

## Strikeprice

By Andrew McGregor

The paper was shaking in his hand as he read the letter. The news introduced him to a world tucked in right under his nose. It was a world that existed around him, that meandered through him, but until today managed to avoid revealing itself. The letter might as well have said, “Your version of reality is nothing but a mirage.” Why would she do this to him? He had been a good husband, a good father. The paradox of what he knew versus what he was learning gave him the feeling that his brain would burst. “You have been the love of my life for years.” He read this line several times. He was without feeling. He experienced confusion the past, but the feeling that overcame him went beyond a mere lack of comprehension. She was telling another man that he was the love of her life. Learning that the sky was no longer blue, or grass was not green would have been an easier notion for him to understand.

The dim sunset was beaming through his windshield as he drove home. He pulled into the parking lot feeling the persistent stun that had overtaken him earlier today. He entered his home without his usual announcement. He didn’t let the door make the greater than silent noise it usually makes when the door jamb stumbles over the hardwood liner. He entered his home like an amateur thief. He paused and looked both ways before entering the hallway. He was 11 steps away from facing his heartbreak. When he entered the master bedroom, he saw his wife lying in bed watching cartoons with their daughter. They looked so content, so blissful. He stared at his daughter. He drew inspiration from her. It softened the injury inflicted on him by his wife. He then looked at his wife. His comfort turned into a turbulent as he looked at her with a violent curiosity. Why would she? How could she? She has been living this farce, able to look her family in the eye as if all were well.

“Did she ever love me? Who else had she been with?” The impact of her betrayal metastasized in his mind into a myriad of unanswered questions. His daughter gave him a hug. His wife said hello. His daughter wanted to show him a picture she drew. She said something after telling him of the drawing, but his new understanding of his marriage brought a delay between what someone said and what he would hear. He just looked at her and smiled. She told him about the sticker she got in school for knowing her vocabulary words. She told him about how her team on the kickball tournament during recess. He nodded his head, incoherent as to what she was talking about. “She looks so much like her mother”. This beautiful creation, am I even her father? He could feel his body beginning to tremble. He gave her a hug so his daughter would not see his eyes beginning to water. He buried his face in her shoulder, doing his best to

hide his tears.

He raised his eyes from his little girl's shoulder and saw that his wife was no longer in the room. She made her way out the split second he took his eye off her. He began wondering how many other times she had finessed out of his sight and into more lurid circumstances. Every recollection became a question. Every sight, touch, experience he now pondered.

That night in bed, he lay there staring at his wife. Was his heartbreak based on her betrayal, or her absolute lack of remorse? How can she just lay there? How can she be so at ease? She can effortlessly carry the knowledge of what she has done is morally wrong, and still sleep at night. She exhibited no signs of deception. So cool, he was completely astonished at this hidden facet of her personality. He always thought he knew her. He was confident he knew her better than she knew herself.

He reviewed his deeds. From when he met her in high school to when he learned of her infidelities: no idea why. It just didn't add up. Every day after work he would give her a back rub. He let her choose when and where they took vacations, so as to not upset her with his choice. He manufactured his entire existence in accordance to what he thought were her needs and desires. He was certain no man did for their wife what he did for his.

She didn't ask him how his day was. She talked about how the fan at the office was broken, and maintenance was taking their sweet time getting it fixed.

He arrived at work the next day in a haze.

His mother volunteered to follow her. He reluctantly agreed. He knew his mother loved him, but he also knew she loved the excitement of pursuing drama. This was the highest form of small town drama: the faithless spouse. She stalked her daughter in law with the efficiency of a secret operative. She drove past the hotel she pulled into, then made a u turn to verify her daughter in law was parking. She then called her son to alert him to his wife's whereabouts. He got the ok from his supervisor to leave work early. He anxiously drove to the hotel, hoping not to discover the obvious. There was a reasonable explanation to this, he said to himself. Maybe she was volunteering at a shelter. Maybe a homeless man was in danger and she was trying to assist him. His attempt to rationalize her actions was futile, but he was a desperate man. She was his first love - his only love. He lost his virginity to her. His mind was unable to accept the reality his wife presented in contrast to the wife he had always projected onto her. When he pulled up to the hotel, he found a new reason for disgust. She didn't even have the decency to cheat at a reputable hotel. The place was located in a back alley across from a walk up fast food restaurant. It was the kind of place prostitutes conduct business, and drug addicts go to score. He thought, not only is she a slut, but a

cheap one.

