

Lost Justice

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A husband tries to move on after his wife passes away from cancer. But soon he discovers that her death is no accident, and the person responsible is someone that he never imagined.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE END?

I stood by her left side of this hospital bed, holding her hand as my eyes gaze into her broken soul. Those green eyes, the same eyes I have loved ever since the day we met, has now withered away into depression and anxiety from her illness. Everything inside me wanted to see her out of this place, but the longer I gaze upon her condition (the paleness of her skin, the weakness in her voice), the more my heart starts to doubt it, and it's making my every hope disappear before my very eyes.

"Please!! Please don't go!!" I begged, fighting the pain inside as I grasp her hand ever so tightly.

"I'm sorry, I don't have the strength to go on anymore" she whimpered as tears of sorrow washes over her eyes. She disconnects her gaze to look forward, and lifts her head to cover her coughs. Gratefully she stops, and rests her head back upon her pillows as she returns her gaze to mine.

"Please, take care of your self and our children, when they need you".

"Don't say that! Don't, please hold on, I-I can't go on without you".

She gently strokes my left cheek with the back of her hand.

"I'm sorry, you have too-

Suddenly her cough returns, but this time it's so bad she's struggling to breathe. I look towards the door behind me, ready to charge for help, but just in time it opens. Over a dozen doctors and nurses came storming in to our aid. They surround us, checking either the monitors or her condition. I turn back to my beloved, but sadly her eyes are closed, and even this doesn't free them to grace me once more.

"Sir you're going have to stay outside" commanded the short blond haired nurse as she steps and gently pushes my chest towards the door.

"No, wait, that's my wife-

"I understand, but this is medical procedure. You're going to have to stand outside".

Without remorse, she continues, as if her mind is programmed to only treat the physically ill, and not the emotionally scarred. I wanted to push her out the way, but I also didn't want to interfere with the surgery, so I let her guide me into this empty hallway filled with lights as she closes the door in front of me. I peek through

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the small window in the middle, hoping to get at least a glance of my beloved. But the over-crowd of white lab coats surrounding and rushing to revive her made it impossible to see even an inch of her hand. I wanted to burst in so badly I can feel my fists clinch with aggression, but no matter what, I had to hold myself back. Feeling defeated, I loosen my grip and turn away to lean my head against the door. My mind felt like letting her go, but my heart couldn't bare the thought of this. Letting the woman I loved for over fifty-two years die? It feels inhuman. It feels like something I wouldn't dream of doing, even on my worst day. But still, out of concern, I lean back up to check through the window. Now they seem to be moving a little faster than before, as if she's in danger. But I hear the heart monitor, and its beeping normally. Is something's really wrong? I have to see. I turn the knob, but it jiggles. I bang on the wooden frame outside of the glass five times, but strangely no one turns around. I bang harder, this time to the point of breaking it as I yell for help. Thankfully the same nurse rushes over and opens the door, but not without swinging it wildly as if to hit me. I stepped back, just avoiding it by inches.

"Sir stop-

I rush pass her towards my wife's side.

"Sir you can't be in here!"

I ignore her commands as I push the other doctors away to see her.

Oh no! Her head is turned away from me, and as I'm leaning over, I can still see traces of pain and sorrow upon her face. Suddenly the heart monitor goes berserk. I glance to find its red lines jumping out of control. Oh no! She's slipping into cardiac arrest! I have to save her! Suddenly something grabs my arm and pulls me away behind the doctors. I see them coming together, and I knew from the mild strawberry scented body spray that it was the nurse trying to guide me back outside, but I struggle to pull myself forward; hoping to reach my wife in time. Suddenly something grabs my lungs, and squeezes them until all my breath escapes.

"Sir, you have to leave! Come on".

I try to speak, but my voice seizes along with it. My heart is pounding like a drum as if it's trying to burst out of my chest. I turn to look ahead out the opened door and see the hallway began to twist into a blur. I hold on to the archway, and feel my legs starting to give in.

"Damn!! I don't think she's going to make it. We're gonna need penicillin here stat!!" commanded a doctor behind me.

Oh no, she's about to go. I don't think I can go on. All those years together, from the time we met, to the time we wed, to the time our children were born, all will be reduced to living the rest of my life in pure loneliness. I think, instead of fighting, I should let it consume me, just to be able to hold her hand and be by her side once again. I collapse upon the floor, feeling my back slam hard against the floor as I watch the ceiling in front of me start to fade. Even in this blur, I can still hear the same, cold hearted nurse finally racing to my side. She stops and kneels down, pressing her cold hands against my chest as her head rests between them. Within a second she lifts back up and yells:

"Hey, we have a man down out here!!!"

I hear heavy footsteps racing towards me, but now my life feels like its slipping away. I can no longer see them, I can no longer hear their voices; and for the first time I think, maybe, this is for the best.

