



The
Moments
in Between
J.R. Waller

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“Give me a man, I have some stories. Give me a woman, I have a few more stories. Give me a man *and* a woman and the stories are infinite.”

-J.R. Waller

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one

James was starring out the window. Eyes fixated on the rain. His focus intense, he could hear the rain with his eyes. His blank starring eyes were enraptured in the harmony of the blind the repetition before him. Endless drops. One by one. Pelting the window over and over. Captured him. Froze him. Brought him peace, gave him solace.

He was in a fog, a daze. Life had become relentlessly stale. Why? Because everywhere he turned he saw *her*. She always turned up when he didn't want her to. She was even around even when she wasn't. Though he would never admit it, not even the rain's fine distraction could keep her away from him, for

even in such moments she would find a way to slip into his mind and stay there for hours on end like an unwanted guest that you can't get rid of. Even forgetting her was only an exercise in futility.

However, he could always count on such silent moments to at least momentarily drown her out of his thoughts. Yes, he could always count on the rain to wash away his thoughts of her, to some extent. That was good enough.

Of course, reality is a sleuth. It always found its way back to him. And there it was, reality was back to get him. It was Monday, near dinner time. She was due home and right on time she approached. He watched as the dim rays from her headlights broke through the rain as she pulled into the driveway. Flat horizontal glares of light streaming across the lawn. She exited her van, grabbed some bags from her trunk and walked to the front door. James listened to the sound of the lock as she turned it. The last remnants of peace were ebbing away with each turn of the pin. Nevertheless, he remained stalwart, and kept his eyes fixed on the rain. He wasn't about to lose what precious seconds of tranquility he had left.

Jane slammed open the front door. It was quite an entrance. A loud thud rang out as the door hit the

wall. A torrential downpour flew inside. Her raincoat flooded the carpet. She rushed to close the door, and quickly shut it just as loudly as she had opened it. She had grocery bags under her arms and in her hands' grasp. She struggled to make it into the hallway. James's concentration finally broke, he turned and watched as she wiped her feet, sat down the bags on the floor and diligently but quickly removed her raincoat, tossing it onto a hook on the wall.

She was wearing a tweed blazer. Buttons swirls of regal brown and cream. A large golden lapel pin with her alma mater's insignia on it. She had a dark blue shirt underneath, a knee length black skirt with flounces and coffee brown riding boots on. Her long blonde hair was kept back with a dark green and yellow argyle hair band. The ends of her platinum locks accentuated with dangling ringlets. She wore a small diamond encrusted watch on her right wrist and a pencil in her left ear. She was always the epitome of professional.

Jane taught comparative literature at the local university, but unlike many of her colleagues, she dressed for the role because she wanted to, not out of obligation. As such James almost rarely saw her without a blazer. Her look contrasted well with her

high cheek bones, bright lively face, and large deep set green eyes. She was in all ways the consummate academic professional, even when rain soaked.

While her entrance had broken James's trance, he remained where he stood. He pursed his lips, and glared at her as she took off her boots and grabbed some of the bags of groceries from back off the floor.

Jane noticed him in the corner of her eye and slowly glanced over at him in short clandestine intervals. Those eyes of hers, formerly lovely, now stone cold, pierced him. Like a knife to the heart, they hurt him even at the slightest look.

"Are you going to just stand there? I'm soaking wet if you haven't noticed," she called out.

For a few split seconds James willfully ignored her. Then, he slowly and deliberately turned his head back to the window and stared outside before letting out a big sigh. He wanted the silence back, the bliss of forgetfulness to return. However, he knew better. Whenever such situations took place in their interactions with each other any escape was useless and impossible. He turned and walked over to her.

"I got it," he said, as he bent over and grabbed the rest of the bags from the floor.

Jane, despite asking for the help, would not in any

life acknowledge his acquiescence. It was her way of doing battle. He would stare, avoid and relent; she would often take a more active approach. Hurtful words, brittle non-verbal cues and acid tongued remarks and noises. Those were her choices of weapons. Verbal swordplay.

“Careful!” she yelled bitterly.

“I told you I’ve got it.”

Jane placed her hands on her hips and bit her lip as she watched her husband struggle with the heavy load.

Seconds later, the inevitable; the bottom fell out of one of the bags. Its contents? A cartonful of eggs, which had now been smashed onto the entry way carpet. With that James had successfully sparked a volcanic eruption.

