

I'm Sorry

Part 2

Her Story

By

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Any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

I watched in stunned horror that day. So utterly helpless, silent like a fool That day in the park when a part of my past, my world, my life, crumbled to the ground. I wanted to go, to rush over to help, to be there. But I couldn't. My feet would not let me. My heart held me back. I watched in silence, in pain, as the man I had once loved, and still loved, crumpled to the ground at feet of the woman he loved, and took for a wife. I wanted to go, to rush over and tell him what was in my heart, what he meant to me. I wanted to beg his forgiveness, for the past, the pain. To simply say, I'm sorry.

Greg and I met one fall day at a small county fair in a quaint out-of-the-way town. He wasn't that much older than I and, surprisingly, we had grown up only blocks from each other. So close to each other and yet, not even knowing of the others existence. Until that day. Over the next dozen or so months our friendship grew. Our likes and dislikes, friends and families all became part of each others life. We grew ever so closer with each passing season. Friendship to fondness, fondness to affection, affection to love. Our secrets, thoughts, hopes, dreams and desires, all shared willingly. Shared out of respect and love for one another.

We often took little trips to the country, just for fun. Going to small town fairs, picnics in the park, moonlit walks on the beach. Sometimes just for the day, sometimes the weekend. One weekend we went out for a drive in the country, late in winter, and ended up in a snow storm. We were stuck in a quiet, cold motel, so close and yet so far from home. We made the best of it though, and we were together. Together as friends, friends so in love that soon we became more, and it was wonderful. He was so gentle, so romantic, when we were together, at home or away. He even went as far as having a heart of roses laid out on the bed in our motel room one night while we were out for an evening nightcap. Always the little things, always the sweet romantic.

I loved him, I truly did. And I still do. How could I ever deceive him as I did. How could I tell him of my past, the parts I kept hidden, never to share with any one. Not even now, not even with the one man who loves me as deeply as I love him. I just don't know.

The day was bright and the sun was smiling brilliantly that summer morning. I had awakened early just to be alone. To find out for sure if what I had felt was true. As I rolled out of bed, being careful not to awaken Greg lying so peacefully next to me, I snuck the box out from its hiding place under the bed and slipped off to the bathroom. I read the instructions and waited. After what seemed like an eternity, it was the moment of truth. I couldn't bring myself to look. The results, positive or negative, how would he react. We had discussed children, how we both wanted them but we wanted to wait. Wait for his career to take off, my university to finish up. Before I could summon the will to see the answer, Greg was stirring and I stuffed the box and used test into the oversize pockets of my robe. I made an excuse before slipping out of the bathroom and walking seductively back to the bedside where Greg was waiting eagerly with open arms.

We spent the day wandering the town and enjoying each others loving company. Shopping, sightseeing, being very much in love. Later on we found our way to the park where we walked along, hand in hand like lovers sometimes do. We stop now and then to look at the flowers, the people, and to kiss. Deep. passionate kisses, and small affectionate pecks on the cheek, each exchanged so sweetly and lovingly. So full of passion we were that we soon found

ourselves playfully rushing home. I ran on ahead with Greg chasing me. I let him catch me, once or twice, just to be coy. When we reached the house we were out of breath. As Greg reached behind me to unlock the door our lips came together. Such a sweet taste, that passionate embrace. When he leaned back to put his keys away, I reached behind myself to open the door. As I looked into his big blue eyes I felt myself even more in love that I had ever felt in my life. When Greg leaned in for another kiss I playfully opened the door and let him stumble awkwardly past me, his fall to the floor like that of an well practiced slapstick comedian. As I looked at him laying there sheepishly on the floor I locked the door and went to him, in love. We began playfully wrestling, tickling each other as we had done so many times in the past. When Greg finally stood up, he swept me off my feet in his strong arms and kissed me ever so gently before carrying me up stairs, putting me down only to lead him to our chamber of passion.

We made love for hours that wonderful day. Late into the afternoon hours and on into the evening, every moment filled with sensual pleasures to be felt, explored and enjoyed. When finally we paused for a breath of air and fell back to the comfort of the bed to relax, Greg did something I had never expected. He rolled away from me for a moment and when he turned back he had a small box tied with a red ribbon in his hand. I still remember his words that night, I always will, "A gift for you, my love, for all eternity, will you be my wife?". A proposal! I was dumbstruck, what could I say, what else but to stammer out the words which I fear may have later haunted him, "Yes!, Yes! I'll marry you". We made love once again that night, the last time I was with him. My foolish mistake, which will haunt me forever to my grave.

