



Tracking Lines

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I love my town. Most people know it for the TT Circuit, but I like another kind of tracks. Trains are so cool. I mean, look at them! They are quick, big and help people. They are like big friendly giants.

Today is the first time I am allowed to use the train all day. I am so excited! I will first visit a station I have already been to many times before but it's really pretty. It has been built by Izaak, which is funny because my nephew is called Isaac but you spell his name differently. And then I took the train to another big place in yet another province! I could have taken the quick direct train, but I like to enjoy the ride so I took the slow direct train. That way I get close to an hour of fun instead of a little bit over a half hour! I got to see a lot of nature.

And of course I went to finally visit the city of mosquitoes! Dad told me about this Dutch tale in which a swarm of mosquitoes was mistaken for a tower on fire. It was really funny and I wanted to see it myself. I must say I didn't eventually see any mosquitoes but the town had very friendly people and the train trip was very long, so it was okay.

When the day was almost over I had to head back home. But on my last trip the train suddenly stopped. I had to wait for a while until I could get off, but I didn't mind the gap. Dad said to mom somebody jumped but I did not get it. Why would you do that?

Boy, I am finally home. Can't wait to tell my friends!

I still remember the time when apples were only a healthy snack. And look at me now, I'm leaving my bicycle behind in the top of a green apple. I never really got the city folks, I wondered as I entered the railway.

I really hope she is different. I know she's from Rotterdam, but she seemed like such a first class girl. The whole ride I have been thinking about how I could express my feelings. I want to go to the next platform with her...

Finally. I'm there. As I stepped out of the train my eyes scanned all thirteen tracks. And there she was! Oh my god... she was ugly. For a few moments I was stationary. Have I been chatting with *this* all these months?

Puzzle code

82wyX6Chox

This puzzle is part of the puzzle hunt Pandora of I.C.T.S.V. Inter-Actief that exclusively takes place from 15 May through 19 May. Please leave the puzzle in this exact spot. It will be removed by the organization after the event. For more questions refer to www.iapandora.nl or call +31 6 83822397.

I ran. I glimpsed a few times over my back. She did not seem to notice me. I jumped onto a random train, and as I finally took a breath and dared to look outside the window I saw two watery eyes locked on mine from faraway. The few minutes until departure seemed like an eternity.

The first four stops were a thought train of self-loathe. I really crossed some ethical boundaries this time... The train came to a stop again. My phone buzzed. I didn't need to check it to know she's cross with me. As the vehicle moved on, I seemed more able to move on as well. I never really looked where I was going, but I can do that now. I just need more time to focus on myself. How convenient, the second stop will be a nice big city. Time to treat myself.

It is amazing how insightful that half an hour of a train trip was. The shopping afterwards was, well, fine. I got sidetracked to be honest. It slowly dawned on me I have never really been coupled with a nice girl.

I stayed to have a fancy dinner by myself. I don't need anyone to have a nice meal. But once I was eating I just wasn't able to keep track of everything or anything.

I called it a day and went back home. I reluctantly took my bike out of the rack and tried to ignore the ridiculous fruit-inspired construction. Why does it annoy me so much?

I need to get my life back on track.

Every day I have to face this monster of a building. I still remember first hearing about the construction plans, but now it's just unfinished. It's silly how all of a sudden things can stop. The remains are just telling enough to know what it should have been. It taunts me. Oh castle of my dreams, you too have sold out now like so many other things around me have. WitchWorld. I scoff.

But this day I have had enough. Their stop on realizing their dreams doesn't mean I should, right? So I went to central station.

Because the thing is, it's this weekend. And this time I will finally go. I have been wanting to go to this exhibition for ages. I have always liked nature and flowers in particular. However, my all too familiar anxiety increases as I'm approaching the exhibition centre. Why can't a guy just like flowers? They look nice, they smell good. I have been trained to turn my nose away all my life, but goddamn, I will sniff each and every one of them. I will not backtrack this time.

My plan to exit the train as masculine as possible fails the moment I am faced with the harsh truth. The exhibition centre is open, but there is no horticultural fair. The annual event cancelled since a few years ago, I just remembered. How could I forget? I blame my one track mind.

And then something else struck me. Agrexco. They were the ultimate flower champions on the very same exhibition like a decade ago, and now they are in liquidation. It saddens me how things can derail like that.

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Trying to keep myself together, I wander. With complete tunnel vision on comparing my life with the castle, the cancelled show and Agrexco I just step onto a random metro. I have had no sense of time, but I was able to listen to barely half an album until a snippet was able to break through the noise in my head. The announcement for the final destination was something like "isolate". I nod furiously. Isolated.

I got off on the second last stop. I looked around. Am I on the right track? Maybe I should have gone to the next one, I thought with a bittersweet smirk. Still, my mind started to feel more and more absent. My feet had a mind of its own though and entered a train. This ride seemed so short. I just stepped out when almost everyone seemed to leave. I have always been somewhat of a follower.

I blended in almost perfectly with the masses, but my feet demanded me to stop. A woman with an empty gaze looks me in the eyes. I feel a knot in my stomach, remembering my misbehaviour from the past. I take a moment to take in all of her stately coldness. "Terugblik" (retrospect) says the sign below her. Fighting back the inclination to touch the stone material, I wondered why the universe seems to conduct me into constantly reviewing my life.

However, I know just the thing to cheer me up. I went to platform four and I took the train to another large city. It was such a nice ride: barely a half an hour. My joy grew even more when I entered the central station. I felt overwhelmed with bliss. This is it. The proof you can rebuild. This place was burned down several decades ago and just look how fascinating and immense it is right now!

I'm not fond of urban culture though so I won't be doing some further sightseeing in the city. Nope, I decided to finally visit this other friendly town. So I took the train again. I immediately headed to the north, only had one transfer and entered the place that granted us our royal king's mother. Roaming around the town and sitting in the parks maintained some of my positivity, but somewhere I knew cherishing these small luxuries doesn't make up for the rest. A self-forged cage of crushed dreams, frustration, excruciating loneliness...

I decided to go back home. I felt like I was running out of steam, I thought to myself for like twenty minutes. Well of course, it has been a long day. My head was so heavy when I exited the passenger car for my transfer. Instead of taking the next train, I just stood there for a while. Then I decided this will be my final destination.

I never thought that the light at the end of the tunnel would in fact be a train.

"Attention to all travelers for direction Zwolle: there will be a delay of indefinite duration on platform five. We apologize for the inconvenience."

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