

# The third life

She could barely open her eyes, she was stiff and pain shoot through her with a terrible intensity. She was trying to move but her body was hurting too much, her back and neck were sending ripples of pain and her legs were having cramps and didn't respond. She didn't remember anything, and she didn't know where she was. It was a sunny summer day, she raised her hand to hide her tired eyes from its shiny sunlights but she got terrified when she saw blood on her hand and memories began to show up in her mind...

The holidays were around the corner, and as ordinarily a trip had to be planned and booked out, her parents' traditional recommendation was to visit her grandparents while her rather immature brother eagerly insisted to travel across Europe to Barcelona, with an intention to meet his favorite team and show off to his friends. From Ashley's perspective, the destination didn't bother her, unless it was to be unsatisfyingly boring. After exploring each member's point of view, for once the family came to a conclusion. The brother succeeded to persuade the parents with his proposition, and a travelling premium class all the way.

In the night of the scheduled trip, Ashley was extremely joyful and excited that she couldn't fall asleep. She was flipping through a French-Spanish translation booklet to establish an understanding of the conversational Spanish like "Hola, como estas?", "Cómo te llamas?", "Me llamo Ashley", "Me gusto mucho".

"Chico, quieres una historia para acostarte?" She intimidatingly said to her smirking brother. "I'm convinced that this is not a compliment." he assumed. "Sleep tight little monkey, tomorrow is a big day!", She replied optimistically.

The night had finally faded up, she pushed the blanket off and peered out over the balcony, her eyes taking in the bright colors squeezing through clouds. The dawn sun peeked through a hazy screen of clouds, painting the sky an elaborate mix of bloodied reds and vibrant oranges. Her brother and her were the first ones to wake up, giving life to the sleepy home with their youthful spirits. They delightfully slid into the chairs of the living room and the mother served them an enormous platter of food. They packed up their luggage and headed off to the airport.

The airport was crowded, people were flowing like a wide river down the aisles. It was like a jar of mixed feelings, there was those who were happy to finally meet their families, and those who were sad to leave the wide arms of their loved ones. Among the sea of irritated and joyful faces, Ashley got captured by a scene of an elderly man waiting of his wife with a bouquet of flowers within his arms. She instantly wished to be loved that much someday and to find someone who would look into her eyes the way this loving man did.

On the plane, Ashley was afraid as it was the first time she flew in the sky, but her mother tried to keep her calm. "Honey! don't be afraid, it will take just few seconds before the take-off and we will be flying like birds. I'm here with you sweetheart and I'll always be." Her mother murmured with a heartfelt smile. She grabbed the hand of her mother to feel more comfortable and shut her eyes waiting for the plane to take off. The air hostess started to give security instructions and few minutes later, the plane accelerated. She could hear the engines

starting to roar as she got pushed back in her seat. She felt cramps in her stomach and all she could do was keeping her eye shut. After a minute or so, the plane was freely flying in the sky, so she was finally able to enjoy the landscapes from the window.

One hour later, she felt an usual shake and turned frightenedly to her mother. Then the airplane broadcasted a flight-attendant speaking in an urgent voice. "Ladies and Gentleman we are experiencing some turbulence so can you please fasten your seat belts right away, and make use of the oxygen masks. Thank you". It suddenly became chaotic on the plane, and people started gasping agitatedly and then uncontrollably screaming and wailing. Her fears were racing to engulf her frail hopes and diminish all the bliss she has left. A clammy hand with cold sweat was reaching for her, "Sit tight honey! Everything is under control." Her dad valiantly yelled, but his tone didn't sound promising.. Her watery eyes enlarged and her heart started beating fast. The plane was rattling and rollicking back and forth with audible growling engines. Suddenly, the plane hit the land. It bounced and skidded to a halt after wrecking down. Her body was thrown in the air like a dusty doll. She was unexpectedly the only of the survivor.

A single tear slid down from her warm butterscotch eyes as she figured out what happened .She would clasp onto something for support, anything, a table or the back of a chair, and then his whole body would shake.. Stumbling, she dragged her legs to look for her family. The scene was deadly, the plane's pieces have almost vanished and the flames were still leaping high in the air in spite of the hard work of the firemen to extinguish fire. She was staggering between the dead bodies in slow steps, her bowels were churning and her body was frozen. She was constantly praying "Oh God! This is not happening ..". However, her hope seemed to fade away when she spotted her brother's toy which was completely damaged. She started looking turbulently around her and she immediately distinguished her parents' and her brother cadavers covered with blood. She was overcome by the wave of her emotions that she would mentally break down entirely, all her defences washed away in those salty tears. Her legs were threatening to give out, she couldn't help but fainting.

She opened her eyes to spot an 'emergency' sign on the plain wall. The miserable incident hasn't only left on her sightful traces but emotional destruction as well. She was informed that she needed to stay at least one week in the hospital. Her grandmother arrived as soon as she could, her throat felt too dry to speak a word and she couldn't move a muscle.

After the incident, devastated and sorrowful, Ashley begun to awaken every night from nightmares, and her brain refused to let go of the dreadful plane crash scenes. She would hear voices and see fantoms of her family around her, she would randomly giggle with her mother, and play hide-and-seek with her little brother. She was forcing their presence in her life. She was going crazy.

One warm summer day, Ashley woke up determined to make an end to her sorrows and suffering. She doesn't feel the taste of the life anymore. She was even taking sleeping pills to escape the reality, and going back to a normal life remained to be impossible when depression and loneliness choked her every time. She went to the nearest train station and straight to the railway with no hesitation. She couldn't handle it anymore. She shut her eyes, seeing a flashback of all her life passing by her eyes. She mainly saw her mother's soul welcoming her.

The sound of the train kept increasing and so did the tension, so her body was starting to shake continuously ,her teeth were chattering and her pulse pounded out.

She thought she was dead, but surprisingly a young man has heroically rescued her by pushing her away from the railway in the right time. She didn't know whether to thank him or to yell at him. The moment she looked into his eyes, she felt something strong. He appeared to be the one she was always dreaming about .The destiny has just given her a third life since she was about to die twice. However, this new life had a happy ending and finally someone would look to Ashley the way the old man in the airport was looking into his beloved.