

# **FORGOTTEN**

It was so simple. Just another minor annoyance in one more incredibly busy day. He had forgotten where he put his keys. Spent a minute or two looking, found them and that was that. Only one thing nagged at the very back of his mind about it. Way back there where he tried to keep things he wanted to ignore. The keys were on the little hook on the kitchen wall. Where he always kept them.

When he looked back on it, the keys were the beginning. At least once, every few days, something was not remembered, forgotten. Objects, appointments, even tasks at work. And then one day, stunningly, where he'd parked his car. He talked it over with his wife and paid a visit to the doctor.

Once the test results came back, the news was the worst he could possibly get. He would lose himself. Slowly, surely, one agonizing piece at a time. Shortly after the diagnosis, with much care, concern and well wishes he was let go at work. He and his wife spent dreary days waiting in bleak and sterile government offices, filing for disability benefits.

He cared for his wife, he really did. Made all the necessary arrangements for himself, insurance, funeral etc. Even as the gears of his mind were beginning to slip like mad. It seemed as if the world was being drained of color, inexorably turning flat line gray.

Television used to something he thoroughly enjoyed, at least an hour or two each evening. Now he spent more and more time in front of it. It seemed to his wife that he was trying in vain to use the TV. Quietly and desperately attempting to hold onto what life was like, what existence is about. As he grew ever more silent and unresponsive, she became increasingly worried about leaving him alone.

She awoke one morning, startled to find him out of bed already. Throwing on a robe, she hurried downstairs, only to find him in his usual perch. In front of the TV. It wasn't on.

That night she helped him into bed as usual now. His body was growing stiff from inactivity, rust creeping in. As she lay him down, she felt his hand on her arm. He was gripping her with an urgency that she hadn't felt from him in months. He struggled to speak, making halting fits and starts in his throat with no audible success.

His wife looked into his eyes, and there she saw her husband. *Really* him, as she hadn't seen him in a long time, alive to her probably this one last time. She looked deep and long. Though he made no sound, she heard him.

He slowly relaxed his body, and lay flat on the bed's surface. She reached across him, retrieving her pillow from the other side and kissed her husband tenderly on the forehead. Holding the pillow by both edges, she pressed it firmly down over his head.

There was no struggle. It was over in just a minute or two. She went downstairs and made a pot of coffee. His wife sat at the table a while. The coffee was ready, she could smell the fresh aroma.

She supposed she should call someone, she really should. She stared blankly at the phone hanging on the kitchen wall. Right by the key rings.