

The Tale of the Boy Who Could Do Magic

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*"I am not yet a magician, I am still learning,
but love enables us to perform true miracles."*

Evgeny Schwartz,
from the filmscript of "Zolushka"

*"True miracles can be created
only by a kind and loving heart!"*

Sarkar

At the time of this tale, women wore long dresses and men frock coats and tails. People used to ride horses, because the first automobiles were only just being invented, and there was still no such thing as an airplane.

Then too, as always, there were rich and poor, clever and less clever people, kind folk and those who had forgotten about kindness.

And so it was that two very ordinary parents had an extraordinary little boy. This little boy was gifted with the ability to work miracles. But it took a while for this to be discovered.

His father was a wonderful children's doctor, his mother played the piano beautifully and gave music lessons.

For a long time, they dreamed of having children of their own, and then it finally happened.

When the mother of the future little miracle-worker found out that she was going to have a child, she felt like the luckiest woman in the world! The mysterious half-smile of contentment constantly playing on her face now made her even more beautiful, radiating a soft and barely perceptible glow of happiness!

The day finally arrived when the little miracle-worker came into the world, and it was on that very day, his mother believed, that he performed his first miracle.

His mother, you see, did not have any mother's milk, so of course she asked her husband straightaway to go and find a wet nurse, or at least buy some milk.

All the while she held the little baby to her breast so he wouldn't cry.

But then the little one began to suck, and the gentle touch of his lips was enough to make the milk flow!

Now some may say that this is no miracle at all; after all it is by no means the first time such a thing has happened.

Even his father, who had hurried home with a small bottle of breast milk for his newborn son and a list of women who said they would be wet nurses for the little one, teased his wife about it gently.

"Now didn't I tell you that this often happens at first, but you worried so much about it, my dear!"

The tiny one's mother, however, was convinced that it was a true miracle!

She, of course, did not yet know that her son would grow up to be a true miracle-worker.

The parents decided to call the little boy Daniel, but everyone usually just called him Dan.

The miracles seemed to happen for him just by themselves. If he wanted to do something kind, that's exactly what happened. At first, these were just little

things, and he himself did not know how he managed to do them. But Dan knew that he really liked to do these things!

One day, for example, his mother broke her favorite cup and became upset. The little magic-maker did not want her to be distressed, so he held the three broken pieces of the cup together, and they stuck together again so well that you could not see any sign that it had been broken!

The parents wondered for a long time over these insignificant miracles that happened from time to time through their little son.

All sorts of other little miracles happened with him too. For example, his friends would find candies or coloring pencils in their pocket as if by magic, and a butterfly drawn on a piece of paper would become real and flutter away off the paper...

Usually the little children who were Dan's friends accepted these miracles as something completely normal, while the grown-ups thought they were magic tricks that Dan played to impress his friends.

As all these miracles were acts of kindness, none of the grown-ups got angry with him.

Everyone was always happy when they were with Dan!

Like a sunbeam, he lit up everything around with his love! Everyone around him — children, grown-ups, and even little animals — always felt very happy in his love. Even the flowers seemed to look prettier! Birds began to sing their springtime songs even in the fall, and they would show their trust by landing on his palm when he held out little scraps of bread! Cats and dogs would come and wrap themselves round his legs, their happiness knowing no bounds when he stroked them!

As for Dan, he was never sad and never cried. And if anyone around was despondent, he would always know how to cheer them up.

If his friends were having an argument, he made sure to restore harmony between them.

To begin with, Dan did not think that he was any different from his friends. Well, maybe just a little different!

For example, he was very surprised when he realized that not everyone could easily understand what another person was thinking.

It was then that the little miracle-worker realized that there was a Great Miracle-Worker-in-Chief that people sometimes called God. And the little miracle-worker really wanted to become at least a little like Him.

As time went on, Dan learned how to always feel His Presence around him.

If Dan looked up at the sky, he would see the Smile of the Great Miracle-Worker. Or to be more precise, he did not see it, but he felt as if the Great Miracle-Worker Himself was smiling at him through the heavens!

The light of the sun, as Dan felt it, was always filled with His Warmth, Gentleness, and Joy.