He sat slouched in his car for about 45 minutes, his high powered zoom lens camera resting comfortably in his lap. When she finally exited the room, he raised the camera and began taking photos. The bright blonde color she recently dyed her hair made her look like someone in hiding. It was a physical manifestation of his being married to someone he did not know. He waited to see who else would be exiting the hotel. It was about 5 minutes later when he walked out: a heavy set man with a cowboy hat and sky blue Hawaii shirt. He got in his pickup truck and drove off, not knowing he had been reconnoitered by his cuckold.

That evening, he didn't even ask her how her day was. He was certain the silent treatment would induce her into asking him what the problem was. He was deeply wounded his move didn't even slightly shake her. His acting indifference to her was overruled by her genuine indifference to him. He silently stared at her that night. With her back to him she laid, the victim next to his assailant. He wondered what she may have been dreaming of. He stared at her the entire night, not getting even a minute's sleep.

He drove to the airport considering possible outcomes. Should he discuss the emails he happened upon from his wife to her lover before or after they get home? Should he tell her of his discovery while driving home? In his wildest dreams he never thought he would have to prepare himself for the conversation he was about to have with her; it was supposed to be other people, other families that had issues like this, not us. He drove home listening to her story of her out of town trip. Her words began to coagulate into one long jumble as his mind wandered off from what she was saying to what he already knew. He found himself hesitant to ask her. He was nervous. "Why the hell am I scared? She's the one who betrayed me."

When he placed the final suitcase on the bedroom floor, he handed them to her: a stack of all the emails he collected, showing the dates and times of each communication she had with her paramour. Her face grew red as she realized they were her emails. She threw them in his face and screamed "How could you? How the hell could you go through my emails?!?!?" Her reaction added yet another level of confusion to his already lost sense of understanding.

They argued the entire night. He was taken by surprise at her fury toward him. Her rage, her sense of violation at him checking her emails made him cower in the new sense of guilt she successfully projected onto him. He temporarily felt like he was the one who was guilty of betrayal.

He had two monitors in his office at work. One monitor displayed his assignments and projects that needed to be done for the corporation. The other had her profile page up throughout the day. He would

keep a close eye on her any way he could. He felt no sense of guilt while spying on her. He felt it was his right to monitor her, his duty even. She was after all, his wife.

He needed to know what she was up to the week she went out of town. He contacted her friend that went with her, in an attempt to gather information. The friend politely stated that she did not want to get in the middle of their personal problems. Who said anything about personal problems? He once again felt the cold hand of betrayal striking him in the face.

He stared at the man's profile page. He knew he saw that face before, but couldn't recall where. He showed the pics to his friends, and one put him on to who the man was. He worked at the burger joint in town across from the bank.

Some of the emails frightened him. One in particular, saying how someday her, her daughter and he would all be one happy family together. He felt a stabbing pain throughout his body every time he read it.

He would feign sleeping to watch her. She would sit up at night staring out at the bedroom window. The moonlight pressing the window blinds caused a rippling reflection across her face. She didn't have a look of disappointment, of happiness or sadness; she simply just had a look.

He prayed feverishly on the matter. He was a minister at his church, so he was already well versed on scripture dealing with his issue. He reminisced on the numerous couples who sought his counsel on the very matter he was going through. He always credited God for bringing remedy to any family he was able to assist, but deep inside, he felt their improvement had a lot to do with him. Yes it was a God given talent, but the talent rested in him. He wondered what he should do should they break up. How would he find a suitable mate? He never smoked, never drank, or did drug; growing up he never even stayed out past curfew. Combine that with his spiritual devotion, and he was unsure if there was even a woman out there who lived up to his standards.

She was his life. Even after finding out about her infidelities he was still in awe of her. His ringtone played the song..... every time she called. He had a hard time removing their song from his ringtone dial and replacing it with plain dial tone.

Their discussions didn't lead to any resolution he felt as fair. She approached him and told him she forgave him for violating her privacy. She might as well have been speaking to him about quantum mechanics, because he was at a total loss of understanding for her words. He had been with this woman for so long, and she was an absolute stranger to him. It made him ponder the validity of their courtship, of their entire marriage.

"Why is this happening to me? Of all people, me?" This was the first thought that traveled his mind

every morning. He swept through the white pages and located an attorney he thought was suitable for his issue. He was counseled by his attorney to keep all types of correspondence discovered between his wife and her paramour.

