

I Love You Abigail...Help!!!

By

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The storm clouds came in and the sound of rain patted against the window and roof. It wasn't an unusual storm but due to it being early spring, a cold one. At some points, the wind hollowed through the trees and the flash of lightning gave the leaves an ominous look.

Pastor Clayton Colley didn't mind the oncoming storm. He lived in Ohio all his life so this was nothing new. He would've preferred being there at home with his wife, Abigail. They were not divorced or separated but she left due to a rash of break-ins in their neighborhood.

The Pastor assured her it was a few youths vandalizing the area. He told her the news was making it sound much worse than reality. Most of the vandalizing happened to vacant homes. She didn't care. Abigail was nervous.

He decided to stay home for a while to show her everything was okay. Abigail lived with family in Wheeling. Pastor Colley like the West Virginian city, but didn't care much for the casino. He felt like gambling halls brought down a town's moral compass. To Clayton, casinos were a haven of immorality, crime, and suspicious behavior. He was against Ohio's ballot for casinos and preached against them in his sermons. He felt victorious when the first ballot failed.

However, just like the oncoming storm, he realized that having a casino was only a matter of time. He didn't care of the glitzy hotel that would open up on the Westside of Columbus. He was happy that he lived on the eastside, so at least whatever problems would hit the city, he wouldn't be near them.

Pastor Colley, head minister of the Everlasting Hope Christian Church and avid fan of Cleveland's basketball team, sat by a window to watch the storm. He was at peace with his surroundings. It shortly stopped and the wind would dry all traces of moisture on the cars and homes.

From a distance, he could see another storm brewing. He assumed it had to be an hour or two away. He didn't mind and sat there for a while drinking hot chocolate while Cavaliers basketball spewed from the TV in the background.

His thoughts went to earlier that day and how he saw a few people for counseling or going over church ministry ideas. E.H.C.C. had quite a few retired people who would see the

pastor during the day to talk about better ways the church can grow and serve the community. Others came in because they needed help with a personal problem or situation.

One person in particular, Henry Hall, came in earlier that day. Colley's mind troubled when his thought turned to him. He knew of Henry's addiction to alcohol but his earnest desire to be free from the liquid drug.

Stacey, Henry's wife, also had an alcohol addiction. Due to her kidney problems the addiction took a hard toll on her body. Colley figured to help Stacey by keeping her busy and mind off her condition. He hired her to help edit his book and implement ideas for a smoother church service.

Pastor Colley blew out a sigh. Guilt overcame him and he sipped on his hot chocolate. The TV was on but the sound was so low his heartbeat sounded louder.

"I hope, I did the right thing," he whispered. Pastor Colley tried to counsel Henry on how to get over his addiction. He stared at two writing tablets resting on a oak and glass coffee table.

The tablets were a similar idea he suggested to Henry for help. His treatment, which started three months ago, was a bit different. One of them dealt with the mental process of self-forgiveness and the other praising God for a variety of blessings in his life.

Pastor Colley could not let go of self-pity and guilt, no different then Henry turned to alcohol. It was like his personal elixir. Just as Henry turned to the bottle for relief, the Pastor turned to guilt. For some reason it helped.

"I gotta' get over this," Pastor Colley said. *"Tired of living with this burden. I'm tired."* He sighed, sipped more of the warm chocolate, and thought, 'please help me.'

A loud knock at the door woke Pastor Colley from his slumber. He didn't realize he had fallen asleep for a few minutes. The warm cup of chocolate was in his hands and he spilled a little with the knock at the door.

Pastor Colley assumed it was thunder, but once the knock came again, he knew it was a person. He put his cup next to the tablets and didn't even think to look out the window. He assumed someone went to the wrong house or a hysterical parishioner came by. Colley figured it could not have been the kids vandalizing the place. His home with the neatly trimmed yard, good painted siding, and a garden gnome dressed as a basketball player certainly gave the look of people living there.

“Here I come,” Pastor Colley called. He didn’t bother to check the eyehole and opened the door. “Listen I don’t need...”

A thump on the head stopped Pastor Colley from continuing. He staggered back and tried to pull himself together when the figure rushed him. Pastor swung his elbow and caught the side of the man. The intruder made a guttural sound.

“There’s more of that,” Pastor Colley stated. The intruder didn’t make a noise but was able to turn Pastor Colley quickly on his stomach so he couldn’t see his face. Pastor Colley struggled to take another swing when a powerful blow to the head nearly knocked him unconscious.

The minister tried to push him off and stand but immediately tumbled down. His head ached and a trickle of warm blood started down his forehead and onto his cheek.

Could my wife be right, “Pastor Colley thought. He was in pain and forced himself to stand. The intruder was gone but there was a strong dizzy feel. Because of the blood, Pastor Colley knew he was not imaging being attacked. He picked up a tablet to use as a weapon and then shook his head. He dropped it and headed for another room to get something better.

Pastor Colley assumed it was a gun or something hard that hit him in the head and almost knocked him out. He looked around his living room and the hall leading to the kitchen. *‘Better weapons in there’*, he thought. His leg felt heavy and that made him pause a bit. *‘C’mom Clayton you can do this’*, he thought.

Pastor Colley summoned some energy to move fast as possible to the kitchen. It took a second but he realized that there was a tumbling noise coming from the other room. He could hear the intruder walked down the stairs and stopped.

“You can take whatever you want,” Pastor Colley yelled. “Just leave in peace.”

No response. Pastor Colley was in the kitchen and grabbed a knife. His instincts told him to stay and wait, but if the stranger had a gun, *‘what good would standing around do’*. He figured to move and surprise the invader.

Pastor Colley crept around the kitchen table and quietly made his way into the dining room. A sudden noise crashed through just beyond the sunroom and into the front area. Pastor Colley raced into the area where he heard the noise. The knife was held high.

Pastor Colley came into the room hoping to catch the home invader and stop him from doing harm. Instead, what he saw where two tablets and his mug crashed into the side of a wooden statue and the bookcase.

He was tricked.

Pastor Colley turned around, got punched in the back, dropped the knife, and fell to the ground. An all black pillowcase was forced around his head. He could breathe but felt trapped. The intruder tied the pillowcase around his neck and began to pull on him. The black velvet pillowcase was Colley's favorite, but made seeing through it impossible.

Pastor Colley fought the intruder's grasp but rewarded with a hit in the back. There was a pause in the action and another blow to his head. The last hit was hard and the Pastor began to lose conscious. Only a few moments ago he was worried about feeling guilty. Now his thoughts, was on survival. He tried to muster the strength to stand and fight but couldn't. He felt the grip of his captor grab him once more under his shoulder and lift him to his legs.

The cool wind wisped through the blue and steel gray pajamas he was wearing. Pastor Colley was not prepared to leave in such a hurried manner. He was forced from his home and thrown into the passenger seat of the car.

Before losing conscious he whispered, "I love you Abigail."

"Shutup," the intruder said in a ruff voice. The intruder shoved the Pastor and slammed the door. He was hoping not to die and fought the urge too sleep. The last hit in the head was too much and he only remembered hearing the purr of the engine and the movement of the car.

Read what happens next in Repeat Offender.

Characters are from the novel Repeat Offender by Ricky LaVaughn

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