

The Giant Rabbit

Written by

Jingyi Zhu

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INT. OFFICE- EVENING

The office is almost empty. MARTIN (early 30s), neat suit, loosened tie, sits at his desk. In front of him is a printed report. He adjusts the stack of papers until every corner lines up. His BOSS, MS. HARRIS (40s), stops beside him with her bag.

MS. HARRIS
Martin. Go home.

MARTIN
I'm almost done.

MS. HARRIS
That report can wait until next week.

MARTIN
It isn't finished.

MS. HARRIS
I know. It doesn't need to be finished tonight.

Martin looks at the report.

MARTIN
If I leave it unfinished, I'll think about it all weekend.

MS. HARRIS
You do good work, Martin. You don't have to prove it every night.

Martin nods. Ms. Harris leaves. Martin turns back to the report.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Martin stands at the bus stop. He checks the street. No bus. He checks his watch. Then the street again. His thumb taps against the briefcase clasp.

ELI (O.S.)
Waiting for something?

Martin turns. An ELI (60s), in hiking clothes, stands nearby with a walking stick and a small backpack. He wears a strange hat with soft rabbit ears.

MARTIN
The bus.

The ELI looks toward the dark hill beyond the road.

ELI
There's a giant rabbit at the top
of that hill.

MARTIN
What?

ELI
Twenty feet tall. Maybe more. They
say whoever sees it becomes happy.

Martin stares at him.

MARTIN
Why are you telling me this?

ELI
You used to like hiking, didn't
you?

MARTIN
I haven't hiked a mile since high
school.

ELI
Still. You look like the kind of
man who hates not knowing.

MARTIN
I don't.

The bus pulls in. The doors open.

ELI
Good. Then you'll forget it by
morning.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Martin sits by the window. The bus pulls away. The ELI stands at the stop, waving lightly. Martin looks past him, toward the hill.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark room. Martin lies in bed, eyes open. He turns onto one side. Then the other. His brow tightens. Outside the window, the dark shape of the hill sits in the distance. Martin stares at it.

EXT. HILL ENTRANCE - MORNING

A bus pulls away. Martin stands at the trailhead. He wears brand-new hiking clothes that do not fit him well. The jacket is too stiff. The backpack straps are pulled too tight. A trail leads into the trees. Martin looks up at the hill.

MARTIN

Just to confirm.

He steps onto the trail.

EXT. HILL TRAIL - MORNING

Martin walks up the trail. Every few steps, he stops to adjust his tight boots and backpack straps. He sighs and looks up. The trail keeps rising. Ahead, a wooden sign hangs from a crooked post:

RABBIT EXPRESS

An arrow points toward a small station beside the trees.

EXT. RABBIT EXPRESS STOP - MORNING

A small, old shuttle waits at the stop. The CONDUCTOR (60s) sits near the open door. One pant leg is pinned below the knee. A crutch leans against the side of the shuttle. Martin approaches him.

MARTIN

Rabbit Express?

The Conductor looks up.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Can you take me to the giant rabbit at the top?

CONDUCTOR

No. I can take you to the lookout halfway up. After that, you walk.

MARTIN

Then why is it called Rabbit Express?

CONDUCTOR

Why not?

MARTIN
Because that implies it has
something to do with the rabbit.

CONDUCTOR
It does.

MARTIN
How?

CONDUCTOR
People looking for the rabbit
usually get on.

Martin looks at the shuttle, then at the hill.

MARTIN
But it doesn't go to the rabbit.

CONDUCTOR
No.

MARTIN
Or the top.

CONDUCTOR
No.

MARTIN
Then the name is misleading.

The Conductor shrugs and stands. He moves with practiced ease, reaching for his crutch.

CONDUCTOR
I can't drive up there. Road's too
steep. Shuttle's too old. And I'm
not climbing it for you.

He taps the side of the shuttle.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
This gets you to the lookout.
That's what it does.

Martin exhales.

MARTIN
Fine. Where's your schedule?

CONDUCTOR
No schedule.

MARTIN

Route map?

CONDUCTOR

No map.

