

Never Look Back

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She looked back. She didn't know why, but something compelled her to and he was standing there. She didn't feel surprise; it was like she knew that he would be there. His head is bowed deep in thought, thoughts about her she knew, how could it be any different? Why should it be after all this time? He is still as much a part of her as he had ever been, and time seems to make no difference to that. What is time anyway but the futile man-made measurement of eternity?

He looks up and his eyes lock directly onto hers and she feels that nothing has changed between them. The intimacy, the belonging, and the love are still so obviously there - it is tangible. Is it shock she sees flicker across his face, or is it fear? A crazy thought considering she would never dream of hurting him, but that thought is instantly erased as she remembers how it has been for the past three years; the hurt, the pain, and the overwhelming grief of separation.

It has been hell on earth, and she knew it had to have been hell for him too because it shows in his face, and causes her heart to twist painfully. No sign of any arrogance now, maybe he has learned a few lessons in her absence, she knows that she has learned many in his. She learned that she loves him more than life, more than hope, more than love, and she will never find sufficient words to tell him like she tried to tell him in the letter she sent to him last year.

Oh God! The letter. Had she waited a few more months before sending it, she would have been divorced anyway, unable to have any kind of relationship while she was still in love with him. Her friends had chided her over that letter and the fact that she had to go and do the honest thing and spill her guts to him. That was her nature; too honest her friends told her, but dishonesty had no place between them, it was unnecessary. Nor did she want him to find out from someone else that she was married because she had already been a victim of how destructive the words of people were; that had cost them their relationship.

Now that she was immune from the hurtful words and actions of others, it seemed pathetic. Pathetic that she ever could have been a victim in the first place, but vultures don't attack those that can fight back; they pick on the weak, and wear them down, and you suffer untold agony as they eat you alive.

He had waited a whole year before trying to contact her again, and then sent three letters one after the other. Letters that said all the things that she would have given anything to hear during their twelve difficult years together. Words that would have given her the strength to stay and work things out when he had asked her to.

The best part of her had died when she left him anyway, and as the small part of her that was left did its best to kill the rest of her, she grasped at the opportunity to move on before losing the ability to even bother trying. The first letter arrived just as she returned from her honeymoon, and a Pandora's box of pain and grief closed the book on her new

marriage before it had even begun. How foolish to think that she had tightly closed the lid on that chapter of her life forever, and on him. The emotions spewed out into the reality that was her life. They spewed out and suffocated any hope of her fragile marriage ever succeeding, extinguishing easily the small fire that had begun from the fight to try to move on.

He made his way toward her and she felt like she was dying slowly because with each step he took, her life with him flashed, frame-by-frame quickly before her eyes. All the terrible things they had said to each other strung together in a freak-like oral accompaniment to the flashing scenes. She saw the beauty of their love at full bloom, then the hurt, the dismissals, the lonely nights, and the torment of the thought of other women that she knew now never had existed. She saw how the doubt, torment, bitterness, and fear had killed the intimacy between them. Odd that their soul-connection had been left strangely intact, as though it alone had the sense to know that theirs was a bond that could never be broken.

He watched her every move. He knew that he couldn't let her go, not now. He believed her to be his wife, his lover, his best friend, and his life, she had always been his life and he had almost torn out his soul with his bare hands for letting her slip through his selfish fingers. Their eyes were locked together communicating in that silent way that was so total, so them, so like they were together even when physically apart. As they moved closer to each other, there it was; the smile he loved. The one he called 'his smile'. He had never doubted her love for him, and his whole body felt like air as she stepped off the sidewalk towards him.

Then, like a bad dream when you desperately run and you really don't move; he felt paralyzed. He heard a scream and new it was his. Everything slowed as the car hit her. His soul completely left him at that instant. He felt it.

She heard him screaming her name. She recognized the sound of that old friend, pain. A tear slid silently down her cheek as she realized that there was simply not enough life left in her to do anything but let go. The past three years had drained all fighting ability from her, and the little bit that she hung on to that had kept her alive each day was just a fragile kind of hope. He bent over her taking her into his arms one last time. She touched his face. Oh how beautiful is the peace found from the knowledge that love survives everything. It was her last mortal thought as she realized that she should never have looked back.