

## The Ring

By: Hazel Gay Lee © 2013

All of her life everyone had taken from her. Her mother was a young teenager when she was conceived. Her family disowned her mother when they discovered she was pregnant. Her mother's boyfriend wanted her to get an abortion, but she wouldn't. She gave birth to her baby and named her Summer Eve because she was born in the evening on a hot summer day. What should have been Summer Eve's time was cut short by a mother too young to be a mother. She took the responsibility at times but she came first and her baby just grew.

Everyone took care of Summer Eve. Her mother left her here and there but nowhere that Summer Eve could call home. Her mother came and went. Her grandparents had walked away and never saw her. Her father left her too. First he did not want her, but he did visit Summer Eve a few times before beating up her mother and the police taking him away. He swore he would never be back. He kept his word, and during this time Summer Eve continued to grow.

As Summer Eve got older she could hear and understand what people were saying around her. Sometimes her mother left her with complete strangers and other times with people who also came and went out of her life. These people were angry at her mother. They were angry that they had to take care of Summer Eve. They openly expressed their anger in front of her. As they talked, Summer Eve got angry too. She was angry at her mother for leaving her with people who did not want her. She was angry at the ones taking care of her for not wanting her either. She was angry at her father for not coming to get her. She was angry at her grandparents for abandoning her. She was angry at everyone around her. As she grew her anger grew within her. She trusted no one. She bonded with no one. She belonged nowhere and to no one.

As a teenager Summer Eve went to live at a shelter for lost children. She had been lost her entire life. The shelter was no different than the other places she had lived. Every room was shared with someone else. Everything belonged to everyone else. Donations went to the first person who could grab them. It was a fight just to get her basic needs so Summer Eve learned to fight to survive. She did not have much, but what she owned was hers. Her entire possessions could fit into one small trash bag. She felt cheated and angry that everything she should have had was taken from her.

Summer Eve knew she had been cheated because while she grew she looked around her at the other children her age and saw what they had. Some children didn't have much but they did have a mother or father or grandparent who picked them up, played with them, and gave them big hugs. Other children had everything. They had a mother, father, and grandparent that cheered, bought lots of toys and pretty clothes, and packed yummy treats for them to eat. The girls had bows in their hair, braces on their teeth, and shoes that sparkled. The boys had nice clothes, cool backpacks, and wonderful skateboards. They all had something Summer Eve never had. They had everything she never had. Summer Eve was angry at the children for having what she wanted.

When Summer Eve was sixteen she was walking through the city park when she noticed something shiny in the grass. She reached down to find a ring. It was a boys ring with a wide gold band. In the center of the band was a diamond about the size of a small button. Four prongs held the diamond in place. As she moved the ring through her fingers the sunlight caught a rainbow in the center of the diamond. The rainbow in the ring was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen. It was her first time to touch something so pretty and valuable. She looked around but she did not see anyone. The ring was lost. She was lost. It was meant for her to find it. She put the ring on but it was too big for her finger. Summer Eve was still growing and certain that she would grow into the ring for it to fit. The ring was her first treasure to call her own. For the first time in her life, Summer Eve felt happy. The rainbow in the diamond made her happy. The ring made her happy. She liked feeling happy.

Since Summer Eve could not wear the ring without the chance of losing it, she hid it in her bra for safekeeping. Just having it next to her heart made her feel joy. She never told anyone about finding the ring. When she was alone she would take out the ring and look at it and try it on again just in case her fingers had grown. Everyone at the shelter noticed a change in Summer Eve. She still showed a lot of anger but once in a while they saw her smile. She also seemed happy at times, calmer, more content. They had no idea what was changing her, but they definitely noticed something was.

Summer Eve eventually got a job and left the shelter. She found a small apartment to rent attached to a private home. It wasn't much but it had a bathroom, a tiny kitchen, a bedroom, and a private entrance with a locked door. Finally Summer Eve had a place to call home. She did not have to hide the ring

anymore. She took it out of her bra and put it into a box for safe keeping until she could wear it.

Summer Eve's mother continued to come and go in her life. When she visited she only wanted to talk about her problems and never asked about Summer Eve. She wanted Summer Eve to feel sorry for her. Summer Eve felt nothing for her except anger. Her mother wanted to blame everyone else for what she did or did not do. She never asked how Summer Eve was doing. Everything was about her. Every time she came to visit she left Summer Eve feeling rejected, abandoned, and hurt again. Thankfully, she didn't visit often. Summer Eve did not want her to come at all.

