

Mouse and Me

Judith Nolan



“There is some kind of a sweet innocence in being human - in not having to be just happy or just sad - in the nature of being able to be both broken and whole, at the same time.”

~ ~ C. Joybell C. ~ ~

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“What do you think, Mouse?” Jamie dragged her companion to a reluctant stop before the remote park bench.

She wrapped her gloved hands around his upper arm, stamping her feet to keep them from freezing on the snow-bound pathway. She

was well aware the tinker was eager to get Below and out of the cold. He had such plans for Christmas, he'd said. They couldn't wait.

"You made them?" Mouse frowned at the two snowman figures that had been neatly crafted to sit on the park bench.

One was larger than the other, both possessing silly grins created from convenient sticks. Their twiggy hands were almost touching. They looked ridiculously happy.



"Sappy happy," Mouse commented. "Just like us." He leaned closer to perform some slight remoulding of the figures. "Okay, nice. Thanks, Jamie. Let's go now. Too cold out here." He urged her to continue their interrupted journey by pulling on her hand.

“I didn’t make *them*. They aren’t what we’re here for.” Jamie shook her head, tugging back against his determined grip to keep him beside her. She exhaled a long sigh. “You need to look harder, Mouse.”

“Okay...” Mouse appeared confused. But he didn’t dare comment.

There was a mistake here somewhere, and he knew he’d made it. So he tried to look harder. But the snowmen were the only things in sight, besides the bench. It was only a lonely bench in a quiet corner of the park, and nothing special.

“What do you think of my gift?” Jamie prompted, with resignation in her voice, after a long, troubled silence. She was well aware her absent-minded husband of barely two months hadn’t yet discovered her present. “I had it made, especially for you. Cullen carved it for me. Vincent and Winslow helped with it too. Do you like it?”

“Mouse is sorry...” Guileless blue eyes slid sideways to clash with his wife’s impatient look of mild rebuke.

“Take another look around, Mouse.” Jamie gave his arm a small shake, encouraging him to look again.

The winter sun was lowering towards the horizon, also eager to be gone. Snow began to fall softly. The temperature was dropping rapidly.

“Okay...” Mouse heaved a worried sigh. His eyes hunted the bleak park scene once more, but still, nothing stood out for him.

What has Mouse missed?

He knew it was important. Jamie had said so. But he was stumped. And his body was growing colder by the second. He huddled deeper into his jacket, wishing they could move on. But he knew he was trapped.

He was so new at all this. He was still learning how to be a husband. Vincent had been giving him lessons. One of the most important, his good friend and mentor had said, was learning how and when to say you're sorry. *And mean it.*

Even when you're not even sure you've done anything wrong. That was the hardest lesson of all, for the confused young man to grasp.

Expressing regret was not in his nature. He created and moved on, allowing the mistakes, and failures, to fall where they may. He didn't know, until he became a married man a few weeks ago, that he had anything to be sorry for.

"Clue..." He finally surrendered.

"Oh, Mouse..." Jamie shook her head, reaching to kiss her husband's cheek. "You're always looking at the big picture. I forget, sometimes, how you're only now learning to see the finer details. It's all right." She leaned back to smile up at him. "The plaque, silly. Read the sign on the back of the bench."



“Okay good, okay fine!” Patent relief flooded into her husband’s worried features.

He’d missed it, before. He shook his head as he turned back to the bench, leaning closer to read the plaque that had been newly-secured to the top plank.

He quoted the inscription slowly and carefully. “*“To my knight in shining armor. The love of my life. Mouse...”*”

He stood back. “You did this. For me?” His voice rose and became choked with emotion. “Jamie is the best,” he managed after a moment of intense struggle to sound coherent.

His breath rushed from him along with the words, “I love you, Jamie mine. Forever.” He pulled her into his arms and hugged her tightly.

“I know that,” his wife commented, as she pressed her cheek over his heart. Pulling back, she cupped his face between her hands and kissed him. “But then I’ve always known. Always...”



“No matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.”

~~ Maya Angelou ~~

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“Desiderata (Latin: "desired things") is a 1927 prose poem by American writer, Max Ehrmann. Largely unknown in the author’s lifetime, the text became widely known for its use in devotional and spoken-word recordings in the 1970s.

The poem ends with these lines...

*You are a child of the universe,
no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here.
And whether or not it is clear to you,
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.
Therefore be at peace with God,
whatever you conceive Him to be,
and whatever your labours and aspirations,
in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.
With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams,
it is still a beautiful world.
Be cheerful. Strive to be happy...*

~ ~ Max Ehrmann ~ ~

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*From my tunnels to yours...
May all your wishes and
hopes come true...
For now and always...
Merry Christmas and a
very Happy New Year!*



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