

TWO BLACK STONES

Once upon a time, a girl flew to a very distant island to build a life of her own. She found shelter on the first day, trade on the second and a dark-haired man on the third. A man so handsome but so imperfect he was just perfect for her.

“Hi.”

“What’s up, miss?”

“I was wondering if you could help me fix my bike.”

“Of course I can. Worry not. I’ll take it to your house as soon as I’m done.”

“Would you mind if I stay to watch you play?”

“What do you mean by play? This is no game.”

“I know, I know, I apologise. I mean no offense.”

“That’s OK, miss. I forgive you. You talk too much but most of the time you don’t pay attention to what you say.”

“Wow, that’s short!”

“That’s the truth.”

“You’re such a... such a.... grrrr!”

That’s all it took for her to call it a day. But he wouldn’t leave her mind so after a fortnight she stopped by his workplace.

“Hello again!”

“Hello, miss. What can I do for you today?”

“Going to the beach. What do you say?”

“What are you talking about? Are you out of your mind? I’m busy here.”

“I can tell you are almost done. C’mon, you work too much.”

“I don’t wanna go. I can’t stand the waves.”

“Can’t you give it a go?”

“I just told you I hate the waves. Just go away.”

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“You’re such a grumpy, man! You know what, I don’t care what you say! I’ll just sit here and wait.”

“What about your beach? You’ll miss the waves.”

“Doesn’t matter. It’s supposed to rain, anyway.”

“OK, whatever you say...”

And that moment she knew he had her in his sway.

“Hi miss, what’s up?”

“Nothing much.”

“Would you like to dine?”

“I can’t cook.”

“I’ll make something special for you, sweetheart.”

“I don’t eat chicken.”

“That’s fine.”

“I can’t have beef.”

“That’s alright.”

“Everything gluten-free.”

“How demanding you are!”

“C’mon, Valentine. Loving me is not that hard.”

They smiled. And charmed, he was, at the girl’s pure heart, he opened up and awed her with the most wondrous surprise: a rare kind of love, so sincere and honest, so extinct that one can’t find, not even in a billion years. She locked him in her heart and he knew she was his forever.

Until one day a poisonous bug bit her valentine, putting his life in danger. The virus compromised his senses; he was not himself anymore.

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The girl prayed, cried, begged for his health for many days, countless nights. But as no remedy could be found and no healers' verdict would satisfy, the man was forced to depart.

He pledged, before flying back to his homeland:

"Worry not, sweetheart! Don't stress out! Believe in our love. We will meet again soon. I have this hope in the depth of my soul. Once I'm back in my homeland, I'll find the cure".

He then grabbed her hand tight and placed a black stone on the centre of her palm. On the middle of the stone, she read "BELIEVE", carved in a shiny-white as bright as stars on the darkest sky.

"Have faith. I'll write to you, sweetheart – every day."

Months went by and not even a single word she heard back from her valentine. Was he ill? Was he alive? Was he still hers?

She thought, *"Doesn't matter for now, I just need to keep my spirits high."*

And she carried on with her life, keeping the black stone very close to her heart. There were days, however, that the pain would hit her hard.

People urged her to give up:

"He doesn't love you anymore".

"Who on Earth would still have hope?"

But she knew, she just knew, deep down... They are perfect for each other, as imperfect as it may be...

As his silence kept on, more sorrow came along.

"You should just let it go..."

"Why don't you find a new love?"

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People's gibberish was so heavy that it end up shaking her resolve. She was still struggling with the pain when a fair-haired man met her half-way.

"Hey valley girl, how's it going?"

"Hi, oh, I'm sorry, I'm not sure we've met."

"I just got to this island. And guess what, the first human I see is you!"

"Oh, is that so? Where do you come from?"

"I come from the Pacific coast."

"That explains you hair kissed by the sun."

They laughed.

"Do you have plans for tonight, valley girl? It would be nice to grab some dinner and I'd appreciate if you were able to show me the way around here."