I awoke later that night with a nagging feeling inside of me, thoughts of a task incomplete. The test, I had almost forgotten about it! It was there, in my robe from this morning, waiting. Waiting to tell me its answer, yes, or no. When I finally gained the courage to look, I slipped from the bed and off to the hall bathroom where he would not see. There I withdrew the little wand from my pocket. After what seemed like hours I finally looked. Yes, what I had suspected for the past few weeks was true. The flu, I kept telling him, just a mild cold or a bug going around. But I could no longer deny the truth. A child, but I was not ready, we were not ready. He was not ready, or was he. I didn't know, I couldn't bear the thought of asking, and being told no.

I didn't know what to do. In a panic I did what I have done in the past, when I've felt cornered, uncomfortable, unsure. I ran. I picked up what I could and left a hasty note. "I'm Sorry" is all I could think of to say. So little, to express so much emotion inside. And so I ran. I told no one, no one at all. I went to the bus station and got a ticket on the first bus out going out of town. I didn't care where it was going, just as long as it was far, far away. I couldn't bear the thought of facing Greg, I don't know why.

When I finally stopped running I settled down in a cheap motel for the night and soon was looking for a job. I made the appointment, several times. Something always came up that kept me from keeping it. By the time I had finally made up my mind and screwed up the courage to go, it was too late I was going to be a mother.

A boy, 7 pounds 6 ounces. I named him Alex, Alex James, his fathers and my fathers middle names. I don't know why, but it seemed to be the right thing to do somehow. A healthy

baby boy, with his fathers eyes and willing smile. The choices, the debates, I know not what to do. Should I keep him, only to be reminded daily of how foolish I was in running away, or give him up to be raised by another, someone who can give him all the things I can not. The endless debate raging in my mind, with no one else to help. No one else to turn to, to talk to.

A year. That's how long it took after his son, our son, was born. A year to get up the courage to go, to see him again. I went back one weekend to see him. I left Alex with a friend and just went. I guess I hoped to see him, tell him about his son and rekindle our old romance.

I went past the old house we once shared, was he still there, had he moved on, I wondered over and over. The house looked the same as I remembered it, a little less kept but the same and, yes, there he was, just leaving the front door as my taxi turned around at the corner to take me back. I had the driver stop up the street so that Greg wouldn't see me. I quickly paid and got out with the intention of going to him. But I couldn't, something inside stopped me, and I watched him walk away. Was he off to the club for drinks with friends? Work perhaps, but on a weekend? I couldn't guess, I didn't know. I went slowly up to the door, would my key still fit, would it work? Yes, it did! I thought about going in, being there when he came home, but then I caught myself. No, it's been almost two years. Had he moved on in his life, gotten over me and found a new love. I had no way of knowing. I just turned and slowly walked away.

I spent the rest of that weekend wandering the city, visiting our old haunts in hopes of seeing him again and having the courage to face him once more. I walked the park where he how strolls silently in solitary contemplation, the club where we used to hang out and dance the night away, and the train station going down town. I saw him again and again, but I could not approach, it didn't feel right some how. When the weekend was over I went back to my new life, swearing that one day, one day soon, I would make contact. I would call him to let him know I am alright. But not today. Every weekend for the rest of that month and into the next I spent in the city, trying to bring myself to see him, or just to call.

Eventually, on one of my visits to the city, I found a job and was able to move back to be near him again. But still, I could not find the courage to call. I continued to watch from afar almost every day. Our paths occasionally crossed by chance, in the supermarket, the train station, a club. But we never did speak, or happen into one another closer than across a room. How could we, I always ran away. Some times I had Alex with me, in the park or shopping, but still could not bring myself to interrupt Greg's life.

Over time, I noticed something was different with Greg. He began to seem happier. I soon saw why. He had finally found someone, someone new. Someone to replace, me. He had gotten over me and had allowed his heart to find love again. But I was not yet over him, and a small piece of me died inside that day.

I continued to watch. Days, weeks, months. I saw the announcement and was there across the street on that special day when they came out of the church on the day of their union. And another small piece of me died inside. As the days of wedded bliss passed, I watched for some sign of weakness, a fight, unhappiness, something which would allow me entrance once again into his life. But none was there. I resigned myself to seeing him from afar. I spent my

days reminiscing about what once was, thinking about what now is and wondering what might have been, had things been different.

