

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Fantasy

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It's beautiful now with the leaves moving in a light breeze, shining in the afternoon sun, and the cool summer air just right for a walk. The trees hum low; their perfect reflections look back at us from the water. The flowers dance in the wind just like Emma Rose's eyes. I set out the small plastic tablecloth I brought. As we sit down I take the picnic things out. Emma Rose is delighted as she takes a few bites. Famished, I almost swallow mine whole. I keep thinking about Noah but know I have to concentrate on Emma Rose. There is a little brass plaque at the edge of the property on the path to the stream. I've seen the saying before and it's a favorite of mine so I read it to Emma Rose.

" A Kiss from the sun for pardon

A song of the bird for mirth

One's nearer to God in a garden

Then anyplace else on earth"

I talk awhile as we eat, telling her about the birds that fly by, the bubbly brook and pretty trees and about school in a few months and how much fun we'll have with Patrick and the other kids. We finish our little lunch and I pack it up. As I get up, I see him about twenty feet away. I drop the picnic things on the ground and rub my eyes. It's Jeb, my golden dog, sitting, panting just like he used to while he waited for me to take our walks. He's young again, a happy glint in his eyes as real as day. Stunned, I can't say anything. Then he turns and moves east up along the stream. In silence I take Emma Rose's hand and we follow. Then in a flash he disappears. I can hardly breathe for I've just seen the spirit of my beloved dog. Emma Rose points. Did she see him too? No she's pointing to a fallen black bird on the path, a dead bird. We walk up to it but something strange happens. The bird moves lifting up as if someone is holding it and with each second it begins to stretch its wings, becoming more alive. Then, as if tossed gently in the air, it flies away.

Emma points again. "Angel," she says with a smile. I turn to look at her and I get down on my knees to her eye level. "What did you say?" She doesn't speak again. "Did you say angel?"

She's still pointing nodding and smiling at the sky where the bird flew away.

"Did you see a dog?"

She shakes her head no. How can this be? I turn around and stand up. Am I day dreaming? Did I really see Jeb? The angel in the dream said Jeb's spirit would come with me to Mystic Bay. But did Emma Rose really see an angel save a fallen bird? Jeb has been dead for months and Emma Rose, the little girl with Down's Syndrome has always been mute.

It's way after midnight when I return home. King is lying on his dog bed beside GG's brass bed. He lies beside her each night and it's a beautiful thing. I look in on Gram. She's in her powder blue bedroom with the light still on, the book she's reading on her chest, her glasses on her nose. Cookie snuggles next to her, her head on the other pillow. I gently take her glasses, placing them on the nightstand. It's an older novel, *Diamonds Fury*, by Marshall Greenstreet. I turn out the light. She doesn't stir. I make sure the nightlight is on in the bathroom then head out into the chilly night to lie on the chaise and watch the moon glow. The swirling clouds with the moon behind them light the star-filled chilly night. King comes out the doggie door to be with me till I go upstairs myself. He does this every night. Then back he goes to be with GG.

"How was your day boy? Did you help Gram and GG with their psychic readings?"

Of course he doesn't answer, how I wish he could.

"Can you see angels?" King sits and puts his left paw up for shaking.

"Good boy, you're a southpaw just like me." I shake his paw and rub behind his ears. I review the astonishing day and tell King all about it.

"Noah Greenstreet, a handsome and psychic man, asked me if we'd met before. How surreal, but where? College? LA? Did he grow up here? No I'd remember that. I do remember him too...it's so weird, King. And today, did Emma Rose see an angel or just a sick bird regain

strength, then fly away? Elena says she's never spoken a word, but I swear she said, 'angel'. And was Jeb by the stream? What's happening to me?"

I close my eyes and King puts his head on my lap. Not alarming Elena was my priority. Should I tell her? What if I was hallucinating hoping to see Jeb, thinking of angels? Yawning, I announce to my companion, "It's time to say goodnight to God and the moon.

King and I walk back in the house and he turns to look at me like he did at the whistling man today. "Goodnight boy," I whisper. I climb the stairs and get ready for bed. Blue, snug on the comforter again, opens one eye and is gone. I get in my bed exhausted. A long white feather sits on my bedside table. Picking it up, admiring it's perfect beauty, I wonder where it came from. Maybe Gram put it there because GG can't walk up the stairs anymore. Mabel was here today so perhaps she found it. Wrapping around today's events, I'm trying to make sense of it all. Analyzing it has exhausted me. As Blue purrs next to me, my eyes close in prayer. "God, did Jeb lead us to an angel? Did Emma Rose see one?" Fading now, inevitable dreamland comes, taking me away to parts unknown.