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Daddy's Love

“Daddy, when can I see you?”

“Soon, baby, soon, put your mother on the phone.”

She hurls the phone across the room and rages to her room, blinded by the familiar, unkind fury of emotion that accompanies talking to her far away father. She hates him. She misses him. Her heart pounds and her pulse races like wild horses on a thundering plain. Why does it have to be like this? Why can't he understand how much it hurts and how much she needs him? Why can't he come back, open his arms and embrace the loving family he left behind? It's not too late to pick up the shattered pieces of their broken lives and rebuild their once-promised future. Although it's been ten years, she remains hopeful that he will find a way to re-sew the fragments of her tattered heart. He cries, silently wiping the tears while he gathers the strength to once again face the distortion that has taken up residence between him and his once loving wife.

He lays awake at night, sucking in streams of poisonous smoke in an attempt to evade the crushing force of his baby's innocent words: “Daddy, when can I see you?” They play over and over again in his head like a train wailing down an endless track. There is no end, no future. What can he do to make this better? His wife didn't want him. She told him to go and he went but not without a searing, twisting agony and a realization that he was being effortlessly flung into the spiraling torment of a blood-spitting cyclone. His worst nightmare was now his reality. What about the children?

He would do everything he could for the children. He would love them with all his heart and he would spend every waking moment trying to fill the cavernous void between them. He needed those children more than he needed the air that he breathed. They were his reason for living. He would make it right. But how?

“She's mad at me again. She said she hates me.” He bows his head as he quietly says her last words out loud. His shoulders slump and he sighs a sigh that is worthy of Goliath with all the weight of the world piled like boulders on top of his head. “She doesn't mean it, she's hurt.” His fiancé says. She reaches out to rub his arched back as if it is aching from the strain of the weight he is so desperately trying to balance. He is defeated. “Give her time, she'll come around. She loves you. She's just a child, a kind and sensitive child and this is so hard on her. Let her talk.” She lifts his head to look into his eyes. “What if I lose her? What if she never forgives me?” “She'll forgive you. She is smart and loving. She is just so hurt.” He reminds her of a great philosopher, poised with his head in his hands, elbows jutting into the soft meaty part just above his kneecaps. His eyes are deep blue stormy seas. “How can I fix this?” she thinks to herself. “What can I do?” Together they sit, mourning the loss of an innocent, of a smattered fragile figurine, a soft and smiling angel beaten by the ravaging tides of time and fate. “There must be a way.”

“They're coming to visit!” He exclaims with delight. The children will come for the weekend. It will be the first time in what feels like a lifelong sentence and perhaps they will have the chance to heal a battle wound or two. He is frantically cleaning and arranging and chatting, giddy from the fumes of hopeful forgiveness and second chances. He is hungry, starved of their presence and essence. He anticipates his feast of fun and plans the menu of events for their togetherness. There is a bounce in his step that's been absent for months and a spark in his eye that beckons to all who are lost. It is his chance to become whole again, but more importantly, it is his chance to embrace his tear-soaked angel. To make her know that it is she he lives for, forever and always. Blood-sucking cyclones and ravaging tides, everlasting nights of tears and shredded heartaches, soul-ripping words and feared unknown futures have not won. An angel's love cannot be relinquished through whiplashing gusts of emotional torment and whitewashing blasts of unforeseen tomorrows just as a father's love cannot be diminished by the teeth-gnashing villain that tears his children away from him. Tattered fragments can always be sewn. Hope is never lost.