



Miracles Are Made To Be Shared

By:
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Paul Peterson felt no sadness as he looked down upon the ceremony. It was a beautiful June day, bedecked with butterflies and serenaded by birds. Off in the distance the cries of happy children vivified the circle of life. A soft breeze blew in from the ocean, drifted over Shay's Point, and rustled new leaves on the cemetery's old oak trees.

Joan looked so diminutive, standing there between Jeff and Sandra, leaning against her walking cane, but to Paul she had never appeared more beautiful. He now knew what she could only believe: that the two of them had always been together, would always be together, and that she, too, would soon transcend the confines of earthly time and they would soar together above the tracks, seeing past and future, sunshine and tunnels, all at once.

Jeff stood tall and grim, so much like his father had been at midlife. Not so long ago Paul had stood between Jeff and Joan for the funeral of Jeff's youngest son. Jeff's faith was now being challenged in a way Paul's never was. Paul had learned much, but did not yet understand why he would be reunited with his grandson before the boy's father was.

WHATEVER YOU MOST NEED IN LIFE, THE BESTWAY FOR YOU TO GET IT IS TO HELP SOMEONE ELSE GET IT WHO NEEDS IT EVEN MORE THAN YOU DO.

To Joan's right stood Sandra, at once a grown woman with a family of her own and the gap-toothed imp who had given Paul "merpission" to dream new dreams. Now a successful writer, Sandra had always given herself permission to follow own path, and had never flinched nor faltered during her times of doubt and adversity.

Paul had occasionally wondered what would be said about him at his funeral, and in fact had often asked his students to write their own obituaries as part of a goal-setting exercise. Now, though, the words held no interest for him and were lost to the breeze.

The wind picked up, causing the images below to gradually lose their separate identity and meld together. Paul simultaneously felt himself merging into the scene below and being pulled upward.

“It’s a beautiful evening for flying, isn’t it?”

Rafe looked exactly as he had on that day nearly fifty years ago when he had plucked Paul from the air below Shay’s Point. Paul wondered whether he, too, appeared as he had that day, or as a newborn infant, or as an old man. Whatever it was, he knew, was an illusion soon to change.

“You’ll see everyone again, my dear old friend, but it’s time now for you and me to move on.” The funeral faded away as Paul and his old friend flew off toward the distant mountains, at last landing upon an eyrie that seemed to overlook this half of the universe.

Paul felt no need to talk in the presence of his friend as they sat together looking out across the world. Finally Rafe spoke. In his lap he held a simple unadorned box.

“You’ve done well, Paul; you’ve written a lovely story, one that will be read for a long time to come.”

Paul shook his head. “I didn’t write any stories, Rafe, though I may have told a tale or two. Sandra is the writer of the family.”

Rafe smiled and opened the box. Inside, Paul could see a book in a soft leather cover. Rafe cradled his hands under it, as though he were lifting a baby eagle out of its nest. As Rafe extended the book toward him, Paul read the words inscribed on the front: