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A

Octavian Fînaru

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Octavian Fînaru

A

a letter-novel

*To the one who stood by me,
with all my love and eternal longing!*

*Every event mentioned in this book that might resemble the
reader's own memories, is a coincidence, or not. Anyone who
recognises their own self in this book or perhaps something
that they themselves experienced, must keep on reading.*

There is even more to come...

Octavian Fînaru

PROLOGUE
This is how the story begins

Dear A,

I am glad I am in your hands. I have confined myself to the most isolated place on earth. I am in the middle of the ocean, surrounded by nothing but water. Anywhere the eyes of my destiny can see, the line of the horizon looks calm and circles me in from afar.

I can feel the wind and the silence intensifying my memories of you, making me relive them again and again and again.. I needed this.

It's been a while since I last saw you. Although we've been apart, I have always kept you in my heart. I hope I haven't become a stranger to you either. I often ask myself if you are well. Today I am writing you ...not to upset you, but because I feel you have a right to know. I am praying and hoping you would read this letter when you receive it.

I am writing to you because I need to say "thank you". I need to share with you things I've just found out on this journey. I need you to keep reading my letter no matter how painful it might get at times. And there will be chaos. I tried to make sense of my thoughts as much as I could. I've been writing them down for a long time. My moods swung from lack of understanding to revelation, from pain to clarity. I would like you to keep reading till the end, please, for the sake of all the beautiful moments we lived together.

There was a time when I thought I would not be able to go on living without you. I came on this boat of memories and surrounded myself with nothing but water. This was the only place that felt calm and quiet enough for my memories of you to come back to life. And they did, with such intensity that they almost felt real. I refused to follow

any other path that opened to me. I missed many sunrises as I could only remember the ones I watched with you. I stopped smiling because I could only think of the times we smiled together.

I made mistakes. I was confused. And I regret that I didn't understand any of this earlier. But everything I felt was screaming for your presence, especially in the first days ...first weeks... Every morning I woke up, my pillow was soaked in tears, tears I'd shed at night, trying to sleep. All those hours when I couldn't sleep felt like an eternity, that was the extent of the pain I was feeling. And only when my eyes were tired with crying, my eyelids would finally close, as if in an attempt to protect themselves from so much pain. Or maybe that was simply nature's call for rest or my body finally giving up.

But you were still there, present in my dreams. In the morning, I would wake up with another sigh, feeling I was slowly dying from exhaustion, sadness and pain. Honestly, it felt horrible. I couldn't eat. I couldn't be around people. So I isolated myself in the middle of the ocean as I always thought I would do if I ever suffered as

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much as some of my characters did. I lost weight, I got sick, I went through all possible phases, from 'how could this be possible' to 'this is why it's happened'. Although the pain hasn't gone away, at least I can breathe now and have enough clarity to be able to write to you.

I wonder... What will you feel when you get to read these pages? What feelings will rise in your heart? Nostalgia? Hatred? Joy? Will you find it hard to believe that I have not forgotten you? Inappropriate that I tried to ? I can only hope that you will not read this with a cold heart. The pain and sadness can diminish, you taught me that. And happiness is what we all long for, from our first breath to the last. But if my letter makes you feel nothing, then the pain I caused you must have been far more intense than any of the happy moments we lived together. So, A, please, read on!

In this letter you will find everything I feel you need to know. If you decide to go on with your life without reading this letter, I would be terribly sad. Please, stay with me among the words I have written, between the lines on these pages. Only you can bring them to life. And it feels

somehow like you've already done that, before I have even started.

This letter is, before anything else, our story wrapped up into words. This is not a strategy to get you back. You know my intentions by now. You know me. These words are totally honest, and come straight from my heart. Perhaps you don't understand how you could mean so much to me. Perhaps you will discover some amazing things in these pages. Whatever the result, I know that deep down inside you know that I am telling the truth. Please take my words as they are.

All the moments we shared together brought us so much joy. I am aware that in a few pages from now, the painful moments will also come out. I choose to live them all one more time. I put them in this letter because I believe it is important for you to know everything. Before you start reading, I would give anything to know how you remember me...how you remember us....

I remember the day I met you and what I read in your eyes: the hope that the journey we were about to start

was going to be beautiful. And I also remember how innocently you looked at me and told me you had not done much with your life until then.. I wanted to help you grow, fill that empty space, overcome that fear, help you find your purpose and then help you attain it. I wanted to be next to you all the way, to draw our path together. But I didn't manage to do that with grace. If I could turn back time and rewrite the last pages, I would. But life isn't like one of our books... I cannot change what is already written. I can only write new pages. Because, my darling A, I have never stopped thinking about you, not for one second. I have not abandoned you. It was excruciating to think that I was not what you needed and that I let you down. I am fascinated by the strength with which you stood back up. I admire your will to survive.

My darling A, getting back on track is a painful process and a huge task. I had to sink into isolation. Meditation was necessary, however, not enough. I had to regain the strength to write, and mainly the strength to write to you... When we were together you demanded that I told you the truth all the time and I did that religiously.

Even when I knew what I was going to say was not what you wanted to hear, I still spoke truthfully.

And I continued to do so, even when I knew what I was about to say would lead to destroying the image you had of me. I wanted us to be friends and for you to share every tear and every smile with me. I wanted you to tell me “everything that happened to you, when it happened”... Truth is not always what we expect it to be.

And still...

This letter is truth. But a truth that is warm, longing to be embraced by your heart. I know some things should stay locked inside our souls, unspoken and unwritten; perhaps sometimes to be remembered for a smile on our faces and nothing else... Now that we are apart I hope you will enjoy these pages, that you will be impressed and moved when you read my words, as much as I was when I laid them down on paper for you. Let them reach your heart.

For days and days it was impossible for me to even hold a pen. Today, I feel ready. I have drawn my own line in the horizon, all around my boat of solitude. I have surrounded myself with our memories. Every time we met, every message we sent to each other, every conversation we had, every joy we lived, every smile we smiled, every tear we cried, and all my thoughts of you; I spread them out on the white walls surrounding me to make sure I am not leaving something important out when the emotions would overwhelm me. And this is how I start this journey. I wish I could place myself in your hands until your next birthday. I hope the pain I've caused you will not cast a shadow over the following pages and that you would take my words into your heart while sipping a cup of Apple-Melissa or cranberry tea.

This letter is a "Forgive me!" cry. It is also a "Thank you!" feeling. Why and what for? I will let you discover...

Forgive me if my words might hurt you, but I couldn't face the irreversible passing of time with the regret of not having expressed myself at this point in my life. There are already enough regrets to come...

There was a day, right at the beginning, when you told me that somebody should do this, this thing I am about to start. That is why I believe this will be amazing for us both. Darling A, I may be a good writer. But you... you helped me reach perfection! And I refuse to accept that you only came into my life just to inspire me..

Octavian Fînaru

Chapter 1

The Arrival

I think about myself, the one I was before you came into my life. No one ever did the things you did to me. It seems amusing and difficult to understand how, all my life, ever since I was a child and went to kindergarten, and then all throughout the following years, I breathed without knowing you existed. Amusing, because I had no clue about what was going to happen. Difficult to understand, because now that you left, no matter how hard I try, nothing is like it was before. I stopped resisting, lying to myself or trying to forget, when the truth is, all I want is to keep it in my heart for ever. I am the most blessed man on earth and I will

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proudly carry all our memories with me for the rest of my life.

I trace our footprints, revisiting every moment we lived together... The words are excruciating. Breathing in and out our past is so painful it almost suffocates me...

Life brought you in my life just when I needed you most. Perfect timing! You, precious soul, are so lucky; you are always in your own presence. I wonder if the reason why I had you by my side for such short time was so that I would get to know what greatness feels like.

Fulfilment from the first lines. My past was crowded with joy and sadness, happy moments and despair. I lived happy days and new beginnings. More than I can count. When you came into my life, I was alone. Just me and a plenty of wild dreams, plus a gram of hope that I wasn't too keen to admit to or make use of, in any way.

We got in touch on October 30, at 10 am. When I first read your message I could find myself in your desperate call for ethics and integrity. With a calm

innocence, you tidily organised your thoughts into words. Out of the blue, your message startled me. I had to reply: "I could not help but being pleased to find something so rare nowadays: uniqueness and a critical mind. A grounded point of view and an objective contribution. Real potential for a career as an opinion influencer."

You smiled when you got my reply. You didn't quite see yourself in that light. You felt there was still a lot of room for improvement. Although you were pleased to get feedback from a writer, you couldn't foresee a successful career in writing for yourself. Having lived a little, I instinctively felt how special you were, right from the moment I met you.

Truth is, I felt more than that. I saw in you what I thought I would or could never have. All the ovations received, whispered or shouted out loud, could never fill the emptiness I felt when I would write. I was afraid I wasn't good enough, that I couldn't reveal my emotions between the pages, that I was incapable of describing them at a molecular level.

But here I am now, doing exactly that. I should be thankful to you and naturally, I would celebrate the success, hadn't I been so scared by the thought of... No, I refuse to accept that you came into my life just to be my muse!

"A, but there is a huge difference between 'normal' and 'common'. "

I find it so hard, my darling, to go back to our first days together, before we got to know each other. One thing is certain: I felt that you were... something else. I felt that you were different from all the chaos that surrounds us and steals our hope. I anticipated your noble expectations. Apart from the smile that your distant, yet close and magnetic beauty put on my face, deep down inside I was sad. I was not sure that the future would give you what you rightly deserved.

If I could live that time again, I would run to you in a heartbeat, to share every second of it. If I'd knew you were only a few kilometres away and so within my reach, I would not wait for three more weeks to go by in vain.

Do you know how special your smile makes you? I'm looking at it as I am writing to you right now. A photo of us both is right here, in front of me. It is my constant reminder of how lucky I was to meet you. But you already know that.

When I suggested we should meet you replied simply:

“ I'm smiling. “

My subtle suggestion came from my desire to meet you. That was the main reason behind it. I didn't see it coming. All I had was a phone number and a time we had both agreed on. I was sitting in an armchair in my bedroom at that late hour in the night, while my body was shivering with a yet unknown feeling, growing from the centre of my heart, spreading all over my body and beyond. I didn't know what was happening to me, nor why I felt sleepy. For a long while, I didn't understand. Up until now, when I turned back in time and connected the dots. A sensation beyond human understanding was telling me

silently that something extraordinary was about to happen in my life.

The morning looked different to me that day. I woke up full of enthusiasm and energy. I was torn between the desire to close this chapter of loneliness, uncertainty and chaos in my life and the comfortable feeling of relieving the “sweet dreams” of your words.

I don't remember very clearly everything I did that day before 5pm. It actually doesn't matter much because it all happened before us. But I remember I brought you candies.

Our little chat from the night before made me sleep with a smile on my face because I felt a new life opening ahead.

I couldn't stand the place I was in any more, and our words were the only thing that gave the world meaning in those days. We were frantically sending each other text messages, back and forth, in the gap created between my past life and the beauty unknown to me yet, an unknown that was pulling me towards you as if you were a magnet

that I could not and did not want to resist. I brought you chocolate candies. That was my first mistake, wasn't it?

I woke up in the morning and, for the first time in a long while, I felt certain a beautiful day was about to begin. I left home early as if I was getting ready for a big event. That wasn't my intention, nor had I any idea about what was going to happen. But something inside me, an unfamiliar impulse, was pointing me in the right direction. I walked into a not so crowded shop. There were lots of options on the shelves. I wanted to find something special though. I chose Belgian chocolates, the type that melt in your mouth and leave you elated for hours.

I arrived at the cafe an hour and a half earlier. I sat in the most comfortable chair, and all this time we were sending each other text messages frenetically, as if we were to crazy people on some kind of mission, working undercover. You texted you were close to the cafe. I went down the corridor leading to the men's room and kept texting you from there. You somehow knew I was going to hide. And that's when I realised you were completely wild, my darling. And I was so thrilled about that.

I got even more surprised in the following minutes. I could hear your high heels clatter on the marble floor. The sound was both hard and delicately elegant. From where I was hidden, I could observe you through the slight opening in the door. You put your handbag on the armchair next to you, where I had left my hoodie on purpose, for you to know which table I reserved. In a second, I scanned you from head to toe. You were tall and fragile, determined and elegant. I walked towards you. You turned around. I looked at you, smitten by your beauty. Your eyes were sparkling, your lips drew an elegant smile which came with a noble posture but also with warmth, which instantly made you approachable. You shook my hand with confidence and introduced yourself: your mother's caprice and your father's pride. I can still recall how much I enjoyed the way your name rolled out of your tongue and how your voice sounded.

I sat next to you and tried to find out as much as I could about you. Your whole being intrigued me. You seemed so complex and strong. I was listening fascinated to what you were saying, I wanted to know every thought you

had, every belief, no matter on what subject. I wished we had the whole cafe just for ourselves. And while I was talking to you, I was hoping for an occasion like that to arise soon. My wish came true shortly after, although with difficulty. Come to think of it, that was not the time we first met, for real. The destiny was on the side of the Gemini and the connection we had was about to make that happen for us.

"I need the right backing to get started."

"I want to be there for you."

Leaving the cafe, a somewhat chilly wind was blowing and I saw you were shaking. I touched your hand to check if you were cold and even though I didn't ask you anything, you looked into my eyes and said "yes, I am." I took your hand in my palms, holding it there for a few seconds protectively. Only for a few seconds, as we both felt that we were not there yet and the walk didn't allow us to hold hands either. Despite that, nothing stopped us from being for each other exactly what we needed to be in those moments.

“ The Ocean has plenty of drops.”

Now I understand that the silence you emerged from was in a strong contrast with what was being built in front of you. It was my responsibility to make this transition as smooth as possible. And I am glad you allowed me to be close to you in the days that came after that. Unfortunately I didn't do it fully or exquisitely. This thought upsets me a lot, and the guilt puts huge pressure on me. I am ashamed. I would like to hide away, even from my own self... It's not that I didn't do it till the end, but that I didn't do it enough. My darling, I feel I don't deserve the admiration , but still you gave it to me from your heart, with infinite kindness.

“ If I open my heart to you...” , and I, darling A, I broke it.

You will be an excellent writer. I know it. You want to become exquisite. You are a perfectionist. No one can understand you better than I do. But you must make perfection and optimism work hand in hand. Do not let despair win you over. I remember that evening when I told

you this. I had received some good news - of course, you were attracting them from everywhere into my life. Things were getting calmer. There was less stress. I remember our words:

“ (...) so I will be able to sleep tonight.”

“ Awww, I am so glad. You should take great advantage of this sleep.”

“ I feel like a child who was just given a toy. I am so excited, I cannot sleep now.”

“ Nooooo.!!!” Even your written words were giggling.

Everything came naturally between us. I was getting to know you and I liked what I saw, and now I miss the simplicity of those days, the beauty with which they went by. It was also then, at the beginning, that we spoke about immunity; the immunity we could achieve in our minds, in our souls; the ferocity with which we protect ourselves. You taught me how to get rid of stress and negative people. I thought I was in charge of this immunity, but only once

you left I truly earned it. You were right to say “immunity to negativity takes work.”

“When you think you’ve got it, something unexpected comes up just to show you that you still have a long way to go.”

“ So...should I believe that even you have a long way to go to master your own immunity fully? That means you are really sensitive.”