Perhaps this was his karma. His father was verbally abusive to his mother, and eventually left her for another woman. Maybe he should just eat it. Maybe he should just accept his wife's constant straying as punishment for his father's sins.

"So, where do we go from here?" His question only reinforced the two separate atmospheres under which they existed. It was as if they were having two separate conversations at once. Her talking about how she doesn't know how she feels or what she wants – him explaining to her that she has an affliction, and needs help. Her not answering questions the way he needed her to only caused him to repeat the question. He had faith in his ability to put her under a spell. If he could inspire her with fear, he would be able to get her to see things his way. From there he could induce her to act in accordance to his view of her as a distressed helpmate. If only he could discover what she was afraid of.

He was praying to a deaf God. Despite his many supplications, her feelings did not change. She could not say with surety where he stood in her life. She could not proclaim love for her husband, like she easily did so many years ago when they exchanged vows. He did his best to explain to her that she was under spiritual bondage – that she needed help. He cited the Book of Peter, chapter 3 to make his case more clear, so that she could understand. He reminded her that despite her many transgressions, God still loved her.

He spoke with the church elders concerning his situation. He felt betrayed by life, betrayed by his Creator. He couldn't understand why this test had come his way. He had been a faithful servant of God, keeping his commandments, doing his best to avoid wrongdoing. As far as he was concerned, his inability to relate to most people came from his lack of sinful indulgence. He considered his successful navigation down the straight and narrow as evidence of his favor with God.

She would tell him every morning they weren't going to work out. He would reply that God loves and forgives her, as does he. He would follow her into the bathroom, standing outside of the shower in case she needed anything. He would drive to work singing songs from his favorite devotional cd. He would pray during his work breaks. At lunch he would drive past her job to make sure her car was in the parking lot. He called her every day at 3, just to remind her that she was loved.

He found out where his rival worked and where he lived. He adjusted his daily route to work so he would pass by the man's house. He needed to understand what kind of demonic spell this ungodly man

placed on his poor wife. Certainly she would never have done what she did unless bound by some unholy possession. He heard stories of spiritual warfare and read books on the matter, but now his issue was living proof of its existence. He would fight valiantly to defend his wife's good name. He saw himself as a soldier of the Lord, armed and ready to do battle. If only he could convince his wife to fight alongside him instead of against him.

She let him know in more than a hint she didn't need therapy. He was determined to show her how far her demons had seeped into her mind. She was his wife, his helpmate, and he would save her if it was the last thing he ever did. He found a local doctor who agreed with him and they set up a time to bring her into his office. He filled out the medical questionnaire, categorizing his wife's recent behavior. Her diagnosis in absentia showed tendencies of narcissism with a mild sociopathic pattern.

They were wearing plain clothes when they arrived at his home. He expected them to be wearing white surgical scrubs, like they do in the movies. He opened the door for them so they wouldn't have to knock. He showed them to their bedroom. He turned on the bedroom lights, and allowed them to enter. His wife woke up from her slumber alarmed, wondering why these men were in her bedroom. She immediately grabbed the covers and placed them around her, staring at her husband in shock and confusion. He explained that they were here to take her to a facility. Tears began pouring down her face. She was in a perplexed state of rage she didn't know she had the ability to experience. He showed her the test results based on her behavior that qualified her for treatment. He stressed that this was in her best interest, that this could help her, and at the same time repair their marriage. He trusted his compassion and love for her to cushion himself from the yelling and screaming she was focusing on him. With every curse word fired his way, he nodded his head, saying to her that God loves her. She backed herself into the corner of the bedroom, using the comforter as a shield against the men approaching her. She grabbed the wedding portrait on their nightstand as a weapon should they get within reach. He told her that she would be out in two days – just two days. He told her this was only for her benefit, and if necessary this treatment session could become involuntary. He reminded her of their precious young daughter, and a custody battle with her diagnosis presented to a judge could compromise her rights as a parent and guardian.

She was terrified. She sat in the back seat of the van not knowing where she was going. He reminded her that they were taking it easy on her; that normally, they would use twine to keep the patient's hands secure. She was shivering from fright. Unrequited love warranting a visit to a facility required the logic of a madman. She felt he was the one that should be sent to receive treatment.

