

The White Butterfly (726 Words)

Imagine finding it at the bus stop.

Well, not it- but, them. Exactly as I remember. A long skirt flowing down to her ankles, and her thin framed glasses sitting on the bridge of her nose. She sat inside the waiting shed, staring out at the street, watching the cars whoosh by one by one. She gazed at them curiously and with excitement, as if she could never get enough.

I never saw the resemblance between her and my father until now. They had the same wide nose that had been passed down to me, and a delightful smile that was rare but ever so memorable.

But there was something different about her. Though there were more streaks of gray lining her hair, she seemed more joyous, more free than the person I remembered.

The thing that was so unusual about this was... She was supposed to be dead.

Days ago, I had come downstairs to find my father sitting at the dining table with a somber expression written across his face.

“You’re grandmother’s dead.” He had said plainly. I remember feeling numb at first, like the words hadn’t even been spoken in the first place. And perhaps they weren’t, if she was sitting in front of me now.

I cautiously approached the bench where she was sitting and sat a distance away from her. She turned her head to look at me.

“You’ve grown,” she said in her rich native language. When I was young, it was a wall dividing us. I spoke english and she did not. But now, the words that rolled off her delicate tongue translated automatically in my brain in a way that always felt like magic.

My mind flooded with memories of when she would babysit me when my parents were at work. Offering me a drink with the only foreign word that I knew. *Milk*, she offered, and I always accepted. Sitting before her now, I wondered if she was really here. Then I tossed the thought aside and was wholly grateful that she was here anyways.

“Child, I’m so proud of you.” She said, and a tear rolled down my cheek. I had been holding in my emotions for so long now, wanting to be okay for everyone else. “It’s alright, let it out.” Tear after tear fell out, tracing an endless river of despair down my face. My hands came up to my face in an attempt to shutter my sobs. She spoke softly, in the way that resembled someone handling broken glass.

“Now you must listen. You are strong, like your mother. You are wise, like your father. But no matter how strong, nor how wise you are, you cannot survive alone. You must stay together. As a family. Get through this together. And at some point, you will all feel as though you will break apart at the hinges, but you will hold each other together. Because there simply is no give without take. Do you understand?”

I sniffled, finding fragments of words in my shattered voice. “I understand, grandma, I understand.” I reached for her hand on her lap, but it fell through her leg, and onto the cold wood of the bus bench.

The image of her shifted, and instead of looking solid, she looked fluid, like sunlight. An aura of white surrounded her body, and I looked into her eyes. They were kind, as they always were, and she said a final sentence, so quiet her voice almost got lost in the wind.

“Tell your father I say hello.”

With a final smile—a smile filled with peace like I had never known—her form flickered into a mirage of colour. A blast of light exploded before my eyes.

When it faded, in her place was a small milk-white butterfly. It fluttered its wings taking flight. It made way for the skies, never looking back.

A startled gasp shook through my chest as my eyes shot open. I looked around me, and felt the soft layers of blankets around my bed; and smelled the familiar scents of my room.

The sound of cars whooshing by passed my ears, and my head whirled towards the window. It had been left open just a crack, letting the cool spring air glide inside.

I smiled at the sight. For on the sill, was a white butterfly.