

JULIE

SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB

The title is a dead giveaway  
Change adjective or change title  
"Undying Love" or "Purple Hearts and Bleeding Hearts"?

Change View  
Point of View  
1st or 3rd-personal singular  
Delete "As"

As you sit outside your lover's house, a single rose rests beside you, and a poem is clutched in your right hand. You feel anxious for her to arrive home. With the other hand in your pocket, grasping onto the engagement ring, you hope that it will secure the love and commitment for your future together.

Passive Verbs  
Make active

Sweat drips down your forehead in steady beads, as if you were a plump man standing next to a bakery oven on a summer afternoon. You look to her yard and see it's spacious but seems more angular due to the many Oak trees that line its edges, displaying their leaves' mural of fall colors.

I will suffice

Be more descriptive

You are scared about changing your relationship, but you do not know what else to do with your new lease on life after the war. You feel that no one else will love you the way she does. However, she tells you that it's as if something inside of you died on the battlefield and is incapable of resurrection.

While you take out a cigarette, your thoughts stop and dwell on the full moon's intimidating presence. The night holds the smell of burning Christmas trees, while the street lights illuminate a hellish reflection like the color of dried blood in the moonlight.

The smoke does little to calm the nerves as the motion of blowing leaves makes the violent and erratic patterns like those of rats in a rodent trap, fighting over their last meal.

You continue to ask yourself how to approach the proposal. What will you tell her about your true feelings? How will you phrase the words?

reflection word choice  
Too many similes (too many) with figurative language these #s

thoughts

word choice  
analyze  
evaluate  
carry out

Julie

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You used reflection  
2nd res

Bad memories continue to distort the bliss in your mind, like a shattered reflection. It's as if you see yourself in a broken mirror ~~during a lightning storm.~~

Choose one.

glass

You think about the time, just before you went away, when you gave her a gold bracelet for her birthday that was originally meant for your mom. She felt that you had forgotten her special day, but you assured her that you hadn't, yet you didn't have enough money for another bracelet for her. You were never rich, but you did put her first, and you wanted her to know that.

How did she know?

Misplaced modifier  
Birthday wasn't meant for M

These disagreements might make her decline your plans for marriage, if she does not accept the proposal it would mean heartbreak for all of eternity. The future with her might hold only emptiness after tonight if there is a future, at all.

proposal which

redundant

You remember Remembering the day your bus drove you away for the war, she stood there crying and quite solemn. Your lover then blew a final kiss, before going out of sight for a year, and that is the sole reason that you made it back home that one kiss that meant so much.

Misplaced modifier  
Introductory modifying clause  
has to have to have to modify the first down

to disappearing

(understood)

Despite these memories and the present sweet sentiments, what if your love rejects you? What if she laughs at your poem? She would not do that, would she? This love of yours would not be that insincere. How long have you known her?

It is then that you wonder if this is already a dead proposal. The question is not so much if you love her, but does she love you still? That is the right question to be asking. Does she still love you after all the both of you have been through?

At that final thought, up pulls the Cadillac, your love inside. Your unpleasant thoughts still seem to bounce around in your head, like white blood cells running away from a recursive virus.

passive verb

pulls up

SYNONYM - obscured hidden

You take a step towards the vehicle, then another. You are darkened by the night, so she does not see you. It's time to see if your hearts still beat in tune.

harmony sync

JULIE

SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB

She gets out of the car and her blonde hair starts to blow in the wind, giving her the appearance of a flying angel.

word choice

Your hopeful wife sees you and gives a smile. You continue walking to her. You still do not know what to say; your bleeding heart is stuck in your throat.

surprised expectant

At arm's length from her now, you look at your love while holding onto the rose and the poem. She looks back at your sudden awkwardness, waiting for your reply.

?!

You do not say anything as you take the engagement ring out of your pocket. You hold it in front of her. She says nothing. Absolute silence passes for a few moments.

Tears flow down her face as if sourced from a large aqueduct. Taking your ring, she kisses your hand. She nods and gives you her answer.

stream

?!

"I will wait for you until that day comes and then we will be married."

Happiness washes over you like an Indian summer. You watch her go into the house and out of sight.

