

Butterfly in the Night

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Lorii, a spirit girl, is stuck on Earth. She longs to meet her love, and one day, he comes. However, not all tales end happily ever after..

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“How sweet. How terribly, terribly sweet,” the spirit hung above her gravestone, draping a transparent arm over it. Before it sat a small girl, offering daisies to the dead woman, whom she never knew. The child did not see the spirit, no, nobody could. But the spirit saw her, and approved of her generosity. Scrawled on the slate gray slab was meaningless dates and meaningless retorts about her grand time on Earth. The only thing that did matter was the name.

Lorii. The child left with a silent prayer, leaving tiny footprints in the snow. It was a cold, cold winter. Lorii had loved the feel of the winter, the beauty it left behind, the taste of the crisp air. How it layered houses upon houses, leaving neighborhoods and cities alike in solitude. And then the swarms of people, creeping out, children and adults. Disdainfully shoveling away piles or gleefully collapsing into snow angels. Oh, winter. Now the spirit looked upon the winter as her first in a long time. It was so different, she could not feel it or taste it or leave marks in it. Winter was gone as she knew it, forever and always.

She was one of those disgruntled kinds of spirits that had unfinished business in the world. Only, it was more the fact she was afraid to move on. What would be waiting for her? Or was it destiny for Lorii to wait here? Wait, wait, yes. Lorii's unfinished business would forever be unfinished, it seemed. Many, many years in the past, she was told by a wise priestess that her true love would come by, and notice her, and be the only one who would notice her. She now understood that the priestess meant he would be the only one to see her as a spirit, for nobody else could.

“But what is love,” Lorii retorted, sniffing slightly as she rose from her spot, “when you are dead?” That question would never be answered, she thought. Until one night.

Lorii sat atop the hill that overlooked her small town. By now in time, it had progressed to a fast, high-tech land of gizmos and gadgets. But it was still her small town. The wind picked up, carrying wisps of her golden aura. Her porcelain face, framed by amber curls, was locked in a frown. This was where the priestess said her love would meet her, some fateful night. Stars dotted the midnight sky like the tiny lights barely illuminating the town's pathways. New snow fell gently onto rooftops awaiting fantasized reindeer.

“Augh...this hill just gets bigger and bigger each day,” a voice grumbled, a boy's voice. The male came into view, he was a lanky young person, with ravishing blue eyes and dark hair. He paused in step, staring at the woman before him. Emerald eyes glanced back in question. He wore scruffy blue jeans and a thick brown coat; she wore a decorative dress of black and flaming orange.

“You...you're...glowing!” The boy remarked, eyes widening in some sort of amazement and fear. His glasses were frosting, and he looked quite flustered.

“Yes,” Lorii replied simply, overcome with silent joy as she stepped up from her seat.

“Please...please stay, I will not harm you,” she stated quickly as he began to turn on his heel. Blinking in surprise, as if not noticing she could talk to him, he paused in the motion.

“What are you?” He blurted out.

“I am a restless spirit who has not passed on to the afterlife because...I've been waiting for the one who can see me...You. My name is Lorii.”

“Why would you wait for me?”

“A priestess told me it was the right thing to do,” Lorii lied easily, thinking it would scare the boy to say he was her love. After all, she was dead.

“So...now what?”

“You could tell me your name...” Lorii advanced, to get a better look at this boy. He was a bit taller

than her, with the appearance of a responsible college student. Something hard to come by.

“Mayura. My name is...Mayura. It's a-uhm...pleasure to meet you,” he stuck out a hand. Lorii put out hers slowly, then watched as it went through his. With a slight frown, thinking the priestess lied to her, her hand retreated.

“Would you like to sit with me?” Lorii asked, and went to the edge of the hill once more, sitting in the snow. Mayura, who had come up here to mostly stand and look, decided it'd be best to get to know this spirit. He sat a bit gingerly down on the cold, white fluff.

Silence washed over the moments as the two passed quick glances at each other. Mayura, confused but appalled by the statuesque-like personality of Lorii. Lorii, hopeful yet afraid for the worst.