I now write from a place of despair, like you used to do, my darling. This was the fall-out in our story. The anticipation of how our story was going to end was right there, in our very first words. And now, with this letter, I am trying to make it sound less painful. The pain is already hard to bear as it is...

That night we studied together about manipulation, the sublime, semi-hypnosis, the history of advertising, photo messaging and the actual targets in manipulation. Our conclusion was that manipulation is a weapon we use more or less consciously and the control we have over it defines

our intelligence, as words are being used at a more elevated and profound level. “More or less consciously” have we ever manipulated each other, my darling?

“...those moments when you ask yourself what’s the good in sleeping...”

“exaaaactly!”

“but have you noticed that no one understands us?”

“yess... but it’s ok. You don’t always need other people’s understanding.”

Because you needed the right guidance, I felt I should do something to help you. So I waited for the sunrise and began preparing your surprise. You are such a Gemini!

I told you that I needed natural light and that raised your curiosity. In the evening, pleased with the outcome, I hoped I would make you smile and that you would be as excited as I was. I wasn’t yet aware of how

much you needed this. We kept texting trying to find a moment just for the two of us. I went to a restaurant nearby and ordered cranberry tea. Usually I sit on my own, away from anyone else, in a quiet corner, but this time I sat right in the middle of the restaurant. My eyes were glued to my phone's screen waiting for a green light from you. I wasn't paying attention to anything happening around me. Nearly two hours went by and then I got the sign I wanted from you. And totally oblivious, I drank my tea cold. The wait had been worthwhile.

I used to take long walks during the spring of our time together, not even I noticing that end of November's cold wind started to give you chills...

....It got dark and the only light I could see in the streets came from the cars passing by. There was no light on your quiet and somehow empty street. I waited patiently for you to come, few steps to the side, so that you could see me when you'd come out of your courtyard. And you came, all smiling, happier than any character in any fairy tale, ever; you walked towards me, almost floating. The moon poured down its cold white light on your face, a face that was giving me so much warmth.

I walked towards you and felt how we got closer to each other. You, to me. I, to you. The wave of your being was coming like a current towards me and I wasn't resisting it. I embraced the emotion you arose in me by simply being yourself and I surrendered to it fully. God, how precious you are!

Your hair framed your happy face, and while you moved closer to me, I could see a child's smile in your eyes. I gave you the red memory stick which was about to reveal the surprise I had prepared for you, and a bar of brittle pistachios, like an evening smile. You burst with happiness when you hugged me. Only a kind genuine soul can rejoice from small pleasures. Another thing we have in common. I took you in my arms. I waited for your embrace as I would wait for the most wonderful thing in the whole universe of fulfilled dreams. There was nothing that could make me quiver nor breathe more intensely than the happiness of our bond and the friendliness I found both in your heart and in your mind. You rested your head on my shoulder. You put your arms around me, and your hair caressed my face as the wind was blowing through it. I could hear your calm breath and felt I had finally made it home. I hid my face

in your beautifully wavy hair. It felt warm. I stayed like that for a few moments, then I looked into your eyes and you kissed my cheek tenderly and it felt like an explosion of sunlight all over my face. A few minutes spent with you filled my heart with tremendous happiness. That was by far one of the most beautiful evenings of my life.

Next day, we were supposed to meet again in the evening. Do you remember? Right from those first days, obstacles started to get in our way. A sense of fair-play and integrity determined you however, to make a firm decision. You were upset. I believe your only peace of mind in those moments came from the awareness that you did what was right. And I love you for that!

There was so much happiness in your eyes when you knew what we were about to do, but then you gave up. You had an exemplary upbringing. I respect how you chose to listen to your consciousness. In vain had I waited for hours and hours for you to come. I couldn't call you, but you knew I'd be there and that I'd be waiting for you till 6pm. Deep down in my heart I feared you might not come; but

that wasn't like you. On the other hand, I didn't know how to tell you that I would respect your choice.

But, because things happen as they are meant to, we put our cards on the table, with the warmest sincerity possible, the day we became forever friends. For me, that was when we met for the first time, really.

Indeed, things happen the way they are meant to. There were years in my life when I didn't believe that and I would rebel in my denial. But then came the days when I understood how true that saying is. It is so easy to say it now but back then, after you left, I refused to see it. "That's how it was meant to be..." How could I have said that to my broken heart?

"I often burn myself out."

"as long as you are ok with it, I will encourage you to keep going."

Anyhow, I've made some sacrifices for you, not to mention that compromise, which I still think was huge. But

I thought it was all worth it, for you to have a beautiful evening. Nothing seemed too much or too difficult. I felt like a rocket, so fast it all went, or so it seemed from my galloping rhythm. I attended the event, smiled, said 'hi' to people... Everybody looked so thrilled by what was happening around them. Obviously I was part of the game and went on with it. But now without you, it makes no sense. I felt too empty inside and decided to leave a few minutes later. I only hoped that you wouldn't be upset with how things worked out. I hoped you would have faith and would explain to me so I could understand all those things that I was uncertain about. I wanted you to know that I was there for you.

At home, I kept walking round and round my room incessantly. What was I to do? What was the appropriate thing to do in such a circumstance? And then suddenly I remembered your smile the night before and that cheered me up in an instant.

You deserved the best, so I chose honesty. I chose the truth. I could feel the burden on my chest. I had to tell you everything I had on my mind, otherwise I would have

exploded. I didn't quite know what I should say. I was sorry that everything I had prepared hadn't really come out as planned, but more than that I regretted that you got sad. You were not to blame. Your only blame was that you were standing your ground. We were both between the hammer and the sickle. But you wouldn't have breathed in all that sadness if I hadn't started the whole thing. I need you to know that I did all that I could and despite that, I was still convinced I was guilty. In those last days you gave me great positive energy. I could see that in the pages I wrote in my book. But that evening... I really missed your smile...so much.

It had gone dark and I was sitting in my balcony looking at the trees being covered by the first snow drops. It was past midnight and from far away, from behind the tall buildings in front of me I could hear the fireworks. I couldn't see their colourful light but they wouldn't have brought me much joy in those moments anyway. The wind was blowing a gentle cold breeze through the opened window. The wind and some people randomly passing by were the only signs reminding me that time hadn't stood still. An hour had gone by and I startled when, looking in the depth of the sky, I anticipated your reply:

“ I am in such a bad, negative cloud, I can't find the appropriate words to begin with (...)”

Both of us, A, like two children, victims of daily routine, made a commitment to be honest to each other. Then I understood what you can and what you can't take from the people around you. Your words gave you strength, and at the same time, showed me how human you really are. You seemed unreal, as if you had come out of a fairytale, but my heart wouldn't have been so full of joy hadn't you been real. We both calmed down and slept a good night's sleep, something we hadn't expected at all that day.

“I am sending you a smiley face, as you are the one responsible for it this evening :)”

As we didn't keep in touch that day, just half an hour before we met, you wanted a confirmation that I will be there:

“We're still meeting, right? :)”

I remember our first meeting; how the air quivered when you arrived. I was eager to meet you. I felt you were getting closer and I froze instantly. My heart felt a tremor like never before, not even when I was still alive. Your steps... The sound of your high heels seemed as though you were knocking at the door of my senses to let me know I must let you in without any doubt. And you appeared in all your splendour, introducing yourself so naturally, with a smile. Your elegance, your stature, your natural look, YOU - entirely - entered my world. Your good manners, your openness towards me - a man longing for you. Your straight posture, your dignity and shyness when you stretched out your hand towards me. Your confidence and your shiver when you smiled gently at me. It was like an anticipation of the end of our story; the musicality in our words and the euphoria of those feelings we openly had for each other. You filled all the emptiness in me the very first time our eyes met. Your firm yet kind voice made me feel in a second like we've known each other for too long. You are unique, you are love with all that warmth that surrounds you. And when you saw me like this, complete, you gave me a smile to help me breathe again. I understood and accepted the gift of life. But then you made me ill. And you had only

started to cure me with your love. There is no science or force that can prove the miracle of your being, the greatness you filled me with; you, my precious thing!

But you unveiled yourself to, your whole life... I did know you, stranger! You make me happy, just like this ... The tear in my eye was brave enough not to roll down my face with shivers in my throat... leaving us both totally speechless, until we both burt into tears. You are pure love, my bright happiness. You are fulfilment at first sight! You and me, by the fireplace of time standing still, kept looking into each other's eyes, mesmerised, for what felt like an eternity! I had tasted life. I got my hope back. You turned me into something impossible to reverse, in something better. And it felt good!

Your loyalty drew you close to me. Like a snowflake, you lightly touched my life, and I knew immediately how special you were. You, the strong one, saw beyond my attempt to protect you; you found shelter in me, which somehow made you feel strange. You hardly took a few steps on this planet, but you got to see how rare correctness, verticality and objectivity are. I was on your side, kind soul.

Can you see now why I feel so lifeless? Destiny brought my way the most wonderful thing in the world and entrusted it to me. But I let you down.

Impatient to see you, I arrived almost an hour ahead of you and found us a private space: a table with two comfortable couches facing each other. I had lots of news to give you and was full of hope. I wanted you to understand what my intentions were exactly. Although I suspected you were not well, I understood what you had really gone through only once you told me. So many dots connected in those moments and everything started to make sense.

You are like a strong wind which caresses with its breeze. Determined yet soft. Imposing, yet calm. Powerful, then sensitive and then again, powerful. Most people would give up as soon as they encounter an obstacle. But not you!. No matter what happens you just don't give up. You keep going. You give everything it takes. And this makes you extraordinary. My darling, don't give up on me!

I have to admit, I was quite sceptical before I met you. I wouldn't want to raise my hopes up without a good

reason, but our meeting was so real and uplifting that I was immediately convinced you were special. Unique. Unique, not only because of the tipsy doctor who wonderfully misspelled a letter in your name. It sounds more beautiful with an 'e'. :) Your whole being overflowing with love, wisdom and honesty... Oh, the harmony we had in those days and we now lost!

I wanted to make your month more beautiful and in exchange for the immensity of colour you brought into my life, to give you at least a fraction of it back. In the past few days I had tossed that idea in my head. When I shared with you what I had in mind, your great enthusiasm brought in me a peace that I had not lived since youth, an age that seemed then remote and long gone. We made plans together. We were in awe at how alike we were. I will never forget, my darling, how we were not laughing, but breathing happiness in and out.

“Indeed you are a Gemini, head to toe!” :)

Our smiles were making their way to our lungs, and we were inhaling the energy born in that small space

between us. What was that all about, when you were apologising for being grumpy? Oh, A, you are the most beautiful thing that has ever happened to me!

“ summer is my ‘special thing’ “

Before taking a picture of that moment, of our smiles, I pulled out from under the table a small present I had for you. The cure for loneliness was hiding inside.

That’s what I would have liked it to be anyway. I wanted it to bring you joy, the kind of joy that was only for you, a small haven in which your smile would live forever. I was aware I couldn’t be next to you every second. And so I wanted it to be with you all the time, the soft haven that you could take home with you and which you could hold in your arms in the evening, while in bed, falling asleep. I gave you a Panda teddy bear as my present and you stretched out both arms towards it. A cute Dalmatian with a red bow was coming towards you and I was moved watching you hold it in your arms with tears in your eyes. They weren’t tears of sadness. On the contrary, they were a sign of the happiness you felt in that moment and which

was pouring down, like rain, into my heart. I didn't manage to hide my tears either. I watched you and filled with joy I thought "God, how beautiful you are!"

I often ask myself if you still have it, if you still look at it from time to time and if it reminds you of me. I wonder what feelings it brings in you.

"My cheeks hurt!"

It was a perfect day. I wish I wrote more about it, everything I can remember. But I believe that was a day we should cherish in our hearts. Unspoken and unwritten of. I would like to live in that state of well-being for ever. It stemmed out of the joy of seeing our own self in each other, in a time when you needed me and I needed you.

It's an unique feeling and I believe us, humans, would live hundreds of years if we could breathe in every morning, if only for a minute, this comfort. Fulfilment. Acceptance. Being at peace with whatever it is to come, no matter how difficult or bad. We had each other. We could rely on the immense friendship which had grown between us in those last days. That was when our vow was born. It took

a little longer for us to put words into it. My darling, that was the most beautiful thing anyone has ever said to me. You showed me how much you cared...

I was in a wild mood to live life at its fullest. I felt that the miracle I had asked for was right in front of my eyes. I felt good inside, as if I had been born a second time. I took your hand and we let ourselves go with the flow. We both felt happy, heard the voice that spoke through our eyes and we both knew that wonderful things were going to happen as long as we would be together.

In the evening, I took you home, up to your gate, and before you held me in your arms, I looked at you, overwhelmed by the beauty of those moments we spent together. I saw once again how the moon poured its cold light down on your warm face which smiled with fulfilment, exactly like mine.

I had the most beautiful and sincere feelings for you and had no doubt that that was the time for me to declare: "finally". Finally, we met and from then on, I would not be on my own. The intricate life full of challenges I had chosen

had brought me and was going to still bring plenty of moments in which my heart would need support. Now I had it; after so many naïve hopes, I felt that I was not going to be alone anymore.

“I cannot remember what I dreamt, but I know it was beautiful.”

“if you woke up feeling good, what difference does it make if you remember it?”

This chapter in our story is called “hope”. Darling A, no matter what thoughts life might bring, you should know that hope is a good thing. I will tell you more about it because it gives me the strength to hold my pen in my hand this very moment.

“There is a big difference between ‘waiting’ and ‘wasting’ your life... “

The euphoria created by being together is, in absolute, without equal. The time of taking attitude had come. Everything felt easy and beautiful. You were my

pillar, my purpose, my support. My smile. Oh, how much I miss seeing you laugh!

It was close to St Nicholas' day in December. I embraced every occasion that created an opportunity to surprise you without me having to invent a reason for it. I remember you had to attend classes till 4pm and then we were supposed to meet. Ever since lunchtime, a hundred paths to happiness and plenty of pistachios were waiting for you by my side in a gift bag. The time spent with you was all that gave meaning to a whole day so I didn't mind waiting for you for hours. I was on the platform of the metro station close to where you live, where I knew you usually get off at. The wait was making me increasingly impatient. I kept checking my watch every few seconds. Time was passing by in slow motion. I saw trains stop at the station, on both sides of the platform. People would get on, others would get off, their life moved fast. I felt like I had turned into a pillar, or rather a chair, or any piece of furniture, for that matter, so little did I move. Every few minutes, I would stand up and walk up and down the platform from one end to the other. Up and down, up and down, up and down.

I felt I was in one of those frames you see in action movies, the kind in which one person stands still while everything moves around him at high speed. It was funny to think about the people in the surveillance room watching the station. They saw me, a kid, small gift bag in hand, waiting for the day to smile at him.

I had waited on many occasions throughout my youth. The last minutes before the agreed time were always the most difficult. 19, 18, 17. The countdown was getting close to zero. In that moment, if the phone wouldn't ring, I would totally freeze. My brain would start to panic and I would begin to imagine thousands of scenarios in my head. What if you forgot about our date? What if your phone ran out of battery? What if something else has came up? Should I call you? Should I wait for a few more minutes? ... Once the 15 minute of grace passed, phone in hand, my finger was hovering above your profile picture in the middle of the screen. I could call you instantly but I didn't touch it. I froze in that position. It is crazy, I know, and I am not afraid to admit it.

Beeeeep! Message from A.

And my eyes filled with disappointment, ...

Chapter 2

Loyalty

... because I wasn't able to give you the present on the right day. I knew that you would not expect to receive a gift from me. I knew it would make you smile. And I regretted missing that moment with you. Something had come up last minute. You couldn't call and we had to keep in touch via text messages. In fact, I was extremely grateful that you couldn't hear my voice at the time. Do you have any idea how difficult it is to talk when you feel like crying? Some strange sounds would awkwardly come out. It is the most difficult task ever. I didn't want you to know how upset I was, but you felt that anyway. Maybe it was obvious in my choice of words. Or maybe it was floating in the air. I don't

know, it might have been due to the bond we had created between us. Or perhaps nature sent the wind of the Gemini from where I stood on that platform which cocooned me during that time, all the way to where you were, a few kilometres away. You instinctively felt me.

“ hey, are you upset?”

“ no”, I said trying to fool myself.

But I didn't manage to fool you. I was being shown one more time that things happen as they are meant to. As always, I understood that much later. When I felt how smoothly you were trying to cheer me up and snap me out of my sadness, I convinced myself that I was fine. “ Do you trust me?” I asked you. You gave me the most meaningful answer ever.

“ I do. That's why I would like you to tell me about everything you go through, while you are going through it.. “

Oh, my God! My darling, are you reading right now the words you told me back then? That is the key to eternal friendship, the grounds to all relationships of any type, the

seed of wisdom, the dream every emotion aspires to, the tear in a smile, the faith we have in its absoluteness. This is the beginning.

This was the memory of our beginning, the first breath and the new life that started. It meant honesty, hope and love to me.

This is what brings us peace and supports everything. Just like "A" is the first letter in more than 30 letters, your words are birth and hope. The evolution of breathing and the feeling of growth. The present moment, the union between past and future. The undebatable logic of the essence of life, love and rebirth, a never-ending beginning. The tear in a smile, the joy in sadness. The reflex of childhood. The simplicity in voicing our desires. The surprise of a smile. The shelter for two people getting together. The absolute peace. Happiness thriving with life. The strength in fulfilment. And the birth of a dream.

I didn't feel stressed any more. I was happy. And I had to explain you my sadness. I avoided to mention I had a little bag full of beautiful things for you. You were going to get the present the following day, and you did. We met in the same pistachio place. And in the evening I made sure you

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smiled. I played a song for you. But the gift you gave us both was absolutely wonderful.

I closed my eyes. Letting the tears roll down my cheeks as they wished, I painted your face in my mind as I could imagine you in those moments. Although we were not physically next to each other.. somehow, we were. Do you understand what I mean?

I hope you felt the same way too. I will never forget that moment, like I will never forget anything that happened in our story, the most intense time in my life. I close my eyes now and wonder what your thoughts would be regarding “everything you are going through while you are going through it.” The words I am writing are rooted in this place, in the peace of our vow. Well, at that time it didn’t occur to me that “everything” could mean so much. However, it was equally impressive to see that your infinite soul, as valuable and full of beauty as it is, can be enraptured by the universe surrounding us, so I thought, who are we to judge others? :)

Do you know what I think loyalty is? Loyalty is the most beautiful thing someone gives you when they stand by you, to support you like a pillar. It is a haven of peacefulness,

faith, friendship, unconditional support and meaningfulness. Loyalty is courage, attitude, coolness, silence, and harmony. Now perhaps you don't understand me but there will come a warm day, when you will know what I meant by saying this. Look, the day has probably come already.

I still owe you a dreamlike evening... I promised I would tell you a few things from my past.

“ We are fighting.” :)

Drawn to you as if you were a magnet, we both laughed at the funny moment we had on the coach. Because it was not just date, I wanted to make sure your parents were informed and at peace with it. On the phone, your voice had sounded playful, happy, impatient, gently proud. You were a good actress!

I felt lucky, cherished and appreciated through the consent with which your parents entrusted you to me. Apart from the beautiful words you must have used when you talked to them about me, and apart from an image of me they got from your stories, these strangers who didn't even know what I look like gave me the responsibility of their most cherished soul

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in their lives. I am not taking all merits, of course. The faultless upbringing you received was so obvious, in every move you made, and it meant way more than just a reassurance of the faith your parents had in you.

It was a simple, yet complex evening. I believe that the honest things I told you were a bit much for you. They came too abruptly. But it didn't matter then. You were by my side and the melancholy, the past feelings and the bitter sweet memories had lost their power over me. We took a walk to a different place. We stayed - as much as the cold allowed us to - by the lake. A few lights reaching from a distance behind us contoured our shadows on the tired waves in front of us. The water shivered ever so slightly. It felt that it was our breathing that made the water move. We were alone on that huge land, away from any noise or crowd. We took some pictures. When I look at them now.. I don't know, I cannot see anything else, but how the cold and exhaustion were slowly getting to us.

I think we must be the only people who would take pictures in the dark only so they would have a memory of that moment. Oh, but look! I am just about see a shred of a smile

in the air surrounding us. Or is my memory playing tricks on me?

You created my psychological profile. How much fun I had when you started reading in my handwriting all sort of signs about my personality and my emotional state in those days. I would be tempted to believe you cheated a little, that you could also see inside my heart, but the conclusion you drew when you noticed how I place the dot on the 'i'...

[Sigh]

I still have that need. You told me you were the answer as my instinct had guessed right from the start. Until now, my gentle doll, no one could replace you.

This was the summer of our story, when you looked me in the eye and told me that you will be by my side and I won't be alone any longer: "I am a pillar!" We walked arm in arm all evening. I felt like a winner showing you to the world. I realised then that we wouldn't need big successes or achievements in our lives. We wouldn't need all our dreams fulfilled in order to be happy. I felt content with my life as it

was. I felt comfortable in my environment, totally accepting of everyone around me, only to be with you.

On our way back we came in a bus crammed with people. It was at that time of the evening when strangers start to share with others the experiences they had throughout the day. We weren't at all bothered by the voices we could hear in the background. After a great day, no matter how tired I am, I can only fall asleep if I watch a film or chat with someone until I get exhausted. That's what happened that night too. I only remember you told me that you wanted to read one of my books and that you felt like eating a cake with ice-cream. It was what we had planned to do on Saturday. This time in our story is called "Fulfilment".

The bus was shaking, making its way on the road full of potholes, and it made us little nervous. You had a window seat and I sat to your right, very close to you. You smiled at me, turned your head towards the window. You kept looking at the field to our left and with your eyes open, you started falling into a long awaited and well deserved sleep. After a few seconds, your eyelids covered your tired bright brown eyes, that I found electrifyingly shining. I wanted to tell everyone

around us to keep quiet so you can sleep well, but who would have listened to me?

As the minutes went by I noticed you were not at all disturbed by the noise or the bus shaking. You fell asleep, one hand resting on your handbag, the other, on my leg; I covered it with my hand as I was gently caressing you, trying to make your sleep better. You rested your head closer to me. I could have woken you up if I had moved, so I remained in the same position for a quarter of an hour. My left hand, my shoulder and back went numb. My body found the position painful, but my heart was laughing at this funny romantic moment. A curious and eager stranger had started talking to me. I wasn't paying much attention to him. I could feel your breath and was trying to hear it, the softest sound in all that loud noise around us.

You were a child, A, a curious happy child who had taken a bold step in a new world to discover a new life. You were ready to find out who you were and evolve from there onwards. You just wanted to have a beautiful life and do what you loved. This beginning reminds me of a baby, who is so tiny he needs to be protected all the time, every step along the way. It felt like you were a valuable piece of China antique.

You were asleep with your head on my shoulder. Nudged by my tumultuous past, having learnt my lesson of responsibility and danger awareness in this life, I felt the need to protect you and took on that role.

A few days earlier, I had asked you to stay with me forever. You needed me as much as I needed you. You stood by me all along our journey and infinitely more, beyond that, after the end. Or maybe I should better call it a break... My attempts to protect you were going to push you away from me abruptly and brutally. I removed my hand from yours and touched your cheek.

I didn't want to wake you up but I caressed your face for a few seconds and you startled slightly, in your sleep, without guessing what was going on around you or in my heart. I sat there. I often revisit that memory and let it enrapture me. No matter what I live in the present, the memory of that dreamlike moment makes me feel good instantly. It probably is the only memory of something I lived with you which is free of sadness. And when I open my eyes, I look at the sky, the atmosphere, the life around us, this earth we stand on, and where we experienced that beautiful moment.

I still cannot quite remember if I woke you up or if you felt my presence. You turned your head around and placed it in the palm of my hand. You rested it there while I was caressing your soft skin. Sweet Angel, you deserve all the great things this world has to give! In those moments it felt like we escaped the mundane, tired and busy world we're living in.

I couldn't wake you up not even when we arrived. I let you sleep until the very last minute, when we had to get off the bus. Then I touched your hand, woke you up and whispered in your ear:

“ Shall we get off?”

Did you think you only fell asleep for a few seconds? That would have meant we had travelled on a rocket home, right. :) Not a second after my question, you answered in a warm and sweet voice, with clear certainty, elegance and simplicity:

“ Yes.”

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How much I loved you then! For the happiness you gave me, for the feelings you brought in my soul, for your appearance in my life, and for the tears I had in my eyes when we got off that bus. I wiped it before I turned towards you. I knew if you saw me you would ask me what happened and I really didn't know what to tell you. I couldn't have answered "nothing". Who was I to fool?

"I smile the smile you put on my face, again. Good night!"

In the morning, I woke up a second before you called. I remember that perfectly well, ...

Chapter 3

Ecstasy

... because I got out of bed wondering what else could make the start of a day more beautiful than the sound of your voice. It was so soft, so delicate and musical in those first few moments when the day began. Just woken up, you sent me a smile, then we took a bit of time to ourselves and then went out to have the cake we both wanted to eat.

This time in our journey is called “Alive”. We talked enthusiastically about our immediate plans. We didn’t have time to waste. In the evening, I confined myself to a writers’ cafe that I always found peaceful and pleasant to work in. I

put everything on a piece of paper and started a project that had been waiting for quite a while to be written.

I had just spoken to you on the phone. Some minutes went by and I felt this strong desire in me, to hear your voice again. I called you under a childish pretext, but that worked between us. The flavour of those memories will never die.

Things came out differently from how I had planned them, I mean the part you knew. But there was something else which I can't bring myself to write here. Something that would have given you a bigger achievement than the happiness we were working on together was about to happen. I regret that by doing what I did, I couldn't create the right circumstance you needed for the acknowledgment you were waiting for. If it didn't come when you wanted it, it would come this time, because you really deserved it. This is a topic for a face to face discussion though.

"We'll kick ass!"

Time went by gracefully for us. One morning, when a volcano of energy erupted inside me, this positive state of mind created results. I could hardly wait. I could hardly wait for

you to see how I saw things and I could hardly wait for things to happen.

On the first days I met you, you said you were going to welcome every good thing coming your way. This is what really makes me sad, as I really meant it to be good for you. Maybe I didn't succeed, but once the pain diminished, I started to work on it every day.

I got so attached to you, to us, to our dream that it suddenly scared me. My life had changed radically. It had been a full year. When it began I couldn't foresee that the destiny would smile at me, with such vibration, just by meeting you. I went through all possible feelings, from happiness to disappointment, like a victim in the absurd game of chance, from tranquility to stress. I experienced all stages, from success and glory to the despair of loneliness. You came like a shard of light. You removed me from the foggy universe and placed me with my feet on the ground. You lifted me up from the low place where I was wasting my hope. You took me to the highest point in the sky, coloured my dreams above the clouds. I don't know if you did that because you felt I needed that and knew that you could be my pillar of strength. Or

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maybe it came so naturally to you, so simply - to light a spark and give life, to smile at people around you.

Yes, I was afraid. I asked you to never to disappear. You caressed me with a kind smile, showing me how childish I was to speak like that. Becoming incapable, not to hope but to want to hope, would have meant complete disintegration for me.

I like to think of you as if you were a playful molecule of nature surrounded only by beautiful things and to believe that your life follows its smooth course in this energetic nucleus of wellbeing. I imagine I see you walk in the streets, coming towards me; then I see you in your room, reading a book, writing, walking on a beach wearing a hat and sunglasses, protecting yourself from sunlight. How beautiful you are growing, taking your world with you everywhere you go. You are so powerful! Your state of wellbeing joins you, with a tremor, everywhere you go. This time in our journey is called "In ecstasy".

"Every time when I startled, I knew you would calm me down, soothe the wounds in my heart."

One of those evenings, you were overwhelmed by tiredness and I felt you didn't smile enough in the life of that day and I remembered how much you liked lemon ice cream.

The idea came late in the evening. The only pizzerias with non-stop home delivery service only had the classical "vanilla" and "chocolate" ice cream and some of the ones which considered themselves to be the real thing, had an extra option: "Forrest berries". I think I must have called more than 10 restaurant. I was given special offers, bonuses, discounts if I gave up something that they considered to be a caprice.

I had one thing in mind only and focused all my attention on it: your caprice, A, is not negotiable!

I even thought I could buy the ice cream myself in a supermarket then meet the pizza guy on his way to your home and add the ice cream to your order and then let him continue his errand. That wasn't needed but I felt calm and content when the idea popped into my head. Irrespective of how things would have gone, I had a plan B. I got there in the end. I went through extreme stress. But I found a pizzeria where people were understanding. I think they were the last chance I had from that long list of possibilities. They also made great pizza and lemon ice cream. But they were taking and

delivering orders last minute, just as they were about to close. So I had to change two trains, took a taxi, avoided the busy traffic and arrived, as always, a few minutes before the delivery guy. I was right there, on your street. Our street... I called you and tickled your curiosity. You had no idea what was coming next. I had only asked you to keep your eyes on your phone. Did you really think I was going to send you the text via email? So I wouldn't get to see your reaction?

The delivery guy was all over the place. He had been given instructions by the people at the pizzeria but also by me, on the phone. He had been told how this order was going to be delivered. He found me, confused, at the one end of the street where I had waited for you to go to the photo shoot the other day. He told me how much I had to pay and after I checked the order was correct, he wanted to abandon me in the middle of the street. I explained to him for the third time and he understood that he had to call you and hand you your dinner, without giving out that I was there. Although you never said anything to me, I have a feeling you guessed. I would have liked to see your eyes, not just to feel them smiling when I called you, but the respect for your intimacy came before my longing for you. From the tone of your voice I

understood that my struggle that evening was completely worth it.

“You are a little thief!”

That morning when I came to The North Station, I waited for you on the platform with a small bag of pistachios. Quite a few trains had gone by and then, when yours arrived, you saw me and smiled, even before the train stopped and the doors opened. You came towards me and gave me a warm hug. I almost got my mind fooled it was summer again. In a way, it was. That was still the summer of our time together.

You bring a wave with you, shaped like a V. Its lines are to be found in the diagonals behind you. An energy and a happiness follow you everywhere you go, my darling. This makes you so special.

Our visit at that location didn't mean much on its own, but I wanted to tell you that I have always been afraid of dogs, ever since childhood, when I went through an unpleasant experience at the age of five. I was in the kindergarten at lunchtime with three-four other children in my group. I think our mothers were with us too and possibly

our teacher. It was at the end of our programme and we stayed behind for a few minutes, where the swings were. I was holding a metal stick I had found on the ground. There was a shop selling construction materials nearby. They also had lots of tools in that shop. In my playfulness, I started running past this fence. A stray dog saw me, barked at me, ran from behind and jumped on me. It shocked me badly. It was a huge dog. And I was... as you can probably imagine, I was the most innocent, with absolutely no bad intentions. It didn't bite me but it left me with a phobia for the rest of my life.

