



The Goodbye
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Published: 2009

Categorie(s): Fiction, Romance, Short Stories

Tag(s): romance angst drabble death

This story is made up of sixteen drabbles. A drabble is a story written in exactly one hundred words, not including the title, and cannot be one word more or one less than one hundred. Each drabble within this book can be read on its own, but when read in conjunction with the other fifteen, will become part of a longer story.

There is romance, there is angst, and there is violence.

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July, 2009
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The Goodbye

The words of the letter, stark and bold, had shattered my happiness. A mission overseas he'd said. I watched him as he dressed in olive green. The t-shirt hiding his muscular torso, the shirt tucked into pants that were, in turn, tucked into boots.

Foreboding so intense it set my teeth on edge. Wanting to give him a keepsake to remind him of me, I snipped one of my curls with scissors from the dresser. Folding it carefully in a tissue I pressed it into his palm.

I kissed him and then he was gone, taking my life with him.

Sacrifice

Hunkered down behind the crumbling wall, I realized this was the single most important thing I'd ever do in uniform. My target was hiding in the burned out building across the battered square.

The slight weight of the envelope holding her lock of hair weighed heavily on my heart. Removing it from my breast pocket, I stared into my past.

The faint residue of perfume remained with me as I walked away from a future I knew I'd never have. Stepping out from cover, I went to do my job. Risking my life but saving countless others in the process.

The Letter

I found the letter on the hall table after he left. Now its pages were tear-stained and creased. He wrote that he loved me, that he would miss me. He wrote that if the worst happened I was to continue with my life. He wanted me to find happiness with someone else, to build a life and a family.

No word from him yet. No word from his superiors either. There is still hope. I will not give up on that. I'll wait. Wait until I have definite word before I begin to grieve.

My life is not yet dead.

Failure

I opened my eyes. Slowly my brain began to make sense of the signals it was receiving. I pulled myself up from the floor and sat against the blood-spattered wall.

Taking a deep breath to control the pain, I took stock of my situation. My target was lying in a pool of blood, the movement of his chest told me I'd failed in my mission. I'd walked into a trap; he'd known I was coming. Now I needed to finish him and save myself.

Oh my love, where did I lose my focus? Will I make it back to you?

Routine

I went through the motions of daily living just to get through each day. Each morning I would pray for news, each night I would pray for his safe return.

I became an automaton. I ate because it was mealtime; I slept because it was nighttime. I went to work because I needed money to pay for food I couldn't taste and for the roof over my head that now meant nothing to me.

My life isn't here; my life is there. Wherever he is, he holds my life in his hands.

Oh, my love, come home and love me.

For The Greater Good

His face was like any other. No guilt over the hundreds of deaths that he'd engineered. He'd never wielded the bombs; no he sent brain-washed innocents to do his dirty work. He would send them off with stories of Nirvana and rewards in the afterlife.

I convinced myself the world would be a better place without him.

I was bleeding badly. If I waited longer, I wouldn't be able to reach safety. I had to finish it. I pulled my knife and put an end to future suffering, both his and his unseen victims.

When did I become a murderer?

The Reality Of Dreams

Still no news. Something is wrong. I know it. I can feel it. A deep sense of loss had awoken me at dawn.

I couldn't work today; my mind wouldn't stay on the job. My imagination had me on a roller coaster ride of emotion. The deepest lows had me seeing him bleeding to death, alone and cold. The highest highs had him coming through my door, kissing me and swinging me around, our laughter a joy to our ears.

The reality of life is that I would never know how he died. My dreams have him never leaving again.

Shelter

I didn't make it to the border. I knew I was bleeding out. Shadows sheltered me as I found an empty building, no more than a shack. Collapsing in a dark corner, I pulled the belt out of my pants and made a makeshift tourniquet. My field dressing was next. I pressed it onto my thigh and tied it tight.

If the bleeding would stop, I could rest; make another attempt to get out of this Hellhole. The crimson stream slowed to a sluggish ooze. Closing my eyes, I pictured my love and I let her breathe life into me.

