

Yeseo J

October 18, 2021

Whenever you are ready

My name is Isabelle Rosemary and I am just like every other kid. I go to school, I get grounded, and I hate vegetables. Everything about me is normal. Except that I become a heaven guide for the dead people in my neighborhood in my dream. I must guide all the dead neighbors into heaven before waking up. Sometimes many people died and sometimes no one died. But I had to go back to the portal before seven o'clock in the morning.

Just like every other night, I entered the portal to the Gateway of Heaven to see a few dead ones waiting for me. Mrs. Nilsson, Mr. Wilson's cat, and Shawn. I greeted them with a smile. I comforted them and gave them a new sense of hope. Then I guided all of them into heaven. But when I stepped in front of the portal for it to take me back home, it didn't open. Huh. That's weird. I thought. I guided all the dead ones into heaven. That's when I heard a barking sound. I turned back to see a dog. The dog had light, fluffy fur and a small black nose. It was Paul's dog, Ruffles.

"Oh! I didn't know I had one more left," I said to myself. "Well, come on." I started leading him toward the Gateway of Heaven. But he wouldn't move. He stayed firmly to the ground. "Come on, Ruffles!" I urged him.

"No!" Ruffles barked. "I want to go back to Paul. Where is he?" He asked. He looked frightened and confused at the same time. But he was also determined to find his owner, Paul.

"Oh," I said. I felt bad for him. He didn't know he was dead. "Umm.. Ruffles, you're dead. You can't go back to Paul. I need you to follow me to heaven, so I can guide you into heaven safely." I said softly.

"No!" Ruffles barked loudly. "I am going to find Paul! I'm not going with you!" Then Ruffles ran away from me to the Forest of Wander. Forest of Wander was a place where the dead sometimes wandered around because they were lost. There were lots of trees inside the forest. It was really hard to find someone there. I hurried after him, calling his name.

"Ruffles!" I called. "Ruffles! Come here, doggie."

I kept yelling and calling his name. I ran and looked behind the trees. I stumbled through the leaves and searched under the leaves to see if he was hiding there. I also went to check the Gateway of Heaven to see if he was there. But it was useless. Ruffles was nowhere to be seen. Then, when I was just about to give up, I spotted him. He was right behind the tree. I knew he would run away again if I tried to catch him. So I decided to talk to him. I sat a few feet away

from him.

“Hey, Ruffles.” I said gently. Ruffles seemed surprised to see me and he tried to run away again. But I spoke quickly. “It’s okay. You don’t have to run away from me. I just wanna talk.”

Ruffles seemed to think about it for a second, then he sat down. “Okay.”

“You seem to really like Paul,” I said.

“Yeah, he was more like my friend than an owner,” Ruffles replied.

“Oh, that’s nice. If you don’t mind me asking, how did you die?” I asked carefully.

Ruffles was quiet for a second, but he finally spoke. “Paul and I were playing at the park with a ball. I was messing with it and then it rolled onto the road. When I ran for the ball, a big truck hit me. I think that’s why Paul was shouting, but I was too focused on the ball to care.” He seemed regretful.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” I said. “That’s a terrible thing that happened to you.”

“I just want to tell Paul that I’m okay,” Ruffles whimpered. “And that I’m sorry.”

“Well, I could talk to him for you if you want,” I offered. I forced back the tears. Just hearing about this was heartbreaking. “But I really need you to come with me. You want Paul to stop worrying about you and be happy, right?”

“Yeah,” Ruffles said. “Okay, I’ll come with you. But can you do me another favor?”

“Anything.”

“Can you give my collar to Paul?” He asked. “I think he will be looking for it.”

I nodded. Then I untied the collar from his neck and held it in my hand. We walked together to the Gateway of Heaven.

“Goodbye,” I said tearfully. Ruffles barked one last time before stepping into heaven.

When I got to the portal, I didn’t realize how late it was. It was only two minutes away from seven o’clock in the morning! I jumped quickly into the portal, back to my bed.

I found Paul at the park where Ruffles had died. He was sitting on a bench, crying softly. I walked over to him and placed my hand on his shoulder.

“You okay?” I asked.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” Paul sniffled.

“You don’t have to lie, you know,” I said softly. “I know how hard it was for you to lose Ruffles.”

Paul was silent. So I started talking again. "I think he's in a safe place now," I comforted him. "So you stop being so depressed. Ruffles wouldn't want you being sad over him, right?"

Paul sniffed and nodded. "Yeah."

We sat in silence for a while. Then, when he wasn't looking, I dropped Ruffles's collar under the bench. I stood up, waved him goodbye, and started walking away.

"Hey, I found Ruffle's collar! It was right under this bench. I thought I lost it forever." Paul said happily.

I smiled brightly at him. "I'm glad you found it."