And the night stars seemed to be sparkles in His enormous Eyes, in which stories about distant wonderful worlds could be seen.

The gaze of the Great Miracle-Worker was always so loving!

Another thing that Dan could feel was His Magic Hands. They embraced him, supported him, and reached right through Dan's whole being, filling him with a state of bliss!

These Hands could also point out which way to go and what must be done.

And now as soon as Dan even thought about the Great Miracle-Worker, His Presence and Love made themselves felt!

Dan found it easy to follow the Advice and Instructions of the Great Miracle-Worker.

It was thanks to these that he began to understand that it is not just for wonderment and fun that true miracles are summoned up; they must also help people to recognize something very important in life, to overcome the bad within us, and to learn to do good.

And thus it was that Dan began to try to help people around him.

* * *

There was one boy who went to the same school as Dan, but he was only in first grade. He was made to stay home by his parents as a punishment until he could recognize all the letters of the alphabet. These were written on little cards lying in front of him. But the little boy could not even bear to look at them!

There, outside, the sun was shining and his friends were out playing! But he was the only one in the whole class who didn't know the letters of the alphabet. For that he got poor grades. Many of the other boys and girls not only knew the alphabet by now, they could already read books!

Dan asked the parents if they would let him help the boy, and they said yes.

"You are the best student in school. It is so good of you to want to help him! Perhaps you will succeed in this. He has been in school for a whole year and he has not even mastered the alphabet yet!"

Dan went to the boy's room where he was met with surprise and delight.

"Why did they let you come to see me?"

"That was easy," said Dan. "I said I would help you learn the letters of the alphabet!"

"Only a miracle-worker could do that," replied the boy. "How I wish for a miracle like that to happen. Then I would be able to learn these lousy letters and go out to play!"

"I will help you," said Dan. "It's very simple to learn to read. The letters themselves are magical and they can create miracles."

Dan set out the little cards in a fan shape.

"Choose any three cards, and lay them out in front of you."

After a little bit of magic, this is what happened. The chosen letters came together as the word "cat". And a shining picture of a cat appeared in the air. It seemed to be alive! It gently waved its fluffy tail, gave a long stretch, and then — miaowed!

The two boys did the same thing again and made the word "dog", and a happy little pup jumped up and gave a playful bark!

All of a sudden, the tiresome chore of learning the letters had turned into an amusing game!

Dan explained to his friend how different combinations of letters *could* make up a word or even several words, and every time they tried it, a magical moving picture appeared.

That very same day the little boy learned to recognize all the letters! Realizing how magical they were, he soon became very keen to learn how to read!

From that time on, whenever he read a story, he would always see the magic pictures that no one else could see.

The boy grew up to become an artist, doing illustrations for story books and even for alphabet books, so that all children would learn to love reading!

* * *

One day Dan caught sight of three brothers with catapults shooting stones at a young crow. They had already damaged the little bird's wing. Now it was unable to fly, and could only try to hop away, nursing its painful wing.

Dan rushed to the rescue, standing between the brothers and the little bird.

The boys lowered their catapults.

"Why are you stopping us from playing our hunting game?!" the eldest brother said.

"You hurt the little bird's wing," said Dan. "It's in pain, can't you see that? When your father uses the strap on you, that hurts too, doesn't it? Then you shout 'stop!'."

"Now this little bird is suffering just the same, but for absolutely no reason. After all, the bird hasn't done anything wrong to you."

"How did you know that our father hits us with a strap? Who has been telling tales?" The eldest brother put his fists up, ready to give a punch.

"You just remembered it yourself, and Sam too!" said Dan, pointing to the youngest of the three.

"How do you know what someone else is thinking?" the boys asked in surprise, their anger now forgotten.

"Well, I just know!"

“Okay, prove it!”

“Alright then, think about what you would like your catapults to turn into, and I'll guess the answer!”

In a flash, instead of a catapult each of the boys was now holding a lollipop, which was the idea that came into their heads.

The boys were so amazed that they did not know what to say.

Dan gave a smile.

“It's easy,” he said. “If you do something good, it will make you happy.

“But if you think about something bad or do something bad, then you allow sadness and pain to come into your life.

“So please don't play with catapults anymore!”