And when I say 'dogs', I don't mean your old good guardian - the black doggie (which, by the way, is still there. I saw him the other day.). I mean all dogs, even the tiny ones we kept looking at all the time. Any fluffy dog with four legs, teeth and a lot of energy, can still scare me. Naturally, I would have put a distance between myself and dogs, following all my reflexes, but you succeeded - I don't know how, and I will leave it up to you to understand the impact you had on me - to stifle these reflexes in me. I would immediately activate the instinct I had to protect you first, to clear the way for you and defend you. I don't know but maybe any other person wouldn't have felt that you needed defending. After all, they were just some small dogs. But to me, you were the centre of

the universe, in the most literary way possible and with no exaggeration.

On our way back, we stopped at the traffic lights. As I was about to suggest to go somewhere to spend the rest of the day, you turned your face towards me and asked me:

“Shall we eat something?”

Like all artists, we went to have breakfast at lunchtime. I couldn't help myself but pleasantly notice how naturally everything went and how peacefully you spoke. We were two people, growing and developing on this planet earth, without any rush, without any pressure. We didn't depend on anyone and anything. We simply lived. Life was so beautiful; I think last time I enjoyed a worry-free morning was in my childhood. This time of our journey is called “Living a dream”.

A dream. During our meal, we talked about what we would do if we would ever be apart. If something or someone would ever come between us. The thought scared me, but we spoke about that and you reassured me that I had nothing to worry about.

“ If we tell each other everything, nothing can come between us!”

Do you understand now where I stand? I told you everything and look, that wasn't enough. “ Everything “ was a high truth in which, I believe, our very existence tells us that is the answer. It would have worked, you know. It would have worked for us too. If we both had told each other the truth...

Now, the only beautiful dreams I have left are the ones in which you appear. No matter how you treat me in them, warmly or rebelliously, a dream with you is always a reason for me to be happy.

“when, on the 27th?”

“ yes, but not many people know...”

“ if the right people know then everyone knows” :)

Only living such powerful emotions can a human know what happiness really is. I came to know it. I hope I gave you

back a small part of what I received from you. I need to thank you for it. Your happiness was simply full of happiness. I believe that if only for a moment everyone on earth would live this emotion, the world would be totally different and would continue to exist in warmth and beauty.

The big day came. We were in the place where we first met, but sitting on a different sofa. We both opened our envelopes. I was sure you would be on Cloud Nine. I had prepared everything impeccably. This time in our journey is called “Beautiful”. What a strong word, “beautiful”! You were listening with interest to everything I had to say because our time was limited and you had to be up to date, considering the next steps.

You had a cold. That’s what you had told me. On our way, as we made a detour to the district Mihai Bravu, rather than go straight home, to catch the sales, you started feeling worse and worse. At some point, you felt like fainting and held onto me for support. You touched your forehead. You had a headache and started to shiver. I didn’t really know what was going on, I thought those were the symptoms of a cold.

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Even though you were so ill, the gentleman we saw informed us with regret that it was a wasted journey, just like the one we made to The North Station, but he was extremely pleased that he had met my stunning sister, remember? I knew that if things had become more clear, you would have been more safe, and we would have received more credibility if I had introduced you as my sister.

When we left, I insisted I would take you back home to your gate, so we took a taxi. You could see how worried I was about you. You looked into my eyes so sweetly,...

Chapter 4

Sincerity

... smiling as always. Oh, my precious friend, my darling, what a wonderful soul you are! You reassured me you were fine. I was holding you tight with my left arm, to help you sit comfortably. I took your hand and kissed it with affection. I could hardly fight my own tears and the worries. Even now, when we are far away from each other, I often think about you and wish you well.

“Everything will be fine!”, you said to me.

My muse, our story was about to reach its autumn...

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Going back to that day is painful. If I had understood where I was aiming, and the reason why you appeared in my path, the responsibility life had given me, I wouldn't have disappointed and we wouldn't have gone through the suffering which changed us, one way or another. I think that that pain resembles me, who I am today. I try to bring a bit of reconciliation between us and to know that these lines will get to you.

“ hey, hey! I want to hear the news”

“ I had fallen asleep phone in hand”

“ I am so sorryyyyyy.”

To be awoken by you seems now to be a long dead wonder. The second day, we were supposed to be together, black and white. I was stressed and a little scared for you. Even if a cup of the made of passion fruit “cures everything”, I should have known better. The stress, the tiredness, exhaustion, lack of rest and burn out had taken me to the hospital more than once.

“ it's ok. honestly”

The morning started with an explosion I felt inside. From happiness to uncertainty, from many questions to... no answer. Then a heartbreaking fear. Uncertainty. I was in a point where I had to choose between taking a stand or not. And denying that was in itself a stand. No matter what I chose to do, or not do, would have had consequences and the responsibility of those consequences.

Ten minutes. Fifteen. Half an hour. Forty minutes. Three quarters of an hour. An hour. An hour and ten minutes. Almost two hours. Time went by without bringing a clear answer, so I made the choice that put you first, before us. Because we wouldn't have made any sense without you. You were the most beautiful thing in our friendship.

I informed you of my choice and waited to hear from you. A scene like the ones I saw in action movies was about to unfold, and all I could do was to flash a green light at you and to speak up. It was difficult to make a decision in your absence, especially as this decision involved you as well. Then I lived, on a small scale, a feeling called "oxymoron" in literature; emotionally speaking, I don't think it has any name. At least not one that can describe its real intensity.

How can some words sound disturbing and soothing at the same time! Your answer shocked me and I could not see how... I went silent. I let things calm down. I let you rest. And I did what I do best. I wrote you a letter. I went, from the shadow under our pistachio tree, to the only place that connected us the deepest.

I didn't even know what to write to you. I thought that after all we had been through, you wouldn't feel like reading something, anything. It was for the first time I had found myself in that position and I felt so afraid to go so far. I was scared something bad might happen to you. Sure, I knew that the pulse "was there", but all the scenarios I made in my head... I wasn't trying to acquit myself. It wasn't easy. I didn't want to make decisions for you. I have not tried to do that at all! Never.

How many times have I told you I was afraid you might disappear on me? Reason and fear kept fighting each other inside me for a long time. I want you to know I did not pull the alarm impulsively, in a blink. I closed my eyes and could see how a huge abyss appeared between us; as I was

connecting the dots, and I remembered things as they had happened, the abyss would grow and start to have a shape.

It was painful. That's all I managed to tell you. That hurt. And despite the abyss getting deeper, and the confusion in my heart, I was calm. You were fine. I mean, not very well, but at least I could erase all the scenarios I had in the morning.

My darling, your health comes first. Nothing is more important than that. I know I am far away from you right now. Speak to loyalty when you find it. Don't stay on your own. Don't isolate yourself from the world in moments like those were! Don't protect others, but protect yourself first!

“ I told you I am not made of gold. I am, sometimes, perfect to be thrown out of the window.”

It was painful but I did what I had to. The biggest risk was that it was “a false alarm” and that the break up would come between us. And that is exactly what happened, but that was bearable and acceptable in comparison to the thought that something bad could have happened to you. I was going through the lowest state of mind ever, doubled by the fact that I had not had the opportunity to talk to you

openly. The uncertainty hadn't vanished. However, calm as I was, I wasn't ashamed of what I had chosen to do, a comfort I got only a few hours after you had disappeared on me.

This time in our story is called "Up, again" . Your words are the best cure for my heart. I got this back then and I still believe it to be true today. Dear A, when you can make a man shift from a state of internal turmoil to a refreshing peaceful smile, full of moving tears, when you can soothe a friend only by talking to him as you always do, simply and sincerely, you are powerful. And in my eyes you will always be powerful. Do not let anyone else tell you otherwise! I need you so much right now!

It's a life lesson! I used to be upset with this saying but life made me understand, not by slapping but by caressing me rather - for this is what you are, a caress - that when someone needs you, you must drop everything else and be there for that person. When you can do that you must do it. And you must ask yourself if you can do it, if you have that power it takes. And then, follow what your heart tells you. You must leave all other thoughts behind; your heart is so great that it would never show the wrong way.

I ask you today, I beg of you, be here for me. Read this letter till the end and then, listen to your heart.

“Up, again”, because your heart didn’t take long to pour it’s tranquil kindness between us. I remember your words.

“heeey.. I am the only one who should feel bad. (...) I couldn’t remember anything... I cannot believe how much it bothered you, not in a bad way, but it made me smile :) on the other hand, it made me feel guilty that you went through all these things, that I (...)”

I remember all the words you said back then, but I feel I should keep them locked in my heart. Unspoken and unwritten. It was a feeling we created in each other, you, with your infinite kindness, and me, with the infinite appreciation I have for you, my darling. It was something we created for us, for the smile of our happiness.

And you told me the whole truth. I understood then how much you suffered and how much you needed me. I wanted to be close to you and only God knows how much I

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regret that I wasn't able to, and that I had wronged you so much and forced you to...

"I can't keep struggling :) you didn't know about these things, but (...) I don't want others to worry about me anymore, because I always get over it. I try not to whine unless (...), because when you say you feel pain you become aware of it. implicitly, the brain gets hung up on that and (...) I was merely trying to (...)"

In that moment, A, I wished I were the only person you could feel at peace to talk to till the end. You needed a shelter, and once again, I am monstrously guilty that I couldn't be there for you. I would give anything to have this chance one more time... for your to allow me that...

Your promise was warm, full of kindness and what you asked me...

"something I don't want at all, (...) HOWEVER there is no other way, (...)"

... was human, appropriate and absolutely necessary. You waited for my answer quietly. You should have known it

already. I keep blaming myself that I showed you those papers afterwards. It was a way of manipulating you unconsciously. Believe me, I didn't do it on purpose. When you changed your mind, I comforted myself by promising to be by your side and to look after you. That was all I wanted to do in that moment and... perhaps I thought that, by moving forward, I would get that chance which, only now I know, I would have had anyway.

“ I feel so bad :) and not physically.” “ forgive me...”

I had the power to stop everything, I know that. I thought I was going to do that when the time came, but I didn't realise that the time had already come. That was “ a point of no return”. If I had done then what I had to, things would have been different today.

“ I felt I couldn't breathe all day, I burst out crying “ when you hugged me

“ God... I am sorry... for all the mess and for how much you suffered...”

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It was then that I realised how difficult it is to talk when you feel like you're about to burst out crying. We both did that all day with other people around us, but between us it came so easily; as if we were one, and inside us, we felt at ease.

“ use fewer words :) it makes us stronger “

...

... it doesn't make any sense. I didn't want to be strong next to you. I wanted to finally have the chance to be myself after so much chaos, after a turmoil which seemed to have lasted three lifetimes.

I felt a strong urge inside me. I needed to tell you over and over again that you were the most important thing in my life. In that moment I had no other interest but for you to be well and happy.

I like to think that the tranquility and acceptance of that evening were like a summer day at the end of September. When you know that autumn is around the corner, but you are given strong sunlight for a few hours and fresh air inviting you to rest in a hammock with a good book to read. That's how it was for us. An evening that gave us strength.

And you told me incessantly that everything would be alright.

This time in our journey is called "Stronger". I was waiting for you. That was the last day I saw you come out of that gate, walking towards me, smiling with all your heart. I kept this memory and will keep it for ever in my heart.

You were so beautiful. You were radiant!

"You are shining, stranger!"

We looked at each other and we both understood that the time of making plans had gone by. That was a time for action. We were both thrilled, full of hope and curious to find out where that path would take us. I held on to some photos from that day. They are so dear to me. I keep looking at them whenever I want to go back in our time.

On our way I made an unforgivable mistake. You saw it differently but you still didn't like what I said. I would like you to know it came from a good place of justified worry on my part, despite the way it landed.

Then, only to take the situation out of its dramatic context, I continued my idea, tongue in cheek. You can imagine how absurd it is that such a deep bond like ours was destroyed by what seemed to be a trifle? We were both wrong to decide to continue everything secretly..., but, my darling, the words we told each other then, by the cash machine, had painful consequences. That moment when, for a second, I caught the glimpse of a silent cry in your eyes.

I don't know if the test was your decision or if you were influenced. But I believe that you did it only because you considered it to be the best choice. I would have given anything for you to remember our commitment then.

“everything you go through when you are going through it.”

My eyes and ears signalled that something was wrong when you came out of the train station without giving me a hug. We were both in a hurry, but in my mind I didn't want to see that. And instead of calling you, I reacted instinctively. I came after you. You smiled at me. I watched you walk towards the taxi and felt very proud that you came into my life. I waited for a few seconds just enough to see the number

written on the taxi as it went past me. I could be calm only if you were well, not if you told me you were well. I had huge faith in you, but that was surpassed by the care I felt for you.

When I saw you walk away towards the taxi you jumped in, I felt I had to do something to stop you. I had a feeling that something bad was about to happen. Fortunately you were fine. However my intuition turned into a harsh decision.

And when I think of how, after that, I slept a whole night blissfully unaware when you already knew...

Chapter 5

Sense

... How could you do this to me? I had put all my hopes in you!

“I’ve lost you, my pillar of strength!”

...

...

...

I thought I could cope. Reliving that leaves me breathless. It hurts too much. I know, somehow and up to a certain degree, I got over it. Not completely but at least I understood why and what for. And I thank you. But I feel

that I physically I'm losing it... and still, you need to know what I went through.

...

The first day went totally dark. Confused, I was looking for answers everywhere, but the only direction I had was you. And since you were gone, I did not have any direction left... I was in a shock, but not the kind of shock that shakes you but an empty, senseless, meaningless, lifeless kind. I felt that my reassurance that you can count on me without limits had been in vain, that my loyalty for you was complete and that, no matter what would ever come up, I would always accept and stand by you.

You were the one who told me an impressive truth not long ago: "if we tell each other everything, we will always be fine." Even then, I respected that. Maybe I exaggerated or the sadness made me choose the wrong words. Lacking energy, and even the desire to understand what happened, I could only keep hoping you were fine. I hoped you were all fine.

Dear A, you should never make fun of someone like me. Not even to test that person, or to make a joke or a punk. I am far away from being "made of gold". I am crazy,

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sometimes immature maybe, with no responsibility, unconscious till the clock strikes eleven. But, hey... I am a Gemini!

"I have lots of faith. don't worry, I'll teach you."

I have no clue what you meant by that, but you know for sure. You cannot make fun of anyone. I am not saying that this is what you actually did. I still care about you more than my own life, but... I am too involved. I get too emotionally invested. I burn myself out and suffer so much I end up in hospital. Hundreds of thoughts are tormenting me. I make thousands of scenarios in my head. I am all alone through it all. And I feel I am quite a rare type within my own species.

Personally, I don't like describing myself or having to self-analyse myself. I know my worth. And not only because I observe the people around me, but because I know how much I love you, how much you mean to me and how much everything matters to me. Back then, 'everything' meant 'you'. Nobody knows how big the emotions I invest are, not even you - the receiver, for most of them. I know you understood them. I know you appreciated them. But that is not enough to make

you realise what you did to me. Even back then, it wasn't fair for you to put me through such tests.

