

fullcolorworld

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And the grayscale world revolves and revolves and revolves again and

Categories: F/F

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THERE IS A MONSTER IN SEOUL.

That's a quote from Killing Stalking; Ennuen was obsessed with it. It's this, like... messed-up toxic yaoi phenomenon, totally global, Webtoons original! It's Korean, and everyone knows Koreans make the coolest stuff, the most messed-up stuff. It's not nice to talk about your tastes in terms of how messed-up they are, but sometimes it's the simple truth, right? Something being messed-up is often pretty interesting! It adds drama, it adds...

Well, anyway, Ennuen binged all of it over two days. It was long, but not longer than most webtoons, and Ennuen was experienced. Um...

Anyway. No one else at her school, which was rural, Midwest, indistinct (nondescript enough she could never ever be doxxed online from any image she could share) knew anything about webtoons, or anything about, like... Eastern stuff in general, right? Japanese, Korean, Chinese (the only three Asian countries)... it was so lame! Not even the Asian girl in her school cared.

Um...

"Heya," from behind, Ennuen turned abattoir-horror-noir and saw another girl, who? long black hair antipesticide, she probably had lice... so unkempt! Ennuen's family was religious, and Ennuen inherited their habits of care for the self. She was wearing a pretty plaid shirt tucked nicely in.

Of course, this wasn't normal at their school. Even here in the conservative, rural Midwest kids didn't really dress nicely or keep themselves clean... it was kind of a shock for Ennuen's family. They were expecting everyone to be like them! But they were kind of overachievers.

Anyway, the specimen before Ennuen was like the total mean, totally averaged-out from all the kids at her school... Ennuen thought they were a she, from the voice, but could she really tell...? Haha... Ennuen stooped back down over her desk and the scratch-scratch of pen on pencil was audible once more—

"Heeeeya," repeated the other girl(?) forcefully. Ennuen looked at her again. "Nice art," she said, pointing.

Ennuen covered it up and blushed. It was anime-style... yeah, she didn't want this to get out, does she? Even if anime was getting really popular, it hadn't yet penetrated the town where Ennuen lived, so... secrecy was the only option! Like a spy, or an FBI guy! Special Agent Ennuen Cooper, here to solve the mysteries of a sleepy Pacific Northwest town...!

"It's nothing," said Ennuen.

"Really? I mean it really looked like something, really-really!"

Ennuen looked off to the side, purposefully and pointedly ignoring the other girl... "Come on," she said...

Who even was this girl? Actually, that was the question for sure! Ennuen had never even seen her... not here. Which meant she had to be new? She was someone who had penetrated into Ennuen's town, or into Ennuen's world (which was smaller than her town—you understand what she's getting at?), and... no, that's crazy! Why...

Why would someone enter Ennuen's world willingly?

"Come on, what?"

The other girl bent down.

"You a fan of anime?"

"W-what?"

"Japanese animation! I am too, really really! Pinky promise!"

"You..."

Ennuen rubbed her eyes, and they suddenly focused for the first time on this other girl... traced her outline, form and figure cohering, solidifying—

"I'm Toxicplasma Deathheart, but you can call me, um... Art! Like heart!!"

"I'm," said Ennuen...

"Ennuen...?"

Toxicplasma Deathheart was smart smart smart. The town where they lived was in between the two drug capitals of the state, though, and most of the kids there were unsavory one way or the other; certainly none were focused on school like Ennuen! So it was kind of a shock to see her class ranking go down to number 2?

Like... she was the only student in her grade who got As. Um, or Bs... haha. That's why it was a shock. She had kind of gotten used to the deflated grades of the school, and...

Well, Toxicplasma Deathheart, umm, real name "Jennifer," was actually number one on this week's exam for mathematics, and also AP English, and also a whole other host of classes, in fact, all of the classes that week. Ennuen sat ahead of her, but she was fairly sure Art wasn't cheating or anything... I mean, let's illustrate the example.

When you look at someone, you can immediately see if their outline is fuzzy or clear by wiping your eyes and staring at their face. If they have movement or animation, you could say—soul? to their face, demeanor, way of acting (not charisma, but soul! Remember!), well, you know that they have a clear outline. Art was the only one in their class with a clear outline like that. It was like everyone else was still caught in the fuzziness that happened only outside of Ennuen's world, and in this little town...

