

Lottery Magic

a Tidbit series

by Ulrike

1.

The children were proud of seizing the suggestion of creating an Easter ceremony of their own. Even more thrilling was the possibility of guiding an adult. Of course, they all secretly wanted the chance to assist one of their favourite people, and it became obvious that person was Catherine.

At this realization, they looked lost, but Father shook his head.

"It's your chance to exercise responsibility and deal fairly," Father told them.

The children accepted this, then considered ways and means.

They decided on a method which should be satisfying and coincidentally would ensure no one would be unhappy.

2.

How should they manage the lottery details?

"Let's create a lottery. We should write names on pieces of paper, then put them into a pot. Then each of us will pick one - and that's it," Zach explained. "That would be a fair way."

"What about an exception, if someone had a heartfelt wish?" Samantha argued.

"Please, no swapping," Zach replied.

"No, but fulfilling the wishes of the little ones can be burdensome. We're willing to accept the result," Samantha remarked.

"Why don't you ask Sebastian?" Jamie suggested with a wink, when she overheard the discussion.

3.

"Sebastian, will you help us?" the children asked.

"What can I do for you? Finding the hidden treasure behind your ears?" he asked in amusement conjuring some coins left and right of Samantha's ears.

"No. Honestly, be serious, please," she replied. "Will you reveal some of your tricks?"

"Tricks??? I never used tricks, it's all magic," he reminded them, making a sweeping gesture.

Samantha rolled her eyes and explained their dilemma.

"It's a considerable but solvable problem," Sebastian assured them. "Will you keep it as a secret?"

Samantha nodded.

"Then, here we go!"

4.

"You are aware that performing magic isn't done carelessly?" Sebastian asked, looking strict. "Your bluff shouldn't be noticed by anyone, so you have to be very experienced. It should appear graceful, effortless. It must appear light as a feather, drifting with the wind." He raised his arm, blowing on an imaginary feather from his outstretched hand.

Samantha nodded, feeling slightly uncomfortable.

The rehearsal began and Samantha learned something she never expected, Sebastian being a strict teacher and repeating the command "again!" often.

Finally, both gained respect for one another.

After myriad repetitions, Sebastian nodded and finally said, "Well done."

5.

Samantha looked up at Sebastian in disbelief.

"Really?" she asked, taking a deep breath.

"Yes," Sebastian answered. "You're a bright student."

As the event approached, she became very nervous and bumped into Vincent.

He laid his hand on her shoulder, squeezing it reassuringly.

"You can do it, you won't betray anyone," he added, looking at her.

"Where....from....? I'm afraid, I'll make a mistake," Samantha confessed.

When the lottery took place, the older children stood shoulder to shoulder, moving regular as clockwork. Occasionally, Samantha performed a bluff, unremarked.

As just recompense for their efforts, everyone was happy.

6.

As the children gathered, suspense had created such a level of excitement that the atmosphere seemed to crackle. The great moment had come. The little ones were so worked up, that they spent a near sleepless night.

Zach asked for silence and there was a hush.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to welcome you to our name drawing in the lottery," he began, but giggling sounded in the room. For a moment he was reluctant to continue, but Samantha nodded subtly, so he carried on with

the general explanation of the procedure.
The children listened carefully as he spoke.

7.

“At the board on the left, we have a list of all the names. We will call you up, to draw one slip from the pot standing in front of me. The note will state the name of an adult who is to be guided by one of us. After choosing a note, please hand it over to Samantha. She is our Judge. She will check the slip and I will read the name aloud,” Zach explained.

“Are there any questions? Is anything unclear?” He finished his speech, surveying the crowd. There were no remarks, so the lottery began.

8.

Samantha took a deep breath. The success or failure was now her responsibility. As she had learned and practiced so often with Sebastian, she now focused coolly on her job, and paid close attention. With every drawn name the jury gained self-confidence.

Now Eric was the next in line, taking his chance.

His dearest wish would have been to guide Catherine. He wasn't really hopeful and sighed as he stepped forward. Since Ellie had gone, the little boy looked so sad, so lost in his grief. His future touched them all. Samantha replaced the note and Zach proclaimed aloud: “Catherine”.

9.

No one could explain the exact reason, but all of them were deeply moved. The room became totally silent. It was so quiet, that one could hear a pin drop. All were looking at the small boy, holding their breath.

Eric stood stiff, in shock. He couldn't believe his ears. Then slowly he seemed to realize what had happened. He raised his head and his eyes looked askance first, in disbelief. As he glanced around the room, he saw the nods of confirmation and his eyes began to shine.

Later, as he guided Catherine, pressing her hand, he was smiling.

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