

THOSE WHO COME WHEN CALLED

Shaeen Svanede

There was a time when I trusted only what could be proven. The measurable. The rational. The logical. Today, I know that reality holds far more layers than that. This is not a story about religion or belief systems, but about what can happen when hope and action meet in a state of complete desperation.

Life did not turn out the way I had imagined. A traffic accident changed everything and led to years of heavy medication and dependency. A marriage that had begun in passionate love gradually gave way to infidelity, threats, and increasing financial dependence. This was not how my dream had looked, yet here I was - caught in a daily life shaped by fear and powerlessness.

Somewhere in all of this, without truly believing in it, I began to pray to the angels for help. Not out of conviction, but out of sheer desperation, like a final whisper to something greater than myself.

Step by step, fear began to loosen its grip. When the time came to fill out the divorce papers, everything proceeded calmly. We even spoke of a quiet, peaceful separation. In that moment, it felt as though the angels might indeed have been listening to the prayers I had carried for many months.

But then, a week later, when I came home, my husband was gone, and with him, two cars and much more. No letter. No explanation. The loans on the cars were in my name, and I knew he would not pay a single penny. The bank manager also informed me that my husband had visited the bank the day before, taken out a short-term loan of £9,000, and placed liens on my house totalling £50,000.

I nearly lost my footing, yet I had no choice but to hold myself together. How was I supposed to keep a roof over my head for myself and my teenage son? I knew with certainty that my husband would not take any financial responsibility whatsoever; he had never done so with anyone before. Now it was my turn.

Desperation hardened into resolve. I would save what could be saved. If nothing else, I would try to reclaim the cars. But it had to be done in a way that ensured he would never know I was behind it. Otherwise, I knew I would be placing myself in real danger, given the threats he had made over the years. More than ever, I hoped that angels truly existed.

A plan took shape. It was meticulous, almost absurd in its level of detail. My hair was dyed blonde. Hair extensions were purchased. Blue contact lenses. A visit to second-hand shops resulted in a style of clothing far removed from my own. Friends and family supported me, but were clearly nervous as to what I was about to attempt. I myself felt strangely calm. There was no turning back.

Three weeks later, I learned that my husband was in our old hometown in Spain. A friend and I immediately flew to Alicante, where we were met by a Spanish acquaintance. Unaware of our presence, my husband was sitting at the bar he used to frequent when we had lived there. We kept him under observation, but lost him in the traffic when he drove off. The plan had to be abandoned.

That evening, I prayed even more.

The following day, word reached us that he would be flying to Holland for Christmas and that the car would be parked at the airport. We returned to Alicante and positioned ourselves strategically. My Swedish friend kept watch at the terminal while the rest of us circulated in the area. Within fifteen minutes, we had our chance.

My husband had left in another car. We could not understand why, but I moved quickly and walked straight into the car park. There it was - the car. I unlocked it, started the engine and realised there was no parking ticket. Panic struck. A sudden, intense sense of danger nearly paralysed me.

Still, I managed to drive up to the next level, take a few deep breaths, and call my friend.

"Go to the manual booth," I said. "Tell them you dropped off your wife and that she must have had the ticket in her pocket. Without it, we won't get out." He forgot to hang up the phone. I heard him obtain a new ticket, with an additional fee. With my heart pounding, I drove back down, picked him up, passed through the barrier, and we were out. It took several miles before I could calm myself enough to stop.

Then a text message arrived - the first sign of life from my husband in over three weeks: "The car has been stolen. Did you pay the insurance?"

We had missed him by just a few minutes.

I chose not to reply. Instead, we kept driving, mile after mile, until we were completely exhausted, we checked into a small motel in France for a few hours of sleep.

When the light was switched off, I once again thanked the angels, grateful for their help in allowing us to escape with at least one of the cars.

Then the room suddenly filled with a flowing, luminous light. I heard my friend gasp as several silhouettes emerged from the glow. A beautiful man with dark, curly hair stepped forward and looked at me with a love beyond words and understanding.

And suddenly, I remembered.

The time I had met the same man on a train many years earlier.

A wordless encounter that had felt inexplicably important. A man who later appeared and vanished at a bus stop, only to return some days afterwards in a dream bearing a vital message. Someone who had felt utterly real and yet somehow not.

Now he stood in front of me again, with his angelic smile, and said: "I am the Archangel Raphael."

And suddenly, I understood everything.

We are not alone on this Earth, even though it may sometimes feel that way. There are forces beyond ourselves that are undeniable, and fortunate are those who come to realise this.

Today, I no longer ask whether angels exist, but how we choose to listen.

Help rarely comes without action. Ask for support, stay attentive, and dare to take the step when the impulse comes.

By the way, my former husband never found out how the car disappeared.

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