

## **BREAKING THE SILENCE.**

Jenny sat quietly. Everything depended on the outcome of the conversation. Her loved ones had told her that everything would be all right, but Jenny's doubts continued. Then the doctor walked in.

'As you would expect, discussions have been had, and we've carried out further investigations.'

There was a pause as the doctor waited to see whether Jenny was ready to take the news. 'The result is positive,' he said. Jenny was speechless. She wanted to speak, but the words remained in her head, refusing to make that journey from brain to mouth. This wasn't unusual. Jenny habitually self-censored, so that the drawbridge remained closed, her thoughts locked inside the castle's keep, not being permitted to float across the water to the world outside.

Although Jenny's words did not cross the moat, water did appear, running down Jenny's face. These tears expressed the emotion that she was trying to keep locked away.

'Thank you,' she said, before the doctor could say any more. 'You have left me speechless. I shall see you tomorrow.'

As Jenny drove home, she went past familiar surroundings, reflecting that, after living in the same town all her life, she would not see it beyond the next few months. Driving past the old Post Office, Jenny remembered how much she had enjoyed sending presents to her nieces at Christmas. She loved to watch the delight in their eyes, as they opened their gifts from Santa. Last year, she had heard the children reading Christmas stories themselves for the first time. She hoped that, when they discovered the truth about Christmas, they would not be too disappointed, understanding that adults had told them tales to bring them happiness.

Jenny sat at home, waiting for her husband, Rob, to arrive. Rob loved their home town. Then she heard the sound of Rob's key in the front door. Her heart sank as she prayed that she would be able to tell him the news. Listening to the sound of Rob's footfall as he approached the living room, Jenny asked herself, 'Why is it so easy for Rob's feet to march along when my words, so often, remain stubbornly locked away?'

'Well?' said Rob. On this occasion Jenny's mouth opened.

'The answer is 'Yes'. Dr. Richard, the professor of the Philosophy Department, has told me that I have been accepted. I'm going to be a lecturer at the University of Washington. It means that we're going to leave this town and start afresh.' There was still doubt in Jenny's voice.

But Rob cast that doubt to one side, stepping forward to hug and kiss the only woman he had ever truly loved. 'I love you so much!' he said. Then Jenny cried again. It was the second time she had cried with happiness that day. Rob had made a discovery, as children make discoveries when they find out the truth about Father Christmas.

As adult readers, we can also make discoveries. But not until we reach the story's end.