With those words, Dan picked up the injured crow and set off home, the little bird nestling up to him trustingly.

Dan tried to heal the little bird's wing by running his hand over it, in the same way as he made his mother's or school friends' headaches disappear. However, the wing did not heal. The pain passed, but the wing was not restored.

“It seems that there is still a lot I do not know about healing,” Dan said. “I will take you to my father, he is a doctor. Do not be afraid!

“By the way, what shall we call you?”

“Kraa-ra!” squawked the crow.

“Alright then, Klara!” said Dan, with a smile.

* * *

Dan's father was always busy with his work and had very little spare time. When he was not out on his

rounds visiting sick children, he read books about various illnesses and how to treat them. Or else he himself would write articles on what he had discovered about how to prevent and treat children's ailments.

Dan always tried not to disturb him with trivial things. But he also knew that his father was always ready to give help and support when it was needed.

He knocked on the door of his father's study.

"Come in, Dan!"

"Father, this is Klara! She needs your help!"

When his father had finished bandaging up Klara's wing, Dan asked him: "Do you think Klara could stay with us for a while, until she gets better?"

"Sure, I don't mind, but let's ask your mother if she agrees."

"Father, there's something else I want to ask you," said Dan. "You know Sam, Pete, and Phil? Well, their father hits them with the strap, and very hard. That could make them fearful and cruel towards the weak. Do you think you could have a word with him?"

"Aha, now I get it!" said Dan's father. "When I was treating those boys, I could never understand how they could beat each other up so badly.

"Alright, I will try to make their father understand what the consequences can be when he hits them with the strap."

"Thank you, father!" said Dan. "Now I'm going to show Klara to mother!"

* * *

Mother also agreed to let Dan keep Klara at home.

As for Klara, even when she got better, she did not want to leave her new home.

And so it was that this young crow became another member of the family. In fact, it didn't take her long to learn how to say words in the language of humans.

She was a great help to Dan in the little displays that he put on for children and grown-ups quite often now. She would delight in picking little wish-notes out of a hat, fetching different objects for Dan, showing off her ability to say human-language words at the right time, and in many other things besides this. She soon became everyone's favorite!

One day, the family gathered for breakfast as usual. Klara always used to have breakfast with them too.

Later, when Dan was at school, Klara had lots of spare time when she could fly around town and hang out with the other birds.

No one stopped her from doing whatever she wanted, but what she enjoyed more than anything else was to spend time with Dan, because she learned a lot from him! She was smart and talented and really liked to learn!

Sometimes, after she had enjoyed the breakfast she had been given, Klara would ask for a little bit more. Crows, you see, have a habit of hoarding supplies of food, and Klara still had this strong habit.

Sometimes, too, Klara would fly off with the extra food she had been given and, it seems, shared it with someone else.

On this occasion Klara asked Dan's mother if she could have a large slice of bread and cheese.

"Why do you want that much?" his mother asked in a kindly voice. "It might make you fat, and then you will find it hard to fly!" she teased, holding out the bread and cheese.

"Need it!" Klara assured her in humans' language.

Then, fixing the bread and cheese more comfortably in her beak, she flew out of the window.

Ten minutes later Klara came back and asked for more.

This time Dan, too, was surprised. He decided that he would have enough time before going to school to find out why this extra food was important to Klara.

He picked up the lunch bag that his mother had made up so carefully and put it in his school bag, saying that he would go for a little walk before class.

Klara was already waiting for him on a branch just above the porch.

* * *

Klara flew ahead, showing him which way to go.

Soon they found themselves by a derelict warehouse where the roof had collapsed in several places.

Dan went inside and found a boy about the same age as him.

At first the boy was afraid, but seeing Klara, he asked:

"Is this tame crow yours?"

"Yes," said Dan. "Her name is Klara, and mine is Daniel, but everyone usually just calls me Dan."

"My name is Tom. You know something? Klara has brought me two slices of bread and cheese today! I wanted to share them with her, but she declined. That's when I understood that she is tame. How do you train her?"

"Well, she's very smart, she teaches herself everything, and she loves to do what I ask her!"

“Yes, of caws, of caws!” Klara cawed. “Klara, of caws!”