It's now time for your part of the deal. Your heart continues to flutter as you make your way back to your post-war home.

Your destination for the oncoming years is your plot in the cemetery. You will rebury yourself in the grounds and stay there until your fiancée is buried alongside you.

Arriving in the grave, you pull the dirt over yourself, and close your eyes. You have a smile on your lips as you wait for the years to pass until you find eternal happiness with your soul mate.

?!  
or foot?  
in feet?  
fly?  
What?  
He's dead?  
Where is she?  
= real?  
angel?

Oh!

CHANGE P.O.V.  
Cut down on figurative language and choose more powerful w  
The premise holds promise  
Don't show your cards too soon.  
Where was she coming from? Did she expect him?  
Reminds me of "The Monkey's Paw" by W.W. Jacobs.

# Jean's Comments

## SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB

As you ~~sit outside your lover's house~~, a single rose rests beside you, and a poem is clutched in your right hand. You feel anxious for her to arrive home. With the other hand in your pocket, grasping ~~on to~~ the engagement ring, you hope ~~that it~~ will secure the love and commitment for your future together.

Sweat drips down your forehead in steady beads, as if you were a plump man standing next to a bakery oven on a summer afternoon. You look to her yard and see it's ~~spacious~~ but seems more angular due to the many Oak trees ~~that line~~ its edges, displaying their leaves' mural of fall colors.

You are scared about changing your relationship, but you do not know what else to do with your new lease on life after the war. You feel that no one else will love you the way she does. However, she tells you that it's as if something inside of you died on the battlefield and is incapable of resurrection.

While you take out a cigarette, your thoughts ~~stop~~ and dwell on the full moon's intimidating presence. The night holds the smell of burning Christmas trees, while the street lights illuminate a hellish reflection like the color of dried blood in the moonlight.

The smoke does little to calm ~~the~~ your nerves as the motion of blowing leaves makes the violent and erratic patterns like those of rats in a rodent trap, fighting over their last meal.

You continue to ask yourself how to approach the proposal. What will you tell her about your true feelings? How will you phrase the words?

When he finally sees her, he doesn't speak. Only she does.

Is he in the house in a car on the porch?

He does a sharp cut no can't miss physical like cigarettes and rings? He can sweet rings?

upon and reading line doesn't make sense if he's dead how do they talk?

maybe use a comparison of war rather than rats

spacious that

lining

huh?

**SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB**

Bad memories continue to distort the bliss in your mind, like a shattered reflection. It's as if you see yourself in a broken mirror during a lightning storm.

You think about the time, just before you ~~went away~~ <sup>left or were deployed</sup>, when you gave her a gold bracelet for her birthday that was originally meant for your mom. She ~~felt that~~ <sup>thought</sup> you had forgotten her special day, but you assured her ~~that~~ you hadn't, yet you didn't have enough money for another bracelet for her. You ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> never rich, but you did put her first, and you wanted her to know that.

These disagreements might make her decline your plans for marriage. If she does not accept the proposal it would mean heartbreak for all of eternity. The future with her might hold only emptiness after tonight— if there is a future, at all.

~~Remembering~~ The day your bus drove you away for the war, she stood ~~there~~ crying and quite solemn. Your lover ~~then~~ blew a final kiss, before ~~going~~ <sup>disappearing</sup> out of sight for a year, and that is the sole reason ~~that~~ you made it back home— that one kiss ~~that~~ meant so much.

Despite these memories and the present sweet sentiments, what if your love rejects you? What if she laughs at your poem? She would not do that, would she? This love of yours would not be that insincere. How long have you known her?

It is then that you wonder if this is already a dead proposal. The question is not so much if you love her, but does she love you still? That is the right question to be asking. Does she still love you after all <sup>you</sup> the both of you have been through?

At that final thought, up pulls the Cadillac, your love inside. Your unpleasant thoughts still seem to bounce around in your head, like white blood cells running away from a recursive virus.

You take a step towards the vehicle, then another. You are darkened by the night, so she does not see you. It's time to see if your hearts still beat in tune.

Good tension. I want to know what her response will be.

**SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB**

She gets out of the car and her blonde hair ~~starts~~ <sup>starts</sup> to blow in the wind, giving her the appearance of a flying angel.