MARTIN

How is that possible?

The Conductor opens the shuttle door wider.

CONDUCTOR

You want to go up. I take you up.
Simple enough.

Martin looks at the hill again. Then he steps onto the shuttle.

EXT. HILL TRAIL - DAY

The Rabbit Express stops at a small lookout halfway up the hill. The Conductor points to a narrow trail disappearing into the trees.

Martin climbs. His boots scrape against stones. His backpack straps dig into his shoulders. By the time he reaches a small wooden shop beside the trail, his face is damp with sweat.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SHOP - DAY

A tiny wooden shop sits beside the trail under a patched green awning. A hand-painted sign reads:

NOT THE TOP SHOP

Bottled water, apples, instant noodles, bandages, cheap ponchos, and single hiking socks crowd the counter.

MARTIN

Not the Top Shop?

SAM

That's the name.

MARTIN

That's not very inspiring.

SAM

People come here tired, hungry, and halfway lost. Inspiration is not on sale.

MARTIN
Of course it's not.

Martin picks up a sandwich and a bottle of water. He sits at a small table and starts eating very fast. The SAM watches him for a moment.

SAM
You're eating like someone's chasing you.

MARTIN
I'm trying to get to the top.

SAM
Food goes down better when you chew it.

Martin keeps eating.

MARTIN
Have you been up there?

SAM
To the top? No.

Martin stops chewing.

MARTIN
You work here.

SAM
That's right.

MARTIN
You're halfway up the hill.

SAM
Also right.

MARTIN
And you've never gone to see it?

The SAM shrugs and cuts another slice of apple.

SAM
I run the shop.

MARTIN
That's not an answer.

SAM
It is if you run a shop.

Martin looks around at the small shelves, the socks, the bottles, the awning.

MARTIN

So this is enough for you?

SAM looks up.

SAM

Enough for what?

MARTIN

To just stay here. Halfway.

SAM

Halfway gets a lot of traffic.

MARTIN

Don't you want to know what's at the top?

SAM

People go up. People come down. Some say they saw it. Some say they didn't.

He nods toward Martin's half-eaten sandwich.

SAM (CONT'D)

Most of them still need lunch.

Martin looks at the sandwich.

MARTIN

That's all?

SAM

Lunch is not nothing.

Martin has no response. He takes another bite, faster than before.

SAM (CONT'D)

Careful. Rushing makes a mess.

Martin stands, still chewing.

MARTIN

I have to keep going.

SAM

Most people do.

Martin leaves. The SAM watches him go, cutting his apple.

EXT. HILL TRAIL - AFTERNOON

Martin leaves the mountain shop and continues up the trail. The path grows narrower. Trees close in around him. Insects buzz near his face. His brand-new hiking clothes are no longer clean. Mud stains his boots. He swats at a bug on his neck and keeps climbing.

EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON

A small campsite sits between the trees. A tent. A hanging kettle. A MARA (30s) sits near a tiny stove, stirring something in a metal cup. Martin stops when he sees the gear.

MARTIN

Finally.

The MARA looks up.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You're looking for the rabbit too.

MARA

Me? I'm just camping.

MARTIN

So you haven't seen it?

MARA

I've seen a rabbit.

MARTIN

The rabbit?

The MARA thinks about it.

MARA

Could be.

MARTIN

Could be?

MARA

It was foggy.

MARTIN

How big was it?

MARA

Big enough at the time.

Martin stares at him. The MARA tastes from the cup, then adds something from a small packet.

MARTIN

You're saying you saw the giant rabbit.

MARA

I'm saying I saw what I saw.

MARTIN

And you're just sitting here?

MARA

I like this spot.

MARTIN

But if you really saw it, why aren't you more interested?

MARA

I was. Now I'm making soup.

Martin laughs once, sharply.

MARTIN

That's ridiculous.

The MARA looks at him, not offended.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Do you know what people would do to see something like that?

MARA

I moved my tent here because the ground is flatter.

MARTIN

After seeing the rabbit?

MARA

After seeing the rabbit.

MARTIN

That's it?

