

# LOVE STORY LAMENT

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My Dad performed a funeral last weekend for a beautiful woman in her 70's who's life was interrupted by cancer. Sorrowful stuff worthy of grief... but it was another tragic interruption from 10 years earlier that shook him. After 40 years of marriage her husband had left her, after which she was taken in by her daughter and son-in-law until her dying day. Though the hurt and anger was thick with his presence at the funeral, what was even more evident was the remorse and guilt that her ex-husband felt as he broke immediately after thanking my Dad for capturing her so beautifully.

The story felt so hopeless, so sad... and it's not the only one of it's kind. A friend of mine just asked her husband for a divorce — it will be messy. Because I love her, I ache. It's a little scary because, well, nobody plans this stuff. After the weekend of lamenting over lost loves, it made me want to cling to something. **We all want love stories worth *reveling* over, and with less than stellar odds, we know, at the very least, we have to fight for it.**

*"Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame."*

— Song of Solomon 8:6

*A mighty flame?* Doesn't sound like wimpy, happy-go-lucky stuff does it? It's not, when it's good. **That kind of love, that kind of unquenchable, jealous for commitment stay-worthy effort — it doesn't die in the face of adversaries. It doesn't bend a knee to the winsome whispers of our enemy who delights in destroying our love stories.** The one who lures us into a lament.

"I'm just not happy anymore."

"We're just not in love like that now."

"Doesn't God want me to be happy?"

"I don't even know who I am anymore."

"I know God is for marriage, but here's what I'm dealing with..."

**This side of eternity is short. It's not the end of the story.** If it was... well, I'd probably applaud the people just trying to better their lives and move beyond the crazy effort of working out the impossible. When we consider all of forever and what really matters, we realize that there are bigger things than being happy. We realize that love isn't always for us. We know that truth doesn't change. We don't rely on our spouse to define us. And we realize that it's not likely that our life circumstances surprise God... he didn't say "I hate divorce... except for you, because man — that guy is just unreasonable!"

Back to the mighty flame stuff...

**Fire is a powerful thing, right? It requires boundaries, or it can get out of control, kill and consume rather than sustain, invite and refine. It's not safe unless we manage it carefully.** And when we do love without boundaries, without managing it carefully, it's like tap dancing over hearts as if they can't be broken. Our lives were not made to work like *Sex and the City*; and if it does, then there's something HUGE we're missing out on, because true intimacy, true vulnerability requires a whole heart — and that's just not safe when your offering it in that context.

My heart started to race a little faster over the tragic misconception of what love is supposed to look like when the hubs and I watched a romantic comedy recently (pretty sure he was going for some serious points), and we were sorely disappointed. SORELY. Old lady alert — love stories are not what they used to be. Thank you, old hollywood, for [While You Were Sleeping](#), [Ever After](#), [Only You](#), [You've Got Mail](#), and

[The Notebook](#) (kind of new). And for Meg Ryan, because, seriously. You guys, I am not a love guru. I did not write [The 5 Love Languages](#) (sure wish I did!), but I am a romantic, and I have genuinely deep seeded hopes for earth shattering love worth reveling over for generations after we die in one another's arms in a nursing home. So when the "new hollywood's excuse for a love story," wrapped up, I grabbed my computer and this was my immediate response:

*"Heart wrenchingly disappointing. Shallow expectations fulfilled only by uniformed and uncommitted vagabonds of the heart. We are intentionally designed to be excited, transformed, exhilarated, changed even, by something far more eternal than the creative exploits of a fools dream. Our hearts yearn for more depth with a soulmate than the carefree hipster's wit. No less romance than Romeo himself would offer Juliet! And yet, we settle. Or at least watch the efforts of the ones who know not love and yet portray it. It is dancing with a fool in their folly and nothing more when we expect greatness and allow the withering corruption of our hearts as we absorb it. It - the best attempt to harness love by those who do not know it."*

You guys, I realize I was ranting in the moment on a high horse about totally made up people in a totally made up story. But I think my reaction is rooted in a deep belief that **we were made for something glorious! Not much can claim an eternal status, but love does! People do! And it is a tragic loss when we belittle it's splendor; when we miss it.** I have just shy of 8 years of marriage to claim... I am no expert. Fortunately, though, I don't have to be. God loves love... He IS love. God doesn't want us to anguish over broken promises and tragic losses. He wants us to enjoy it. And so he gives us direction into what he designed. He spells out how we protect it, how we engage in it. Precious people — we do not have to lament lost love. We do not have to surrender our forevers. So, in honor of our upcoming Valentine's day, let's go there for a while... let's examine some truths about how we create a lasting love worth reveling over; because great love is intentional. So let's stoke a mighty flame...