

Hemi Takahashi

wee beq.

As Hiroshi directed his speeding electric train through Tokyo, he pondered over the choice of a New Year's gift that would best suit his mother. Since winter was approaching, a woolen scarf might do, he thought. One that would ~~keep~~ her warm and comfortable, giving her a luxury that she had never tasted. Perhaps she would rather have some silk materials with which to make kimonos. He must buy something practical. No rings or bracelets or anything like that. If he should go window shopping at Ginza he might find something desirable, ~~he thought~~, something that ^{would} ~~will~~ make a mother thrill and forget her many woes. Ah, to make her happy once.

His thoughts carried him back to his home life. "What a blow it had been when his father had died. That was ten years ago when he was a little boy of fourteen. He remembered how he had regretted ~~to~~ leave ^{ing} school ~~to~~ work. Ever since ^{then,} both he and his mother had never felt the joys of luxury. Now that he was making eighty yen a month, he could afford to buy a present for his mother. His mother had saved a few yen too. "I am going to buy a nice present for you, today," she had said when he was leaving for work. They had both laughed then. He could still picture her kind beaming face.

As his train was rounding a curve at the rate of forty miles an hour, Hiroshi saw not more than fifty feet away an old woman cross the tracks carrying a bundle in her arms. Evidently she had not seen nor heard the danger signal. Hiroshi frantically blew the whistle. To put on the brakes

would undoubtedly fling his train off the tracks and endanger the passengers. Either that old woman or the occupants of the train, he thought. He chose the former.

To a spectator, the train did not slacken its speed. In a fraction of a second she was crushed....

Hiroshi could not erase from his memory the horrified expression of the old woman as she looked frighten~~ed~~ly into his face just before she was struck. He remembered every little detail of the fatal scene....her expression, her horror, the sickening crunch, the blood.

But Hiroshi courageously stayed on duty till he was relieved several hours later. He was very pale. By that time the news was all over the city. All the newspapers praised the quick and good judgement of Hiroshi. If he had tried to stop, the train would have hurtled off the track and would have put many passengers in danger, with the possibility that the old woman would have been struck anyway, so they said.

Hiroshi was a hero.

"Good work," said the motorman who was relieving him.

Hiroshi nodded. He did not answer the reporters who crowded about him ~~clamoring~~ ^{clamoring} for a word. He walked mechanically past them, with a distant look. He turned, resolutely, and spoke to the reporters, slowly, as though each syllable was an effort. ~~What he said stunned the group so that they forgot for a moment to aid Hiroshi who had fainted.~~ ^{Then he fainted.}

That old woman was his mother.

Based on a news story. This accident happened two years ago in Japan.

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*Back on a news story. This accident happened
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Somehow we never realize the solemnity of death until an immediate relation or friend is involved. Although we are constantly aware that thousands of people are killed annually in automobile accidents, we ignore the cases entirely, hypocritically believing that automobile accidents happen only to others---until our best friend is killed by a speeding car. We read of Chinese dying from ~~starvation~~, ^{bombings,} but we dismiss the news as just another ~~famine~~ ^{war} in China. Yet as soon as we hear that a missionary friend had died in ~~the famine~~ ^{an air raid} we are soon made aware that ~~starvation~~ ^{warfare} is not to be treated lightly. We know that many men and women die from diseases daily but we are not worried. No, not until our grandmother, who had been an incurable invalid for six years, died.

We do not realize the full meaning of death until one of our members have died. Then with a shock we are made aware that death is a grave occurrence. We are made aware that death strikes relentlessly, everywhere, leaving behind a deep depression of sadness.