

This Story Needs a Name

by Margaret

Note: This story was written on March 25, 1991 when my husband and I were in the throes of deciding whether or not to adopt. We had struggled with the inability to have children of our own and didn't know what the next step should be. We looked into many types of adoption.

I remember not being able to sleep one night and getting up and sitting on the sofa with my journal and this is what came out.

An old woman is tucked into a bed. It is the family room in a cozy home. There is the sound of a creek running near the paned windows that line the walls. There is a fire in the corner fireplace. The bed is next to the windows with the kitchen adjacent.. The woman is talking quietly. "Don't forget to feed Sheba John. You won't forget, will you John?"

"It has been a good life, a good life," She nods slowly, lifts her forefinger for emphasis. "Never had any children, did we John? Never could. Remember how we tried. Went to Romania in '91 and found Misha. Gone so long John. How we cared for her. Wish I could see her face just one more time. It was good John. It was good. We always told her where she was from. Always kept the records. And then she left us. She just left us and went back. She never knew them John, but we cared so for her. What happened John? John, can you hear me? What happened?"

"John, can you hear me? What happened?"

The woman is alone. A light is lit next to her bed, on a bedside table. "I wish that girl would come and bring me some tea. The fire needs to be poked. Where is that girl?"

"We always had a garden, didn't we John? Always had a garden. Phlox, those were my favorite flowers. Who liked those? My grandma. What was her name? Helen, yes, Helen. She was Catholic. Yes, she was Catholic. You never were one for organized religion were you John? But you always had religion in your heart John. It was always in your heart."

"Where is that girl? She must be asleep. I don't know if it's the middle of the night or the middle of the day any more. The light's on so it must be night. Look at my hands. Look at my nails. You know I was always so vain about my hands John, so vain. Now look at my nails. They look like my grandma's nails when she was 90. They look like my Dad's nails after he was dead in his coffin. But they're on my hands. Must mean I'm gonna die soon, pretty soon now."

She sighs.

"These hands have done alot of gardening and alot of cooking, even some painting. But I never won any prizes for anything. Makes me think sometimes that I never amounted to much. Not much at all. But we always kept on didn't we John? Kept

on for 60 years. Remember how we used to laugh. Married longer than anybody we knew. I sure miss you John. I miss you. We always had our little cat though didn't we John? Here she is. She sleeps so nice, look at her. We always missed her when we went on vacation. Oh, we had some wonderful trips didn't we?"

"Except our trip to Romania. That was so terrible, so terrible, so sad, all those children. But we got our Misha and brought her home. She was a beautiful child, wasn't she John? We loved her so much. But then she grew up and went away from us. Why did she go away John? I can't remember now."

"Remember how you used to tell her stories? And how she helped me fix dinner? She always liked to do that so much. She could cook John, couldn't she? Yes, she was a good cook."

"Where is that girl?"

A woman enters the room and moves toward the kitchen. As she passes the old woman, she gently leans over to see if she is asleep. The old woman looks up at her.

"It's me mother, it's Misha," she says.

"Who?"

"Me, Misha."

"No, my Misha went away a long time ago. Right John? She went away."

"No, I'm here, I've come home." She lays her hand on the coverlet and they look into each other's eyes.

"Pumpkin face," the old woman says, finally.

Misha's eyes glisten, she smiles.

The old woman becomes restless, "tea," she says.

"Yes, I'll get you some tea," says Misha and goes to the kitchen.

The old woman looks into the fire. Misha brings the tea on a tray. She plops the old woman up in the bed. On the tray are some soft cookies and two cups of tea. They settle down each with a cup.

The old woman considers Misha and says, "eat, Misha, eat."

Misha pats the old woman's hand. "Yes mother," she swallows hard. "I will," she says taking a cookie.

The old woman nods her white head and looks content.

Photos are
included below:



The Garden in Spring



More Garden in Spring