Your hopeful wife sees you and gives a smile. You continue walking to her. You still do not know what to say; your bleeding heart is stuck in your throat.

At arm's length from her now, you ~~look~~ <sup>look</sup> at your love while holding onto the rose and the poem. She ~~looks back~~ <sup>looks back</sup> at your sudden awkwardness, waiting for your reply. } This is her only reaction to seeing a ghost?

You do not say anything as you take the engagement ring out of your pocket. You hold it in front of her. She says nothing. Absolute silence passes for a few moments.

Tears flow down her face as if sourced from a large aqueduct. Taking your ring, she kisses your hand. She nods and gives you her answer.

"I will wait for you until that day comes and then we will be married."

Happiness washes over you like an Indian summer. You ~~watch her~~ <sup>she goes</sup> go into the house and out of sight.

~~It's now time for your part of the deal.~~ <sup>It's now time for your part of the deal.</sup> Your heart continues to flutter as you make your way back to your post-war home.

Your destination for the oncoming years is your plot in the cemetery. You will rebury yourself in the grounds and stay there until your fiancée is buried alongside you.

Arriving in the grave, you ~~put~~ <sup>replace</sup> the dirt over ~~yourself~~ <sup>your coffin</sup>, and close your eyes. You have a smile on your lips as you wait for the years to pass until you find eternal happiness with your soul mate.

- Isn't it he who is waiting for her? Not the other way around?

} So is he a corpse, a ghost?

Very sad and emotional story with good tension & character development. There are some inconsistencies & I think you can make the lead up to the "big reveal" more clever. I purposefully went back and read it again to see what I might have missed but I only found a couple.

Can the dead smell, smoke, hold a ring?

**SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB**

*Dave*

*This type of mis-direction story has been done before. If it's done with good technique and feeling, it always brings out the emotional impact the writer is looking for. Here, we have the war victim looking for some solace from his girlfriend. She is the only reason he carried on, to find her and have a life of happiness. Of course, he's been killed and we have to assume that the girlfriend is devastated. This story is only too often repeated in real life and is always sad.*

*That said, I think this story goes too quickly from point A to point B. He's waiting. She shows up. The reveal, and the end.*

*There's so much more that could have gone into the story to make the impact, perhaps, a little unusual. First of all, I understand the nature of the story, but I don't understand the ending. Was he able to communicate with her somehow? Did she take the ring knowing that he was standing there? Then she went inside, implying she'd wait for him until she died and they'd be buried together, side by side in the future?*

*The ending isn't fair to the reader. If the guy is dead and the lady still lives and grieves, she can't acknowledge his presence in real life. Check out movie THE SIXTH SENSE. In that movie, the very clever presentation of communication between the living vs. dead worked because we never realize one is a ghost until the end. I went to see it twice to see if they really didn't make real contact. It was true and they pulled it off. Here, you're expecting the reader to believe there's real contact, but with a dead guy. If that's the case, her reaction would be much different than described here. There's just so much suspension of dis-belief we're capable of.*

*I don't want to write your story, but there are many ways to allow the reader to think the dead guy is really proposing to his girlfriend without her actually physically accepting a ring or acknowledging his presence. Maybe have her wearing the ring from an earlier episode, or from before he left for war.*

*Again, the sadness in a situation is the motor that drives this kind of story. If you can add to the structure, you will have a valuable addition to literature.*

*Good luck*

*Dave*

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You continue to ask yourself how to approach the proposal. What will you tell her about your true feelings? How will you phrase the words?

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You think about the time, just before you went away, when you gave her a gold bracelet for her birthday that was originally meant for your mom. She felt that you had forgotten her special day, but you assured her that you hadn't, yet you didn't have enough money for another bracelet for her. You're never rich, but you did put her first, and you wanted her to know that.

**SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB**

These disagreements might make her decline your plans for marriage. If she does not accept the proposal it would mean heartbreak for all of eternity. The future with *(out)* her might hold only emptiness after tonight— if there is a future, at all.

Remembering the day your bus drove you away for the war, she stood there crying and quite solemn. Your lover then blew a final kiss, before going out of sight for a year, and that is the sole reason that you made it back home— that one kiss that meant so much.

