

Amazing girl

On a beautiful sunny-Saturday morning, Lily's dad asked at the breakfast table, "Girls, can you do something for me?"

Petunia's face already turned a deeper shade of sour.

"You all remember about the car accident of Mr. and Mrs. Dent, who live some houses down the street?"

Petunia replied resolutely, "Sorry dad, but I still have THAT much homework, and I wanted it to be finished..."

Even though Lily knew it was a little lie, as Petunia hardly did any homework at all, or postponed it as long as possible, she said nothing about it.

"Yes, certainly, dad. Mr Dent helped me to repair a flat tire, and Mrs Dent has learned me all about flowers when I was helping her in the garden"

"Ah," her father said. "That is good then."

"Is Mrs Dent coming home again?" Lily asked.

Her father's cheerful face became serious again. "No, on the contrary. And Mr. Dent is missing her still more every day. He is growing sadder day by day. It looks like he is giving up all hope. I just paid him a visit. You should have seen him at home all alone."

"So what can I do then?" Lily inquired.

"Your mother and I will go to see him in an hour or so, to tidy up his place a bit, and I know that this evening, as always, he will go to the hospital, to visit his wife and sit at her side."

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He continued, “Can you pick a nice bouquet of flowers, that we can bring to the hospital?”

“Sure, when do we leave?” was all Lily asked.

“You can go ahead on your bicycle, so if Petunia clears up the breakfast table, I would say, right now, if it is OK with you.”

Lily smiled, as she concluded that her sisters' white lie had backfired upon her.

Within the blink of an eye, Lily drove her bike through the lane. It was still early, and the countryside was as beautiful as can be. It just felt like a fresh beginning. Lily grinned at her silly thoughts, “Each spring IS the beginning of something beautiful. Just wait and see!”

When she arrived at the house of the Dent's, she went straight to the garden at the other side of the house, and she grinned no more. “Oh – my – God,” she said, while watching in disbelief.

Mrs. Dent had several separate gardens, one special with vegetables, one with flowers, a nice little sitting corner, where grapes were growing, and apple trees, and a big lawn (Something Mr. Dent was very keen on). And Mrs. Dent devoted much of her time to tending all of her gardens. Lily remembered her saying “Throughout the whole year, there is always something to do, nature is constantly on the move, so I am grateful for your help, dear girl.”

“*Everyday something to do*”, and all gardens looked like it had been deserted for months, which actually was, what had happened.

Tears welled up in her eyes, while she said to herself, “Let's start somewhere, and see how far we can get.” She went to the garden shed, picked up protecting gloves and cut some nice,

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but somehow wildflowers. She immediately put them into a vase in the kitchen.

After clearing all the old leaves, she said to the lawn mower, “So much to do, just two hands, and so little time,” and prayed “Dear time, would you please tick just a little bit slower?”

She heard her parents arrive, and calling to her, “Lily, we are here!” and she yelled back, “I am in the back garden.”

She thought: “Dad said he would come in about an hour time, but it feels like the entire morning had lapsed.” She heard her mother giving an acknowledgment, but could not properly understand what she said.

“Well, if the house inside is in the same condition as the garden, they have quite something to do,” she thought.

So Lily went from one chore to another, until she decided that it had to do for the moment. She picked an apple from the tree, moved one of the chairs such that she could sit and watch the result of her labor.

She dozed away until her mother came looking for her, and said: “O, here you are, thanks for putting the flowers in the kitchen-sink,” She looked around and continued, “It seems that either you had some help, or someone else has been tending the garden. Lucky you. You should have seen the house inside, I first thought it was a pig farm. Men alone...”

After some small lunch, they decided that Lily and her father would straight go to the hospital, and her mother went home, “*Enough to do.*”

The city hospital was not that far away, so in an hour time they put their bikes in the shed.

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“Lets go straight to Mrs. Dents' room, and hope we do not get noticed by the staff, this is supposed to be my day off, but if they notice me, I'll know what will happen...”

But at the very moment they turned the knob of the dormitory where Mrs. Dent was nursed, a voice pleaded, “Doctor Evans, Would you please be so kind to have a look at Mr. Brown, his condition is deteriorating by the moment.” He sighed and said, “Oh well then, I'll be back as soon as possible.”

So Lily entered the room alone. Mrs. Dent lay in a bed near the window, her face towards it. Lily looked around, and near a table, she saw a vase in which she put the flowers she had picked. There were some chairs intended for accommodating visitors. She moved one near the bed of Mrs. Dent and looked closely. It seemed that she was just asleep, all the bruises and cuts were healed, there was nothing that would remind her of that horrific car accident.

With her left hand, Lily took the lady's hand. “Oh Mrs Dent, I'm so sorry about your garden, I should have tend to it much much sooner. It used to be a garden of Eden, but now it looks more like a jungle. Will you please wake up? I promise that I will help you with the garden. And Mr. Dent misses you so much.”

Without any thought, Lily started gently to stroke Mrs Dents' hair. Again and again and again, thinking about all of their times together, her and her husband, in the garden.

Her eyes became heavy, and the last thing she remembered that it was so warm in the room. She should have opened the window and let fresh air into the room, before sitting down. But it felt good, so why bother? She decided to remain seated, and slowly closed her heavy eyes and her mind drifted away.

