



I'M NOT A STAR

Miracles

I once had a magician friend who had a rather unique way of performing his shows.

Unlike the other magicians who would take a rabbit out from the hat, he would shove a rabbit in. When the rabbit was settled, he would wave his wand and wait till the rabbit jumped out.

The first time I saw it I thought I had accidentally booked a comedy show and laughed out loud. Then, some people in the audience also started laughing along.

He got off the stage and slapped me. That was the first time we met.

It's been two years since that day. He's still doing magic, though not many people show up and oftentimes I'm the only audience.

I still enjoy his shows a lot. Last Sunday he did a show where he pulled out a coin from his mouth, which I'm sure he hid before the saw but who cares, I love whatever he's doing.

I might be reading too much into it but it seems like his shows are getting shorter and shorter these days. He also wouldn't tell me what was wrong when I asked about it.

I left it but I couldn't shake the feeling that something was deeply wrong.

And I was proven right when I showed up for his show today and I couldn't find him. He never appeared on stage ever again.

He just disappeared as if he never existed.

Mighty Mike

After the sudden departure of my magician friend, Hector (yes, his name was Hector), I found myself completely stagnant.

I stopped going to those shows and started spending my days cooped up in my apartment.

I was bored out of my mind and found myself in the kitchen when I suddenly heard a knock on the door. I stilled myself. I had not expected company since my only companion was Hector. Then my heart leapt up and I opened the door happily, thinking that it might be Hector but to my utter disappointment I saw a guy in a superhero suit standing in front of my apartment. I was about to close the door when he suddenly stopped me.

"Fear not, my friend." He said in a dangerously manufactured deep voice. "Your dearest friend, Hector, has sent me to tell you that he had left to study the art of magic in a place faraway."

My grip on the door knob faltered, only I knew Hector's name and I've only ever told my address to Hector.

I took a closer look at his face and found it strikingly similar to Hector's.

"So this is what you've been doing." I thought to myself and invited him in.



“So what is your name?” I asked setting two cups of coffee on the table.

He puffed up his chest and struck a corny pose.

“Captain Mighty Mike.” He said in that infuriating voice.

I didn't say anything to him. I decided to let him play around for a bit. Clearly, after a while he would be back to being Hector, the one who did bad magic and didn't care.

“I've moved in next door.” He said, drinking his coffee. “We're neighbours. If there's anything you need help with, you can tell me.”

I simply nodded.

After the coffee he left and I found myself completely baffled. It felt as if the absurdity of it all hit me after he left.

The next day he showed up asking if I needed help with anything. I waved him away. He showed up the next day asking the same questions and the day after that.

I couldn't walk out of my apartment without meeting the guy. I kept myself shut in my apartment but I was bored and needed some air.

One random day he showed up at my door and suggested that we go to the park to see if others needed help.

I was really missing the outside, so I tagged along with him. About fifteen minutes after we reached the park I found myself alone.

Mighty Mike had gone God knows where. I sat myself down on the bench and decided to enjoy the peace till he came back.

A Bicycle

Mighty Mike was still not back. The sun was already setting and I wanted to go home.

I searched for him but stopped short when I heard a sobbing noise behind a bush. I decided to check it and found a kid with a scraped knee and a broken bicycle beside him.

I wanted to walk away but he already saw me so I had no choice but to enquire what had happened.

“Hey there, little guy.” I coax.

“What happened?” I bend down to look at his scraped knee.

“Wow, that's bad.” I say, wincing.

The kid stopped crying but still wouldn't talk.

“Can you stand up? Where are your parents?”



He still wouldn't talk.

I sighed and stood up.

"Here, take my hand and see if you can stand."

He took my hand and stood up, limping.

I looked around trying to figure out what to do. "Can you tell me where your parents are, I'll take you to them."

He wiped his tears and nodded.

"They're at home. My flat is that way."

He pointed and I followed his movements and saw the same apartment building I had been returning home to.

"Great, I also live there. I'll take you home. But, I don't think you can walk, get on my back."

I stooped down for him to get on.
He got on my back and I stood up.

"What about my bicycle?" He asked suddenly.

I sighed. "I'll have someone come pick it up for you."

"Okay, thanks mister."

I took him home and found that he lived in a flat above mine. As we neared his apartment I noticed a familiar sensation.

"Don't tell me you live here?" I said, bewildered.

"This is my home." He climbed down from my back.

"That's sad, buddy." I say aloud, more to myself than to him.

He smiled and waved goodbye before going in.

Even from the outside I could still hear the couple fighting.

And for a little while I stood outside the familiar noise.

I dragged myself down and found Mighty Mike standing outside my apartment.

"Why are you standing there?" I asked.

He turned around surprised and smiled when he saw me.



"There you are, I was searching all over for you." He said with a hint of guilt.

I straight up asked him "where did you go"

"Nowhere?"

I didn't believe him even for a second.

"Okay" he said. "I met this girl and I think I'm in love with her."

"Classic." I rolled my eyes and opened the door.

"If you want to make it up to me go get the bicycle at the park."

With that I shut the door, leaving him alone.

I didn't tell him where the bicycle was or what type it was. I just wanted to let him suffer.

I don't know why.

Little Mike.

There are two things I hate the most in the world. The first one is noise and the second is insects. And where do you think these two coexist together? Yes, that's right.

