next train will arrive?”

The man was old enough to be the guy's father, he kept an emotional distance and answered as correctly as possible:

- “This depends on where you want to go.”

- “I’m going to the other end of the city - North Island. My aunt lives there. I’m here the first time, so I cannot navigate myself.”

The man looked at his watch slowly, bending his left hand, and replied:

- “Ok. The train going that way is leaving in 10 - 15 minutes. Pass the Greenwich Bridge, pass one station, and get off on the next one. You will be in the right spot. Maybe you should write it down.”

The guy nodded and held out his hand to the man:

- “Thank you... I will remember. Marcus.”

The man shook his strong hand and added with surprise:

- “Sorry?”

The young man smiled broadly:

- “That is my name. My name is Marcus.”

- “Oh, I’m sorry. I did not hear. Well, I’m Mike. Just Mike.”

- “Nice to meet you.”

An awkward silence hung between the new acquaintances. Marcus apologized and reached into his pocket, pulled out his mobile phone again. Meanwhile, the man was looking for something in his case. The guy looked at his phone and said aloud:

- “Oh, damn! My battery is dying!”

Mike got distracted from the contents of his case and said politely:

- “As usual, when you need it,” - and, having heard the sound of the approaching train in the distance, added, - “Your train, Marcus!”

The guy got up from the bench and hung his backpack on one shoulder. He looked at his mobile phone as if expecting a miracle to happen. But the message was inexorable: “Low battery.” The train stopped at the platform. The people rushed to enter as if this could speed up their reaching the comfort of their apartments.

Marcus nodded to the man with the cloak:

- “Thank you, Mike!”

The man smiles at him and sincerely wishes:

- “Good luck!”

The train car was half empty and everyone who entered it from the platform found a place. Marcus sat down by the window. There was no one next

to him. The train was moving at high speed, passing some houses. Everything was flickering and rushing past so quickly that it was impossible to study anything in detail. Marcus looked through the window a little and took the mobile phone out again and dialed the number.

- "Hello, Aunt Jenny! I'm on the train, I'll be there soon..."

Not allowing the owner to continue the conversation, the phone squeaked plaintively and turned off. The battery died.

Marcus said softly:

- "Damn it! Indeed, at the most inopportune moment. Now I cannot miss that bridge. And I forgot what it is called."

Worrying, he looked out of the window again, glancing across the aisle to the other side. He looked to the left, then to the right. The bridge appeared. The train stopped at one of the stations. Marcus regretted that there were no fellow travelers next to him. He got up and went towards the other passengers. The wagon came to life. Some passengers were getting off, others were getting on, bringing the smell of rain in. The train was standing still. Completely confused and not knowing what to do, Marcus went directly to the woman sitting in a corner place, and asked hastily:

- "Excuse me, have we passed the bridge yet?"

The lady looked at him, clearly torn from her thoughts, and answered stammering slightly:

- "Which bridge? You know there are a lot of bridges in this city, and we have already passed few of them. Where are you going?"

Marcus did not listen till the end, being afraid that he missed his station. He said brief words of gratitude and almost ran to the exit. The doors closed as soon as the guy jumped out of the wagon.

Being confused, he was standing on the platform. There were no people as everyone hurried on to continue their journey home. Marcus didn't know what to do and where to go now. He looked around, realizing that the appearance of the station was unknown to him. He went to the information desk. There were an elderly woman and a man in a uniform of a guard sitting behind the plastic partition. The young man knocked on the window and it opened. There was a dutiful smile on the woman's face, which did not touch her tired eyes:

- "Good evening. How can I help you?"

Marcus rejoiced, expecting his problem to be solved:

- "Hello. It seems I am lost. Can you help me?"

- "Yes, sure, what's wrong?"

- "You see, I think I passed my station. I have to go to North Island. Someone will meet me there."

The woman sighed with sympathy:

- "You didn't reach your destination yet, young man. It is another 50 miles to North Island."

Marcus lowered his hands and hit the window sill slightly, giving the way out to his anger at himself.

- "Hey, young man! Easy! It is too late. The train will arrive at 6:30. Do not worry! You'll spend the night here at the station. You will go home in the morning. There are empty benches and a machine with cookies and coffee in the corner if you get hungry."

