

Angel of Mercy

Friday, 21 October 2005

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I had just clocked off my shift at the hospital and, not yet willing to face the loneliness that had invaded my home I decided to drop by Rudy's cafe for a quiet cup of hot coffee. As I pulled the door handle a tremendous gust of wind snatched it from my grip, driving the door hard into the brick wall. I shivered and as I fought against the wind to regain control of the door, my eye caught the flutter of a small piece of paper sailing through the air. A young man had sprung from his chair and was tearing past me chasing the paper. He was too late though; the scrap disappeared deep into the storm drain and was swept away by the moving water. I stood, dumbfounded, watching as the man, now lying at the edge of the drain, desperately clawed at the water as if his effort alone could reverse its course.

Finally he slowly lumbered to his feet. He looked at me with beautiful, melancholy eyes bearing a sorrow that pierced straight to the core of my spirit. His eyes were a mirror to me, and the grief written on his face was a reflection of my very soul.

"You've just killed me," his words startled me as he stumbled past and slumped into his chair.

Tentatively, I approached him; "Sir, I'm so sorry...but, the wind...I didn't mean..."

"I'm sorry," he interrupted, emotionless, without looking at me; "It's not your fault; it's just that that piece of paper was my only link... It was from my son."

He continued softly; "He's gone. He and his mother, my beloved, were killed in a car accident 1 year ago today."

I stood silent, trembling now not from the cold but in my own grief. How can it be that here before me, sat a man who was going through the very same pain and anger and confusion that I'd endured these long months?

"Oh my God," I finally whispered, "I know...mine, too." It had been seven months since my own life was changed forever. My husband and daughter...a freak accident...suddenly gone.

He looked up at me; the tears that had clung in vain now freely tracked his unshaven cheeks.

We sat for hours that day; talking about our families. We shared laughter and tears; we understood each other. I believe it was an Angel of Mercy that carried that paper away. An Angel sent by the God of second chances.