

Georgestreet short story by Sigríður Hrefna Jónsdóttir (S155473)

“I cannot believe she said that” Mike said and took another bite of his sandwich. I wasn’t really listening though, the only thing I could think of was that Jackie wanted me, me over that douche guy, James or what is face. She had been seeing him for about 10 months now, I have only been dating her for half a year!

“Yeah” I said and tried to feel some appetite, but who could eat with all of those butterflies in their stomach?

“Did she really say that Kevin!!?” Mike needed the details but I wasn’t sure if I could really speak

“Yes, she said that if I can find Georgestreet, take a picture of the sign and arrive at her place before 8 o’clock tonight we would be together forever”.

“Ohh I’ve heard about that one, you know it’s not on google maps and people tend to keep it’s whereabouts a secret” Mike said with a sceptic tune.

“That’s, the point, can’t you see? If I find it, it will prove my love for her by showing how intelligent I am!”.

Mike looked at me, with a huge piece of ham between his teeth and busted out laughing. “I don’t even thing that my dad knows how to get around without google maps” he replied “can’t you just solve a math problem?”

Mike was upsetting me, I know I can do this, it can’t be that hard, my great great granddad often told me about the days when they didn’t have google maps and how everyone knew their way around “technology is going to bit you in the ass Kevin” he had said many times. But he was old man, and kind of didn’t fully understand technology, he didn’t even have touchless phone when he died 2 years ago. If he had lived, he would be 100 years old now, born in 1980. If he could have found his way around, I could too!

“Well let me know how it goes, I have other things to do today” Mike said and stood up, “I’m going to go to the amusement park and you know, just let my car find the way, like normal people!” he added and smiled.

I’m not listening to him; I need all my brain activity to find a way to that none existing street, I think I will start at the library so I stand up and walk to my car. Phone rings, it’s Jackie!

“Answer Jackie” I say towards my pocket which holds my phone and her lovely voice start to sound in my earpiece.

Everything is just better when she speaks, the sun reaches between the skyscrapers, the pavement turns to grass and I can see birds in the sky. My dad says that I should not complain

about the lack of green and wildlife in New York city, it's the price to pay if you want to have unlimited electricity for everyday use, how would we live without it? But the most beautiful thing I have seen (except for Jackie of course) is when we went to the simulation of Central Park, how could anything be so green?

After I say good bye to Jackie (who was just being sure that I was up for the challenge) I head straight to my car. "To the closest library" I say loud and clear, don't really know why I said the closest, to my knowledge there is only one library left in New York city! I hope nobody I know sees my entering, how would I explain that?

My car starts driving, it's a heavy day on the streets and the car tells me that the drive will take 30 minutes, so I reckon I can get a power nap on the way, "Will you wake me up when we get there" I ask my car. "As you wish my master" it replies. Ohh god I need to change that "my master" setting before somebody else gets in my car.

"Master, wake up, we have arrived" I open my eyes, of course there are tons of parking spots here, I think I haven't seen that much of empty space in months. I walk inside, what a step to the past, everything is so dull in here. An old lady looks at me from the front desk "are you lost son?" she asks.

"No, I'm looking for a map of New York"

"A map? You don't have a phone?" she replies with hesitation

"I do, but I'm looking for Georgestreet and it's not on Google maps, do you by any chance know where it is?"

"Ahh that one, you know it's not a street any more son, It's merely about a 2 metre curve I've heard, it was a street before the war I think, it was probably destroyed in the same attack as Central Park" she says with dream in her eyes

"Where you born before then?" I love to hear stories about New York before it became so black

"Hahaha no, how old do you think I am, young man? The Trump war was in 2021, I'm only 50. And I don't even think that they made printed maps after the reconstruction, why would they? It's only a waste of space since our surroundings are changing so fast, they would always be printing new ones"

"That's fine, I could probably find it on a map before the war and try to link it with some of the new streets?"

"You are a clever young man, I will try to find one for you" and the old lady started looking, maybe she wasn't that old? Well she is more than twice my age. Hope it won't take long to find. I'm not used to waiting an unknown time, what if I start watching a show and I can't finish it? Everything is always timed out for us, should I just stand around and wait? Who does that? From young age we are taught that our time is precious and we should never waste it!

I think the universe heard my worried mind and my phone rings, it's mom, is it 5 o'clock already?

“Answer Mom” I whisper to my pocket, thinking that you are supposed to be quiet at the library, that thought quickly goes away when I remember that no one is here.

