

## THE MAGIC OF THE SNOW GLOBE

My grandfather always told me this snow globe was magic, so I finally decided to give it a shake and see for myself. Holding the small globe in the cup of my palm, I admired the intricate little houses that resembled a village scene. Flakes of white, glistened with silver glitter, littered the bottom and gave an illusion of land covered by lush snow. The translucent liquid inside the globe moved around as I turned it carefully to inspect it.

A smile tugged my lips as I remembered every Christmas when grandfather would gather us around and tell the story of the magic it possessed. Grandfather said, *“This globe is special. It’s been handed down for generations and has been in our family for nearly one hundred years. It began with a tale of lovers, separated by war. This globe represented his love for her, and he claimed as long as she shook the globe and thought of him, he’d be by her side. The magic of the globe ensured he kept his promise, for when she did as he instructed, he would appear to her in her dreams and it would be as if no time had passed. She was encased in his arms once more.”* His aging blue eyes held secrets behind the oval slits that were now surrounded by creased skin, a short, thinning scalp of silver hair, and hands that were always so gentle. Not a day went by that I didn’t think of him and miss his stories. My own olive-green eyes cast back down to the globe I still held onto as my memories had taken me away to another time.

With an intake of air, I braced myself for what magic this globe could possibly possess and begin to rock the globe back and forth to stir up the specks of snow. It begins to swirl inside the glass, floating down upon the small village. I am mesmerized by the beauty of this illusion it gives me and cannot help but smile, remembering the trip I’d taken to Aspen two years back around Christmas. Pulling it deep from within my heart, I recall the blanket of snow that covered the ground during that winter. It looked like a wonderland straight out of a magazine.

A cool breeze interrupts my thoughts, and I lift my gaze from the globe, taken aback by the change of scenery. I am no longer in my Denver apartment during the Fall, but at the familiar suite of the resort I had just been thinking of during what looked to be winter. I nearly drop the globe in startled panic, my eyes darting around the room as I scurry toward a door. My mind is racing, matching my heartbeat, and I can barely keep up with my own bewilderment. Just as I reach the door and extend a hand to the knob, it turns and opens where Chris steps inside, causing my eyes to widen in disbelief. He smirks at me and his eyes rake over me.

“Thought you said you were changing? Aren’t you ready for the ski lessons?” Chris says, stepping forward and reaching out for me, snaking his muscled arms around my waist.

I stiffen and continue to look at him with hesitancy, “Wh-what am I doing here? What are *you* doing here?” My tone is accusatory and shocks even myself.

Chris attempts to gather me in his arms, a chuckle rumbling his chest as he shakes his head. “Have you started on the wine already, Allie?” he teases me with a sly grin, hands moving up my back.

I am genuinely in a state of confusion that has me clutching the snow globe to my chest with one hand and pressed against his hard chest with the other, pushing him back. “I-I am so confused.”

“Get changed, they’re waiting for us, babe.” His hand comes down to swat playfully at my rear and my eyes grow as big as saucers. He retreats and leaves me in the room, in a state of shock and convinced I am somehow dreaming.

Glancing down at the snow globe, I gulp and then look up to take in my surroundings once more. My memory recalls this room, it looks exactly the same as it did two years ago. My eyes scan the walls and I notice the picture hanging above the fireplace of an arctic polar bear, just as I remember it. Spinning around, the same quilted pattern on the massive king-sized bed with four bedposts across the room. This is the suite. This is the resort where Chris proposed to me two years ago at Christmas.

Desperate, I walk over to the chair that rests near the fireplace and take a careful seat. My mind is still attempting to process this situation and I continue to come up empty handed with an explanation.

*“When she would shake this globe and think of him, he would keep his promise and return to her in a dream.”*

Grandfather’s words ring back in my ears, recalling the story of the magic this globe held. But he said he returned in a dream. Oh, I must be dreaming. That’s a logical explanation, dreaming this whole thing up and I’ll wake up soon. Mindless I reach up and pinch my arm, eliciting a yelp and curse from my mouth. I consider the possibility I am wrong in thinking this is merely a dream. What else can I possibly do at this point?