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Suddenly it felt very strange, all the warmth was gone! She knew, sitting motionless without any cover, could chill you to the bone, but still it felt strange.

And where was she? Apparently not in the hospital anymore! But she could not remember leaving the place, how could this be possible? She was standing all alone in, what seems to be, the bedroom of Mr. and Mrs. Dent's house. There were some pictures of Mr. and Mrs. Dent as bride and groom on the wall.

“I can't remember I've ever even been upstairs,” she thought. “How did I get here? And what am I doing here?”

She wondered if she really was in the house of the Dent-family, so she walked to the window. Lily looked outside. It seemed like an awesome foggy cold autumn afternoon. Her heart missed a beat. What had happened there? The lawn, she just had mowed this morning had gone, and where it used to be, a huge maze of buxus hedges, about ten feet height, had appeared.

And in the middle of the maze, stood Mrs Dent! All alone in her nightgown and crying.

Lily looked carefully and imprinted the layout of the maze in her memory. Then she rushed downstairs and went straight into the maze without second thoughts. It did not take long before she got close to the center of the maze.

As soon as Mrs. Dent noticed somebody coming, she said with a weak voice “Help, anybody please help me!”

A brief moment later, she saw and recognized the girl who helped her so often in her garden. “Dear Lily,” her voice suddenly trembled, “Can you help me? I'm lost and feel so weak

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and strange. I'm trying to find my way out for so long.” A horrible thought suddenly struck Mrs. Dent, “Dear girl, how did you come to be here, are you also lost?”

“No, Mrs Dent. I'm not. I know my way. It's easy to get out. I still remember very well finding my way, come, follow me.” She helped Mrs Dent up, and gave her a supporting arm. They went left, right, right, left again ignoring some sideways, and finally right again. Lily felt with each step that Mrs Dent seems to become heavier, like something was pulling her back.

Finally they reached the entrance of the maze. Mrs. Dent stopped Lily, and when she looked into her eyes, they were completely black, when Lily looked into them, she just saw them mirroring the maze. With a strange hollow voice, that didn't sound like Mrs Dent at all, the lost lady asked, “Are you sure, Lily Evens? Are you very, very sure you want to do this, to take the next step? There will be no turning back!”

Lily's only thought was “What a strange question to ask and here at the very end of the maze.” She set her mind to it, took Mrs. Dent hand and turned the knob on the door.

She opened the door, and heard a distant lonely church bell starting to chime sadly and thought “Strange time and place for church bell to ring! They chime normally only, either for warning people for imminent danger, as a departure signal at funerals, or as an inspiration for people to think their lives over again.”

Lily was however totally unaware that the sad bell was chiming for her. Unknowingly, she was at an important crossroad at her life. Whatever road she was going to take, there was no turning back anymore. One bell was chiming for the departure

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of Lily-the-Muggle, the other warning Lily-the-witch. That bell was warning Lily, that living in the magical world wasn't so glamorous and adventurous as might appear from stories. Instead of a relative innocent, carefree life she was on the threshold of far more responsibilities, heartbreaking choices, bottomless pits filled with grief and sadness with only a tiny spark of hope and new possibilities.

She gathered all her strength, took a step, and all went dark before her eyes....

About an hour after Lily's father had left his daughter near Mrs. Dents' room, he returned with a college doctor. A nurse said with a smile to them, "Look at those two." They peeked around the corner and saw Lily holding Mrs Dents' hand, but fast asleep, their heads beside each other on the same pillow.

Lily's father said, "No harm done, and understandably, she has been working in the garden all morning, and also my fault. I promised her an hour ago that I'll be back in a minute."

The nurse added "Well, with this temperature, who would not doze away," and opened the window to let a fresh breeze enter the room.

The nurse turned towards Mrs Dent and Lily and looked at the patient and the girl. "Come!" was all she could say. "Please come quick doctor Evans!" And not without good reasons. Mrs. Dent had opened her eyes!

Both doctors rushed immediately towards Mrs. Dent and started carefully to comfort her while examining her at the same time.

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All of the following commotions woke Lily up. First a bit drowsily, but soon very much awake.

“I am sorry, I must have fell asleep. Is something wrong?”

She moved her chair a little back and looked at all the hospital staff that had arrived.

Mrs. Dent pointed with her hand to her mouth, and the nurse first moistened her lips, and finally let her carefully sip a bit of water through a straw.

As soon as Mrs Dent was capable of speaking, she kept on asking, “Where am I? Are we home from the party? And the endless maze, my garden, the maze, how did I ever got in that horrible maze? And why did I ever got in?”

Lily's father, still a bit overwhelmed, replied, no knowing how to interpret her question, “Mrs Dent, you were involved some time ago in a car accident. Your husband is fine and will be here shortly. Do you remember anything of it? Right now you are in hospital where we have been curing your injuries, and where you have slept for quite a while. Your garden looks much much better, lovely as always, but as far as I know, you don't have a maze, the garden isn't large enough for it.”

Mrs. Dent shivered when she thought about all the months she had been wondering all alone in the horrible maze. Suddenly her attention was drawn to the girl next to the window and recognized Lily immediately. “My guide, my rescuer from the maze.”

With tears in her eyes and a look full of thankfulness and understanding towards Lily, she finally said, “Doctor Evans, you have an exceptionally *amazingly* gifted girl.”