“Gee, she even knows how to talk!”

Daniel gave his lunch bag to Tom and promised to stop by again later that day after class.

Later that afternoon Tom told Dan all about himself.

Tom used to live in an orphanage because he had neither a mother nor a father. But two weeks earlier he ran away and never wanted to go back to the orphanage again. The new head turned out to be very grumpy, and life at the orphanage became terrible.

At first, Tom explained, he enjoyed his new-found freedom. He had settled in the basement of the derelict warehouse and set up his own place to live!

He proudly showed them the table, wardrobe, and bed that he had made out of wooden boxes.

However, he didn't like stealing or begging, because it was more likely that someone would find him and send him back to the orphanage. And that was the very thing that Tom feared most of all!

From that day on, Dan began to stop by at Tom's place every day after school.

The two boys quickly became friends, and Dan offered to have Tom come and live at his house.

“I think mother and father would agree,” he said.

“Just ask them first,” Tom replied. “I don't want to intrude!”

So Dan promised to have a word with his parents.

In the event, however, things turned out differently.

* * *

It was early spring, and ice floes were still floating in the cold, dark water under the bridge.

On the bridge stood a woman, alone.

Dan immediately knew what the woman was thinking. She felt unhappy and unneeded, and wanted to put an end to her life by throwing herself into the river.

Dan hurried up to her and softly touched her hand.

The woman gave a shudder, because she was already saying goodbye to everything here down on Earth.

"This must be the Angel of the Lord intervening!" she thought.

The eyes of the unknown boy shone so brightly, as if light was pouring out of them.

"What do you want, little boy?"

"I have something very important to tell you. Actually, I need your help!"

"You need my help?"

"Yes. Well, not me exactly, but my friend! Please come with me, ma'am, and I'll tell you all about it as we walk along!"

Dan took the woman's hand. His touch felt so warm in her hand that the warmth seemed to pour straight into her heart.

After the moments of utter despair that she had been going through, this surge of happiness almost brought tears to her eyes.

Dan pretended not to notice her emotions and squeezed her hand even more tightly as he began to tell her about Tom.

"Well it's like this, ma'am," he said. "He is an orphan. He was living in an orphanage, and now he has run away. He does not want to go back there, because he was treated very badly! Tom wanted to run away forever from this miserable world in which he felt alone, unhappy, unneeded, and unloved. He told me that he

wants to run somewhere far, far away, but he doesn't know exactly where."

"As a matter of fact," said the woman, "I wanted to run away too."

"Yes, ma'am, and that's exactly why you can understand him! Maybe you will find a way to love him, and he will find a way to love you!

"You can make a world full of happiness for him, and in doing that for him, you will become happy too!

"If somewhere is cold, that's where you need to light a fire to make things warm! And if you find that there is no kindness and love somewhere, that's where you need to do kind things and give love! I'm sure you can see that, ma'am."

"Yes, I can," she said. "But what if I can't make it work? Suppose he doesn't like me?"

"Let's at least try!" said Dan. "Now I guess you are feeling better than you did a little while ago standing on that bridge, right?"

At that point they arrived at the basement where Tom lived.

"Better wait here for a moment," said Dan, as he went in. "I need to go and warn him."

"Well it's like this, Tom," Dan explained. "There's a woman I found standing on the bridge. She is alone too, just like you. She also wanted to run away, see? In fact, she wanted to run away from here forever, she wanted to die. But you could help her! My parents did agree to let you come and live with us, but this woman needs you more. She really needs a son!"

"Is she poor, or sick?" asked Tom. "Well I can work! They taught us at the orphanage. I will take care of her!"

The woman, who couldn't wait outside any longer, heard what Tom had said.

"And I will look after you too, my boy," she said, tears welling up inside her. I will try to be a good mother! I have a big house...

"Perhaps you will forgive me if something turns out different than you would like?"

* * *

That day Dan was feeling especially happy about what he had managed to do!

The Miracle-Worker-in-Chief spoke to him.

"Well done, my boy! Today you have understood something very important! You can help souls find happiness, love, and wisdom, uniting them in such a way that they themselves can begin to do good to one another!

"It is from this unity in the emotions of love that souls find happiness!