“Lorii. How did you die?” Mayura asked cautiously, not sure if this was a question spirits liked to be asked. “I mean...you don't have to tell me...”

“That's fine, it doesn't phase me much anymore,” she paused, “I was shot by an arrow. It was a quiet day...in the outer rim of this town. Where the forest is, you know?” Mayura nodded.

“I was walking through, minding my own business. It was a lovely spring day, and it had just rained- I love the rain...And I suppose I just wandered off. I heard this terrible, horrible crackling voice. It called out, ‘Butterfly, butterfly, come play with me!’. And then before I knew it, I was a lowly ghost, hanging over my bleeding body, an arrow sticking out of my back.”

“Butterfly?” Mayura inquired with one word and a quirk of his eyebrows.

“Yes. I was what they called a free soul, with no boundaries. But the true meaning comes from my wings...you cannot see them anymore, sadly. But I was made in a lab- I never got the opportunity of parents. I was made with many others still alive, with many magical children. I was made with butterfly wings- oh how I loved them. The patterns, colors, so beautiful.”

Mayura nodded along. Lorii looked like a butterfly without the wings sprouting from her shoulder blades, to him. The slivers of gold flying off of her as the wind rolled by, the deep eyes, the billowing fiery hair. The stubborn chin, and small snub nose. The freckles lining her flustered cheeks, her long dark eyelashes. She was a free soul, alright. A wild, free soul.

Days went by, the meetings of Mayura and Lorii becoming orthodox. The two became more and more attached as the minutes crept by. It was the end of winter by this time, and a spring day was upon them. Lorii was in the outer rim of the town, past the forests, in a spot she liked to call home. A shallow lake, with a river running into it. Clear water sloshed around over multicolored pebbles, the grass around it full and green.

Barefooted, though it would not matter, Lorii twirled around in the middle of it. Soon though, she heard the footsteps of Mayura. She drifted to the edge and sat down, greeted by the boy.

“Mayura, I've been meaning to tell you something,” Lorii started.

“Me too, Lorii,” he replied. Surprised, and anxious as to know what he wanted to say, Lorii started on her subject. It would be best to get it out of the way.

“That priestess...Mayura, she said you would be my true love. But, I do not understand. I cannot feel, Mayura. I cannot touch the rain or the moss on a tree. I cannot taste the wind of winter or warm soup. I can-”

“No, Lorii, stop,” Mayura stated, interrupting her. “I cannot be with you, Lorii, either way. I need to move on. You are a free spirit. A butterfly in the night that illuminates a pathway I cannot follow. I must leave you, no matter how much it hurts.”

Lorii's eyes flooded with tears, something she had not been able to produce in a long while.

“B-But...perhaps you c-can still be my f-friend? Visit me? Please, d-do not leave me, Mayura, please!” She pleaded, breaking out into shivers. But the boy simply stood.

However, then, the spirit grabbed Mayura's hand, standing up herself. Suddenly, color flooded into

Lorii's eyes, she could feel warmth, the warmth of his hand. Mayura turned, as if noticing this too. With an over gleeful grin, he locked Lorii in an embrace, and for moments on end it seemed like they would be together forever. But it wouldn't. Lorii knew, she had to leave.

The wind picked up. It tugged on her hair, her golden aura reappearing. Lorii tried to grab Mayura's hand again, but it went right through. The boy frowned, and looked around.

``Lorii? Lorii, where are you!" He called in distress, looking right through the spirit.

``I'm right here, Mayura! I'm right here!"

``Lorii? LORII!" Mayura called, then dropped his arms in defeat. The butterfly was much too precious for his grasp, and it flew away without him. Head dropped, the male walked off, leaving Lorii yelping out his name.

They say if you stumble upon this town, and find the hill of which Mayura and Lorii had met that fateful night, you can see wisps of gold. Every now and then, the butterfly finds a new path to follow, but sooner or later they all drift apart. The butterfly in the night might be caught one day, but until that day, life goes on. Lorii sits on that ledge, watching the tasteless winters and the springs, the sorrowful summers and the falls.