

My grandpa once told me that if you listen carefully, and pay attention, you can hear your guardian angel intervening in your life. And with patience, he insisted, good things will happen. The accidental things we attribute to dumb luck or fate, may not be so accidental after all.

Grandpa also told me that it's better to tell the truth, and face the consequences, than it is to tell a lie—except, of course, for the harmless, often necessary, little white lies. You know which ones I'm talking about. They're the kind you might tell the school's crossing guard; like when you tell her that her pink-flowered pajama bottoms really are a great fashion choice. Or the kind you might tell your favorite uncle, like when his thinning hair looks great in that style held together by globs of misplaced gel.

Having said that, I'm putting on my serious hat, and I promise not to lie. But, I have to tell you, this is not going to be a sappy, heartwarming Christmas story. It won't make you feel all gooey inside so you'll want to run out and hug your neighbor. Nor does it have a super-mushy ending where a bumbling angel exposes himself in order to sound a bell, or grow some wings. Nope, it's not like that at all. I will tell you however, that this promises to be a completely different kind of Christmas caper.

But let's talk about me for a second. Kind of a quick selfie-in-prose you might say. You see, I was a bit of a precocious child growing up, always seeming older than my actual age. This was because I was always surrounded by adults and older kids. So, at the time, I was probably nine going on twenty-nine. My sarcastic sense of humor often came off as brash, and probably gave the impression I was rude or uncaring.

Not so. I did care, about a lot of things, just some more than others. And, as the eldest girl in the family, of my generation, I think the younger kids looked up to me. Yet, despite this, I certainly wasn't prepared for this kind of Christmas adventure. Though some of the memories may be a bit hazy, the fear I experienced, waking up the way that I did, remains etched in my mind. For it is still one of the scariest moments of my life...