

LESLIE T CHESTER COMPETITION 2022

A Night to Remember

Astrid was thankful that she had chosen to wear her cosy alpaca wool sweater beneath her olive green waxed jacket. Her tiny frame shuddered. She had already begun to question why she had been tempted outside at two o'clock on a cold, February morning to photograph the predicted meteor shower. Peering up into the darkness, she contemplated the sheer magnitude of the galaxies and beyond. The full moon, looking like a huge, round camembert cheese suspended in the sky, seemed to be waiting in anticipation of the spectacles to come. It was a fine, clear night, so Astrid would not be needing the umbrella that she always brought along 'just in case'. Standing in readiness before her, fixed to its tripod and pointing skyward at the precise obtuse angle that she had been informed should guarantee success in her mission, was the expensive camera which had been the last special birthday gift from her late grandmother.

Astrid had very fond memories of sitting on the old lady's knee, listening intently whilst she read her a story. One of her favourites was, 'The Little Match Girl', by Hans Christian Andersen. This was the story of a poor girl who was afraid to go home to her father one New Year's Eve, as he had threatened to beat her if she returned without selling any matches. Failing in her task, the young girl struck the matches one by one and saw a cheering vision within the flame each time, until every match was gone. At one point, the Little Match Girl saw a shooting star and remembered her grandmother telling her that whenever you see one of these, it means that someone is on their way to heaven.

As the meteor shower commenced with bright streams of light taking flight in all directions, Astrid wondered whether one of the numerous shooting stars could possibly be the soul of her grandmother journeying to its new heavenly abode. Using a wide aperture and long exposure, images were gradually captured and scrutinised in the camera's viewfinder. One brilliant trail of light, which had travelled on a lateral course, stood out from all the others. Managing a tearful smile, Astrid was convinced that this was the vision she had been seeking. She gathered up her equipment, loaded it into her car and set off home.

Soon, the sun rose as vivid as the corona of a giant daffodil, her grandmother's favourite flower and an emblem of Spring and new beginnings. Astrid gazed out of her bedroom window as it spread a halo of vivid, yellow petal 'rays' which illuminated the distant horizon as the new day began. Wherever she may be, Astrid was now certain that her grandmother was happy and content.

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Total Words: 456

Given words used: 15

Typo/spellings: