

## Eulogy for A Rogue

Leon often joked that he was my knight in tarnished armor. For those of you who didn't know him, I need to tell you right now that you missed a wonderful, funny, infuriating, stubborn and prideful man who loved his family with a passion that few can imagine much less sustain.

As I was preparing for today, I looked at our hundreds of pages of love notes and chat logs and I ran across the list I sent him entitled "What I have Learned About Leon in the First Six Months." While I won't share all 80 things I thought I knew about him, I'd like you all to know a few truths about my husband.

1. He had the most amazing blue eyes ever.
2. Gentleness and violence were equally strong instincts in him.
3. He was a terrible liar.
4. He loved his family above all else in the world.
5. He was playful and fun.
6. The giving or withholding of a smile could make or ruin his mood.
7. He could hate with as much fire and passion as he could love and the strength of either emotion scared him sometimes.
8. He did not like to be interrupted when working on something.
9. He respected his father and loved his mother.
10. He couldn't cook.
11. He was more intellectually curious than 99.9 % of the population and had more native intelligence than virtually all PhD's I know.
12. His pride was easily hurt.
13. What was his stayed his.
14. He couldn't throw anything away.
15. He could have a political argument all by himself.
16. He read.
17. He had a cast-iron stomach.
18. He never asked for anything but was grateful for and pleased with any gift.
19. He liked game stores.
20. He was very serious about playing games "by the rules." He just wasn't so serious about living by them.

I have often been asked how a girl like me ended up with scoundrel like Leon Webster. Our first date was August 1, 2003. The date wasn't going very well. I was chattering away and he was playing shy. We were both fending off calls from work and trying to steal a bit of time to get to know each other. He showed me downtown Savannah as if it were personally his and he was offering it to me as gift. He had such pride in his hometown and in his heritage. We were wandering down Bay Street with me chattering away and for no apparent reason, right in front of the Outback Steakhouse, he whirled me around and kissed me so thoroughly that my toe nails start to sweat. I felt a little light switch in my soul go from "standby-by" to "alive" and at that moment, I heard a group of guys in a passing pick-up truck let out the loudest "WOOOOOOOOO-HOOOOOOOOOO" I'd ever heard. Leon chuckled and said, "Welcome to Georgia."

We wandered around Savannah's famous squares kissing and talking. He led me to a fountain and handed me a penny. I made a wish that went like this, "Please let this man like me just a little bit." He reached into his pocket and a five dollar bill fluttered into the fountain. I was shocked and said, "What are you doing???" and he gave me that rogue's smile and kissed me saying, "When you make big wishes you aren't cheap." Once I got to know him and the legendary Webster cheapness, I cherished the memory all the more because I knew that he knew the value of a dollar. Six months later, we spent Valentine's together downtown and we ran across our fountain. I told him how much that first day meant to me and he laughed at me and confessed that he had meant to pull out a quarter but a five dollar bill fell out instead. He was about to fish it out when he saw my face and decided to let it work for him. He was ever the rogue and that day he stole my heart.

Our life since then has not always been easy. The twins and I spent some time yesterday trying to remember the good times. What we as a family remember most is the laughter and the adventure. Whether it was "treasure hunting" at Good Will or gaming late into the night, Leon was always there to provide laughter or a clever prank. One of his favorite songs was "Awful, Beautiful Life" by Darryl Worley. It goes like this:

I woke up early with a poundin' in my head  
I'd been out the night before with all my friends  
A little worried, kinda wonderin' what I did  
I said, "Lord, please forgive me for my sins."  
My wife wanted to kill me, but she tried to save me first  
"You're goin' if I have to drag your butt to church."

I love this crazy, tragic,  
Sometimes almost magic,  
Awful, beautiful life

I laid in bed that night and thought about the day  
And how my life is like a roller coaster ride  
The ups and downs and crazy turns along the way  
It'll throw you off if you don't hold on tight  
You can't really smile until you've shed some tears  
I could die today or I might live on for years

I love this crazy, tragic,  
Sometimes almost magic,  
Awful, beautiful life

I love this life  
It's a beautiful life

Leon often told me that our lives were a roller coaster ride and that sometimes we have to go "all the way down" to get back up. He would give me that sheepish

smile and say, "Well, I am never boring." He was right. For me and the children, we can honestly tell you that life with Leon Webster was never boring. It sure was an awful, beautiful life.

Leon, if you can hear me, I need you to know that I feel about you as I always have. As Benjamin told you just a week ago today, "Daddy, we love you and we will always love you." You said to all of us that day, "Remember, what does not kill us makes us stronger." So we, me, Adam, Ben, George and Isabella, we are all strong and we are so because you forced us to be. We go forth now in strength and in unity to face all the troubles and difficulties that now lie ahead. You have given us two things that no one can ever take away: you have given us love and you have given us strength. Rest well, my love, you will never be on call again.