



The Days Forgotten

Part 1: The Clown Statue

The only thing that remains of the days forgotten is the clown that never stops smiling. His smile was frozen in time as if he was waiting for someone that could or may never show. His smile never fades even as the clown lies on the cold, hard concrete ground. He remembers simpler times, and his days were filled with making people happy.

This happiness was the reason he became a clown in the first place. His heart was most content when he could light up a child's face as they held a balloon animal. Or when he awed his audience with his fire and knife tricks. Even the times when he purposely tripped on his shoelaces repeatedly; one time, he had a sprained ankle, as a direct cause from this trick.

The times of joy and even pain brought him eternal happiness; living his dream was all he needed at the time. Becoming a clown was the best choice he had ever made with his life. He was twenty-seven years old when he taught himself all the tricks. Before that, he was a lonesome

and dejected office worker. His days were spent as an accountant for a bank; he has since forgotten the name.

Tears formed in his statuesque eyes as these memories flooded his mind. The tears streamed down his white, almost translucent face with a steady flow. Nate imagined a puddle below himself, with all the tears flowing out of him. He believed he had been a statue for one-hundred and one years now, in awe of all the time since he was human. He knew the year was 2021 because of the people who passed him by and who would talk about the new year. The day he transformed into a statue was the day his life changed forever.

Nate, the clown, had belonged to a traveling circus in 1920, at a time when nothing could go wrong. The big white and red striped big top attracted many walks of life. From all around, neighboring towns would come to the most incredible show on the planet to watch the circus. Nate was proud to be a part of that show. The Ringling Brother's Circus was a popular attraction from the late 19th century to the early 21st century; it ended in 2017 (Wikipedia, 2021).

Nate was not a crowd favorite at the time, as most people preferred the acrobats, elephants, and lions. This deterrent did not stop him from bringing smiles to his customers. His spirit was the true essence of a clown: jovial, silly, a trickster, and even child-like at times. Nate felt that he could be himself at the circus, a need that was never met when he was an accountant. He felt accountants led such boring lives, and he was never happy.

Part 2: Pastimes

Nate could vaguely remember his last day as a human being. The clouds had filled up with rain quickly that day. As the colossal droplets poured down, the smell of the cleanest water bounced off the ground. The streets of Minden, Louisiana, began to flood from the downpour. It was a hot summer day and sweat beaded down Nate's forehead; the heat was unbearable. The

Louisiana heat was unlike any he had ever felt before. It was so hot that people were admitted to the hospital from heat exhaustion.

Nate was as red as a fire engine that day as he tried to bear the heat. He remembered these beautiful magnolia trees that had become bombarded with rain. The little rain torpedoes invaded the trees as if they were in World War I. The tiny, lifeless petals that fell to the ground became translucent. Their once bright, white color lost its luster. The sight of the flowers made him sad that day. These flowers reminded him of the most dazzling acrobat he never dared to speak to, he did not have any courage.

The day started like any other at the world-famous circus. People were shoving one another to get the last remaining tickets; it was the last day for the circus to be in town. Their next stop was going to be his hometown of New York City. The circus was coming to life as the performers scrambled to get everything together. The elephants stomped as the earth shook with each triumphant step. As the crowd was amazed at their beauty, the elephants trumpeting noises could be heard from Darwin Street to Homer, a nearby neighboring town.

Even the lions were excited to be entertaining that night; Nate always knew the lions to be ornery as they roared all night long; he missed many nights of sleep from the noise. People around him were abuzz with excitement; one portly toddler was licking a vanilla cone, dripping the ice cream all over his clean, black buttoned-up shirt and white dress shoes. Nate could not help but chuckle at the sight; he loved children because they were easier to talk to than adults.

About seven customers came to his small, yellow, and red stand throughout the day. He made the circus a few dollars that day. He considered this a good turn-out because he usually did not get that many people. Though he was not a popular attraction, he felt very pleased with his life, though something was always missing.

At the end of the day, he packed up his stand and put it on the train. Then, like he routinely did each day, he carefully watched the most stunning acrobat practice her somersaults. She had the most beautiful, golden blonde hair that cascaded down to her lower back. Her eyes were a deep blue as sweet as a blue butterfly. She was small and delicate and had a small beauty mark above her upper lip. Magnolia Rain Hammons was her name, and it was as unique as her. As he carefully watched her, making sure she did not see him, Magnolia started walking towards him. Nervous and unsure, Nate ran quicker than he ever had before. He kept running as if he was a triathlon athlete.