Despite these memories and the present sweet sentiments, what if your love rejects you? What if she laughs at your poem? She would not do that, would she? This love of yours would not be that insincere. How long have you known her?

It is then that you wonder if this is already a dead proposal. The question is not so much if you love her, but does she love you still? That is the right question to be asking. Does she still love you after all the both of you have been through?

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*From this point onward, I don't understand the actions.*

**SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB**

Your hopeful wife sees you and gives a smile. *(Does she really see you?)* You continue walking to her. You still do not know what to say; your **bleeding heart** *(bleeding heart has a different connotation.)* is stuck in your throat.

At arm's length from her now, you look at your love while holding onto the rose and the poem. **She looks back at your sudden awkwardness, waiting for your reply.** *(Again, I don't understand. Does she see you? Aren't you dead? Is there something supernatural going on? If it is, it needs to be explained.)*

You do not say anything as you take the engagement ring out of your pocket. You hold it in front of her. She says nothing. Absolute silence passes for a few moments.

Tears flow down her face [~~as if sourced from a large aqueduct~~] ~~delete~~. **Taking your ring, she kisses your hand. She nods and gives you her answer.** *(Not fair to the reader. You're suggesting reality here, yet that's not the case. It can't be both ways)*

**"I will wait for you until that day comes and then we will be married."** *(Who says this?)*

Happiness washes over you like an Indian summer. You watch her go into the house and out of sight.

It's now time for your part of the deal. Your heart continues to flutter as you make your way back to your ~~post-war home.~~

~~Your destination for the oncoming years is your~~ **plot in the cemetery. You will rebury yourself in the grounds and stay there until your fiancée is buried alongside you.**

**Arriving in the grave, you pull the dirt over yourself, and close your eyes. You have a smile on your lips as you wait for the years to pass until you find eternal happiness with your soul mate. (Delete)**

SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB

take out the "inanimate"

Ed

As you sit outside your lover's house, a single rose rests beside you, and a poem is clutched in your right hand. You feel anxious for her to arrive home. With the other hand in your pocket, grasping onto the engagement ring, you hope that it will secure the love and commitment for your future together.

Sweat drips down your forehead in steady beads, as if you were a plump man standing next to a bakery oven on a summer afternoon. You look to her yard and see it's spacious but seems more angular due to the many oak trees that line its edges, displaying their leaves' mural of fall colors.

You are scared about changing your relationship, but you do not know what else to do with your new lease on life after the war. You feel that no one else will love you the way she does. However, she tells you that it's as if something inside of you died on the battlefield and is incapable of resurrection.

While you take out a cigarette, your thoughts stop and dwell on the full moon's intimidating presence. The night holds the smell of burning Christmas trees, while the street lights illuminate a hellish reflection like the color of dried blood in the moonlight.

The smoke does little to calm the nerves as the motion of blowing leaves makes the violent and erratic patterns like those of rats in a rodent trap, fighting over their last meal.

You continue to ask yourself how to approach the proposal. What will you tell her about your true feelings? How will you phrase the words?

- definitely a surprise!
- why 2nd person? why not "he...?"
- does he know he's not alive?

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You think about the time, just before you went away, when you gave her a gold bracelet for her birthday, <sup>It</sup> that was originally meant for your mom. She felt that you had forgotten her special day, but you assured her that you hadn't, <sup>✓</sup> yet you didn't have enough money for another bracelet for her. You're <sup>tenxcs</sup> never rich, but you did put her first, and you wanted her to know that.

These disagreements might make her decline your plans for marriage. If she <sup>did</sup> does not accept the proposal, <sup>(i)</sup> it would mean heartbreak for all of eternity. The future with her might hold only emptiness after tonight— if there is a future, at all.

~~Remembering~~<sup>to?</sup> the day your bus drove you away for the war, she stood there crying and quite solemn. Your lover then blew a final kiss, before going out of sight for a year, and that is the sole reason that you made it back home— that one kiss that meant so much.

Despite these memories and the present sweet sentiments, what if your love rejects you? What if she laughs at your poem? She would not do that, would she? This love of yours would not be that insincere. How long have you known her?