Two years ago, Chris proposed to me and I eagerly accepted the request to be his wife. Our life together had been full of happiness until the devastating day I realized Chris had been seeing

his ex behind my back. He admitted his mistake, but repeatedly said I didn't understand. My heart had been shattered and I never let him try to explain away his reasoning; it didn't matter much to me when the damage was done. I stayed at my parents until he'd cleared his belongings from our shared apartment, refused his calls, texts, and emails. After a few weeks, his communication attempts ceased and I had not seen him since.

This recollection causes me to question the reason I am here now, at this resort where our love began. It was more or less the beginning of the end.

"God, please. If this is a dream...let me wake soon." Blowing out a hard breath, I rise to my feet and walk toward the adjoining room of the suite where the couch, desk, television, and fridge are. Spotting the closet, I walk to it and open it to find the ski suit I vividly remember buying. Looking down at the snow globe in the nook of my elbow, I close my eyes and let my head fall back in frustration.

What was happening?!

In an effort to find more answers and maybe wake myself up from this odd dream, if it were one, I grab the snow globe and carefully place it on the top shelf of the closet. Retrieving the ski suit, I grumble and turn to make my way to the bedroom to change.

Once I have changed into the ski clothing, I exit the room and look around, carefully examining my surroundings and remember the décor not being any different two years ago. This is a complete mind-boggling situation I have found myself in.

'*Feliz Navidad*' drifts through the speaker system of the elevator as I anxiously watch the numbers on the panel. Soon, the doors open and I step out, eyes carefully scanning the area. Silver tinsel garland is draped on the front desk and beautiful red poinsettias sit atop the counter. There is a tree to the left with large wrapped gifts, topped with meticulously tied bows. The lights draped on the branches of the full green tree sparkles in the dimly lit common area. The small spheres decorating the tree in red, silver, and gold shines and illuminates the beauty of the tree. The fireplace is lit with more decor lining the top, contrasting against the polished mahogany wood with intricate designs along the panels.

I spot Chris smiling as he speaks to one of the instructors. I halt in my tracks, eyeing him from across the room, my heart remembering all the things I loved about that man. Loved is the wrong word, I think to myself. I still love him. I always had and possibly always would, despite the way he crushed our future with one choice. Left to feel inadequate compared to the raven-

haired beauty of his ex. My thoughts cease when he turns his head to look at me, his smile growing so wide all of his perfectly white teeth show. His short brown locks spiked in all directions, just as I remember him.

Walking over to me, he continues to offer me a smile, his long fingers reaching up to brush a stray blonde lock of hair from my face. I nearly shudder from the gentle reminder that I once craved his touch. The intense craving rushes back and I long for his embrace. As if reading my mind, he envelops me in his arms and pulls me into him.

“Ready or not, it’s time to ski, Al.” Chris leans down and presses his lips to mine, my entire body stiffening for a moment. He pulls back, having sensed my reaction. “Everything okay, baby?”

I am not sure how to answer this question. I’m not sure I want to, so instead, I smile and offer a chuckle. “Yeah, of course. Just cold.” He doesn’t seem to fully accept that, but doesn’t say otherwise.

“Here. I’ll warm you.” Chris grins and leans down to recapture my lips with his own. His unyielding hands gripped my thick ski jacket, holding me tighter against him as he kissed me fervently.

I lost myself in this kiss as my eyes flutter closed and my body reacts opposite of the original cautious uncertainty. My hand moves forward, pressing against his chest before sliding up to cup the back of his neck as I part my mouth to allow him entrance with his tongue. I find myself enjoying this kiss, much to my dismay. As if no time had passed, I lift myself on my toes to kiss him back with just as much passion.

“Hey, you two, get a room,” a male voice says and chuckles.

