

REDEMPTION

ALAN WATKINS

John was watching TV when he heard his cell phone going off. It was Jen. They had been fighting earlier, and Jen had said some really hurtful things. He paused his TV show and looked at the phone. He wasn't ready to talk to her, so he threw the phone on the couch and went into the kitchen to get a drink so he wouldn't have to hear it buzzing at him until it went to voicemail. When he got back, he set his full drink on the end table beside him and settled back in to finish the movie he was watching. He must have fallen asleep because he was awakened by a knock at the door. Sleepily, he checked his watch. It was 1am. The knocking continued. As he moved closer to the door, he said, "Who is it?" A voice from outside responded, "Raleigh PD, Mr. Williams." John peered through the keyhole, and sure enough it was the police, so he opened the door. They explained that they had found Jen's car totaled less than a mile from his house. Not knowing who to contact, they found that he was the last person she called and wanted him to come down the next day to identify the body. The rest of their conversation was a blur. John closed the door and sat back down on the couch. He hated that their last conversation had ended with her storming out. He opened his phone to find a picture of her, and noticed he had a message. He was sure it was from Jen and was probably her wanting to get in a few more insults that she'd forgotten to tell him when she was there. A tear ran down his cheek as he clicked the button to hear the message, knowing the words he was about to hear would be his eternal memory of her.

"Hey...it's me. I'm sorry for what I said. I'm just so insecure because I've been hurt before, and being in love with you scares me. Yes, I said it, I love you, John! Please let's just forget all this. Call me in the morning. I love you."

More tears, different than the first, were running down John's face as he ended his voicemail call. "I love you too," he said.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alan Watkins teaches computer science courses at NC State University. In his spare time he likes to make short films and write short stories, usually in the horror genre.