

The Fortune

A.

Matt is an upstanding member of society. Every weekday, he wakes up, gets dressed, and goes to work in the office. He has no wife, husband, or any kind of significant other. Likewise, he has no children, blood-related or otherwise. He devotes all of his time and energy to rising the ranks at his corporate job, in pursuit of something akin to happiness. On the weekends, he goes golfing with his coworkers, and at night he goes to a bar with one of his friends from college. Things proceed from here with no irregularities, and Matt eventually retires. At age 70 he adopts a dog, whom he loved, but ends up outliving him. He had no regrets.

B.

There was one noteworthy irregularity in his life. When he was 33, the company had a picnic, with all the staff at his office. There was live music, mini-golf, and many other attractions that are of no concern to us. For kicks, Matt entered the tent of an apparently famed fortune teller. Smoke fills the tent, and a hooded figure sits cross-legged in the grass, staring at nothing. As Matt enters the tent, the man looks up, and their eyes lock. “Before midnight tonight, you will meet the love of your life.” The man lowers his gaze and says nothing more. Thinking the man odd, Matt leaves the tent and returns to the merry gathering.

The sun sets, and Matt and his coworkers pack up and leave for the night. Matt drives home to his apartment, and parks outside. He steps out, and as he walks up to the door, he bumps into a woman he didn’t see in the dark.

“Oh, sorry,” he says, turning to look in her direction. She had kept walking, unfazed, and he never saw her face. He shrugs, thinks for a moment about the fortune, before putting it out of his mind. There were no further irregularities in his life.

C.

Samantha is not an upstanding member of society. Quite the opposite in fact: she was unemployed, living off the generosity of the government to make ends meet. She did drugs, marijuana, and liked to party. She lived life to the fullest, without a care for the future. Once, she bumped into a man in a suit coming out of his car, but it’s hardly worth mentioning. She died young, in a case of drunk driving. No one missed her.

D.

After literally bumping into that man, she began to figuratively bump into him seemingly everywhere she went. It seems he shopped at the same grocery store, and she could see him every weekend going golfing, in the course she could see from her bedroom window. At first, she thought little of it, but it was certainly odd. Even when she went on a road trip with her gal pals one year, it turned out he had come by plane for a business trip in the same town they had stopped at for the day. Wherever she went, he would turn up.

She began to think about him, even when he wasn't around. It was funny really, almost like the universe was pushing them together, like God was holding two action figures, and smacking them together, making them kiss against their will. But she guessed it was working. She thought about talking to him sometime. Maybe he noticed her like she did him. They could go get a drink at her favorite bar and laugh at the absurdity of it.

She never did talk to him, as the next day on the way to meet with a friend, a drunk driver crashed their car into hers on the highway, and she died, tragically.

E.

Samantha was never a religious person. However, she had a word or two to say to some Buddhists she knew. She had been reborn, this time as a basset hound. Inexplicably, she remembered everything from her time as a woman. As a puppy is apt to do, she spent her youth tied at the hip to her mother, dependent on food and warmth and friendship, but in her heart she vowed to find the man, and somehow tell him how she felt. As months, then a year, goes by, she begins to understand where and when she is. On her stout legs, she spends days walking across the state to find the man. She stands outside his apartment, apprehensive, but also too tired and hungry to do anything else. She scratches at the door, and the man, now much older, but handsome, in a different kind of way, opens the door. He bends down, patting her on the head, and looks around, apparently for her owner. Seeing the state she's in, he picks her up, and brings her inside, giving her a bowl of water. As she laps, she hears him making a few phone calls. Ultimately, she stays at his side. They grow old together, bring joy and love to each other's lives. At 80, his heart fails, and she is left alone. She passes away peacefully less than a year later.