

## A Letter

It was a crisp sunshine. Steve got up from his deep sleep on this Sunday morning. Steve Micklem lived alone in his old bungalow on the outskirts of Ireland. He worked in a profitable company called “Greencore”

Steve freshened up himself and walked right into the kitchen. He opened his refrigerator and grabbed a bottle of cold water and a packet of frozen hamburgers. After heating his burgers, he settled at his dining table comfortably and began eating. After lounging for a while, Steve picked up his favourite book from the occasional table, titled Arabian Nights, and was engulfed in the reading.

All of a sudden, there was a light snowfall. It seemed pleasant outside...white snow on green trees. Steve sighed contentedly and exclaimed, “Nice day! Not too cold, not too hot either. Perfect for a long drive”. He got up from his little cozy chair and started searching for his car keys when the doorbell rang. Steve was startled – Who could it be at this time of the day? Steve couldn’t stop wondering, just when he spotted a letter on his doorstep. He picked it up with numerous questions in his mind.

The letter was written by one Mrs. Megan, and it was addressed to her grandson Robert. Hesitantly, Steve went through the contents of the letter. He was full of emotions and tears when he completed his reading. Robert was a lucky boy to have such a caring grandma, thought Steve. The letter showed Megan’s grief of loneliness and kept alive a hope that Robert would come and see her from Las Vegas to Ireland. It also seemed that Mrs. Megan’s several previous letters had gone unanswered.

Brooding and reflecting, Steve was struck with a sudden idea. He decided to pretend to be Robert and reply to Mrs. Megan’s letter. Oddly, both Steve and Mrs. Megan were lonesome. If this letter trail starts, they could have each other to share and interact with. The next day, when Steve went to work, he wasn’t the old, tired man anymore – but felt very elated and cheerful. All his colleagues and friends were astounded by such a drastic change in him! Can someone change so much in just one day, especially in this prosaic world? Everyone kept wondering. John, George, and all his other peers kept whispering and gossiping about his nice but queer behaviour.

Days and months flew by. The letters and replies continued. It now became Steve’s hobby to pretend to be Robert and send kind responses to Mrs. Megan’s letters. Till now, nobody had ever written to Steve, apart from a handful of his friends. Now he wrote pages and pages to Mrs. Megan. While writing, Steve would think about how this tradition of letter writing started, with just one wrongly addressed letter! Steve had become tremendously curious about Mrs. Megan’s family and her life. He wished to meet her someday, but that day had never arrived. In her letters, Mrs. Megan would always write how she spent her day. There was a common thing that Steve noticed that she enjoyed cooking. Although she was all by herself, she always cooked some unique scrumptious recipes. Now Steve was even more intrigued and longed to meet Mrs. Megan at least once in his life. He also sometimes thought about Robert, who must be waiting for his granny’s letters. Steve recollected one of her most remarkable letters.

Mrs. Megan Stanley,  
Ireland – Cork,  
T-23

27/10/2023

Dear Bob,

Wish you many happy returns of the day. God bless you. ☺

If I were there with you, I wouldn't have gifted you anything but a kiss, some of your favourite food, and a cuddle full of love & and faith. For a grandchild, his grandparents' faith in him that he will grow up to be a respectable citizen and a good human being is everything. And not to forget, their love which can in no way match any wealth and material things in the world.

I have made Kilt for you and I hope you will like it. I think I must stop here or else you will not get enough time to spend with your friends.

Love you,

Megan

Steve was speechless upon reading this letter. He was so impressed with Mrs. Megan's simplicity and love. He had safely locked the letter in his drawer and read it whenever he wanted to motivate himself.

Today, Steve was sitting on his patio. The day sounded somewhat gloomy. Clouds had shrouded the blazing sun. All the weather forecasts stood true, and in no time it was pouring and bucketing. Steve was so engrossed in writing a letter to Mrs. Megan that he didn't even notice a squirrel taking away all his nuts under his nose. After a while, the heavy rain turned into a pleasant and soothing drizzle making a soft sound and making the trees even greener.

It was already late and was Steve's dinner time now. He scurried back to his kitchen to search for some fare. He felt to be in a mood to cook one of his favourite Irish dishes. At the same time, he remembered Mrs. Megan and her love for cooking and how she detailed all the ingredients to make a particular recipe. He followed the steps in one of her recent letters to prepare some delicious Irish Stew, which happens to be a national dish of Ireland. Prepared with thick lamb pieces, potatoes, and onions, making it a hearty meal. Along with that, he made himself some Drisheen, which is another special delicacy.

Taking his meal, Steve sat on his favourite chair near the fireplace. The weather was getting a little frosty now. Steve enjoyed his meal, along with a little brandy, watching an old French movie. In his mind, he was soaked in his thoughts about Robert.

A few days later, Steve was walking on the street wondering about Mrs. Megan. Since last month or so, there hasn't been any letter he had received. Steve started getting anxious, losing hope. What must be wrong? He was too scared to lose this little happiness, which now was part of his life. Steve reached for his car and pushed the ignition. "Oh no", he wailed in frustration realizing that the car

didn't start. By then, raindrops had started hitting the ground. He was even more upset. Resignedly, Steve got down and entered the café nearby. Listlessly, he watched the ambiance of blue and yellow, along with a small lawn just outside. An efficient, young lady was managing the show, multitasking. She got a steaming hot coffee along with a few delicious cinnamon cookies for Steve. Browsing through the newspaper, Steve's attention was caught by a piece of news. With shaky hands, he held the paper closer to read it carefully.

"Mrs. Megan Stanley's death has been quiet and mysterious. The old lady lived in solitaire for years in Cork and was known to have no relations. She used to send letters to her imaginary grandson Robert. Mrs Megan was 93 years old. We pay our homage to the dear old lady. RIP."

Steve was completely flabbergasted by the news. He couldn't utter a word from his mouth and just kept staring at the photo of Mrs. Megan in the paper.

Spellbound with mixed emotions, Steve walked out in the rain, incognizant of his dripping clothes. So Robert never existed, and poor old Mrs. Megan found her happiness in writing those letters. Steve stood there, with a sad feeling of having lost a close relative. He also felt a little satisfaction that he could create a few moments of joy in her lonely life. The world around him kept moving...