

Remembering Happiness

By

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INT-BAXTON HOUSE-EVENING

F.B.I. Washington D.C. Field Agent AMY BAXTON is carrying a heavy box of a case file when HER phone rings. SHE goes into HER sunroom to answer the phone.

BAXTON

(picking up the phone)

Hello? (PAUSE) Hey DEMPS, where are you? (PAUSE) Oh okay, have you made it to Whitehaven Park yet? (PAUSE) Oh, you're literally three blocks...yeah, just go through the next three lights and make a right at Jefferson. I'm the second to last house on the right. (PAUSE) Okay, see you soon. Bye.

BAXTON hangs up the phone. SHE takes a look around the sunroom. The early spring sunset is peering in the windows of the room. BAXTON snaps HER fingers as if SHE'S forgotten something. SHE goes into the kitchen and retrieves a bottle of Scotch from HER refrigerator. Moments later, HER doorbell rings. SHE goes to answer the door, it is the man with whom SHE was just on the phone, fellow F.B.I. agent MAX DEMPS.

DEMPS:

Hey Amy.

BAXTON:

Hi DEMPS, come on in? No jacket? Is it really that warm out?

DEMPS:

Yes, it is. Absolutely beautiful today, 68 degrees.

BAXTON:

Very nice. I've got us all set up in the sunroom. (motioning with the scotch) Care for some?

DEMPS:

I'd love some. Especially after the day I've had.

BAXTON:

Alright, well I'll be right in, make yourself at home. I've got hard copies of everything, but I don't think we'll need them, I've got everything saved to a flash drive in my laptop.

DEMPS:  
Alright, good. I'm a bit old  
fashioned, I like having paper  
copies of everything.

The two agents go their separate ways. BAXTON goes to the kitchen to pour the scotch, and DEMPS goes into the sunroom.

DEMPS:  
(calling to BAXTON)  
This is quite a nice place you have.

BAXTON:  
(calling back)  
Well, Georgetown does have it's  
perks. How do you take your drink?

DEMPS:  
Is it chilled?

BAXTON:  
Yeah.

DEMPS:  
Straight then.

A few moments pass as DEMPS sits down and begins to look through the paper copies of the files. BAXTON enters a few moments later. SHE hands DEMPS HIS scotch and takes a sip of HER own drink.

DEMPS:  
Thanks.

BAXTON:  
(swallowing)  
Not a problem. That's Ramin  
Al'Fader, our new threat.

DEMPS:  
(looking over the file)  
Yeah, I've heard his name mentioned.  
Who's he with?

BAXTON:  
That's the kicker, he's got  
connections as high as Achmenijad.

DEMPS raises HIS eyebrows in surprise as HE takes a drink of scotch.

DEMPS:

(swallowing)  
Shit. Where'd you get that intel?

BAXTON:  
C.I.A. confirmed it this morning.  
Al'Fader's got a fetish for  
bio-warfare, or at least he did over  
in Iran.

DEMPS:  
How exactly did customs not catch  
this guy on his way into the states?

BAXTON:  
He moved in pre-9/11. That's what's  
scary. A lot of people think that  
Bin-Laden shot the wad with his  
attack, but in reality, the whole  
time that was happening, this  
Al'Fader dickhead could have been  
raising funds for his own little  
operation. And if he is, he should  
have enough by now to pull off  
something big.

DEMPS:  
Has he seemed suspicious.

BAXTON:  
Not in his actions, but his bank  
account has certainly grown  
substantially in the past nine  
years. Take a look at this.

BAXTON pulls up a file on her laptop. It's an excel-type  
spreadsheet detailing Al'Fader's bank records.

DEMPS:  
He only spends enough to get by.

BAXTON:  
Yeah, and check out his savings  
account.

DEMPS scrolls down on the screen.

DEMPS:  
(eyes wide)  
Whoa.

