

Find Your Four-Leaf Clover

- Linda Fitzpatrick

When I think of Ireland, I think of my great grandfather. I'm not sure why he is the person who comes to mind since he wasn't any more Irish than my grandparents. Perhaps it is because he was the oldest in the family; his blood traced the farthest back to our heritage. Nonetheless, when I think of my great grandfather, who died a few years ago at the age of one hundred, I think of a dream of his fulfilled, and one that our whole family was able to experience. I think of April 14, 2012, when my great grandfather threw the first pitch at Fenway during the stadium's 100th Anniversary weekend.

This was a dream that had been talked about for years. In a way, it became as much a dream of mine as of his. I grew up imagining the day he would stand on the mound. The idea brought such hope to my imagination and to my understanding of dreams. In the weeks leading up to April 14th, my great grandfather practiced with a personal trainer regularly, but, when the big day was seemingly in reach, he became ill. My whole family was concerned, would he make it to the mound? He was determined. Nothing was going to take him away from Fenway Park on his 100th birthday.

That day was crazy. Dozens of my family members gathered at the field in celebration. My great grandfather ended up throwing two pitches, after being dissatisfied with his first. On that day, he taught me something so wonderful about life. That dreams and family matter, and that nothing, nothing happens just out of luck. No matter what we go through in our personal journeys, we should never give up.

There's a very famous plant that has taught me a similar lesson. When I think of Ireland and my great grandfather, I likewise think of the four-leaf clover. This plant is popularly known as a symbol of luck, presumably because it is incredibly challenging to find. It is said that there are 10,000 three-leaf clovers for every one four-leaf clover. Four-leaf clovers can also stand for hope, faith, and love — each leaf symbolizing one of these qualities. But I believe this “lucky” plant means even more, just like I believe my great grandfather's life and Fenway extravaganza means more than simply a dream come to life. They're both about purpose.

Four-leaf clovers are about finding fulfillment in our lives, which allows us to then pass this gift along to another. This is exactly what my great grandfather has done for me. He lived his life with purpose and in the only way he knew how, and somewhere along the way, he influenced how I want to live mine. Yes, there is a great deal of luck wrapped up in our lives and it's true that sometimes you just have to be in the right place at the right time for miracles to occur, but I don't believe that luck is always random. I think four-leaf clovers reveal themselves out from among the 10,000 three-leaf clovers for specific people. For those individuals who have or are still discovering their purpose. For the dreamers, the lost, the lonely, the hopeful — the people who take the time to look, which has become a rarity in our fast-paced, technology-addicted lives.

Today, as you wear your green attire and celebrate Saint Patrick, lie down in the grass. Let your fingers trace the plants. Focus on the green in front of you and let your mind wander through the

many thoughts that drift to your attention. Take a much-needed pause from the crazy rush of the 21st century. Live like a child for a moment — with quiet wonderment and true freedom. Don't stop. Your luck, faith, hope, love, and purpose will come. And as you become a great grandparent yourself, keep looking for four-leaf clovers, in the grass at your feet or among the individuals in your family. Luck, faith, hope, love, and purpose can be found in all shapes and sizes, just as long as you open yourself to the possibility of discovery. Your four-leaf clover is waiting to be found. I now realize my great grandfather has been mine all along.

Happy St. Patrick's Day!