

## New Beginnings

They first met at Uni. They had much in common including their thirst for knowledge, and dry sense of humour.

Ellis had been a protected only child. She had been bullied at school for being a geek, but her intelligence enabled her to rationalise the unkindness. She would visualise the cutting words flying over her head into the atmosphere (which she reminded herself was approximately 80% nitrogen and 20% oxygen, with a bit of carbon dioxide and water vapour thrown in).

Ethan conversely was brought up a strong independent lad. His parents were determined he should rely on no one. He was named after Ethan Edwards, the superhero from a Marvel comic book. That Guardian Protector was able to shapeshift into virtually any form he could imagine, and Ethan had inherited the courage and confidence of his namesake.

Just one week into their course the lecturer was discussing stomach acid. Ellis informed the class that she had been experimenting to prove that Stomach (hydrochloric) acid was strong enough to dissolve metal (a razor blade to be specific).

Ethan was smitten from that moment. Firstly, that she was interested in such things, but mainly because she was tenacious enough to test the theory. From that moment, like the north and south poles of a magnet, they were drawn together.

They had in-depth discussions about the environment. They laughed, they listened to music, from classical to rock. They would test each other's knowledge of their favourite tv shows.

'How can I be a gynaecologist? I can barely look a woman in the eye.'

'Raj – Big Bang Theory.' Laughter.

'You're in a triangle Feeney'

‘Eric Mathews – Boy Meets World.’ More laughter.

They agreed they would never drive (too damaging to the environment) or have children (why would anyone want to bring a child into this uncertain world?) Life was good.

Two years passed; Ellis appeared distracted. ‘Ethan, I had a strange dream. A beautiful woman spoke to me about Angel Numbers, specifically the number twenty. I have looked it up, it represents new beginnings.’

‘Are you for real? What has happened to you lately?’

‘As a scientist you know the importance of keeping an open mind, how will you learn anything new with that attitude?’

‘Remember Dawkins’s philosophy? By all means let’s be open-minded, but not so open-minded that our brains drop out.’

Ellis’s lips tightened and her eyes narrowed. She was surprised at herself for even giving such ideas a moment’s thought.

The following day she said that she had found a spiritualist church and that for purely investigational reasons, she wanted to visit. He reluctantly agreed to accompany her.

They sat in the back row of the small cosy church, watching curiously as an elderly lady with a kind face recited a prayer.

They were invited to sit quietly and send healing thoughts to the world. ‘Well, that isn’t going to harm anyone, so let’s go with it.’

Ethan slowed his breathing down. As he relaxed, a small golden globe appeared, settling on the blue curtain above the altar. He blinked hard and glanced across to see if Ellis had noticed. She was sat unmoving, hands in her lap, eyes closed.

The globe grew larger and gently floated to the floor, where it vibrated and gradually transformed into the shape of an Angel. Ethan couldn’t move. His body filled with intense heat, he was overcome by a sense of total

peace.

The Angel gently placed her hands onto Ellis's stomach, which began to glow. A pink bubble materialised with what looked like a tiny baby inside.

Ethan was stunned. He didn't hear one word of the spiritual philosophy which followed, nor the messages given from loved ones in spirit via the medium.

He decided to keep his experience to himself. Perhaps he had fallen asleep and dreamt it (but he hadn't, he had pinched himself and felt the pain) he was so confused.

'What did you think of the evening?' Ellis herself wasn't convinced.

'Well, nothing was specific, and there was no convincing evidence. I'm not *totally* closed off to the idea of life after death, but nothing I heard tonight convinced me.'

Ellis's looked down in disappointment, but she reluctantly agreed.

A week later Ethan came home to find Ellis in tears.

'What's wrong?'

'I don't know how to tell you; our lives are ruined' she sobbed as the words got stuck in her throat.

Ethan abruptly left the room.

'Please Ethan, we need to talk.'

He returned, handing Ellis a small package wrapped in white tissue tied with pink ribbon. The label read, 'Angel Number 20'

'You don't understand Ethan'

'Oh, but I do.'

She unwrapped the small package, to reveal a tiny pair of pink baby socks.

‘Ellis, don’t worry, it’s our new beginning. All is well’