

ANEMONE

I know you can't hear or see me as well as I can you, Danielle, but I want you to know that everything is alright. For over fifty years I have been at your side, and it pained me deeply to know that I left during a time you needed me most. I can't be there for you no matter how much I want it so. To hold your hand, to be near you—it is a feeling without equal, and I want nothing more than to have that feeling back again.

Don't worry about me, Danielle. My passing was without pain, and yours will be too. When you wake up from tonight's rest, you will be here with me, in our world, a beautiful land created solely for the two of us to share together forever.

Look into our daughter's eyes once more before you go, one last time, and see within the infinity the future that you and I have borne. She'll be having her second baby within the coming weeks, and though you will never meet your granddaughter in this lifetime, you will be able to see her whenever you please where we'll be. Our grandchildren will marry, have children of their own, and their children will have more children yet, and that will continue for ages, generations and generations, young to old, and young to old again. At last, we will all come here, to this serene place, with our loved ones so very near, and we will be young once again. Together, we're finally free of the burdens of age.

You will absolutely love it here, my dear. I know you remember those days we spent swimming in the ocean together. That's all here. The warm sun shines through the clouds as though it were

shining through calm water, and the reflected light of the mirror lake swashing above the tops of the trees paints bands of color along the ground, as if one were walking on the bottom of the bay under the water. The trees here, the plants, they're alive. They're animals—giant, harmless sea anemones. Their vibrant, flowing lengths wave in the wind in so many colors, it's as though they were floating amongst the sea. And the wildlife! At nearly every turn there are groups of jellyfish making their way around the anemones, floating up to the sky like feathers drifting in the wind. Around another corner you'll find herds of dolphins, schools of all kinds of colorful fish, even whales. Little pleases the animals more than for you to take to the air and swim in the sky with them. Never will you feel so alive!

Go to bed now, my dear. You've had a long and fruitful life and a most pleasant last day. I'll be watching over you, and in the morning, you'll wake to me quietly sitting on the edge of your bed. I will have patiently waited all night to once again feel your warm, loving embrace. I will take your hand and walk you into the world where you'll spend your next life, and there we will be happy in each other's company, watching as time passes, eons rolling by like hours. At the world's closing, we'll welcome the end of our time, and we will wait for our old world and our old lives to be lived again. But that is a long time from now. Tomorrow, I want to show the anemones.

Good night, Danielle.

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