

And the Darkness Took Her

By : Mistress of Word Play

Author's Note: Each day throughout the world at least 1 in 50 people attempt suicide. Statistics show on average women are more likely to try and take their lives than men. Men are more successful than women. This story is dedicated to a friend's son who tried to take his life and failed.



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She drove the endless stretch of gravel road. Music drifted from the four speakers in her car. It was a cool October day and she had let down all the windows to allow the crisp afternoon air to keep her alert. The trees were just starting to turn their autumn colors and she wondered at the beauty that lay before her. Persimmon trees stood at attention along the path she had chosen. Their leaves had begun the transformation from dark green to a pale shade of yellow. In the distance she could see the different types of maple trees adorned in reds, oranges, and yellows. It was as if some unseen artist had touched his paints to the leaves and was working on a masterpiece. As a young girl her father had brought her here fishing and sometimes to watch the deer as they grazed at sunset. She could still at times catch a fleeting whiff of his aftershave. He had been dead for almost a year now and she could at times like these, feel him close to her. The grass grew tall here and trees lined either side of the road. She had traveled this rock and dirt road on her bicycle when she was a teenager. This area had always held a special meaning to her, yet today she was using it for another reason. There was an isolated area deep in the reserve area and this is where she was maneuvering her vehicle. Few people traveled this far up into the park and she would go unnoticed and undisturbed here. A million thoughts ran through her mind as she swerved to miss the potholes which had expanded over time. Lack of government funds had left the preserve area in disarray over the last ten years. She liked it this way; it made her feel more secure in knowing chances of being detected were zero. The radio was playing songs from the nineteen seventies and she felt her body start to sway to a song she had come to love as a teen. The sun was just starting to dip below the tree line and more shade started to consume the once lighted areas of the road. Honeysuckle wound its way up the trees and the vines almost totally covered what had once been the railway station. The sweet pungent smell of the honeysuckle calmed her soul. There had been a munitions plant here in the reserve area through World War II. Parts of the silos were still standing and bits and pieces of the railway structures were still intact. A feeling of nostalgia seemed to overcome her. Maybe if she had been born a little earlier or a little later then she had, things might have been different. She tried to imagine herself growing up in the nineteen sixty era or later in the nineteen eighties, but somehow she could not place herself there. For months now she had been having a very hard time placing herself in the life she now led. She was forty-nine, had a successful career, was blessed with a great family, and she wanted for nothing. Yet a cancer of the soul had been eating away at her these last two months and now she would end the torment. Her mother had always called her over-sensitive and prone to an over active imagination. Maybe her mother was right and this elusive illness was something her mind had conjured up. At this moment she did not care to sort it out, she simply wanted peace and resolution. Her secret spot was just ahead. She pulled her car as far off the roadway as possible. No one would find her here in this isolated spot. Her hand reached to shut the engine key off and she for the first time that day saw herself in the rear view mirror. Her hair was neatly groomed and her face was freshly scrubbed. She had not applied any makeup and she had worn her favorite outfit. When she had journeyed out for the day she had left no note, no reason why, no explanation for what she planned to do. Her family would know. They had tried to help her deal with the darkness, which from time to time had threatened to consume her. She had this last time not given them the opportunity to assist, she had remained silent. They could not help her anymore. There had been similar moments at different times in her life. There were two other times before she had tried unsuccessfully to end her life. The first was soon after her husband died. The pain of losing him, the man who was her soul mate had been unbearable. She sat one night in their wedding bed, the bed they had shared, and tried to blow her brains out with a 9mm revolver. Her mother sensing something was wrong had put a stop to the as of yet, unperformed crime. The second time she tried to kill herself she had been discovered in her bathtub with cuts across both wrists. There had been extreme blood loss, but she was rushed to the nearest emergency room and they patched her up, at least on the outside. She had hit rock bottom for the second time in her life and the attempt had been thwarted. She paused for an eternity then turned her attention to the bottle of soda which rested in the cup holder. The lid was wrested free and she took a slow deliberate sip of the beverage. She had stopped at a convenience

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store and spent the better part of ten minutes deciding on the drink she wanted. It is strange, how choosing something as silly as your last soda, can become a major issue. Birds were high in the trees and she could hear the endless chatter as they called to each other. God, how she loved it here, this place had become a very important part in her life.

There had been many soul walks here in the deep reaches of the reserve. She had worn blisters on her feet from the many miles she had walked. The trees, water, sky, and nature had healed her in prior days, but she realized healing was no longer an option she wished to explore. She felt detached from the rest of mankind. Try as she could, she had never fit in. She had raised her daughter to be independent. She knew her family would someday forgive her this one thing. Before she had left her home she had looked at pictures, the pictures she had locked away and were never viewed. The pain had buffeted her and she had succumbed to the folly of believing she still had a life. The photos were of her husband whom she had lost. For over twenty years she had mourned his passing and wanted nothing more than to be with him. Today she started that journey.

She took the pills from her purse and read the label. The word caution in large letters was stamped on the exterior of the pill bottle. It had not been a difficult thing to get the prescription from her doctor. She had complained of sleepless nights and insomnia. The doctor had written out the script post haste and sent her on her way. She knew the doctor would probably blame himself, but she was beyond caring. She was already a ghost.

