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White Gloves

The never-ending and hideously loud cackle of the bearded man sitting next to me was like a cheese grater scraping against my nerves. It was 7:45 in the morning and already the subway was jam-packed with commuters, no doubt on their way into the city for work, same as myself. I pulled my dull black purse closer to my body, trying to make myself as small as possible so I didn't have to continue bumping elbows with the woman sitting on my right. I truly hated public transportation, but driving a car through the chaotic streets of New York every day was a much more terrifying prospect.

The subway shuttered as it rounded a sharp corner, the mass of people crowded inside all swaying together like a wave in stormy waters. Suddenly we lurched to a jarring stop and the doors slid open, letting in a fresh batch of travelers and the biting cold of the winter air. I subconsciously pulled my coat tighter around myself, trying to hide my shiver as a young woman sat next to me, taking the place of the annoying cackling man. I briefly noticed she was wearing a rather festive looking multicolored polka dot scarf. I myself would have never been brave enough to wear something that would stand out so much; I preferred to blend into the crowd and remain invisible to the prying eyes of those around me.

It wasn't much longer before we had finally arrived at my stop. I was eager to finally leave the claustrophobia behind and get on with my day, and as soon as those mechanical doors opened, I snatched my things and darted onto the platform. I only had fifteen minutes to get to work now, so I wasted no time climbing the stairs that lead out to the city streets. It wasn't until I hit the frigid air that I realized my stupidity. In my rush to get off the subway, I had left my

knitted white gloves laying on the bench seat next to where I had been sitting. Mentally slapping myself for being so forgetful, I ran back down into the subway, taking the stairs two at a time in hopes I might catch the train before it went on its way again.

Of course I knew it was highly unlikely that the train was still sitting at the platform, but I still felt my stomach drop as I watched the last car disappear into the pitch black of the tunnel. A deep sigh left my lungs and I dropped my face into my hands, defeated. They were just gloves, and it would be easy to just buy a new pair, but the loss almost felt like a bad omen. I was sure that my day would now only continue to get worse. After a few moments I had accepted my fate, and now several minutes late for work, I began to trudge my way back towards the exit when a sudden shout caught my attention. "Excuse me!" I glanced over my shoulder, more out of habit than any expectation that the person was speaking to me, and I noticed the woman with the polka dot scarf running down the platform towards me.

"Excuse me, I think you forgot these!" In her hand she held my abandoned white gloves, waving them in the air above her head as if to emphasize her words. I'm sure my face held a look of surprise similar to what I felt, and I barely remembered to smile gratefully as she dropped the articles of clothing into my outstretched palm. "Thank you," I responded, still shocked that she had appeared like a knight in shining armor in my moment of distress. She merely smiled and jogged up the stairs behind me, waving as she disappeared from sight.