

Caged

By Olivia C.

My cage and I were headed home. It was dark on the bus... and empty. I had to leave my dog behind at the pound. My parents wouldn't let me keep a stray. Slowly, the bus rolled to a stop and its tires scraped against the cold, concrete road. I lived in what some people would call an old, broken town, but not as ruined as the one where the bus had stopped. No, this wasn't the home that I remembered. I looked around and then hesitantly left my seat. This wasn't my stop, nor could it have been my bus. I cautiously walked toward the driver, but he didn't even seem to notice. He didn't listen or even look at me. His cloudy eyes looked straight ahead. I decided my best bet was to get off the bus, just in case it drove any further than it already had.

As I neared the bend of a street, a man in an all-black suit approached me. He had slicked back, brown hair. His eyes were blackish brown, and they were staring right at me. He didn't look like the type that would

want to sit down and chat. I stepped back a bit, but I knew it would be rude to ignore him, so I stayed put. He said to me, "You look lost. Do you need help? I'll help you if you want. I promise I won't hurt you." I had no idea what he meant. All of the sudden, he grabbed my collar and dragged me into a nearby alley. I knew I should have started running, even though he wasn't hurting me. I think he sincerely thought I needed help. Maybe, this man might have been a kind person. He looked at me with warm, caring eyes. Then he shoved me in a cage.

Everyone around us noticed me, but no one seemed to really care. He carried me to what I think was his house. Somehow, I found myself in his kitchen. He opened the cage door and let me out. I had no idea what was going on. The man walked over to the phone and dialed a number. I started to roam around the room. It was messy. Like, *really* messy. He had plates piled up in the sink and bowls of soggy cereal scattered all over the table. There were napkins on the floor (most of them used.) It was disgusting! For a man who looked so professional, you would think he would be a bit tidier. I was interested to find out what was going to happen, but I also wanted to be back on

the bus. I sat down and pushed myself into the corner of the room. If he had the mind to shove me in a cage and kidnap me, he certainly wouldn't want to hear my questions. Plus, I didn't want to start any trouble with him. It was bad enough being trapped in his house. I soon fell asleep. It probably wasn't the smartest idea, especially since I didn't know what this man could do to me, but all the worrying had tired me out, and I really needed some more energy.

As I heard a door opening, I immediately awoke. I started to freak out. What if it was someone coming to hurt me. These big, strong-looking men entered the room. They were even weirder than the man in the suit. The men were wearing dark blue clothing. The outfits were more like a work uniform of some kind. There were lots of pockets... some of them filled with tools that I think I had seen before, but I couldn't remember where. They looked around the room for a millisecond before settling their eyes on me. They didn't just look at me though, they started to advance towards me. They had these grim looks on their faces. One of the men grabbed me and dragged me out the front door. He tried pushing me into his van, but I wouldn't let him. I struggled against him. I had no idea

what was going on. I was sick and tired of being pushed around. I bit the man as hard as I possibly could, and he yelled out in pain as I scrambled to my feet. I ran and ran and ran. I didn't want to go wherever they were going. I just kept running and yelling. I wanted back home.

I was sitting back on the uncomfortable seat of the bus. It was all a dream. I didn't think I had ever fallen asleep. I glanced out the window. Apparently, I had been sleeping for a long time, because I had no idea where I even was. I sighed and slouched back on my chair. That's when I noticed that something strange had happened. My cage had started to move. I had just dreamt the life of my new, stray dog-- the dog that had just appeared in my used-to-be empty cage.