The sound of gravel being worked by tires pulled her from her dream-like state. A park ranger was patrolling the area and his jeep slowed as he came closer to her car. He peered curiously into her car and she simply smiled and waved at him. He waved back and continued down the road.

She waited for what seemed like an eternity to make sure the unwanted guest did not return. Some journeys we have to make alone. This was her journey. Feeling content the ranger would not return, she uncapped the bottle and began to take the capsules one by one. She would pause from time to time and wash them down with the soda she had brought. A twisted smile came to her lips slowly. This reminded her of the old drinking song, a hundred bottles of beer on the wall. She started to hum the silly lyric and substituted pills in place of bottles of beer. The bottle was soon empty and she looked around. Such a beautiful place, she thought, so beautiful yet so cold.

The drugs were making her drowsy and a myriad of images came to her. She remembered eating blueberry cake donuts with her husband at three o'clock in the morning. There had been happy times and sad times, these all returned to her now. A fleeting image of her daughter at the age of three assailed her idle wanderings. Her daughter wore a dress of white organza with red ribbon sown on the hem. The woman had sown the dress for her daughter and the child had fallen in love with it. "Push me higher," the child had screeched, "I want to touch the sky." She recalled the birth of her grandchildren and how small and helpless they came into the world. Her eyelids were growing heavy as if someone was applying weights to them. Her head fell back against the seats headrest.

She felt herself floating and found she was climbing a staircase which stretched upward.

The stairs seemed to go on forever. Farther up the staircase she saw someone. The figure was hard to make out. Then the realization hit her. It was her husband, he was waiting for her. She could feel herself pushing harder to reach him. She tried to call to him, but no words came out.

"Are you getting anything, yet?" the ambulance driver was looking back at the two Emergency Medical Technicians who were working over the woman's non-responsive body.

"No," the first one answered, "it may have been too long." He worked the bag trying to push air into the now nonfunctioning lungs. The second technician was shocking her at intervals and checking for a pulse. The two men worked at a rapid pace, trying to rescue the woman from her folly.

She stopped for an instant. Her legs were growing tired. Funny she thought, I shouldn't be getting tired. She had read everything she could find about near death experiences and there was nothing about getting tired. Why then did she feel a pain in her chest and why was her husband not coming down to greet her. Her husband motioned to her, he wanted her to turn around and look back down the stairs she had been climbing. She found herself shaking her head in a negative manner. He seemed insistent. Fear gripped her soul and she could feel the tightening of her neck muscles. His gaze fell beyond the woman and he gestured her almost

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pleadingly to look back. Half to humor him and half because of her curious nature, she turned at last and looked. Below her lay the earth and she watched in horror as the blue-green ball exploded. Tears ran down her cheeks and then she was falling; she was hurtling back down to the place she had been trying to leave. A silent scream escaped as she came back into the world of the living.

The taste of vomit was on her lips. The two men who had been administering CPR looked at each other and then at her. She was back. By some strange twist of fate, she had cheated death and they were her conspirators. They took turns smiling at her. They offered her words of comfort. Each of the two men seemed kind and understanding, but they did not understand. Her overdose had not been an accident. It had been a well orchestrated plan of salvation. Yet here they stood and were acting as if she had accidentally taken a bottle of sleeping pills.

She felt herself drifting back upward. The stairs were in sight. Maybe this time, she thought to herself, she could run up them and be done with it.

“We lost her again,” the technician called to his partner.

“Resume CPR,” the second man replied.

Her legs moved rapidly up the stairs. One moment she was climbing the next she was falling. “Please God!” she cried to the endless stairs in front of her, “Please!”

The torture was endless, at one point she felt as if she had become airborne. There was the sensation of flying and then plummeting back to earth with an impact. The lights became brighter and brighter and now she felt as if she was on a train or in a fast car. The burning and pain in her chest returned. Her lungs hurt as well. It felt as if someone had gouged and pricked her with thorns. The pain radiated up both her arms. In the distance she could hear voices. Soft voices which were coaxing her to come back filtered into her subconscious. She tried to ignore them, but they became more determined each second that passed.

Her eyes fluttered open. A bright light met her blank stare. “Where am I?” she thought.

The light was hurting her eyes. She had never seen light so bright before. Was she there the place she had been trying to go?

“Welcome, to the world of the living,” a rather large woman with blonde hair said, “we really thought we lost you.”

She could feel the tears in the corner of her eyes. She felt disappointment engulfing her and smothering her like the depths of a down pillow. It was so unfair she wanted to scream, but she could not speak. Something had been pushed between her lips and into her airway.

“Another few seconds,” the man in the white coat commented, “and it would have been too late. You should thank your stars, the park ranger found you when he did.”

She felt the anger growing like a wild tiger. Through her life she could not remember feeling as angry and hurt as she did now. Tears flowed freely from her eyes. She could feel her hands working themselves into fists. She fought the restraints they had placed on her.

“Doctor,” the nurse said, “her heart rate is off the chart. What should we do?”

“Give her five of Valium IV,” he told the nurse.

She fought with every ounce of strength she had. She hated them for what they had done.

She had been so close and they had ruined it for her.

The needle stick came quickly and the blonde nurse injected the medication deep into her veins.

She felt the softness of a spring afternoon and then the darkness took her.

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