It is then that you wonder if this is already a dead proposal. The question is not so much if you love her, but does she love you still? That is the right question to be asking. Does she still love you after all <sup>that</sup> the both of you have been through?

At that final thought, up pulls the Cadillac, your love inside. Your unpleasant thoughts still seem to bounce around in your head, <sup>[</sup> like white blood cells running away from a recursive virus. <sup>)] mood killer</sup>

You take a step towards the vehicle, then another. You are <sup>(darkened)</sup> darkened by the night, so she does not see you. It's time to see if your hearts still beat in tune.

**SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL? BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB**

She gets out of the car and her blonde hair starts to blow in the wind, giving her the appearance of a flying angel.

Your [hopeful wife] sees you and gives a smile. You continue walking to her. You still do not know what to say; your bleeding heart is stuck in your throat.

At arm's length from her now, you look at your love while holding onto the rose and the poem. She looks back at your sudden awkwardness, waiting for your reply.

You do not say anything as you take the engagement ring out of your pocket. You hold it in front of her. She says nothing. Absolute silence passes for a few moments.

Tears flow down her face as if ~~sourced~~ from a large aqueduct. Taking your ring, she kisses your hand. She nods and gives you her answer.

"I will wait for you until that day comes and then we will be married."

Happiness washes over you like an Indian summer. You watch her go into the house and out of sight.

It's now time for your part of the deal. Your heart continues to flutter as you make your way back to your post-war home.

Your destination for the ~~on~~coming years is your plot in the cemetery. You will rebury yourself in the grounds and stay there until your fiancée is buried alongside you.

Arriving in the grave, you pull the dirt over yourself, and close your eyes. You have a smile on your lips as you wait for the years to pass until you find eternal happiness with your soul mate.

*—so, does she actually see him? he's tangible?*

Susan

SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: *AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL?* BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB

- ① 1st or 3rd person
- ② follow the rules

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Comment [s1]: My first instinct is to change this to first person. "As I sit outside my lover's house..."

Sweat drips down your forehead in steady beads, as if you were a plump man standing next to a bakery oven on a summer afternoon. You look to her yard and see it's spacious but seems more angular due to the many ~~Oak-oak~~ trees that line its edges, displaying their leaves' mural of fall colors.

You are scared about changing your relationship, but you do not know what else to do with your new lease on life after the war. ~~You feel that~~ No one else will love you the way she does. However, she tells you that it's as if something inside of you died on the battlefield and is incapable of resurrection.

good when re-reading!

Comment [s2]: Telling. Have him thinking instead.

While you take out a cigarette, your thoughts stop and dwell on the full moon's intimidating presence. The night holds the smell of burning Christmas trees, while the street lights illuminate a hellish reflection like the color of dried blood in the moonlight.

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These disagreements might make her decline your plans for marriage. If she **does** **not** **do** **esn't** accept the proposal, it would mean heartbreak for all of eternity. The future with her might hold only emptiness after tonight— if there is a future, at all.

again, interesting to read these hints when re-reading

~~Remembering~~ the day your bus drove you away for the war, she stood there crying and quite solemn. Your lover then blew a final kiss, before going out of sight for a year, and that is the sole reason that you made it back home— that one kiss that meant so much.

Despite these memories and the present sweet sentiments, what if your lover **r** rejects you? What if she laughs at your poem? ~~She would not do that, would she?~~ This love of yours would not be that insincere. How long have you known her?

It is then that you wonder if this is already a dead proposal. The question is not so much if you love her, but does she love you **still**? That is the right question to be asking. Does she **still** love you after all the both of you have been through?

Comment [s3]: Too formal, I think.

At that final thought, up pulls the Cadillac, your love inside. Your unpleasant thoughts still seem to bounce around in your head, like white blood cells running away from a recursive virus.

You take a step towards the vehicle, then another. You are darkened by the night, so she does not see you. It's time to see if your heart **still** beat in tune.

watch usage

**SHORT STORY IN ITS ENTIRETY: *AN INANIMATE PROPOSAL?* BY NICHOLAS GREGORY SCHWAB**

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Clever story. I think you need to make the story more immediate. Don't tell the reader what he/she is doing or feeling; change the story to first person and go from there.

**Comment [s4]:** Be less obvious about the destination until you are actually there.