

Miracle

Lizzy Lee (2010)

The paper I held in my pale olive hands seemed to be made purely out of gold, and as I held the delicate note, it seemed to give off a feeling I couldn't quite explain. The words on the paper, composed of letters that seemed to float on the page, were written with a pen of a color I've never seen before, one I could never begin to describe. The message was the most memorable thing of the paper, though. It was not only addressed to me, using my full name, but it described my current situation, and provided an answer.

Because I was both lost and desperate for help, I couldn't resist taking the advice given to me on this sheet of paper, written by an unknown ally. I had nothing to lose, really. My husband was MIA, and my infant son had just died of SIDS. So instead of doing something rational or logical, such as even questioning the note, I left for the large, dense forest as indicated on the paper. The directions were written in quite a different way, and I was a little nervous I wouldn't be able to follow them:

Keep going straight, weaving through the tall, shady trees. Turn left at the cold, slate-colored car-sized boulder with soft, light green moss. As you step, notice the crunch of the twigs beneath your feet. When the crunch turns to the clicking of your heels on cobble stone, keep your eye open for a white tree. You might pass a few, but brush your hand over each. Most will feel cold and rough, like most trees in general. Try not to scrape your skin on the uneven surface of bark. When you find the snow-colored tree with bark as soft and warm as a baby's skin, turn right. Continue going straight and you'll notice now that you're no longer on the cobble path, but one of soft, jade grass, forever more cut short to the ground. But pay attention to the scent of the air. If you think about it, it smells of the fresh aroma of the numerous flowers, all of various species and colors, ranging from light pinks and reds to soft blues and greens to vibrant oranges and yellows. Keep walking until you catch the scent of death. Don't be afraid of it; it's merely there to ward off those without invitations. Continue walking slowly now, and if you pay attention closely, you'll feel a spot in the ground that gives when you put any pressure on it. Turn to your left as you stand here, on the weak spot in the ground, and gaze into the forest. As you feel the soft breeze passing through the trees and see the fresh, green leaves swaying in the gentle wind, you'll notice the space between the trees spell out a word, in capital letters. Read this word out loud.

"Magic," I whispered, reading between the trees. Suddenly, as if the word triggered something, I noticed the ground beneath my feet begin to glow, and I felt a tingly feeling shoot up through my body. There was an aura in the air that I could actually feel, and it seemed to close in on me. As I began to feel claustrophobic, I noticed the forest beginning to fade. The trees became semi-transparent, and the sky and ground were blanching. Eventually, everything around me turned to white, and I was standing quite literally nowhere.

I quickly glanced down at the golden letter still in my hands, and the last sentence caught my eye.

If you do believe, everything will become clear.

This was the sentence that hooked me in the first place. For a moment, I had believed that maybe, just maybe, whatever, or whoever, was waiting for me could give me some answers, some direction in life. Answers to why I should continue in life; why I should believe in tomorrow; most importantly, where the love of my life was.

Now, standing in a scene of absolute, complete white, I felt that hope again, for some strange, twisted reason. The thought crossed my mind: a normal person would not only be completely petrified at this happening, but they would have found the omniscient note more than a little concerning in the first place. But perhaps I wasn't a normal person. Maybe I was just insane.

Just then, as I felt hopeful for the second time in my life since my husband went missing and my baby boy passed away, a forest purely different from the first began to appear around me. First to form was the glowing green grass below me. I could tell, just by the way it swayed in the gentle breeze and glistened in the magical light, it was soft as a feather. Next was the bright, vibrant, endless sky of the perfect shade of baby blue. Finally everything else began to fade in: the dark brown trees, complete with waving green leaves and blue and purple buds, that glowed as if they were hollow with a candle burning in the center; the red, yellow, orange, and pink flowers clustered around the base of the trees, of a species I've never seen, that gave off the fresh, perfume-quality fragrance that reminded me, somehow, of children laughing; the white and silver birds, again of a species I'm sure didn't exist at home, chirping and singing a bright, cheerful tune that made me smile. Even the wind, flowing gently past me and everything around me, seemed to whisper joyfully. Despite my position in life, I couldn't help but feel carefree and happy in the forest.

That feeling only lasted a few minutes, until I looked past the clearing I was in. Standing beyond the trees was a figure I could identify almost instantly. Seeing the tall, muscular build and the outline of a military uniform filled my eyes with tears and my heart with hope so much more intense than ever before. I desperately reached out in front of me, trying to touch him, but no matter how hard I tried to stretch just a little further, he was much too far out. I tried to move my feet, to run to him and jump into his strong arms, covering him with long-overdue kisses and love of the most romantic and passionate degree, but I was glued to the ground. My feet just would not budge from beneath me, and the thought that crossed my mind – of never being able to hear his deep, kind voice or the sound of him breathing in the morning he before he wakes; touch his smooth golden hair or his gentle, sun-tanned lips; feel his warm, inviting embraces or the delicate touch of his hand covering mine; tasting his loving and needing kisses – made tears burst from my eyes like an explosion of emotions.

Without this man in my life, I didn't know if I could ever go on. I didn't even have a little piece of him to hold on to forever, a child half him. I was alone, and no one in the world would ever compare to my husband, the man of my dreams, the love of my life. And I would never see him again, even in this magical fantasy world.

Suddenly, as if on cue, the paper in my hands became heavier, reminding me of its existence. I looked down at it and, remembering that last sentence again, I realized I've been doubting the

return of my husband this entire time. A small part of me wondered if I simply believed in my husband and stayed positive, everything would work out in the end. Suddenly, as that small part of me grew, my feet began to move from beneath me. That small part of me turned into a miracle.