

Deceived

I decided to meet you through a mutual friend. It seemed safe. We hit it off and melted together like hot buttered syrup on warm pancakes, we were a very sweet mix. Something special happened like with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan in *Sleepless in Seattle*. Soon after, my little daughter and I moved in with you. Months later, you just disappeared, leaving your image and memory growing within me. A week later, after I called the police and hospitals, you reappeared!

I implored, “Why? Why did you bring me here to leave me?” then screamed, “you should have just left me the fuck alone!” Forgive or move on? I thought.

“I am so sorry, I won’t ever do it again,” said sad eyes, like the one-too-many pup in the litter, being dropped off at the edge of the city, alone.

You told me your wife “tricked” you into coming back because of the children. Then you drank and drugged with her. You were not divorced, as you had said. Stupidly, I still took you back. Like the men who would drift into my moms’ life, making promises, never keeping any, and always leaving. I did the same. Strangely, I can remember that now. I should have remembered it when your piss-poor ass was begging. Maybe I am just a soft-sale for a good story and empty promises. Like the time the family that approached me at the grocery store.

Gloomy faces behind wounded words exclaimed, “This was for my child’s birthday, but I got laid off and we need to get some food, we’re just asking for fifty dollars.”

They were selling an Xbox. It was sealed, unopened, store labeled, and I thought, mine. Self-serving and gratuitous, my heart went out with my money. Later, I discovered inside the “sealed” box that looked so good were antique VHS tapes. You are just like that sealed box that looked so good and fooled me so well. I bought your bullshit. Pondering, am I gullible, stupid, caring, or just selfish?

I fell for your sucker punch, allowing you back into my arms, my heart, and my life, rationalizing, anyone could make a mistake, I was tricked, maybe you were tricked. Looking back at the grocery store, that lesson was squandered.

Here I sit with a cute-as-you newborn in my arms, alone, in a rented room. You are with your wife in the spacious house that was to be ours. Like someone who slipped on the high wire and caught herself just before falling, I reach out to the life preserver of hope, independence, and a newly found truth that was thrown to me. That is my safety net.

Finally, after being pushed off the boat, treading water, and clinging to the wreckage left for my daughter, your son, and myself, I am thinking clearly. With the constant reminder of the child you left me with, this lesson will not be forgotten. I am determined never to be fooled while continually reminded that nothing valuable is inexpensive.