

And The Light Smiled

Harry was in a hurry. He'd stayed late at work and today was his daughter's birthday so he was taking a back-road shortcut to make up for lost time. The road was narrow and barely qualified for the label "paved." It was also very hilly.

Cresting a rise in the road, Harry noticed two Canadian geese on his side of the road. One was obviously dead, its neck twisted and its body flattened, one lifeless wing pointing to the sky. The other stood guard over its dead mate's body.

Harry moved a bit to his left to avoid the geese.

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Of the two geese Harry encountered, the dead one was the female. The one standing guard was the male, the gander. Harry's car appeared to the gander to be exactly the kind of creature that had taken his mate's life. So, even though Harry was moving away, it was not far enough away to suit the gander. He did not want his mate harmed again. Spreading its wings, the gander attacked Harry's car – and lost its life in the process.

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"Damn," exploded Harry, glancing into his rear-view mirror where he could see the dead bodies of both geese, including the one that had leaped in front of his car. Then, mindful of the reason for his haste, he swept the dead geese from his mind and hurried on his way.

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The gander felt very little pain, only a solid thump and then blackness. Then, after a while, the darkness began to lift. The light was different from any the gander had ever before experienced; it was a soft, hazy light, yet it seemed to illuminate everything. As the gander regained its senses and looked around, it realized it was no longer on the road where he and his mate had been struck by one of those big, fast-moving creatures. Of more concern was the fact that his mate was no longer in sight.

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"Welcome to Heaven," said a voice in the gander's mind. The gander was more than a little startled to find it understood those words. Then the gander realized that there was a sphere of light directly in front of him that was much brighter than all the rest. The voice he'd heard seemed to come from a shadowy form in the center of that sphere.

"Where am I?" asked the gander.

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"You're in a safe place," replied the shadowy form in the light.

"Where is my mate?"

"Oh, she's right here," answered The Light.

Sure enough, the gander's mate came running out from behind the sphere of light and rejoined her mate.

Still not sure of his surroundings, the gander placed himself a little in front of his mate so as to be between her and the light.

If a light can be said to chuckle, this one did.

"There is no need for that," said The Light, "you are both safe here."

Somehow, the gander and his mate knew this to be true.

"You will both live here and have your goslings here and they will have theirs and all will be safe. There are no predators here."

"For how long?" asked the gander's mate.

"Forever."

"How did we come to be here?" inquired the gander.

"All creatures come here sooner or later," explained The Light, "but you, my little friend, are a special case."

Feeling a little overwhelmed and overjoyed by the prospect of being safe and being with his mate forever, the gander asked, "What did I do to deserve this?"

"You gave your life defending a loved one. Your love for her brought you here."

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When he got home, Harry told his wife what had happened with the geese.

"Oh, how sad," she said.

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Harry suddenly realized how much he loved her and engulfed her in a long, warm embrace. Releasing her, he stepped back and, turning to pick up his six-year old daughter who had just entered the family room where her birthday party was to take place shortly, Harry gave her a hug and a kiss and asked, "And how are you my little gosling?"

"What's a gosling?" his daughter asked.

Harry started to explain and The Light smiled.