"Hey," said Art. It was the afternoon so cue the ringing of the Catholic church bells in the distance. (There was a historical cathedral built many many years ago and it was the only notable part of their town.)

Ennuen jumped. "What?"

Art had snuck up on her. After school Ennuen liked to go to the top of their school sometimes and look out over the parking lot, sheltered from the sun by the little jutting-out top room... why was Art up here? H-honestly, why was someone named "Toxicplasma Deathheart" in her world at all... no, right, Art's real name was... "Jenny?"

Yeah... that was a name that belonged to someone who wasn't really focused, though. And Art... was, somehow, lucid. Clear as

day to Ennuen. Maybe it was because she had tried at all to touch her soul? Ennuen saw in Art's eyes herself reflected—Ennuen saw that she was actually visible.

"We kind of got off to a weird start. You're... Ennuen, right?"

Ennuen paused, caught like a deer, no, not a deer, you know that behavior squirrels have where sometimes they'll run in front of your car to get hit, self-sacrificial, idiot! you know that? Yeah, that's what Ennuen was doing now. How'd she know? How'd Art know her name...

"Did you get that from... someone in class?" she said cautiously.

"I didn't," said Art. "Well... I got it from the class rankings! But I knew... who it was, really, really magically. I knew that only someone in full color could match my mind. And you can, totally, super-totally! It's a super shock I was even able to surpass you!"

"Ah, uh, what are you saying?" said Ennuen, drawn in despite herself...

"Let me start over!" said Art. "I'm Toxicplasma Deathheart. And, well, I saw you, and I just thought... wow, that girl is in full-color! It's like the world around me is totally greyed out, except for a few people, and you're one of them, so it really-really made me want to be your friend! Is that a little clearer? I'm sorry, I can't really understand other people not understanding what I understand, it's super hard... haha! I hope that was understandable!"

She smiled. Even with the rattish hair, Ennuen found her...

"Full-color?"

"Yeah! But enough about that, um... I saw you drawing anime!"

"It's not called anime," said Ennuen. She paused.

Art smiled and asked what it was called.

And Ennuen replied it was called drawing in a manga artstyle, and then said, quieter and with a liiiittle stutter... you have to be precise when you say something.

Art smiled again.

They had given each other contact information, against Ennuen's better judgement... or rather, because of it? It was so scary meeting someone else who punctured Ennuen's blurry world. It was so scary meeting someone else who felt so similarly... like the stories, love-at-first-sight chivalric? There was nothing between Art and Ennuen like that, she knew, but it was... a similar principle. She wasn't being precise...

Toxicplasma Deathheart: whats ur favorite anime

Ennuen: Oh, um

Ennuen is typing

Ennuen's top three anime were FMAB, Konosuba, and a third she picked depending on the demeanor of the group; none were actually her favorite or even close to that (in fact, she didn't even think Konosuba was good at all), but they served to ingratiate her to whoever she was talking to online. It was better to lie and be loved than show herself if she would only be a nuisance.

Ennuen: Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood

Toxicplasma Deathheart: haha nice

Toxicplasma Deathheart: whats ur actual favorite

Ennuen is typing

Ennuen is typing

Ennuen is typing

Ennuen: Oh, um

Ennuen: How'd you know?

Ennuen: Or, well

Toxicplasma Deathheart: those arent the picks of someone in full color nyehe

Toxicplasma Deathheart: i can sniff the lies right out of you dont even test me...

Ennuen: Haha, um

Ennuen: Okay.

Ennuen: Thanks

Ennuen: For calling me on that I mean... I don't know how you knew, but...

Toxicplasma Deathheart: told you already silly

Toxicplasma Deathheart: :)

Ennuen: Have you seen Haibane Renmei?

Ennuen and Art became close friends. They would meet a lot so often after school up there on the roof, and from it look, look out, and see:

The town stretching out before them. So far! Rural America, being late-settled, was ultimately built for cars. People think of rural areas as "small towns," but for someone living in them, they're anything but small. It's just the simple truth of the world.

Maybe there isn't anything *in* these small towns, but they cover a lot of land. Expanses of nothingness as far as the eye can see—trees and grasslands and hills but it's all dirty, unkempt, because there's no one there to keep it. Not beautiful, but untainted by humanity.

Where humanity merges with nature it's ultimately only ugly though. Ennuen had been on a college campus before many years ago. She remembered how pretty it was; how the trees and grounds and grass were well-kept, how that college seemed to care about beauty and life. In the rural areas of America, though, mostly the environment exists to get torn up, patchwork patched-up with angry, sullen buildings, sagging low-quality type of builds.