On one particular visit her mother made her so angry that Summer Eve told her to leave and never come back. She was tired of her mother's excuses but she was the only family she had. Now Summer Eve was really alone. She was so angry at her mother that she went to get the ring. She wanted to look at the rainbow that always made her happy. In the box it was waiting. It had been awhile since Summer Eve had taken the ring out to look at it. She slid it on her finger. To her astonishment, it fit.

The ring fit! For the first time she could wear the ring without fear of losing it. She had finally grown into the ring. Summer Eve felt joy. The beautiful ring with the rainbow in the diamond was making her happy. Now she could wear it wherever she went and look at the rainbow anytime she wanted. She would be happy forever, but Summer Eve was deceived.

The ring was beautiful and the rainbow did make her feel happiness but the ring was on the outside and on the inside Summer Eve was still full of anger. Her anger went back to the day she was conceived. Anger had molded her, consumed her, and robbed her from allowing anyone to get close to her. Her anger prevented her from trusting or loving others. She could not tear down the walls she had built around her. Anger had isolated her, made her feel cheated, and controlled her heart for far too long. Her anger was real, and although the rainbow in the diamond was also real, it could not take away the deep inner feelings that had scarred her life.

Summer Eve was at work one day when a woman came in to buy a plant. The lady was a little older than her. The florist was busy so Summer Eve offered to help her. The lady said that her name was April. She was looking for a plant for a child about the age of ten. She wanted a bear to go with the plant to brighten the little girl's heart. As Summer Eve talked with April she learned that the child was sick. Together they picked out a green plant and a white bear with

a bright pink ribbon and bow. When it came time to fill out the sentiment card, April started rambling through her purse looking for the child's name. Summer Eve was shocked.

"Don't you know this girl?" asked Summer Eve.

"No," replied April, "I heard about her through a friend of mine and I just want to make her feel better."

Summer Eve didn't know what to say. She had never met anyone like April. Everyone in her life took from her or wanted something. She had never met anyone who wanted to give, and especially to a stranger.

Weeks passed and April made several more visits to the flower shop for plants and bears. Each visit Summer Eve found herself drawn more and more to April. She was shopping for another child, another story, someone she wanted to cheer up. Summer Eve wondered what these children had done to deserve April in their life. She wished she had had an April in her life when she was a child. It made Summer Eve feel cheated again. "Life isn't fair and it never will be fair," she thought. Yet, she found herself drawn to April. She wanted to learn more about her. These feelings confused Summer Eve. She had never let anyone in her heart before. Trusting someone was foreign to her, but she began to trust April. April made her feel happy. Only the ring had made Summer Eve feel happy and these feelings for April were confusing. At first she did not know how to respond but gradually Summer Eve took down her walls and opened up her heart, allowed herself to feel love for April. April was her first friend and it felt good to finally have a friend.

One evening Summer Eve invited April to her house for dinner. They had dined out several times, had gone other places, and April had fixed dinner for her a few times. Now it was Summer Eve's turn to be the hostess. She did not know how to cook very well, but she knew how to roast a turkey with all of its fixings. She got out the ingredients, put on her apron, and took off her ring so it would not get dirty. She placed the ring on the counter above the sink and got busy cooking. When the turkey and side dishes were done she set the table and poured the wine. Then she heard April knocking on the door.

"It smells delicious in here," said April as she entered the room. In her hand was a cake she had brought for dessert. Summer Eve thanked her for the cake and told her to put it on the kitchen counter. Then Summer Eve excused herself to use the restroom.

When Summer Eve returned to the kitchen April was standing at the sink, the cake was on the counter, and April was trying on Summer Eve's ring. She

had washed her hands and saw the ring above the sink and just wanted to look at. She didn't want the ring for herself, but she had admired it many times on Summer Eve's hand. The ring was too small and did not fit April's finger. She had it on the tip of her finger and was moving it around. Summer Eve could see April admiring the rainbow in the diamond.

When Summer Eve saw April touching her ring she instantly was outraged. All the anger inside of her boiled to the surface and exploded. She was sure April was trying to steal her ring. April told her that she was only admiring the ring and did not want it for herself. She had no intentions of taking it. She told her that she was sorry for touching her ring. Summer Eve could see that the ring was too small for April, but her anger had taken over. She told April that she never should have trusted her. She knew better than to trust anyone. April was not her friend. She wanted her out of her life. She wanted her to leave.