The Breath Of Life

I had a dream last night. I dreamed I lay next to him, holding him. I stroked his hair, kissed his cheek and told him everything would be okay. The sensation of him sleeping in my arms was tangible. Now in the light of day, I wondered if he'd visited me in my sleep. Had he been dying and came to say goodbye?

I can't let myself believe that. I have to believe that he's coming back to me. We will have a future together. Without him by my side, life has no purpose.

We breathe life into each other.

Retreat

I awoke with the dawn, hope burgeoning in my breast; I was alive. I'd dreamed of her cradling me in her arms as I slept.

I dragged my aching body through the still deserted streets and alleyways. Every agonizing step took me closer to home. Resting from time to time to gather my wits and catch my breath, I calculated I would reach our front lines before mid-morning, if they had advanced as much as I hoped.

I started to hear sporadic gunfire and took cover. I didn't need to be brought down by friendly fire so close to safety.

Hope

Today, for some reason, I felt a lightness of spirit. From the depths of despair a frisson of hope began to tickle the edges of my consciousness. I didn't question the 'how' or 'why', but I knew that he was alive, somewhere in this world.

The hope grew with every telephone call, with every conversation. It's impossible that I would feel this way if he's dead.

If he lives but never comes home to me, I'll be content. If I can have him by my side for the rest of my life, loving and caring, I would be complete.

Sanctuary

I fought the pain down and pushed back the faintness that came with loss of blood. Shock registered in my brain as I opened my eyes to find the sun blocked by a silhouette.

I struggled to understand as the figure spoke to me. He crouched and I flinched in instinctive fear as he touched my shoulder. Features came into focus and I relaxed. I heard him shout for a medic and knew I was safe. Not home, but among friends.

The comfort of kind words and the bliss of drugs allowed me to slip into the arms of Morpheus.

Learning To Cope

The tears come so readily when a word or a piece of music triggers a memory, but I didn't dream of him last night. He no longer fills my thoughts every waking moment.

I'm getting used to eating alone. But, I'll never get used to the great expanse of cold and empty bed. I miss the feel of his breath on the back of my neck as he holds me through the night.

I still jump when the phone rings, but I'm able to talk to people without mentioning his name every other sentence. Life goes on, even for me.

Second Chance

The sun filtered through the camouflage netting as I drifted between pain and numbness. Someone had replaced my rough field dressing with a cleaner, neater version. An I.V. dripped life into my vein. Soon they would ship me back to a hospital.

A nurse had asked me if I wanted to call anyone. I'd shaken my head at him. I didn't want to phone her just yet. I needed to wait until I could walk through her door under my own steam.

I wanted to hold her in my arms, make love to her and re-affirm my commitment to her.

Dreaded Anticipation

Weeks have gone by since I pressed a lock of my hair into his palm, yet it seems like a year. Each hour feels like a day and a day stretches into a week.

I didn't go to work this morning. Something told me to stay home. I sat near the phone, waiting for it to ring. Dreading it. No call came.

The doorbell rang instead.

Through the frosted glass, I saw an olive green uniform. Certain they were there to tell me he was dead, my hand shook as I opened the door, my gaze fixed on the ground.

Life Renewed

I leaned on my cane and feasted my eyes on her. She stared at the ground, as if afraid of what she would see if she looked up. I reached out and lifted her chin to allow my gaze to meet hers.

Her eyes widened with shock a second before she launched herself at me. I caught her mid-air and hugged her tight to my body. Leaning against the doorjamb for support, I buried my face in her neck, breathing in her unique scent.

This woman had kept me going when I should have died. Now my life is hers.

Fin

From the same author on Feedbooks

Black Silk (2009)

Victoria Hudson is 29 and lives in the kind of small town where everyone knows everyone else. She has two great loves in her life - her cat, Mister, and reading books from her used bookstore. She doesn't see her life changing much in the future. She's stuck. Until one night when she's saved from probable danger by a mysterious stranger.

Steven Colburn has moved around quite a bit during his lifetime, never really finding a place where he felt he could be comfortable. Until he buys an old homestead, and fate steps in to forever change his life and that of one of the town's quiet entrepreneurs.

A light but sexy romance with a paranormal twist.
Adult content - not suitable for younger readers.



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