A Second Opportunity (Pt. 2)

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The next few days went by quickly and Mary had gotten better. She was always laughing and making me laugh as well. I had taken her out to the movies after she insisted one day. Afterwards we had walked and she told me about her past and what she wanted for her future. She had been raised by loving parents when she was young but as she got older things had changed. Her parents seemed to argue all the time and the love they once had for each other quickly vanished. Mary had dreams of traveling the world and for this she had done her best in high school to go to college and get scholarships. She wanted to study abroad and she was finally going to realize her dream of going to another country. Starting next semester she would be studying in England.

Since Mary was feeling a lot better I assumed she would be leaving soon but I found myself not wanting her to leave. I had grown fond of her and would miss her company and the way she made me laugh. I thought about this while we were having dinner and I decided to ask her.

“Hey, when do you start classes?” I asked.

She dropped her spoon and replied, “Will, do you want me to leave? Have I become a burden?”

I quickly said, “No of course not! I was just asking because…well…I don’t want you to leave just yet.”

She smiled and I got the feeling she knew that already. She grabbed my hand and said, “I still have a whole month left but I’m not sure I should stay here. Don’t get me wrong, I am truly grateful for all you have done and I enjoy spending time with you, but, we just met and I don’t think it is right for me to be in your house for that long.”

I told her that was nonsense and she should stay at least for a week more. She said she wasn’t sure and made the most adorable face as she was thinking about it. I could tell she was messing with me and wanted me to beg a little.

“Come on Mary, you know you wanna stay. Ok how about this. You spend the night and think about it and I will have a surprise for you in the morning that might convince you to stay here a bit longer.” I said.

She then smiled and agreed. She told me I didn’t have to get her anything but I told her that I would because tomorrow was Christmas. When I said that she gasped and said she had completely forgotten.

“Oh my god that’s true! I have to get you something too. Let’s go to the mall! Pleeaase!”

I got my coat and we were on our way. While we were shopping she told me that it would be the first Christmas she wouldn’t spend with her parents. She was saddened by that but quickly put it aside and her face brightened up as she told me she needed to buy her friends something too. We walked for several hours in the mall and bought a few things and the whole time Mary was holding my arm. Those moments were some of the happiest I had had in a while. We laughed, tried on some clothes, shared anecdotes about Christmas, and I even chased her at one point after she had pulled a small prank on me. By the end of the night we had forgotten about our problems and woes and simply enjoyed each other’s company.

The next day I woke her up with the smell of coffee and a tray of food. After she finished I gave her the present I had bought for her when she was trying on some clothes the previous night. It was a scarf and a book. She had told me a few days earlier that she loved scarfs and she also mentioned that she wanted to read a particular book that was hard to find but I had ordered it a few days earlier as well. She hugged me and I felt something stir inside me as she did so. Then she got something from underneath the bed and handed it to me. I was surprised because I didn’t see her buy anything that could have been for me and I had been with her most of the time. My guess was that she didn’t really try on clothes and got out after I left her there. When I opened the gift I was surprised to see a watch that I had wanted for some time now. I didn’t remember telling Mary about it so I was curious as to how she knew. Then I remembered I had been staring at it for a few minutes at the mall but had decided not to buy it. With this I felt embarrassed about what I had given her but she told me she loved her present.

My parents and siblings were coming over for dinner and Mary was worried about this because she said she didn’t want my family to think wrong of her. I told her my family was very nice and they would understand her situation. So we then started to prepare dinner. I quickly found out that Mary was very good at cooking and we decided to have a little fun. I put on some tunes and to my surprise she started singing along. This was exciting because she had the same taste in music as I did. We were making salad, chicken, rice, pasta, and some other stuff just for the fun of it. Mary had her hair tied in a ponytail and was wearing an apron. She had some food on her face and was a little messy but she looked very cute. She was also dancing and started to drag me into it. Within minutes we were singing and dancing and the food wasn’t fully prepared. Instead we threw the food at each other and were having a blast. I started to chase her around and when I finally caught her I tickled her. She was

very ticklish and started to laugh uncontrollably. Then when I stopped I realized just how much I liked her. I had her in my arms and she was still laughing but then stopped as well. She looked at me and there was a spark in her eyes. Very slowly she moved her lips towards me and I did the same. Time seemed to go very slowly and I held my breath as our lips were centimeters away. Finally she leaned closer and kissed me. We stood there, not moving except for our lips. My arms dropped and she placed her hands on the back of my head. I grabbed her hips and started to walk as we continued to kiss. She hit the wall gently and gasped softly. Her mouth had the richest taste and for the moment I felt something so strong that it was overwhelming. I placed my hand on her cheek and felt the softness of her skin. This was going slowly but I could feel the tension building as our bodies were warming up and I could feel her heart against my chest. We broke apart for a second and looked at each other. Then we continued to kiss and slowly started to get more passionate about it. She kissed me and I could feel the desire to love and to be loved with every movement of her lips and how she placed her arms around me. I did the same and felt like I hadn't felt for years. Not since my wife died. That's when I stopped and stepped back.

She remained against the wall and stared at me as she bit her lower lip. It seemed like she understood everything I did. She simply looked at me with soft eyes which made feel safe. I was scared, however. I didn't want to fall in love again and go through the same pain I had gone through. Also, I thought about the age difference between us and felt guilt. There were about a million more thoughts going through my mind and at that moment Mary reached for my hand. She squeezed it and stood there patiently. I didn't know what to do so I simply hugged her. I thought about what would come next. Mary was leaving in a month so that was another complication.

We remained in the position we were in for many minutes when she finally stepped back and said, "William, there are things in life that we wish wouldn't have happened, but, we can't change the past. The future is always uncertain and we don't know what's going to happen. One thing we do know is what we see in front of us. The present is the time when we make decisions that will affect us forever and how we go about them defines who we are and who we want to be. I am willing to take a risk and go after what I think could make me happy. Are you?"