Before I’m able to greet mom she says: “Have you taken your vitamins? Kevin, Don’t be stubborn like your dad, you can’t get all the nutrition you need from meat, Kevin, we need more than just protein and fat”

“Mom, mom stop, I have taken them already, I promise, I’m fully vitaminated up” I try to be funny so she will stop nagging, she knows I always forget to take them

“Kevin, this isn’t a subject you should be joking around with, it’s dead serious, you know that number two cause of death here is from lack of nutrition, do you want to die young Kevin?”

Ohh how I hate that’s she says my name so often in a sentence, I know my own name and there is no one else in the conversation.

“No mom, I don’t want to die young”

“Great Kevin, I just love you so much, you know me, now take your vitamins and be at home for dinner tonight, I found broccoli, can you imagine? It wasn’t cheap, I can tell you that Kevin, but it’s going to be worth it”

Who in the hell is excited about broccoli? It can be so annoying to have a mom that is a doctor!

“Mom, as much as I want the broccoli, I can’t, I’m on this quest to find the non-existent street and prove my love for Jackie, I’m sorry, can’t I just take more vitamins tonight?”

Hope she doesn’t hear in my voice how glad I am that I don’t need to eat the broccoli and I had tomatoes last week, is she going to kill me with vegetables?

“Ohh honey, but it’s been so hard to find vegetables these last years, well it’s hard to find true love as well, hope you make it Kevin, and show my pictures of you taking a double dose of the vitamins, bye”

I hang up and notice the old lady standing next to me holding the biggest book I’ve seen in my life, called “Atlas of the World”.

“Did I hear you say broccoli on the phone son?”

“Yeah, my mom found some, I guess”

“I haven’t tasted that in years, not since the government issued that 90% of all fields should be used to make grain and corn to feed livestock”

“I don’t mind, I like bread and meat, is this the map?”

“You, young people don’t know the true quality life can give! This sure are the maps I found, it’s from 2008, so your street should be on there”

I grab the book and run to my car, I only have about 4 hours to find that street and get to Jackie’s house. “Start driving” I command my car “To where? my master” it replies “Just drive around New York!!” I yell, I just want to get moving, these empty parking spots give me agoraphobia.

“Driving around, my master, driving time infinity” my car says, if I didn’t know any better I would think it was making fun of me.

I open the book, I my god it’s so big, and there are so many maps, Australia, Vietnam, Russia, Greece. When I open google maps it always shows me my location and surroundings, I didn’t even think of looking at other parts of the world. Everybody knows they are there, but I didn’t imagine it would be so big. Definitely worth paying to see in the simulator at one point. I finally find New York and it has a great big green central. I would have loved to live 80 years ago, but maybe then my mom would have made me eat broccoli every day? At least I will not make my children eat that shit, the vitamin pills are just enough!

My car is slowly moving around the colourless streets, while I look through the streets of New York in the year 2008, I don’t recognize any of them. That’s maybe not weird at all, you don’t need that information, I can always find the street names on google and just tell your car to go there, no need to remember the names. It’s better to use your brain activity for something useful.

Finally, Canal Street, I’ve been there often enough to know that is a street today as well! And apparently it wasn’t fully ruined in the Trump war so they didn’t change it. “Drive to Canal Street” I tell my car with excitement in my voice. Driving time only 20 minutes so I have time to look Georgestreet up in the book as well.

From my understanding of this map (which I don’t fully trust) Georgestreet isn’t very far from Canal Street but of course the layout of the streets has change a lot through the years. But I think I know approximately in which direction it is.

How do I do this? It will take me forever to walk, and I have only once tried the control my car myself. You have to learn it in case of a power shortage, which hasn’t happened in 20 years. I close my eyes and imagen Jackie running to my arms, the beautiful children we will have, in my imagination I have even convinced her to paint the house we live in green. I get this warm feeling all over my body, and I know I can do this. No I need to do this; my happiness depends on it!

“Car, put me in charge of driving”

“Are you sure, my master?”

“YES I’m sure, put me in charge of driving now”

“I will need password for this command, my master”

Oh my god, not even my car trusts me, I will have to stop thinking about it as my friend, it’s taking valuable time for some bullshit!

“Password: Meatlover36”

“Password approved, you are now driving on your own, my master, good luck!

I, Kevin, aged 21, driving, myself, on the streets of New York! HA this is like an action movie, I can feel the rush in my blood and the sweet braking out on my forehead.

I’ve been driving for approximately 15 minutes when I realize this is not a big deal, the traffic is moving on an average of 20 km/hour, maybe I should try this on the highway sometime?