The woman pointed at the benches and closed the window, making it clear that the conversation was over. Marcus stepped away from the booth and went to the benches. He sat down covering his face with hands. After a while he looked at the station clock. It showed 22:00. He took his mobile phone out of his pocket and tried to turn it on, but the battery was dead. He slightly beat his fist on the palm of his hand, took a deep breath and tried again. It didn't work.

Time passed. The clock at the station showed 23:00. Marcus could not sit still. He was getting up, sitting down, lying down on a bench, slipping a backpack under his head. In boredom he got up and went to the exit.

It was still drizzling outside. Marcus was not even trying to hide. It seemed it was all the same to him. He went along the sidewalk and came to the alley leading to a small park. The stylish forged lanterns glistened affably, and droplets of rain, falling into the ray of light, shone like a scattering of small diamonds. The lighting along the alley seemed to be inviting him for a leisurely walk and to think about something sublime and eternal. Marcus had nowhere to hurry and he even felt a special feeling of the charm of this strange night. He was no longer angry at himself for a stupid mistake. He was walking with small steps, admiring at the place, which seemed so mysterious and at the same time absolutely safe. He felt that he got a little wet, and droplets of rain were dripping from his hair, trying to make their way through the collar of his shirt. He saw a covered bench and noticed the silhouette of the person sitting there. Marcus soon saw it was a girl. Despite the canopy above the bench, her umbrella was open, and it was difficult to see her face. The enamored couple passed by laughing aloud, and happiness was heard in this sound. Marcus went to the covered bench, looked at the girl and asked, trying to keep his voice as soft as possible, being

afraid of frightening the stranger:

- "Goodnight. Can I also take refuge? I don't have an umbrella, and it seems my clothes are starting to get wet."

The girl looked at him. She had beautiful eyes, a clean and well-groomed face. Her curly hair was wet with rain. She had a black light raincoat. Without saying anything, she moved slightly to the side, making room. Marcus sat down nearby without looking at her. After a moment she told him in a soft, gentle voice:

- "Do you love rain?"

Marcus did not expect that the girl's first words addressed to him would be like that. He felt a mixed sense of surprise and confusion. He did not know what to say to the girl. But it seems that the answer was not important to her because after a short pause she added:

- "I love it!"

Marcus was sitting silently, looking to the right and to the left, occasionally throwing glances at the stranger and admiring her profile. Just to do something, without hope that a miracle would happen and the phone would work, he pulled his mobile phone out of his pocket again and looked at the dark screen. Actually, this was quite expected, but he hid his embarrassment behind this gesture. The alleys of the park became deserted, the laughter wasn't heard anywhere. Time seemed to stop in this enchanting place with a mesmerizing knock on the canopy. Marcus could not say exactly how long they had been sitting on the same bench, their shoulders were slightly touching. Perhaps, the silence lasted about five minutes or, maybe much longer. Marcus was the first to interrupt it.

- "It's quite noticeable."

It seemed to him that she even shuddered when she answered:

- "What?"

- "That you love rain. You are sitting with an open umbrella, but your hair is wet. This means you've been walking with a closed umbrella."

He noticed from the side how a smile appeared on the girl's face. But she didn't turn her head in his direction and didn't look at him.

- "How smart you are! Like a famous detective!"

Marcus put his cell phone into the pocket, replying:

- "I'm trying."

The young people were silent again, but Marcus decided to take the initiative. He turned his head and looked at her.

- "I am curious, what is such a beautiful girl doing in the park at this late hour? Alone. Do you live nearby?"

But she didn't turn to him. She looked straight ahead, answering with her silvery voice, touching the most secret corners of his soul:

- "You're curious."

Marcus decided to dilute the situation with humor, but it turned out to be ridiculous and too ambiguous from the inexperienced guy:

- "No, seriously. You do not even know me. What if I'm some kind of a maniac and attack you now? Or a criminal whom the police are looking for? Aren't you afraid?"

Neither fear nor alarm could be detected in the girl's voice. She joked enjoying the frivolous conversation:

- "How do you know they aren't looking for me? Where is the guarantee that I'm not a criminal?"

Marcus laughed noticing:

- "Oh yeah... You would be a beautiful criminal."

- "Is this a compliment?"

