

Famous Last Words

By

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INT. PALACE - DAY

AARON and MARLOWE, two scrappy outlaws stand back to back, fighting off guards.

AARON

You know, I had promise when I was a kid. Could've grown up to be a blacksmith with a... Blacksmith...forge.

MARLOWE

Smithy?

AARON

(Pointedly ignoring him.)  
Little cottage on a hilltop, growing old with someone...pretty but practical. Never gonna happen now. You know why?

MARLOWE

I have seen how you are with women, if that's what you mean.

AARON

I'm serious, Marlowe.

MARLOWE

Me too. You start sweating.

AARON

If I hadn't met you, my life would've been completely different.

MARLOWE

(visibly hurt)  
I'm sorry we met too.

AARON

How's *that* work?

MARLOWE

For one thing, you don't *just* do the sweating thing with women.

They're outnumbered and know it. With knives at their throat, they allow their hands to be tied behind their backs. Two guards start walking them down...

INT. LONG HALLWAY - DAY

AARON

What are you *hurt*?

MARLOWE

Just because I look good in leather vests and my hair does this naturally swoopy thing, people assume I don't have feelings.

AARON

Okay then. Explain. Explain to me how I've hurt you, because you know, I really wanna be *better*.

MARLOWE

That's *exactly the problem*. You don't actually want me to change, you just wanna be *better*. You know, sometimes I steal stuff just to make sure you can feel like the good guy. Maybe *my* life would've been different without you, ever think of that? Maybe *I* would've had the smithy on the hill.

AARON

The *house* would be on the hill, the *smithy* would be in town.

MARLOWE

You didn't even know the word smithy, and now--what, you're an *expert*?

INT. DINGY PRISON CELL - DAY

The men are now shackled together.

AARON

I know you. I don't *like* you, but I know you. Moral bankruptcy's in your nature.

MARLOWE

You know me because you need me. Because that's how you operate. You just loll around all decent and helpless until someone *does* things for you. It's what makes you such a great crook.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

MARLOWE (CONT'D)

And now you're ignoring me. Really mature.

AARON

I made a choice. I made the wrong choice.

Ouch.

MARLOWE

Don't say that.

AARON

Why's it matter now?

MARLOWE

Because it wasn't the wrong choice.

AARON

I'm a crook.

MARLOWE

A *great* crook. It was a *compliment*.

AARON

The growly delivery and low cadence did a great job communicating that.

MARLOWE

I'm morally bankrupt, remember? That's my voice.

AARON

Well it's hostile.

EXT. CHOPPING BLOCK - DAY

They wait in line as other people are executed before them.

MARLOWE

We've passed through tons of towns with tons of smithys.

AARON

Um, okay?

MARLOWE

There have been tons of women *in* those smithys, who don't seem to mind the sweating thing for some reason.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Are you nearing a point?

MARLOWE

If you wanted to settle down you would've done it. Why'd you stay?

AARON

*Why'd you let me?*

Beat. A challenge Marlowe wasn't expecting. He's imagined saying the words a thousand times, but now they won't come. He surrenders, letting Aaron win this last game of chicken.

MARLOWE

I hate explaining things. I became morally bankrupt so I wouldn't have to explain things.

AARON

Well maybe the moral bankruptcy is part of the appeal for me.

MARLOWE

Appeal?

AARON

(covering. Badly.)

Of being your partner in crime. And you know. Friend, occasionally.

MARLOWE

A friend who's appealing?

AARON

I wouldn't read too much into it.

MARLOWE

It's worth reading into.

AARON

Because you've *made* it that way. You're essentially conning yourself.

Beat. The guards lead them up to the chopping blocks.

AARON (CONT'D)

I didn't mean that.

MARLOWE

Then why'd you say it?

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Not sure, I just, um.

MARLOWE

What?

Aaron stares at this man whose signature cockiness has been washed away with the tide. He's all boyish rage and embarrassment now. The executioner's ax comes down on someone else's neck in front of them, but it matters so much less than the fact that Marlowe is literally blushing. It's adorable. And Aaron will never get to see it again.

AARON

(tenderly)

I hate slipping up. I'm sorry.

Beat

I hate slipping up, I always have.

MARLOWE

When did you know?

AARON

When did *you*?

MARLOWE

I was never..there wasn't really ever a point of *not knowing*.

AARON

Oh.

MARLOWE

What, there was for *you*?

AARON

I mean, it wasn't a "first sight" kind of thing for me. It happened gradually.

MARLOWE

Aaron, if you don't feel the same way--don't lie. There's no point now.

AARON

God you're impossible. You're the only person who really knows me, okay? So is it just me, or should we spend the rest of our lives together?

(CONTINUED)

MARLOWE

Well, given the rest of our lives are only gonna last the next five minutes, that's a pretty easy question to answer.

AARON

Context is part of it, yeah.

MARLOWE

Any other circumstances, this never would've happened.

AARON

Oh, definitely not.

MARLOWE

If we weren't about to die, I would never tell you I'm in love with you.

AARON

I'd never tell you the feeling is mutual.

We hear the sound of whooshing, and then arrows thudding into the hearts of their captors, who fall to the ground. The peasants surrounding them attack the guards. One of them cuts the ropes binding their hands. The mob chases the guards off the beach, screaming, leaving the two men alone. They stare at each other...