



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 11, 2012

The Vow: A Story About Love and Second Chances

Paige (Rachel McAdams) and Leo (Channing Tatum) are madly in love and truly happy with one another. For Leo it was love at first sight. The minute he saw Paige for the first time, he felt compelled to ask her on a date. The awkwardness of that first encounter is realistic and will be sure to bring a smile to the faces of all moviegoers who remember the crippling fear that comprises a first encounter with one for whom he or she develops an attraction. Nonetheless Paige agrees, and she and Leo eventually get married and appear poised to live out their lives in complete wedded bliss.



That is, until a terrible car accident shakes the very foundations of their love. Paige is thrown through the windshield of the vehicle, causing brain trauma that forces doctors to keep her in a coma until they feel it is safe to bring her out. When she is finally transitioned out of her coma, Leo is heartbroken to learn that his wife no longer remembers him. In fact, Paige does not remember any of the recent years in her life — her life as Leo's wife, or as an independent artist who severed ties with her family.

But she does remember her earlier life, when she and her family were close to one another, when she was in law school — and when she was engaged to another man. She has feelings for her former fiancé, Jeremy (Scott Speedman), since she remembers her love for him only. She visits Jeremy at his office, where they share a kiss. Jeremy, who is clearly not a gentleman, tells Leo about their encounter, only to antagonize him. The two argue in a cutting exchange where Jeremy threatens to take advantage of Paige's condition by sleeping with her.

And though Leo has all the proof in the world that he and Paige had a life together, it is not enough to unlock the door to Paige's mind where those memories are stored.

When Leo realizes that his wife may never remember him, he adheres to more drastic measures. He decides he has to make his wife fall in love with him all over again. That task is not an easy one, however, as Paige sets up a wall between herself and Leo. And while Paige recognizes that Leo loves her deeply, she cannot bring herself to love him back.

The trauma that engulfs Paige's life is not entirely negative, however. There is some consolation in the fact that Paige's family returns to her life as a result of the ordeal. And while there is still much to be addressed in that familial relationship, it appears they are poised for a full reconciliation.

But unfortunately for Leo, it seems all the odds are against him. Paige's family, so consumed with uniting their own family, pushes Leo away. Likewise, it is hard enough for Leo to make Paige fall in love with him again without the presence of another man in Paige's heart. And as Leo works on his marriage, the rest of his life begins to fall apart. His business suffers, and bills begin to go unpaid. What's worse is that Paige's father, selfishly thinking of his own needs, offers to make Leo's financial problems disappear, but only if Leo is willing to divorce Paige.



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The real-life story on which the film is based is a truly inspiring one. Kim and Krickitt Carpenter were only married for 10 weeks when an accident robbed Krickitt of the last 18 months of her memories. The real-life couple worked for three years on rebuilding their relationship and eventually renewed their vows in a second ceremony. "You make a promise before God with your wedding vows," Krickitt said. "You have to take that seriously." The couple that inspired the story are Christians, and they worked on their marriage in the most extreme ways in order to stay true to their vows. Unfortunately, however, the Christian element that motivated the couple in the real-life story does not appear in the movie version, and Hollywood tampered with the story in other ways too.

But even without directly stating it, Christian morals are still at play. The notion that marital vows are not to be taken lightly pervades the entire film. The concept of love as spoken about in Corinthians is entirely evident. And the necessity for forgiveness is at play. For these reasons, *The Vow* is a beautiful exploration of love and all it entails. It does not pretend that love is always peachy, and even depicts the effects that adultery can have on a loving relationship. But it also highlights the beauty of forgiveness. And most importantly perhaps, it underscores just how sacred marital vows are. It highlights exactly what "for better or for worse" truly means.

As usual, Rachel McAdams is her charming, endearing self. She is lovable, and aptly captures the emotions of what it must have been like to be Krickitt Carpenter. Similarly, Channing Tatum is inspiring as the eager and doting husband, who is willing to do whatever it takes for his wife's happiness. In fact, most would argue that Tatum stole the show. He really discovered a depth to his acting abilities that audiences have not seen until this film. The two have a definite chemistry on screen.

The film very beautifully shifts between present and past, helping to paint a picture for audiences of the beauty of Paige and Leo's journey leading up to the accident.

The director also does a wonderful job of creating a romantic ambience with scenery, featuring snowy Chicago streets, Lake Michigan, and in general some very elegant scenes.



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