"But the most important miracle will take place if you can succeed in uniting them with Me!

"If a person loves God and feels My reciprocal Love, this person will discover a greater happiness, which is more wonderful than any miracle!"

When Dan returned home, his mother was surprised.

"Where is Tom?" she asked. "I have prepared a room for him, and the table is set for dinner."

Dan told her about everything that had happened.

"I am pleased that everything has turned out so well for him!" she said. "But I am a little sad that I could not help.

"As for you, my son, you have grown up so much!"

"I had another idea, mom," said Dan. "In that orphanage there are many more children and their life

there is not very happy. We cannot take them all in at our house, but if you were to begin to teach music and singing there, we could hold concerts in town, and then many of the children might find foster parents of their own!

"Oh Daniel," said his mother. "What a good idea that is!"

And that is exactly what Dan's mother did. Not long after, very many things changed at the orphanage. Even the head, delighted by his new teacher, became a much more kindly person. And the music concerts that they gave resulted in the most magical encounters that Dan had ever dreamed about.

* * *

One day, father called Dan into his study to talk about something important.

"There's something I want to ask you, son," he said. "A new family has moved to town and they have a sick little girl. She is unable to walk after a serious injury she received four years ago. It might be possible for her to have a complicated operation, but the little girl is so weak that it would be too much for her.

"At the moment I don't know what I can do to help her. This is the saddest patient I have ever had.

"If you were to make friends with her, maybe my treatment would become more effective."

"Does she still have her legs after the accident?"

"Yes, but she doesn't have any feeling in them and she cannot move them. It is what we, doctors, call a spinal injury.

"Anyway, the thing is, if you were to make friends with her and teach her to be joyous at least a little bit...

Her name is Eliza, and she likes to read books with pictures.”

The next day, Dan picked out the most beautiful of his books of illustrated stories and set off to see the new family in town. It was summertime, and the weather was beautiful.

Dan rang the bell at the gate of the house with a plain brick garden wall. The gatekeeper opened the gate and, when his little visitor told him why he had come, led Dan through a garden with tall trees and neatly kept flower beds to the beautiful large house.

The lady of the house, Eliza's mother, opened the door.

“My name is Daniel,” said Dan, introducing himself. “My father is the children's doctor who is treating your daughter Eliza. I have come to play with her.”

“Very nice to meet you, Dan,” she said. “But unfortunately we don't allow her visitors. She is a very sensitive little girl and very seriously ill. When she sees healthy children, she sometimes spends the next several days crying or remaining withdrawn, so we try to protect her from these stressful episodes.

“Even in her specially adapted wheelchair, she refuses point blank to be taken round town to choose new toys or clothes. She feels embarrassed that she is not like all the other children and cannot run around and play.

“That is why we moved here and bought this house with the garden. But even though no one can see her, she doesn't like to go out into the garden very much.

“We just open the windows so that she can breathe the fresh air and admire the beautiful trees.”

“Okay then, but please give her this book!” said Dan, holding out his present.

"Thank you!" said Eliza's mother. "Eliza will be very pleased! She loves reading! And what lovely pictures! You are a very kind young man! Would you like some tea and cake?"

"Thank you, but no thanks. I'll say goodbye then."

The gatekeeper led Dan back, and the metal gate closed behind him with a harsh grating noise.

Dan spent the whole evening thinking about what he should do next.

"Such a beautiful house," he thought, "but it's like a prison. What should I do and how can I help Eliza if they won't even let me see her? And what would I myself do if I was unable to walk?"

All evening Dan tried to think of a solution to the situation.

Then Klara, the crow, flew in through the open window. She flew around Dan's room several times before landing opposite the boy, giving him a wily, mysterious look.

"Maybe I could try to learn how to fly!" thought Dan, admiring Klara.

Klara fluffed up the feathers on her head and neck, tilted her head engagingly, and approvingly said, "Great! Ca-a-aw!"

Dan smiled. "You like that idea?"

Well, Dan's first attempts to copy the way Klara took off, by flapping his arms up and down, were not a resounding success.

However, he was convinced that he would be able to learn to fly.

