

## Dearest Marjorie – Isla, Year 9, QLD

Widowed and wilting like a rose cut many years ago, Marjorie sat alone in the parlour rereading the words written on the yellowed page.

To her it seemed as though those words were the nectar and she the hummingbird, forever longing to enjoy their sweetness once more. Only the slight light of the pale afternoon illuminated the room with a deep blue glow, allowing Marjorie to memorise the words once more before the sun would set.

Unwanted tears soon crept upon her porcelain cheek, as the rain does a warm spring day. Her wishes of not exposing the true feelings that reside buried within her heart were betrayed. Though, Marjorie kept her sobs silent as she reread those familiar lines, for as alone as she felt, her children were still present in the next room and did not need to witness such tragedy. Whilst she pitied those who had never felt the love she had; she envied their bliss without such troubles plaguing their free minds.

Had the lord, who sits so high in his heaven above, grown bored and wished to play a cruel joke on her? Or was she such an afterthought, that mistake in her creation be only natural? Surely, she had loved her late husband Hugo, but no words could ever express her feelings towards her dearest friend, Queenie.

As Marjorie pondered the righteousness of the universe, a habit that had become common practice, the last incandescent rays of sun were extinguished. The parlour now sat dark, empty of any lust for life. Whispers of a previous life enveloped Marjorie as the silver of the Moon began to decorate the intricate home. Despite the lack of visibility, the string of words that lay on the love letter in front of her, danced around Marjorie's mind. Her days as a young woman were lost in the timeline of memories, similar to a movie each time she replayed the scenes.

Resisting the urge to light every candle in her home to garner just a few more minutes to read the haunting lyrics of love, Marjorie replayed the first line in her head.

*To my dearest Marjorie, every night it feels as though I am the music, loud and upbeat, forever entangled and wrapped around you, the dancer, so elegant and perfect in your movements.*

It seemed to be one of Queenie's many unique talents, that she could tell Marjorie she loved her in a million different ways without ever using those three words. Oh, how she yearned to be twenty-five once again. Late nights filled with champagne-soaked gowns and restless laughter. Stories of opulence and espionage never to be told. Secret admissions of romance and loud declarations of freedom spilled from their lips before Marjorie sealed them shut.

Although, after all those years, Marjorie still didn't know whether she would make the same choices or not.

Despite the space carved out in her heart for a certain blonde, had she not married Hugo, she never would have known the stability of a family she craved for as a young girl. Furthermore, and most urgently, she would've never known the love of her now teenage daughters, Eleanora and Isobel.

Alas, the ever-growing wonders of "What if's" would have to stay forever in the infinite timeline of her mind, only to ever occupy the place of her thoughts. Her dreams and hopes shattered like glass and splattered across the canvas of her life, like the stars across the ebony nights, all because of a supposed mistake.

Would Marjorie ever know the loving embrace of another, friend, carer, confidante, lover again? Or was she doomed to stay locked up in this gloomy parlour, forever rereading the words that have broken her heart a thousand times that lay still, upon that yellowed page?