

A.M.A.

by MJA Smith

'In my professional opinion I cannot recommend it,' said my doctor from the side of my bed, scratching notes onto a clipboard and pushing his glasses back up the bridge of his nose. He sighed and shook his head. 'But I understand that you need to do what you need to do. I won't stand in your way.'

That was twenty-fours ago. As the doctor left my room, I retrieved my cell phone from the small cupboard next to my bed and called you. 'I have to see you,' I said. 'There isn't much time.'

I call you again as soon as I land, climb into a cab and meet you in the reception of your office. Seeing you again is overwhelming and I wonder whether I have enough strength left; the flight has made me weaker than I thought it would, and I wonder briefly whether I should have listened to the doctor.

Your smile is as captivating as I remembered. When we kiss I find myself spontaneously pushing my fingers into your jet-black hair, pulling you close to me, the combination of the distinctive perfume and shampoo I recall so vividly making me lightheaded, just for a moment, just long enough for look of concern to pass across your face when we separate, your smile fading suddenly into panic.

You try to act normally. You tell me there's a painting in the lobby across the square that you want me to see. I nod and smile. You take my hand and lead me out of your building to a large skyscraper across the plaza. We go inside. The painting covers the full double height of the reception area. It is a burning yellow sun on a blood-red and orange background. We stand in the middle of the busy lobby, oblivious to the people milling around us on their way in and out of the building, you and I holding hands and gazing at that picture. I feel calm, the most serene I've felt since the diagnosis. Over the final days I will try to fill the little time I have left with as many moments and memories as possible. But for now I am happy just standing there, with you, staring at the sun.

I turn to you and smile. 'Thank you,' I say, and return to the painting.

(c) MJA Smith, June 2013

This short piece of fiction was inspired by 'A.M.A.' by Maps.