

Somewhere My Love

Steve Carr

In his bold, swirling handwriting, written on the card was, "I found this in Saigon and thought of you. Love, Cliff."

“THAT’S THE LAST OF THEM FROM the attic,” Mike said as he placed the cardboard box on the floor.

“Are you sure you don’t want me to go through them for you, Mom?”

“No, this will be fine,” she said. “There’s no rush. I’m not going into the retirement home until next month. I’ll do a little at a time.”

“Give me a call if you need anything,” he said. He crossed the room, bent down and kissed her on the cheek, and then left her house.

Jenny gazed around the living room and gave a heavy sigh. She placed her hands on the grips on the top of the walker and pulled herself up from the chair to a standing position. Grasping the walker she shuffled across the floor, wrinkling her nose at the dust that covered the stacked boxes. She went into the kitchen and put a kettle of water on the stove and turned on the burner. As the water heated she got a teacup, saucer, and teabag and placed them on the table.

She returned to the living room and stared appraisingly at the stack of smaller boxes standing in the corner. She recalled that several of them contained Christmas cards, postcards, and family photographs, but the smallest one sitting on the top didn’t look familiar. She brushed the dust from its top with the sleeve of her sweater and then removed the dry, yellowed tape that held it shut, wadded it, and tossed it onto the top of

a nearby stand. She pulled the flaps back and gasped with surprise.

Inside was a rectangular shaped box-like object wrapped in faded pink tissue paper with red ribbon wound around it. She lifted it out and turned it around in her hands several times, feeling the slight weight of it and examining the wrapping. She put it to her mouth, bit into the ribbon, and turned the walker and carried the object held between her teeth back to the kitchen. She placed it on the table just as the kettle began to whistle.

She turned off the burner and with one hand carried the kettle to the table while with the other hand she used the walker to steady herself. She sat down and poured the steaming water into the cup, then set the kettle on an ornately designed trivet. While the teabag steeped, she removed the ribbon from the object. Her hands trembled as she slowly peeled away the tissue paper.

For several moments she stared at the music box.

The card taped to the top was from her husband, Cliff. In his bold, swirling handwriting, written on the card was, “I found this in Saigon and thought of you. Love, Cliff.”

She turned the pink lacquered box upside down and turned the key, and then turned it over and opened the lid. She held her breath as “Somewhere My Love,” the song from *Dr. Zhivago*, began to play, and the ballerina in

a pink tutu pirouetted around and around on a small metal disc.

“Vietnam was so far away,” she whispered. “I’ve never stopped missing you.”

She took a sip of the tea, and then as the music played and the ballerina danced, she grasped the hand grips on the walker and stood up. She raised one leg, bent it, and placed her foot against the knee of the other leg. She raised her hands from the walker, and with her arms stretched out and her head held high, she did a single pirouette. She then sat down, drank the tea, and longingly watched the ballerina. ❖