He placed the other bags on their dining room table with great defiance and began to storm off, but not before Jane could get another word in.

“Where are you going? Clean it up!” she yelled, hands on her hip.

He turned, looked over his shoulder, and with great apathy replied a simple refrain, “I don’t have time.” With that, he went upstairs to his room.

Jane wasn’t going to clean up after his mess. She

had wasted too much time lately being his personal streetsweeper. Since the onset of the war he had become lazy. She wasn't about to live in a mess so she took it upon herself to carry that load. But not tonight.

Instead, she began a long, listless waltz to the living room sofa. Her feet even stepped right into the eggs. She didn't care, in fact it felt good; stepping on his beloved oriental rug and smearing chicken embryos into it brought her the utmost satisfaction. She never liked the rug anyway, and of course it was his fault, he lifted it all in one attempt when he shouldn't have. In fact, everything was *his* fault.

Jane then sat on the sofa, pulled her egged socks off, threw them to the side and curled up to relax.

Both she and James were equally at odds with each other. Their protracted "full out domestic war" was fully two sided. However, they coped the same way. As she sat there, she turned her attention to the same thing he had. She stared out at the rain. The rain was her solace too. It took the edge off things. Even if she could never fully remove him from her mind, it at least provided her with short glimpses of peace, and tiny morsels of retreat which she devoured as much as she could. Of course, she would get sick from time to time if she ate too much solace.

The rain wasn't their only similarity, however. In addition, their tactics were similar too in that they produced the same recurring results. They were both committed to never bringing any closure or resolution to their war. It was merely trench warfare. Deep down that was how they liked it. Blow up, avoid, stare out, that was their formula. Neither of them would ever admit to being similar, but they were. Rivals are like that. They're alike. Yet they never dare say so. If you asked either of them to describe each other, you'd find that they viewed each other as *incredibly* different.

From Jane's perspective he was a workaholic, self-centered and inconsiderate, while James had come to know her as flighty, disrespectful, and mindless. Quite a slew of adjectives, all different yet similar. Despite all this, they lived in the same house, shared the same coping mechanisms, and attacked with the same goals in mind and with similar tactics. They were alike. Deep down they knew it. That's why they got married in the first place albeit for far different and optimistic reasons. That fact alone ate at them and kept their battles from ever going all out, or even coming to any sort of finality.

Thankfully, for their neighbors sakes, the rest of this evening would remain calm. She would eventual-

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ly clean up the eggs and eat dinner in the guest bedroom alone. He would stay upstairs working. They wouldn't see each other at all. That was the way they did things. Come and go. Start and stop. It was a cold war really, just bursts of violence, mainly emotional, every so often. Yet just enough to keep things tense and real.

About The Greater Heritage



Mission

The Greater Heritage equips Christians for an abundant life of service, personal spiritual growth and character development through the study of God's Word and the contributions of His people in the fields of art, literature and music throughout history.

What We Do

The Greater Heritage publishes original articles, books and Bible studies. The ministry also hosts a digital museum and podcast. All of its books are entirely made in the USA.

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If he continued to let his feelings eviscerate him, he'd just be engaging in an emotional cannibalism where, in the end, he'd be even less of a person than he had already become.

In this richly nuanced psychological novel, J.R. Waller chronicles the disintegration of a marriage amidst a backdrop of grief and disillusionment.

Jane and James, a happy small-town couple, have their world shattered when their young son dies in a tragic car accident. In the ensuing fallout, the two enter what they call a “full out domestic war” with each other.

When James’s mother has a heart attack, he leaves for Denmark to visit her, and to get away from Jane and his now empty existence. However, due to circumstances outside of James’s control, what begins as a trip of escape quickly becomes a journey into the heart of despair.

Both multifaceted and complex, *The Moments in Between* offers a profoundly emotional lesson about moving forward when sorrow feels insurmountable to overcome.

—

J.R. Waller, MBA is the Founder of The Greater Heritage, a Bible teaching and publishing ministry. He holds an MBA from Rollins College, Certificate in Christian Apologetics from Biola University and Bible Knowledge Certificate from The Master’s Seminary. He is former James Madison Institute Leaders Fellow and University of Central Florida Center for Public and Nonprofit Management Fellow. He is the author of seven books.

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