

Magic

It is the year 3000 AD. The fourth millennium has just begun. So much has changed since the last millennium. If anyone from the past were to see it, he would not believe his eyes.

The city center is an ordered, fully automated district. Businessmen and women flock there constantly. There is no longer traffic congestion. Everyone is capable of teleportation or air transport. Advances in technology have rendered the automobile obsolete, now seen only in the history museum. Technology also means that there is a solution to any problem that may come up. There is no more disease and even death is easily prevented through a recently developed and refined anti-aging programme.

However, there is a price to pay. Technological breakthroughs in the past have used large amounts of electricity. Pollution has created a thick black cloud cover, blocking out the sun for decades. Everything in the city is artificial and man-made, designed to survive without sunlight. The clouds, combined with the gargantuan buildings in a concrete jungle create a dark, dreary world. Chemicals and pills are available to give people feelings that are connected with the presence of the sun and for anything else the people may want.

Damon sat in his apartment, a mere ninety storeys above the ground. Being a restorer in the history museum, he could not afford better accommodation in higher units. But he was lucky, He could actually see the sky from his balcony; something which many could not do. Now, comfortably dressed in a brown turtle necked shirt and khaki coloured pants, he was at his computer looking through some papers the museum had recovered. Just more work for him. Lately, his life had become a cycle of work and sleep. He felt a deep feeling of emptiness and dissatisfaction. "Shucks." He thought, "So what if there's so much technology? Doesn't make me happier. Even those happiness pills can't change things."

As Damon scrolled through the numerous documents, something caught his eye. It was a very yellowed, faded piece of paper with writing on it. It was almost totally faded except for one line that read ‘Remember the magic in our lives’. It was impossible to read the rest now. He needed the necessary equipment at the museum. But Damon was not surprised. Ink did not last very long back then.

“Ah, magic.” Damon thought. “A word used by the ancients to describe any unexplained happenings.” The word did not feature in the working vocabulary of many. Magic had died out long ago and technology had taken its place. Gone now was the sense of wonder and amazement that magic used to bring. They just did not exist anymore.

Damon wished with all his heart that he could experience magic, feel the wonder the ancients felt. He had mentioned it before to his employer. He had just been laughed at and labeled the most naïve of youths. But Damon held on to his dream. He longed for just one piece of the ancients’ magic to hold for all his life. To ease the gnawing emptiness in him. Remembering all this only served to add to his despair. Damon switched off his computer and pushed it away. It had begun to rain, huge heavy drops. Damon felt that the rain suited his mood completely. He folded his arms on the desk and buried his head in them, trying to escape into his own world.

About fifteen minutes later, Damon felt a presence in the room. He looked up, annoyed that his solitude had been disturbed, angry that his security system seemed to have failed. There was someone or something standing in the doorway between him and the balcony. Something in the shadowy doorway that did not seem too real. “Don’t be silly.” He thought, “Ghosts are merely manifests of the subconscious mind. Figment of my imagination.” But Damon could not help but feel a little frightened. He reached out and switched on the light to see the apparition better.

It was a man standing in the doorway. He was tall; over six feet in height. He was causally dressed in a dark blue sweater of a strange looking material and a pair of what the ancients called jeans or denim pants. He had picturesque features and a small, warm smile crossed his face. His eyes were a deep, yet soft brown and seemed very intense. Damon had never seen such intensity in anyone before.

“Who are you?” Damon asked.

The man did not reply. He just continued to look at Damon. Damon was a bit put off. He was not sure what he expected but silence was definitely not an option. He felt uncomfortable under this strange man’s gaze.

“What are you doing here?” Damon asked timidly.

“To show you the magic in your life.” The man answered. His voice was soft and very soothing. “Come.” He took Damon’s hand. At once, Damon found himself in a place he had never seen before. The place was like an empty field. The sky was not overcast but filled with twinkling stars against a midnight blue sky. Everything was so still. It was as though it was an abyss. It seemed like a place where anything could happen.

Damon was aware of the man’s hand holding his. It was soft and warm, unlike that of a ghost or hallucination. Suddenly, the stars began to move, weaving a silent, seamless dance in the sky. Different scenes formed and flitted across the sky. These scenes were familiar to Damon. They were scenes from his life, times when he had been particularly happy and content.

“Great.” He thought. “Just great. This person has brought me here to show me something I already know. Big deal. So much for showing me magic in my life.”

The man seemed to have heard him. He squeezed his hand and said, “Don’t look at things with such a closed mind. Try to see things from a different perspective.”

Damon did not really understand. Still, he tried hard and willed himself to see his life from another point of view. It was no use. His conscious mind was continually telling him it was a dumb thing to be doing. He closed his eyes, trying to quieten his mind. A myriad of colours swam before him. It made no sense. He had no idea what he was doing. Soon, the only thing Damon felt was the man’s hand and piercing gaze. He still could not see the magic the man was trying to show him.

Damon opened his eyes. He was back at his desk. He felt as though he had just woken up. He stood up and walked over to the balcony and stood in the doorway. The man had stood at that very spot that night. Was it just a dream? It had all seemed so real. Damon looked wistfully up into the sky, that eternally black ceiling of cloud. A soft cool wind kissed his upturned face. This little breeze flew upwards, challenging the clouds. The clouds yielded.

A hole had appeared in the clouds. A clear beam of sunlight penetrated and shone in the city like a spotlight. Damon detected a circle of baby blue sky through the opening. The single beam of sunlight cut through the darkness like a knife, illuminating the area that it shone on, bathing it in light. Damon never saw anything like it before. The dreary city seemed transformed. He saw people on their balconies, looking at the beautiful light. For many, it was the first time they had seen the sun. Damon felt the emptiness and despair in him vanish like mist in the morning. He felt truly happy.

Then Damon understood. This was a form of magic in his life. It was not a large unexplainable thing but a small, often unnoticed thing. There was magic in his life all along. He just did not see it.

“Try to see things from a different perspective.” The man had said. Damon knew now. It did not mean to look at his life differently but to see magic differently. Magic was not merely a word to describe the impossible. It was also the little things that make life wonderful and happy. Simple things like a child’s laughter or the love of a friend was what made the magic in life.

The End

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