

G A Price

TIMELESS

WORDS

STORY OF A LIFE

Timeless Words

G A Price ©

She walked carefully, with a slight limp to the run down bookshop. Her step was fragile and betrayed her age. Her white hair was tangled, streaked with the luxurious blonde strands which used to cover her head like the rays of the sun. Her eyes were dull, and she seemed anxious in the vulnerability of her age. She glanced at the old rusted metal sign above the shop, clanging noisily against the brick and moss. She opened the door with a slight creak and glanced inside.

The old man was still there, wiping his glasses with a dirty old handkerchief. The smell of ageing books filled her with nostalgia as she smiled at him softly. The damp air around her was clogged with a thousand memories. She turned and walked a familiar path to the heart of the shop.

The books still retained a majestic dignity in their unpreserved state although some were falling apart with age. There seemed something almost mystical about the soft yellowish colour of the pages, the way the sunlight caught the books and shone over them, blurring the endless titles with soft light. She kept walking, kept moving on as if compelled to move amongst the relics, those timeless books she once loved with all her heart.

She stopped quite suddenly. The carpet beneath her feet was soft, a small chair was solemnly placed against a rack of dozens of books. She sighed. So many authors, so many books preserved forever in the immortal state of publication. Sitting down on the lonely chair, she reached to a particular book and read the title with a secret pleasure.

Her hands moved gently over the precious cover, her eyes read the words even as the tears blurred her vision. She smiled broadly at the delightful object, her hands turning the cover so she could read the dedication inside. The pages, although yellowish with age, retained the beautiful charismatic qualities of the words within. The story which had been made eternal in the small bookshop in the middle of nowhere.

A small sigh escaped her lips, and she surrendered to her many memories. She tipped back her head, felt the sunlight on her face, and listened to the voices of the past.

"Can I help you, Agatha?" The old man asked, still cleaning his glasses, not even bothering to look up. He knew this routine well, and the simplicity of the homage made his heart swell with pride.

"No thank you, Peter. I'm just looking. Remembering" Agatha put the precious item on her lap and looked towards the old man, tears brimming in her eyes. She opened the book, and held the author's notes up to Peter with a slight smile of sadness on her face. "I wasn't that bad looking back then, was I?".

Peter smiled, and walked over to Agatha. He took the book from her grasp and looked at the picture within. A stunning young woman with bright blue eyes and the most beautiful blonde hair smiled back at him from the book, her expression of complete happiness.

"You certainly were a doll, Agatha. Still are". Peter said smiling. He gave the book back to Agatha and stood beside her, awaiting the inevitable outburst of emotion.

"The men would wait for hours for my autograph. I felt so special. I felt ... connected to the world" Agatha closed her eyes and inhaled a sharp breath. "Its a shame the flame had to perish and the enemy came to take my glory, short as that glory was".

Peter glanced at the book with a sad expression on his face. "Your light has never gone out, Agatha. You are the most amazing writer, bringing to life the most shallow of characters. You have brought so much joy and happiness to people in this life, that will always be here".

Agatha looked away, a slight sparkle in her eye "I remember the day I first came here. My publisher said he had arranged a book signing at the huge bookstore in the centre of town. I was horrified when I discovered that the arrangements had been mixed up and I wasn't due to sign any books until the week after they had originally said. I had flown all the way here from New York, and wasn't going to waste time on another flight back home. So I stayed here for a week, browsing in the centre of the town. It was so stunning, this small town. I fell in love with it, and decided I wanted to live here. I was here three days when I happened upon your store. I wasn't expecting to see my book here, it was only a small bookstore in comparison to that huge book-filled place in the centre of town. I walked down the centre of this shop, walking the very steps I walked today, and came to this particular shelf. I have never felt such a sense of honour as I did when I saw my book on your shelf. I vowed this shop would always be in my life".

Peter sighed happily "You were the most inspirational thing to happen to this dreary old place, Agatha. I am so glad to see you again".

Agatha smiled and puts the book back on the shelf. "So many memories ... and so many years have gone by so fast. It hardly seems yesterday when I was

sitting here on this chair signing my book for readers. How can time go so fast? Does the clock tick faster when we enjoy our brief success? Does time play a cruel joke on those who make something of themselves by speeding the process? Ah! I am more alive here than anywhere else in the world. Such love and warmth emanates from this small bookstore".

Peter grinned suddenly, and took the book from the shelf where Agatha had placed it so carefully and opened the front page. "Can I have your autograph for this exquisite work, madam?".

Agatha laughed merrily and thought hard for a moment, then she wrote a small passage in the front of the book. Peter took the book from her fragile hands and read the inscription. A small smile of joy passes across his aged features.

'Let the immortal words of my mortal life bring whoever decides to read this book happiness and allow them to achieve their dreams. For dreams come and go so quickly, and through the passing of time I have realised one inevitable truth. To have your dreams come true can be the cruellest fate on earth. For those who shine in life are forced to leave their success far too quickly. Be happy, be successful if you must, but above all be yourself and be content with the latter only".

Peter clasped the precious book to his heart "Always, madam. It is a pleasure to read your fine work".

Agatha nodded and rose to walk out of the shop. She glanced briefly around herself at the books lining the racks for a final time with a brief smile on her face before she opened the door and left.

