

Βοσλάβεκ Ιουλία – Ελεονόρα

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3^ο Βραβείο στην κατηγορία “Short Story”

When Sorry is Too Late

Elizabeth. The love of my life and my soon to be wife. At least that was the plan. We were supposed to get married this summer, after announcing our engagement to her parents. But I didn't expect that one simple mistake of mine could end it all. I'm currently outside the house my love was staying in, thinking of how silly I was to let this happen.

It all started a week ago when I was working late at the office. My assistant ran inside with a worried look on her face and she said: “Sir, Miss Elizabeth has left town” and quickly got out like she didn't want to see my reaction. I couldn't believe my ears. Beth has never left without telling me. I called her multiple times but she didn't answer. I also tried calling her mother but she did not answer either; for a second I thought maybe it was because I had to use my work phone but they both had it. That day I left work with a broken heart.

I could only feel emptiness inside as I entered the quiet house. See, we had just moved in together but I was already used to coming home and hearing Beth's laughter while she was watching TV or talking on the phone with her friend or cooking. I walked to our shared bedroom just to find her closet open and half empty. As I kept trying to contact her something caught my eye. It was my phone thrown on the bed. I unlocked it just to find it open on my messages with my brother, Sam. That means Beth had opened them but that just seemed unusual. She never did that.

A few days passed until I realised something. Beth has a best friend living just outside New York and if she ever left the city it would be to go and visit that exact friend. I could not remember the friend's name but I knew where she lived. I had told my brother the whole situation and we both agreed that I should visit her.

The next morning we drove to her friend's house but stopped as soon as we saw both of them leaving the shopping mall with bags of clothes. But Beth wasn't

smiling. She had a grumpy expression which made me smile at her cuteness. I remembered seeing that exact expression every morning. She hates waking up early so I always changed that by picking her up just to see that beautiful smile of hers again. As I was daydreaming I didn't realise that Sam was talking to me. Annoyed that I wasn't paying attention to him, he grabbed my phone and opened it himself.

I once again turned to look at Beth trying to get out of the car before getting pulled back by my sleeve. "Do you remember what we were talking about after the party?" he asked, showing me our conversation from that day. I looked at him confused since I couldn't understand what did our conversation have to do with my situation. But I still looked through the texts and, boy, was I ashamed of myself. The texts were me and Sam joking about college and how I used to date multiple women at the same time. But that wasn't exactly what made me so shocked. The last thing we said was truly the result of alcohol. Sam pointed out how much I had changed for Beth and I said something I regret. I answered with a text that said "Who said I changed?" which was clearly a joke at the moment but I guess Beth did not think it was funny.

Who am I kidding? That was clearly the reason she left. She had always been insecure about our relationship thinking I would find someone better than her. I always told her that she was the only one I would ever truly love and she always seemed satisfied with my answer. But I guess this text triggered her biggest fear. I couldn't believe myself. Truth be told I was actually going to tell her about the things I had done in the past. The day she left I was preparing myself for that.

The very next day I kept preparing myself for what I was going to say just like the day she left hoping she would listen to me, so here I am now. Knocking on the door late at night hoping she opens the door and runs in my embrace like she always did but a side of me knew that would not happen.

When the door finally opened I took the time to look at her beauty which I've missed so much. We looked at each other in the eyes. Tears threatening to fall from her ocean blue eyes and down her rosy cheeks which I wanted to kiss so badly but knew she probably didn't want me to. I on the other hand already had a tear running down my cheek. I took a step closer to her and she looked away a tear dropping on her left cheek. "Beth I didn't mean it, I love you and you know that, I would never"

she looked at me in disappointment clear in her eyes and a sarcastic laugh escaping her pink lips: "Eric I think it's time for you to go" she said, looking at me once more before more tears fell. "I did not mean it Beth, it was a joke, I was drunk and I didn't know what I was saying." I was fully in tears by now. There was a moment of silence until she spoke again: "It's not what you said that hurts me, it's the fact that you didn't tell me before!" she was fully screaming now. "I was going to!" I raised my voice but calmed myself down when I saw her surprised expression. "I was going to tell you later that day but..." I didn't get to finish when she stopped me. I hoped she changed her mind but she said something that broke my heart into million pieces before she slammed the door shut "You know Eric, sometimes later is just too late".