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English 4

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Palshaw

Cancelled

The terminal echoed with a harmony of sounds, the light beat of falling footsteps, the quiet hum of distant conversation, and the charm of the occasional robotic announcement playing over the intercom. Surrounded by towering glass windows, the airport was lit by a soft glow, creating a dreamlike state in the early morning hours. People floated about with fluid movements, taking off their shoes for security, pulling out their boarding pass, and calmly walking through the melodical beeping metal arch.

His buzz cut hair stood as rigid as his posture. Red veins laced throughout his eyes that were engulfed in the puffiness of sleep deprivation. His skin lacked a normal human glow of life, instead, bluish, grey undertones were emphasized by his baby blue collared shirt. It could be inferred that his features appeared similar to that of a zombie. A sudden break in the peace came as--smack smack smack-- he harshly tapped his crisp leather loafer foot against the glossy security floor.

 A row of glazed over, tired eyes turned to his direction as the row of eleven or so people in front of him methodically shuffled a couple of steps forward.

 The security guard sitting at the raised black podium, scanned each ID and paper boarding pass in slow motion gestures. Sitting there at the podium, hair heavily cemented down with gel, meticulously parted straight down the middle, the guard signed and stamped each ticket with exaggerated movements. Wrinkles that shone of years of smiles and laughs, lined his small, beady blue eyes as he took the time to ask each person how their day was, giving them a big toothy smile as he sent them on their way.

The line slowly continued to drag towards the guard. Single step forward, stop. Single step forward, stop.

The foot tapping only increased as the middle-aged businessman tested his patience abilities. Scanning the line, he listened as the baby behind him let out a belting screech that could probably be heard for miles. The short, stout man in front of him dragged his suitcase along on one wheel, which created a relentless clonking on the hard floor. The same robotic voice repeated the same security reminders in the background in exactly forty two seconds intervals. Eyes now slightly twitchy and hands clenched together, the man kept waiting. A clock overhead let out a faint clicking sound as each and every second passed.

Tick. Tick. Tick. Tick. Tick. Tick.

After only a few minutes, the business man came to life, leaving his zombie persona as he pushed past the floppy plastic guard gate, getting a little shove from it on the back as it snapped back into place, and launched himself towards the guard. The man stuck his documents in the outstretched blue latex glove. Wrinkles creased around the guard’s eyes as he gave the businessman a big smile, though when he met his stale expression the guard looked down. The black light shone over the glossy, plastic ID and the man’s now folded and bent plane ticket was checked and scribbled on with the blue signature of the guard. Before the guard could do his “have a great day” spiel, the man had was already hopping over to the bins to take off his shoes.

The man’s phone buzzed, but he pushed it deeper into his pocket, as he already knew what it said. He entered the terminal like a tornado, popping the dreamy bubble of peace and lighting a fire full of tension throughout. His eyes shakily scanned the room, taking in the maze of halls braided together in a uniform fashion. A dizzy light headed feeling took over as the leather shoes hit the cement floor hard as he began accelerating his walking pace.

 What began as just a quickly paced stride, turned into an all out Olympic sprint as his ears registered a familiar name being spoken in that dreamy, robotic voice echoing throughout the halls. The tie was hanging on for dear life, as a gusty breeze whipped around it. Stale airport air smacked him in the face as he pushed further and further down the everlasting hall. The jacket, having been hastily pulled on after security, was normally a crisp sight, but flopped and folded, origaming itself to whatever it felt like. His eyebrows turned down as, appearing out of the mist, he saw the gloriously shining sign that read Gate A18. A single drip of sweat beaded down his forehead as he floated closer and closer to his destination.

His feet reached the gate before his mind did, sending him almost falling forward from such a sudden, screeching stop against the freshly polished floor. He met eyes with a professionally dressed woman standing behind the counter whose hair was perfectly slicked back into a neat bun and eyes shone with bright awakeness. Confusion swept over her face as she watched the man, drinking gulps of air, pull out his boarding pass and toss it in front of her.

The man raised his eyebrows and looked at her with a “well aren’t you going to say something” expression.

Looking up, the gate number’s reflection glimmered against his watery, now wide awake, eyes. Slowly standing up straighter and pulling his jacket back into place, the man realized that people were just casually sitting around. A man casually flipped the page of a freshly printed newspaper, a young boy giggled as he was engulfed in an IPhone game, a teenager tiredly gazed out into nothing. He felt the slight rumble of his phone vibrating in his pocket again. He slowly slid the phone into his hand and he focused in on the only notification consuming the screen. FLIGHT TO MONTEREY: CANCELLED.