

STEPPING INTO THE FUTURE

Written by

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Based on Gift of the Magi

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLAIRE, 28, with golden locks and white blouse, opens an envelope and reads the letter inside. She reads the ending of it aloud, disgusted:

CLAIRE

Call off the engagement, as this man you claim to be your fiance has no promise in the industry and is a poor choice to be connected to the family name.

Claire bitterly tears the letter to shreds and throws it into the garbage bin.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You old fool. You don't know a thing about him.

Claire sits in a chair and reads a book. Moments later, LUCAS, 31, with short red hair sporting a brown cardigan under a coat and a briefcase opens the door and walks in. Claire goes to greet him and take his coat.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

How was work today, dear?

LUCAS

Dreadful, as usual. I'm amazed I'm paid as little I am for the work I do.

Lucas drops his briefcase and slumps down into a chair across from an canvas and stares at it, still exhausted. Claire comes up behind him and massages his shoulders.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Any word from your father, this month? I don't like having to depend on your family, but we may not have a choice this month.

Claire glances at the garbage bin for a moment.

CLAIRE

I don't think we'll be getting any more loans. I'm sorry, darling.

Lucas sighs and sadly looks at his canvas, than back to Claire.

LUCAS

I'm sorry, sweetheart. I promise that when we finally save up enough, I will open my studio.

CLAIRE

You keep saying that, but it's taking a while. I wish there was more I could do, anything to help you out.

LUCAS

Thank you, Claire. I'll still never understand how an angel like you fell for this hopeless failure.

CLAIRE

Lucas, you fool! Don't you dare say that! You're the one I love, and nothing will ever change that.

LUCAS

You figure your family would be more eager to help us out. They were a tremendous influence on your love for shoes, after all.

They look at a picture on the wall of Claire standing with her father, with rows of pristine shoes behind them.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Yet here we are, struggling to pay the rent here. Life is cruel, isn't it?

CLAIRE

Don't think like that, you're just hungry again. You'll feel better after dinner.

They both get up and head to the kitchen.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Lucas puts on his coat and has briefcase in hand. He pecks Claire on the cheek and heads out. Claire busies herself with cleaning the kitchen. After a moment, she glances at the calender, seeing it is now December 24th. The words "GET GIFT FOR LUCAS" are scrawled on over the square.

CLAIRE

That time again already, huh?

Claire sits down at a desk and takes out a notebook. She takes out a pen and opens to a page titled: "GIFT IDEAS FOR LUCAS." She starts to write a series of ideas, crossing them out and shaking her head while occasionally glancing at her wallet.

The light in the window fades as Claire looks from the clock to her wallet and to her journal. She grunts in frustration and slams her fist down, knocking a slip of paper to the ground. Noticing it, Claire picks it up and reads it.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
392 Morning Light Court...

Claire looks over at Lucas' canvas.

LUCAS (V.O.)
It's only a matter of time before I own it. There's no better location for my art studio to be!

Claire looks in her wallet and sighs. She looks around the room and notices the picture with her and her father, and smiles.

INT. HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

YOUNG CLAIRE, 5, wearing a white dress, is running up and down the rows of shoes with her arms outstretched, laughing wildly. FATHER, 42, with dark combed-over hair wearing a dapper business suit waves her over to him.

FATHER
Claire, come over here. We're ready to take the picture now.

YOUNG CLAIRE
Papa! I want to have all these shoes.

Claire runs over to him holding a pair of shoes far too big for her. Father laughs as he lifts Claire up onto his shoulder.

FATHER
Is that so? Well, you're lucky you're a part of a family that makes them.

YOUNG CLAIRE
Can I have them? Can I?

FATHER

I can't just give you all of these.
As you get bigger, you could
collect them if you like.

YOUNG CLAIRE

Cool! I'm going to have the best
shoe collection in the world!

FATHER

Is that what you want? In that case
I hope your wish comes true.

YOUNG CLAIRE

Really?

FATHER

Of course. If that's your dream,
then you should follow it. Now,
smile for the camera darling.

Father takes the shoes Claire is holding and puts them on a nearby desk as they smile for the camera, and a flash of light envelopes them.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire stares at the picture as dusk shows outside the window. Standing up, she goes over to her closet and opens it up. It is filled to the brim with shoes of all sorts. Claire picks up the pair she once held in the flashback.

CLAIRE

Father... if I told you my dream
now, would you still hope for the
best?

Claire looks over her vast collection. After a moment, she gets to her feet, and then starts boxing the shoes up, pair by pair.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Claire is sitting in a chair reading a book. Lucas groggily comes out from the bedroom

CLAIRE

Merry Christmas, dear. Did you
enjoy sleeping in for your first
time in weeks?

LUCAS

More than you could believe. Merry Christmas dear. Before I forget, what happened to your shoe collection? Did you move it?

CLAIRE

You saw that when you came in last night? Never you mind. More importantly, take this.

She hands Lucas a paper. He skims it and his jaw drops open.

LUCAS

Claire... you couldn't have. You did all of this for me?

CLAIRE

That's right. Yesterday was your last day in the factory. You can finally open your art studio.

LUCAS

But to get that much money... Claire, that was your shoe collection! Your dream!

CLAIRE

It's okay, sweetheart. They were just shoes. Besides, you're more important to me than all the shoes in the world.

Lucas looks at the deed and then slowly starts to laugh.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Lucas, are you okay?

LUCAS

Claire... oh Claire... I'm so sorry. I've ruined everything.

CLAIRE

Don't be ridiculous, you haven't done anything wrong.

LUCAS

No, I screwed up big time.

Lucas, still grievously laughing, pulls out a box while labeled "PREMIUM SHOE CARE KIT" and hands it to her.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

I sold my remaining artworks and materials so I could get you this. Both our gifts are meaningless.

Claire looks at the box, and then starts to grievously laugh along with Lucas.

CLAIRE

Oh, Lucas, you moron. You really are too kind for your own good.

The two of them burst into a fit of laughter, shedding some tears as well. They calm down after a moment, and mull over the situation.

LUCAS

Well, looks like it's back to the factory with me tomorrow after all. Unless my would-be studio can turn this around.

CLAIRE

Now that you mention it... I think there just might be a way to make this work.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Lucas is tidying up the interior of a room with a few chairs and desks, with empty racks near the back. The picture of Claire and her father hangs on the wall. Claire sits at a desk holding a pen to a sheet of paper.

LUCAS

I've got the sign all ready to go, Claire. Want to come take a look at it?

CLAIRE

Just a moment, I've got to write something real quick.

LUCAS

Your loss, looks like I'm going to be the first to see the complete storefront.

Lucas goes to the window while Claire writes onto the sheet of paper.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

Dear father, do you remember that time long ago when I told you my dream was to have the biggest shoe collection in the world?

Lucas moves some remodeling materials from the storefront window.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

My dream has since evolved, and that dream is to stay with Lucas for the rest of my life. I learned recently part of why he is so dear to me: he reminds me of the way you were long ago.

Lucas puts a sign that reads "LUCAS AND CLAIRE'S SHOE DESIGN AND REPAIR."

CLAIRE (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

You now see me through the eyes of a company president, and not as the father who lovingly raised me. We are starting our own business together and are going to turn our lives around.

Lucas goes outside and looks at the completed storefront, smiling broadly.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

Until you can take off your business glasses and welcome Lucas into the family, do not contact me again.

Lucas goes back inside and embraces Claire, who does the same.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

I pray you will be able to come around soon: I would like to have my loving father back. Your daughter, Claire.

