

# FORGETFUL REMEMBRANCE

By Bobby Keniston

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

*This is a play about remembrance, as well as the things we forget. It is a play about love, about two people who spent their lives together. It is also a play about loss.*

*When tackling a ten to twelve-twelve minute piece such as this, with a simple setting like this one, it is important to make the characters as believable as possible, and the connection between them is electric.*

*Both COLIN and MYA speak with Irish lilts, though, if this is not something that can be achieved believably in your production, feel free to drop the accents.*

*I dedicate this ten-minute piece to Tracy Sue, for giving me some fine suggestions as to improving it. Thanks, Tracy.*

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### **CHARACTERS:**

**MYA**, 70s. She is peaceful and serene, though still has some fire in her. She is accustomed to speaking her piece. She wears a distinctive shawl and speaks with an Irish accent. She loves her husband very much and wants what is best for him.

**COLIN**, 70s. He loves MYA with all of his heart, and wants to take care of her, to somehow hold onto everything they've had. In this short play, he travels from doting husband, to a man finally accepting a great loss. He also speaks with an Irish accent.

**PROP, FURNITURE, AND COSTUME NEEDS:** Park Bench, Wastebasket, Snow Cone (Colin), A Distinctive Shawl (Mya)

**SETTING:** Area of a beautiful park where there are a few park benches and picnic tables, and a few wastebaskets. Any other decoration is at the discretion of the director.

**AT RISE:** *MYA, 70s, is sitting on a park bench. SHE wears a simple dress and a very distinctive shawl. SHE looks around peacefully, as COLIN, 70s, enters. HE carries a snow cone, and sits down next to MYA, putting his arm around her.*

COLIN: Are you sure you didn't want one?

MYA: Yes dear, I don't like cold things the way I used to.

COLIN: I suspect it's because you still have your own teeth. Ice doesn't chill my fake choppers.

MYA: That could be it, dear.

*(There is a pause. COLIN looks over to MYA, who is looking at something peacefully.)*

COLIN: Do you have much pain today, Mya?

MYA: No, dear.

COLIN: I know what that means. Stop asking, Colin, am I right? *(HE chuckles)* I'm sorry, I can't help worrying about my girl. *(HE takes her hand gently)* Are you cold? I can get your jacket out of the car.

MYA: No, I'm fine. I just would like to sit with you for awhile. *(slight pause)* And you didn't bring the car. You took the bus. Don't tell me that's slipped your mind already?

COLIN: Ah, yes. I took the... we took the bus. The bus driver didn't know what he was doing. I swear, they'd let anyone drive the bus these days! It's not like it used to be.

*(MYA says nothing, but looks at him sweetly. HE smiles at her, happy, but there is an underlying uneasiness, a "trying-too-hard" quality about his demeanor.)*

I've always loved this park. Remember when that area over by the swing set was nothing but trees?

MYA: Where?

COLIN: *(points)* Where that young couple is, right there.

MYA: Yes. That's where...

COLIN: ...you made me the happiest man in the world by saying yes. *(beat)* I hope it's as lucky a spot for that young couple. *(HE leans over and gives MYA a tender kiss)* I love you.

MYA: I love you, too.

COLIN: Been a long time since I've given my girl a kiss in this park. But I want the world to see how much I still love my beautiful bride.

MYA: You with your love of blarney, Colin. You talk the collar off of a priest, to be sure!

COLIN: It isn't blarney, when it's truth.

MYA: Aye.

COLIN: You've still the most beautiful eyes of green and blue, my girl. Still the most beautiful woman I've seen on God's Earth.

MYA: *(smiling)* Please tell me you don't have the drink in you this early, boy-o.

COLIN: No, my constitution is not what it once was. Your beauty is seen by sober eyes, my girl.

*(There is a pause. COLIN finishes with his snow cone and tosses it into the garbage. HE seems to be trying to think of something to say, something important.)*

MYA: What is it, my love?

COLIN: Our life together... was I...?

MYA: Were you what, dear?

COLIN: *(suddenly choked up)* Was I good enough? Because I ponder and do my best to remember, and I know I did my best. But I look back and I see so many mistakes with you. So many times I could have said things that I didn't. Times when I didn't make you feel as beautiful as I should have. Or you wouldn't need to accuse me of being unsteady when I tell you just how beautiful you are now.

MYA: My boy, you were as close to a perfect husband as a girl like me could have. Not to mention a most loving Da. I would not change a thing, and that's the God's honest, so it is.

COLIN: I still say you were too good for the likes of me.

MYA: Nonsense. Now really, dear, you shouldn't carry on like this. You must learn to relax and enjoy. Just enjoy.

