

Entanglement

Her world, and all hope, shattered. The ghastly news gnawed into her broken defences with savage, and unflinching, cruelty... An Olympian, groomed for gold... She would never compete again... never have children. Would lose the ability, to walk, talk, or to function normally. Reduced to a shaking, vegetating, mass. A burden to all. "Motor neurone doctor? Surely a mistake. A few tremors, the odd twitch? a urine infection perhaps...? Please... Her piercing, tear filled eyes, searched his with hopeless intensity. Tell me." She choked, "Tell me, it is something else." The tears she had frantically been trying to stem burst, amid shuddering, rasping, sobs.

Months came, and then went. She finished the degree she had shelved in pursuit of Olympic stardom. Her dissertation on quantum entanglement had been published. Met with widespread approval, and she was striving for a PhD in Quantum mechanics with Oxford university, That is, until her illness overcame her: when her life would, effectively, end. She would see it ended before that. Before she lost bodily functions, and the ability to carry out that task for herself. She would not be a vegetable, or a burden. In her mind, that was as irrevocable as the creeping illness that was destroying her.

Time slipped rapidly by. Any vestige of independent action would soon be gone too. She had prepared for her exit tonight. Barbiturates, from the dark web, should do the trick, with little suffering, and less anguish than the mental strife she she had fought with these long months. First, though, she would relax, read the stacked mail she had been ignoring, enjoy a last cup of strong coffee... "What's this?" The package contained a hard drive and short letter. She settled down to read:

Dear Emma

Since reading your dissertation I have followed your progress with interest. I find it odd, fateful even, that you, a person with a disability I know, far too well, should also be first to exhibit understanding, and the ability to proffer possible answers to the problems I am wrestling with. My condition is more advanced than yours. I have not long, but you may have longer. Will you work with me. Help me to smash the boundaries holding back our overdue leap, into understanding the extent of quantum phenomena. My wealth, my work, and my resources, will be at your disposal, now, and after my death.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Hawking...

Emma Mused... 'This changes everything.'

Flash fiction 400 words