That was the time when we should have told each other "everything". That was "something" we should have shared.

How could you do such a thing to me? I had put all my hopes in you! I trusted you! I trusted your fairness in making decisions! What you did felt like you put a knife through my heart! It hurt, A! It hurt and the wound has not fully closed. It is that kind of wound that only time can heal. It is a wound that requires words, not silence.

Although you knew I was feeling horrible, nothing made any difference to you. I would have always accepted to go through these things and even more difficult ones, only if I had done it with you by my side! I am not just saying this. It is a reality that I still live. I would do anything for your well being without hesitation, and I would not be afraid of anything. If you needed me then, you had me right by your side and you can still have me, no doubt about that!

"God, how tough everything is..."

How did it all change so abruptly? Yesterday you smiled at me, today you tested me? "Everything I am going through, when I am going through it"... doesn't stand between us any more? Ask yourself and give yourself an answer, what did I do to deserve this? What? Don't keep reading, please take a minute... What... what have I done, to deserve this?

The uncertainty was driving me insane and the restlessness was tearing me apart. My heart was bleeding and I, as a human being, was falling. I was falling, A, because you had been my pillar. You were the feeling that made me smile when the sun was rising as I would wake up. I would get out of bed and instantly feel like I was the luckiest man on earth, because that morning was bringing with it your voice and my ears were pleasantly caressed by the most suave sound of youth - the music in your voice. The day was coming along with your smile, with your embrace and new steps in our life. You and me, each being for the other exactly what was needed, erasing everything else in the claustrophobic space surrounding us and which sometimes disappeared completely. The evenings were peaceful as I was awaiting for the sleep to come in the quiet of the happiness around us - how could we not not feel like we were babies when we had each other?

I have none of that in my life now. I was the saddest and most distraught man. In vain did I try to fool myself that I can get a new beginning after you left. Nothing can be the same if you don't exist in my life. Hey, don't feel guilty! This is how it was meant to be! Everything will be alright! :)

"Where am I going, so lost? Without dreams, without hope?" I couldn't understand what I had done that was so wrong that I lost you. We had been so close to each other. What was I supposed to do with my dreams now that you were gone.

I would wake up and go outside. I would walk into a cafe where I felt so lovely. I would choke over a fizzy juice, then walk into a supermarket and just go up and down the alleys for hours on end. I would leave the shop without buying anything and would go back to the same cafe ending the day the same way I had started it, with no other feeling in me apart from my pain. I would walk on foot back home, alone. I would fall asleep crying, wake up with nightmares and start the day in tears. And then repeat.

This is what my life without you looked like.

Smiles and tears. I would walk down many streets, take the train, revisit our places. I had no intention of getting anywhere, no meaning. All I could think about was how tormenting our separation was. In the few moments when my life would trick me and escape, I would visit our most beautiful memories together. The first evening when your embrace made me smile, the first day when our cheeks hurt with laughter, our walks, our natural conversations full of theories, the way you would calm me down with a few words, your inspiring words, the way you moved and behaved... and other special moments which will always live in our hearts - they brought a smile that got lost amongst so many tears.

I think I must have spent hours looking with no particular focus in sight, just smiling. The tears on my cheeks must have looked like I was laughing with happiness. And when I would start to see things clearly again, the smile would go away, and even more tears would roll down my cheeks in waves. I couldn't and in fact, didn't want to accept it had ended.

“What was the instinct that determined you to leave?”

Two days later I tried to cool down and set out to uncover the enigma that had appeared between us. The truth is, apart from the mistakes we have both made - perhaps I made more than you - during our autumn, Indifference made no sense and falling apart was difficult. My actions were not fruitful. My stranger, it is common for us all to believe in the power of communication without boundaries and the power of telling the truth. But this belief is often wrongly abused. Maybe when I generously offered this to you, your instinct to protect yourself got in the way of you seeing it for what it really is. But it's fine. I will come second, for the hundredth time. Look after yourself! First and foremost, yourself!

A cranberry tea would've been soothing for both of us. You had started to give me lessons, more or less willingly. I understood that I was wrong to treat the people who had let me down with indifference.

It's true, our situation bears no comparison. But it is unpleasant that on the other side of the fence - talking would have been the ideal solution, but because I hadn't offered that to other people around me when I could have done so, destiny made sure I didn't get that when I needed it most. The fact

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that you knew how I felt should have calmed me down, should have satisfied me, but it seems it made my pain.

The day before we spoke, I edited a short film on my mobile phone, something I am sure you would like and which hopefully I can show you someday...

Now that you have left, my heart beats distressed without you. I am incapable of taking any action, that is how much I miss you. You came and gave life to my entire being. When you left, everything fell apart. Countless thoughts tell me to go after you, not to give up on you, not to give up the life you made me love. I sat by the window and prayed for you to feel my desperate cry. I would like to believe that at least I had a bit of an impact on you, enough to make you remember me once every few hours. I believe you did not want me to suffer, but that doesn't give me much consolation. My pain, A, was louder than the music you listen to.

I lost my sense of orientation. It felt like I had no space, nor time left. I had started to fly with you and when we reached the zenith, you left and cut my wings. I was left without you. You took everything away from me. You took my simple joy, my hope and the strength to carry on. I was a man

who couldn't breathe, a dream without a pillar, a word without a voice. I was left on my own, with one single hope dormant in my heart and which I felt, was not to wake up too soon.

With these words I am writing to you, hope started to surface. This beam of sunlight has continued to shine even after you left. Always, all this time, deep in my heart, I kept hoping that we will make new memories together.

I looked fearfully ahead. During our time together it never crossed my mind that we would ever reach this point. The shock was too powerful. I don't give up when under pressure. I challenge pressure. It is difficult, perhaps useless, to write to you about what pain feels like. It was horrible. You, my darling, put me under pressure and I yielded.

And once again, I hover about, with an empty, broken heart and I wonder if I can hold on to hope. Throughout my life, I suffered more than I was happy. My biggest happiness was with you. Equally I believe I brought to others both smiles and tears.

How easy it is not to get involved, to turn everything upside down, but when you are the one who is being messed with, you understand.

My darling, I wish for our next embrace to come without you having live not even the smallest particle of the pain I felt when I lost you. You punished me terribly and I find it unbearable to think you could also be going through this.

How could I heal my wound? I am used to be, to live, to breathe next to you and now I have to pay the price of being apart. You appeared by my side, my pillar, and then you left, leaving our dreams unfulfilled by the passing of time. I know that my mistakes go deep and that the pain I caused you was big, but this punishment is too much. All I long for is the antidote for this pain, your forgiveness.

Time was going by as life had lost any meaning, any appeal. I didn't know how you felt, if you had already recovered. I didn't know if it affected you to such a degree that you would have to recover. Everything had been so beautiful between us, you weren't.. you were too.. it is not like you. Dots weren't connecting. I remember I thought it would have been

amazing to get a phone call from you and to find out everything had been a nightmare I had.

Tell me, all this time, have I ever stood a real chance to get out of this situation decently? If you need time to think about it, take it as much as you need, because I would like to have an answer to this question. I was a fool. And I am sorry. I should have told you this back then. I should have dropped everything and fight with all my strength for you! You are not someone I can lose. Life doesn't come with such gifts along my path. The wonders of life are too... wonderful to be missed.

Sunrise can be quite depressing when you are disappointed. Do you think I was not going to suffer?

The time for self-pity was over. It was time for acceptance and I fought with that. Weeks, then whole months, I fought with it and I still don't know who the winner was. I am aware that the fight is over and that it could never start again after I began writing these words to you.

Sadness couldn't help me understand anything, my darling, despite your wishes. I was exhausted, with no strength, and no discernment. My "letters" were once more proof of how much I cared about you, about us. They spoke on

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my behalf about my desire to mend at least the friendship we had.

I know you wouldn't have wanted me to be indifferent, no matter how good that sounds now. In absence of emotion, nothing makes sense.

However, let me tell you, you were, are and always would be IRREPLACEABLE ! What we had is unique.

"Happy holidays! (...)

To many beautiful things! A"

"Trust takes years to build, can be destroyed in a second, and takes an eternity to win back." - unknown author. It took us way too little time to build trust and, no matter what happened between us, it was and, I believe, still is strong. The bond we created between us was lost in a few moments and, to regain everything and to repair everything, I am prepared to wait for two eternities, not just one. I am afraid however that our lives are not as generous and I believe that I have wasted enough time already. Waiting gave me the strength to breathe again. I have a smile in my eyes when I write these words

right now: Dear A, It's not long before I will be able to say that I'm doing fine.

I hope that in the years ahead of us I will be able to prove things so you can understand. I find it hard to remember how immature I was but I didn't know how to keep you in my life. I hope that the full stop you put is not a final one. This would take away the meaning from all the good things that came after your decision.

My dear, every single thing that I will do will be to honour all our feelings and memories, expressing my eternal gratitude for the kindness you showed me. Every success, every step forward, everything in line with your strong sense of morality and integrity.

If I had treated your challenge with indifference, wouldn't you have felt under-valued? I couldn't have done that. I know that this led to our loss, but... You meant so much to me.

I felt useless. There were times when you were not doing anything to me physically but somehow you were, through lack of action. You didn't know me for a lifetime, but you

should have known how much it was going to hurt what you chose on my behalf. Today, I tell you that you would like that someone in my position would react the way I did. And why don't you take any action in this regard? I had traveled from the end of the world for just a few minutes, isn't this madness?, just to show you your worth.

I realise only now how naïve my answer was. Had I been you, I would have slapped me. In fact, I just did. Physically. For that moment back then... But I was honest.

You can't take things out of context, even when you simply walk on the street. We need equilibrium. That wasn't a mistake as far as I am concerned. I was wrong not to give you the credit you deserved. I was wrong to believe that you would not be able to manage things by yourself, that you couldn't defend yourself from danger. I was wrong not to want to let you do things by yourself and not to know how to make myself understood.

"The end of the world" was coming, according to the well-known propaganda. These were ideas that I had studied superficially and amused, driven only by the morbid curiosity in marketing. I thought I should write a book about an island

just going to be swallowed by the ocean and the people living on it, tiny civilisation, had only 24 hours to live, not being able to evacuate the island in time. Anyhow, I never treated this topic seriously. And this goes to prove, I wasn't wrong. Then however, I asked myself "but, what if...?"

I was desperate, sad, even shocked by the sudden twist in my life. I wondered what if the end of the world come and I would never get to see you again. In moments like these, a man understands what really matters to him. I was in my kitchen, looking out the window. It was night time. A burning tear was rolling down my clenched throat.

And then the sadness come out freely, helping me to get rid of the knot I had in my throat. I closed my eyes to escape the reality which was bringing me no joy anymore.

Dear A, where were you in those moments and why are you putting me through such distress? My tears got stuck in my throat and, before making my eyes go foggy, felt like knives cutting me inside. Why did you leave and why did you let go of our commitment? No matter how much I torment myself, I still can't find an explanation that would do any one of us some good.

I know that things happen as they are meant to. I've learnt this lesson but it doesn't quite apply in our case. And all that matters now is the reason for this suffering. If I found it and my strength was the supreme good, I choose to ignore it. I needed to be more than just that.

A, the winter of our story came. This chapter doesn't have a title, at least I haven't found an appropriate one for it. With every winter we get Christmas. And because to me, you continued to mean as much as you did in the summer, Christmas was an occasion to give you a present. You got half of it two days before Christmas and the other half, two days after.

I remember I was writing a list on my phone:

- the tea (if possible, the fruit of love)
 - * look for "apple and Melissa" (plant, not girl's name)
- and pistachios...

... they were giving life to my list. I smile as I remember your reaction. You also had 15 minutes with me in private.

My dear ‘everybody’, the surprise which arrived before its time, was not a “necessary” gesture, but a heart-felt one. I would have liked to cheer you up with more than just a box full of fulfilled wishes; with things dear to you, with joy, good memories, and feelings. I knew you deserved more. I say all these things to make you aware this time. Maybe you do not understand, but if you dig a little deeper in our memories, you will realise what I am talking about.

“ I like very much what you put inside that box almost my size... “

That day you gave me a present. You gave me the peace between us, something I don’t know if we still have now. You gave me peace, gave me your appreciation. If I could turn back time, I would reply with acceptance and gratitude:

“ Thank you for your love, A. “

I should have taken your gift, let you prepare the tea and to... that’s all. Perhaps we would’ve not been in this situation today. I learnt however, throughout my entire life, thanks to the good people surrounding me, that things happen as they are meant to. Although I was wrong once again, both

in your eyes and in mine, I am convinced that things will take a better turn. Perhaps this is the road we should have taken right from the start. I would like to hear that we are both at peace and satisfied, irrespective of whether we are close to each other or apart. I would like to know that I am in your heart and in your thoughts and that you smile when you think of me. I would like you to know how much I cherish you.

“ I admire you a lot”

In my mind, all I could think was “ I’m gonna show you what a box almost your size is”. What was I supposed to do with that admiration? To forget everything that ever happened between us? How could I forget how we used to smile together and how happy you made me?

To abandon our dreams? To “keep going”? Maybe I shouldn’t have done all of these, maybe not even some of these things, but when you’re upset, A, your mind gets foggy. That’s why, I want to tell you that our mind reacts differently when we are upset or angry. We make wrong decisions, say things we don’t actually believe, hurt ourselves and the people who love us. Such thoughts took over my mind and I didn’t understand how priceless the gift you gave me really was. I

never said 'thank you' for it and want to do so here. Thank you for the chance you gave me that day. I didn't deserve it because I wasn't aware that I had done so much wrong by you, nor that my actions didn't protect you as I would have liked them to do, or cherished you as you deserved. I would like to look into your eyes right now, as you are reading this letter, but I have already received a smiley face from you. :) no matter how upset you are with me, I know that you find the power to forgive me in your heart. Otherwise, there is nothing left for me but to keep fighting for redemption all my life. Living peacefully means a lot to me.

I was trying to protect my heart. I was about to have the saddest Christmas ever and I knew that only you could change that.

As I felt it was not going to happen, I took a Santa Claus outfit and visited all my closest friends - those that would have opened my door. They were the same as the previous year when I saw them. Their routine didn't go through drastic changes. I gave and received smiles, but none was like yours. For the first time, I didn't enjoy what I was doing; I couldn't find strength, to leave a part of my heart with the joy I was giving. I was trying to survive. I felt like an

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ill man in need of machines to be kept alive. The machines could not however, embellish my existence.

I realised then, that only in few days, a person who is the right one and a bit of luck coming at the right time in one's life can have an unimaginable impact over that person. And I strongly believe that everyone should experience that. You happened to me, stranger...Well done!

This Christmas wasn't going to be as we had planned it, full of fairy tales, but a part of it was down to me. I was aware that good intentions can ruin all hope left in me but, if I hadn't paid you a visit, I would have tormented myself for not bringing you a smile in which I strongly believe.

"Let's see what the sun will rise for "

It was 6 in the morning and all I had planned depended on perfect luck. I started my journey with the hope I would stand a chance, and longing to live with you at least one moment similar to the ones we lived during our summer. To go past our mistakes, our heart break and pain, and to go with the flow, led by our hearts, in the palm of a smile.

