

I'm Sorry

Part 1

By

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Any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

(Scene: fade in, ambulance interior, patients point of view, blinking at the person leaning over them)

“I’m Sorry.”

It’s the last thing he remembers saying as his world went black with the shrill wail of the siren fading from his ears and the Ambulance technician reassuring him things would be alright...

Ambulance tech (to Greg) “...it’s O.K., we’re gonna get you to a hospital, just hang on...”
(To driver): (urgently tentative) “Step on it... he don’t look good...” “(fade out)

(Scene: fade in. Outside in a park in full summer glory)

As the young couple, Greg and Anna, walk hand in hand, they playfully tease each other, joking and tickling each other in a playful way that close lovers do. Occasionally, as they laugh and joke along, they stop briefly and kiss. A peck on the cheek, a gentle press of lips and a passionate embrace before continuing on in their playful way. After wandering farther down the trail they again stop to kiss and cuddle. First a small kiss, a little peck as a father to a child, then a longer kiss, one which draws a spark of passion. They soon are quickly drawn together in a full passionate embrace and covering each other in a flurry of kisses, deep and rich, over each others face and neck. (Scene: pan right, fade)

(Scene: fade in, on an urban street a couple of cars. Pan up street, left to right)

Soon, our amorous couple is playfully racing up the street, up the sidewalk to his house, there is a giddiness about their frantic pace. With her in the lead and he following closely behind they grasp, playfully at each other as they engage in a flirtatious game of touch football.

As they reach the house, they fall together against the door in a passionate embrace, and kiss. As Greg unlocks the door, he leans away, briefly, gazing deeply into Anna’s bright hazel eyes and leans in again for another taste of her full sweet lips. As he does, she reaches down behind her and playfully opens the door, slipping back with it as it swings open, inward, away from him. As he leans in closer, and Anna steps away giggling, he stumbles into the house past her and rolls playfully, gently to the floor.

Looking up from his vantage point on the floor, Greg is delighted to see Anna smiling playfully, down at him. Slowly closing the door, she turns as she reaches to unbutton the top button of her blouse. In this instant he knew, as he watched her come playfully closer, that she was the one for him. The woman with whom he wants to share the rest of his life and all of eternity with.

As Anna drops gently to her knees beside him and begins playfully tickling him, Greg rises up, slightly, to a sit, toying with her, feigning playfully that he doesn’t want to be tickled. Slowly rising to his knees, then standing, he gathers her up lovingly in his strong arms and, kissing her gently, they go up the stairs.

(Scene: fade on lower stairs as the couple leaves the shot)

(Scene: fade in, Top of the stairs.)

As they reach the top of the stairs and turn towards the bedroom, Greg lowers Anna's feet gently to the floor and kisses her passionately, deeply. Together they walk hand in hand down the hall as she slowly undresses. (Scene: fade out)

(Scene: bedroom, fade in on couple in bed)

As the day fades to night, Greg and Anna share the exquisite pleasures of a couple in love. Embracing life, they explore the rapt sensuality of their bodies and each other, playfully laughing, embracing and making love. After several enraptured hours and with the light of day fully extinguished, they finally pause and roll apart to catch their breath. As they lay back on the bed basking in the afterglow of pleasure, Greg rolls over and draws from a drawer on the night stand a dainty black box, tied with a small scarlet ribbon. Rolling over again to face Anna, he presents the gift gently to his lover. "A gift for you, my love, for all eternity" he says with breathless anticipation, "will you be my wife?" A moment of pause as she opens the box and catches her breath at the sight of the simple, yet elegant, ring cradled within. "I.. I don't know what to say" she stammers. "Say, yes" he gently asks. "Yes!, Yes! I'll marry you!" she cries out in joyous song and throws herself at him in a bodily embrace of passion. The two young lovers fall once again to the bed and, with the renewed vigor of teenagers, make love once more before snuggling close and drifting off to sleep in each others arms. (Scene: fade out, couple on bed)

(Scene: fade in, Greg in bed on his side, covers under arms)

As Greg slowly opened his eyes, they grew accustomed to the bright light of a new day bursting into the room through the window behind him, and he felt at peace. At long last he had found someone special, someone to share his life with, and he felt whole. Slowly, he rolled over, thinking lovingly of his future wife laying beside him, the children they would have and the love and happiness they would bring. But as he gazed down at the pillow which but scant hours before had cradled the soft cheek of his fiancé, the sight that met him was a shock. It was not the sight of his lovely Anna, the beautiful woman whom he had so lovingly ask to marry him, but just the pillow, empty and blank as a fresh field of new fallen snow. The only distraction from its emptiness was a simple note. A small square pinned to the pillow, along with the ring he had given so blissfully the night before. On this small piece of parchment was written, in the elegant hand of a woman, two simple words. "I'm Sorry".