All night long Dan dreamed of himself flying. In his dreams it was easy. He just gave a little push, and before he knew it, his body was soaring weightlessly through the air! He didn't even have to wave his arms

about! All he had to do was to create an *intention* to take off, to build up some speed, and to turn to any direction, and this would just happen!

When Dan woke up, still before dawn, he found he could do exactly as he had done in his dreams. Now he could fly! What a discovery that was! It turned out to be as simple as that!

* * *

The next day Dan and Klara set off for the house where Eliza lived. Dan was walking so as not to dismay passers-by, but he was overwhelmed with the feeling of joy that he could, indeed, fly. And Klara would fly on ahead and then keep flying back to him.

When they reached the house, Dan said: "We need to find out where Eliza's room is."

Klara flew round the whole house looking through the windows. Then she landed on the sill of an open window, giving a quiet, low-pitched squawk to let Dan know that she had found the room!

Eliza was reclining in bed, holding an open book. It was the very same book that her mother had brought up to her the previous day. It was a very beautiful book, and the stories were so interesting and enchanting that Eliza was oblivious to everything, absorbed in the world of her story-book characters.

And how wonderful that was — a world where all difficulties could be overcome, and the adventures always turned out well in the end!

At that point, Eliza turned over the last page and reached the end of the book.

"If only I could stay in that magic world forever!" she mused.

Just then the crow landed on the window sill and squawked to someone outside. "Ca- aw!"

Then it turned to greet Eliza and introduce herself. "Caw! Caw! Klar-ra!"

"This is magic!" Eliza thought to herself.

And then more magic things happened. After Klara a boy appeared on the window sill flying up out of nowhere.

"Hello, Eliza!" he said. "My name is Dan, and I'm the doctor's son. And this is my friend Klara," he said, pointing at her. "Do you mind if we come in?"

"You are in already," Eliza said in amazement, pinching her arm to see if she was dreaming.

Then she remembered her manners, adding: "Was it you who gave me this book as a present? It is very interesting! Thank you!"

Dan made himself comfortable on the window sill and gave a chuckle.

"Do you mind if I call you Eliza, and you can call me Dan, and then we can be friends?"

"Well, you see, I'm not like other children," said Eliza. "I'm not well. I can't walk. You'll find me boring."

"I'm not like other children either!" said Dan. "I can do magic, although I do not know very much yet. So I think we could be friends!"

"And do you think you can cure me?"

"I don't know," said Dan. "I haven't had much success curing illnesses yet. But I want to give it a try. In any case, my father really wants to make you better too, but neither of us can do that without your help and without the help of the Chief Magician."

"The Chief Magician — who is that?"

“God. He is the One Who created everything here — you, me, the trees, the sea, the flowers, the mountains, the stars — absolutely everything!”

“Well, I say my prayers every day, but it doesn't help. I suppose He cannot hear me. Or maybe I do not deserve to have my prayers answered?”

“No, that's impossible!” said Dan. “He can hear and understand everything! He answers everyone's prayers, but we need to learn to understand His answers! Don't you know, Eliza, that He is the Miracle-Worker-in-Chief? Have you never felt His Gaze, or the Touch of His Magic Hands? Have you never felt His Breath fanning cool air in the heat, or warmth in the cold? Have you never felt His Fatherly Care? He can chide us for our mistakes and help us to understand how to put them right! We always have something to learn from Him! In times of trouble or danger He always stands behind us, saying 'Do not be afraid, for I am with you!'”

“Have you never felt any of this?”

“No, never,” said Eliza sadly, and a little irritated.

Then suddenly a Wave of Light swept over her!

“Oh yes, now I remember!” she said. “I saw Him when... well, when all that bad stuff happened to me. He told me that my parents would die of grief if my body did not come back to life. And there's something else He told me too, but then I couldn't remember exactly what it was. Yes, what you are telling me is true! That's great! How could I have forgotten?”

“And what about you, what other magic things can you do?” she asked.

“Well, I'm still learning from Him at the moment,” Dan replied.

"You are learning from God?" "You can talk to God? You can ask Him something, and He will hear you and answer?"

"Of course!" said Dan. "And so can you! We are all His children! He has granted us wonderful opportunities which we can learn to make use of! And we can help each other to learn!"

