

Grey

Chilly as it should be in winter, a boy was on his way back home. He took the crowded but longer route today. He hated cold weathers, but the big street distracted him from the coldness. He took out his hat and put it on.

With some drizzle sprinkling from the sky, the moisture attached on the clothes and permeated in. A woman was standing in front of the bakery in the street corner. The glass of the bakery was foggy. The temperature was not extremely low, but the wetness made her shiver a little. She was waiting for her fiancé. The boy that just passed gave her some future images of her boy. Will he be as tall as the boy? Will he hate coldness just like his mother? Will he has iron grey eyes just like the boy? After few years, she divorced though and died alone having no children.

The boy turned left on the bakery corner. He surrounded his face with a scarf. Just after he threw one end of the scarf to his back, he saw a cardboard box. He drew out his hands from the pockets and lifted the lid. It was a kitten. Grey, grey kitten. He saw her color very familiar but contemplated for no answer.

The drizzle didn't cease. The kitten trembled, deep in sleep. The boy covered her with his scarf and carried the box home.

The man across the street saw all this. He knew what was inside and who put the

box there but didn't want to be involved. The boy looked tough but had a kind heart. The man dragged on his cigarette. He had a kind heart, too, in that age. But things always change, and so did his kindness.

Nobody's at home, so the boy arranged his meal and poured some milk in the bowl for the kitten. He then observed the little creature. Its eyes were also grey, like a grey mirror, but not the kind of blurred, foggy grey mirror. They were clear. Maybe the kitten was too young that its grey eyes were not occupied.

His room was typically quiet. But today, some meow, meow echoed in the boy's room.

The boy's mother came home. She found the kitten along the meow. She didn't look what was inside the box. She didn't care at all since it could not be a robot cat after all. She didn't care at all for she was so worn out that day. She had to make dozens of calls to make arrangements of the sudden dinner appointment to let her boss have a family reunion. The boss's daughter liked a surprise which was only a surprise that was always not well-prepared. And the preparation part always fell on her.

She had to take care of her boss's family. She had to take care of her own family. She had to look after other one's daughter. She had to look after her own son. Why would she need to keep a kitten? She was furious. So she shouted, telling her son that

he had to “put it back.”

The door was slammed behind. The drizzle remained still. The boy wrapped up his nose and mouth with a scarf. He didn't predict that things would go like that. He was sorry, but didn't know to whom to apologize. From the chink between the two cardboards, he could see that she was asleep. He walked in the street again. Not far from the spot earlier, he chose to put it on the dry stairs of the bakery's back door. The baker family are nice people. The little creature should live through the night. He should have a nice family, too, but maybe not tonight. He went back home alone.

It was his first time to truly like a small animal whole-hearted. His mother liked animal, too, in his memory. But when did she change? He didn't know. The sky grew darker, not grey at all. The night went through just like other nights.

The next day, the air was colder. The icy needle-like drizzle lasted for a whole night until dawn. The boy's mother passed by a street corner and noticed a cardboard box. It was roughly the same size as the one her son brought back last night. She was somehow afraid. She crouched down and lifted the covering cardboard. There was a kitten inside, too.

An old couple passing behind took a glance at the box, the content. They just lost their cat, Ashe, several days ago. Tears suddenly filled the old lady's eyes after she

saw the kitten and turned her eyes away. Well, such a pity. The old man thought that if Ashe didn't get sick, they might have passed by this street block a day earlier and saved this kitten, according to their routine after his retirement. The old man was a banker. He liked Corgis more than cats, actually. But his wife insisted, so the pet thing settled.

Ashe was weak in its last moments, so they wanted to keep it company. They were saturated in sorrow these days. The old lady cried whenever she saw a cat. Her old husband was considering about adopting a funny Corgi to make her laugh again.

Staring at the kitten, the mother tried to confirm whether it was the kitten last night, but in vain. She was furious. She didn't pay attention. She didn't think of that in this kind of cold day, a kitten could die.

The kitten had no breath already, curling up and squeezing itself into a corner. Oh, what a poor little thing. The mother sighed. She remembered that once she found a kitten in her twelve. She was not allowed to own it and had to "put it back" at the end. The kitten was also grey, beautifully grey.