PARKS.

Now take a guess where I am.

Around lunchtime, the kid from above knocked on my door and asked for help with something. I accepted hesitantly and thought that I could get it over with, but he suddenly dragged me to the park.

"Can you teach me how to ride a bike, Mister." He said leaning against his bicycle.

I exhaled through my nose. "I don't know how to ride a bike."

"What." He said in astonishment. "But you're an adult."

I stopped myself from rolling my eyes. "Well not every adult knows how to ride a bike"

I turned to walk away but the kid stopped me. He didn't say anything but I could sense the desperation.

"Fine, wait here. I'll go get someone else."

He nodded and I left to get Mighty Mike.

I knocked on his door but nobody answered. Accepting my own plight I went back to the park.

"I can't find my friend." I said to the kid. "Guess we'll have to do this another day."



The kid didn't say anything but he still wouldn't leave, so I continued. "Anyway, why are you set on doing this?"

After a minute of silence he looked up to me and said.

"There's this guy who has been bullying me. His name is Tonny and he challenged me to a race."

"And you accepted even though you couldn't ride." I said annoyed, even though I had no right to be.

He stood still, his head down.

I calmed myself down and bent to look at him. "Anyways what's your name? We've spent the whole day together but we haven't introduced ourselves."

His eyes lit up and he practically shouted. "Michael Hayes, but my parents and friends call me Mike."

Daisy

Little Mike and I were about to head back, since we had no reason to stay, when I suddenly saw a familiar superhero suit.

He wasn't alone, he was with a girl and not just any girl. It was Daisy—My Daisy.

I crept up to them and couldn't stop myself from saying her name.

"Daisy?"

She turned and looked at me with those deep brown eyes I couldn't seem to forget. A smile formed on her lips as recognition hit her.

"It's you." She screamed, standing up to hug me. "I haven't seen you since the day you had that bike race with Tonny."

I tensed up at the mention of that day but she continued. "How have you been?"

"Good." I said with a tense, awkward smile.

She smiles back. "It was nice seeing you again."

Then she spots little Mike and bends to talk to him. "Who's this little guy?"

At that moment, I met Mighty Mike's eyes.

"Hi." I say, not to come off as awkward. "I was searching for you."

Before he can say anything Daisy looks up. "You guys know each other? That's so cool."

"Yeah, we're neighbours." I say not meeting eyes with Mighty Mike

I felt guilty.



“Why were you searching for me?” He asked.

My voice faltered. “I wanted to ask if you could teach this little guy how to ride a bike.”

He touched the nape of his neck. “I don't know how to ride a bike.”

We both stared at each other.

“Do you know how to ride a bike?” Little Mike asked Daisy.

She smiled. “Yes, I can teach you if you want?”

Goodbyes.

We reached home at around dinnertime. Little Mike was scared that his parents might scold him but he still went up to his flat.

It was just me and Mighty Mike now. The hallway was silent, there was no one except the two of us.

Both of us were still avoiding a conversation we had to talk about. Deep down, I had a feeling that it was not just about Daisy.

“Sorry for crashing your date with Daisy.” I said, I didn't look up because I knew he was mad but to my surprise he didn't say anything bad.

“No it's okay. I also have something to tell you, should we talk inside.”

We made our way into his flat. He bought two cups of coffee for us to talk.

I wonder why he was so serious right now. The guy who always seemed to be living as if nothing in life could affect him was now sitting me down in his flat, struggling to say what he wanted.

He sat down after a while and looked straight at me.

“You know you're one of the best people I've ever met right? And if you allow it I would like to have the honour of calling you my best friend.”

My heart was beating with terror. Something was wrong.

“Stop scaring me, Mike, what is it that you want to say?”

“Well.” He started, then took off his mask. “I'm Hector. Well..I'm Mike. Hector is just a made up name. As for my real name, it's Michael Hayes.”

I stared at him. “I already know. I knew from the start that you were Hector. I just don't know why you hid it though.”

He smiled. “I didn't lie to you. I really went to magic school.”



I wanted to roll my eyes. “So is this what you wanted to say to me?”

“well half of it.” He took a sip of the coffee. “I also wanted to tell you that I'm going away to a place far away and I wanted to say goodbye, not as Hector or Mighty Mike but as Michael Hayes. Goodbye.”

I stayed silent for a long time. The world seemed to be turned upside down. I couldn't say anything after that.

Ending

When I woke up the next day a white unfamiliar ceiling greeted me.

I was no longer in my apartment, but the place I was in didn't feel strange. I heard the sound of the air conditioner overhead, the strange chlorine smell. I tried to get up but my body betrayed me. I wanted to call out to someone but no words came out.

In a matter of minutes, I was surrounded by three women in a nurse's uniform. I felt strangely alien. I tried to speak but coughed instead. The woman went into a panic and started checking my pulses and other things.

Still, I had no idea what was going on.

Epilogue

Michael Hayes, aged 88 died on September 12, 2026. He took his last breath on his hospital bed at Avery Jenkins Medicals.

His grandchildren came to clear out his things from the hospital and found photos of him— photos of him dressed as a magician when he was young, there was one where he wore a superhero suit with an ‘M’ encrypted in his chest. He was around ten at that time.

The last one on his table was the one with his wife—Daisy.

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