

The Package  
by  
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June 29th, 2009  
Second Draft

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INT. APARTMENT - DAY

CHARLES (35) lifelessly stands, silhouetted by his apartment window staring into oblivion, deep in contemplation. Flashbacks of a beautiful brunette woman occupy his mind.

His dismal thoughts are interrupted as his cellphone vibrates endlessly on the kitchen counter. He slowly makes his way to the counter and picks up the cellphone.

CHARLES  
(on the phone)  
Yeah.

He listens intently to his caller, his frown clearly unmasking his disdain for the unknown caller.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
(on the phone)  
Fine.

He hangs up the cellphone. He takes a minute to process the nature of the call. He then picks up his coat and car keys as he makes his way to the front door, slamming it on the way out.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - DAY

CONRAD (54), tired and unkempt, coughs a death rattle as he lights a cigarette. Ensnared on a bench, he looks around the park. His hand rests on a package wrapped in old newspaper. He takes a drag of his cigarette as he watches a recognizable face approach him. He eagerly gets up.

CONRAD  
Didn't think you'd show up. You  
look good.

CHARLES  
Why am I here?

CONRAD  
Okay. Straight to the point. I need  
your help, kiddo.

CHARLES  
You need my help.  
(beat)  
You're unbelievable, you know that?

Charles turns to leave.

CONRAD  
I know where Kelly is.

Charles stops dead in his tracks. He doesn't turn around.

CONRAD (CONT'D)  
You wouldn't have picked up your phone if you weren't the least bit curious. Just hear me out for a sec. After that, you're free to walk away.

Charles slowly heads back to the bench. He sits down.

CHARLES  
Make this quick.

Conrad joins him on the bench. He picks up the package.

CONRAD  
I need you to give this package to Sheila.

CHARLES  
You've got to be kidding me. What is it with you? You just never know when to let go, do you?

CONRAD  
No, no I don't. I never stopped trying. I've tried day in and day out to correct my mistake. I never gave up either, not on you and definitely not on Sheila.

CHARLES  
What is it you want with her?

CONRAD  
I just need her to see something.

CHARLES  
She's married, Dad, she's married and she's happy as hell. Get over it.

CONRAD  
I'm trying, Charlie, I'm trying my best. And that's why I need your help.

Charles takes a second to calm down.

CHARLES  
Where's Kelly?

CONRAD  
She called me a while back. Said  
she was going to stay with an old  
friend in Richmond.  
Lisa...something.

CHARLES  
Gennero.

CONRAD  
Yeah, that's it. Lisa Gennero.

Charles gets up. He picks up the package.

CHARLES  
I need you to do something for me.

CONRAD  
Name it.

CHARLES  
Leave me the hell alone.

Charles' staunch expression parallels his adamant statement. Conrad takes another drag of his cigarette as he watches his son walk away.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

Charles pulls up to the front curb of a white clapboard house. He exits the car and retrieves the package from the backseat. He then proceeds to the front door and knocks.

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

SHEILA (53) cups her coffee mug as she stares at the package on the table. Charles, leaning on a counter with coffee mug in hand, watches her nervous expressions.

CHARLES  
You don't have to open it.

Sheila turns to smile at Charles.

SHEILA  
So says my guardian angel.

CHARLES

I mean it, mom. I'd be more than happy to toss it in the garbage.

SHEILA

CHARLES! That's not so nice.

CHARLES

Well, what's keeping you then?

SHEILA

I don't know. Every instinct I have is telling me to lock it far away in the attic and never think about it again. But if opening it means getting him out of my life for good, then maybe I should see what's inside.

CHARLES

I still say don't open it. Why should you care? Why should I care? The guy didn't even bother visiting me in the hospital...and I'm supposed to just help him out of the blue? Especially after what he did to her?

Sheila rubs her face undecidedly.

SHEILA

I know, honey, I know. Oh, what am I going to do? Decisions, decisions.

CHARLES

She's in Richmond, by the way.

Sheila's woes are put to a halt.

SHEILA

Richmond? She's back? How'd you find out?

CHARLES

Dad told me.

SHEILA

(to herself)  
Dad told you. Figures.  
(to Charles)  
What are you going to do?

CHARLES

Talk to her, maybe. I've been deliberating that on the ride here. Eleven months, and I still don't know her side of the story.

SHEILA

You might not like what she tells you.

CHARLES

Yeah. But the reason is still eating away at me. I'd sleep better knowing why.

Sheila strokes his arm sympathetically. Charles looks at his watch as he takes a sip of his coffee.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Hmmm, I gotta take off.

SHEILA

Already? You just got here.

CHARLES

I know. I know. I gotta get an early start on work tomorrow.

Charles starts to head towards the front door. Sheila follows.

SHEILA

Give me a call after you see her. I'd like to hear what she has to say as well.

She gives him a hug. Charles starts to head out the door.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Oh, wait a minute.

She rushes back into the kitchen. She comes back holding the package in her hand. She hands it to Charles.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Can you throw this away?

EXT. PARKING SPACE - DAY

Charles changes into his nicely ironed dress shirt, and throws his t-shirt into the passenger seat of his car. MICHAEL (32) unloads the gear from the BCC news van, while watching Charles change.