COLIN: You've always been the expert at that. Yup-yup. *(note: when COLIN says "yup-yup", they are quick little inhalations of breath, almost an "American" affectation)* So much I should have learned from your example, Mya. So much. I feel like a fool.

MYA: Now, now. You know I could have only spent my life with a man who wasn't afraid of being a fool. So you should bless your foolishness and accept it as a virtue.

COLIN: Yup-yup. You always did have a way with words.

*(There is a pause as THEY sit quietly looking about the park. Then, cautiously, COLIN sneaks a look at MYA to see how SHE is doing.)*

MYA: I'm fine, dear. My bones are old, but I'm still here.

COLIN: I just worry, I can't help it. I'm a worrier. You know that. Can't we call that a virtue, as well?

MYA: (*with a note of stern concern*) Now you know there is absolutely no reason to be concerned about me. (*pause*) Colin? You do know that, right dear?

COLIN: (*after nodding vaguely*) I just don't want you to be in pain, so I don't.

MYA: (*Gently*) There is no pain. Not anymore. You know that.

COLIN: (*evasive*) Yup-yup. (*beat*) I have always loved you in this shawl.

MYA: I know.

COLIN: Do you remember when I bought it for you? We were in the old country for our... I believe it was our fifteenth...

MYA: Sixteenth, boy-o.

COLIN: Oh, now, I don't think so, Mya. We took a special trip to Ireland to celebrate our fifteenth anniversary.

MYA: That was the original plan, dear, but we couldn't, don't you remember? Sean had to go into the hospital, and we didn't want to leave him. So, we celebrated...

COLIN: ...our fifteenth anniversary on our sixteenth anniversary, yup-yup. Now I remember. Beautiful trip. What I can recollect of it. I remember a few games of "down the hatch", with my one hundred ten pound wife.

MYA: If you remember, Colin, I won every round!

COLIN: That's right, too, by Heaven! (*with pride*) My bride could always hold her drink. (*quickly*) Not that you were ever much of a drinker, Mya.

(*MYA smiles. THEY hold hands, and are silent for awhile, looking about the park.*)

My, my. See that little blonde girl there?

MYA: Where?

COLIN: Over there... her daddy's got the blue knapsack.

MYA: Oh, yes. She looks precious.

COLIN: She looks to have a bit of fire in her as well! (*chuckles*) Makes me think of our Jenny.

MYA: Yes. Only without the red hair.

COLIN: Yup-yup.

*(There is a silence as THEY watch. After a moment, MYA decides to speak, with great tenderness and caution.)*

MYA: Colin?

COLIN: Mmmm?

MYA: It's been too long, dear.

COLIN: What now?

MYA: You know what I mean.

COLIN: Now, Mya...

MYA: Sean and Jenny must be worried. You haven't seen them since...

COLIN: Mya, you shouldn't concern yourself with such things. You need to worry about your own health.

MYA: Look at me, Colin. *(beat. Then, gently:)* Look at me.

*(beat. HE does.)*

You know that's not true. Don't you?

COLIN: *(evasive)* I speak with them on the telephone.

MYA: Sean even offered to have you move in with him...

COLIN: What, now? That doesn't even make sense. First of all, who's going to take care of you...

MYA: Colin: that's enough, it's too much...

COLIN: *(a pleaded warning)* Mya, don't. I love my children, Mya. I love them with every bit of this old heart. We made ourselves a family of love, and there's not one ounce of me that doesn't love my children.

MYA: *(gently)* I know that my love.

COLIN: They seem to think the roles have changed. I'm still their Da. I'm not a child, and God bless me, I shall not be treated as one.

MYA: You have not seen either of our children in a year.

COLIN: We've been busy. You and I have our lives, and they have theirs.

MYA: *(with a hint of fire)* No. We have not been busy. Or to get right to the truth of it, my boy, YOU have not been busy. And well you know it, Colin.

COLIN: Do we need to talk in this manner?

MYA: As it has always been, I shall speak my piece. You must expect that even now.

COLIN: Do you have to sport with me on such a beautiful day? Let's keep to the rainbows and not the clouds, can we? Please.

MYA: You haven't seen them since my funeral, Colin.

*(COLIN seems to deflate. MYA looks at him tenderly. There is a long silence.)*

Isn't that right, dear?

COLIN: I remember a year after we were married. We had nothing. It was before I was made foreman in the plant, remember, so we were stony broke. Loose, patched clothes, remember? No money to celebrate our anniversary. *(beat)* I was so ashamed. You were working as an operator, then, wasn't it?

MYA: Yes.

