

Tucks And Folds

When I picked up the newspaper I had no idea what it was going to lead to. Perhaps it was just a moment of boredom that saw me remove a sheet of it without so much as giving those headlines a glance.

It was one of those newspapers that is so large it becomes unwieldy. Turning the pages is always a challenge, especially when seated on a train. That could explain why it appeared to have been unread before it was left abandoned on an empty seat, in a now empty carriage apart from myself.

Still, I felt like a thief when I picked it up and removed the top folded sheet. I'd not really decided what I was going to do with it, or even why I had picked it up at all, but still I carried it home carefully. I was tired that night and just placed the sheet of newspaper down. It was Friday night after all; the newspaper could wait until the morning.

After breakfast the following day, I cleared a space on the table and laid out the paper. Any folds or crinkles were smoothed out, blackening my hands in the process, although that I did not notice until much later.

Memories of childhood folding came flooding back to me. Were they enough, though? I had become quite accomplished at the art of making paper boats, paper planes. My young friends had begged me to make them either, and I liked the meticulous planning that went in to deciding where to fold so I always obliged.

That was a long time ago. I began to plan out where I should fold it.

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Soon I was lost in the folding, the smoothing, not stopping even once until my construction was complete. A boat; a newspaper yacht, all loose corners neatly tucked away. I looked at it with a critical eye. It was not perfect. I could see angles where I had misjudged the fold by a fraction of an inch, but still I was surprisingly proud of it.

Would it stand up to the ultimate test, for what use is a boat without water to sail on? The beach would be quiet today, for there was a chill in the air and enough of a breeze to put off all but the most hardened visitors. I would take it to the ocean's edge for its maiden voyage. My little boat would either sink or float.

As I trudged my way through the sand to where the waves lapped the beach, I thought about you. I felt in my pockets and found a pen. It wasn't easy to find a clear enough space to write your name on it, but eventually I found the room. Maybe you would not even remember me, but it didn't matter; the boat, if it floated at all would not make it the entire way across the sea.

I began to have second thoughts about the entire thing, for really wasn't I a bit old to be playing with ships of paper, but then a sudden gust of wind snatched that tiny boat from my hands and there it was, sailing away from me.