I open my eyes and reality slams into me. Pulling back and away from his embrace, I lick my lips and still taste him there. My body trembles in yearning for more, but I shut those thoughts down quickly.

The instructor claps his hands and calls everyone to the next room for us to go over the basics. I remember this vividly. Chris reaches for my hand, linking his fingers with my own. My heart begins to slam in my chest and, as I turn the corner to enter the main room of the resort, there are all our family and friends. The memory of this moment now once again fresh in my mind. I knew what came next.

“Chris – ” I try to stop this from happening, but he interrupts me.

“Let me explain. I asked the most important people in our lives- -“

“—to be here when you ask me the most important question you’ll ever ask me.” I finish his sentence.

Chris gave me a bemused look with both his brows shooting up, rendering him speechless and nervous. “I uh—you...”

I shake my head and frown, “I’m sorry, I can’t do this again. I...” I see the confused, worried, and surprised looks of our family and friends, retreating backwards until I can no longer take the looks. Spinning around, I rush toward the stairs instead of waiting on the elevator. Climbing the stairs in a haste, I dash to the suite and directly to the closet. Reaching up, I grab the snow globe and close my eyes, a tear escaping as my lid pushes it down my cheek. The pain from these memories have my heart breaking all over again.

I long for home, I silently pray to return to the confines of my Denver apartment where I’d built up a wall around my heart to ensure that it never broke again. Grasping the globe in my trembling hands, I give it a shake and think of home. When I open my eyes, there I stand in the comfort and security of my apartment.

I let out a rush of air, sobs consuming me as I set the globe on the counter and cover my eyes with my hands. Sliding down the wall, I sink to the floor and weep for what I’ve lost and the memories that were good with Chris and I.

I cannot understand why the magic of this snow globe brought me back to that moment in time, albeit a magical moment from my memories. That’s when I realized, before I knew my future, Chris was my future. The magic of the moment being proposed to at such a beautiful place and having the most important people in our lives share that moment. I am angry at him for destroying us, for destroying what we had. Once again, I am shoved in the endless loop of emotions I fought so hard to keep at bay.

I am unexpectedly driven to the impulsive move to grab my phone and open the album I had not opened in over a year. Flipping through the photos of Chris and I, a teary smile tugs at my lips as I relive those memories. There it is, the photos of me kissing him after saying yes to his proposal. Elated memories flood my mind. Closing the photo gallery app, I press my finger to the phone icon. Hesitating for a moment, I cast a look up at the rain falling against my window. The water streams down the glass pane in disorganized roadmaps leading to no particular place.

Returning my gaze to my phone, I click the voicemail symbol that has a red one next to it. Tapping my finger against the only voice message, I close my eyes and listen.

“Hey baby, I don’t know how to fix this, but I need you to listen to me. I know how this looks; I know what you must think. Baby, I love you. I need you to let me fix this. Can I please explain? Trust me enough to let me explain. Allie...please, baby. I...I need you.” Chris’s voice broke and he snuffles, sighing heavily, “Call me back. Let me see you. Something.”

The message ends and I feel the tears roll down my cheeks. The pain I remember well from the first time I heard this message. It was a week after I discovered text messages from her saying ‘*I need you*’. He didn’t hide that he’d been seeing her and I could not bear to hear more of his confession, not wanting to know what he had done behind my back. My thoughts took off on their own and I only knew that I was not enough for him. Perhaps he didn’t love me like he thought he did.

It had only been a year since our relationship ended and I thought of him from time to time. Casting a narrow eyed gaze at the snow globe, I wipe my face from the evident pain. Pulling myself up off the floor, I sniffle. Walking to the coat rack near the door, I retrieve my purse and swipe my keys off the hook on the wall. With a determined mission, I leave my apartment and drive straight to his.

