

A dingy thicket of leaves and brush encompassed me. The leaves growled and branches clawed the misty air above. Several forlorn bushes gathered around clustered spaces waiting for something lively to stir. The smell of dank, musty forest crawled up my nostrils. Ahead of me, a pathway constructed of monotonous brick weaved through the dense woodlands disappearing quietly into the deep fog. Sweat dripped down my face like rain on a windshield, and it beaded throughout every crease on my forehead. Through a clearing in the fog, an old cottage was perched on a craggy hilltop. It appeared quite close, and though I felt awfully weak, I picked myself up and commenced. I carefully tramped through the leaves and mud that sloshed noisily around my feet. I walked closer to the house and admired the aged feelings that filled the aura. The steps were composed of cracked, mossy concrete that looked to be from the eighteenth century. The windows were filled with dirt, grime, and what looked to be cobwebs that occupied the corners of the translucent glass.

As I approached the house, the sounds of water were heard nearby. I turned, finding a small garden that an old woman was tending. I stepped back in surprise and a twig snapped loudly under my foot. The water from the hose stopped and the old woman slowly turned around and gazed at me, her eyes in shock. “What brings you here?” The old woman asked momentarily. Her thin eyebrows raised to produce more creases and her hands were pale.

“I’m lost in the woods,” I found my weak words as I quivered. “Do you happen to have any food?” She stared at me, sympathy clearly pouring through her eyes.

“Of course!” she exclaimed, swiftly stashing away the hose. “You look like you’ve barely eaten.”

Secret Miracles

I shivered. There was something strange about this kind woman, something oddly familiar. A feeling that I've seen this very familiar face somewhere hidden deep in my past.

I stepped in and was immediately greeted with a strong, sweet scent of peppermint. The toasty aroma of firewood wafted throughout the warm living space. It smelled strangely familiar as well. A kettle howled softly in a kitchen somewhere and the elder woman scurried to its attention. The snug ambience was filled with silence and the only noise that was present was a wide grandfather clock that occupied half the space; its pendulum shifting every second, sounding a percussive click. A large bookshelf held itself to display its finest series and collections of tales in one of the corners of the grand room. I looked over the arrangement as I ran my fingers through each spine of the books, admiring the large case of leather covers. I slowly took out a book, inquisitive about what it held. 'A Miracle of Wonders' it read, its words were embroidered in green stitching.

However, I gasped. The classic treasure that lay in my hands was one of my favorite books from my childhood. I opened to the first page and was in awe of the nostalgia that penetrated through me. I skimmed through the pages, thinking the old papers had to be ripped. But there it was, all three hundred and thirty-two pages kept all stored and neatly on an old stranger's bookshelf.

Soon, I heard light footsteps on the hardwood floors in one of the corridors. Candles, which hung on the walls, were lined in the dimly lit hallway. The old lady returned, carrying a wooden tray filled with tea and an assortment of biscuits and crackers.

"Oh," she said, and a smile took shape through her wrinkles. "That book."

"What about it?" I turned it over in my hands, scrutinizing the material.

Secret Miracles

“That was my granddaughter’s favorite book.” She spoke, and her grin slowly turned into laughter. “Come and sit with me, I’ll tell you more about her.”

I took a seat and noticed the steaming hot beverage, blueberry tea, another favorite of mine. The biscuits that were placed neatly beside the cups were embellished in a thick layer of Huckleberry jam, a personal favored dessert.

“Was your granddaughter’s favorite tea blueberry?” I asked. The woman nodded still smiling.

“And did she also like Huckleberry jam on biscuits?” I questioned, holding up a biscuit. She nodded once more.

I shifted my gaze upwards towards the lady. “Grandma?”