She doesn't remember which drugs she received. The pills didn't have a name on them. As she sat there in that bright white room, the walls began to pull together. The drowsiness was causing her to fight to simply keep her head up. When the physician entered with his notepad and thick rimmed glasses, he seemed eager to dissect the subject of his earlier discussion with her husband. Her vision blurred in and out of focus as he checked her pulse, examined her pupils and used the otoscope to check her ears. Then she collapsed.

When she awoke, she was in a room, alone. The walls were lightly padded, with a leather ottoman in the center of the room. Seated on the ottoman was a copy of the Bible. There was a post it note on the Bible that read: Read, And Be Set Free. She dropped the Bible back on the ottoman and got up from the floor. She walked to the door in the corner of the room, and looked out the small square window in the center of the door. It was a bright white hallway beyond the door. She knocked on it and yelled "Hello" frantically. Her non-consensual internment had gone too far. Her panic caused her to fall to her knees, gasping for breath.

She desperately turned the door again, hoping this time it would miraculously open. When it didn't she rose from her knees and began circling the room, her hand over her mouth. Her eyes were beet red from the tears, her breathing growing more and more tepid. She was hyperventilating. She crouched over, and finally passed out on the floor. He was watching in the surveillance room with the doctor. They were discussing her condition while she was unconscious, and the possible next steps to take for her recovery. The practitioner was the first face she saw when she regained consciousness. She was a younger woman, dark black hair, with a rehearsed smile. She welcomed her to sit on the ottoman. They needed to talk. She was told how this treatment was for her, that she should consider taking the medications that have been prescribed to her. Still regaining consciousness her face reflected a look of exhaustion. This helped to conceal the turmoil running in her mind. She nodded her head in agreement. Anything to get out of this place.

The two days might as well have been two years. She was unable to see when the sun was rising or setting, and the drugs removed from her any sense of time. When the door finally opened, it sounded like a dungeon. Her husband entered with the look of a hero prepared to free the captive in distress. His wife walked past him without acknowledgement and proceeded down the hallway. She waited for him to catch up. She knew she wouldn't be allowed out of the place without his consent. She couldn't even look at him. She did not know this man.

The silence of outer space was present in the drive home. He finally spoke up and told her that he

knew that she hated him, but in time she would see that what he did was for her own good. She would realize the error of her ways, and would come back to him in mind, body and soul. He reminded her of Aunt Ruth and how she ran around on Uncle Clarence, until it was found out she was bipolar. After some medicinal therapy and a spiritual victory over demonic principalities, she never again stepped out of the marriage. She was shivering with anger. If he weren't driving so fast she would have jumped out the car. She wanted to run. She wanted to run so far away. To anywhere. To nowhere; it didn't matter. She just needed to be away from him. As she sat on the bed, her eyes blankly staring into the bathroom, she thought about her lover. She needed him. She needed him to rescue her from all this. At that moment she was willing to risk anything and everything to get away from her husband. His gentle pat on her shoulder, and the agonizing monotone of his voice brought her back to reality. He was sitting next to her on the bed, telling her something. Her soul turned sour as thoughts of her lover were being mixed with the monotone drone of her husband's voice. The image of her man finally faded away and she was back home on the bed, staring into the bathroom, listening to her husband tell her how God loves her and forgives her all her sins.

That night she stared out the window. Only two days had passed, but she missed seeing the sun. She did not go to sleep until she saw the sunrise. Her husband got out of bed around 7am and gave her a hug. He told her that she could stay in bed if she wanted, that he contacted her boss and let him know that she would not be in for the rest of the week. She turned around and just looked at him. She had no more things to say. She was living someone else's life. Surely this could not be the circumstances of her existence. She had grown well beyond offended at her husband's hubris, and had reached a state of absolute contempt. No words were necessary. From now on nothing he could say or do would surprise her.

This resolute numbness toward her husband brought with it an ironic sense of freedom. She felt no emotional connection to her husband. If he were to pass away, she wouldn't shed a tear. She was incapable of experiencing any sense of empathy to the stranger she shared a home with. This emotional divorce was a giant weight lifted from her shoulders. She felt lighter. She had wondered how she could break the news to her husband that she didn't love him, that she met someone else. She genuinely didn't want to hurt his feelings. But now, she felt no remorse for her actions. She believed his actions justified her someone else. Maybe her subconscious had been warning to find someone else, to save her this experience.

She woke up the next morning to him asking if she wanted a backrub, his hands gently touching her shoulders. She immediately rolled over and pulled the covers over her in a defensive move. He rose from

the bed and told her he was going to work, and if she needed him that he was a phone call away. She felt relief knowing that she would be alone today. That she could shower, watch TV and be serene in her own home without his suffocating presence.