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The rain pours from the sky heavier than before. I sit in my car parked near the curb next to his apartment complex. I have not spoken to him since I told him to get his things and get out of my apartment. I never gave him the chance to explain like he begged me to. Not that it much mattered now, but my curiosity had been piqued by the magic of the snow globe. I grab my keys and lock my purse and phone inside as I rush toward the entrance of his building. Buzzing his apartment number, I wait while getting drenched.

“Yeah? Who is it?” Chris answers using the intercom.

“It’s Allie,” I answer, blinking and squinting from the rain falling down on me, soaking my blonde locks. I hear nothing after that and wonder if he has decided to dismiss me. I turn to leave, saving myself from getting hurt any longer and to escape the torrential fall of the raindrops.

“Allie?” his voice says behind me and he rushes to me in the pouring rain. Chris’s eyes meet my own and he smiles, “What are you doing here?”

What a loaded question this is. He looks the same, nothing much changing about him and that magnetic pull toward him still exists. I'm not sure how to answer and I open my mouth to speak, "I –"

I realize this may have been a mistake. Retreating backwards, he follows closer, his shirt now pressed against his skin.

"You look great. Wanna come inside?" Chris offers to me and I swallow.

Looking up at the rain, I wince and look back at him. "Okay," I am finally able to say.

Chris steps back and I follow him inside the building. Once we are inside his apartment, I run my hands over my face and instantly feel the chill from the air conditioner. He turns it off on his way down the hall. Disappearing down the hall, I wait near the door and my lower lip quivers from the cold.

When he returns, he carries a towel in both of his hands. Offering me one, I gratefully accept it and pat my face dry before wrapping it around my shoulders to quell my frozen body. The warmth it offers me is a brief reprieve from shivering. He dries himself and watches me, his eyes scanning over me.

I shift my weight, unsure how I could have made this impulsive decision to drive here, but the sudden need to know what he had wanted to explain is weighing on me so heavily I cannot think of anything else. And that's why I blurted out the words that rushed from my mouth before I could think. "Why was I not enough?"

Chris blinked rapidly, wiping the rain from his face with the towel. He placed a hand on his hip and wiped his mouth, looking away from me. Shaking his head, he stepped back from me, walking toward the kitchen. I nearly demand for him to stop when he finally speaks, his back to me. "There a reason you need to know this now?"

I watch intently as he reaches in the fridge and grabs two beers, popping the top of each and turning to look at me as he walked back toward me. "I just do."

"You refused to give me a chance a year ago to explain. You dismissed me. You gave up on us. Being enough was not even a factor, Allie."

I pull the towel against me like a shawl. "You broke my heart, Chris. What was I supposed to do? Listen to you go on about why you chose her and why you were seeing her behind my back? I couldn't bear to hear it."

Chris offered me a beer and I took it, picking at the blue label on the bottle. My eyes focused on my distraction with what my hands are doing. It was difficult to admit my pain and heartache out loud.

Tipping back his beer, he took a sip and looked at me. When I finally had the nerve to look up and meet his soft brown hues, my heart lurched into my chest and I nearly lost all resolve.

“Carrie and I were seeing one another; it was behind your back, but not in the context or way you believed. She asked me not to say anything, to respect her wishes. I was the only one who knew since she had no family. Carrie was diagnosed with stage 4 lymphoma and she needed help getting to and from treatments.”

Chris stunned me with this revelation. My mind raced to understand what I had done. “She... cancer? Oh, my god.”

“We were together for four years and she’s always been a friend. It didn’t work out between us, but she didn’t want to come between us. Keeping it quiet seemed to be the best thing,” Chris added.

“I would have understood. I would have respected this,” I argue.

“The late-night texts, those were the days she had treatment and could barely move out of bed to vomit. In hindsight, I should have explained. But when I tried to, you had already lost trust for me. Why would you believe what I had to say when you wouldn’t give me the time of day to hear it?”

“Is she...” I couldn’t finish my sentence, but he understood since he answered.