"Actually, I'm free. But I can't cook."

"It's my treat. What about we grab some fish and chips?"

"That's my favourite! And I know the best place to go!"

"Great. So fish and chips it is."

They became best mates on the pub that night and would see each other every day from that moment on. His care for her turned into cherish and flourished into love.

"Valley girl, I have to say... How can I put this into words... You move me in such a special way, you softened my heart. You're the sun to me, my soul smiles just because you exist in this world... I never thought I could find something so bright, being with you just feels light, it feels just right. And I want you to know that I'd live the rest of my days by your side."

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She was startled. Not so much about his honest words but because she found, not too deep in her heart, a ray of light. A single one, bright enough to produce a slight though significant change of heart.

“The pain. Some of it went away.”

“Sorry, I could barely hear you, valley girl. What did you say?”

“I said that I’m not too sure what to say. But I’d like you to stay.”

He grabbed her by the waist and spun her twice in the air. She noticed joy in his eyes and grinned back to him. He stopped spinning and put her feet back on the ground, opened her hand and posed a black stone on it. This one had the word “TRUST” carved in shimmer gold. It was sparkly like fireworks. She was drawn to it, she finally found someone she could trust.

He moved in shortly after, giving her moon, stars, comets. They respected each other’s body, mind, soul and space. Since neither could cook nor were eager to learn, they had take-away meals or went out to the pub. Life with him was smooth and secure. There were no arguments, no misunderstandings. No disappointments, no deception. Easy-peasy.

OK, let’s face it: it was a little bit too safe to be honest, and she was extremely bored.

After all this time, she could still feel the pain inside, but it took a different shape. From less desperate and naive to a more mature, stronger shade. She knew what it was, and not even in a billion years it would go away.

“This is going to hurt a lot but one day you’ll see, it’s for the best of us.”

“I can’t believe it, valley girl. There must be some love...”

“There is, and so so much! But I believe it’s not for someone I can trust.”

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He felt sad at her words. She pulled the “TRUST” stone out of her heart and returned it to him.

“Nonsense, I know. You may not understand it now but one day you’ll find the right match for you. All I know is that I was never meant to be yours.”

He packed his stuff and vanished from her sight. When she was left alone, she locked the “BELIEVE” stone back in her heart. It felt just right.

Not too long after that, a letter arrived.

“Dear sweetheart, I apologize. I know all the pain my absence caused. I couldn’t speak, I couldn’t move. At some point I thought I’d die. But I’m feeling better now and it would be a blessing to me just to see you smile”.

Attached to the envelope there was a ticket for her to fly.

She screamed, laughing out loud: *“Oh my, oh my! Can’t believe it, my Valentine is alive! He is well, he reached out! Luck on my side!”*

The day came when they finally met again. She arrived first, her heart beating hard. He spotted her in a second, his mouth dry. And there they were, staring at each other in that stunning caribbean isle. They smiled.

“My sweetheart, I’m so happy! I thought I lost you, but no – you’re still all mine”.

She showed him her palm, wide-open. *“Yes, Valentine. The black stone served me well on the most desperate times”.*

He took his hand out of his pocket and showed her a black stone with the word “HOPE” carved in that very same bright-white.

“Yes, sweetheart. The only thing that kept me going was the sight of a future with you, bright.”

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Hope and belief kept them going, pounding fast in their pure hearts – and they were now reunited.

People cried:

“After so long, Valentine, now you have to make this right!”

He took her hand and said:

“If you take me into your life, I promise you’ll never have peace of mind. I’ll drive you nuts sometimes but I’ll always be there for you: when you break all of our stuff and when you burn the house because you can’t cook. That’s all I can give you: all my heart. Now, would you accept these terms and give me the honour to be my lovely wife?”

“Of course, Valentine! I’ll be yours forever, until the end of time!”

The two black stones were never again apart and the couple was together until death did them part.

It’s said that those who find the two black stones have the power to bring true, everlasting love into their lives.

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