



The Angel on the Subway

When James Blunt was a university student, he had a girlfriend named Sarah. She was smart and funny, and James loved her. “Maybe someday I’ll marry Sarah,” he often thought.

After James graduated from the university, he joined the British Army. At first, he kept in touch with Sarah—he called her whenever he could. But then the army sent him to other countries--to Kosovo and then to Switzerland--and it was difficult to call. Months went by, then years went by, and James lost touch with Sarah. He had no idea where she was.

While he was in the army, James played his guitar in his free time. Sometimes he wrote songs and sang them while he played his guitar. Whenever he sang, other soldiers came and listened to him. “You have talent,” his friends in the army told him. “You should be a musician.”

When James got out of the army, he decided to work as a songwriter and professional musician. It wasn’t easy. He wrote a lot of songs and played his guitar in a lot of small clubs in London, but he didn’t make a lot of money. He needed a big hit to make him famous.

One day James got on a subway train in London, and there she was: Sarah. She was standing only a few feet away from James. James smiled at her, and she smiled back. Then James noticed that Sarah was with another man. Was the man Sarah’s boyfriend? Was he her fiancé? Was he her husband? James didn’t know, but he did know this: Sarah was in love with someone else.

James and Sarah looked at each other for a second or two. Neither moved, and neither spoke. Then the train came into the next station. Sarah and the man got off the train and disappeared into the crowd.

James went straight home and began to write about Sarah. "I saw an angel," he wrote. "Of that I'm sure." He didn't stop writing until his poem about Sarah was finished. Then he picked up his guitar and played music to go with the poem. In only a few hours, he had a complete song.

The song "You're Beautiful" was a number one hit, and it made James famous. And what about Sarah? Did she hear the song on the radio? She probably did, and she probably knew the song was about her. But she never called James, and he never saw her again.

Ten years after he saw Sarah on the subway, James got married. Today he is a husband and a father. Perhaps Sarah got married, too. Perhaps she is a wife and a mother. But in James's song, she will always be an angel on the subway.