“Yes. Barely. I still see her, but she finally told a cousin who has been helping. I wish you trusted me, but I guess I understand why you didn’t.” He set his beer down on the coffee table, taking mine and placing it next to his. Taking my hands into his, he stepped closer to me. “Allie, you were everything to me, baby. I would have never done anything to destroy what we had.”

“But I did. I destroyed it. I didn’t trust you. I didn’t let you explain. This is all my fault. I feel horrible.” I admit out loud.

“Allie, you didn’t know. We can’t change the past. I gave you the space you needed to decide your course of action. When you didn’t return to me, I respected your wishes. The damage was already done, trust was tarnished.” Chris’s fingers glided against my knuckles.

I closed my eyes, biting back my own tears. The longing to feel him hold me only increasing. My resolve crumbling slowly with every moment passing by. When I open my eyes,

he looks at me the same way he did a year ago and my heart rises to my throat, “I’m sorry, Chris. I’m so sorry.”

Pulling my hands from his, I turn to leave, the towel falling off of my shoulders. I rush out the door and he calls out after me.

“Allie! No, don’t go. Wait!”

I ignore his pleas and dash out of the building, the unforgiving rain washing over me once more. I am stopped in my tracks by Chris who grabs my arm and spins me around to face him. The rain beats down on both of us again, my body shivering from all of my emotions and the cool feel of the rain against my wet clothes.

“Don’t run away from us again,” Chris says, tugging me flush against him. His fingers slip between the damp curtain of my tangled locks and pulls my face up to his as he kisses me. I don’t hold back and I kiss him, parting my lips as my tongue dances with his. A rush of passion ignites the flame I thought was long lost and we stand there in the rain, embraced in a heated kiss that completely warms me through and through, despite the cool water falling down.

When he pulls back to gaze into my eyes, it feels like this last year was a complete dream and I’d just woken up to find my world right. “Chris, I love you.”

“I love you too, Allie. I never stopped. I never will stop,” Chris said with a smile.

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Staring mindlessly at the snow globe, I recall the story my grandfather told me. It held magical powers, the ability to find a lost love; it had not dawned on me until after seeing Chris again. The globe had taken the woman to her lover, each time she shook it with him in mind. The powerful magic permeating through the small, beautiful trinket made me smile. I had once doubted this could be possible and now realize how much I’ve gained from taking a leap of faith. My own insecurities impeded my happiness and my irrational fears prevented me from giving him the chance to explain.

As I gazed closer into the globe the snow floated around in, I noticed for the first time the centerpiece in the village. Two lovers, embraced in a passionate kiss. I chuckled at my discovery and flipped it upside down, also noting a small piece of paper sticking out of the undercarriage of the globe. I retrieved a screwdriver from my drawer and unscrewed the bottom. Pulling the paper free, I began to read the note.

*September, 1909*

*My dearest love,*

*I miss you so much my heart can barely contain itself. I received your letter that you will be returning home to me. I long to touch your face and feel your warm embrace. Each time I think of you, I shake the globe and let the glitter specks of snow float around us like the memories that surround me.*

There was more toward the bottom so I read on.

*Before I could mail this elated letter out, I received word of your passing. My heart aches and I do not know how I can possibly go on without you, my dearest love. All I am left with is your memory and the globe I will shake every night so I may meet you on the dancefloor of my dreams.*

A heartbreaking conclusion to this story. Her love had perished before he could return to her and when she wholeheartedly believed shaking it brought him back, it did. My heart broke for the woman who lost her love, but smiled to know their reunion was happy. I found my love before it was too late and that was the most magical of all. This globe brought me back to a time when there was a ripple in my future, helping me see I'd made the wrong choice; reminded me of the love I felt for Chris and how powerful that alone could be. I looked forward to seeing what this Christmas held for us, glancing down at my engagement ring that sat perfectly on my left ring finger. Grandfather was right all along.

Turns out, magic lay in the hearts of soul mates, and I was certain I had found mine.