Pain, sadness, grief, confusion, anger, humiliation overwhelm him at once, finally giving way to remorse, regret, disillusionment, and depression. All his emotions took their turn that day at kicking him in the heart. He could not understand, why someone whom he so deeply loved would accept him for life into her soul, only to run away? The question stuck in his soul. Why had life dealt him such a cruel blow just as he had finally found his one true love and soul mate in life.

For the rest of the day he tried to contact Anna. He called her house, work, friends. He went to her favorite shops, their favorite places, hoping, nay praying, to find her there. To find her and ask her, why? Why had she left, what had he done wrong? His search was in vain.

Slowly, painfully, as time grew old, the days easing into weeks, weeks blending into months, months rolling together to a year, his love for Anna, though never fading, was gathered together in his heart and locked away in a special place where he would visit and briefly reminisce on occasion. Remembering the times they had, the love they shared and wonder. Wonder why she had left and how she was doing in her life.

Eventually, Greg found true love again, and married. Susan was a wonderful vivacious woman Greg met in the park one day while walking along the paths he and Anna once prowled in love and thinking of the many wonderful times they had shared together.

As time went on, Greg and Susan, and later family too, enjoyed their days together in the park. Greg would, some days, imagine he sees her, his first love Anna, in the park, at the subway platform, around town, watching him. Watching as if to see that he was all right, that she hadn't hurt him too much when she left and that his life had turned out well. But when he looks again, she is gone, departed like the image in a desert mirage that never really was.

His life was finally complete and as he had envisioned it would eventually be. A happy marriage, loving wife, two wonderful children, a good job and a comfortable home for them all to call their own. Still, occasionally, he felt Anna's presence. That she was there, somewhere, watching in the wings. The feelings come, but not nearly as often as in the past. When he does feel her presence and thinks he sees her, in the park, across the street or on a crowded subway platform, he imagines she is smiling, happy for him and for the way things turned out. And then he sinks back into the reality of his life in the present, with a silent kiss to that special place in his heart where her memory is saved for all of time.

(Scene: fade in. Park in falls golden glory, Greg, Susan walking, children playing nearby)

It started innocently enough, a touch of heartburn after a wonderful meal with the family. Greg and Susan decided to take a walk in the park, for old time memory sake, and let the children tag along for a family afternoon out. As the children played nearby, rollicking in the newly fallen leaves of the season, he walked along with his wonderful wife and thought of how precious she was to him. How he would never want to lose her to any one else, how he happily worked so hard to provide for her and the children and how they would get by if anything ever happened to him. He kissed Susan gently, telling her how much he loved her, then his world began to spin.

With Susan crying out his name, Greg crumpled to the ground unable to breathe, the weight of the world, indeed the entire universe, seemingly perched upon his chest. Tears come to his eyes as he struggles to speak his love once more to his wife and children as bystanders rush to call for help. But the words do not come, he can barely muster a wheeze. The words choked off, are left but thoughts whispered to the void of his mind.

(Scene: fade in, ambulance interior, patients point of view, blinking at the person leaning over them)

He awakens, briefly, fading in and out of consciousness, as the paramedics work on him in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. He hears the attendant on the radio, garbled bits of conversation. "... 46 year old male... walking... chest pain... heart attack... not good..." Greg realizes that his life was complete and was soon coming to an end with but one thing left undone. With every ounce of strength that he had left in his body, he wills himself to consciousness. Over the objections of the Ambulance attendant, he struggles and strains to pour out his story.

"Please....," he pleads with halted, fading breath, "please, promise me you'll tell her..." he began, "tell her how much I love her." "I promise" the attendant replied "Now rest, save your strength." "No, you don't understand" Greg stammers through the pain, "I know how bad it is... I must... must have you tell her..." He pauses, straining for breath before continuing... He tells the young man about his first love, the box in his drawer that his wife asked about once when she found it by chance. When she did, he had told her that he didn't want to talk about it, and she understood. Never asking again nor looking inside out of curiosity. He explained that inside that dainty black box, tied with a small scarlet ribbon, was a ring. A ring given to another and returned, along with a note. How his wife was in all his heart and soul but that there was also a small, special, place set aside for the fond memories of another. He pleaded for the attendant, again, to promise him that he would tell Susan, the woman he loved and cherished, all that was being spilled forth from his soul as it explained the contents of the box and the words on the note found within. The simple, yet elegant, ring and the small piece of parchment pinned to it with the words, written in the elegant hand of a woman "I'm Sorry".

