

‘A LOVE – NEVER FORGOTTEN’

One-act play

by

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The Residents Lounge in a block of retirement apartments. There are either double doors or an archway which leads to a hall that we shouldn't be able to see. The room is nicely decorated and furnished with easy chairs, coffee tables and a higher table against the wall. On this table there is a coffee pot, cups and saucers, etc. A green baize notice board is on the wall. Sitting on a chair is ROSE. A bag of washing is leaning against her chair. SHARON, the manager, enters, and goes to the notice board.

SHARON Good morning Rose, are you okay?
ROSE Yes love, I'm fine.
SHARON There's coffee in the pot. Jill made it this morning.
ROSE No, I won't at the moment. I'm just waiting for a machine to be free in the laundry. What have you got there?
SHARON *(Pinning a note on the board)* Just a note to let you know I'm having some time off in a couple of weeks.
ROSE Will there be a relief manager?
SHARON No, I'm only away a few days.
ROSE Going somewhere nice?

Before SHARON has time to answer ALICE enters. She seems a little distraught .

ALICE *(To Sharon)* I just saw a man out there!
SHARON Oh, yes, what was he doing?
ALICE Getting into a car, I'm sure he came from here.
SHARON That would be the gentleman who came again to view a flat.
ALICE *(Shocked)* You mean he's been here before?
ROSE I thought he looked quite handsome.
SHARON *(Ignoring Rose)* Yes, last week, came with a younger man, might have been his son.
ALICE And is he going to move in?
SHARON I don't know. He's interested in 34.
ALICE *(Flustered)* That's on my floor, only two doors away.
SHARON Why? Does it bother you?
ALICE But he hasn't decided yet?
SHARON No, but he seems keen. It's between us and the one up the road. He's making a decision today, said he would ring me.
ALICE Oh dear. *(Pause)* What's his name?
SHARON Ives. Why? Do you know him?
ALICE Err. No, I don't think so. Just that he reminded me of someone.
ROSE I suppose no one's found my brooch?
SHARON No one's handed it in. I'm sure it will turn up.

ROSE gets up, picking up her washing bag. ALICE sits down.

ROSE I'll go and see if there's a machine free now.

ROSE exits passing JILL as she enters.

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JILL *(To Sharon)* The office telephone's ringing..
SHARON Thank you, Jill.

SHARON hurries out of the lounge. JILL looks towards ALICE.

JILL *(Concerned)* Are you alright, Alice?
ALICE *(Near to tears)* Yes, no. Oh, I don't know.
JILL *(Sitting down close to ALICE)* What is the matter? Are you ill?
ALICE No, err. *(Pause)* Upset.
JILL Do you want me to get Gordon?
ALICE No. He's at the club, thank goodness.
JILL What is it, can I help? *(ALICE shakes her head)* Tell me, perhaps I
 can.
ALICE That man, I think I know him.
JILL What man?
ALICE He was viewing one of the unsold flats.
JILL *(Lighthearted)* Well, we could do with a few more men here.
ALICE But not him. Oh please not him.
JILL Is he not a nice person, then?
ALICE Quite the opposite. *(She looks directly at JILL)* If I tell you something,
 will you promise me not to tell a soul.
JILL I promise.
ALICE Really Jill, you mustn't tell anyone.
JILL I won't, but don't tell me if you think I might say something.
ALICE I feel I must tell someone.
JILL I know I've got a reputation for gossiping, but I can keep a secret.
ALICE *(Leaning closer to JILL)* I once had an affair with that man.
JILL *(Taken-a back)* You! I wouldn't have believed it.
ALICE It was a many years ago. Thirty years, or more.
JILL And, have you been in touch with him since?
ALICE No. We've never seen or spoken to each other since then.
JILL Well, I wouldn't worry too much after all this time. It is possible that
 he won't even remember.
ALICE But Gordon must never find out.
JILL No reason why he should. Even if this man did recognize you it's
 unlikely he would do anything after all these years. I don't think you
 need to worry about him.
ALICE It's not him that I'm worried about. *(Embarrassed)* It's me.
 (Pause) I was in love with him, and even seeing him again at a
 distance, I find he still has an effect on me.
JILL What, after all these years!
ALICE Yes, I still have feelings for him.
JILL Does Gordon know about him?

