



The Happy Snowman

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Action/adventure

Once upon a time, there was a happy snowman that stood on the snowy paved square of a little town. He did not remember how he had arrived there, but he felt that whatever force had brought him to life was one driven by love, as the first memory he had, was that of some children looking at him tenderly and naming Mr. Chuckles, a name he understood had much to do with his smile.

The days went by, and he would spend his time looking at the townspeople walking by, the children playing snowball fights and the glittering stars at night. Sometimes the children would stop by, and they would talk to him, telling him stories that most of the times would bring him joy and sadness at other times. Although he could not respond, nor give any advice, Mr. Chuckles remembered the face of every child that had come to talk to him and wished that he had a voice to talk back, but the only thing he could do during those visits, was to stare into space with his usual happy smile.

One ice-cold night, as he stood alone in the silent darkness, he noticed snowflakes falling from the sky. At first, they looked like tiny gems sparkling like starlight, and then they started falling in their thousands, dancing obliquely in the frosty, winter air, interrupting the blackness of the night. The snow continued to fall vigorously and incessantly all night and by the following morning everything had been covered in an endless white once again, that glittered in the first morning light. "Tomorrow we will build another snowman, so that Mr. Chuckles will not be alone at night," he heard some kids say, and that made him very happy.

Morning came and the first glimmering rays of sunlight beamed through the branches of the trees that were

now burdened down by snow. Mr. Chuckles looked ahead and saw that the little square that he regarded as his home, was now covered in a pure, white blanket. He waited in anticipation for the children to come and play, but although many walked past him, none of them stopped to talk to him or build him the companion they had promised. "They have school," a perky, cheerful sparrow who loved to gossip about everything and everybody in town, explained, describing in detail the children's activities during the day. "Don't worry, by the end of the week they will be playing in the square again," he added.

Time went by and Mr. Chuckles watched as the light became darkness and the darkness became light, longing for the children to come back to tell him all the interesting, new stories about the place the sparrow had called the school. But none of them came.

The next morning, a strange warmth that he had never felt before, washed over his body. He started to sweat, his body crackled, and he wondered what kind of force was doing so much harm to him. "Oh my..." a robin said. "What's happening to me," the Snowman asked. "You are melting", a goldcrest replied. His friend the sparrow rushed over, flapping his little wings hurriedly and landed on the head of Mr. Chuckles, as if to verify with his own two tiny feet, the truth in the words of the other two birds. "Quick, we have to do something, before our friend vanishes! I have seen this happening before", he exclaimed in agony. A mouse and a squirrel, who had heard the commotion, both hurried over to ask how they could help. "What can we do? Mr. Chuckles is our friend too," the squirrel said. "Let's ask the owl", the mouse suggested, but he quickly retracted, afraid that the owl would devour him. "I'll go then", the little sparrow said, trusting that the owl would have an answer. "Quick, hurry back with the news," the animals shouted out, concerned about the well-being of their friend, whose face was by now beginning to drip vigorously.

The sparrow came back looking gloomy and depressed. "Unfortunately, there is no cure," he announced to the animals that had gathered around, and they all started to sob. Some kids on their way to school rushed over and picked up more snow to reshape the Snowman's face, but their effort was in vain as the melting snow turned into ice the moment they touched it. As the sun began to shine more brightly, casting its blazing rays through the trees, more water began to dribble down the Snowman's body and face, joining the melting ice on the ground. He felt himself soften and fading away, as if he was being summoned by a powerful force that wanted him to become part of something greater. Soon, Mr. Chuckles could no longer stand up, and he was quickly reduced to a puddle, that trickled along the indentations of the rough pavement and fell in a water

drain by the side of the road. The animals all stood there, lowering their little heads in sorrow, staring at the emptiness that had taken over the space that Mr. Chuckles had once stood. All that was left of him now, was his carrot nose, the little charcoals that used to be his eyes, the grey pebbles that had once formed his happy smile and a soggy blue scarf, all lying on the ground. "You will never be forgotten," they said, blinking several times their little eyes and then walked home with a heavy heart.

"Love is energy and energy never dies. As long as there was love in the Snowman's heart, this love cannot be destroyed, it can only be transferred.," the sparrow brought to mind the words of the owl which he had forgotten to mention to the other animals, as he did not understand them himself. "What does that even mean?" he thought to himself, shaking his little head. The sparrow went back to ask the owl again, but the owl said that these were the words of a forest fairy, his ancestors had once encountered in the woods and that he did not understand them either. Looking for the forest fairy was futile, as the forest had changed over time and the fairies no longer lived there. So all that remained of the Snowman now, was the grief and the memory of him in the sparrow's heart.

Months went by and one day Mr. Chuckles found himself in a glimmering blue lake, waking up by the warmth of the blazing sun casting its beautiful rays of light on the water's shimmering surface. "What am I doing here? Why do I feel so light and so... scattered? Where are the children and the animals? Did the sparrow get an answer from the owl?" Mr. Chuckles wondered to himself and before he had any time to think about anything, he felt a new wave of heat gushing through him. The heat wave was so strong that it felt as if it was drawing him out of the lake and lifting him up in the sky. "Not again," he thought to himself, as he felt that he was vanishing into thin air once again and not before long, he realized that he was actually floating in the air, looking down at the dark blue seas and the green valleys from above. Suddenly he felt a cold breeze pushing him in a blue and white river in the sky that stretched to infinity, and at that moment all his memories came back. He remembered how at a previous time, he had joined together with hundreds at first, then thousands, then millions, then billions of other droplets, and how they all had to freeze into little ice crystals to make a cloud. Mr. Chuckles realized that this was happening all over again and just like magic, the Snowman became once again, part of a puffy white cloud that floated in the sky and changed into all kinds of fascinating shapes.

Time went by with fun and games, until one day a gust of icy wind pushed the cloud over a mountain and then Mr. Chuckles was back on the snowy ground, in the hands of a group of children laughing and playing with the

snow. Although the language seemed different from the last time he was on earth, the warmth and love he experienced in the tiny hands of the children felt the same, as he was being shaped into a snowman again.

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