

Her Husband Vanished (v. 消失) Without a Trace (n. 迹象) - 15 Years Later, the Doorbell Rang

For 15 years, Anne McDonnell lived in limbo (n. 处于不定状态), not knowing whether her Jim was dead or alive. Then, one Christmas, the impossible happened.

The McDonnells lived in a small brick house in Larchmont, a suburb of New York City. Jim was foreman (n. 领班, 工头) of mail carriers (n. 搬运工) at the post office where he had worked for 25 years. A gentle, soft-spoken man, he had a wave-of-the-hand acquaintance (n. 熟人) with hundreds of people in town. Married in 1960, he and Anne were childless.

During February and March 1971, when he was 50, Jim McDonnell suffered a curious (adj. 异常, 异样) series of accidents. None was critical (adj. 重要, 关键) in itself, but the combination appeared to trigger (v. 触发) a strange result.

Carrying out the garbage one evening, he slipped (v. 滑) on ice-coated steps, bruised (v. 擦伤) his back and struck his head. A few days later, driving to work, he had a fit of sneezing (v. 打喷嚏), lost control of the car, hit a telephone pole (n. 电线杆), and banged (v. 撞) his forehead against the windshield (n. 挡风玻璃). The following day a dizzy spell (一阵头晕) at work sent him tumbling (v. 翻滚) down a flight of steps, and again he banged his head. Ten days later he again lost control of his car and hit a pole. Found unconscious, he was hospitalized for three days with a cerebral (adj. 脑的) concussion (n. 脑震荡).

On March 29, 1971, Jim borrowed a friend's station wagon (n. 客货两用车 *a car with a longer body than usual, incorporating a large carrying area behind the seats and having an extra door at the rear for easy loading*) and drove to Kennedy Airport to pick up Anne's brother and family. Then he took them to Anne's sister's house. When he returned the borrowed car at 10 p.m., he was unaware that the leather folder (n. 夹) containing his identification had slipped out of his pocket onto the floor of the station wagon. Jim declined (v. 拒绝) the offer of a ride home: "I have a terrible headache and the walk will help clear my head." Ordinarily the walk would have taken about 15 minutes.

At 11:15 p.m. Anne called the owner of the station wagon; he had no idea why Jim had not yet reached home. It was unlike Jim not to telephone if he was delayed. At 2 a.m., Anne called the police and reported her husband missing.

... (We'll read the remaining part of the story together in class.)

Questions:

1. What do you think happened to Jim?

There was something wrong with his brain. He lost his memory.

2. What clues do you find in the text that can support your assumption?

In paragraph 3, his head was struck twice and he suffered a concussion. And I think it will cause problems in his brain.

3. The introduction part says, "One Christmas, the impossible happened". What do you think was the impossible thing?

He came back.