

# THE UNREAD LETTER

By Shawn Deal

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# THE UNREAD LETTER

*A Dramatic Monologue*

**By Shawn Deal**

**SYNOPSIS:** How early in life is too early to have your first real regret? For our narrator, it happens in a high school hallway, in between classes, and a letter he wishes he could have read.

**TIME:** Present.

**SETTING:** High School Hallway.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(1 male)*

NARRATOR (m) ..... Teenager.

**SET:** Bare stage

**PRODUCTION NOTES:** This can be done very simply: bare stage, no costuming and no props.

**DIRECTOR'S NOTES:** The main character goes through a variety of emotions. Regret plays a huge part in this play, wishing to have done things better. This is very introspective. The character can be dressed as if at school, a backpack or holding a few books. He can even have a letter to use as an example. The actor should try to interweave as many emotions as possible throughout the beats of this play. The last thing you want to do is to only focus on one of the emotions.

## DEDICATION

For Julie

**NARRATOR:** I have a regret. I'm sorry to say that. It actually hurts to say that—I have a regret. But I can't describe it as anything else.

I'm too young to have a regret—way too young.

How can I have a regret when I have barely lived my life?

And yet here I am, not quite ready, but close, to going out in the world on my own to see what I can accomplish, what I can make of myself. Before I even get started, I have this regret hanging over me.

It's like having a single storm cloud in a perfectly deep blue, summer sky. If this blue sky was my future, it looks beautiful except for that one ominous dark cloud. You can tell it's about ready to erupt any moment. The rain would come down in a deluge. I mean, it has to. The cloud is so dark grey and heavy that the rain has to burst forth any second now.

I do hope it doesn't rain on me. Of course, that doesn't sound right. I'm the one who created the cloud. So, I'm the one who should get the downpour.

My regret came in the form, of all things, a letter. A letter. Can you imagine that? A letter.

No one writes letters anymore. It's texts, it's emails, it's posting a story on social media. It's not writing someone a letter. I haven't written any words with pen and paper since grade school. I can type faster than I can write. And besides I can edit as I go on a computer rather than cross out words or blacken them out or whatever.

I know people used to write letters—back in the olden days—you know, those days before the computer. I've never written a letter. I doubt my parents have either. Now, my grandparents wrote lots of letters back and forth to each other, especially when Granddad was off in the war.

My grandma even told me once that it was those letters, more than anything else that made her fall in love with him. So, I guess there is something to be said for letter writing. It lets you pour your heart out; at least that's what my grandma says.

Okay, that's fine. That's what their generation did—all cool, but it's just not what my generation does. I need to state that up front—the last thing someone of my generation would expect is a letter. It's important to know that, that right there is a critical piece of information—critical. It will help to explain my reaction later on.

Now, I am talking about a genuine letter and not a card, like a birthday or Christmas card, or something like that. Not a card that a relative has sent you that they have written on one of the inner sides that doesn't have the greeting, and telling you everything that happened in the last year because this is the only communication they have with you all year.

I'm looking directly at you, Aunt Nikki.

No. I'm talking a genuine letter with actual lined pages, in an actual long envelope, not one of those squarer ones that cards come in but a long rectangular one.

I was given a letter. Well, actually, not really. That's an oversimplification of what happened.

I was walking down the hallway at school, and it was crowded because it was the 5 minute rush between classes, and I was carrying all my books because I was an idiot at the beginning of the school year and said no to needing a locker.

Ugh! Anyway, I was looking down at the books I held because one of the books had moved, and I was trying to settle it when I ran into someone... alright, walked into someone.

*(Looks around conspiratorially.)* If you want to know the truth of it, I might have been set up. I think *(Pauses to think.)* I really think that she walked into me—like on purpose. Although, that's neither here nor there.

So, my books go flying, there is a bit of clapping from other students in the hallway, none of whom stop to help. One of my books gets kicked and slides along the floor. I bend down to start picking everything up when I hear in the very faintest of voices: I'm so sorry.

It took me a moment, the words were said so softly that I didn't realize they were directed my way.

Well, I looked up, and of all people, it was Julie Satoris. Everyone in school knew Julie Satoris. I mean, everyone could identify her out of a crowd. I don't know if anyone really knew her, as she kept to herself. I couldn't name anyone who would have called her friend. The way I knew her was the exact same way everyone else in school knew her, and that was through her dad.

The previous year, our school did a whole fundraising event for Steve Satoris, Julie's father. Mr. Satoris was on the roof of his house. I'm not sure what he was doing up there exactly, cleaning gutters, repairing a shingle or something, but he slipped and fell off the roof. He broke his 6th lumbar and was paralyzed from about the shoulders down. With much physical therapy, he was able to move his arms in a limited way, with his hands balled up into permanent fists.

The school got together, and we did a huge fundraising event for him and his family. We raised over \$100,000 dollars. The family was presented one of those huge checks during halftime of one of the basketball games. The whole family cried. Julie was front and center in the middle of the court, standing next to her father, who sat in a wheelchair. Julie stood there proudly and happily for her family, in front of the whole school. Some people in her position would have been embarrassed, but she's wasn't. She showed real

strength in character there. You couldn't help but admire her for that and feel sorry for her, all at the same time.

So, there I was, staring down at my books, scattered across the hallway floor, with Julie whispering to me. She didn't try to help me, but it didn't really look like she could because she had clearly made the same poor decision as I did at the beginning of the year. Due to her tough schedule, Julie too was weighed down with books.

I scrambled to pick up my books and some loose papers that had been tucked inside one of them. When I had grabbed everything, I stood up and Julie pointed down to the ground. At this point, the hallway had emptied, for it had to be close to the late bell ringing. I looked to the floor and there was a white rectangular envelope.

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