

SEARCH FOR A DIME

by: Le Thu Ngan

Old Lieu was scrapping the back of his trunk, trying to find a dime or a dollar. In the corner of his Bún Bò restaurant, crooked chairs and faded flyers, he saw the remnant of a once simple yet beautiful Hanoi. How thick the current of people were in new restaurants, and how arrogant they were to disregard our entire history! At least Old Lieu had that thought to comfort him, else he'd go insane. His two daughters often trail their father with worried eyes watching the frail and dark figure bend down, watching as he scurried the dust and leather with his withered fingers.

"Leave this old man, Linh!" the older sister prompted, "Let's go and build a life for ourselves. I don't get why we have to look after a mad man!"

"But the mad man's our father!" the younger sister reasoned, "What would our neighbours say?"

So the three of them stayed together. Day by day. Barely scraping by. The younger sister would find her escape through a wealthy man and a plump newborn. The older would find hers through a car crash.

Old Lieu searched forever, through sun-dried window sills and withered pots of bougainvilleas. Through nights in the attic and days in the empty rooms. Linh often returned, before breaking down in hysterics and running back to her husband's car.

One day, silver flashed in the corner of Old Lieu's eyes. He held it with shaking hands, and kept it close to his chest. As though caring for a newborn.

"A dime! A dime! Look, Linh and Lien, with this we can go to the States, and start our lives anew! Just like your mother, we'll start it all tomorrow..."



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