"Oh there's no way I can do anything to help anyone," Eliza said. "And as for helping me, there's no one who can do that."

"What do you mean?" asked Dan. "You have already helped me. You have taught me how to fly!"

"Me? I taught you how to fly?"

"Of course!" replied Dan. "Yesterday I spent the whole evening wondering what life would be like for me if I could not walk. And now I have learned to fly thanks to you and Klara!"

"Show me, then!"

Dan suspended himself in mid-air, then had a little fly round the room, stopping alongside Eliza's bed.

"Do you think I could do that?" asked Eliza.

"Let's give it a try!" said Dan.

But Eliza was not able to take off, however much she wanted to.

"Nothing ever works for me when I try it," she sighed sadly.

"Don't say that!" said Dan. "Do you think things always work for me at the first attempt? We have to learn — that's exactly what we're here for!"

Klara flew up to the bed and perched on the headboard to join in the conversation.

"Caw, caw, caw, caw," she squawked. "Again, again, try again!"

"Did she just tell me something?" Eliza asked.

"Yes," said Dan. "She explained that learning is always a gradual process. Young birds have wings, but even they have to learn to fly."

"Do you think she will mind if I stroke her?" asked Eliza.

"Ca-aw!" murmured Klara, hopping closer to let Eliza stroke her neck.

* * *

By now, Dan was going to see Eliza almost every day. She had told her parents about Dan, and seeing the change that had come about in their daughter, they were very pleased that Dan had become friends with her.

"Eliza," Dan said, one day. "I have been trying very hard to think of a way of curing you. But a great deal will depend on you yourself. I know that I have to teach you to shine and smile with the spiritual heart. When love blossoms in our hearts like a beautiful flower, that is when God settles in them and rejoices. From that heart He smiles on other beings! And that is when you, too, smile and rejoice together with Him! For then in your heart you begin to live, to live with Him! It is an amazing feeling when you and God are together!

"Let's try something," Dan continued. "Let's imagine that inside each of us shines a little sun, and its rays can touch everything, but in a very subtle and gentle way."

"Like what happens to you, do you mean?" asked Eliza.

"It's great that you can see that!" said Dan. "That means it will work for you, too!"

And indeed, Eliza was able to feel the love and warmth of the little sun within her, and she was suffused in the Wave of His Happiness and Joy.

"This is awesome!" she said.

"And now try to shine your light on everyone around you. Shine it on Klara, on me, on your mother, on your father.

"But mother and father are not here!" Eliza protested.

"That doesn't matter," replied Dan. "The rays from your little sun will send this love over any distance!"

Eliza began to try, and she succeeded!

"Not long ago," Dan explained, "I realized that no matter how much magic I did for others, the true miracles began only when each of them discovered within themselves this ability to *give love*. It is like giving and receiving presents. It is nice to receive presents, but when you give presents to others, that is even nicer!"

"But it has been a long time since I gave anyone presents," Eliza pointed out.

"Then we must do something about that!" said Dan. "Listen, I have an idea: let's hold a birthday party for you! You will give presents to your guests, you will smile at everyone and shine your light on them with the sun from your spiritual heart! And these toys here, perhaps you could give them as presents?"

"But my birthday was three months ago!"

"That was not your real birthday!" said Dan. "That was just an ordinary day ten years from the day that you came into the world in this body. We will hold a real celebration to honor your return to life and to joy! You will give out gifts and happiness to the other people!"

“Great!” said Eliza. “I like that idea! But who shall we invite? I don't know anyone here except you!”

“We shall invite children from poor families who have not been to a birthday party for a long time,” said Dan. “Are you happy to give them your toys? Are you sure you won't regret giving them away?”

“Of course not!” Eliza said.

“That's wonderful then! I will talk with your parents, and you must do the same! We will get everything organized!”

* * *

Dan decided not to delay talking to Eliza's parents, and did so that very day.

“Could you give Eliza a horse for her birthday — a real horse? I will teach her how to ride. I will sit behind her and keep hold of her. I will be very careful, and she will be able to see and learn so many interesting things!”

Eliza's parents were taken aback by this suggestion.

“No, Daniel!” they said. “That is very dangerous. Suppose something happens to make her condition worse.”

