

# The Trap

*Shawn Campbell*

Gary sat at the bus stop and waited. The weather was chilly. It was just cold enough to make being outside uncomfortable without a coat. He had forgotten his coat at the office. The bus was twenty minutes late or at least it seemed that way. Gary would normally know for certain, but he had forgotten his watch, the one his father had given him, on the nightstand that morning. The wind picked up, and he shivered. He considered going back to the office for his coat, but knew as soon as he left the bus would arrive. It didn't really matter. Soon he would be home.

A plumpish woman in her mid-thirties walked up and sat on the other side of the bench. She wore a jacket over scrubs, suggesting she was a nurse. Gary nodded politely to her and then paid her no mind. Soon the Number 8 bus would arrive and he would ride it five stops and then walk two blocks to his little green house with the blue door. Martha would have dinner ready; she had said it would be pork chops tonight. After dinner, the boys would do their homework while he watched television and read the paper. He'd check over the boys' work and then read David a bedtime story. David was the only one who still wanted bedtime stories. The other two were too old. Gary wished they were young again. He would miss the ritual when David got too old.

It had been a good day at the office. He had found the problem with the Myers account with little fuss, just a few small bookkeeping mistakes. Everyone had been impressed. Problems with the Myers account usually took days to unravel. Mr. Ricketts had brought Gary into his office to congratulate him and hint that advancement to associate would soon be in the picture. Gary hoped it was true. The extra money would be a nice thing for the family. A new car, no more riding the bus, new kitchen appliances for Martha, vacations to Miami.

Gary's brain paused mid-thought. Miami didn't seem right. They already went on annual vacations to Miami. The family had been traveling there since he made associate. Acapulco was the right place. They would go to Acapulco when he made partner. Was that right? Gary was sure he had already been to Acapulco. He could see the blue ocean and white beaches. Something wasn't right. When was the last time David had wanted a bedtime story? Gary glanced at his hands. The skin looked like paper and the joints were swollen with arthritis. They didn't look right. They didn't look like his hands.

"Mr. Daly, would you like to come inside with me?"

Gary looked at the nurse sitting next to him on the bench. She was smiling. She seemed familiar though he'd never seen her before. Gary tried to remember what he was doing on the bench but couldn't. It was cold, too cold to be out without a coat. He nodded, and the nurse helped him stand and walked him back up the sidewalk to the door of the big brick building behind them. His joints felt stiff and his back would not straighten out all the way. Inside the building it was warm and pleasant.

A second nurse sat behind a desk. She looked up at the first nurse. "Catch another one?"

"Yep."

The two nurses smiled at each other. Gary smiled, too. It seemed impolite not to. ☺