

The Things That Remain

By

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FADE IN:

1) EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY - 1945

A small town train station platform is crowded with WOMEN and CHILDREN carrying welcome home signs. A large banner hangs from the station entrance welcoming home the town's soldiers.

EVA, aged mid-twenties, stands back further from the others twisting a handkerchief nervously through her fingers. A train approaches.

A WOMAN standing close to Eva checks her hair and make up in a compact mirror. Other WOMEN ensure that their CHILDREN are presentable.

The train comes to a stop and the FIRST SOLDIER steps onto the platform to a round of applause. A BAND PLAYS in the background. A WOMAN and a YOUNG GIRL rush forward to embrace the soldier.

More MEN depart from the train to applause and reunions with loved ones.

Eva stays back from the others, her eyes constantly searching as the MEN make their way to the platform.

One by one the soldiers and their families leave until there is no one left on the platform except for Eva and the band, who has stopped playing and is now packing up.

2) EXT. STREET - DAY

As Eva walks home the streets are filled with celebrations. Eva stops in front of her house, a white villa, on a quiet street.

She pauses at the gate and then slowly walks towards the front door.

3) INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eva enters the house and removes her hat, placing it on a side table by the front door. She takes a few steps into the living room and stops cold.

Sitting in an armchair on the opposite side of the room, pooled in the warm glow of a lamp is JACK, aged mid-twenties. He is wearing his army uniform.

JACK
Hello Eva.

EVA
Jack, oh thank God.

She rushes to embrace Jack who winces slightly at her touch.

EVA
What's wrong?

JACK
It's nothing, just a scratch.

Eva notices the bandage that is wrapped around Jack's right shoulder all the way across his chest and back.

EVA
A scratch?

JACK
Well more of a bullet wound, but not
to worry my love.

Eva lays her hand lightly over his heart.

EVA
I went to the station. When you didn't
get off the train I thought...well I
thought that maybe you'd -

JACK
I got a lift with Richard. He had a
car pick him up at central and offered
me a ride. After months at sea I
couldn't quite fathom twelve hours on
a train.

Eva studies her husband's face.

EVA
You've changed.

JACK
Years at war will do that to a man.

EVA
It's not a bad change. You just look
more...

JACK
Rugged? Handsome?

EVA
I was going to say older.

JACK
(laughs)
Well that I am. But you my love don't
look a day older than when we were
last together.

EVA
You have a bad memory.

Jack pulls Eva to him and kisses her passionately.

EVA
I have dreamed about that every day
these past three years.

Jack smiles and kisses her again.

4) INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A kettle sits on the stove. A HIGH PITCH WHISTLE announces that it has boiled. Eva stands at the counter preparing a meal. Jack sits at the kitchen table.

EVA
Do you want roast beef?

JACK
You have no idea how amazing that
sounds.

As Eva prepares the plate she accidentally cuts herself with a knife. Jack comes to her side and runs her hand under water.

EVA
There have been no letters for the
past six months. I had no idea where
you were, or if you were even....

Eva chokes back tears. Jack wraps the cut with a tea towel and holds her hand between his own.

JACK
It's alright. I'm here now.

He looks out the kitchen window.

JACK

I see that the vegetable garden has flourished.

Eva follows Jack's gaze to the large vegetable garden that takes up almost half the backyard.

EVA

It's been a saving grace. I was able to sell most of it, and with the money I made from sewing I've been doing alright.

JACK

I'm sorry you had to worry about such things.

EVA

We all did.

Eva finishes preparing the plate and sets it down at the table. Jack sits and takes a few bites.

JACK

Oh God, I've missed this.

CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER is heard from the front yard. Jack stops eating and looks at Eva who smiles and gets up from the table.

5) INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

JACK JR., age six, walks into the living room. He sets his book bag on the side table next to his mother's hat.

EVA

You're home early.

JACK JR.

They let us out because of the parade.

EVA

I have a surprise for you.

6) INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Eva walks into the kitchen with Jack Jr. following behind her. When Jack Jr. enters the room Jack stands.

JACK

Oh Eva, he's grown so much.

Eva looks to Jack Jr. who is still smiling.

JACK JR.

Where's the surprise?

EVA

Jack, this is your father.

Jack Jr. looks at his mother confused.

EVA

Don't you remember him? You used to play with the trains together.

Jack Jr. continues to look at his mother in confusion. Eva crouches down in front of her son.

EVA

You were only three when he left, you don't remember him do you?

Jack Jr. reaches into his pocket and pulls something out. He hands it to his mother.

EVA

What is this?

JACK JR.

It's Daddy's medal.

EVA

Where did you get this?

JACK JR.

You gave it to me.

Eva stands abruptly.

EVA

Do not lie to me Jack, where did you get this?

JACK JR.

(scared)

It came with the telegram.

EVA

What telegram?

Jack Jr. points to the desk in the corner. Eva walks over and picks up a piece of paper. She looks down at the words written and starts to panic.

The telegram reads: The secretary of war regrets to inform you that your husband Corporal Jack Hunter was killed in action on ten December in Germany.

Eva looks at the table. Jack is no longer there. The plate of food sits untouched.

Eva slumps down the wall. She clutches the medal to her heart and cries. Jack Jr. puts his arms around his mother. Her cries are muffled by his embrace.

The SOUNDS OF THE STREET PARADE outside float through the house. Eva's cries are eventually drowned out by the bass of a drum as the parade passes by.

THE END.