

The Sergeant's Wife

by

Kelly St-Laurent

2020

[authorstlaurent@gmail.com](mailto:authorstlaurent@gmail.com)

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - 1945

LILY, mid-twenties, sits across the table from ALICE, also mid-twenties. The kitchen is modest but cozy. A calendar on the wall marks the year as 1945, the month as August.

The summer sun streams through the window. Alice takes a sip of her iced tea.

ALICE

How much sugar did you put in this?  
Good Lord, it could raise the dead.

Lily doesn't say anything. Her mind is elsewhere.

ALICE

Oh, I forgot to tell you. I ran into Sarah Pearson yesterday and she said that they're looking for a librarian. I was considering applying. What do you think?

Alice awaits an answer from Lily, but does not get one.

ALICE

Lily...are you listening to anything I'm saying?

Lily is pulled from her thoughts. She looks at Alice for a moment and then at her lap.

ALICE

Lil?

Lily lifts her hands from her lap revealing a letter. She slides it across the table.

Alice picks the letter up and begins to read it. Her curiosity is replaced with despondence.

ALICE

When did you receive this?

LILY

Two days ago.

ALICE

Two days?

Alice continues to read the letter.

ALICE  
He's alive?

Lily nods.

ALICE  
I don't understand.

LILY  
He's been in a hospital. I don't know  
all the details. He says he was unable  
to get a letter to me until now.

Alice continues to look at the letter.

ALICE  
August 30th. But that means...

LILY  
He'll be home next week.

ALICE  
(to herself)  
Next week.

Lily reaches across the table and touches Alice's hand. Alice  
pulls away from her.

ALICE  
You've known about this for two days?

LILY  
I didn't know how to tell you.

ALICE  
Two days!

Alice puts the letter down. She does not look at Lily but  
instead gets up from the table.

LILY  
Alice, can we just -

ALICE  
I have to go.

Alive leaves quickly. Lily hears the front door OPEN and  
CLOSE.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Alice stands at a grave. The headstone reads: Donald Weatherall, PFC, 34th Infantry Division, died April 1943.

Alice places fresh flowers at the base of the gravestone. She touches the top of the stone and begins to cry.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Lily works in the front yard rose garden. She uses a garden spade to dig out the stubborn weeds.

She comes across one that won't budge. Her frustration builds as she works the spade into the earth around the weed.

Her frustration peaks when GLADYS, her elderly neighbour, approaches the fence dividing their properties.

GLADYS

Heavens child, are you at war?

Lily continues her vigorous digging.

GLADYS

I just came from the market and got to talking to June. She says she missed you at choir practice yesterday. I figured you might have been unwell so I told her as much. You do look a bit pale, my dear.

Lily doubles her effort digging up the weed.

GLADYS

June told me something interesting.

Gladys anticipates a response from Lily and when she doesn't get one she continues.

GLADYS

She said that your Henry is coming home.

Lily looks up at Gladys for the first time, and lifts a hand to shield the sun from her eyes.

LILY

Who told her that?

GLADYS

Her Pete is in the same infantry as Henry. He sent a letter home telling her that Henry had been held captive in some ungodly place in the Pacific.

Lily turns her attention back to the weed.

GLADYS

So is it true?

LILY

Is what true?

GLADYS

Is Henry coming home?

Lily stops digging for a moment.

LILY

Yes.

GLADYS

Well thank the Lord. Oh that's just wonderful. I told June it was wonderful. But of course I had to make sure it was true before I believed it. I do hate when people start gossiping about things they know nothing about. Not that June is a gossiper of course. But my oh my that is wonderful, just wonderful. You must be so happy. We shall have to have a welcome home party. I need to go talk to Etta, I think she still has my serving platter. I should call her now. You enjoy your afternoon. Oh and dear, do be careful with that spade. At the rate you're going I doubt those roses will survive the winter.

Gladys leaves.

Lily sits for a moment with the spade in hand, staring at the reluctant weed. She goes at the weed with reckless abandon, stabbing the spade into the ground over and over. Finally, she gives up and throws the spade off to the side.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lily sits in an armchair stitching lace onto a shawl. On the

table beside her is a photograph of her and Henry on their wedding day. The RADIO plays.

There is a quick KNOCK on the door. The door OPENS and Alice walks into the room. Lily stands.

LILY  
Where were you?

ALICE  
I went for a walk. I needed some time  
to clear my head.

LILY  
I was worried.

ALICE  
I'm okay.

LILY  
Alice I want you to know -

ALICE  
Look, I've been thinking, and I can't  
ask you to -

LILY  
I don't want to be without you.

Lily takes a step towards Alice.

LILY  
I've spent my whole life walking  
around in the dark, and then there was  
you. Like sunshine after a storm. I  
can't breathe without you Alice. Do  
you hear me? I can't breathe without  
you.

