

Mary's Rainy Day
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The checked pattern on the side of the approaching yellow car reminded me of the bathroom floor in our apartment. It was raining but I was happy because I could wear my bright yellow rubber boots with the pretty pink flowers on the top. I had been jumping in the puddles while waiting for the taxi cab to arrive. Momma had made sure to tie my hat snug under my chin and checked twice to make sure my buttons were done up right on my yellow raincoat.

"Soon," she had said, "you will be with nana. She will be so happy to see you, sweetheart." I had noticed a few tears on her cheek, rolling down her face as slow as caterpillars crawled. With my small hand I reached up and wiped them away.

"It's ok, momma." I told her as she had told me so many times when I had cried.

Now, as the cab parked at the foot of our building's driveway, fear took over me. I didn't want to go alone anymore. My heart started beating really hard in my chest as I looked downwards. The sound of a car door closing made me jump a bit and my heart beat even faster. I stared down with my blue eyes, looking only at the puddle that was my rubber-booted feet. Another pair of boots appeared on the other side of the puddle. They were much bigger than mine and bright red, like the balloon I got at my friend's birthday party last month.

Looking up, a few raindrops fell on my nose and cheeks. I giggled loudly at the sight before me. There stood a large lady, with a big red hat to match her big red boots. Her cheeks were so round she looked like a chipmunk and her two hands were on her hips. She looked a bit like a clown too with her large round glasses and her big eyes looking down at me. Her smile was what made me feel safe all at once.

"Hello sunshine! You must be Mary. A pleasure to meet you, m'lady!" and with these words, she turned and opened the back door of her taxi cab.

"Climb on in, doll. I hear someone very special is waiting for you."

Nodding, I let out another giggle and climbed into the large backseat of the car. My legs barely reaching the edge of the seat, my rubber boots dangled alone over the edge, dripping water drops onto the light green leather of the old car.

"I've never seen a seat as big as this one." I said to the driver. She smiled wide as she buckled me in.

"That's because this is a special car, sweetness. Only the luckiest of people get to have a ride with me, darling." Her laughter filled up the car. It was such a good laugh that it made me happy and relaxed. The lady closed the door and walked around the car again and got in the driver's seat. She adjusted the mirror so I could see her face when she talked.

We pulled away from our apartment building. My momma had been standing at the window. I waved and smiled up to her, but she didn't wave back.

"Do you know where you are going, child?" The lady glanced at me in the mirror. She had a sparkle about her, just like the clown had at the birthday party.

“Momma said I’m going to visit nana.” The lady driver looked back at the road and she seemed to have lost her smile.

“Do you know why you are going to your nana’s, sweetie?” she asked.

I rubbed my hands together tightly before I answered the nice lady. They had gotten so cold out in the rain.

“I had worried the night before that I did something bad and that’s why momma was sending me away for a while. But momma said this morning it’s not me. That she wants me to be happy and that she knows nana would want that too and that’s why I’m going. I’m so happy that I am going to see nana.”

I clicked the heels of my boots together and the rain drops all fell down fast and at once.

“Sweetheart, do you think you can listen really close now? It’s really important that you remember this...”

I knew the lady was serious now. She wasn’t smiling at all anymore. I looked up and nodded slowly.

“My name is Mary too. I used to live in that same building where your momma lives.” I knew my surprise showed on my face because Mary the driver started nodding. “Yes miss, I lived there too. My momma and I used to walk down to the park where all the duck go...”

“Oh, I do that too!” I exclaimed. “Well we do that. My momma and me...”

Mary the driver burst out laughing. “That’s right honey! You do!”

“But how do you know that?” I felt a bit confused that this lady was exactly like me in so many ways.

“Because you and I we are kind of the same, hun. We are made from the same kind of stuff, I guess you could say. Do you remember Terry? The doggie that lived in the house next door?”

My smile grew wide as I remembered the little poodle. “Yes! He was so cute! He was only a puppy the last time I saw him.”

“Yes, Mary. But Terry is a big dog now. That was over three years ago...” The curious look in her eyes made me feel sad. I didn’t feel like smiling anymore. Mary kept on: “Do you remember when Terry ran into the street when you and your momma were waiting for me to come pick you up in my cab?”

The back seat of the car suddenly became much larger. Looking down at my legs, I could see red mixed in with the rain drops. It was blood. Blood was pouring down my legs and my yellow rubber boots.

In my mind, I saw Terry running into the street and I chased after him. Just as I heard momma yelling out my name, I saw the yellow car with the black and white checkerboard print and then everything went black.

Now, as I looked up again to the front seat, happy Mary was gone. The taxi had stopped and she was coming around the car. She stopped and opened the front passenger door and Momma stood out, dressed all in black. She was carrying white flowers in her arms.

“Momma! Momma!” I tried to climb out of the back seat, but couldn’t get the door to open. Looking out the window, I saw a large field full of stones everywhere and lots of crosses.

Starting to cry, my sobs were only stopped by my screams to momma. She never turned back once.

As she placed the white flowers on a small stone, Mary looked back at me. She placed her hand on momma's shoulder and whispered something in her ear.

In that moment I knew.

Momma was saying goodbye to me, I knew this now. She was letting me go away so I could have fun and splash in puddles with my rain boots.

The car faded away and I was surrounded in a bright white light. I felt warm at last. The chilly air I had felt all day long was gone and replaced with a warm fuzzy feeling that I hadn't felt ever since the rain had started. My hands no longer felt cold. My boots and raincoat were gone and I was wearing a frilly white dress full of lace and ribbons. I started to feel myself floating away from the seat, from the car, from the cemetery and from the street.

I saw my momma's smile, but not with my eyes, but with my heart, inside of me. I knew it would always be there, her smile always made me happy, and today I was the happiest I had ever been. .

A hand softly took mine. Looking upwards I saw my nana smiling down at me as she whispered:

"I'm so happy to see you, my angel."