

## The twiddling season

The metro chugged along. Windows rattled. There was that faint hiss of music pouring from multiple mobile devices, the hint of clicking on touch panels, the glow of videos flickering away unconsciously. Aging faces poured into screens as if they knew what they were doing.

Jack was young, virile, working and they just hung about and lived off his income. Fucking pensioners. Look at them. For every fifty of them there was only one of him: a worker young enough to still hold down a job and pay enough taxes to have a say. But they still voted, in between face lifts and dental care, resuscitation when they should have died out and left space for a better race.

Jack pulled his hood tight in case they would have to talk. They were good at catching your eye and commenting on the weather: they had nothing better to do.

They sit there twiddling away. Fingers tickling keyboards, faces lightening up over the silliest of things. Just look at them. A waste of space. They never stop. Aimless grins. They have nothing else to do. Hundreds of them. All over the place, clogging up busses, trains, subways, trams, airports in their idle wanderings, gazed stares and hapless conclusions. They seemed incapable of stopping, of letting go. They kept moving when they should have died out. They had been there, done that, and were now living like kings off the fat of the land. Those of us who were still young enough to work had no choice but to pay their way knowing that we would never have the same luxury: no retirement for the next generation.

Jack dragged the rug sack closer. It would be silly to lose it now. And if any of those old fogies thought of robbing it, they would be in for a surprise. He hid his eyes behind a veil of superiority. What did they know. They chattered on around him. In silence. They were all plugged in to their personal stereos,

private health plans telling them how well they were what they needed to do to stay alive even longer.

The bastards. Who was paying for all that. Jack scrunched up within his overcoat, entrenched, hiding away in the final wait. Their time was up. He'd go with them but it would be worth it. Teach them a lesson they had forgotten to learn. The metro wagons entered the tunnel. Just as planned.

For a brief second there was a doubt. Jack wouldn't see his boy again. Once the shit hit the fan it was too late to turn it off. No time to think.

The train went dead. Jack held the emergency signal hard between his palms. There was a brief look of terror as they finally saw their creator and exploded into nothing. They never emerged from the blackness. It took months to clear the tunnel. Jack would never be old enough to be a burden on his offspring. Sometimes it was so easy to be right, to be convinced what you were doing was, that you knew what was best for everyone else. At the last minute Jack just hoped his son would think the same.

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