April had already handed the ring to Summer Eve. She told her again how sorry she was for touching her ring. Her intention was not to hurt Summer Eve or make her angry. She went to get her purse to leave but by this time Summer Eve had the ring in her hand and was admiring the rainbow in the diamond. It calmed her and made her feel happy. She stopped April at the door and asked her to stay for dinner as planned. She was sorry she had blown up. Maybe she had overreacted and misunderstood the situation and April's intentions. She was sure they could work through the misunderstanding and still be friends.

April loved Summer Eve and wanted to save their friendship so she agreed to stay for dinner. They ate, but there was tension. They both could feel it. They were careful what they said to each other. April had never seen anger and rage like Summer Eve displayed. Summer Eve had instantly put up her emotional walls and still wasn't convinced that April could be trusted. All the doubts and insecurities from her past had been awakened. The trust issues that she struggled with were back. She wanted to believe April and stay friends, but her past was causing her to doubt. Dinner finally ended and April left. They both felt relieved to have the tension end.

Summer Eve cleaned up the kitchen and put away the last dish. She went to get her ring from the sink countertop, but the ring was not there. The ring was gone! Summer Eve had been right all along. April was stealing her ring!

All the anger that Summer Eve had within her began to overflow. How could she have been such a fool! April was a fake, an evil person like everyone else in her life. She had fought demons within and without just to survive. Then

came along April. She was the first person who she opened up to and trusted. The first person who seemed to care about her. The first person she felt love for. Summer Eve was outraged! She was beyond anger. She was furious at April for deceiving her. She was angry at herself for being a fool to believe and trust April. All the demons she had fought so hard to control were awakened and boiling within her. The ring was the only thing that brought her happiness and could calm her and now it was gone. Her anger turned into uncontrollable rage. Her beautiful ring was gone! Summer Eve grabbed her purse and started to walk. She didn't know what to do. She had to get her ring back. Whatever it took, she had to get it back.

April was surprised to find Summer Eve standing at her door. Summer Eve began yelling, ranting, and acting crazy. She kept telling April that she was a liar, a thief, a terrible person. April did not know why she was so angry. Summer Eve told April to give her back the ring that she had stolen. April insisted that she did not have the ring, reminding Summer Eve that she had handed it to her before they sat down to eat. Summer Eve began hitting April. She called her names like a whore, a bitch, a tramp, the devil, and the worst kind of thief. April kept telling Summer Eve that she did not have the ring while trying to protect herself from her angry fists. Summer Eve told her that she not only wanted the ring back, she wanted April to suffer for taking the ring from her.

Despite April insisting that she did not have the ring, Summer Eve continued to attack her. In a fit of rage she pulled April into the kitchen, grabbed the largest knife she could find, and dug it deep into April's heart. She stood back and watched April trying to save herself as blood poured out of her heart. Summer Eve did not feel anything for April except rage. She watched as April begged for her help and mercy, but Summer Eve would not help her. As April was taking her final breathe, Summer Eve looked into her eyes and said, "You're getting what you deserve."

When April was dead, Summer Eve searched her body, apartment, clothing, and purse, but she could not find the ring. She must have hid it somewhere on her way home, thought Summer Eve. Now the ring was lost forever. Summer Eve didn't know what to do. Her happiness was gone forever.

Summer Eve left April on the kitchen floor with the knife still in her heart. She locked the door and went home. She was exhausted, but she felt no remorse for what she did to April. "She deserved what she got," Summer Eve said to herself. Her anger was still raging within her. When she arrived home, Summer Eve undressed, showered, and washed her clothes that was soaked

with April's blood. Piece by piece she threw the bloody clothes into the washer. She threw the bloody apron she was still wearing from dinner into the washer too. As she threw the apron into the machine her ring fell out of the apron's pocket and into her hand. Summer Eve's beloved ring that brought her so much happiness was found, but it was covered with April's blood. Then Summer Eve remembered. She had slipped the ring into her Apron pocket after April had handed it to her before dinner instead of putting it back on the kitchen counter. April had told her the truth. She had not taken the ring. The ring was in Summer Eve's possession the entire time she was stabbing April. She had killed her friend for nothing.

Still absorbed with anger and lack of remorse, Summer Eve slipped the bloody ring onto her finger. She moved the ring this way and that way but she could not see the rainbow in the diamond. April's blood was covering the diamond and the rainbow could not shine through.

All her life everyone had taken from her. Now in her death April was taking away the only thing that made her happy. Her precious ring, covered with April's blood.

The end