

Zenaida Macroura

a *The Umbrella Academy* fanfic

by *Rodo*

for *SadieFlood*

THE WORLD WAS chaos. Agnes had watched as the moon crumbled to pieces—as large chunks drifted closer at what she knew must have been incomprehensibly fast speeds, but looked more like leaves floating on a pond. The wind picked up when the first rocks entered the atmosphere and for a moment, Agnes thought that that was it.

“Done,” Hazel proclaimed with an anxious glance at the apocalypse. Then she took a hold of his arms and pressed a gentle kiss to his lips, closing her eyes to forget about everything but him.

When she opened them again, she was greeted by bright sunlight that filtered through the fresh green leaves of late spring. They stood in a small clearing and around them birds sang as if nothing was amiss. A headache began to form right behind Agnes’s eyes and her whole body started tingling.

“It’s normal,” Hazel said, and only then did Agnes notice that she had started scratching her arm while taking in her new surroundings. “A side effect of time travel. It’ll pass.”

“Where are we?” she asked.

“The bird sanctuary, just in 1947.”

The world looked the same, for now at least. Agnes tried to ignore the persistent itch and looked around a little more. The world looked like it should, but after the past couple of hours, it was a little disorienting to see flowers and birds looking to feed their young. She’d just spent half a day tied to a chair by a succession of crazy women, only to learn that the end of the world was coming. But that was decades in the future. In the here and now, she felt Hazel put one hand at the small of her back, and the other on top of her own restless fingers. She’d been scratching again.

“Try to concentrate on something else,” he suggested, and when she looked at him, she saw a small smile on his face.

How had such a handsome young man fallen for her? she wondered, not for the first time.

“What bird is that?” he asked. It was such a silly question. There was no mistaking the gentle coo of a dove. The bird in question was perched in one of the trees, looking around and trying to spot seeds. Surely even Hazel knew the answer to his own question.

“A mourning dove,” she told him, trying not to smile too hard. “One of the most common birds. See the characteristic dark spots and the light grey-brown color?”

Hazel stared at the bird in fascination, and it made her heart beat faster. “They stay together for life, don’t they?”

He let go of Agnes’s hand and grasped her waist, gently turning her around. The smile on his face reached his eyes and it was hard to believe that he had once been a cold-blooded killer. This man had no wish to harm anyone, and Agnes kissed him, forgetting all about the birds and the time travel and the torture. This man and the future they would have together was worth all that she had gone through. He gently drew her closer and held her as if she was the most precious thing in the world.

“What happened?” she finally asked. “To 2019, I mean.”

Hazel sighed. “The apocalypse—the destruction of all life on Earth. It was inevitable, I suppose, no matter how hard Five tried to stop it.”

For a moment, Agnes put her head against his chest and remembered the people she had left behind. There weren’t many. Her parents had died years ago. She had no children, and very few people she would consider calling friends. Her life had been her work and her passion—and birdwatchers weren’t the most sociable of people. But there had been regulars back at *Griddy’s*: Arnold, a retired accountant in his late sixties who always greeted her with a smile and asked after her day; Lynn, a young college student who treated herself to a doughnut whenever she could afford to; Steve, the cop who liked to joke that he was a walking stereotype and who always asked for a plain chocolate doughnut. They were all dead now, she supposed. Or hadn’t even been born yet. Time travel was confusing.

A short, crackling call similar to that of a corvid reminded her of the here and now. Agnes raised her head and looked around. There, in a small shrub, sat a common grackle. It hopped from one branch to another with a decisive beat of its wings. Its dark blue feathers glistened in the sunlight.

“And what will we do now?” she asked.

Hazel shrugged. Still in his arms, Agnes felt the movement more than she saw it. “Whatever you want. I just want to spend the rest of my life with you, eating doughnuts and watching birds and being happy. We can open a doughnut shop, if you like. Although I don’t think 1947 will be big on vegan doughnuts. I can get the money; the Agency has stashes all over. Or we can continue to travel.”

“Through time?” she asked.

Hazel shrugged again. “As long as we don’t stay in one place for too long. I’ll have to get rid of the tracker, and they’ll keep track of the briefcase and how it’s used. Still, if we keep moving, that shouldn’t be too much of a problem.”

For a moment, Agnes considered all of the possibilities. Meeting Buffalo Bill, seeing London as it was before the great fire. The Americas before Columbus arrived. “I always did want to see a passenger pigeon,” she told him.

Hazel beamed down at her. “Then we can go see them. I think I did, on some jobs, but it was always about work, so I didn’t have much of a chance to live in the moment. I’d love to do so. With you.”

Agnes smiled. He had lived so little, it seemed to her, never being allowed to be more than a man who did as he was ordered to do.

“We don’t have to make the decision now,” he assured her. “We have all the time in the world.”

And they did, this time at least. They no longer had to worry about the end of the world, even if Agnes still wished it could be stopped somehow. She didn’t want all those people and birds to die. The world was too beautiful a place for that. But she was just one woman and Hazel was just one man. There was nothing they could do, except live their lives as best they could.

“Is that a yellow-billed cuckoo?” she heard him ask, noting the excited hitch in his voice.

Agnes looked around, spotting the animal in question on one of the higher branches of a beech.

“A male, I believe,” she told him. She smiled at Hazel and the enthusiasm with which he discovered the world beyond his work.

There was so much to do and so much to see, she thought.

And they’d do it together.

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