“On the contrary, it will help to cure her!” said Dan. “Why not ask my father?”

“Alright,” they conceded. “We will give it some thought!”

“But don't tell her anything about this beforehand,” Dan asked, as if they had actually agreed. “Let it be a surprise!”

It did not take Eliza's parents long to make up their minds. The transformation in their daughter since her friendship with Dan had been so great that they decided

to take the risk. They asked the doctor, Dan's father, and he agreed that it would benefit the little girl.

And so the party began.

At first, the children who had been invited were a little shy of the new surroundings and of the fact that Eliza could not walk.

But Dan very quickly entertained everyone with magic tricks, and by guessing what people were wishing or thinking. And Klara was such a great help that any sign of shyness or awkwardness all but disappeared.

Then there was tea with birthday cake and candies.

After that, Eliza invited everyone to choose whichever toy they liked as a present. However, one little girl chose not a doll, but a book — the very book Dan had given Eliza.

"Can I have this?" she asked.

Eliza was a little hesitant, because that book meant so much to her. But then she lit up with an affectionate smile from the heart.

"Of course!" she said. "Please take it!"

"You managed to do it! This was the best present that you have given out of all of them!" Dan whispered in Eliza's ear.

At that point her father took Eliza by the hand, and everyone went out into the garden.

Waiting there was a white horse, their gift to Eliza.

Everyone took turns to have a ride, with Dan taking the horse by the bridle. Everyone was so happy!

And happiest of all was Eliza, for now she could go everywhere with Dan!

That evening Eliza's parents gave each other a hug. Mother wiped tears of joy from her eyes. It had been four years since they had seen their daughter so happy!

* * *

From that day on, Eliza's life changed dramatically. Dan taught her to ride horseback. Each time they rode a little further, sitting astride the horse together with Eliza in front, and Dan behind giving her a little support.

Eliza saw the forest, the river and two lakes close to the town. She became stronger and suntanned, learning to enjoy the sunshine, the trill of the birds, the beauty of the morning, and the calm of the evening.

Dan's father made arrangements for the girl to have the operation. Her health had improved markedly, and now it was considered that everything would pass off well.

The day before she was due to go to the hospital for the operation, Dan and Eliza set off on a horse ride.

As usual, Klara accompanied the youngsters, flying along in front.

They came to a clearing of daisies and bluebells.

"Please pick some of these flowers for me!" said Eliza.

"No, Eliza!" said Dan. "Each of these flowers has only one stem connected to the root which gives it life. I don't want to pick them, for then they will die."

Eliza blushed with shame.

"Oh, I didn't think about that," she said. "I'm sorry! I have seen and read about people giving flowers, and I thought it was okay."

"Yes, that's what lots of people think," Dan replied. "But we should not pick them just to give someone a gift. Unfortunately, when people are in good health, rich, and everything is going well for them in life, they stop feeling the misfortune of others and the pain of other living beings. They give a small coin to beggars on the way to church, thinking that they have done a good

deed. Then they carry on with their lives, without reflecting upon the fact that the good which each person *can* contribute to the world amounts to much more than a small coin!

"When you get better and all your sadness and difficulties are a thing of the distant past, you will never be like that, Eliza, will you?"

"I will try not to, Dan!" she replied.

"There's something I want to tell you," she said. "Today I dreamed that the two of us were flying. Does that perhaps mean that I will not survive the operation?"

"How can you say such a thing? You have already learned how to be brave. Give me your hand, now we will fly together!"

This time it worked for Dan. He was strong enough to enable both of them to take to the air together, so they took off and soared up over the clearing, over the trees, and over the lake.

Then they returned home slowly, aware that the Great Miracle-Worker Who had given them the miracle of that day was always with them, and that together with Him, any miracles were within their powers!

* * *

And so now we will bring to an end our story about the boy who could do magic. Eliza had her operation, and she was subsequently restored to full health and able to walk again.

When they became adults, Eliza became Dan's wife and assistant in his amazing magic performances with which they travelled the world. For Dan never stopped learning, and he became a true Miracle Worker. It was their love that constantly helped them to perform true

Great Divine Miracles and teach other deserving people to do the same!