

Forgetting Superman

by Jacquelyn Bengfort

I forget you. Upfront: that's how this ends.

We meet. Probably in the grocery store. It's a useful place for evaluating people—I have whole theories on this. If all he has in his basket is clothesline or duct tape, move along, unless of course you find bondage or extermination appealing.

We eye each other's frozen meals. Our hands brush at the pizza boxes. Hollywood calls it a 'meet-cute.' We are.

You wear glasses. I crack a Clark Kent joke. Worse—your name really *is* Kent. You hand me your cell and I text myself, *Hello, gorgeous*. Now we will always be able to reach each other, until I forget you.

Which I do, because you never respond to my *Hello, yourself* text.

Or you do, and on the third date we watch a Superman movie on my couch when I come down with flu. You brave contagion and spend the night. But then you stop returning my calls.

It's harder, but I forget you.

Or you call me back, now yourself as sick as could be, so I use the rest of my personal days to take care of you and I never leave. After eight months we clean my dusty apartment and terminate the lease. We use the money I'm saving on rent to fly somewhere hot and breezy and elope before I start to show.

We have three more kids and go skiing in the Alps for our ten-year anniversary, but then we return to find your secretary waiting in the driveway wearing an "ASK ME ABOUT MY BUMP" t-shirt. We both lawyer up and fight it out and despite the monthly checks, I forget you.

Or you don't stray--neither of us do--and we watch our kids grow up and find people and, sometimes, hold them while they try to forget people. We watch them make new people.

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Then one day your heart betrays you and you fall and your glasses crack but you don't need them anymore anyway. I put you in the ground.

I bring you flowers every Saturday, but despite all the years we had, I begin to--God it hurts--I forget you.

Or you're fine, hale, even, as they say of old men, and it's my mind that betrays us, starts to slip. The kids are strangers first, but at last I lose you too. I fight it. I forget you.

Or we both last a very long time, and leave our lives within days of each other. Side by side at the gates we bargain with God for our memories but we learn that's not the way that heaven works.

And, I forget you.

