

Forget-Me-Nots

Harley Johnston

WELL, IT WAS raining today I thought to myself as I dressed. Droplets of water were flickering onto the small arched window as the attacking sound of the water began hitting the tin roof over and over again, plentifully. The water hit the tin roof over and over again. The water hit the roof over and . . . it is raining I thought.

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In the corner lurked a sunken grey face, with whiskers as long as the face that protruded out from the hunch. The slender figure stood in a ghostly manner, appearing to hover above the cold floorboards as the elongated white dress flowed southerly, covering both feet from sight. I shuddered and sobbed out repeatedly, however no person heard my cries. Have I mentioned that there is a ghost in my room yet? *Always voices and always women*, I thought to myself.

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Each day voices beckoned for me to stand up straight and walk toward the door to the hallway. The hallway leads to another place that I'm struggling to remember right now, however it will come to mind when I'm thinking about it least.

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Just then music flowed in through the space and I could hear the thundering of a time-worn piano playing old melodies from my

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childhood . . . I'm caught up in the rapture of the piece and all else escapes my thoughts. The piano plays delicately, toiling with my emotions and flooding my subconscious with recollections of my mother, stern and stocky playing out these rhythms in that old white church in the woods. *There she is*, I thought.

Suddenly I'm surrounded by a murder of crows and a conspiracy of ravens swooping me as a child—yes! Youthful, lively running and playing about the garden beds full of wild forget-me-nots as father rides home in the horse and cart. “Where are you Father? I have so many exciting and wonderful stories for you today!” I shout.

When I sit up in my bed two blonde-haired ladies in maroon dresses, with hair curled and fixed back enter my room without permission: “Get out,” I squeal though my voice is lost before I utter the words—they soon leave as quickly as they came in.

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Now I am sat at a long white table in a banquet with twenty or so ladies, all in floral printed tops and knitted cardigans, with beaded necklaces and pearl earrings. *This is a wedding*, I thought, as I began to dance about in my chair whirling and flailing my arms about me knocking my glass off the table. The glass shatters on the laminate floor and all over the Turkish kilim rug. Now my great aunty enters the room toward me with a frown and a red bloated face: *she is always wearing that horrible black skirt and jacket*, I thought to myself. As she comes closer to me I turn my head for just a moment and she is gone: I only blinked once and the old cow disappeared.

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Soon I am alone again looking about the green coloured walls with the pink flowers dotted about them, and before I know it I am painting the flowers from a floral bouquet that my boyfriend Laurie has given me, or does he prefer to be called Lawrence? I don't quite recall that right at this very moment in time. “Edith,” cries a short stumpy figure with orange hair and a blue uniform: “It's time to see your family darling.” That's right! I have seven children. No. I have six children: I had one miscarriage. I'm sprawled out on white sheets in a white room with white doctors in white coats, and they are . . . hurting me and addressing me formally as if they have never met me prior to this

engagement. “Hello Mum . . . come and say hello to Nana, sweetie,” I hear across the room as I see a man, two women and several small infants hail me over as though I am a taxi.

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I am now sitting in an office and my hand is being grasped tightly whilst I receive warm smiles from across a desk and hear whispering about me to my right: “Just sign here Mrs . . .” spoke a gentle voice before, I interrupt with, “Edith is my name thank you,” in a surprisingly angry tone of voice. I reach for the pen in my left pocket of my cardigan and begin to print my name before signing the small box on the page. “This confirms the Will and Testament Mrs . . .” whispers a short bald man with a hideous tie much like my brother John’s. Oh dear John, I’d love to see him again—I really miss picking berries with him on the farm, always eating more than we sold.

“Edith, honey, we are going to take you back to your room now that your family have left,” spoke a soft and lively voice of a young man with female clothes, who strutted all the way in front as I lingered on behind trying to figure out where I knew him from. *It’s great to be home again*, I thought. I gazed at a letter at the end of my bed and read: “As a tenant of a nursing home facility you are entitled to . . .”

This is a story based on a family member, who suffered from dementia and whose life it eventually claimed—my fondest memory of my nana is picking forget-me-nots in her garden.