



Silently

Loud

Screams

By Raymond Howell

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Silently Loud Screams

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**M**y Jean means the world to me. As I once did to her. But now she no longer knows me.

I might be a stranger in her new world but I still know and love my Jean and it's crippling to see her this way, covered in tubes and flanked by monitors, lost to herself and all her friends. And to me too. Her husband, her once lover, friend, companion, nurse and now the guardian of her shell.

But worse still is witnessing those deep almost black glossy eyes that once beguiled me, but which now scream in silent but strong plead, "Whoever you are sat by this bed please let me die. Please help me die." Followed by the tears that weep gently from the corners of her eyes, to drip uncaught onto her hair and pillow. "Oh, please let me die now. Now! Please help me..."

But my heart is breaking because I can't.

I can't...

This pain of mine so like Jeans in silent scream runs in time with her tears, I can't, my love. I can't, my love. I can't.

So many I cant's.

I can't help you die.

I can't watch you die.

I can't leave.

I can't stay.

I can't forget you.

The, I can't help you, is the most painful of all. Especially when I know I can...

But I can't, because others say so.

But they cannot see your pain or mine. They are blind to your suffering, or rather they are enjoying it, I think. For there can be no other reason why you cannot be helped to die as you wish.

None.

God is not doing this to you. What does God have to gain by making you suffer? And you have nothing to gain from your suffering. While I have it all to lose as I witness your physical and mental pain - the denier's abuse - and the slow demise you cannot be pulled back from. There are no winners here, no gains, just pain. Yours and mine.

As I watch my Jean laying where she does not want to be I cannot help wondering, should I kidnap those who deny the dignity you asked for in your Living Will? And torture those deniers until they know your suffering and finally agree to allow you your assisted suicide. Is that what I have to do Jean? Because I will you know, if it gets you what you want, what you need and what you are begging for.

But otherwise, I cannot help you, my love. I cannot help you...

And I cannot help thinking they don't want me to help you. I'm crying now too Jean because I can see why. And the reason is appalling. Watching your tears makes me believe you can see it too... And feel it of course! My poor Jean, forced to stay alive beyond your span merely so they who profit from your drugs and the equipment for your care can keep profiting right until your agonised end. Oh Jean, I so hate what they are doing to you. and they have the nerve to call it palliative well-being. Their well-being more like, it is certainly not yours.

And I hate what they are doing to me. I hate that billions are spent just to prolong the inevitable, what a waste while millions starve elsewhere. But then, where is the profit in preventing that? None my love. There's only profit in your pain and profit in making more babies to grow only then to die in pain. It's all so wicked and so wrong and so not of the planet's song, as you used to say and I would tease you about. If only I could do that again.

And I hate knowing Jean that my breaking heart for your pain is what I will remember most, and not your graceful passing as is natural and as we planned. I'm sorry I did not agree with your wish that we move to the jungle to escape this comedy of errors. You were right, we would not have endured this horror. I would have sat at your side in our hut as you said you wanted and held your hand and sung to you softly while watching you slip gently away. Oh, my Jean can you forgive me for believing their lies when they said they will care for you and alleviate your pain? Yet here you are, in pain and distress and desperate to die but they won't let you. And I can't help you. I can't help you... Oh, my Jean, please don't ask me to forgive those who keep you here like this for profit. Please don't ask me that. Never ask me that.

Then it strikes me. Why am I sitting here watching you suffer when I can be waiting for your arrival at our final destination, Heaven if there is such a place? Oh Jean, do you want that? Will you welcome me in your arms as once you did? *And did I just see your tears pause?*

And did I just clasp your hand in promise?

Yes, I did. I did. And you Jean felt my promise, I'm sure of it.

Elated, I cannot help whispering, "I will be there in Heaven Jean, waiting for you. I promise."

"Goodbye for now my love," I say as I kiss her feverish brow and step away from her who was once my Jean. And I know she won't miss me here and she understands I need to hurry if I'm to be waiting in Heaven to greet her.

"I'll see ya my love" I whisper as I leave the ward, "I'll see ya, so very very soon."

Do I have regrets about what I'm about to do? I ask myself as I leave the hospital. No. I answer. If anything I'm the happiest I've been for a while. This will be my decision and no one else's and no one will profit from it. But I do regret the manner of my passing. But such things are forced upon us, aren't they? But death at my own hand is a far better prospect than those deaths that will come in the future as the extinction of our species firmly takes hold. Where will palliative care be then, I can't help laughing, when the wards are overwhelmed and profit becomes a useless dream lost in the scramble to survive. No. I'll have no regrets, especially if I'm with my Jeannie.

Now forgive me, but I have to hurry if I'm to be there first.