

The Locket

Pale shafts of light crept into fourteen-year old Fiona Flightless' bedroom. Despite her exhaustion, sleep was a long way away for Fiona as her parents arguing voices drifted into her ears.

“Fiona, can I come in?” Fiona’s seven-year old sister Adele whispered.

The small figure crept across floor, trying to avoid the creaking floorboards. Her thoughtful blue eyes, filled with fear were visible in the dimly lit room as she curled beneath the blankets. Even though she didn’t admit it, Fiona was frightened too; her parents barely looked at each other and her father always worked late at his office. She quietly reassured Adele that everything was going to be okay. Adele was her innocent little sister who didn’t need to know about her parent’s crumbling marriage. Adele wrapped her skinny arms around Fiona’s slim frame and Fiona returned the hug, trying to hide her growing anxiety.

Just as she was drifting off to sleep, Fiona heard her mother’s annoyed voice and her father’s one respond. Their conversation was very faint, but one word escaped - separation. Fiona’s stomach dropped and her brain went into overdrive with questions. They had fought, but she never dreamed it would get that far. As Fiona’s drooping eyelids eventually fell shut, she knew she had to find a way; she had to do something to get her parents back to the loving couple they once were.

The following morning, Fiona awoke with Adele’s arm resting on her face and a single goal in her head. She would get her parents back together. They still loved each other, they just needed a little help in realizing that.

When Fiona woke up, she told her little sister carefully that their parents needed a small reminder of how much they really love each other. Adele was instantly excited and became Detective Flightless to try and find the evidence to show her parents how much they needed each other. Fiona made Adele promise she wouldn't breathe a word of the mission to anyone, especially not to their mother and father.

The sisters began searching for reminders of why their parents needed each other but it was hard work. They propped wedding photos up, displayed the bracelet their father had given their mother on their tenth wedding anniversary, and they even managed to convince them to go on a lovely, romantic walk through the local park. However, Fiona and Adele's mother and father returned looking frazzled and weary. Everything they tried seemed to fail to bring their parents closer together.

Pure fear gnawed away at Fiona because she had never seen her parents this angry at each other. She knew she had to do something fast to save their marriage from shattering into a million, unfixable pieces, but what? One unusually peaceful morning, Fiona and Adele tiptoed into their parent's bedroom while their father bought groceries and their mother took a shower. The sisters poked around the room with its unmade bed and stark walls; searching for something to unite the two. Unexpectedly, a beam of sunlight hit a piece of metal stuck between the wooden floorboards, catching Fiona's eye. It was a circular, golden locket with a picture of a child-like drawing of a heart that had slightly yellowed with age. It was beautiful, despite its obvious age, and Fiona couldn't recall seeing it around her mother's neck.

Her fingers gently pulled the two halves apart to reveal faded, miniature photographs of her parents as teenagers. They were smiling, and the sight of them looking so happy together gave Fiona a spark of hope that maybe they could still regain that never-ending love for each other from the past. Fiona called Adele over, the little girl's blue eyes stared in amazement at the locket's simple magnificence, and a ghost of a smile appeared on Adele's face.

"Is that mom and..." she began to ask but was cut off.

A swirling blue mist leaked out of the minute locket; forming a giant, forget-me-not blue coloured bubble before the sister's faces. It transformed from a seaweed green mist to a hazy yellow before settling on blue. Adele and Fiona stood motionless their eyes were wide in awe at the strange sight unfolding before them.

Gradually, images from their parent's past formed inside the centre of the blue bubble for Adele and Fiona to watch. There were pictures of their parents in the elementary school (where they first met), in high school, and finally, an image of their wedding day looking so youthful and full of happiness. Fiona's heart lurched and she wondered if that happiness together would be possible again.

The last image within the bubble was at an old-fashioned, small town fair. The Ferris wheel was covered with lights twinkling like fireflies in the inky blackness. Fun-looking rides were in every corner at the fair, as well as the occasional concession stand selling cheesy popcorn or colourful cotton candy.

But in the middle of all the lights and people stood the sisters' mother and father; holding hands, looking up at the rides.

However, this picture was different from the others because it moved like an old movie. Fiona and Adele watched their father take their mother's hand, and kneel down on one knee as she put her hand over her mouth in shock. He pulled out a gorgeous diamond ring, asked the love of his life to marry him, and without a moment's hesitation, she said yes. The picture froze at that scene, and the misty bubble floated soundlessly into the locket.

Fiona held the locket tenderly, feeling the smoothness of it against her palm. At that moment, she knew nothing could destroy the boundless love her parents had for each other. Fiona heard her father unlock the front door and quietly whispered to Adele that it was time to leave. All day, Fiona and Adele discussed how they would show their mother and father how much they still needed each other, and by dinnertime, they were as ready.

Fiona guided stray noodles around her plate, only biting into her macaroni and cheese every few minutes to try and keep up the façade that she was all right. Finally, she found the words that had been carefully rehearsed beforehand.

"Mom and Dad, Adele and I found something, and we'd like you to see it. It's really cool!" She said, trying to sound nonchalant and happy.

They glanced at each other, and eventually agreed. Fiona and Adele led their parents to their bedroom where they had first found the locket. Fiona took the locket out from its hiding place behind the dresser, and heard her mother gasp. Adele flashed a huge grin to her parents to reassure them and for a moment, their expressions softened as minute smiles appeared on their faces.

Fiona opened the locket gingerly and watched her parents' expressions change to ones of pure amazement and wonder. They watched in fascination as the blue mist fell out of the locket, changed colours, and the images of their past came into focus.

Their faces looked wistful as their eyes glanced at the pictures. When the locket had shown all the images, the blue mist was sucked back up into the jewelry.

For a moment, the Flightless family was completely still and a dense blanket of silence hung over them. Only Adele squirmed slightly beside her older sister, who waited patiently for her parents' response.

Their mother's lips opened and closed again wordlessly. Their father bit his bottom lip, as he always did when he was nervous. Their eyes met, and at the same moment they both said, "I'm sorry." Forgiveness, regret, and love all swirled around in their parent's eyes, and they seemed engage in some wordless communication for those few moments of peaceful stillness. It was Fiona and Adele's father who broke the quietness first. "Jessica, I'm so sorry... for everything. Will you forgive me?" He asked earnestly. "Richard, I'm sorry too, I didn't mean any of what I said..." She responded.

Fiona and Adele watched nervously as their parents stared at each other and then unexpectedly, they embraced and their lips met in a gentle kiss. Fiona and Adele's mother blushed when they broke apart and she looked at her husband, and then at their daughters.

"Richard, not in front of the girls!" she admonished.

He laughed and looked at his daughters with a grin stretching from ear to ear.

"You don't mind, do you girls?" he asked.

“Nope!” Fiona and Adele said together, hardly able to contain their joy.

Their parents hugged again, and three whispered words escaped from both their lips almost at the exact same time. They were such simple words, but to Fiona’s ears, they were the most beautiful ones she had ever heard.