The night before, I spoke to my parents and explained the wild things I had set myself to do. I didn't tell them everything, just one small part. I had to talk to someone, but the feelings I felt belong only to us, and have no other place to live in apart from our hearts. They understood me but also read into my eyes the instigation, the necessity. They suggested I should let you know beforehand, but I already knew what that would bring with it. They knew that they didn't stand a chance to make me change my mind or give up, so they didn't even try. Sometimes I wonder if anyone will manage to change this stubbornness into something better. The more I think of it, I am not sure I would necessarily like that, in my heart of hearts. Other times, I feel that it is necessary for my peace up here (pointing to my head). And you appear in my thoughts once again, you, my lead character, together with all the good things you brought down my path. You changed my life in so many ways, I don't want to get anyone else the chance to mould me again.

The will of the heart has supernatural powers. It annihilates the meaning of any "must" and, if we listen to it, we live peacefully. Day by day this is all we need. Maybe we weren't strong enough, maybe we didn't want each other as much. I sat in an armchair for three and a half hours in one

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of the emptiest carriages of the train in which I got on without difficulty, but my luggage-your present-you can imagine.

I thought about everything we lived together and about the beautiful things that were to come. How beautifully we could have decorated our life if we had been side by side. I took a piece of paper and I started to write. I wanted to speak to you about what happened between us, to make you see my point of view, to tell you how much it hurt and to ask for your forgiveness. I wanted to tell you that you must not lose your drive. The future depends only on you. I wanted you to turn me into a better man and I was ready to abandon myself fully into your hands.

I stood up once or twice and took a few steps. I felt numb, though not physically.

When I was 45 minutes away from you, I started to assemble - much to the amazement and scepticism of the passengers who could see the synapses I was doing, apparently incorrectly - the props for the show I was going to deliver as a serenade at your feet

I was nervous, stressed, under pressure. I could feel the suspicious looks I was getting from the police officers and all other people that I met that day. I was moving as if in slow motion, and I knew that every step I took, every street I walked was getting me closer to a climax where was my fate was going to be decided. You had back then, the power to decide if my life was going forward or backwards and I would have not trusted anyone else with that responsibility. Infused with loving faith I waited for you to arrive.

I could hear your steps on the pavement. There were a few seconds left. I knew there was no turning back. I tried to hide all the suffering behind a sincere smile, which arose from seeing you again. You did the same, with considerable effort; your words sounded warm, but I felt cold from the coldness between us. You might have thought that being upset was not going to do us any good, to neither of us. And you avoided having a fight and telling me that you felt hurt.

You only tried to reassure yourself that we hadn't lost everything; you asked a question whose meaning I did not follow then. You wanted to hear me say that I would not isolate myself. That brought you a bit of peace, although I don't believe did you much good. The minutes we had together

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killed me. I was unconscious, not getting much help from the little air you gave me.

“You are mad!”

I was crazier than I had ever been. Mad with sadness, with missing you, with the outrage and indignation I felt inside. I wanted to ask you, until I would lose my mind, that we prove it to our destiny that we are mature beings and that we can cherish everything that brought us together. I was losing my mind with the love I felt for you... You made me love life and see it beautiful as I had never succeeded to do before meeting you.

You gave me a hug; surprisingly sad, the intensity of our feelings wasn't as powerful, as it used to be and your arms felt cold. Understanding what was going on, I expressed my outrage and pain holding you really tight, just for a second. It had all been too short. I was in pieces, hopeless, not wanting anything any more. For a time, I clung on to the pain that was killing my heart, my soul, my life and I tried to feel comfortable there, in my tears. Squeezing out every single drop of energy you had given me since our pistachio themed

evening. A while ago you told me that “if the right person knows, then everybody knows”.

Although I asked myself often then what it was that I had done wrong, now I understood that I hurt you so much that you chose to remain silent. Perhaps that embrace, as cold as it was, was a gift from you. The last one for me. It was a painful gift, but I accepted it with open heart.

Your words could lie to me, but not your eyes. I had no idea then that I was still writing our story.

I thought I had known unhappiness before. I walked to your favourite cafe and sat at the second table on the right. I ordered your favourite tea hoping to find reconciliation in it. It came with two spicy biscuits. Their flavour made me think of you, as if it had been made from a plant with your name. Almost every table was taken and it happened so that I found myself to be at the centre of attention; despite that, no one and nothing could stop my tears from falling. They were coming out of my lungs, not directly from my eyes. You know, that place where we put our hand when we refer to our soul... I would have liked you to be there with me... People were watching me from everywhere; the manager of the coffee shop,

the waiters, the clients, everyone saw how my cup of tea shook in my hand while I was trying to sip out of it. I took off my red Santa outfit and whilst wrapping it nervously, my crying, which I was trying to keep as quiet as possible, covered the sound of the carol playing in the background.

And I opened my mind, like we open our eyes in the morning. I kept staring at the Santa outfit I had bought especially for you. I felt bad that I hadn't controlled that impulse. I folded it carefully.

I enjoyed sitting in the same armchair where you once sat and had the same green tea I was drinking. I closed my eyes and imagined you were in front of me, like I hoped to see you every morning at sunrise. But reality was drilling in me the exhausting truth, not letting me hold on to my fantasy for long.

When I left, I felt so lonely and empty inside, like never before. Seeing you again wasn't soothing, but rather more disturbing. I made a terrible mistake to let the chance to speak to you pass us by so easily.

"I miss you"

On my way back, in the saddest train ever, I could only breathe, grace to the unconditional reflex that kept me alive. You were meant to be by my side till the end! That's what I expected from you!

"(...) I don't want to think that you are alluding to something"

Were you talking seriously when you said this? What did you imagine I was going through? Did you think I found it easy, that I could let go just like that? No! I couldn't. I didn't want to and I am proud of that! I look forward to the day when you will be proud of me too and through me, you will be proud of yourself. For all the good things you sparked in me and of the way in which you gave me life... I am scolding you for these words you said; you didn't know me at all if you could say something like that. My mind wasn't clear given the pain, the suffering. I believed you went through the same thing yourself. But the thought of ignorance, which came with a question mark, stabbed me in my heart like the lightening of a thunder. Or was that you trying to make things sound lighter, to continue somehow, subtly, with small steps, writing our story? Was this the chance I was hoping for?

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Right in front of my eyes, without being aware? Very unlikely... And still!

Anyway... that was the last time we ever saw each other. And every single day, without exception, I have thought about you.

“I would have given you the best of me. I would have given you more than I had. Why did you throw it all away?”

What were you trying to tell me? “Forget about me and leave things as they are”? I can even remember the accent you used when you were introducing yourself, you actress!

I can remember the tone of your voice which had in it a combination of insisting request and the childlike innocence of your smile when you repeatedly asked me, after I had said “no”, “Tell me!!!!!!”

I want you to know what you did hurt me. I think about you as a hurt man, trying to make you understand me and I don't know... I can't stay mad at you, do you get it?? I need you to understand this! Any choice you are going to make from now on, to reply to this letter or not, please take my

following request into consideration. Because there are still lots of feelings to experience.

You see, I might have made another mistake. A huge one. Not by suffocating you, but by not fighting for you long enough. Because I should have suffocated you, I should have come to see you, call you and write to you every day. I feel I didn't visit you enough, I didn't fight for you as I should have. Because once we had gone over our issues together, we could have become invincible. Forgive me. I forgive you. And I would like to ask that you continue to continue protecting your soul. Despite all the things that came between us, you can trust me. We both know that.

I was wrong! I was wrong not to be pushy enough. I could have been but I didn't want to suffocate you with my actions. My actions would have been justified, given how you chose to manage the whole thing.

I am scolding you now for that! After all the moments we went through, it was your turn to make the wrong choice! It was horrible and so unfair. It was unfair to me. It didn't bring any peace to your soul either. You should be ashamed of your choice, of the way you behaved!

I let you go as I cared about you too much. I was afraid to fight for you more than I did; I felt that if I had continued pursuing you, we would have both lost what beautiful memories we had left.

It would have been a good option to stop taking any action after I received with all my heart those beautiful words from you on the 23rd. I realise things could be different today. Many thoughts told me that "too much honesty is harmful". I still believe that saying is not true. "You must adapt yourself. That's how the world goes. That's how things work." I refuse! To me, things work as my instinct tells me. I don't need to follow any rules of universal behaviour or any advice from people who did not face the challenges you brought my way, irrespective of your intention. Indeed, I could have kept quiet and could have taken no action, but I have no doubt that every cell in my body would have punished me for eternity for the silence I was guilty of.

Things could have been better between us, same as if you were to look at it from the other side of the fence, this lesson wouldn't have been as dramatic. Ideally I would find the balance between heart break and necessities, between acceptance and regret. There is a fine line between those and

not being perfect myself, I couldn't resist crossing it. However when I cross it, I like to know that I am doing it because my heart told me so, not my mind shouted at me to do it. Emotionally and affectionately, I don't strive towards productivity, but rather towards acceptance of myself as I am of others.

How much I missed in life by allowing the fear of loss run my actions!

Did you notice how the word "disillusion" was made up? Dis-illusion. I know, it not our case. You were not an "illusion". You never "disillusioned" me. The truth is that I built the illusion myself and I was the one who brought disillusion upon myself. You were the natural cause of my actions. This is not a letter meant to soothe, A. This is more than just a story. Although I have to be grateful to you for the many lives you've given me, I also have something to hold you accountable for.

Why, after living so long, I still didn't know to keep you near me? Why have I lost you?

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A long time had to go by for me to understand that what my soul - perhaps everyone's soul - longs for and aspires towards is freedom. That freedom we gain when no earthly force can defeat us.

A dead heart is the only thing we can't live with.

We are just two human beings on a planet that moves around a star. In our galaxy there are 400 billion stars. The universe has more than 200 billion galaxies. It is a wonder that this universe, as enormous as it is, ...

Chapter 6

Assumption

... can embrace your greatness!

It made me feel good to hear, in the late hours of the night, you telling me that your parents were at peace knowing you were with me. It made me feel like home. It wasn't a civic duty, but a strong admiration for the relationship we had, that drove me in the great responsibility I felt I had for your well-being. I wanted to know you were well and safe... and this took you away from me.

My heroine, I believe that all the things we went through before you gave me life happened so I could be by your side, gently. And if we were to see our life as a book, then its cover is there for me to dedicate the rest of my life to your happiness, to your perfection.

I would like to be able to put all my life lessons in the haven of this letter, for you to find support in all the situations life will bring your way. Sometimes I struggle to follow my own advice, despite the hardships I lived and that taught me a great deal. It is easy to tell people around you the truth objectively, but the real difficulty comes when we are involved. Words are not much use, not when they come in a written form, I am aware. But I am far from you and I can only write to you from here.

Oh, my dear, why didn't we honour our commitment?

Holding you in high esteem like I did right from the start, was a dangerous game to play. Without any limits on my part, you became, naturally, the centre of my own existence. I dedicated every moment of my life to countless attempts to make you happy and bring you as much joy as

possible. I know I was successful to a certain degree and am pleased about that.

I think about all the plans we made together and those I was about to share with you once we'd see our first achievements... Why weren't you able to come to me, to hold me in place by your side until you felt you got what you wanted? I wouldn't have been your prisoner for long. Beyond any dream, you were the only one who mattered to me. But you already knew that and perhaps, didn't take it too seriously.

To me, you were the most important person in my life. I understood how much you needed me then. Standing by your side, being there for you, was enough and satisfying for me too. There was nothing else I needed.

My punishment was to be alone during my walks, with the wind strongly blowing in my ear. And to hope that when I would call out your name, I would be close to you and you would hear me. All of my emotions demand that I keep hoping and fighting so that this time in my life called "Away from you" does not last for ever. And this is why I write this here now.

After you left, I postponed this moment as much as I could, as I was afraid the pain would kill me, but now I can write to you as I feel postponing is more painful than the anticipation of reliving all the feelings I had invested in us.

Loneliness is bitter as much as you are sweet. It spreads out inside me, gradually taking over every drop of energy you gave me during our life together and I surrender to it, seeing no other way. It wins me over entirely, it suffocates me. And it comes very naturally. And I don't resist it; it is the thing which allows me to remember you as you are. As you were and as you taught me to live.

I have this strange feeling that we should have met a few years ago. I have many reasons to believe that. Nothing compares to loneliness in times of sadness, apart from the thought that I could have lived my life without meeting you. This thought haunts me sometimes and comes as a slap to snap me back into reality. It stops my tears and makes me realise how grateful I should be that I had met you. How lucky you are.. to have yourself by your side all the time.

Although you are gone, you are with me everywhere I go. I feel your breath next to me all the time. No matter what I experience in everyday life, I think about you and wonder what you would tell me in any given moment. That's how I kept you by my side, with a sigh, remembering you, and knowing that everything felt eternally intense. We never got to say "farewell" properly. I miss you, A. I care about you like I care about my life and this will never change. It is unbelievable that we met in this life.

I got to know you for the amazing human being you are and I am filled with enormous regret...

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Chapter 7

Nostalgia

... at the thought that the people you will meet might not even realise that.

This disappointment is a complex topic, a painful subject. My pen is crying as it is writing down every aspect of the life in which we were both protagonists, and then living one emotion after another...

“Oh, God, give me strength to carry on without it. It is getting dark and I don’t think I will ever hear from you. It all feels so surreal. It can’t be over. Remember that...” It is so difficult to describe what went on in my heart in the first

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days. Not because I cannot remember but because it still hurts as intensely as it did then.

The minutes turned into hours and it seemed you had completely forgotten me... I was so lonely. I walked down the quiet streets, darkness all around me, I looked up and saw how the moon was showing me my way to you. All the memories came tumbling down on me, and, like a mad man, I stayed there, with an empty gaze, smiling sometimes, remembering the times we had together, crying other times at the thought of never living those again..

In the first months after you left, time was passing by too slowly. Life was passing me by and I kept watching it as an outsider, like I used to do before meeting you. Although I lived many happy moments that year, the last eight months I felt I was a robot who did nothing to smile. I was merely surviving - eating, sleeping, a ghost on the street, and although I was making efforts, my productivity decreased and my work was inefficient. I tried to fool myself into believing that things were alright, but in truth, I was hoping for a miracle. A miracle that once brought me so much joy, a miracle which made me fall in love with every minute spent with you, a miracle that gave me the confidence to dream and the strength

to fight, a miracle that kept me with my two feet on the ground and made me rational. A miracle I didn't know how to hold on to. A miracle I wasted like a fool and which, I don't believe I will ever get back into my life, even if only for a moment.

“ I always felt lonely. Until I met you.”

In those days when I wanted to meet you, I discovered a new beverage, a juice I had never had before. This was my companion throughout all the time we spent together and long after that. A juice I will always love drinking. Its flavour, the taste.. unique, intense, discrete. It triggers something in my mind. I see something and it instantly reminds me of you.

I often make associations, like everyone else does. Like for instance, when we go for a walk in a park with someone , whenever we pass that place, we can't help but recalling that moment. Or like when we listen to a song and immediately think of the person who recommended it. Or how when we think we can recognise someone's perfume in the air and that takes us by surprise. The strongest bonds are based on repetition. When we go to a specific place repeatedly, when we keep listening to the same song, when we do certain things

periodically, or even on a daily basis. There comes a point in our life when we just walk in the street and remember, from one moment to another, a person, an event, a time.

What was I supposed to do when remembering became too painful? When the song I heard on the radio reminded me of you and you were no longer part of my present.