Marcus smiled broadly and unconcernedly.

- "As you wish. You made me laugh. I had such a terrible day, you won't believe it. And by the end of the day, or rather, at the beginning of the new one, you gave me such positive feelings. I didn't even think that I would be able to laugh today."

The girl continued to look straight without turning and moving. She sighed:

- "I readily believe."

Marcus continued:

- "You know, sometimes you want to talk to someone, pour out your soul. I met you, talked to you and felt so much better. You are a cure for sorrows."

The girl laughed again without looking at the interlocutor.

- "Did you compare me to a medicine? That's interesting."

- "Definitely - yes, you are a medicine."

Both laughed as his assertion sounded so direct. The rain was not stopping. On the contrary, it was intensifying. Water was flowing from the roof of the shelter.

- "I had a terrible day, too. But the rain made me forget everything. Under the rain you can hide your tears and sadness. Rain is my weakness. I will get totally wet, but I will continue to stand and enjoy every drop that is falling."

Marcus was looking at the girl for a long time, being unable to take his

eyes off her. She interrupted the pause herself:

- "You're silent."

The guy shuddered, as if he woke up after hypnosis.

- "No... Sorry? I got distracted. I don't know. The rain brings slush and I don't really like it. But judging by your words, it's as if you were born in the rain."

- "You are right. How do you do it?"

- "What?"

- "Read my thoughts."

- "Well ... You are so in love with the rain that it is not difficult to notice."

The girl voiced her thoughts:

- "If it hasn't started raining, I would not have appeared here, and you would be sitting here alone."

Marcus picked up the topic and expanded it:

- "Yes... If I didn't go to my friend's party at the other end of the city, I would not be late for my train and would not get lost. Actually, I would not have come here and would not have met you."

- "Do you regret it?"

Marcus looked at her again, looked away and lowered his head. After a short pause he answered her:

- "Yes, I regret that I went there. And the most ridiculous, and maybe sad, is that the battery died on my mobile phone. My aunt is probably tearing her hair out worrying about me."

- "As for me, I don't regret I met you. You are a good companion."

Marcus did not expect that she would say this. He looked at the stranger again.

- "Thank you! No one has ever told me this before. Sounds trivial. But it is nice to be considered a good company."

- "No one has ever told me I am beautiful."

Marcus's surprise was completely sincere:

- "Are you kidding? You are very beautiful. You have unusually beautiful eyes. I cannot stop looking at you. I do not believe that no one has ever told you about this. It's easy to fall in love with you from the first glance."

- "Have you fallen in love with me?"

Marcus looked away. He got confused and began to make an excuse, embarrassed:

- "No... No, of course. But, it's easy," - he looked at her again and continued, - "to fall in love with you."

Silence ensued again. It was only possible to hear the water drain from the canopy above the bench.

- "I wish this rain would stop sooner."

- "It won't be soon."

The guy looked at the girl, admired the beauty of her hair, her nose, and then interrupted the song of the rain again:

- "We've been sitting here for an hour, and you did not even look in my direction."

- "Why look? Sometimes it is enough that someone is near."

- "I cannot look into your eyes. I mean... they are appealing to me, but at the same time you do not let me look at them."

- "Do you want to say that you like me?"

The young man got confused again:

- "No! It's just inconvenient to talk like that when you don't look into the person's eyes. I can't concentrate. Glances say a lot of things."

- "But I can do it, can't I?"

- "Yes, you do it very well. Will you teach me?"

- "It's not worth it! You will not be able to do it even if I teach you!"

- "Why don't you try? I learn fast."

The girl stopped smiling. She closed her umbrella and was about to get up. Marcus asked anxiously:

- "Are you leaving? Has something happened? Have I offended you?"

The girl straightened her coat and tightened the belt. She was holding an umbrella in her right hand.

- "No, everything is okay. I just have to go home. It's too late. And you have to go home too."

Marcus grabbed her hand. She froze in place, and he said hurriedly:

- "I think I offended you? I'm sorry."

The girl smiled sadly:

- "Everything is fine. Don't worry! I really need to go."

Marcus obviously did not want to let her go:

- "We have had such a nice conversation. Why don't you stay a little longer?"

- "I'm sorry and thank you for the warm conversation!"