- ALICE** No, he was abroad, in Kenya at the time, the Ministry had sent him there for a few months. I was meant to go with him but my mother was taken ill and I had to stay here.
- JILL** So, how did you meet him?
- ALICE** We were having some alterations done to the house, it was also being rewired, and he was the electrician doing the work. During the week or so he was there, we became friendly, and then it went further.
- JILL** But, surely it was only a... a fling, otherwise you wouldn't still be married to Gordon.
- ALICE** I don't know what you'd call it. I was crazy about him. Jim, that was his name, I'd never met anyone like him before. He made me feel so wonderful. And when I saw him again this morning, my knees started trembling and now I can't get him out of my mind.
- JILL** Wow!
- ALICE** Oh, I know it sounds ridiculous at my age, but that's the effect he still has on me.
- JILL** He sounds quite a man.
- ALICE** I thought Gordon was the only man I could love until he came along. But then I found what love can really be like.
- JILL** You were flattered with his attention and became infatuated with him.
- ALICE** Oh no, it was much more than infatuation, otherwise I would have forgotten him years ago. No one, not even Gordon, made me feel the way I felt with Jim.
- JILL** *(After a pause)* At the time, did you consider leaving Gordon?
- ALICE** Obviously I thought about it, but even in my exalted frame of mind, I was still able to keep my head. We lived in a nice area, had a nice house, and Gordon, as a civil servant, had a good job. Whereas, Jim, he was self employed, and had little money. It would have meant starting all over again. *(pause)* Yet, if he'd asked me, I think I would have
- JILL** But he didn't ask.
- ALICE** No. I carried on seeing him for a number of weeks, then he got a six month contract for work on the Isle of Wight. Also, Gordon was about to return. We parted amicably with him saying when he came back he would contact me. But he didn't. I never saw him again, until today.
- JILL** Well. *(She stands up)* I don't think you should worry yourself too much, Alice. As I said, he probably won't remember, and even if he did, I'm sure he would be discrete.
- ALICE** He probably would. But, what about me? Even if he doesn't remember, I will be conscious of him all the time.
- JILL** You will just have to wait and see. I don't know what else I can suggest.

TED (In a jovial mood) enters the lounge.

TED *(Jovial)* Maybe I can suggest something.

ALICE is startled.

JILL What do you think you can suggest, Ted?
TED Tell me what you're talking about and I'll tell you.

ALICE looks relieved. TED goes to the table and pours himself a coffee.

TED Can I get you ladies coffee?
JILL Not at the moment, thanks. *(Ted looks at ALICE, she shakes her head)*
JILL *(To TED)* You were out early today.
TED Yes, well you know what they say about the early bird.
JILL And what did you catch?
TED That would be telling.
JILL You haven't seen Rose's brooch, have you?
TED Lost it again, has she?
JILL *(Nodding her head)* I thought you might have found it and given it to your lady friend.
TED *(Smiling)* I don't have to give her jewellery, she's got plenty of her own.
JILL Plenty eh, you're on to a good thing there, Ted.
TED I'm not after her money.
JILL What is it you're after?
TED Friendship, we do things for each other.
JILL Ooh, what things?
TED Things like, she cooks meals for me, I do her garden. That's the one thing I miss living here, my garden. I've got a variety of things growing in her greenhouse.
JILL So we're not going to hear wedding bells?
TED No you're not. She's happy in her bungalow and I'm happy here.
(ROSE Enters, puts her washing down beside ALICE and goes to pour herself coffee)
ROSE So what's the point in getting married.
ROSE For the children's sake. *(JILL and TED laugh)* You may laugh, but there are too many unmarried mothers these days.

ROSE sits down close to ALICE.

ROSE Still couldn't get my washing in. *(Noticing ALICE isn't drinking)*
 Aren't you having a cup, love?
ALICE Perhaps I will now.
JILL I'll get it for you. *(Jill goes to pour the coffee).*
ROSE *(To ALICE)* I don't know why more people don't use this lounge.
ALICE *(Off hand, she can't be bothered)* I don't know.
JILL *(At the coffee table)* Yes you'd think they would. And not many make use of the garden either.
ROSE The garden seats aren't very comfortable, often there's a wind and there's not much shade.

JILL brings ALICE her coffee

ALICE Thank you.

JILL seeing ALICE seems to have calmed down, goes back to TED at the notice board.

ROSE I'm old.

ALICE *(Smiling)* We all are here.

ROSE But you've got a husband.

ALICE Yes. *(Pause)* It must be hard being a widow.

ROSE Over fifteen years since my Sam went.

ALICE They said the time flies when you're over twenty-one.

ROSE Twenty-one. Wouldn't mind being that again.

ALICE I wouldn't wish to be twenty-one, today.

ROSE Oh I don't know, love, I'm sure we'd cope. *(Pause)* The things you can get up to these days.

ALICE We didn't do so bad.

ROSE They've no respect for you.

ALICE Who?

ROSE Kids, young people. No respect for their elders

JILL and TED move closer to ROSE and ALICE.

TED Don't let it bother you, we haven't got any here.

ROSE Thank Gawd, except for my little grandson when he visits with my my Sarah.

JILL Haven't seen them lately.

ROSE They're coming next week, I booked the guest room.

JILL That will be nice for you.