When I walked past a street that reminded me that a smile had come to life one evening there. When I entered a restaurant and spotted that very table we sat at for hours on end, every day. How can something so beautiful become unbearably painful? That song we both liked, that quiet street, that private intimate table, suddenly turned into a pool of pain. And I couldn't find my way out...

Hope is a good thing. Possibly the best. The thought that we'll smile again, that the pain will dissolve. With the passing of time, hope is all I had left. The belief that things happen as they are meant to. I believe in hope as the cure for all illnesses, as the universal antidote. But up to that point, associations are painful. And I had to learn how to live with them, to see the positive side in them. The memory. The worry of not repeating the same mistakes. The attention to be paid to

every good thing in my life. Sweet cranberry. The flavour of a painfully sweet tea. Sweet for its flavour, painful for the memory it brings with it.

Away from you, the tea, the street, anything around me is unappealing.

In those days, some new songs of a singer I admire since childhood came out. Knowing how powerful association is in our mind, I saved them without listening to them too many times.

I waited for a while, to be able to breathe again, before I could discover them fully. And now, although the pain is still there, these songs are the calm meadow in which I write this letter. And I associate them to the words I write to you, so that, whenever I listen to them from now on, I will remember you and your happy face dearly.

So, A, everything demanded your presence in my life. I would leave my house and start walking towards your home. On my way, I felt I couldn't do it. And then I would stop, and instead, enter shops randomly, revisit places we used to go to together. Or other places which somehow reminded me of you.

When I would look at my phone, your profile picture with the 'call' button right under it was in the centre of it - you were smiling in that section dedicated to you on my screen. I tried to touch your face, without calling you. But your face felt cold and hard, as did the screen of my phone which I kept in my pocket during those snowy days.

My soul knew that nothing would be the same without you. Despite your premature beliefs, you were irreplaceable. And if you didn't understand this reading my letter, I wouldn't know how else to make you see it, apart from surrendering myself to these pages, like a butterfly in an insectarium.

And you cared about me! Why didn't you fight for me? Why did you abandon me in this darkness in which I got lost? Why didn't you give me a chance to talk, to listen to my silence, and to let me listen to you?

You know I would have done everything in my power, don't you? You know, because I told you you come first in my life. Did you find the things I said to you inappropriate, unjust? I am so guilty of not making myself understood, of having had the impression I lived in the pages of a book. Or

am I not? That day when I reacted uncontrollably, I was sad for hours and I kept hoping I still had you in my life. That hope was fulfilled. A short-lived fulfilment, which brought me happiness. What will my hope look like now?

A year later I felt more intensely nostalgic than ever before. A year went by, A. A year since I last saw you or heard your voice. I have no recording of you. I would have done anything to be able to hear your voice one more time... I long for new memories with you. Please don't vanish from my mind!

I see you everywhere... I get scared quite often. I can't stop wondering what you I do, what would you do... Would you keep walking or would you stop if you saw me? And if you would, what should I first tell you, when I think about you so often. I would so want to see you again. And at the same time, I hope that moment doesn't come. Not before you read this letter.

Let's forgive each other and rejoice in the memories we have together. Let's find in us the strength to make new memories. Let's welcome the peace of acceptance in our hearts. Because pain is too unbearable... Let's look into each other's

eyes with the same sincerity we always showed each other, fully aware we can let go. I went through terrible pain after you left, and I did not support you like you needed me to. These are our mistakes. Everything I received with your leave, like the strength I have now, is a gift for which I will always be grateful to you. I know I was not what you deserved. Maybe, to you, I am not even a beautiful memory. But please, don't stop your heart from feeling kindness towards us. Our friendship, weak and tightly woven at the same time, has always been special and worthy of us taking a few steps to find each other again, A. Pride and hard feelings aside, we could admit to each other that we got over the hardest bit, that we are stronger now than the decisions we make when we are upset.

A decision made in anger or sadness is never a good one. Don't let negative impulses get the best of you. Reason and kindness should always drive our actions.

This way you will always be in the hearts of the people around you, you will be happy in your own skin, and you will attract only beautiful things. You are very insightful. I do trust your judgment. You already know it's value yourself.

You are so powerful! I know you are able to do this, I trust your judgement.

It feels like I am looking at you from my words on this page, on my knees in front of your heart, I ask you, I beg you, save me! Save me like you did when you appeared first time and pulled me out of my claustrophobic stage when I could hardly breathe. Pull me out of my pain, once again and give me the peace I need so much, my dear.

I would fight anyone and anything for you, no matter what the circumstance would be. I would do anything to be by your side again, to find in you the support I so much need, and to be your sweet haven. Without any hesitation, regret or doubt. There is something in our memories that says I should never forget you. Not that I would be able or want to do this. If I forgot you, I would feel like a man who just landed on Earth, with no past and no emotional intelligence. Every time I think about you, I fight with all my strength to remember everything you ever meant for me. I find it hard to think about the sad times, so, most often, I revisit the beginning and remember your genuine happiness, your craziness, and playfulness in everything you did. You were... perfect.

You were exactly what I needed when I needed it most. You completed me and pulled me out of my sadness with your words, your gestures, your embrace, your smile. Everything you were, covered and filled all the emptiness I felt inside.

I would write more than just one letter to you. You are not a habitual, common, random being. My patience and good intentions apart, what did I do to deserve this miracle, even if too short by comparison to my heart's desire and need? How does the world manage to embrace your heart when it is so big? You have such a good, innocent heart, the climax of my happiness. I will never forget your innocence...

My entire being is in pain, my world is vanishing, my pain calls out your name and begs you to come back. Dear A, I find this punishment too harsh and too difficult to endure much longer. My sweet and darling happiness, I will always think about you through the intensity which you made me live with. And now, that I can think straight, I cannot blame you for my suffering. I know you could have let my wounds heal, but they are fate's response to how wrongly I behaved towards you.

Every soul on earth needs love to survive, and I found that love in your eyes, as they were receiving, innocently, appreciation from me; I found it in your voice - you were the most beautiful song and I loved listening to you; I found it in your words, understanding, and in your smile, hope. Your touch, when you held me...I found the joy of living grounded in reality, not in illusion.

When what you feel is real, then you experience true happiness. And everything I lived when you were by my side, the feelings and suspense to come in the following days, the strong bond we had as friends, all these tell me how real everything was, how many happy steps we still had to take.

With a bit of faith and good will, with a bit of love sprinkled on the lines of this letter, in my calling you and in my hope, I find peace and calmness that everything will be alright. :)

Today I am going back into your life. Because I feel it's needed. My feelings are not a game. During our time apart, I missed your embrace that I still cherish in my heart. We were two fools who had each other and lost one another.

In the subtle depth of the night, and in my heart's embrace, you know what I feel for you. I am in love with how you handled me, with our happy moments and the tranquility we had back then. For a long time I lived off our memories alone. I want to come out of my nightmare now and to get to see you. But after so many months in which I dreamt in vain, I don't think I will ever snap out of that nightmare. I mean... it took too long. It is not a dream, is it? This is all very real.

I read books, I watched movies, I studied the world of our perceptions, and I understood that past fears project themselves on our future, building a bridge between the two moments. I am vulnerable when it comes to you. I will always be. But so be it. I will never give up my past, no matter how painful it was. Because I lived a real dream with you. If this means that I will never free myself from the past and will not be able to experience the present as it is, I will take that - this means I will always be with you.

I struggle to remember your voice and cannot call you anymore. You haven't taken my calls far too many times. When I take the phone I lose all control, I start shaking and panic, and still... Despite all this, I was brave and called you. I did it quite a few times.

I remember every place where I waited for you whenever we had a date. I went to all of them. Yes, I went to all of the places where we held each other in our arms.

That time in my life, when I walked down the street where I could still smell your perfume every day, is called insanity. When I met you, I was happy. I didn't have to write you any letter to make a feeling grow between us, right?

I knew that I would keep fighting to regain your smile for the rest of my life. I owed this to you and to me. I realise that I was wrong and that is all that matters in the end. But equally, you cannot leave my good intentions aside. After all, I only meant to make you happy and to respect you every moment of my life.

My piano, my sound, watching the waves during calm moments, surrounded by the silence of the sea, I feel the vibration of a song to be named after you. You inspire me in a musical way. I would write you a song with no words in it. The keyboards would transcribe with perfect intensity and free calmness your essence, your demeanour, your smile. I

could listen to you then in the endless evenings of my spring in which you no longer are present...

“See the moments when something seems to come to an end as a new beginning.” I kept saying this to others but no one wanted to listen. Now I tell myself that and... But it’s natural not to be able to think of a new beginning when the pain was crushing my soul. I couldn’t do that even if I pulled myself together. Because deep down, I didn’t welcome any new beginnings in my life, I just wanted you back.

I dreamt of you once. I try now to recall every detail of that dream. The knot in my throat had gathered all the tears in the world and my body was shaking. I could hardly move. I couldn’t walk and was good for nothing. In the dream you looked at me as if I was the man you hated most on earth for what I did to you. The look I saw in your eyes scared me and made me feel haunted by my own self. I felt you were sad, upset with me, and I couldn’t find any cure for my loneliness. My heart ached, so real it felt. In the dream, after a while, the distance between us and the reproach in your eyes grew bigger and bigger. It all turned foggy. I was terrified - I knew you were there, wanted to get closer to you but the distance between us was not diminishing.

I woke up with a broken heart because I knew that a part of this pain, from what I felt in the dream, found place in your heart a while ago. I don't know if you still feel hurt now, but as for myself A, I am aware that I caused you pain. And if I couldn't see this clearly then, as I should have, it was only because I was equally as hurt.

There were times when I wanted to transfer in your heart every cell of my own heart so you would feel the pain you caused me too. Only imagining doing this was so scary it would make me grateful to life for not allowing me to do it. It would have been terrifying to know you would go through something like that, even if...

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Chapter 8

Desire

... you are stronger than I am.

Dear A, I am completely mad. My feet are kept on the ground only by the tenderness and love of the people I hold dear in my heart. Losing you made me realise how important it is that I keep these people close to me. But the empty place losing you left in me cannot be filled by anyone else on earth. When I say that there is no one like you I am probably stating the most valuable truth in this letter.

"I think I have fallen ill from missing you."

Yes, I miss you. I miss you in the morning, I miss you in the daytime. In the evening. At night. In the spring, in the summer, in the autumn and in the winter. I miss you when I am happy and when I am sad, when I either get enthusiastic or afraid of something. I miss you all the time because you were my haven. Away from you, with every step I take I feel I am falling into an abyss of memories. And I miss you even more. I miss the joy of our conversations, the smile of your well being, the tranquility of our long walks, the way we shared everything, the balance between reality and dream we used to keep. That balance would eventually veer towards dream as we both lived every moment with such intensity and felt fulfilled by the fact that we had both appeared in each other's life.

You left and took everything good in my life. You left me only my memories with in you I can still find happiness, even today, stranger, when I fall in my thoughts, like a child, with an empty gaze, without being able to or even interested to see or hear anything around me. I collapse like that in an endless vacuum, in a pain which has nothing left to squeeze out of me. And that's how I find peace, in our past, in the reality of those moments we had both experienced. The regret that you are no longer by my side keeps upsetting me, but

somehow, you manage even from afar to bring me comfort with your smile from the picture we took when we first met.

We smiled so much together. I feed off the memories of our smiles. I quench my thirst with them. They keep me warm in the winter, and cool in the summer. They help me sleep. You give me strength. Every time I look ahead with confidence, every moment I stand up determined, hopeful, towards my survival, it is down to you and I will be eternally grateful to you for that.

Now that you are far away from me, completely disconnected, do you ever feel the urge to contact me? The desire to talk to me? To take a walk with me to try and come to terms through a discussion? Even if only for a second? If I didn't write this letter to you, would you ever look for me?

If you missed me like I miss you, you would run in a heart beat to me, to come see if I am doing fine. I know this because I get this impulse every day. If I could, I would launch with power of my mind a message written in shiny letters all the way up to a twinkling star and then pray for you to look at that same point of love in the sky. My message would reflect itself in your eyes. You would read it with your

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heart and reply... I don't know how to communicate at this level but I know that if I could do it, you would find a way to come to me.

I miss you and I would keep telling you this for ever. I loved and continue to love every minute I spent with you, every date we had, every message we sent each other, every line we wrote to each other, every embrace we comforted or made each other happy with. I loved every word you said and every feeling you made me feel. I kept all these in my heart as the most valuable gift life ever gave me.

I would like to get close to you. One evening, when you would be out with your girlfriends or when you would take a walk enjoying the cool air caressing your skin and moving your hair lightly. I would like to get so close to you that I could see you eyes, but somehow without you seeing me. From a safe distance, close enough to feel you are alright. I would like to see that what I did to you had not changed you. Because, my dear, when people go through a break up like ours, people get hurt badly. And suffering changes us in ways we could not possibly imagine. We become... different.

After you left, the pain I felt inside killed my soul and slowly, affected my body; time couldn't heal the wound, only made it a tiny bit better. And neither will the time to come succeed to remove you from my heart or extinguish the fire of all regrets that burn me every day and every night. I will not allow the future to make me forget you and I know that this will never happen.

You changed me by giving me strength. A strength hard to explain, because you need to have it in the first place in order to understand. It's a strength which makes you understand that nothing can beat you.

Today, darling A, I miss you more than ever before. I feel like I am in an oppressive desert and don't know how to escape.

I wake up and remember the mornings when the first thing we did was plan the day ahead of us. And when I was over the moon with happiness when we laughed like crazy and were content with life's beauty. We like looking in each other's eyes and discovering another human being who looked just like us and resonated with us. Another being in whose presence each of us felt good. I miss that now that you are gone. Life

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has changed its rhythm. I look around me and see people walk, laugh, quarrel, meet and I realise how much things have changed for me too. What an impact your leaving had on me!

After so much distress, after so much of my life lived before I met you, there is nothing I find more difficult; the pain of a life without you I found the hardest thing to take because I had fallen for you like a thirsty man would run to a spring. Even the hope you might come back to me someday hurts. My heart desires, from time to time, merely one moment of happiness, my eyes, your smile, my heart, an embrace. I won't know how to accept them when and if you ever come back.

Then my mind urges me to write to you or to do something in that direction. Some days, I manage to write down a thought, a feeling. Other days, I postpone writing altogether. Because it would become even more painful. There are days when I feel I cannot breathe because of the pain. And then there are days when I am glad to see I can find in me the strength to smile at a sunrise. I smile only at the thought that this is what I would do if you had been by my side.

The time of postponing writing this letter has passed. I am writing it now. And this brings me comfort. Because I was always honest with you and this is what I am doing at this moment too. Only today, some of the truth hurts.

How have you been? You know I always thought highly of you and didn't want you to get hurt, ever. All I did came from my wish to make you as happy as we were on our first evening together when I felt so happy by your side, grateful to my destiny for bringing you my way.

I would like to feel peace between us, once again. I would like to kiss your cheek and touch your delicate skin once again, to feel enraptured by your innocence, one more time. I would like to know that you are the same and to unburden myself, to stop living with the fear that I destroyed you beyond repair or that I took a piece of you that you could never replace.

I began to feel the urge to take new steps. Listening to my intuition, a smile starts to shape up in the corner of my heart when I would pray for another day with you... I overcame so many hardships, I am amazed I can still hold this pen in my hand right now.

“ When something doesn’t work as it should, I think about you.”