The townsfolk of Minden still remember that day the clown kept running. They had thought he must have been running from one of the lions. The sheer terror on his face and the quick speed with which he ran was the talk of the town for months. Then it became a town legend. The story foretold of a clown bewitched by a beautiful acrobat with golden, blonde hair, and she turned him into a statue. Though this was far from the truth because Magnolia was as sweet as honey, Nate knew the truth of his cowardice.

When he returned to the circus, the troupe had already left, leaving Nate behind. He was embarrassed by his public cowardice, but he was also heartbroken that he did not dare to talk to Magnolia. His soul was deeply saddened, and this caused him to transform quickly.

He could still remember the weird sensation coursed through his body that day. It was like this bizarre wave that reverberated throughout his whole body. First, his fingers had become numb and started to turn into marble.

Next, the numbness traveled up his arm, then to his head, and flowed down to his toes. Afterward, he fell back from the sheer weight of the marble that overtook his body. His head remained the only thing that remained as he transformed into a statue. There he remained for

over a century. No one ever moved him; it was as if something was protecting him. A Magnolia tree was nearby as if this was his guardian angel. Or was this his sweet Magnolia that he never got to tell her of his true feelings?

"All I have are my memories," Nate thought.

Part 3: Freedom

"Hello, mister. . . mister?" Nate was interrupted from his memories and looked up to see a little girl with golden blonde hair staring at him; she seemed familiar.

"My name is Magnolia Rain Smith, the one and only," Magnolia said. "I could not help but overhear your thoughts and wanted to introduce myself."

As she stepped into the sunshine, her lips were quivering with excitement; the gold sequined leotard she was wearing dazzled in the light. She stood with a specific authority that Nate never seen from a child before. She seemed to be only ten years old, but she walked like an adult.

"I'm Nate, and how can you hear my thoughts?" He said hoarsely in his head. The sun shone in his face like an overbearing mother trying to coddle her child. He squinted as he waited for Magnolia to answer. His anxiety built up as he was nervously waiting.

"I do not know, mister, but are you the Nate Peterson of New York?" Magnolia said matter of factly. "My great-grandmother told me a story about a clown. Are you that clown?"

Suddenly, a wave came over him as he knew who she resembled. The beautiful, golden acrobat that tumbled through his mind for a century. A connection he never lost in all of his years as a statue.

"Yes, I am Nate Peterson," he said with all the excitement he could muster. After all, he was only a stone head and did not have a lot of energy.

The next few hours, Magnolia told him of the great-grandmother she was named after. Her great-grandmother had told her stories of the clown that never stopped smiling and the days she was an acrobat for the Ringling Brother's Circus.

"She looked for you everywhere and could never find you," Magnolia said. "She always had feelings for you and was nervous to tell you."

Nate cried as he heard these words. "I never knew anyone saw me, though I tried hard to be seen," Nate thought.

"She never left Minden because she thought you would come back. All the days you watched her, she wanted you to talk to her. She could tell you were nervous and never tried approaching you. Everywhere she searched for you to no avail. Eventually, she married my great-grandpa, and they had kids. She only told me this story because she never wanted me to be afraid to find true love."

They spent the rest of the evening talking about her great-grandmother's magnificent life. Magnolia's eyes were as big as diamonds as she theatrically set the scene. Nate never felt more seen than he did at that moment. He felt like his soul was awakened by the story being told.

This awakening was all it took for Nate to be freed of his statue shackles, and he was human again. All he ever wanted was to be seen and feel loved, which he never truly felt in his time as a human. Though he was no longer alive, his soul was freed, and he floated up to the clouds. He was reunited with the girl with golden, blonde hair and deep blue eyes. He was no longer nervous to talk to her; he had built up over a century of courage.

The clown statue was never seen again, and it was rumored that he finally found his long-lost love. The almost love story was passed down to Magnolia Rain Smith's children as they

learned a valuable lesson from this tale. Magnolia missed her great-grandmother's way of telling the story, and she was never afraid to go after her dreams and find true love.