Ennuen and Art stared out at the rural areas.

"You know," said Art.

"H-huh?"

"It's so big," said Art.

"That's, that's what I was thinking," said Ennuen.

"Really, really! It's just... so much grainy film, black and white, nineteen-forties-war-footage stretching out, forever..."

Ennuen was silent.

They saw birds, up ahead. Falcons, or eagles, or buzzards, or something. Most rural kids don't actually know anything about living here, nothing meaningful, anyway; a city kid could move out to the country and he'd feel the same way rural kids do when they look up in bafflement at an animal they don't know the name for, an animal they'll never look up online or care about or anything. (Because, of course, who wants to stay where they are their whole life...?)

Art's voice was monotone, suddenly.

"It's a labyrinth, isn't it?"

Ennuen watched her. She focused hard on Art's eyes, and imagined or saw within them a bleak and pretty emptiness, a dense, enveloping sadness, a lack of color or resolution.

"It is," said Ennuen, who understood what Art was saying.

"Hey, Ennuen! I have a riddle for you. If this place is the labyrinth, are we Minotaur or Jason? Or am I Ariadne, here to guide you out of the Labyrinth? Or are we the poor King, pressured..."

"Haha," said Ennuen. "I don't think we're any of those."

Art nodded. "That's right! It was a trick question. Every generation before us is the Minotaur and King. We're the sacrificed girls..."

Her voice trailed off. Then she giggled—! Flung her head back dramatically and turned and walked rapidly in a circle, pacing. "Poor vestal virgins! Sacrificed promptly! The pyres of the flames are burning, burning! No, wait—chewing, chewing? Minotaur eating us up, celebratory! I guess if all we can do is live here, might as well make it fun, hmm? Taha!"

Ennuen watched her. She kind of giggled, reached out a hand, which framed Art, rattish Art, portrait of a lady on fire, burning, burning.

"Toxicplasma Deathheart," she said.

"That's my name, don't wear it out!" Art said, skipping now, laughing.

"Not Jenna, or Jenny, or whatever it was?"

"You didn't even remember that one! So nope, nuh-uh!"

Ennuen stood there as Art burned, burned.

"Oh, oh, Ennuen!!" said Art. "Dance with me!"

"Y-you're so weird," said Ennuen, laughing a little bit.

"I'm being vibrant!" said Art. "Come on, be colorful! You have a beautiful palette inside you, I'm sure," skip, skip.

Ennuen sighed, and smiled, actually, and Art reached out a hand—

Ennuen took it.

The first time Ennuen went to Art's house wasn't the actual first time. The actual first time was early, early on, when Ennuen had

mentioned Art, to her mother, in passing, and been pressed into telling her where Art lived. Turned out Art's house was within walking distance of theirs, only 2 miles away. Wow!

Just seeing it isn't really like going to it properly but it did give Ennuen impressions. The house was really big, and white. Art had mentioned that she had a large family; and yeah, Ennuen could definitely see that! Art's family had a lot of land... what did she say her dad worked as...?

The second time Ennuen went with Art. Her mother had given her permission but Art was kind of reticent on it but Ennuen pushed barely enough to make Art give up and say "Okayyyyy."

Art opened the door. She opened her mouth and for a second looked the same, flaming, impassioned, burning, burning, but covertly ducked in and whispered to Ennuen:

"I'm Jenny."

Ennuen nodded slowly.

"Hi there," said Art's dad in the kitchen. "I'm Jenny's dad, Lion. It's really good to meet you...?"

"Ennuen," said Ennuen. "She's really great," said Ennuen.

Art's dad Lion nodded. Then he opened his mouth. Then he smiled, his breath caught slightly, and he closed it.

"Ennuen let's go hang out in my room," said Art automatically.

"Okay," said Ennuen.

They transferred rooms robotically and asymptotically, taking hallway-through-room-through-all meandering and labyrinthine.

"Please don't talk about me with my parents around," Art said.

"Oh, okay," said Ennuen. "Why? Do they... not get along over you or something?"

"They don't get along with me," said Art.

"Oh," said Ennuen.

"Ennuen, look at my books," said Art.