After some time, Greg and his new wife had a son, and as he grew they went to the park as a family. Father and son, husband and wife, so happy in love, so happy in life. A couple of years later, another child, and I was still alone with Alex. Still unable to bring myself to introduce him to his father. Shawn, the new man in my life, more a friend than boyfriend, treated Alex like his own child. He knew about Greg, and understood. He even tried, in his own way, to help me find my courage. But I could not.

Shawn was with me, that day in the park. The day part of my world fell so completely apart. He is the one who comforted me, took me to the hospital and encouraged me to see him, after he had passed. All I remember is how utterly helpless I felt. How foolish I was for not going to him, seeing him sooner and telling him why I had ran. As he crumpled to the ground, so did a part of me, my life, my past. I wanted to go, to rush over to help, to be there. But I couldn't. My feet would not let me. My heart held me back. I watched in silence, in pain, as the man I had once loved, and still loved, crumpled to the ground at feet of the woman he now loved, and his family. I wanted to go, to rush over and tell him what was in my heart, what he meant to me. I wanted to beg his forgiveness, for the past, the pain. To simply say, I'm sorry. But I could not muster the strength.

Shawn found me, after the ambulance had arrived and he figured out what the fuss was about. He had Alex with him and he was all excited crying out "Mommy, mommy, what's all the noise? Where's the ambulance going?" I couldn't face him. I just couldn't, knowing what I had just seen. We went to the hospital to see how Greg was. Not good. They told me it was a heart attack, a bad one. He wasn't expected to make it. I almost collapsed and would have had Shawn not been there to catch me. A doctor came rushing over to see how I was but I assured him I was fine. They wouldn't let us near the room where Greg was while they were working on him, but after the doctor left, to speak to Greg's wife and family, I snuck over for one last look at him. He looked so peaceful in death, even with all of the hospital machinery and tubes. As I stood there, crying, all I could think of was, I'm sorry. I said it over and over again to him, to myself.

I watched as the doctor and hospital Chaplin went to her, Greg's family, to tell them what had happened. I cried with his wife as she received the news. I wanted to go to her, to offer my sympathy, but how, what would I say. I slowly melted back into the crowd to gather my thoughts. When I next saw them they were in a small room down the hall, the Chaplin, a nun the children and his wife. I watched as a young man, an EMT I saw in the park, opened the door and quietly slipped inside. He sat with the her and Priest and they spoke for a while. When he was finished, she gave him a hug and collapsed back into the chair for a long cry. And I cried. Shawn took Alex and I home and spent the night to look after him while I cried almost all night and slept little.

I watched the paper for the funeral announcement and took time off work to go. I was there at the funeral. The grave side service was beautiful. So many of Greg's friends and coworkers came out. I recognized many of them as people we both had known. Even the young

EMT was there. Greg's widow seemed somewhat uneasy, glancing around the crowd as if searching for something, or someone. Did she know about me, had he told her? I doubted it but I did keep my distance, off behind, by a big, old mausoleum.

After everybody else had left, she stood there alone, sending the children off to the car. I almost went up to her, to introduce myself and to tell her how sorry I was. To ask her forgiveness for the years of pain I had left Greg and to thank her for making him happy, in a way that I could not. But I didn't, I still couldn't. Even in death I could not bring myself to come between him and his family.

As Greg's widow finally left the grave side for the car, I stepped from the shadows. I had to leave a token of my love for the man whose child I had borne, the man I still loved. All I could think of to leave was a rose and a note. A simple piece of paper, drawn on with the likeness of the ring which he had so long ago given to me, and I returned. And the words I'm Sorry. The rose for my love, the ring for remembrance and the words which I had so longed to speak to him, but could not ever find the courage. As I stood up I heard her calling to me. It was Greg's widow, she had seen me, but how. I had to go, I couldn't let her meet me like this, one day, maybe, but not today. Not like this. I quickly retraced my steps, past the mausoleum, down the path and around the bushes out to the street where Shawn and Alex were waiting for me. As I got into the car Shawn sensed something was up and we quickly drove away.

I always swore that one day I would look her up and introduce myself to Susan, Greg's widow. But that one day never seemed to come. As Alex grew up, Shawn and I grew closer, eventually married and had a daughter of our own. Alex went on to become a doctor and Greg's other children, with Susan, both became successful bankers. I always meant to look them all up and introduce myself, especially to the woman who made him so happy for all those years. One day, maybe, one day, but not today...

I'm Sorry, Her Story

A flash of inspiration put to paper.

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

To My Beloved, Leigh Anne Stacey Clarke

Copyright

October 21st - 25th, 2002 - (Original Inspirations)

October 25th - 28th, 2002 - (First Typed Draft)

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