

## *The Little Blue Envelope*

If you ever manage to find this town, go to the lake. Don't ask which one, since everyone knows there's only one lake. Look for the dock, and then turn right. Walk straight just until you see a NO TRESPASSING sign, hanging from a wire fence. No one pays attention to it. No one cares here. Jump over that fence. You won't regret it.

Behind that fence, you'll see trees. Only trees. At least, that's what newcomers suspect. No one knows that this used to be an abandoned park, where young children would play to their heart's content. Yes, this haunted area used to just be a mere park. Oh, did I forget to tell you? A car crashed into one of the beautiful trees here, and it fell on top of the park. We all try to forget.

Anyways, if you continue to scour the area, you'll be able to spot the remains of the old swing set. Behind it, there's a tree, and on that tree, there's this envelope. It's clipped to this string, and this string is tied to a punctured balloon. No one knows how long it's been there. It could have been there for years. No one knows who either. But what is there to know about who?

Children here are visionaries. They do anything to grab the stars from the sky. I've gone to bigger cities, and the kids there are different. They don't have dreams. Well, I don't know that. But I do know that whatever dreams they have there, the kids here surmount greatly. I remember when I was once a kid here. It was surreal. We would all tie little notes to balloons, and these notes would have our dreams. We'd then let them into the sky. I remember my first time doing this. My balloon flew, and flew, all the way up until it got stuck in a tree. It's gone now though. All of us children would grab any remains of hope before we left. We were environmentally conscious.

But this one balloon. It was there years before we existed.

I sometimes like to just sit under this tree, and think. If I had a bad day, I would just lean back, and look up. I would observe the envelope, hoping to find something different. But it always stayed the same. It was a beautiful shade of blue. The color of ice, with sparse bits of baby blue from where the sky was reflected. The corners were crinkled and worn down. On its front, you could just barely make out a faded smudge. A thumbprint held the envelope closed. In the future, I can only imagine how it would look. The envelope would be open. Torn. Covered in countless stains from curious grimy hands. It eventually will lose its beauty, and soon enough, it will disappear. One child would take it home, eager to show his or her family and friends, and brag about their findings. Little will they know that it was there. Always there. Waiting.

It was a wonder. Captivating. Engrossing. To any visitor, it means nothing. But to me at least, it was like an enigma. Our little borough was bland, so it was the only thing that kept me interested. Yes, after a while, staring at the same pale envelope got tiring, but it kept my mind at work. When I was very little, I would sit next to the tree, and look through the holes of the wire fencing, and would people-watch. Fishermen, shopkeepers from the dock plaza, and just quaint wanderers would be my targets. I would imagine their wishes and goals for the future. I would build worlds in my mind, and would create.

I used to bring along a friend of mine. We would look up, and the two of us would just talk. How school was, a new video game that we were hooked onto, anything.

My friend never wrote any wishes.

Soon enough, two became one, and now I just imagine what would have happened if that car didn't crash. If my only comrade hadn't been in the car at the time, and hadn't survived, would we still visit the tree together? Because being a victim was far better than being judged, accused, shunned for the crime, so all they could do was hide. What happened was wrong, but sometimes I wonder how deep the pressure of being convicted went. Through skin. Through bones. Straight to the mind. What psychological trauma does that instill when as young as sixteen?

Now, I come alone. There's no one else I know, talk to, laugh with. It's just me now, and I'm perfectly content with that. I can feel this town weakening, crumbling down. People can rust just by sitting there. No flashing headlines, except for that day two years ago.

I have no blithe memories of this terrible place. Well, not anymore. Other than this blue envelope. It held me together. Now, I'm heading off, farthest away from here. I'll be off to university, to fulfill passions I lack. Along with me, the envelope will disappear, too, carrying three wishes.

Today is my last day here. There's this tight, fluttering feeling. It reminds me of when I would go on field trips as a kid. Pure ecstasy would fill me. I don't know why I would feel that now, but I do.

This is my last hope. I'm old enough now to understand the fantasy of balloon wishes, but I have one more I'd like to send out. So, to whomever is reading this, I don't care for success. Wealth. Fame. I just want to be carefree. I want to remember what that feeling feels like. Because as we grow older, we start to forget that feeling of childlike wonder. . I want to remember how it felt, not opening the envelope.

Now, I'm putting this in the same blue envelope. I tied it to another balloon, and let it go...

*-Anonymous*