

Divorce, Creating Another Future

By Alex Poulos

She woke to the faint sounds of a moving world. Slow and sullen, she shifted toward the bedroom door, resisting a look at the clock. But she knew the hour.

Dawn. Beautiful dreams had filled her nights. Now they were gone, replaced by black, fitful sleeps that left her with dull headaches intensified by breathless crying spells.

Out of habit, she reached behind her, brushed her hand along the cold sheet. He wasn't there, hadn't been for a long time. The emptiness loomed, making her sigh at the loss. Not of him. The man who could do anything had crossed the line in wanting it all.

It took him so long to gather the courage to tell her he was leaving, and why. There was another, had been for a year. Her crystal ball of plans – family trips, raising kids and growing old together – shattered in a moment of words.

The pitter-patter of feet brought a wan smile to her lips. Her little one appeared at the doorway, rubbing sleep from his eyes. She beckoned him to the bed and saw that his pajamas were too small, arms and legs sprouting like tree limbs straining towards sunlight.

She felt a pang of guilt at not having noticed before. It struck her that while she worried about this one and the other whom she knew was still asleep down the hallway, she wasn't paying enough attention to them.

The little one climbed in and snuggled under the covers. She hugged him, rubbing her nose to his. He looked into her eyes, forced a weak grin, and wrapped an arm around her.

In that moment, she sensed he knew something had changed in her, could tell she didn't think everything would be okay. He seemed scared, feeling an instinctive need to comfort her. To bring back the mother who'd always made him feel safe. And that wasn't right. She was supposed to be the protector.

There was so much at stake – working out custody and support, dividing property, tracking down that money she'd never seen. Her children deserved all of her, and better days. But she couldn't do it alone.

It's time, she almost whispered. A friend had told her of a lawyer, offered a number. "He gets what it's like for us," she'd said. After dropping the kids at school, she'd make that phone call.

And she would start creating another future.

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