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I slowly open my eyes when the sound of a heart monitor reaches my ears. But my eyes, they remain in a blur, hopefully they will terminate soon. I gaze around. Suddenly my vision starts to clear, and it isn't long before I can see this entire hospital room again. I turn left with a smile, hoping to meet my wife's heart warming gaze once more, but all I capture is the beeping of a lonely heart monitor standing just a few feet away from my bed. I look on top of its screen, and that's when my whole world crashed before my eyes. It's the same golden locket I gave her for her twenty-fourth birthday, hanging just inches off the screen. I gently pick it up, and lay it across all four of my fingers as I press its broken link, caused by one of the doctors, with my thumb. As I gaze at my reflection on its surface, I can feel my heart sinking into the bottom of my stomach. I can't believe it. She's gone, and there's nothing I can do to save her.

For weeks my stay felt empty and hollow. All those doctors checking those readings from the I.V.'s, all those nurses bringing me food and water, all felt empty from the little to no conversations. But even all this wasn't the worst yet to come.

Now I am hopelessly slouching on a black, folded up chair, buried in misery as dozens of relatives surround me on this cold December morning.

With their voices drenched with despair, each woman released their cries among the air, in a place I never expected to see Alice: a funeral. My eyes have been resting on her polished, oak wooden coffin this whole time, and with every passing second, I wish I was there instead of her. I feel so desperate for her touch that I wished she would leap out and wrap her arms around me, like she always did every time I came home, but as the seconds fade, so does the belief, and it's making me feel the end result: failure. My old friend, Reverend James, gives the eulogy. His light and confident voice is trying to help us believe she's living a more peaceful and harmonizing life above, but all it's really doing, is bringing me back to the day we first met.

November 21, 1982:

Being the first of my family to go to college, and after being accepted at University of Penn for accounting, I couldn't wait to see what my life would be like there. All these expectations of meeting new friends, and having my own room filled my mind as I stepped onto the low-cut green-grass of its courtyard, surrounded by its beautiful, Eighteenth century styled building. As my three freshly purchased books lay perfectly still in my hands, I wondered through the first opened main doors into a hallway filled with new students. Some was standing by the wall on my right talking in groups, and others were wondering ahead of me, looking amazed at its Victorian styled archways towards their classrooms. I thought if I walked around for a little bit more my mind would map it out much quicker. Boy was I wrong. It was so large, with so many classrooms, that everyday felt like I was in a maze.

Getting lost became the norm, and missing classes was like a never ending ritual. But after two years, and an extensive two-day mental study on my first weekend, the halls finally looked more recognizable. Then there was the day I finally met her. It was a late September, and the warm weather was still present in the air. So much so that if any student was caught wearing jeans on that day, his view of fashion would be immediately disliked and downgraded upon. I was walking to the library with a friend I met on my first day there. His name was George, an orange haired, green-eyed guy with glasses large enough to fit a professor's. Even

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though he looked like a nerd, he really didn't fit the part. He was more of a stand up guy, known for his child-like charms and perky personality.

"So Brian, what's on your agenda these evening?" he asked while lightly skipping ahead towards the library doors.

"Me? Nothing really, just studying that's all".

"You serious? Dude you got to get out more!"

"Shut up George!"

After I followed him inside, I froze when I saw her standing at the front desk. Her face was drenched with concern and anxiety as she stands in front of a large red book. Her beauty paralyzes me. Her golden blond hair, smooth flawless skin, and sparkling green eyes makes her appear like an angel rather than your everyday college girl. My heart rose to my throat. My first thought was lost. I couldn't even remember my name, nor found the urge to move. All I could do was stand there, and hope my body would soon return from its paralysis state.

"Hey!"

Yells a voice as a snap from two fingers in front of me causes an investigation. It didn't take long to find George's face staring weirdly at me like I completely lost my mind.

"You okay?"

I nod to loosen his expression as I search for an explanation.

"Yeah, I'm fine I was just, thinking about something".

But his expression stayed the same.

"Oh, okay; well I'll be in the bathroom if you need me".

He turns and wonders off towards the bathrooms on my left, leaving me to become mesmerize by her beauty once again. This time the librarian approaches her, and even though I couldn't hear by how low the conversation was, it looked like she was arguing with her. I knew it must've been over the book, and right than, I wanted to come up with something that will get her attention, but I didn't know what. I lean my head down, letting my mind process as many ideas as it possibly can, but none seemed plausible, nor understandable. As my mind tries to process more, I look to find her disappointingly turning and walking away towards the large desks on my left. While thinking of something to say, I followed behind her, but still remained only a few feet away. With every passing step, my heart pounded more than what I could control. What if she thought I was ugly? What if she hated my jokes? Or worst, what if she already had a boyfriend? All those thoughts not only poisoned my mind, but it also poisoned my self-esteem, and with every negative thought came the incredible urge to just run away, and hope she'll never see me again; but suddenly, at the same time, there's been another voice calling out to me from beneath these voices; almost like a command, telling me:

"Continue on, and don't stop until she's yours".

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I didn't know where that voice came from, but it sounded like an old sub-conscious version from my dad, but that was impossible. He died when I was thirteen, and even until the time he did I never remember him saying anything like that to me.

"Did he come back from the grave to help guide us together?" I thought.

"Well, time to find out".

