

Lost in Translation



Lawrence Johnson Sr.

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by Lawrence Johnson Sr.

Brian was an attractive guy with dark wavy hair. His athletic build and charming personality made him a hit with the ladies where ever he went. But just below the surface was a dark side that he has never been able to contain. While some of us have been know to have short fuses friends of Brian's quickly found out that his was practically non-existent. As an athlete in high school his explosive temper caused him to be booted from so many football games that he was kicked off of the team.

After graduating from college his ballistic behavior caused the breakup of a half dozen relationships causing him to jump from girl to girl until he met Brooke. The two hit it off right away and for the first time Brian was in love. The two dated for almost two years, but during that time on several occasions Brooke had witnessed first hand the volatile nature of the man that she though she would spend the rest of her life with. During the course of their relationship she begged and pleaded with Brian to get help but each time he refused. She began having doubts about their future but in spite of his refusals and continuing fits of rage she didn't give up on their relationship.

Brooke was as kind and gentle as they come, but she also harbored a dark family secret, one more sinister and deadly than Brian could image.

Brooke was running out of patience with her boyfriend so she decided to take a leap of faith and tell Brian the one secret that she had keep to herself all of her life. She was sure that Brian would seek professional help to control his anger once he heard the story but she was wrong. One evening after dinner Brooke told Brian the story about a man that her Mother used to date before she met her Father. She revealed to him that a few years before she was born her

Mom and her abusive boyfriend went to the islands during their summer vacation. Her mother's boyfriend beat her so badly that she required stitches.

As the ambulance drove her to the hospital she yelled out of the window, "I never want to see you again!"

While she was at the island's hospital a mysterious man who had witnessed the beating earlier approached her and told her that she would never have to live in fear again. The next day the boyfriend disappeared during a ferry boat ride. Everyone, including the local police, thought that he had fallen overboard but Brooke's mother knew that this was no accident.

Brian was angered by Brook's story. He felt that Brooke and her Mother had concocted the tall tale in order to scare him. He viewed the story as nothing more than a thinly veiled threat. Things went from bad to worse during the heated argument when Brian suddenly attacked her. For Brooke that was definitely the last straw and that the relationship was over. During the week that followed the incident Brian made several attempts to contact Brooke. He knew that she was hurt and angry but felt that if he gave her a few days to cool off that she would forgive him and give him another chance.

A week later when Brian returned home from work he noticed that a letter had been slipped under his apartment door. It was from Brooke. The letter was cold and direct; it began with the words 'My Mother was right.' The letter continued on to say 'I have taken a trip to the islands to visit someone that will see to it that you will never hurt me or anyone else again.' The venomous letter went on for two pages and ended with the words 'I wish I had never met you. I never want to see you again.'

He balled the letter up and tossed it into the nearby trash can. Feeling hurt and betrayed Brian sat in front of his computer and looked through all of the pictures that he and Brooke had taken together. One by one he began to delete each of the photos from the happy times they spent together. Trips, parties, anniversaries, birthdays, every memory of her had to go.

To Brian it was a purging of sorts; if he could erase her from his computer then he could erase her from his mind. He paused when he finally reached the last picture it was a photo of them taken on their first date. He turned to the sofa where the happy couple sat when the picture was taken. His sadness instantly turned to bitterness then rage. Brian spun around in his seat and angrily hit the delete key, the photo remained on the screen but this time there was a tiny pinging sound. He dismissed the odd sound and continued to focus on the remaining photo. He pressed the delete key again, and again he heard the faint sound of a ping. Brian looked around the room hoping to find where the mysterious sound was coming from.

Deciding to ignore the mystery sound his thoughts jumped back to something she had written in the letter about his anger issues and how he refused to seek counseling or go to anger management classes. 'The world will be a better place without you,' she wrote. Brian swore under his breath and hit the delete key a few more times, still nothing but more pings coming seaming from out of thin air. It was as if she was taunting him, not wanting to stay with him physically but unwilling to leave him mentally. Each time he pressed the delete key the pinging sound would be heard in the distance but he paid it no mind. As his rage began to build so did his determination to rid himself of the final image on the screen. So much so that he never noticed that each time that he hit that delete key an item or piece of furniture in his apartment

would vanish from behind him. Ping, the table lamp. Ping, the Fichus Plant. Ping, the coffee table. Ping, the TV. Ping, the picture on the wall.

When his rage kicked into a full boil he banged on the delete key over and over and over again until everything in the room including Brian suddenly just vanished, everything except the partially crumpled letter that lay on the floor. If you looked closely you could make out the words 'I never want to see you again.' The authorities were baffled when they entered the empty apartment. The police department searched for weeks but Brian was never seen or heard from again.

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