

“Unknown”: A Short Story

The following essay was written by Elizabeth Everett, Notre Dame 2014, and chosen as the Fall 2011 Notre Dame Right to Life Pro-Life Essay Contest winner. It was featured in Footprints Vol. 5, Issue 3.

I've loved her for as long as I can remember. She doesn't know I'm alive. I long for her to hold me in her arms, to let me know I'm all she lives for, but days go by and she never acknowledges me, seems to be unaware of my existence. Of my presence.

I am learning so many things here, partaking in so many experiences, but whenever I catch a hint of her sweet, melodic voice, my world seems to stop. For now, I am content with my occupation as an unseen observer. But sooner or later, she will have to come to terms with me. I am hopeful, yet fearful, for that day.

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Amy slammed the car door shut and jogged up to the big wooden door, fumbling around in her bag for the set of keys. A beautiful spring day, the sky as blue as a robin's egg. The petite garden in front of her was yet to bloom; the bulbs had not yet dared to poke their heads above the soil. A glimmer of red caught her eye -- a small, wild blossom slowly starting to creep its way toward the sun. Amy smiled as she crossed the threshold of her dorm. Closing the heavy door, she phoned Mark, her significant other of two years.

“Hey, honey, I'm not feeling too well so let's postpone dinner 'til next Saturday. 'Kay, talk to you later, love you, bye.”

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Saturday night Amy stood dressing, tucking her long hair behind her ears. She stood on tiptoes to reach the lamp switch on her bureau, shaking her head ruefully as she did so, wishing for the umpteenth time she could add on a few more inches. She stepped outside and saw two butterflies in a tizzy, fluttering around, looking for nectar from nonexistent flowers. Amy looked over at the tiny blossom; she really should water it, but not tonight. No, tonight she had more important things on her mind.

That night at dinner Mark held her hand and reassured her. They talked a long while. What could they possibly do? They had one option. Only one.

"Honey, you know that, right?" Mark's anxious face, his hazel eyes peering into her own.

Silence.

"I just want what's best for you. I can't -- we can't -- deal with this right now. Think of school, our future..."

And so she gave in, because she didn't want to lose him.

That morning Amy dressed slowly. She pictured Mark's earnest expression, his lips telling her it was no great thing. She repeated this to herself, and was resolved before the last button was done. The bright smile that faced her in the mirror confirmed his words. A sigh of relief escaped her lips.

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I don't know what is happening. All I know is I'll never see her face, or hear her lovely voice. The voice that I imagined would whisper sweetly in my ear grows harsher as she severs our ties forever. If she would only pause for a moment, she would realize my love is not a burden. But to her this is nothing.

* * *

Two hours later, Amy pulled up to her dorm, its majestic turrets casting shadows on the manicured lawn. A light breeze began to meander and the azure sky seemed to darken for an instant. A solitary petal flew into her face, whirled around her in the wind, an embrace of unknown, unrequited love. She brushed it impatiently away and tread quickly and quietly along the worn, old cobblestone path. She didn't even notice her flower had been choked by the weeds."