When he left, she felt a wave of worry well up in her body. The slam of the door reminded her of the facility. She began to worry if he placed cameras in the home, or if he told the neighbors to keep an eye on her. She would look out the kitchen window to see if anyone was looking at her. She stared at the man across the street while he was mowing the lawn to see if she could catch him making an unnecessary look in her direction. She sat down on the sofa to watch soap operas. She couldn't remember what happened after turning on the television and finding her show. She just recalls being startled to hear her husband entering the home, announcing his presence. She wondered why he returned early until she looked at the grandfather clock and saw that it was 6pm. She thought back – did I take any drugs? Maybe I was drugged by him? But that couldn't be. All she had all day was a glass of orange juice, and she poured it herself. He wouldn't dare contaminate the entire gallon for fear their daughter might pour some for herself. Perhaps the stress of the last few days exhausted her more than she thought.

The next morning, she woke up before he did. Under no circumstances did she want him touching her. As far as she was concerned, she was living with a roommate until she could afford to part ways. He went to work that day letting her know that the counselor would be by tomorrow to see her. He said goodbye and reminded her of his love for her, as well as God's love. She rolled her eyes and laid back down until he left.

She got out of bed and stepped outside. She circled the house to look for microphones. She peeped through her neighbors' windows to see if they were peeping at her. She looked across the street if anyone was seemed to be staring in her direction. She felt now that not only was she being watched in her own house, the entire neighborhood had her under surveillance. She went back inside to relax on the couch, and felt herself shivering. She checked the thermostat on the air conditioner, and saw it read 73 degrees. She pulled a blanket from the bedroom and dragged out to the sofa to keep it warm while she watched television. All she remembers is sitting back on the couch, pulling the blankets over her, and turning back on the TV.

It was the noise from groceries being placed on the kitchen counter top that woke her up this time. She was stunned to see that she slept the entire day. She knows that she didn't drink anything that was compromised, because she made it a point not to drink anything located in her home. She planned on going down the street to the corner store to purchase a drink, but somehow she just didn't make it off that

couch. When her husband asked her how her day was, she just nodded her head. Their daughter came running in through the hallway, screaming Mommy! She picked her up and gave her daughter a big hug and a kiss. She was ashamed that she hadn't really thought of her daughter in the past three days. Her husband patted her on the shoulder and told her he wanted to tell her something in private, tilting his head toward the bedroom. She took a step back in disgust, closing their daughter's ears saying hell would freeze over before she let him have a piece. He calmly stated he wasn't talking about that, and he really needed to tell her something. She put their daughter back on the carpet, and as she ran off to the living room, he took his wife's hand and walked her into the bedroom. He reached into his pocket and pulled out two bottles of prescription medicine. He told her if she was feeling drowsy lately, it was because she was missing these. They were the same pills being fed to her while under observation at the treatment center. He told her they were strong, so getting off them could take some time as well as more counseling. She had run out of tears. She had no more depth to experience frustration. Her soul had reached the abyss long ago, and almost as if she were a robot she mechanically reached over and grasped the bottles like her arm was a crane pulling construction equipment.

She was beginning to question her sanity, her intelligence, her strength. She knew the marriage was beyond reconcilable, but all this? How did it devolve to this? Seven days ago she was a woman whose marriage had run its course, now she was a drug addict hoping her soul had hid itself from her reach, as a means of self-preservation. She had no time to analyze how she fell upon this path. She had a daughter to think of. She had a future to consider. She would bide her time, and ease her way out of the marriage. Enough people had been hurt.

He discussed with his lawyer the next step in the process. He had discovered even more pics on her cell phone. These were of another man, someone he knew. He was upset this time, but not angered. It hurt less this second time around. Being an IT specialist ingratiated him with into a lot of interesting people within the cyber community. One person in particular, an expert hacker, showed him how to upload phone calls into a transfer module, and regenerate them as printable conversation script. He basically was taught to tap a phone. He used this talent to reproduce all past conversations between her and her now multiple paramours. He printed the dialogue from each call and placed them in his briefcase, armed and ready for a divorce battle.