Mara shrugs.

MARA

It wasn't that important.

Martin's face tightens.

MARTIN

Not important?

The MARA shrugs again. Martin takes a step forward.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 Not important? I've been climbing
 all day. My feet are bleeding. I've
 been bitten by bugs, dragged around
 by a shuttle that doesn't have a
 route, and lectured by a man
 selling sandwiches—

Martin stops. For a second, he looks embarrassed. Then the
 anger comes back.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 I came all this way to see the
 rabbit.

MARA
 Then keep going.

MARTIN
 You don't care at all?

MARA
 I care about different things now.

MARTIN
 Like soup.

MARA
 Today, yes.

Martin has no answer. A rustle comes from the trees. The ELI
 steps out from behind a trunk, walking stick in hand, rabbit-
 ear hat still in his head.

ELI
 You're close to the top.

Martin turns sharply.

MARTIN
 You.

ELI
 Me.

The MARA lifts his cup in greeting.

MARA
 Afternoon.

ELI
 Afternoon.

The MARA goes back to stirring his soup.

MARA

You should go before the fog gets thicker.

ELI

Come on. You're close.

MARTIN

I'm not finished.

Martin looks back. MARA has already stopped paying attention to them. Martin stands there, frustrated. ELI starts up the trail. After a moment, Martin follows.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - LATE AFTERNOON

Martin follows ELI up the trail. For a while, neither of them speaks. The campsite disappears behind the trees. Martin's breath is still uneven from the argument. ELI walks slowly.

ELI

You're close to the top.

Martin says nothing.

ELI (CONT'D)

So why are you still angry?

MARTIN

Because that woman said the rabbit wasn't important.

ELI

I heard her.

MARTIN

She saw it. Maybe. She says she saw it, and she just sits there making soup.

ELI

But you're still going up.

MARTIN

I've already come this far.

ELI

That's one reason.

MARTIN

What does that mean?

ELI

It means it isn't the only reason.

Martin slows down and look at ELI.

ELI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

What if you don't see what you came
to see?

Martin stops.

MARTIN

I don't know.

The trees begin to thin ahead. Pale fog moves between the
trunks.

ELI

I think you'll like it there.

MARTIN

At the top?

ELI

Past the trees. When the forest
ends, you'll know you're there.

Martin looks ahead, then back at him.

MARTIN

You're not coming?

ELI

No.

MARTIN

Where are you going?

ELI

To find the next person who needs
to see the rabbit.

A gust of fog moves through the trees. Martin blinks. ELI is
gone. Martin stands alone on the trail.

EXT. HILLTOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Martin steps out of the trees. The view opens all at once.
The hilltop is a wide grass field. Fog moves slowly over the
slope. His boots and pant legs are covered in mud. His stiff
hiking jacket hangs crooked on his shoulders.

Martin squints into the fog. Something large seems to move in the distance. He steps forward. The shape breaks apart into fog and light. He walks faster. Another shadow moves. Martin follows it, stumbling through the grass, until he is out of breath. Nothing. Only fog rolling over the hill. Martin looks around, lost and exhausted. He stops, and sits on a rock.

Sunlight slips in and out through the fog. The grass shifts in the wind. Small wildflowers bend close to the ground. Somewhere far away, birds call from the trees below.

Martin sits there, head in his hands. He hears something, and raised his head. A small, normal brown rabbit appears at the edge of the grass. Martin watches it. Another rabbit comes out of the fog. Soon there are several of them scattered across the hilltop, eating grass, lifting their heads, disappearing and reappearing in the white air.

Martin lets out a small laugh.

His phone buzzes. Martin looks down.

REMINDER: FINISH REPORT

His thumb hovers over the screen. Then he turns the phone face down on the rock. He looks back at the rabbits.

ELI appears beside him, as if he had been there for a while.

ELI

There's another hill past that ridge.

Martin doesn't look away from the rabbits.

ELI (CONT'D)

I can show you the path, if you want.

Martin sits for a moment.

MARTIN

Not yet.

The ELI smiles. The rabbits keep eating.

THE END