

The Letter

By Brian Judge

My dearest Bet,

I have been thinking about this matter for a long, long time and it has been eating me up inside. I feel so bad about how you have been treated and knew that sooner or later, preferably sooner I would have to get it out of my system and clear the air. You of course know that I have always tried to do what I could for both of us and the children and have not always been successful. Failure is not easy to come to terms with, let alone to admit it to the world. Now, since I cannot tell it to your face, that is why I am writing this letter to you from the south of France.

A few months ago I was called in to Mr Simmons' office and told quite abruptly that I was fired and would have to clear my desk and leave that day. He said that the standard of my work, my attitude towards the new bosses who had come into the company within the last 4 months and also the fact that I always seemed to have a bottle of whisky in my cupboard, if not a glass on my desk were the main reasons. The arrangement was that if I agreed to waive any legal action to contest my dismissal they would pay my salary for the following three months! _____ then nothing!

As you know I have been leaving the house each morning as before and returning at my usual time each evening trying to appear normal. I could not bring myself to tell you what had happened. I was afraid I would lose you. Many times whilst sitting in the park I would rehearse just how I would break the news but I never had the courage to say anything. Of course your plans about the new bedroom suite and the trip to Paris we had talked about just made it more difficult. At first I searched for another job but with the country in recession there was nothing on offer and I became more and more depressed. How did I fill my days? Well, it was springtime, the weather was pleasant so I walked in the parks, visited the museums where we

used to go in our courting days when money was so tight. I read the daily papers in the libraries and all the time my terrible secret was churning away inside of me. Then last month I read an article in a magazine about the French Foreign Legion. I didn't know it still existed but it does and the recruiting office is in Marseilles where I am now. I must admit I considered suicide on a few occasions but I am too much of a coward to even do that properly. This morning after several interviews I was accepted into the Legion and by the time you receive this I will have sailed to Sardinia for basic training. I have registered under a new name since I want to start afresh. I well know that the life in this army is very harsh but this will, I hope help me to get this whole sordid business out of my mind. Please don't try to contact me as the Legion has a complete system of confidentiality and don't even know my real name.

I have left 40,000 pounds in our joint account, the mortgage is virtually paid off and of course the car and everything else is yours my darling.

This is a last goodbye and I hope you can forgive me for what has happened and enjoy the rest of your life. After some years you can apply to have me presumed dead which will allow you your freedom. Kiss the kids for me and thank you so much, my precious, for all you have given me over the years we have been together.

Many last hugs and kisses to you my darling, and to Jennie and Joe.

Peter.