On Art's wall was a massive book collection. YA books and adult books and philosophy books and science-fiction; Christianity, postmodernist sympathy, ultra-illicit ultra-Marxism, too? Sitting right next to *Gulag Archipelago* was *Das Kapital*...

"Wow," said Ennuen, wooden. She was still thinking.

"My collection's really massive," said Art. "Really, really. I love books. Or I did, when I was a kid. I kind of fell off reading when I got access to the internet. It's a shame..."

"I wish I liked books more," said Ennuen. "I mean, I read them more than the average person, it's just..."

"Nehe! I totally get it! Books are super-duper hard, sometimes... you just want to turn your brain off and scroll through life, condensed. I get it! But it's a really worthy, miraculous thing, to be able to read a book."

"Do your parents hurt you?" Ennuen said after silence had set in for two and two more seconds.

Art looked at her and smiled cutely.

"Maybe that can be the next riddle, Ennuen...?"

"That's really unfunny," said Ennuen. "Art?"

"Nah, not really," said Art after another pause.

"Oh," said Ennuen. Art watched her.

Good things have to end. Why does God have to take away good things? Art doesn't believe in God, while Ennuen...

This is part of the study of theodicy. Theodicy is the question of why evil exists. Why does there have to be evil in the world alongside good? Couldn't an all-good God destroy all evil forever, witch hunt and purging, so why doesn't he? There's so many convoluted answers in all the religions, of course, see for instance Catholicism's crazy-complex original sin magical debt banking explanation; Cantor gives his own too—that without being leavened by evil, all the good in the world would be indistinguishable from God, to simplify it.

So maybe there's actually a lot of reasons for why evil can exist alongside good; but it doesn't make anything feel better at all, does it? Something can have a reason and still suck, still absolutely suck...

That's why Art doesn't believe in God, in the end, you know? She doesn't believe that something so good and so powerful could allow someone to be hurt so bad. Art doesn't look like she's hurt at all when she's dancing like she does but Ennuen knows, because Ennuen saw her eyes—the bleak and pretty nothingness.

"Ennuen, dance with me," commands Art; Ennuen falls into step and they perform a sweeping waltz to the sound of classical music, classic music from the age of antiquity, a good Bach, or maybe shall we accelerate centuries and listen to some

Rachmaninoff, some Chopin, some Liszt? Some of those romantic-style or modern-style pianists with their massive, massive hands, playing sweet and large and diminutive tiny pieces all at once; Art and Ennuen dance, burning, burning.

Good things have to end.

"Pukka perfect beautiful simply wonderful," said the man before Art and Ennuen. "Great condition! I'll take them. You said thirty?"

Art nodded. Her and Ennuen finished the transaction and they stepped outside of the building, a pawn shop. Art tended to sell a lot of the things she owned.

"Art," said Ennuen. "You seem really weird today."

"Do I?" said Art. "Haha! I suppose it's just a little bit of stress, then. College applications, you know. If I don't get accepted into the last few that come in, I'll only have waitlists, and..."

"You didn't apply to safeties...?"

Art smiled. "I didn't. I thought it was too much effort, or too much money, or something."

"I see," said Ennuen.

"I'm just stressed, that's all," said Art.

"I get why," said Ennuen.

"I'm going to be here forever," said Art.

"You aren't," said Ennuen.

"Do you remember how, years ago, we used to go and skip together at the top of the school-building," said Art.

"I do," said Ennuen.

"And we would see the world expanding before us, and the only thing we could see in that world was how big it was," said Art.

"I do remember this," said Ennuen.

"And the first time we did this I said:"

Ennuen subvocalized it as Art said it:

"It's a labyrinth, isn't it?"

Art closed her eyes and smiled. "It's not the full-color world I wanted to be in by now, that's all. Sigh! Nothing to be done! Can't be helped!"

Ennuen watched her eyes. When Art opened them, what did she see?

Eventually, Art had to go home.

Ring, ring. Ennuen's phone rang. She was in her bed and was idly scrolling (not reading, drown out the world in life condensed) and her phone—rang.

"Hi," she said.

"Hey, Ennuen," said Art's voice. What was that sound? Heavy white noise? Brown noise? Heavier than that. Thicker and substantial, textured. It was rain. It was raining, wasn't it? Dense and heavy rain had completely covered the town, blanketed, a thicket thunderhead...

"Are you outside?" said Ennuen, alarmed.

"I am," said Art. "I'm by the bridge."

