

Loss of Focus

By: Viki

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money...I wouldn't be posting on a free website.

Author's note: This story follows my story, Bug Under Glass

I frown as I backspace to clear out the word I've just mistyped. A word that I've been spelling and typing for more years that I care to think about. A word, that as an English teacher, I should be able to spell or type with my eyes closed.

Teach.

How in the world did I misspell that?

I roll my eyes at myself over the ridiculousness of the question.

I know very good and well why I have misspelled the word.

I've misspelled it for the same reason I've misspelled the other ten words I've had to backspace and type again.

Focus.

I seem to have lost all that I had.

I sigh as go back to trying to work on my novel. My publisher has already granted me an extension on the deadline due to extenuating circumstances.

That thought makes my fingers freeze on the keyboard.

George.

The sole reason for my lack of focus.

The reason for the extenuating circumstances.

I close my eyes as the memory of the day three weeks ago that brought my world crashing down around me.

My loving husband had been called in on a highly classified case, one that was so secret that I couldn't even know where he was going.

I had fussed and worried, something I am not usually wont to do, but I had an odd feeling that had washed over me after the call came.

At the time, George and I had attributed it to the fact that he was going away without me knowing where and that we wouldn't be able to communicate. That had always been our lifeline before we had married and semi-retired. No matter where either of us had been, we always took the time to call, email, or if the other two were impossible, we had been known to text.

How wrong George and I had been with our reasoning for my odd feeling.

One week later I received a phone call that had my knees buckling beneath me and Seth scrambling to catch me before I fell and hurt myself.

George was missing, and feared to be dead. There were no other details they were allowed to give, and I'm afraid I lost my temper, something that is rare for me. Fear and anguish were fueling my anger. Amazingly it was Seth who was the calm one.

My dear friend Seth. He's always known when I need him, some times even before I do. That day had been one of those times. He had simply shown up for a cup of tea even though it was the middle of his normal office hours.

"Jessie."

I hear my name, and it draws me out of my memories just as I feel two strong arms wrap around me, my focus now on the man behind me.

"George." I breathe his name, not trusting my voice.

"Aye, Seasaidh, it's me."

Letting my head fall forward, I try to keep a sob from escaping, but it's a futile move.

"My Seasiadh." George whispers as he pulls me up out of my chair and into his arms. His hand cradles my head as he gently rocks me back and forth. "I'm so sorry, Lass. I have already made it clear that I'll not be available to them for anymore problems. Or consulting, as they called it."

I take a deep breath to calm myself, his gentle embrace and the sound of his voice soothing me. Leaning back to look up at him, I catch a glimpse of the mess I've made of his shirt. "Sorry, Darling."

George smiles down at me at the use of the endearment. He had confessed to me after the first time I'd used it, that he loved the way I said the word. Something about the way my voice goes soft. "No need to apologize, Lass. Ye have a good reason for the tears."

Lifting my hand, I caress over the bandage on his forehead, tears pooling in my eyes once again. "Tell me what happened? Or can you?"

"I was instructed not to tell anyone of what happened, but I informed them that I was telling my wife who had spent three bloody weeks fearing that I had died and not knowing the why, what, or where. We had a lovely row over that, but I won in the end."

I smile, my tears rolling down my cheeks. “Thank you,” I whisper. “I don’t know what I would have done if you,” George’s finger on my lips stops me from finishing.

“Shh, Lass. I didn’t, but if I had,” he paused to wipe away the tears that had gathered under my eyes. “If I hadn’t returned to you, you would have carried on just like you did in the past. It’s who you are, Seasaidh. You’re my beautiful, strong of will and character, Irish lass who can do anything she sets her mind to. Besides, Seth wouldn’t let you wither away. Neither would Mort. He’d miss your nose in his cases.” George grinned at me as he tapped the tip of my nose.