MICHAEL

I still think it's a bad idea, man. You gain nothing from digging into the past. All you get is more reason to get drunk and curse yourself for ever knowing the both of 'em.

CHARLES

The girl ran away without telling me her side of the story. I think I deserve an explanation, don't you?

MICHAEL

You made it a year without knowing. What's a couple more?

Charles buttons up his shirt.

CHARLES

I don't know. I'm still in love with her, I do know that.

MICHAEL

I gotta say, I admire your optimism. I wouldn't bet on it though.

Michael continues unloading as he notices something in Charles' backseat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

What, can't afford proper wrapping paper? What the hell is that?

Charles takes a quick glance at the backseat.

CHARLES

A two-faced man's idea of trying to rebuild a twenty three year old relationship that he gummed up.

MICHAEL

Okay. So really, what the hell is it?

CHARLES

Fuck if I know. Let's get going.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

KELLY (29), in work attire walks briskly along a suburban street;

notices Charles, as he leans against the hood of his car. As she walks toward him, their eyes meet. Kelly holds his gaze for a moment, then looks away, taking a deep breath.

INT. CONDOMINIUM - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charles picks up a photo on the mantle - he and Kelly in a happier time. He smiles.

KELLY

There are some memories you just can't bear to part with.

Charles turns around to see Kelly holding two coffee mugs. For a moment they just stare at each other. Kelly breaks the uncomfortable silence.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Do you still like five lumps in your tea?

Charles silently chuckles as Kelly hands him his mug.

CHARLES

I'm trying to cut it down to two now.

Kelly chuckles as well.

KELLY

Impressive.

Charles takes the mug; turns around and picks up another photo. Kelly watches him closely.

CHARLES

Huh. I remember this one. Who the hell wins an award for best Sonny and Cher look-alike?

Kelly slowly approaches him.

KELLY

Who can blame them? You in a rainbow tunic and matching bell bottoms? You were a shoo-in for first place.

They both laugh. Charles looks at the photo.

CHARLES

Yeah, a perfect match.

Charles doesn't take his eyes off the photo. He sighs.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
How can you still be in contact  
with him?

He places the photo back on the rack as he turns to look at Kelly.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Why him? Of all people, why him?

KELLY  
God, I don't know. He's the only  
one I know close enough to you. I  
couldn't call Sheila. And Michael?  
Well, you know what he's like -  
glued to his cellphone permanently.

Kelly looks away, then back at Charles, looking him in the eye.

KELLY (CONT'D)  
Conrad was the only one I could  
reach who could tell me how you  
were, what you were up to.

Charles walks away from the mantle towards a couch. Kelly slowly follows.

CHARLES  
I barely ever talked to the guy  
after that. How could he possibly  
know what I was up to?

Kelly has no response. Charles looks at her, then sits down on the couch, silent. He grips his coffee mug nervously.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Maybe going to Bosnia wasn't such a  
great idea.

Kelly sits down beside him.

KELLY  
It was your job. You looked really  
excited about it. I wasn't going to  
stand in the way of your dream.  
It's just, when that bomb went  
off...

CHARLES  
I know. I know. You were worried. I  
understand that.  
(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

What I don't understand is how a guy I looked up to my whole life just...stabs me in the back. I know how much he hated the idea of me becoming a journalist, but this?

Kelly nods in acknowledgement. Charles shifts his body to face Kelly.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I pieced it all together. He was never happy with his marriage to mom. Maybe he saw you as his way out.

KELLY

He was drunk, Charlie.

CHARLES

What does it matter? He could've gone to the bar and taken advantage of somebody else. Not my vulnerable wife at home grieving whether or not her husband would ever regain consciousness.

Kelly places her mug on the coffee table, and gives Charles a sympathetic hug.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You didn't have to leave. You did nothing wrong. I mean, it's not like you slept with him.

KELLY

We didn't sleep together. I wouldn't have let it go that far.

They hold each other's gaze.

CHARLES

I've missed you. God, I've really missed you.

Kelly smiles. She wipes a tear off her eyes.

KELLY

I thought you'd never understand what happened.

CHARLES

There's nothing for you to explain. He was the one at fault, not you.

Kelly jumps in for a tighter hug.

KELLY  
I really missed you too.

They continue to hug.

CHARLES  
There's something I need to do.  
Care to join me?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Charles and Kelly walk leisurely on the street. Kelly has her arm wrapped around Charles' arm. Tucked in his other arm is the package.

CHARLES  
Yeah, her husband is a CEO at a pharmaceutical company, or something of that sort. Really nice guy, I gotta say.

KELLY  
She sounds like she's really happy.

CHARLES  
Who can blame her. She definitely picked a winner this time.

KELLY  
Are you calling him daddy yet?

They chuckle as Charles notices a garbage bin on the side of the street. They walk up to it. He takes one last look at the package. Beat. He drops it in the bin. They continue walking as we stay on the package.

KELLY (CONT'D)  
Aren't you curious what was in the package?

CHARLES  
Honestly? Not in the least bit.

Charles brings Kelly in for a tighter arm-lock as they walk away from the garbage bin, deep in their conversation. Stay on the package as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

