

Thirty seconds in my life

It was a cold winter of 1982. I was a usual fifteen-year-old student of high school. My winter semester had finished and I was taking a train trip to the relatives of mine, who lived on the outskirts of the town. I was sitting in my cozy window seat and observed the endless fields stretching along the railroad, once green, but now covered with a thick layer of white snow. I was anticipating to read my favorite book by Dostoevsky and to snap, however, the door of my compartment opened and closed constantly, disturbing the settled harmony between me and the book, and, as a result, bringing discomfort to my trip. A conductor once again opened the door and announced a shortstop at some tiny village close to the place where I was heading. An old lady with a small dog stepped into the compartment following the conductor. This very moment will probably never fade away from my memory, as far as it struck me with so many dear and warm feelings that it is hard to simply take it for granted. I often recall the lady and her dog, when taking the exact same train every year. The moment only lasted for mere thirty seconds but I still recollect every single detail of the encounter.

There was something mysterious about her appearance and it made me forget about my reading. A strong desire to start a conversation struggled with my inborn shyness towards strangers. The smell, which she brought into the compartment, the clothes that she wore, and her tiny puppy induced a palette of feelings, emotions, and thoughts in my mind. The smell of her perfume brought in warmth and pleasant feelings into the dullness of the compartment. I clearly distinguished this smell. It was 'Fidji', my grandmother's favorite perfume, which she was using on a daily basis. I was always wondering why the older women preferred this particular perfume, but I never really found an answer. Indeed, I desired to thank her for the smell that refreshed the

pictures of my dear grandmother. I wanted to say something pleasant, but, unfortunately, I could not find appropriate words. I just continued to examine her.

Her face was beautiful and, at the same time, strange. Such kinds of faces are stored in your memory for the rest of your life. Her facial appearance could be called pretty, but surely grabbed attention. She had a long straight nose, grey eyes, and volitional chin. She was not simply beautiful but rather had something attractive and substantial in her looks. Her shining eyes pierced my heart with no difficulty, leaving an obscure feeling of happiness. I distinctly remember the sensations that I experienced. Her single glance revoked images of my childhood when I used to spend my summer vacation with my beloved grandmother. Numerous thoughts were present in my mind changing one another, but one thought was dominating: I strongly desired to have such beautiful old age.

Another detail that interested me was her book, which had a title just as magical as the lady was herself. The book was called "Spirit and Matter". The cover of the book was an illustration of the battlefield scene with a dusky blue and red sky. It just so happened that the cover of the book toned with the oncoming evening sky and with her unusually long red nails. A peculiar thought visited my mind at the same time. Her red, long, and scary looking nails reminded me of my high school algebra teacher, whose nails were just as red and scary as the ones of the lady. For whatever reason, I concluded that this old woman was a mathematics teacher as well and probably was just as boring as my teacher was. On the other hand, her magical book suggested that my new neighbor was a great interlocutor. The last thought prevailed and after a couple of seconds, I realized that Dostoevsky would have to be closed and substituted with something more interesting.

Finally, her dog, a little puppy with a cute brown face and a straight, downy tail brought me the memories of my childhood back. He was nuzzling her hand with his nose and stared at me with his kind eyes. I recalled my own dog, which had died two years before and used to be my best friend, which really showed me true love, devotion, and friendship. In fact, I was happy for the lady. I was not quite positive whether she had a family, but I knew for sure that she was not alone. She always had a companionship of a small, though devoted friend. Unexpectedly, I felt peace and joy in my soul.

The picture that I have illustrated in my thirty seconds essay was observable for less than half a minute. A minute later, the lady was moved to another compartment. This experience showed how simple, pure moments can influence a person's heart, mind, and soul. I will never forget the lady for she had brought so many beautiful and dear memories to me. In fact, I wish I could have seen her again and started a conversation with her, just as I wished during these mere thirty seconds.