Laughing, I raise up on tiptoes to wrap my arms around my husband’s neck. “I love you, George Sutherland,” I whisper before pressing my lips to his. I’ve missed his kisses. The feel of his warm breath mingling with mine, the way he gently nibbles at my lower lip. As he pulls me closer, I moan into his mouth, then pull away reluctantly. I want our kisses to carry us away as they normally do, but until I know what happened, my mind won’t be at rest enough to fully enjoy making love with him. It’s been a month since I’ve felt his touch, and I want nothing to take away from that.

“What is it, Lass?” George asks as I move completely out of his arms.

“Until I know what happened, and just how hurt you are, I won’t be able to concentrate fully on what that kiss was leading to.” I answered.

George smiled and held out his hand. “Come on then, Jessie. I could do with a bit of a cuddle in front of the fire.”

“Mmm,” I hum, the thought of being snuggled in his arms very appealing. It was our usual way of talking things out, no matter what it is we happen to be discussing. Taking his hand, I let him pull me close to tuck against his side as we walk into the living room.

“Let me put a bit more wood on the fire.”

I nod and wait and watch as he does just that. I hear his quick intake of breath and suspect that he has an injured arm or possibly a few ribs, maybe even both. I know that I’ll have to be careful not to hurt him, and to be watchful so that he doesn’t hurt himself.

“Lass?” George asks and I blink up at him, not realizing that I’d lost focus once again. “What is it?”

“You’re hurt.”

“Yes. I have a few minor burns and scratches.”

“And your ribs?”

“I have a few bruised ribs,” he answered my query as he reached out and took my hands. “I’m okay, Lass, really.”

Looking up into the green eyes I love so much, I saw that he was telling me the truth and not holding anything back. Tugging at his hands, I backed toward the sofa and sat down, waiting for him to settle beside me. “I don’t want to hurt you.”

George smiled as he pulled me close. “Why do you think I sat on this side of you?”

I shake my head at him even as my lips tug up into a smile. “Very smart,” I whisper as I lean against him, sighing in contentment as I listen to his heart beating beneath my ear.

“I am a Chief Inspector after all.”

“Oh!” I huff and gently poke his thigh. “Semi-retired Chief Inspector, Mr. Sutherland.” I remind him.

“Aye.”

“Now, on with the explanation. We have more important things to do.”

George laughed at that and squeezed me. “I love ye, Jessie.”

“I love you, too.” I return the sentiment as I entwine my fingers with his. His voice is low and even as he begins to tell me the where, what, and why. I’m a very good listener, and it’s normal for me to listen and not interrupt, but I find myself having to bite my lip to keep from responding to what George is telling me.

I listen as he tells me that there had been an explosion only moments after he had left the building where he had been staying, which explains the minor burns, scratches, and bruised ribs. I feel myself growl low in my throat when he tells me how no one had even bothered to look for him, that it was his stumbling into the main compound that made them realize he’d survived the blast.

“I couldn’t persuade them to bring you to me. I yelled and argued, but they wouldn’t give in. When I realized I wasn’t going to get my way, I tried to leave, but the doctors wouldn’t let me.”

“Darling, should you be here now?” I ask, suspicious that he’d traveled before he should have.

“Do I need to call Seth?”

Tilting my face up, George caressed my cheek. “We can call Seth later, but for now,” he whispered, his mouth moving to hover over mine. “We have some unfinished business.”

My reply was lost in his kiss. Turning to angle my body closer to his, I slid my hand up his chest to cup around his neck, holding him to me as our kiss deepened. My mind was at ease, my focus would now be wholly on my husband and making up for the month we’ve been apart. I know everything I need to know about what happened. Now I need this, need the physical act of kissing, of making love, to reassure me that my beloved George is really here with me.

“Come on, Lass.” George whispers as he stands up and holds out his hand. “I’m tired,” his voice is a deep timbre as he says the last word, letting me know that he’s anything of the sort.

I take his hand and smile up at him. “A nap sounds lovely,” is my breathy answer.

The document containing my latest novel is still open on the computer, the cursor still blinking beside the t, just where I’d left it when I lost focus.