

The Miniature Soul

The fairy mermaid princess leaned out the window of her castle with her most beautiful hair and said "You don't need to worry about anything anymore, because the world is ending."

"But how do I stop worrying?" Baby doll asked.

The Fairy Mermaid Princess was silent. She didn't have an answer.

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The world was green. At least when you were looking at the grass it was green. When you looked at the sky the world was blue. Melody's sneakers were pink and they lit up. I bet your sneakers don't light up and even if they do they are probably not as cool as Melody's. Melody lay on the grass with her feet in the sky. When her sneakers were on the ground they lit up the green grass like a disco ball for ants. But when her sneakers were in the sky they didn't light up very much but it did still look cool. Because, then it looked like she was walking on clouds in the sky. When she held the fairy mermaid princess up in the sky she looked like she was flying. But the fairy mermaid princess looked cool in the grass, like she was hiding from danger. The fairy mermaid princess danced among the blades of grass and then floated up into the sky. She flew so effortlessly. Because she was both a fairy and a mermaid she could both fly and breathe underwater. She could do anything. The fairy mermaid princess would never die.

"Melody!" Bethany said.

"What?" Melody was startled. She hadn't remembered that Bethany was still there. Bethany sat on the ground beside her, criss-cross-apple-sauce. She had Baby doll on her lap.

"You're getting distracted again. You were telling me a story."

“Oh sorry.” Melody felt confused and tired again. She blinked to try and remember what she had been talking about. She couldn’t remember and blinking just reminded her of how sleepy she was. She realized that her arm hurt from holding the fairy mermaid princess up in the air. She let it flop to the ground.

“It’s okay,” said Bethany.

Melody looked at Bethany’s little hands wrapped around Baby doll. Her hands were still chubby little rolls of fat, like the hands of Baby doll. Melody’s own hands were finally the shape of grown up hands but were still much smaller. Melody walked in the clouds with her light up sneakers again.

“I’m glad I won’t have to wear snowboots again.” said Melody, “I never really liked snowboots.”

“Why won’t you have to wear snowboots?” Bethany asked.

“Well, it’s April isn’t it? And doctor said I only have two months left don’t I? So it won’t get cold yet. I think I will want to be buried in these. Do you think that mommy will come and change the batteries in my sneakers if they run out?”

“Oh,” Bethany looked worried. This made Melody grumpy. It wasn’t fair of her to be worried. “Well,” Bethany said timidly “I suppose you will be underground won’t you? So she wouldn’t be able to change the batteries because she would have to dig you up again wouldn’t she?”

“Why do you have to spoil everything?” Melody asked. It was unfair for Bethany to look so sad when it was Melody that should be getting all the attention since *she* was the one who was dying.

“It wasn’t me, it was Baby doll who thought that and told me so.”

“Oh shut up.” said Melody. She pushed Bethany over as hard as she could. “This is just like how you were on MY birthday when YOU wanted the first slice of cake. I am the one who is dying and you have to go and make it about you? Don’t you?”

“Melody, are you crying?”

What? Melody touched her face. It was wet with tears and there was snot coming out of her nose. She wiped the booger onto her hand and then onto the grass. It was next to an ant.

“Bethany, I will miss you.”

“No,” Bethany said, “You won’t need to miss me because you will be watching from the clouds, won’t you?”

Melody shrugged. The Fairy Mermaid Princess did a pirouette and then a backwards somersault in the air. Melody started to sing.

“You can’t have the fairy mermaid princess because I am taking her with me.”

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The castle was blue. It was just the sort of castle that you would like to live in. The walls of the castle were wooden. They were painted a light blue with fluffy white clouds. In the center of the castle was a spectacular long glass stairway, perfect for floating down in a ballgown or for revealing shocking gossip. The bathroom had a swimming pool in it that was occupied by a giraffe and a uniformed soldier. The kitchen table had a large pink plate with a strawberry on it. The strawberry was nearly as large as the table. The bed was partially occupied by a sleeping jellyfish and Mt. Everest was in the hallway.

The castle belonged to the fairy mermaid princess but often Baby doll would come and visit. (Baby doll lived in the crib which wasn’t very far away.) Today was the fairy mermaid princess’s birthday. She had invited Baby doll over for a tea party. The castle had never looked more beautiful. It had been decorated with paper cut outs. There was a chain of paper girls holding hands, paper snowflakes, and paper stars. The shapes had been cut out with such loving care that the sight was breathtaking.

The party was abuzz with action. The giraffe and the soldier were flirting again and the jellyfish was making mixed drinks with lemonade, jellybeans, and cheerios. But when the fairy mermaid princess walked down the stairs all of the action stopped because everyone was

staring at how beautiful she was. Even Baby Doll. No, Baby doll is not supposed to be having any of the lemonade until the fairy mermaid princess gets it first because it is not her birthday now is it. But she already had her birthday yesterday. But now it was her birthday again.