ROSE Would have been this week, but there's someone in there.

JILL Oh yes, Anne, on the second floor, her son.

TED How many Anne's have we got here now?

JILL Three, one on each floor.

TED But there is only one Jill.

JILL *(Smiling)* Only one of me, aren't you pleased?

TED You still going line dancing?

JILL Yes, you should come along, you'd enjoy it. An opportunity for you to meet some women.

TED No, it's not for me. Anyway, I'm quite capable of meeting women.

JILL It would give you some exercise.

TED I don't need any.

JILL Of course not, you're getting your exercise doing your lady friend's garden.

TED smiles. ALICE stands up and takes her cup back to the coffee table.

JILL (To ALICE) I'll see if I can find out anymore from Sharon about that man.

ALICE Thank you, Jill.

ALICE is starting to leave as her husband, Gordon, enters.

GORDON Hello Alice, you had your coffee?

ALICE Yes. How was it at the club?

GORDON Alright, usual crowd. Oh, the annual dinner-dance is coming up soon. Tell you about it later.

ALICE I'm going up now, a few things to do.

GORDON I'll be up in a minute, just want to speak to Ted.

ALICE No rush, I haven't started lunch yet. Take your time.

ALICE leaves. JILL sits down with ROSE. Gordon goes over to Ted.

GORDON (Excitedly) Twenty to one. (TED looks at his watch.) No, twenty to one, the horse you gave me.

TED Oh.

GORDON You must have made a few quid.

TED I didn't back it.

GORDON But you gave me the tip.

TED Yes, but I didn't back it.

GORDON Why?

TED I'm not really a betting man. I forgot about it. But at least you must done well.

GORDON No, I didn't back it either. Some of the boys down at the club did. They were keen to show their appreciation.

TED (Catching GORDON'S breath and standing back a bit) Yes, I can tell.

GORDON Oh, sorry, didn't realise. Think I'll pour myself a black coffee before I go up.

TED So why didn't you back it?

GORDON Would have done, but I'd promised Alice I wouldn't bet for a while. Went a bit too far sometime back, had to delve into the family coffers. I wouldn't want to upset the old girl.

TED Of course not. (GORDON goes over to get the coffee) Have we got a committee meeting next week?

GORDON The week after. I've been approached by Ruth, she wants to know why she can't be allotted a parking space.

TED But, she hasn't got a car.

GORDON I know, she wants space for her nephew when he visits once a week.

TED That's ridiculous.

GORDON She's a menace that woman. Thinks if she hasn't a car space she should pay less maintenance.

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JILL If she feels that way, I shouldn't have to pay for the lift, when I live on the ground floor.

TED It's all nonsense, everyone has to pay a share of all the services.

GORDON I'll have a word with Sharon about her.

JILL stands up and joins the men. ROSE's head has moved to one side. she's asleep.

JILL Rose has dropped off.

TED And we thought we were entertaining her with our sparkling conversation.

GORDON Anything else we've got to put on the agenda?

TED That lady who lives near to me was complaining about the pigeons mess on her car.

GORDON Who was that?

TED Oh, you know, walks with a stick, grey hair.

GORDON *(Laughs)* That could be anyone here.

JILL I think he means, Mary.

TED That's right, Mary. She's right though, they're a bloody nuisance those pigeons.

GORDON Not much we can do about it.

TED It's people throwing out bread that encourages them.

JILL Well you know who it is? *(She looks over at ROSE, who is still asleep)* I've told her about it many times.

TED And what does she say?

JILL Always the same, *(Mimicking ROSE)* I don't throw it out for the pigeons, I feed the other birds.

TED *(Laughs)* Tell her to put up a notice. Not for Pigeons.

JILL You can tell her when she wakes up.

GORDON Have either of you looked at the estimate of our service charges for next year?

JILL They've gone up considerably.

TED It was expected with the general rise in electricity and insurance.

GORDON But one of the biggest was the estate management.

TED *(Joking)* Well, we could always take over run it ourselves.
GORDON *(Seriously)* That is possible, if most of the residents agreed. I'm sure we could run it for less than what they charge us.
JILL Not with most of the residents. Can you imagine Rose as a director?
GORDON I'd have a go if I was younger, but then, if I was younger, I wouldn't be here.
JILL *(Laughs)* No, none of us would be.
GORDON While we're at it, I think that refuse room needs sorting out.
JILL It's since we've have had to separate the rubbish.
GORDON Bottles all over the place.
TED I didn't realise people here drank so much.
GORDON There are a lot of secret drinkers.
JILL Yet when we tried to arrange a cheese and wine party, no one was interested.
TED You'd have thought we were in a temperance hotel.
GORDON Wouldn't know, always avoided them.
JILL Surprisingly, there were a few bottles of champagne.