In the distance I saw her taking a seat by the large empty desk. Seeing an empty chair a few inches away, I slowly sat beside her, and placed my books carefully on the table's surface. Her eyes were too buried in her red book to notice me, but that didn't stop her perfume from catching my nose. Its strong, yet intoxicatingly sweet grapefruit aroma took me to a place filled with flowers as I imagined the warm sunlight settling upon my face. I closed my eyes, and immediately felt it as if I could physically smell the scent among the flowers, and feel the warm rays caressing my face.

"Hey, you okay?" reached a soft, concerned voice.

I open my eyes, and seeing her staring strangely into my cubical made my heart pound even harder as if I was a lab rat. I was immediately lost for words, but only for a second, as some did come to memory, although the way they were expressed was entirely out of my control.

"Um, heyâ ¸muchâ ¸Iâ ¸umâ ¸thought you wereâ ¸!"

Suddenly my mind just shut down when she reflected a stare that said: "What are you talking about?"

I tried to correct my words, but everytime I opened my mouth, nothing but air came out. I turned away to stare at the table. I felt so stupid and embarrassed I just wanted to run and hide, but suddenly I heard something. It sounded like a hint of a giggle. I looked up, only to find her laughing at me; but it wasn't like a teasing laugh, it was more like a joyful giggle, as if I made her laugh; and right than, it all made my stomach tickle, as well as caused butterflies to emerge from it. After that we hit it off perfectly. Everyday I would see her in my English class and everyday, when class was over, we would sit out in the courtyard to talk about our families. I told her about my small family life back in Cleveland, Ohio.

I didn't have a very bad childhood, just a very disturbing one, and being the only child in a family of a garden obsessed mother, and an environmental hippy father, she could pretty much sum up my childhood image: a nature obsessed, little hippy. My friends were that of trees, my fiends were that of other kids, ready to kick my ass whenever I stepped out of the house. Luckily I haven't stayed long, and moved to a small town of Bay Village, Ohio. It wasn't bad, just basically your average small American town.

The kids were nice, even though some questioned me, and some didn't; but the best thing in the world to me was to finally walk home without having to run for my life! After graduating from middle school I was pretty much done with the hippy stuff, and I mean done. I got so tired of the trees and birds, and being terrified of green house gasses that I went on a hobby spree, trying out every single thing I could think of. I

've tried jumping rope, hated it. Tried basketball, sucked. Football, until I sprung my knee, and surfing, until I almost drowned. Soon after I just took up the only thing I was good at: knitting. It was something I always did with my mom when dad was at the power plant, and I figured as long as nobody saw me, I was good. After graduating from my normal existence in middle school, high school didn't seem so bad. In fact it was just the same as middle school, only bigger.

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I still had the same friends: Jimmy, Justin, Billy, and Stew, but this time I finally had a girlfriend. She wasn't pretty as all the other girls, nor thin, but she was the greatest friend I ever had. Her name was Lisa: a hundred and eighty pound girl who wasn't much of a talker, but a very good listener. We always had fun together. From trips to the park to share laughter and jokes, to even looking up at the stars, wondering what the future held for us. I felt like she was more than a very good friend, unlike the guys, she never laughed at me for being shy around other girls, nor picked on me whenever I missed a basket when playing ball with her.

It all felt blissfully refreshing, and I couldn't believe our relationship lasted for more than two years, but after the third her family sadly had to move back to Austin Texas because of her father's job. It was a very sad day seeing her go, it really made me feel very lonely inside.

She left a permanent scar in my heart that I knew, would hardly heal. After I enrolled in Penn, I still kept thinking about her. What she must be doing, what her life must be like, even when I talk to Alice, sometimes my mind still drifted away to her. Alice's childhood was far, far different than I could imagine. According to her: she was born and raised in Charlotte, Michigan: a small town with only a population no bigger than five thousand, at least to her knowledge. She was also raised by her grandparents, after her real parent's abandoned her when she was a baby.

From the time she was small, to the time she was a teen, her grandfather would drink occasionally, throwing outbursts of verbal abuse until she felt like no matter how hard she tried to please him, it was never enough: she cooked the eggs too hard; she made the coffee too sweet; the living room wasn't clean enough, or the attic was too dusty, even though she spent hours cleaning them. Everyday for her felt like a battle for his affection, and everyday she felt even more desperate to escape. When she heard about Michigan University after graduating from high school, she immediately packed up her stuff and raced over to take up English with the hope of being an English teacher. There she met a guy who would always try to make her laugh with corny one liners.

Thing was he was a pharmaceutical technician, so the only time they could really see each other was through the court yard when they had to exchange buildings. I guess that's why she didn't really remember his name, but at least he was there for her, and not like everyone else in her life: either a bully, or a tormentor. Two years later she saw how high her G.P.A. was, and after transferring, she really liked Penn. She was amazed by how big it was compared to her old school. Afterwards I told her about my graduate program, which was accounting, and it was a good thing I met George, cause with his connections to P.N.C. bank, I knew I would have a job in no time. Within four years we graduated, and landed some pretty cool jobs, but before we went to them, we had one thing else to do.

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