

Under Railroad Tracks

By

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EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE. MIDDAY

Mara, an ambitious 17 year old with an easy going temperament and overflowing with confidence approaches a clearing under a bridge. She moves cautiously but is secretly thrilled. Simon is already waiting, staring out towards the river, his movements are stiff and awkward. He is also 17: intelligent, distant and empathetic- he understands how scary life can get. There's a pause as their eyes meet.

Simon emphatically checks his watch as if to say 'you're late', Mara shrugs in response: so what

SIMON
do you have it?

she puts her left hand in her pocket to clutch something

MARA
(almost babbling)
Don't forget who's meeting this is,
I'm in charge, I have the goods

SIMON
(interrupting)
and I have your money, I'm not
forgetting anything

a pause, then

MARA
(Softly chuckling)
y'look nervous. Chill out, w'can be
friendly about this.

She offers her left hand to shake, he gives her an irritated look before stepping forward to meet her. She's concealing a USB stick in her hand. They shake stiffly but with tight grips

MARA
Mara

They maintain eye contact while Simon reaches into his pocket and hands her a crisp, white envelope. He abruptly breaks the shake. Stuffing his hands in his pockets, he turns around to walk away. Before he's out of the clearing he turns back

SIMON
Simon

(CONTINUED)

He leaves. Mara smiles to herself and leaves without even checking the envelope

TITLE CARD- WE SEE CODE, MEN IN SKI MASKS, PASSPORTS AND AN OPEN BOOK ON A TABLE, AN ALMOST KISS, AND LASTLY A TRAIN SPEEDING ALONG THE OVERHEAD BRIDGE

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE. MIDDAY

Mara sits in a relaxed position, looking out at the river. She hears a rustle behind her but doesn't turn.

Instead she emphatically looks at her wrist (she doesn't wear a watch) as if to say 'look who's late now'. Simon rolls his eyes. She turns to look up at him, smiling. He smiles back.

Then Simon stiffens slightly, his expression going blank

SIMON

You have it

MARA

... why don't we sit for a bit

SIMON

look Mara-

MARA

(talking over him)

cooome ooooo

SIMON

-this isn't a game

MARA

'could be, if you'd cheer up. Ever heard of fun

He grimaces, but sits beside her, not conceding, not relaxing.

SIMON

sigh Seen as you begged. But not for long- I have people to see

MARA

t's that 'sposed to mean

SIMON

Nothing

(CONTINUED)

Mara scans his expression, Simon avoids her eye, picking a piece of grass and tying knots in it.

MARA
(lightly)
mmkay, d'ya wanna talk about
something?

SIMON
Like what?

MARA
Dunno, what do friends talk about

SIMON
(joking)
as if you'd know.

He rolls his eyes, forgetting the grass and meeting her gaze

MARA
(ignoring him)
what's you're favourite class? the
teacher hot? small talk small talk?

SIMON
(amused)
Well, my favourite subject was
Literature, however the teacher
wouldn't have been my first choice

MARA
was you're favourite, so you've
finished school. Freedom, livin
life, getting money, I'm jeal-

SIMON
Actually I had to drop out...
financial reasons

He crosses his arms over his knees, staring across the river, lost in thought. Mara watches, then leans back on her hands watching the bridge.

MARA
Sorry... Y'don't need A-levels you
know, my mum's always like 'Jobs
need grades, Mara bla bla bla'

SIMON
(smirking)
a strong argument

MARA

Hard to trust someone that gets her
life advice from The Daily Mail.
She wouldn't get where I'm going

SIMON

Would I understand your grand
schemes, oh almighty kingpin

Leaning back on his hands, mirroring Mara

MARA

(sticks tongue out)
Just wait, Someday I'll shake hands
with Zuckerberg, and you'll tell
everyone you knew my first clients

A train speeds by above them

SIMON

(sarcastically)
Really

MARA

actually, probably not. 's just a
dream, something to aim for, ya
know

SIMON

oh. Well, um, I don't have anything
like that

picking up a rock and examining it while he speaks

MARA

You must do. You can't have no
plans, what are you doing next
September

SIMON

More of the same, probably

he attempts to skip it across the river, it sinks before
skipping once

MARA

weird, can't imagine not having
hopes?

SIMON

Hey I have hopes-- I hope my sister
can go to University, I hope my dad
finds a job

(CONTINUED)

MARA

Yeah... but why do you even do anything?

He sits back and meets Mara's eye, surprised by the scale of the question

SIMON

Well, my life may be complicated but it has benefits

On the last line he gives her a shy smile

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE. MIDDAY

Mara saunters to the meeting point where Simon is already pacing, arms folded

MARA

Can't believe you beat me here again-

SIMON

(interrupting)
this needs to stop

Mara steps back as if shoved, confusion clouds her face, arms fall limp by her sides, palms closed

SIMON

Do you know what you're doing? You think you're so clever but you have no idea, do you?

MARA

Chill out Si, let's sit down

She reaches out to him, he jerks away. He looks away and reigns in his anger, fiddling with something in his pocket

SIMON

My dad, Mara, isn't from here. and in case you didn't notice, my family isn't living the middle class dream

Mara balls up her fists then shoves them into her pocket

MARA

oh so you blame me for being.. that stuff

(CONTINUED)

SIMON
why not, I don't know *what* you do

MARA
yes you do, I make malware and sell
it to your people

SIMON
They aren't *my* people and I have
no idea what they do with your
USB's. Neither do you

She glares down at the river

SIMON
(sarcastically)
But of course it doesn't matter, we
just take the money- that is until
my dad gets blackmailed with his
overstayed visa.

Mara is abruptly too shocked to be angry

MARA
(blankly and quietly)
what

SIMON
He was emailed saying they'd hand
him over to immigration unless we
paid their ransom

He takes his hands out of his pocket and erratically combs
his hands through his hair- periodically stopping to
punctuate a point with a hand gesture

MARA
that's sad Si but its not my fault

SIMON
Don't be naive, Mara. you've heard
about the cyber attacks on the
election and the real attacks on
immigrants in this country. doesn't
it make your stomach crawl knowing
any of it could be your fault

MARA
(nervous laughter)
What do you expect me to do, stop
working

SIMON

Yes.

MARA

(turning away)

No! I can't

Stops playing with his hair, his gestures are bigger and more aggressive-

SIMON

No, you can, I can't. You stop and you wait longer to scare Bill Gates or whoever it is, I stop and I don't eat, or else my sister can't get textbooks or- or pads

MARA

This- this is my whole life,

SIMON

(talking over each other,
getting more nervous)

I don't have time, they have my address

MARA

Might never see you again

SIMON

I'm leaving, Mara

MARA

I could get you money, how much do you need

SIMON

Fantastic, someone else's dad's money. I won't be complicit anymore, Mara. Goodbye

He turns to leave, she steps towards him

MARA

Wait

She holds out her hand just like their first meeting, he looks at it with disgust

SIMON

I said don't be naive Mara, get your thrills with someone else

He throws the envelope at her, it lands on the ground-crumpled like it has been balled up and smoothed out repeatedly. Simon leaves, Mara watches without moving, face smoothing crumpling as she's tries not to cry

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE. MIDDAY

Mara approaches the clearing cautiously, there is a figure facing away, towards the river.

MARA

Si, you're o-

the figure hears her and turns around, it isn't Simon, the man is older with a rifle strapped to his back. She tries to maintain a blank expression but gives away her fear with a slight quiver in her lip.

CREDITS