There was a bridge, with high rails, so you couldn't fall off. The plunge into the water below was probably fifty feet. Ennuen knew immediately that Art meant this bridge.

It was late but that didn't matter. She had actually never snuck out of her house before. Crazy! TV shows prime you to expect all teenagers to be delinquents but for the most part a teenager is just a normal person. Ennuen especially was well-behaved and well-bred. The ways she upset her family were in ways subtler than sneaking out when it was too late. Art, on the other hand…

Ennuen shook her head, freeing herself from her own thoughts. Art was by the bridge. Art…

She crept to the door and shrugged her jacket on. Making sure to open it as quietly as possible—she exited the building.

"Ennuen, what are you doing?" said Art over the phone.

"I'm going to see you," Ennuen said. She was determined!

"Don't," said Art.

"Why," demanded Ennuen.

"Please don't," said Art.

"What?" Ennuen broke out into a jog; water splashed around her and soaked her, monochrome monotone monomania and she was gray and indistinct in the rain as she ran, slowly, but ran nevertheless.

"Ennuen, stop," said Art.

"I don't understand," said Ennuen, she ran faster, ran quickly. Her legs were burning, burning. Up the hill, any other day she would've come to a stop and breathed heavily, out—she wasn't fit! She was exhausted! But she kept running—"Art," she said.

"That's my name, don't wear it out," Art said. "Ennuen, stop. I wanted to tell you something and I won't tell you it unless you stop right where you are."

"I'll stop when I meet you," said Ennuen. "You're out here in the rain and it's nothing good."

"It's good," said Art.

Ennuen doubled her pace, tripled her pace, quadruple-quintuple-speed sprinting mayhem! Burning, burning. Flame consumed her body and ardently she danced; Art skipping, Art skimming, Art saving, Art saved.

"A-Art, *hah, hah* why are you, *hah,* out there??" said Ennuen.

"Do you remember what I was saying this morning?"

Yes, thought Ennuen. She ran. Around the next corner would be Art. Around the next corner would be Art.

"That I was stressed, and... I was thinking, you know, about this world. About this town and its root of evil."

"E—" Ennuen panted, "—vil,"

"I'm going to go to the full color world," said Art.

Ennuen stopped. She had to stop; her legs were burning, burning, she couldn't go on, she needed to go on, so she went as fast as she could, but she had failed, already—by stopping. And she said:

"What does that mean."

"We'll be together again," said Art. "In a bit. It won't be very long, okay? And it'll be better. Anything's better than unfocused dreams. Sometimes I think this is all just a nightmare I haven't woken up from."

"It's not," said Ennuen. "Is this—is this, no, you still have a chance, Art! You really do. It doesn't matter what colleges you get into! You can escape from this place. You can get away from the ugliness and everything else. Art." Art. Art.

She turned the corner:

Art stood next to the railing of the bridge and solemnly looked down at the patterning river below. She turned to Ennuen, silent.

They both put down their phones. No, Ennuen lowered hers. Art dropped hers into the water, staining it blackly, indistinct from a sea of blood; Moses calls the plagues, 'Let my people go.' Minotaur, Ariadne, Theseus, or else? Selection screen...

Ennuen narrowed her eyes and saw inside Art's own: the ersatz facsimile of human joy. Art swallowed and looked away.

"You're coming to my house," Ennuen declared, imperative.

"Ennuen," said Art.

Ennuen reached her hand out; roles reversed. Ennuen the hope-giver, Christ, messiah, Toxicplasma Deathheart locked in her tomb, Lazarus, deceased and dark-night-of-the-soul.

"You're coming to my house," said Ennuen.

"I'm going to kill myself," said Art.

"No you are not," said Ennuen.

Art looked away.

"It's different when it's vocalized isn't it?" said Ennuen. "You aren't going to do it. That's, that's why you called me, it was a cry for hope. It can get better."

"It can't get better while I'm here," said Art. "There's only you, and soon that'll be gone too, right? You'll go off. I'll be left here. In this monochrome world."

"There's always, always hope," said Ennuen. "There always is I *promise* you there is always hope. You have to, you have to wait and hope. You get it. You do, right?"

"Life isn't like a story where tension gets released in a cathartic way," said Art. "It's a thriller novel without the last hundred pages. Yeah, that's, that's really what life is," said Art.

"Shut up," said Ennuen, she stepped toward Art, Art jolted, hesitated, stood in her place. She couldn't move! Couldn't do anything at all...