BAXTON:  
Yeah, that's what I thought.  
Somehow, at the age of 33, I don't

think honest men have that much saved for their retirement.

DEMPS:  
Yeah, seriously.

Both BAXTON and DEMPS take a sip of their drinks.

DEMPS:  
So where's Rob tonight?

BAXTON:  
Working late. With EarthCure Pharmaceuticals getting FDA approval for their new cervical cancer vaccine, the PR department has got him working like a dog.

DEMPS:  
Yeah, I can imagine, I hear it's got a prevention rate somewhere in the 90's. Or at least that's what the post says.

BAXTON:  
Yeah, he says 97 percent. It's really interesting, because I remember him coming home when he was working on the project, and the prevention rate was in the fifties. It's really interesting to see how far that drug has come.

DEMPS:  
Wow, how long have they been working on it?

BAXTON takes a sip of HER drink.

BAXTON:  
(swallowing)  
Oh, they've been working on that since he came on board. He's only personally been involved with it for two years, but from what he tells me, it's been a ten to twelve year project.

DEMPS nods as he takes a sip of HIS drink.

BAXTON:  
I think that's what bothers me the most about this job.

DEMPS:  
(swallowing)  
What's that?

BAXTON:  
Not being able to share my day with  
him. It's terrible. I hate having to  
toe the line of secrecy.

DEMPS:  
To be honest with you, I don't even  
try. I mean, I look at you, and  
you're married for Christ's sake.  
You should be able to tell your  
husband everything. I've told a  
couple of girlfriends some pretty  
high level secrets. Put it to you  
this way, when I retire, I'm going  
to have a huge bullseye on my back,  
trust me. That's why I think they  
love that I'm single, I can't go  
spewing secrets. Believe me, I agree  
with you, the F.B.I. is full of it  
in their  
"matter-of-national-security-need-to  
-know" bullshit.

DEMPS takes another sip of scotch. BAXTON stares into HER  
glass.

BAXTON:  
He works late all the time now.

DEMPS swallows HIS sip. HE knows that the conversation is  
turning. HE begins to mirror BAXTON, staring down at his  
glass and avoiding eye contact.

DEMPS:  
Really?

BAXTON:  
Yeah, the last year and a half.

DEMPS:  
I'm sorry.

BAXTON:  
It's not your fault. Truth is, I  
haven't really noticed. I've just  
buried myself in my work.

DEMPS sets HIS glass down on an end table. HE leans in close

to BAXTON and looks HER in the eye.

DEMPS:  
You looking for a way out?

BAXTON:  
I don't know yet. Part of me wants to salvage it, but I don't know how to salvage it when we don't see each other because when we don't see each other we can't talk.

DEMPS:  
Seems obvious.

BAXTON:  
DEMPS, I don't know what happened to my life. I used to love doing this. Going after the true bad men of the world. The mass murders, who didn't work on an individual case-by-case basis, but wanted to shoot a whole bunch of fish in a barrell with one huge shotgun round. I don't know if I enjoy it anymore. I've grown to hate having to look people in the eye and say that what I need from them is a "matter of national security," everyone knows that's bullshit these days.

DEMPS:  
I know how you feel.

BAXTON and DEMPS take a final sip of scotch, finishing off their glasses.

DEMPS:  
(aside)  
This was good, thank you, what's the brand?

BAXTON:  
Johnnie Walker Blue Label.

DEMPS:  
(giving a whistle)  
You're quite the high roller.

BAXTON:  
I like what I like. I'm just glad I can afford it.

DEMPS:

Me too, thank you again.

BAXTON nods. SHE takes their glasses and goes to the kitchen. SHE returns a moment later wiping a tear away from HER eye. DEMPS gets up and hugs BAXTON. After a moment of embrace, BAXTON goes to pull away, but DEMPS pulls HER back in. A tear falls from BAXTON'S cheek onto DEMPS' shoulder.

DEMPS:

Can I tell you a story?