Or maybe it wasn't the birthday party of the fairy mermaid princess at all. Maybe it was her funeral. Suddenly the fairy mermaid princess vanished into thin air. The paper girls lost their heads and legs and the snowflakes were shredded into little bits. And if it is her funeral then she won't even be there at all and Baby doll can have as much of the lemonade as she wants to and mommy and daddy will finally pay attention to Baby doll even though she is not sick. And the fairy mermaid princess will finally be gone for good and maybe I will even be happy that she is gone because I never loved her anyways.

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Melody was silent. She opened her mouth to say something but no words came out.

"How could you say that? How could you say that to me? How could you say that?"

Melody asked.

"I'm sorry." Bethany's voice was so quiet that Melody could barely hear her. "You know that I love you right."

"If you love me then why would you say that you didn't love me. Why would you say that?" Melody didn't look at Bethany. She watched the fairy mermaid princess on the floor. Her body didn't move like how when you are dead your body doesn't move ever again. Somehow the fairy mermaid princess didn't look so beautiful to Melody as she had once looked.

"I-I-I-I don't know" said Bethany. Bethany let out a whimper and then began to sob loudly like an infant. Her whole body shook. It was pathetic.

"Are you kidding me?" Melody asked. Melody chose each word extremely carefully in order to make her words hurt Bethany as much as possible. "Do you even care about me at all? This might be the last time I ever play with you and you are not even taking it seriously? PRETTY SOON YOU WON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH ME ANYMORE BECAUSE I WILL BE

DEAD.” The room was silent again. Melody didn’t realize her voice could be that loud. She looked over at Bethany, finally making eye contact with her again after the longest time. Bethany’s face looked so sad it was like she had stepped into another world, a world where Melody didn’t love her. Melody looked down at her hands. Her little grown-up-ish-hands were shaking but Bethany’s little fat ones were shaking more. She reached over towards Bethany extremely slowly. It was as if the world had slowed down and her heartbeat was a loud angry drum.

Melody cupped Bethany’s baby hands in her own and whispered “I’m really really sorry. One of the only things that I know for certain is that I love you and that I will always love you. I’m just, just-” It became harder for the words to come out like someone was poking at the words and popping them before they were said. “I’m just really scared. I don’t want to die because it is so scary. I just really wish that you could die with me and we could just handle it together.”

“Melody. Please. Why can’t you just believe me? When you die it won’t be the ending, it will just be the start of something new. You will have your own castle and your own glass staircase and you won’t have to pretend anymore.”

“Stop playing Bethany. I just want to talk to you for real for once.”

“Please Melody. Please say that you will be okay. Please.”

Melody nodded silently and pulled Bethany in for a hug. As she squeezed Bethany as tight as she could she was glad that Bethany couldn’t see her face.

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The world was empty. It was easy for Bethany to avoid eye contact with the adults because she was only tall enough to see up to their knees without tilting her head back but it was the other children that haunted her. Her cousin Tommy was about her height. Tommy stared at Bethany as he clung onto Aunt Macy’s skirt. It was his turn next. He seemed frightened. Bethany watched as Aunt Macy reached down and picked up Tommy. He squirmed and shook his head. “NO, I don’t want to. I’m too scared.”

“Tommy,” Aunt Macy seemed angry, “you need to say goodbye to her and this is your last chance.”

Bethany looked at the lifeless fairy mermaid princess in her hand. She was glad that she didn’t have to say anything because she could just give Melody the fairy mermaid princess and that would be enough of a goodbye, she hoped.

A faceless adult who Bethany did not bother to identify pulled over a stepping stool for her to peer into the coffin. The coffin was light pink with little paintings of fairies on it. Bethany remembered helping Melody choose this one. Melody loved decorations and planning parties so she had been very excited. They had even once sat in it together when Melody was telling a scary story. The stepping stool had two tall steps so Bethany walked up the slow way. First step: right foot and then left foot. Second step: right foot and then left foot.

Bethany looked at her sister lying in the coffin. No one had bothered to turn on her light up sneakers. Bethany gently reached in and clicked them on. The pink light flashed against the side of the coffin like a disco ball, as if the little painted fairies were having a wild birthday party. Bethany lightly touched Melody’s hand and then laid the fairy mermaid princess next to her.

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“This isn’t a game anymore Melody,” said Baby doll.

Melody stood at the bottom of the long glass stairs and looked up at the clouds.

“It still feels like a game.” said Melody uncertainly. Melody looked at the fairy mermaid princess expecting her to say something but she was silent. She lay motionless on the ground.

“Please trust me,” said Baby doll, “you will be okay.”

Melody silently nodded and took her first step on to the glass stairs.