COLIN: And I hated you having to work, hated not being able to take care of you, like I had promised you, and your mother and your father. Couldn't even buy you a present for our anniversary. *(beat)* But you never made me feel like a failure. You always took... well, I don't know how else to say it... always took such good care of me.

MYA: Our first anniversary was right over there, where the swingsets are now. Just a blanket, two corned beef sandwiches, and two people holding each other, looking at the stars.

COLIN: Yup-yup. *(beat)* And dreaming.

MYA: And dreaming. *(beat)* And a good deal of those dreams came true, didn't they, my dear? A house of our own. Beautiful children. A trip to Ireland. Many happy years together. *(beat)* You and I had a wonderful life together. And yes, my boy, I remember the lean years, the years you couldn't pinch a spot of fat on either of us. But you filled me with love. *(beat)* You know what always mattered most to me?

COLIN: What's that, now?

MYA: That no matter what, whether we were kissin', fussin', sportin' or fightin', each night, before we fell off to sleep... every night for forty-seven years, you said the same thing to me, before my eyes closed and the dreams came.

COLIN: Aye. I still say it to you every night. *(HE looks in her eyes with unfathomable love)* Thank you, Mya, my girl, for once again givin' me the greatest day I have ever known.

MYA: How you could say that to me every day, and truly mean it each time, is still a marvel to me.

COLIN: It's because the truth is easy to say. Always and forever, my one sweet girl. Always and forever.

MYA: *(soft)* Thank you.

COLIN: I don't want... *(HE trails off. Silence)*

MYA: You don't want what, dear?

COLIN: It wasn't supposed to be like this. I was supposed to take care of you...

MYA: You did, Colin.

COLIN: And I never wanted you to be the first to go, it's not right, it's not natural. But worse, and I hate to say it, because I never wanted to leave you alone, but I never wanted to have to live without you. Because I don't know how, anymore, I don't know how. And I don't want to. I don't want to be here, pretending.

MYA: You have life left in you yet, old man. And its not for sitting around in a park with my old shawl.

COLIN: It's just that I forget, Mya. I forget when I wake up in the morning and you're not there with me. I forget when I pour out a cup of coffee in your favorite mug, two cremes, one sugar. I forget how good you made our house smell, and I don't know how to do it myself. I forget when I hear a joke on the TV and I want to look over next to you and laugh with you, but you're not there. And I don't want to hear Sean and Jenny telling me I need to let go, because I don't know how. We lived together as man and wife, as Mamma and Da, and then, as man and wife of an empty nest, but you were always the constant. Me climbin' into bed with you next to me, your rump nestled all next to me, feeling you breathe. Your heart beating. I don't know how to live without you. I forget what it's like, and now I just don't want to have to learn again. I'm just an old fool, filled to the brim with blarney and emptiness without you laughin', and cussin' and sportin' with me. I don't think I can learn again, Mya. I just don't think I can. But more to the point of it, how can I choose that? How can I choose to live without the one who filled me up, made me whole? Each day without you, I feel the cold, I feel my own self slippin' away. I can no longer tell where you ended and I began. They talk about phantom pains for one who loses a limb. I have phantom pains of your hand in mine. Your eyes lookin' deep into my very heart. Phantom pains of your breath on my skin. How do I live without that now?

*(There is a pause. MYA slowly removes her shawl and puts it into Colin's arms. HE clings to it as though HE is hugging her. SHE stands*

*and walks behind the bench. COLIN stares straight ahead. Behind him, SHE leans down and kisses him on the cheek.)*

MYA: You will, my love. You'll learn. Just enjoy. Enjoy it all. The sun, the rain, the happiness, and even the hurt. Yes, my love, the hurt, because to hurt is to be alive, and being alive is a very special gift. And not a permanent one. So enjoy. Do you remember when we first met? When I was betrothed to another? But you told me it didn't matter. That I was your girl, no matter what?

COLIN: Aye.

MYA: And what kept you believin' this silly lass would come to you?

COLIN: Faith, my girl. Faith in my love for you being so strong, and burning so bright, that it would one day have to guide you to my side.

MYA: And so have that faith now. You will be by my side again, my dear Colin. And when next you see me, I'll be waitin' for you on the Green Isle, young again, my legs warmed by the sun, and those freckles you love so much on my face. And you will see my eyes shinin' with fun, and we'll run, jumping rock to rock like we did in our youth. And you'll be strong. And I'll hold your hand, and we will walk into the next great journey together. As you once waited for me, I shall wait for you, and once again, our patience will be rewarded. Believe this, my boy. Believe this here (*SHE places her hand on his heart*) and here. (*SHE places her hand on his head*) I love you, Colin. Always and forever.

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