

REGRETFULLY YOURS

by

Edward Grabczewski

Second Draft

FADE IN:

EXT. CHARING CROSS STATION, LONDON - LUNCH TIME

The station forecourt is busy as ANDY searches for BRYONY. He eventually spots her standing in a quiet corner.

ANDY
(smiling)

Hi!

BRYONY
(smiling back)

Hi! You look just the same!

Andy notices she's lost weight and looks better than he expected. But she's cut her lovely long hair.

ANDY
You too!

They hug and kiss on the cheek.

ANDY
What happened to your hair?

BRYONY
Well, when you've got kids then it gets pulled a lot. So I finally decided to cut it.

ANDY
(losing eye contact)
Oh!
(pause)
Well, where are going?

BRYONY
(pointing)
It's over there. It's Italian.
Is that okay?

ANDY
Great!

They walk, side by side, sneaking glances at one another.

ANDY
Do you work nearby?

BRYONY
It's not far. About twenty minutes.
Near the Strand. How about you?
Did you come from work?

ANDY
No. I work near Reading. And I took the day off.

They cross at a zebra crossing. She guides him to the restaurant.

BRYONY

Here it is!

INT - Inside the reception of a large Italian restaurant - DAY

She talks to a WAITER and they head off downstairs to a corner table. After being seated they order drinks. The waiter offers them menus, which they take and start to scan.

BRYONY

I don't want anything too heavy.
I'm trying to loose weight.

ANDY

But you've already lost weight! - since
I saw you last, anyway.

BRYONY

Well, I've been trying hard since I had
my baby last year.

ANDY

Wow, you've got a baby!

BRYONY

Yes. A girl - Elizabeth.

ANDY

Are you married then?

BRYONY

Yes, but only last June. We lived
together for five years and I had
my first baby by accident. After that,
we planned the next.

ANDY

Good grief! So you've got two! I bet
those nannying skills are coming in
handy now. You were always so great
with kids and you're the only person
I've ever known who made me feel
comfortable with 'em.

BRYONY

(painful expression)
I feel so tired after work that I
really can't give them all the energy
I gave to Thomas and Gemma. I feel
really guilty about that. I gave the
best years of my life looking
after other peoples sprogs and now I
can't give Beth and Mark the same attention.

They start to read the menus properly.

BRYONY

I think I'll have a salad.

ANDY

You know, I've often thought about you and wondered where you were. Every so often I'd type your name on the Internet to see if anything came back. I thought you'd gone back to Australia so I looked for you there. I remembered you had family in Australia. You had no presence on the Internet whatsoever. Well done!

Then, finally!, when I did a search last month I was amazed to find you were still living in London!

BRYONY

I never went back in the end. I had a boyfriend in London shortly after you went back to - what was her name - Dorothy?

ANDY

Yep, Dorothy

BRYONY

And we lived together for seven years. That was him in that restaurant in Goodge Street.

ANDY

(wistfully)

God, yeah! I was with Li. We'd just finished teaching that evening and we got something to eat. I remember you were with two guys. I was really glad to see you. I'd broken up with Dorothy and I'd been trying to find you. I gave you my card and I thought you'd phone me - as you'd promised. But you didn't.

BRYONY

Well, I was going out with Dave at that time. It didn't work out in the end. A couple of years later we split up.

ANDY

I really wanted to see you.

BRYONY

Well, what happened to you and Dorothy? After you *dumped* me for her, I thought you got back together again.

ANDY

(wincing a little)

You know why I did that! We'd lived together for ten years and then she told me she didn't want children until she was forty. So I decided to split. That's when I met you. But then I thought I owed her the chance to change her mind. I couldn't do it with our relationship in the background so I asked you if we could split. In the end it was all a big waste because she never changed her mind. So we split a few years later anyway.

(beat)

After that, she never had another boyfriend - that I know of - or children. And neither did I for that matter!

BRYONY

Boy, you really screwed up one another's lives didn't you?

ANDY

Yes, we did.

(pause)

She had a boss at work who was a real career woman and didn't want a family. I think she influenced Dorothy. Anyway, I couldn't change her mind.

(holding back tears)

I didn't want children at forty! By the time they left home to go to university I'd be ready to retire! How could we finance that? I really don't think she'd thought it through.

(two beats)

She'd just started this new job in music. It was too good to quit.

(pulls himself together)

She was never any good at planning. The sad thing is that I lost a really good relationship with you to give her that chance. You've no idea ...

The waiter interrupts. They each order salad.

BRYONY

You didn't marry then?

ANDY

No. We lived together for eleven years before the issue of children cropped up. It then took another five years to split up! We both wanted to own our own properties, so we split up very slowly and I bought out her profit share in the house. She eventually moved into a flat nearby. We still see one another a couple of times a year.

BRYONY

You're lucky to have stayed friends.

ANDY

Yes I know. After you and I broke up you just disappeared! I was amazed at how you controlled your emotions.

BRYONY

Well, you dumped me, so there wasn't much I could do about it.

ANDY

Sorry. I really regret that now. If I'd known it wouldn't work out then I wouldn't have done it. But I had to give her the chance.

Bryony shows no signs of sympathy.

(remembering Bryony)

You always managed to understand me. You understood that when I argue then it isn't a personal thing. I think that's because of your family background of philosophy. Your father was a professor of Philosophy wasn't he?

Bryony nods

You must have picked it up from him.

I remember that trip to Cornwall, we sat on a train having a heated debate about something and when it finished I noticed you weren't even upset. In that sense you were totally different from Dorothy. As time went by, I really began to appreciate that quality.

BRYONY

Well, it all comes in handy now that I'm a lawyer.

ANDY

(surprised)

Really!

BRYONY

Yes. I work for the Government.