

## A Man Without a Heart

by Sari Tomorari



A man was in a certain town. His name was Justin. He did not have a heart. All the residents in this town did not have a heart. When they were born, a witch took the heart of the people, and she ruled over the town. All the people of this town obeyed the order of the witch. They each had a role. Some people baked bread. Some built houses, and some painted buildings, and so on. Justin had a role. It was to catch fish in the river.

Justin has a bird. It was his friend. Its name was Aaron. One day Justin went to the river to catch fish with the bird, Aaron. When Justin came to the riverside, a young woman was lying there. Justin went over to her. Her eyes were closed, but she was breathing.

He said hello to her. He did not touch her. He was afraid of touching a stranger. For a while he was watching her, but he said hello again.

Then she opened her eyes, and slowly sat up. Justin said hello. The woman said,

“Hi.” Justin said, “Who are you?” The woman said, “My name is Claire.” Justin said, “What are you doing here?” Claire said, “I am a visitor here. I am traveling.”

Claire was traveling, but she was really a princess from a different part of the country. She did not like her parents. Her parents had different ideas from Claire and they disagreed with each other on many ideas. So, she ran away from her father’s castle. She had been traveling for some weeks. She came to this town and she did not know where it was, but there was this beautiful river. She sat down on the riverside and she was resting there when Justin and Aaron came.

Justin asked her about her travels, and she told him how interesting it had been to see different towns and meeting and talking with different people in different towns. Justin did not know the word, “interesting.” Justin asked Claire, “What is that? What do you mean interesting?” “Interesting means you like it and you want to know more about it”, Claire said. “I don’t understand.”

Aaron, the bird told Claire that Justin did not have a heart, and that he could not like or love anything, because he did not have a heart. Claire was puzzled. She could not imagine how not to have a heart. But she was strangely relieved that he did not have a heart, because she did not want him to find out who she was or wonder about why she was traveling alone.

From that time Justin came to the river with Aaron every afternoon to meet with Claire. She told him about the places she visited and the people she met. She told different stories. For some reason he was drawn to the riverside every afternoon. The people in this town never smiled, as they never knew what happiness or gladness felt like. They never knew what sorrow or jealousy was, either. He did not know the feelings, but he felt strange warmness inside of his body. Gradually he began to retrieve the heart that he lost when he was born. Aaron was glad.

As time passed by, Claire noticed that Justin was about the same age as she was. She began to notice that he was a good looking, tall and strong young man. He did not act or talk like the princes that she knew when she lived with her mother and father in her father’s kingdom. She liked his simple expressions and his questions. She began to look forward to meeting Justin in the afternoon. After a few months she knew she really liked Justin. Then she was sad and grieved that Justin did not have a heart.

One day the witch found out that Claire had fallen in love with Justin, and felt very anxious. The witch caught Claire and was able to lock her up in her castle.

The witch was angry. “A heart might return to Justin because of this young woman!”

On the day when Claire was kidnapped, Aaron went to the riverside and found out that she had been captured. Aaron’s bird friend told Aaron that the witch had taken Claire. Immediately Aaron told Justin about this kidnaping.

Justin hurried to the witch’s castle. When he arrived at the castle, the witch was about to execute Claire. “Justin!” she called his name out loud. Justin heard it and felt sharp pain in his body. He wanted to help her. Aaron took the sickle that the witch was holding, and stung the witch’s heart with it.

The witch gave a shriek cry and fell down to the floor and died. A grey smoke came out of the body and the smoke ascended higher and when the smoke was gone, the body of the witch was out of sight completely. Once the witch disappeared Justin’s heart returned to his body and his heart was full of joy and love for Claire. Everyone in town got their heart back too.

Justin decided to travel with Claire. Justin never felt anything before. Justin is eager to experience and learn new things. Justin would like to learn more about friendship and love.

Claire decided to go home with Justin. She will travel for some time with Justin and Aaron and then go home with them. She thought that she would be able to talk to her parents once more when Justin and Aaron were with her.

So, three of them began their journey together. The sun was shining, the sky was blue, and the birds were singing. It was a beautiful day to start a new journey.

The End