Alice takes a step towards Lily. They kiss passionately. Lily begins to unbutton Alice's blouse. Alice unties Lily's robe. Without breaking apart, they move over to the couch.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Alice sits at the kitchen table, while Lily pours coffee into two cups. She hands one to Alice and sits opposite her.

ALICE  
You have to make a decision, Lil.

LILY

How?

ALICE

I don't know. Do you love him?

LILY

He's my husband.

ALICE

I know, but do you love him?

Alice waits for Lily's answer, but she doesn't give one.

ALICE

Do you love me?

LILY

How could you ask that?

ALICE

Up until now I never needed to hear it.

LILY

They told me he was gone. They sent a letter and said that he had gone missing and was presumed dead. I grieved for him. I spent months grieving. I consigned myself to the life of a widow at 24. You know what that feels like. You know the hole that leaves. I thought I'd feel like that forever. I would have given anything to have him home. But then I met you. And these past four months I've felt more alive than I ever have. And now he's alive, and I should feel happy, I should feel relief but all I feel is afraid.

Tears stream down Lily's face. Alice reaches across the table and takes her hand.

ALICE

You don't have to decide right now.

EXT. LAKE JETTY - DAY

Lily and Alice sit next to each other on the jetty, their feet dangling in the lake water. They watch a flock of geese

fly over the lake.

ALICE  
Do you remember when we first met?

LILY  
Of course.

ALICE  
You were wearing that awful dress.

LILY  
It's really not that bad.

ALICE  
It is. But you still looked beautiful.

LILY  
You were on a date with, oh what was his name?

ALICE  
Bob.

Lily laughs.

LILY  
Yes, the butcher. Bob the butcher. How could you have agreed to go on a date with him?

ALICE  
I was set up. Tom and Martha asked me to meet them but when I got there they faked an emergency.

LILY  
Still, you stayed.

ALICE  
I'm glad I did.

Lily smiles.

LILY  
I wasn't supposed to go that night. I hadn't been out since Henry...

Lily hesitates.



LILY

I remember you were sitting at the table and you looked so bored. I kept thinking that you looked more bored than I was. And then you excused yourself and went outside. And I don't know why but I had to follow you.

ALICE

And ask for a cigarette. Even though you don't smoke.

LILY

It was like a scene from the pictures.

ALICE

Except in our film no one can see us together.

They both look out at the water.

ALICE

I wonder what it would be like.

LILY

What?

ALICE

To be able to go out in public together.

LILY

We're out in public now.

ALICE

You know what I mean. Imagine if I could kiss you whenever I wanted. Like in the middle of the street.

LILY

I'd love to see the look on Gladys' face. Her and June would have a year's worth of gossip alone from that one kiss.

ALICE

It would be worth it.

LILY

You say that but you don't mean it.

ALICE

Of course I do.

LILY

They would turn on us. Look at what happened with Rose. She gets pregnant out of wedlock and suddenly she's the town vixen. She will always be remembered for that, no matter what else she does. And that would be nothing compared to what would happen if they knew about us.

ALICE

It doesn't matter what they think.

LILY

Of course it does.

ALICE

Well it shouldn't.

Alice lies down, closes her eyes and lets the sun wash over her. Lily looks at her for a moment.

LILY

I love you Alice.

Alice opens her eyes. She sits up, smiling, but her smile fades when she notices that Lily is not smiling.

Alice stands and offers her hand to Lily, pulling her to a standing position.

ALICE

You ready?

Lily looks at Alice in confusion. Alice nods towards the water.

LILY

But we're not wearing swimming suits.

ALICE

So?

Alice holds Lily's hand. She turns to her and smiles. Lily smiles too. They both jump into the lake.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

A light snow has begun to fall as Lily opens the gate and enters the front yard. She looks at her rose garden which is dusted with white snow.

She is about to turn to go to the front door when something catches her attention across the street. She looks up and sees Alice walking past.

Alice looks at Lily. Neither acknowledges the other. After a moment, Alice tears her gaze away and continues walking down the street. Lily turns and heads to the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lily walks into the house and closes the door behind her. She hangs her coat on the coat rack and then walks into the living room. HENRY, mid-thirties, is looking out the living room window leaning on crutches. Lily goes to stand beside him.

LILY

You shouldn't be on your feet. The doctor says you need to keep pressure off the leg.

HENRY

It's snowing.

LILY

I'm going to make some tea. Do you want some?

Henry doesn't respond. Lily turns to go.

HENRY

You know what?

Lily turns and looks at her husband.

HENRY

I don't think the roses will survive the winter.

Lily follows his gaze to the roses. Both are lost in their own thoughts as they watch the snow fall, covering the rose garden.

FADE OUT