The stranger got up from her place. Marcus released her hand. She touched the ground with the tip of her umbrella, and began to knock on the asphalt and move along the sidewalk in small steps. The young man realized that she was blind. He seemed to have swallowed his tongue because of shock and could not

say anything afterwards. He got up and, having made a few steps in her direction, stretched out his hand. He wanted to call her, but something stopped him. He could not recover from what he had seen and froze. He could not take a single step, and was just watching the way she was leaving. The girl kept walking and moving away from him. He was touched by this picture so much that tears welled up in his eyes, but he could not do anything. Marcus was helpless in his reaction, and he was ashamed of what he said.

Time passed. Marcus was going by subway thoughtfully. He was dressed in a light black windbreaker. It was dark outside. The train stopped at the same station. Marcus got off on the platform, passed by the booth and waved his hand greeting the same persons on duty.

A man in uniform said to his colleague:

- "Look, he's here again."

The woman shook her head and replied:

- "For the fifth time. What did he find here? Two weeks ago he said that he was lost."

- "So, maybe he found someone?!"

Marcus went out to the street. The rain accompanied him again. He went to the park to that very bench. People were passing by. Someone was running to not get wet; the others were hiding under umbrellas. He was all wet, but he just looked at the empty covered bench, without entering it. The rain intensified, and he got all wet.

This was repeating again and again.

It was raining. Twilight came down to the city. Marcus was wearing a brown jacket and a hat. He was standing near the covered empty bench and whispering quietly:

- "Where are you?"

He lifted his head up and looked at the sky. Drops of the rain were falling on his face.

- "Where are you?! You said that you love rain! I come here every time it rains! You were brought here by the rain! You're like a drop of rain – you appeared and disappeared! Can you hear me? When you asked if I had fallen in love at first sight, I was frightened and answered: "No." I lied to you! And I do not regret even for a moment that I lost my way that day. Forgive me for not stopping you that time. I will not get tired of coming here! Every time it rains I will come back

to wait for you!”

Marcus lowered his head and said more quietly:

- “I will be waiting for you!”

Marcus was lying in his bed in the dark room. His aunt sat next to him, anxiously touching his head and clinking with her tongue, - “You have a fever. I’ll bring you medicine.” She got up, but before going to the kitchen, she came to the window and said, - “It’s raining again. When will it stop?”

Having heard the words of his aunt, Marcus jumped out of his bed and started to dress. His aunt looked anxiously at him and asked:

- “What are you doing? Where are you going?”

The guy ignored her questions and put his jacket on. His aunt tried to stop him:

- “You are sick. You have a fever, a high temperature. You cannot go outside. You need bed rest.”

Marcus persuaded her gently:

- “Aunt Jenny, I have never asked anything from you. Please understand and don’t stop me.”

- “But where will you go?”

- “To search for her... She will come today.”

- “Who? Where will she come?”

- “She... a drop of rain!”

The guy left and closed the door behind him.

The unshaven guy standing at the window shook his head. During this time, he recalled every detail of that single meeting. Looking at the person, that was getting wet in the rain on the street, Marcus recalled himself. He closed the curtains and left.

After a while, Marcus was beside the unfamiliar guy, holding an umbrella over his head and holding out his jacket to him.

About the author

“Once upon a time a reader told me that my past life was filled with books and maritime adventures. I worked in a library on some kind of a cruise ship. Being a visionary child with a boisterous imagination I took it as a clear coin and acted accordingly from that day forward. My subconscious mind told

me to read and write, envisioning stories. I followed my calling by writing essays on my favorite literary masterpieces and accompanying them with hesitant childish drawings that caused my writing to flourish with life and movement. Every sentence was vivid with my cinematic prose. This creative work was my secret weapon, helping me to combat the loneliness of my adolescence. It provided me with a treasure-filled-hideaway where I always was able to discover understanding and love through true friendship. Imagination works as a miraculous crystal ball that can tell you what may happen with you in the future. And the greatest gift we have is to be able to paint our futures the way we envision them. Belief is the key to this door where creation becomes visible, and action is the secret magic powder that gives you an ability to touch and feel, breathe and live the reality of this dream-realized life. I live my dream only because I believed in it all my life and every step I made was moving me closer to the very top of the mountain of my life.”

Olya Aman