

A Wife's Last Goodbye

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. UNUSED HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

PAT, 82, is sat in a lone chair in the middle of a blindingly white room. On the ceiling above her is a projector, shining a default-blue image onto the wall in front.

Her coat and bag are slumped on the floor next to her. She delicately touches her hair, making sure it's in place. She's dressed up nicely.

A TECHNICIAN is in the room fiddling about with wires below the image. A webcam and microphone sit on the floor behind him.

Pat sits anxiously, she's upset, in distress.

There's a second of deafening feedback before the technician grunts and gets up.

TECHNICIAN

Right that's all sorted for you, it should come to life soon.

Pat nods a thanks and eagerly tries to peer at the image on the wall, waiting for something to happen. She nervously plays with her hands.

The image glitches and turns to black.

PAT

Hello? Dor? Are you there?

A reply comes back in the darkness.

DOR (O.S.)

Hello? Who is it.

Dor's voice sounds weak.

PAT

(excitedly)

Dor it's me. Pat. Can you hear me?
I can't see you. Can you see me?

DOR (O.S.)

Pat! Where are you?

PAT

I don't know. I'm in a room. They won't let me come see you.

Dor coughs, it sounds painful. She's very ill.

The image glitches again and a webcam feed of Dor comes up on the wall.

Dor's in a hospital bed. Oxygen tubes come out of her nose, IVs out of her arms. Her bald head is wrapped in a scarf and her skin is pale. She's terminal.

PAT (CONT'D)

Oh Dor, what do you look like.

DOR

Like a dead woman.

PAT

Now don't say that, what did I say about talk like that.

DOR

It's true, didn't they tell you?

PAT

Tell me what?

DOR

It's not good news love. They say I won't make it through the night.

Dor sounds at peace, she's not upset or distressed, she's ready.

Pat gasps, she begins to cry but sniffles and holds it back, pulling a tissue out of her sleeve to dab her eyes.

DOR (CONT'D)

It's ok Pat, we prepared for this.

PAT

There's still a chance, you might pull through.

DOR

Might? I'm old Pat, we both are. It's my time, it's ok.

(beat)

We've had a good life together haven't we?

PAT

I want to come see you. Say goodbye properly, sit by your side. Hold your hand one last time-.

Pat chokes on her words.

DOR

They won't let you. You'll catch it, then we'll both be dead and what good will that do. Who'll look after the garden? I know your son won't.

Dor scoffs. Pat laughs.

A pause.

PAT

Is this the last time I'll get to see you then?

DOR

I think so dear.

PAT

Well in that case I'm staying, for as long as I can. They'll have to drag me out.

Dor laughs but it turns into an ugly cough.

DOR

That's just like you, fighting till the very end. You always were the fighter weren't you. The optimist, the activist.

PAT

You always wanted to give up, accept things how they were.

DOR

It's easier that way trust me, life's more peaceful.

Another pause. There's no awkwardness, the pause is comforting, natural.

DOR (CONT'D)

They say that when you die, your life flashes before your eyes. I always thought it was a load of rubbish, but now... now that I'm near the end, I think I believe it. I want to believe it.

(beat)

It'll be good to remember the first 60 years. But also, it'll be good to relive the last 20, with you.

Pat's eyes tear up over fond memories.

PAT

We had the best time, didn't we. A wonderful time.

DOR

Tell me the story of how we met.

PAT

Oh you know how we met-

DOR

-I know, but I want you to tell me.

PAT

Well, it was a glorious sunny day.
It was a Tuesday?...the 17th of May
if I recall. Just on the brink of
summer.

DOR

We were both getting ice cream on
the beach.-

PAT

-Ah! All in good time.

Dor chuckles. Pat calmly recites a story she's told a
thousand times.

PAT (CONT'D)

I had gone to the coast that day to
pick up a present for my grandson.
He wanted a bucket and spade for
his holiday you see. But before I
got to the shop I walked past you.
You were chatting to the waitress
at a cafe.

(pause)

There was something about you that
made me stop. That drew me in. You
know I had always thought that I
wasn't meant for men, I think
that's why my marriage hadn't
worked out. But when I saw you, sat
talking, I felt something... new.
It's cliché I know but it's true.

Dor coughs abruptly, it lasts longer than usual, it sounds
rougher.

PAT (CONT'D)

Dor? Dor are you ok?

Dor nods, she suppresses the cough and it calms down.

DOR

Carry on.

Her voice is much more croaky. Pat hesitantly recollects her
thoughts.

PAT

So I sat down on the table next to
you. I had no idea what my plan
was, I just wanted to start
speaking to you. So I summoned the
waitress over, much to your
displeasure, and ordered.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

Oh I was so nervous! As the waitress was gone I was racking my brain to try and think of something, anything to say. But thankfully you spoke first.

DOR

It's not like you to be shy.

PAT

I always was around you.

DOR

(quietly)

Mint and strawberry.

PAT

What?

DOR

Your favourite combination. One scoop of mint, one scoop of strawberry. That's what you ordered.

PAT

Yes that's right, and you said
(imitating; sternly)
"How on earth can you eat that?"
You hated it.

DOR

I still do.

PAT

You got two scoops of chocolate chip.

DOR

Oooh what I would do for an ice cream right now.

Pat laughs, silent tears fall down her face.

PAT

What's your fondest memory? Of us.

Dor's silent as she thinks. The beep of her heart monitor is all we hear.

DOR

I think, it must be the village dance. Our first dance together in public.

Pat smiles at the memory.

DOR (CONT'D)

We practiced for two weeks
beforehand, we wanted it to be
perfect.

PAT

Thank God we did, you kept stepping
on my toes!

DOR

I never was a dancer, but that
evening, that moment. That was the
moment I knew that I was truly
happy. It had made every other shit
thing in my life worth it.

PAT

Me too.

They sit silently for a moment, reflecting on their lives
together.

DOR

Pat, I just want to say. Thank you.
I've had the best life anyone could
ask for, and you've made it all the
more special.

PAT

Oh... Doris.

DOR

I love you Pat.

PAT

I love you too. I wish I could be
there.

DOR

Me too.

The repetitive electronic beep fills the room.

Pat sits silently crying in the chair.

After a while, the beeping stops. It becomes one long noise.
Doris has passed away.

Pat gets up and walks over to the wall. She traces Dor's face
with her fingers and spreads her hand against the wall,
giving it, Dor, a final kiss before leaning her head against
it.

Pat sighs and kisses the wall once more.

PAT

(whispering)
Goodbye old friend.

She walks to the chair, takes her coat and bag in her arms and leaves. The connection drops, the image on the wall goes black, and the lights in the room switch off.

We are left alone in the darkness.

THE END