Ohh this is so boring, did people really have to do this be them self 80 years ago? But my boringness goes away when I think about my sweet sweet Jackie and the green house we will live in.

I take a left, go straight, another left and then grab the book, I think I'm going in the right direction, and open it.

BAMM

Street light knocked down, what was I thinking? Driving and reading the map? This is what they warned me about, never ever turn on self-control on your car, no matter what is on the line, the car knows best.

"You have been in a car crash, my master, should I notify an ambulance?"

"Nonono, please don't, I'm fine, are you in a driving condition?"

"I have some dent's in the front, and a broken head lights, I'm not allowed to drive further without head lights, my master"

Ohh the worst thing about cars is that they know too well in what condition they are suppose too be in. I guess I'm walking!

I get out of the car, take the heaviest book on earth and start walking, it shouldn't be more than 500 meters to the street but it's already 7 o'clock and I need to find some kind of transportation to get to Jackie.

"Call Jackie" I scream at my phone

"Hi, Kevin are you at Georgestreet?"

"No, I had a little accident, could I get one hour more?" I can hear her getting upset, by her breathing.

"I'm sorry Kevin, I gave you plenty of time, you know that James has found that street three times for my already?!" she almost screamed

The best thing about Jackie isn't here intelligence, she's so kind and caring, beautiful and funny. But stupid, very very stupid. I think with time I could maybe knock some sense into her, but then I need more time to get to here place with my photo of the sign.

"Jackie, you know it's only hard finding the street for the first time, then you just pin it on your map and make your car drive you there the next time" I try to said that with a loving voice, so she will get mad at him, not me.

"Are you kidding me? Ohh you are right, as always. You are not like James, you think and would never try to deceive me like that, maybe I can give you 30 more minutes, but you are proving your love for me, there are no more chances Kevin"

Before I tell my love goodbye I tell her about my accident, and she whispers some naughty words in to the phone, that's all the encouraging I need, I will make it!

I start running, don't remember when I ever did that before, my heart starts pounding in my chest, that book is so heavy, should I dear to throw it away? I've never done anything bad in

my life before I left the car after the crash so maybe two bad things at once is okay? Before I finished that thought the book was on the ground. I run through the empty streets, the people sitting in their cars look at me with big eyes, one of the turns down the window and yells
“Run, Forrest Run”

What the fuck does that mean? Is he confusion me with somebody else? I don’t have time to think about that, I turn into the next street and there it is, the sign, the one and only sign on a short curved wall. “Georgestreet” it’s apparently old, and they just haven’t bothered to take it down, I have never been so happy in my entire live. I grab my phone from my pocket and say “take photo”. It’s done, she’s mine, just a tiny problem I don’t have any transportation to get to her, and I finished all my money on a sandwich I didn’t eat and on renting a map book I threw on the streets, not a typical day for me.

“Call Mike” I scream of the top of my lungs at my phone

“No mihek in phonebook”

My breathing has never been so bad, do you breathe in out, in out or in in, in in?

I try again

“CALL MIKE”

“Hey dude, are you married yet?” It’s Mike on the other end, it worked, thank you lord

“Mike, you need to come and get my now and drive me to Jackies house right away!!” I really hope he understands what is at stack here

“No worries man, just pin me and I’ll be there” Now I remember why he is my best friend

“Send location to Mike” I say as calmly as I can towards my phone

Is it getting darker? I can see flashes of red lights running over my eye side, I fall down on the ground, it doesn’t matter, Jackie is mine, I can feel the impact with the lifeless and moist ground, how much better would it be to fall on to grass I wonder? But I don’t feel pain, I only feel the love in my heart and that proud feeling of (nearly) completing the quest.

Kevin! Kevin!

Is it my mom?

“Kevin honey, are you okay? This would not have happened if you would take your vitamins, you promised to take them, Kevin tell me you are okay!!”

I’m at the hospital, I collapsed after the running,

I say something that no one understands and try to sit up in my bed, when my vision clears and I start to focus I can see Mike in the room and behind him Jackie is standing with tears in her eyes.

“Think god for technology, Kevin” my mom yells historically “Mike found you because of your phone, I don’t know what would have happened without the technology we have today”

I look into Jackies eyes, I can see her lips move “I love you, I choose you” and I feel healed again.

Should I try to explain to my mom that it kind of was technology witch lead me in this situation? I think she wouldn't understand, but I know I wouldn't be here without the technology we have today, we should not depend so much on it, I think I will start to walk around more after this, get to know the streets. Technology really did bite me in the ass and my great great grandfather was not as stupid as I thought!