Another step. Art jolted.

"Just cry about it," said Ennuen. "Instead of doing anything just cry about it. Just cry in your sleep. Be miserable. But don't do anything you can't ever change back. You just have to endure. You have to live through your gray world yes and you have to hope it stops being gray but you have to endure, to live for the moments where it's in color, you have to, if not for you, then for me, your best friend, so do it, okay, understand?"

Another step.

"Ennuen," Art said.

"LISTEN TO ME," said Ennuen. "Actually listen. Just come with me to my house and stay the night and it'll be better, better than KILLING yourself. And stay with me and rely on me as long as you need to and it'll be all-okay, A-okay, I'll help you get out of here no matter how much it takes. I understand what this place is to you! It's the same way to me! This place is the root of all evil, singular in its malice, corrupting everything it touches and the only way to break free is to slice away all your ties with a high-powered chainsaw, or a super-sharpened longsword, the only way to break free is to employ ultra-illicit methods, move away and never come back, never look back, I understand! That's how it is to me too! So you have to, have to be the person better than me that I know you are... I know that you're stronger than me, so be stronger than me and remain here with me, forever, okay, A-okay?"

The scene became silent, except for the torrential fall of the rain from overhead, which soaked Ennuen and Art both to the bone. Art made a noise and Ennuen's hand wavered—but didn't fall, not at all, not one single bit.

Ennuen took another step forward and her hand grasped Art's arm.

"Listen to me," she said again.

"It's despair-inducing how colorless everything is," said Art.

"Do you think I don't feel that way...? Every girl in this town understands you," said Ennuen.

"So it's my fault?" said Art.

"No," said Ennuen.

"I know it is, you're talking about how I'm so much stronger, but I'm *not,* I'm just a faker. You seriously don't understand me at all, Ennuen... I just wanted to be someone colorful, but by trying to be that way I revealed that I had no color at all. I was like this world all along in the end."

"No," said Ennuen. "You're just you. You're seriously just you, I don't care how strong you think you are, I know that you're capable of being better than me, because you tried. We all start from the same place, but you're reaching past it, please."

"I can't live without rejecting those evil parts of me this place has shackled me to," Art said helplessly. "I can't live without being Art."

"Then you can reject them but you have to live," said Ennuen urgently. "You have to."

"It doesn't feel like I have the willpower to go on at all," said Art, "I never understood what that meant until I realized it was all gone, until I realized I was just done," said Art.

"You have to live anyway," said Ennuen.

"I can't make this choice," said Art.

"I can make it for you, but you have to nod," said Ennuen. "Do you want to be saved?"

Art choked.

They stood.

"Art," said Ennuen.

"Yes, I do," said Art, "I-I *do,* I want to be saved, I just—*don't* deserve, don't deserve it,"

Ennuen pulled her by her arm into an embrace under the rain under the clouds under the moon.

"You're my friend," said Ennuen. "And you *do*. You really, really do. Let's go home, Art. We can warm up. Okay?"

When Ennuen went to college, they fell out of contact.

It happens. Many people lose their high school friends when they meet someone newer and cooler, when they have more experiences, when they realize they've grown apart too. Art didn't go to college, to Ennuen's knowledge—but Ennuen never saw her again when they returned home, and at some point they stopped texting or calling or anything. Then, Ennuen got a new phone—an ultra-illicit method to cut all of her ties away. And some years passed even after Ennuen went to college.

She had a lot of experiences while she was there; she got into a token and straightforward and lukewarm and heterosexual relationship that imploded but in a successful, normal way, where all of her new friends assured her it was normal. She got a good job, and then got a promotion, which raised her salary by forty thousand a year—at which she was overjoyed. She lived in a big city, which was so in-focus, so full-color; she was happy, so happy, disconnected from the root of all evil.

The lights of the train crossing flashed:

Ennuen looked up from her phone and saw:

A girl with long black hair, abattoir-noir, familiar face, crossing from one side of the street to the other, Ennuen felt shock, surprise, gasp, and all the memories flooded back into her, and

she stepped forward but the train crossing had already lowered its bars, and the train rushed past.

And the train rushed past, and the sparks on the rails were burning, burning.

And when the train had passed, this other girl was nowhere to be seen.

That night, Ennuen opened up the right app, clicked the right page, scrolled to the right episode:

THERE IS A MONSTER IN SEOUL.