

I Wish To Die Beside You

By Mark Edgemon

"Baby, can you hear me," I said to my precious wife, brushing the hair back from her forehead. I leaned close to her face and kissed her eyes, my tears a virtual fountain, each drop falling on her cheek as she laid there unconscious before me, wasting away, transforming from a once beautiful angel into an emaciated, withering figure awaiting death.

"I'm tormented in agony!" I cried out inside my thoughts, contemplating suicide the day she passes from my life.

The door opens abruptly as the physician on record walks into the room. He glances at her chart, but only for a moment and then looks at her and remarks, "Well" pausing briefly, "It won't be long now!" And with that, he left the room.

I resent that son of a bitch and I wish that he were afflicted as I am, the callus bastard! I hate him for his lack of concern toward my wife's suffering and of my own wrenching anguish.

As I looked into her thin, gaunt face, I traveled back in my thoughts to our first Christmas together, when she and I went shopping that Christmas Eve at a local crafts fair. We found nothing of interest until suddenly, she spied a hand carved wooden tree ornament, made by one of the traveling craftsmen. She had to have it and although we had so little money, I bought it. We had spaghetti noodles that night for supper, which was all we could afford, as we dined in the reflection of the peaceful lighting from our Christmas tree. She stared at the ornament with a glow on her face that illuminated our darkened room and most certainly, my heart. From that moment on, Christmas never really began for her until she placed that ornament on the tree each year at which time she would cry.

"How are we today?" a gruff, boisterous voice boomed from behind me as the door once again flew open, jarring me out of my remembrance of happier times. It was the priest that frequented the hospital, dressed in robes, beads and religious jewelry all to let us know, he was somebody important. Well maybe he was to those that played into his act, but I can't imagine that God gave a damn about what he had become, a self righteous, self important piece of...self!

Before I could stop him, he placed his thumbprint dipped in holy water onto her forehead and began chanting in Latin over her 70-pound, skeletal frame, she being too far-gone to realize what was happening. How dare this pompous bastard push his way into our moment of grief and afflict us with his voodoo witcheries. I grabbed him by his collar, causing him to spill what was left of his vial of holy water and shoved him out the door, accidentally bumping his head on the doorframe as he fell into the hall.

I looked upon her emaciated, near lifeless body that lay before me. I knew she was in pain, I could feel it. I knew what I must do. I promised to love and protect her in sickness and in health. She needed me now all the more, now that she was at her weakest.

I had asked the hospital's administration to pull the plug on her life support a few days earlier, so she could be spared the pain that the cancer was inflicting on what remained of her body. They stated it was against the law in our State to assist suicide, which included all forms of assisted death. I asked if I could do it and they said that I would be arrested and very likely put to death for murder.

Whether or not that was true, I know what I have to do.

I reached into my pocket and pulled out the wooden ornament she loved so much and placed it in her hands, cupping my hand around hers. With hand shaking, I reached for the plug and disconnected her life support. I turned to see her draw her last breath as she passed away peaceably in her sleep.

Unbeknownst to me, an alarm was set off at the nurse's station when her life support was severed. The doctor on record slammed open the door, rushing into the room along with two male nurses and a security officer with the intention of reestablishing her life support.

The doctor screamed at me, "What have you done!" He turned to the male attendants and said urgently, "Check her vital signs! Begin resuscitation, stat!"

The doctor pointed to the security officer and ordered, "Arrest him!"

As the officer approached me, pulling his revolver from his holster, I reached into my other pants pocket and removed a pistol, pointed it to the officer's forehead and shot him between the eyes. A couple of female nurses approached the door of the room, recoiling in sickened disbelief as the others were paralyzed with fear.

I shot the officer first, because he was the only one with a gun. I proceeded to shoot the doctor in the face and both male attendants in the chest. The nurses at the door ran in terror.

I placed the pistol to my right temple and pulled the trigger. As I fell across my wife's body, the room began to fade from view as my spirit hovered over her.

And then, her own spirit rose to meet me from the confines of her sickly corporal form. I reached out to her with great joy.

But then, in an instant of time, a gulf began to separate us. I caught a glimpse of her and I could see that her countenance radiated with the glorious light of the angels. As I gazed at her holy beauty, I was immediately plunged into darkness where I began to fall, gripped by the beast's fiery grasp!

For time eternal...The End