

Morghan Tyler

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English 202

Inspired by JBSpeed Art Museum

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### Again

The green dress around her gathered loosely as she shifted for the third time in the past minute. *Index meets thumb, thumb meets middle, meets ring, meets pinky, meets ring. Middle, index, middle, ring, pinky, ring, middle. A wave.* It was something to calm her. Callus to callus, counting up and down, back and forth, absolutely refusing to look up to the clock. If she looked up, she'd see that he was late. Again. Or she was early. Information she didn't need to know, since she knew already she'd have to wait. Again.

She was used to the waiting. Waiting for the straightening iron to get hot enough to get rid of those silly curls her mother was so fond of long ago. Exactly 13 and a quarter minutes. It was a slow iron. She knew every second that passed as she waited. Exactly seventeen and a half minutes to go from home to work. Six to eight minutes to school either way. Traffic was always a wait.

The plants beside her waved slightly in the breeze coming from the air conditioner. *Hallelujah for small miracles. Breathe in and breathe out, the same as before. Back when we were young and knew everything.*

She hears herself in her mind as she counts down the time. Counting prime numbers as the seconds slip by. 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41, 43, 47, 53, 59, 61, 67, 71, 73,

79, 83, 89, 97, 101, 103, 107, 109, 113, 127, 131, 137... Higher and higher until she can't remember anymore.

“Ms. Magnus?”

*Was it 161 or 31?*

“Deio Magnus?”

*Maybe 113. “Yes?” They have finally come to take us away.*

“I’m afraid you’ll have to wait a while longer. We just received a call. He’s on his way.”

*So the illustrious Haydn Piruz cannot come on time after all. “Of course.” Yes, let us be civil about this. Let us not let on that we are not amused by this stunt.*

She went back to what she’d done for the wait. Counting back and forth, prime numbers, as her other hand rested limply on her emerald wrappings, palm fronds ensconcing the arms and legs of the beige monstrosity someone deemed a chair. The cutouts on her black pumps teasing her toes with the air flowing around. Shifting lazily with her gray eyes lost in the crowd. Counting back and forth, ebbing and flowing like the sea. Each breath with a second ticking away. *Was that the four hundredth breath? Less or more?*

“Deio.”

*937, 941, 947, 953, 967, 971, 977, 983, 991, 997, 1009, 1013—“Piruz?” Darkhair, viridiangreeneyes, myheartheisgorgeous, wanthimtastetouchhaveown belongneedwantwant lustlovewant...*

“It’s a pleasure to finally meet you.” A slight crinkle at the corners of his eyes, nearly hidden by thick glasses. “I am so sorry I haven’t been able to meet with you sooner. Business, you see.” Boldly pressing on like he couldn’t deny a part of himself. “I reserved a table, if you’d like to come along.”

*“You. Can’t believe you look like this. “Are.” Tell me that you are not real. “Late.” Be punctual for the beauty. Be on time for the smile.*

He nods, checking his watch carelessly. “Just by a few minutes. I’m sure they won’t mind. Come along.” He holds out a hand to lift her up, earnest and sincere. “Five minutes I promise to give back to you, as soon as possible.”

*Does this mean again?* Her fingers paused in their staccato tempo. “Very well.”