BAXTON:

Sure, I love stories.

They release from their embrace and sit down.

DEMPS:

When I was 16 years old, I got a job at this amusement park, and I'd worked there for three summers. And in the beginning, I loved it, I mean, it was awesome. I had friends, I met cute girls, some of which I had had mini relationships with, but it never lasted past the summers. Here's the thing though, everything about the job itself, sucked. The pay was shit, you were constantly degraded, the food...pshh, let's not even get into that.

BAXTON chuckles.

DEMPS:

But I still loved it. And it wasn't until a few years ago that I realize why I'd loved it so much.

BAXTON gives DEMPS a look of questioning.

DEMPS:

It's because of the people's faces. Throughout those summers, I saw countless faces, and all of them were filled with sheer unadulterated happiness. From the father and son tandem riding the roller coasters, to the young lovers who would watch the fire works at ten o'clock at night. I swear AMY, it was as if happiness was a tangible emotion. A blanket in which you could wrap

yourself on cool summer nights, or the cold bath of water that came flying out of the water ride when the passengers went down the hill. I saw sheer happiness, and it really helped me to take a moment to stop and feel that happiness. I remember one of the girls that I'd "dated," (aside) a term I use loosely, but I remember her because late one night, when the park was closing up, a summer thunderstorm rolled through, and I saw this girl outside of the gate, her name was Kelly. And being the hopeless romantic seventeen year old that I was at the time, I kissed her with as much passion as I could muster, as the rain came down around us, and a low rumble of thunder echoed in the background. And I will always remember that moment, because I was reminded to remember those moments from the people who rode the rides, the lovers under the fireworks, the people that the park made so happy. And when I compare that to here, (PAUSE), it's just so...very...

BAXTON:

Stoic?

DEMPS:

(shrugging)

Emotionless. Uncaring. I feel like a machine. And what's worse is, when I get out of the F.B.I., I'm gonna feel like the main character on that show Burn Notice.

BAXTON:

Never seen it.

DEMPS:

(aside)

Great show if you ever get a chance to see it. But the main character is a former spy, and it's all about how he dodges the company that he used to work for, because they're trying to kill him, for obvious reasons, I mean, the guy's got secrets that no one else knows. He's obviously a

liability. And I'll feel like that.

PAUSE. DEMPS looks at the clock. BAXTON looks at the clock as well.

BAXTON:  
He'll be home soon.

DEMPS:  
Tell you what. Give me the flash drive. I'll do some more digging when I get home and see what I come up with. Talk to him. If you work things out, great. If you don't...well...I've always been here for you.

BAXTON nods. SHE ejects the flash drive from HER laptop and hands it to DEMPS. The two get up and go into the foyer of BAXTON'S house. BAXTON hugs DEMPS.

BAXTON:  
(without releasing from the hug)  
Thank you.

DEMPS:  
You're welcome. I'm sorry that you're going through this.

BAXTON:  
Why are you apologizing? I should be the one apologizing.

DEMPS:  
Why?

BAXTON:  
I'm sorry that you've forgotten how to feel happy.

DEMPS:  
Well it appears that you and I are in the same boat. I'm sorry that you've drifted away from your husband.

BAXTON:  
I'm sorry for another thing too.

The two separate from their embrace.

DEMPS:

What's that?

BAXTON:

I think it's better if I just leave it at "I'm sorry," you'll know in time.

DEMPS:

I'm always here for you, Amy. I always have been, and I always will be.

BAXTON:

Thank you Max.

DEMPS is a bit taken aback, looking at BAXTON with a questioning expression.

DEMPS:

I've waited three years to be on a first name basis with you.

BAXTON:

I figured that it was about time.

DEMPS:

Well...It feels nice.

PAUSE

DEMPS:

It makes me happy.

BAXTON:

Me too, Max. Me too.

DEMPS leaves BAXTON as SHE watches HIM walk to HIS car.

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

THE END.