

It was a Sunday. You were allowed to go for a longer walk on Sundays, not the usual half hour. You intended to make the most of it. You put on pink pyjamas, and not the regular green ones. You go to the library to look for a book of crosswords. The doctors say mental exercise helps: crosswords, Sudoku, math. On the way out you ask the lunch lady for an apple for your “outing”.

You walk out into the garden, the big crossword book and journal in one hand, and the apple in the other. The sky is clear and the sun, giving out just the right amount of heat. You make your way to your favourite spot. A garden chair and table, right beside the rose bushes and the lily pond. You set down the books and decide to take a little stroll, before starting on the crossword. You decide this is the best time to enjoy the apple, giving a small piece of it to a pigeon sitting on the table that seemed to have been eyeing it for a while now. You aren’t quite sure if pigeons like apples, but offering it food seemed like a good bargain, in exchange for it not pooing on your favourite table.

You walk until your legs start to hurt, and make your way back to the table. The pigeon was still there, and the clean table indicated it had kept its side of the deal. You sit down and make your journal entry for the day. You write down what you ate for breakfast, and what you did till then. Then you move on to the crossword.

A few minutes later, you see a nurse walk up to you. “You have a visitor,” she says. You don’t remember anyone having visited you in the past. It was probably family. You have a daughter, you think. You don’t remember her face, or her name, but you remember a faint blurred memory of having a daughter. A woman, probably in her forties, walks up to you.

“Hi dad, I’m Belle” she says.

You say hi back. You want to remember her. But, you can’t. You don’t remember attending her graduation, or her wedding, or her baby shower.

She sits in front of you, asking you how you’ve been, how you spend your day. What you ate for dinner yesterday night. You can’t seem to remember that either. You show her your journal.

She gets an urgent call, and says she has to go. She says she’ll be back soon. You nod, and open the last page of your journal. You quickly note down the word – Belle.

Only, you don’t notice at the top of the page, the name Belle written another four times.