Being a man of God, he knew about mercy. He believed firmly in the power of forgiveness. He decided at the last moment to give his prodigal wife yet another chance. He deemed her fortunate to have married a husband like him. A less godly man would have jumped ship on the first scent of infidelity, but

he stayed through it all. They must have been put together for a reason, and he was going to keep them together. He reached over to rub her back. She didn't push him away this time. He asked her how her day was. She said it was boring, and that she was tired all the time. He said she should get out some, and not just stay cooped up in the house all day. She decided not to ask him how he knew she did not leave the house. He let her know that he spoke with her boss again and that it was ok for her to go back to work. He let her know that he did not tell her boss too much of her ordeal, that it was family business and no one else's. He began rubbing further down her back. He turned her around. He kissed her. She did her best to act as if she wanted to be kissed by him. He kissed her body. He made love. She endured the moment. This night was testament to his perseverance. This was the crown reward to his not giving up on her. He now felt completely sure that their marriage had survived, and was headed back on the right path. She did what she had to do until better plans emerged.

The next day, he went to work rejuvenated. The fruits of his following the righteous path were finally beginning to pay off. He contacted a friend who was going through similar difficulties with his spouse, and told his story of victory in hopes that it would provide inspiration. His buddies at work figured he must have gotten laid the night before.

She entered work the next day on edge. She could only imagine what her coworkers had been told. She knew of at least two people that would report her actions to her husband. She felt a preemptive betrayal by them even before they had the chance to deceive her. Everybody passed her with an eerie silence. She was almost frightened by the lack of noise, the absence of energy in the room. Before it was a madhouse at the office. People were always joking around, throwing balled up papers at each other, telling stories to one another. Now it was as if a drill sergeant was to make an appearance any minute. She eventually spoke up. She rose from her cubicle, climbed her desk and yelled "it's ok to say hello to me. I'm crazy but not dangerous!" The relief in the room was palpable. People began to ease up. Her co-worker eventually approached her and asked how she was holding up. She replied she was doing the best she could. She cried. She wanted out. It was time to hatch an escape plan from her nightmare marriage, by any means necessary.

She developed a scowl. She's not even sure where it came from. Rather, she doesn't know whose face she took it from. Like an angry man projected his rage onto her, and fastened it onto her face. Her upper lip developed a rigidity that was not present earlier. She knew that only happiness would be able to soften her features. She began to suspect the stiffness was here to stay.

She tried to develop plans of escape to no avail. There was a cloud of anger surrounding her,

following her everywhere where she went. It would compromise her ability to be creative, to think of ways to better her condition. Every move she made, his counter move further isolated her. She wanted to tell someone of the trap she was in, but who would listen? She felt her community wasn't against her, but at the same time they weren't exactly for her. He let slip of her love letters to her ex-lover, mentioning it to fellow parishioners. He may have hinted to his daughter's preschool teacher of his wife's condition, and that if there was any issue with his daughter that she should try and get in touch with him first.

Time went on. The emptiness remained, but she grew accustomed to it. She lived with it. She reached her wit's end long ago, and was painfully accepting the fact that she had been defeated. He was a good chessman, and had commanded his pieces to precision. To him, his lies were justified by her betrayal. After all, her refusal to feel love for him was the reason he transported her to the facility in the first place. If she would have just done as God commanded her none of this would have happened.

She no longer had an identity. She had been starved of any attention, not only by her family but the community at large. There was no hello as she entered the grocery store. No hugs during church. She had been systematically starved of acknowledgement, and it worked. His victory was secure.

She's tired. Somehow, someday, her will has finally been broken. She was under the impression that a spirit was infinite and indomitable, but he showed her that everything has its limits. Before all this she felt invincible. She was in need of love, and did indeed find it. The nurturing and rejuvenation found in her brief affair was worth all the hell she was later made to endure. She has no regrets.

It left the arena of fighting for reconciliation and became a test of wills. In the beginning he sincerely wanted to have her love. He was willing to do anything to earn it. He learned a lot of things on this journey: about himself as well as about her. He found that the most important aspect of any relationship was structure. It was imperative for each member in a relationship to know their place. If there was a misunderstanding in roles, one of the members must do whatever is necessary to bring harmony back into the relationship.

He never wanted what was done to happen, but he was left with no choice. It was his role as husband to if necessary guide his lost wife. He learned that love is not just a feeling, it is also action. He did his godly duty as a man to put her back in her proper role. He was grateful for his success. He credited his creator for bringing his wife back to him, for providing him with the resources necessary to contain and eventually eradicate the sickness that changed her for the worse. He quietly reveled in the victory. He made a personal vow, one to never let this happen to his beloved again.

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