"I'm Sorry."

It's the last thing he remembers saying as his world went black with the shrill wail of the siren fading from his ears and the Ambulance technician reassuring him things would be alright...

Ambulance tech (to Greg) "I promise, I'll tell her, I will. Rest now, we're gonna get you to a hospital, just hang on..."

(To driver): (urgently tentative) "Step on it... he don't look good..." (fade out)

(Scene: fade in, hospital corridor by ICU station. Susan sitting on bench, children playing silently nearby)

As Susan sat on the seat in the hospital hallway, the children by her side, she wondered frantically what was taking so long, Why were they not telling her anything. Greg had to be alright, he just had to be. When she looked down the hall and finally saw the doctor approaching, along with the hospital Chaplain and a matronly nun, she knew that what she feared the most was true. He was gone. Her life was shattered in an instant.

All she really remembers of what the doctor said were just his first two little words, “I’m sorry” before she collapsed, sobbing, to the bench. I’m sorry, the words rang hollow upon her ears. In her mind she knew he meant well, but in her heart the sting was too painful and filled her with sorrow and rage. She heard little else. Of how his heart had just given out, how they worked frantically to save him, to find a transplant, anything. Or of how they finally had to let him go.

Susan was led down the hall by the Chaplin, the Sister taking the children, to a quiet room where she could be alone to reflect and gather her thoughts. As she sat gently sobbing, wondering about the future and reflecting on the past, the Chaplin and Sister keeping the children occupied, The door to the room opened slowly, ever so slightly, and a quiet young man stepped softly inside.

She recognized him in an instant, one of the EMTs who arrived with the ambulance to help. He begged her pardon for the intrusion, explaining he was there to pay his respects and to fulfill the last wishes of his dying patient. He was there to tell Susan how much her husband truly did love her, and to tell her the story that Greg had so desperately sworn him to tell.

Susan asked the Chaplin to join them and motions for the young man to sit down. Tears of sadness and pain welled up in his eyes as the young man began to tell her how this was his first week on the job and that he had never lost any body before. How, with all his will, Greg had made him swear to tell Susan how he felt, the story of the woman, his first love, and of the small tattered box he kept in that special place in his drawer at home. When he was finished telling his story and drying the tears from his eyes, the young man stood up, excusing himself to go. Susan too stood to thank him for helping her husband as best he could, letting him know that it wasn’t his fault, and for just being there to help at all. Before he leave, Susan stopped the young man and gave him a gentle, reassuring hug in thanks for all he had done.

(Scene; cemetery, grave side service. Several dozen people)

At the grave side service for Greg, Susan furtively scanned the crowd. Looking, searching, for her. The woman who had first captured the heart of the man she loved and married. She glanced from face to face, from friend to co-worker to family. Most she recognized, his boss, the young EMT, one or two others. Others were known to her through common friends or work, but none stood out. When the service ended, the crowd filed slowly past offering their condolences and, still, she kept looking, searching for something more in their faces than sadness at the loss of a friend. Finally, as the last of the guests had left, she was alone with the children and a close family friend. Susan sent the children ahead to the waiting car along with the friend and stood alone by the grave. Saying one final farewell to her beloved, she couldn’t help but wonder if she was truly there alone.

Later, as Susan was getting into the car, she stopped. Had she heard what she thought she heard? Someone calling her name? It sounded like Greg's voice. No, a woman's voice, calling out to her, or maybe it was just the wind whispering through the late autumn trees and she was imagining things. She stood up, and turned around, looking back at the site of her husband's grave. There, bent down by the headstone, was the figure of a woman, dressed all in black and wearing a veil. Susan didn't recognize her from the funeral, and she hadn't been at the grave side service, so who was she. The woman was standing up now, and turned to walk slowly away. Was this the woman from Greg's past? She had to know, wanting to thank this mystery woman for caring, and to tell her how much her husband thought about her. Susan called out and went quickly to where she had last seen the woman disappear behind some hedges, but she was gone. Saddened, Susan walked alone back to the grave to see what the woman had done. There, beside the headstone, amongst the flowers and wreaths, was a single solitary rose. Pinned to it was a small piece of paper bearing a drawing of a simple elegant ring and, in the elegant hand of a woman, was written two simple words, "I'm Sorry". And Susan wept.

I'm Sorry

A flash of inspiration put to paper.

Based on a brief chemical fume induced inspirational flash received at work.

Dedicated to my first true love.

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September 9th, 2002 - (Original Inspiration)

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