So much time has passed by... my memories of you seem to be from another lifetime. The days I feel like I am about to die because of how much I miss you, I close my eyes, and relive every moment, one by one. If you had been a song, I would sing you in my loneliness. The sad truth is that I am not in solitude. The ocean is merely the space I chose to write to you. It is in my mind and in my heart. It is the place I isolated myself in, the day you broke up with me. You see, nothing is on my side apart from the light breeze which joins me when I go for a walk and think about you. When I am sad, I do the same thing and finish my walk with the image of your face smiling in my mind. I can’t cry after that, I only get tears of emotion in my eyes and my whole body shivers.

I would like to tell you that you should feel remorse for how you treated me, so I can move on, but your smile is enough. I can’t have any hard feelings for you.

Do you believe I somehow had a hunch that you would leave? I told you so many times that I didn’t want you to

disappear on me, I begged you to stay next to me and you promised me that you were going to be my pillar no matter what.

There were days when I could only look around me, passively, I would analyse what was going on, and observe all the subtle things. That's how I started to understand what made me sad and what made me happy. And I realised that I couldn't make peace with loneliness. Loneliness made my depression escalate to extremely high levels. I had this knot in my throat for days on end. I wanted to cry. I would cry but that would not do me any good.

I needed someone by my side. So I relied on you again. You cured me up to the point I managed to survive. Painful fight for survival, but even so... I survived. In my memories with you, that's where I found my cure. I would close my eyes and confess to you how much it hurt. I would tell you that I am sad and that I am sorry. I didn't know what to do in that situation and again, I asked you. In my imagination. And I would stay for minutes there, looking for the words you would tell me. There were days when I would immediately know what your response would be and then, other times, I would fall asleep with you in mind. Every day, however, without

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exception, you soothed my pain as much as you could, from where you were stuck in my imagination.

I knew you would have comforting words to tell me. And that's how I would fill my heart with happiness, knowing that you are somewhere, far away, but if you could come to me, you would give me strength to carry on. I would thank God that you exist and that I had you come into my life. You were there for me, genuine, making me have deep feelings, and giving me strength. In my thoughts, you were still holding me in your arms...

I dreamt of you last night. You were again, by my side. You looked so happy... Although I was afraid that you might be a dream, I wasn't scared that you will disappear. The moments we had together was all that mattered. I couldn't think of anything else. I enjoyed us being together. I felt I was one with you. We were together and all our memories came alive in my dream. I was content and relaxed in a way no one else had ever made me feel. Everything around us was moving at unimaginable speed, but the two of us, hand in hand, seemed to live all moments in one. And you were by my side, again. After missing you so much, after crying for you, I felt your heart near mine. You looked at me

and breathed lightly next to me, happy to bring me joy again, stranger! I relived the most beautiful and intense feeling possible. To be with you felt like I was covered by a comfortable, warm blanket of love.

Honestly, the more I looked at you, the more I understood that nothing is more valuable to me than being next to you. I felt your palm holding my heart, I felt you finding yourself in me. You rested your head on my chest and I embraced you with all my being. You were looking for me, putting your face next to mine. Those cheeks that made you explode with happiness at the start of our relationship. I could feel your soft hair on my neck, happily caressing me. We didn't need words. We knew each other very well and knew we had both missed and cherished each other as much. You stayed like that, in my arms, till dawn, lighting me up with your light. Innocent, sensitive and equally powerful soul, you are the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me. Your gaze, always shining. Your embrace, always comforting. Your smile, always soothing. Nothing shadowed the peace, joy and happiness we breathed in our communion. I loved your laugh, tiny panda, and the comfort we both found in each other's arms. You were for ever charming and kind. In each other's arms, I caressed your face. We felt we had come to terms with

everything. Now I am awake. Obedient, I am waiting for the dawn. We had met again in our world.

So much time passed by and I still miss you, my dear. I miss you in every moment that has been passing since you went out of my life. But I feel I miss you these days more than ever before. I've been thinking about you with higher intensity than ever before.

I haven't given you up. In the times when I feel lonely, sad or content - as content as I can feel without you, I close my eyes and think of you. I see your smile and all the moments we lived together. And those moment are full of joy, but they are too short because suddenly the pain overwhelms me when I come back to reality, and release that my dreams will never come true, will never find their embrace. You are far away from me, and I am stuck in that far away land.

I would like to dream of you every night and to make the dream last the entire day, to keep it imprinted in all my senses when I wake up, in all the steps I take through the day, until I go back to sleep and meet you again. My life, although an illusion, would be so beautiful. Because nothing that happens on this earth matters if I am not surrounded by your

presence, physically. I would like, that whatever flash I remember from my dream most clearly, to be the one I had in front of my eyes every time I blink.

“Do you know how I start shaking at the thought of seeing you? I am purely going insane.”

There are so many days when I get the impression I see you. When I am in a cafe, take the metro cross the street, I open my eyes wide to see if it's you I am seeing. From a distance, the illusion is quick to enter my soul, which starts to shiver with anticipation at the thought you are only a few steps away, close enough for me to call your name. So I get closer as I want to make sure that it is not you and that it is all in my head. But my sensitivity when I think about you has grown so much that I keep staring, as if in a shock, at the illusion that is so close to me, that in two or three steps would be so near that I could stretch out my hand and touch it. But I never follow that impulse. I just keep watching for a few seconds, sometimes more than a few, trying to take in every inch of that person's face until I finally realise what is really happening. I miss you so much, my dear, that the gaze I hold at the sight of those women who have some of the features that remind me of you is merely a manifestation of hope. I don't

dare to hope that finally you would appear by my side, even unintentionally. No, I cannot raise my hopes so high. But I can hope that you would be somewhere, in my vicinity. And even though we it feels so far, we both live our lives in the same corner of the universe. In the end, I realise that this is a the reality. We live in the same city after all, despite my attempts to isolate myself in the middle of the ocean, where nothing can disturb the memories I have made with you.

The truth is that I actually hope it isn't you. When I think I see you in a crowd, my mind skips over my strong desire to meet you again. The fear and weakness overwhelm me as I start asking myself what it is that I would tell you first and how I could stay clear in my head when my heart would beat uncontrollably fast.

Beyond this truth, I very often look for your face full of love amongst the people I meet when I take a walk. If you would like to see me again too, maybe destiny would plot somehow to make us meet. Who knows, maybe it can make it happen... and maybe it will do just that when we both need each other again.

I asked you once what we would do if someone or something would get in our way and tear us apart. Your answer was reassuring, made me smile and comforted me, as always. I would like to believe you meant it and that, putting behind us the reality of our separation, they were not empty words to you, back then.

I fell ill, so much I missed you, so painful it was and still is.

I am not at all ready to let time heal my wound, even if it could. But it wouldn't be able to do it! Because I am driven by my reason, my will and my emotions. If I ever came your way again, no circumstance could give me the time I would need to tell you everything I feel. So why would I invest my hope in that?

You mean too much to me for me to leave you behind. I sometimes wonder what my life would look like today, five hundred days since we last saw each other. Would you have still been with me? I know things were different. I miss you terribly!

I thought your mission was to be my pillar in my life, but now I sometimes think that it was quite the opposite. You

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came into my life because you needed to evolve, you were at the start of a new journey here and things couldn't have been better for you. I am therefore guilty. I should have known better. Back then, I should have known better!

How strange! The suffering I went through when you left was infinitely bigger than the one you soothed when you came into my life...

Chapter 9

Reliability

... and at the same time, made me feel so good.

Oh, dear A, how quickly time flies when I write to you... I face East, without looking directly into the blazing sun. I take my pen and paper, and pour my feelings down with the ink that starts drawing shapes and colour on my way to your heart. And when I look up to the sky, I realise many sunsets have gone by...

A few days ago, I searched the depths of the sea and the line where the sky meets the ocean, hoping for another “one more time”, and remembered our first embrace. And all the ones after that. And an embrace is so short, really. I would

like to give you a hug that could last for eternity, as a sign of gratitude for all you made me experience, and so that we could feel it for ever, to comfort our souls everywhere and anytime, wherever we would go.

That way we would both be the most privileged of all people in this universe, for we would enlighten our souls with the friendship that bonds us, and we would know now that there is no harm in that. Silence surrounds us, and we only have each other, whenever we would need comfort or want to share a happy moment we lived that day. It would all be so simple. I would be happy. I am sure you would like that too; when you read my thoughts in this letter, I would like you to feel no remorse and no pain.

And nothing would ever compare to this eternal embrace. We would know that there will never be a time when we wouldn't be together, come tears and smiles, finding nothing too difficult, embarrassing or ridiculous to share. The abandonment in this embrace would serve us both as support in all our endeavours in the life ahead of us. I know I hurt you and this made us both behave inappropriately, trying to protect myself and not to lose each other. I would like for us to be able to put all that pain and the unpleasant memories

behind us; to hold on to the good things we had, and both feel no remorse, no secrets and no negativity between us.

Seated in this armchair from our past, I started to write to you. I wonder when and how I will get rid of this nightmare. Of the unrest that haunts me whenever I think of what I did to you. Of the frightful memory I still have. Of the air I breathed when you left me.

Dearest A,

will you forgive me? We live in a world, a time, a space, a society and context in which we do things sometimes we cannot understand ourselves. In this regard, I know that I was wrong. But sometimes our mistakes come from a good place. We were both too selfish to see that.

I was wrong to think that I knew more than you did. I didn't give you the credit you showed me you deserved. I should have known better. Now I realise that my good intention had no value without the right actions. I understand that only now, as well as the fact that you needed someone to have faith in you back then. I did it, unconditionally. But somehow an instinct from the past made me want to protect

you. I didn't show you that as you deserved. There is no use now in asking myself why I did it. Even if you would like to have an answer. What really matters is that I was wrong.

I see it all clearly now and I beg you to forgive me. I was a fool not to listen to you. You see, now you know I am not as "golden" as you used to tell me. I am not perfect and I feel I had not been so wrong in my entire life as I was in how I behaved to you.

At some point, I told myself that it's time to move on, no matter what I do, no matter how many days pass without thinking of you. I am so sorry that I hurt you and made you suffer. Apart from our memories, this letter always holds my request to forgive each other, my hope that we can smile at each other again, as I believe we can do this together. For us, dear A, an embrace of our hearts will never come too late.

I am tired of waiting. You, I am certain of this now more than ever, will never look for me. And even if you would ever do, we should not leave things unsaid. I don't know... I am sending you this letter because of that.

I need to let you know that you meant everything to me, you were the space in which I functioned fully, the time in which I lived, my dream and my strength to keep fighting, my hope and my impulse to keep dreaming, my pillar which infused me with optimism. You were my joy, my tear, my every emotion. I know. I know that that dream was too beautiful to ever turn into reality but I cannot stop hoping that we will smile again, in the name of all the times we lived together.

And that we will hold each other tight. If you cannot get over something, please tell me. Is there anything I could do to be part of your life again? People say that time heals all wounds. But that is not true in our case. I am still aching, whilst you.. I tried to get in touch with you a year after we broke up. I didn't hear anything back from you...

I know that it might seem far fetched, but it was you who made me invincible in the first place. I felt your pain, I breathed the bitter tears you condemned me to, and now I feel much stronger and unbreakable. We usually give our most valuable things without being aware we are doing it. Maybe you didn't even mean to give me so much, so many feelings, and then this strength... but you did.

Don't ever allow anyone to tell you that you are incapable of doing something! Anything! Stay away from those people! They advise you so because they are incapable of doing that thing themselves. They are afraid that you might succeed and that they would be left behind. Intentionally or not... But you are capable! You will always be, no matter what thing you might want to achieve. I know you that well. I can see that in you. Please believe me. Count on yourself with all your might.

I have been taking no action for a long time now. I didn't write to you...only from time to time I would write you messages on a piece of paper, fold it and then place it under my pillow before going to sleep. In hope that I would dream of you. Do you have any idea how wonderful and cherished a dream can be when the woman your heart holds in its greatest esteem, is no longer near you? That changes the reality. Although an illusion, that dream has power over you. I had a dream in which I had to fight for you. You seemed absent as determined... It was so painful, I woke up feeling grumpy. You looked annoyed that I showed up, and despite my wasted attempts to talk to you, I didn't want to wake up. That dream left me dry, emotionally as well as physically, and still... at least I was with you. A few meters away from you. At least I got to see you...

There are so many hints I never managed to tell you. So many stories, so many things I went through, and taught me lessons I believe you could have learnt from too.

Before I met you, life had taken me down many different paths. I loved, smiled, suffered, won, lost, understood, learnt, rebelled, I was happy, indifferent, involved, ignorant, loved, applauded, scolded, I said 'thank you', I rejected, begged and cried...

And if we never meet again I know I'll suffer, but I want that at least one small portion of the things I learned, to find their way to you. Life comes with pain and inevitably, with hardships. Had I been by your side, I would stand as your pillar of strength, in every moment, but from the distance this ocean puts between us, I can only reach you through these words.

I have always seen hope as a good thing, perhaps the best thing of all. When we are sad, we hope to solve our problems, to overcome our obstacles, to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We look for haven in the heart of someone close to us. We look for a pillar. In its vicinity we feel good, comforted, motivated, and then happy. When we get deeply disappointed, on the

other hand, we are left without hope. In such moments, do not despair. Keep calm and accept things as they come because things are meant to happen that way. Do not rebel and wait to see where the new path takes you. Being rebellious can be physically harmful. People will tell you that hope never dies, that it is the last one to die or that it is acceptable not to hope any longer. Don't get confused. Keep the flame of hope lit for ever. Even if pain feels unbearable. A light will show itself to you when you least expect it, and when you need it most.

I like to believe that there are no problems, but only obstacles in life. The moment you say the word "problem", the difficulty seems to somehow increase, a solution becomes necessary and that is not always easy to find or to assemble. I know that obstacles can be overcome. Three tips: determination, effort and time. They often appear in our life under different shapes - inner obstacles or job-related obstacles. When you are motivated by your emotional side, you will fight passionately in order to achieve your purpose. Have you ever asked yourself how success comes when it does? Because you don't stop until you get it, because you've always wanted it and you had a strong motivation.

A sense of defending what is right and what is true is deeply rooted in our consciousness. The right thing to do is to remain objective. A Man, with capital M, is someone who has the strength to stand by what is right whenever needed. A true friend is the one who slaps you when you need to wake up to reality. Other people's bad intentions will poison the spring of goodness that comes from you, will harm you without asking for anything, not even in a pragmatic sense. I remember when you put yourself in an unpleasant situation in order to protect someone who was mean to you. I am really lucky that I have met you, my sweet Edelweiss...

Joyful moments, collected and protected, are tiny things that contribute to our happiness through the beautiful feelings we live when we give birth to dear memories. In the days to come, bring plenty of joy to your dear ones. Be it with a word, a card, a book, a compliment, a suggestion. The happiness you bring to others will come back to you. Your cheeks will hurt with all the laughs you will laugh.

Where are you ever worried? Yes, I know... You didn't know what was going on with someone you cared about once. You didn't know if what your plan would work and so on. Such moments are bearable but sometimes tiring and painful

and tormenting. The more involved you are, the bigger the worry gets, until you reach the point it might feel you are out of breath. Stress can reach such high levels that you might feel every drop of energy is being squeezed out of you, that our living space closes in on you and you want to break free. Look for a haven then, for a loyal support. Loyalty will be comforting.

Do you know what comfort feels like? :) Comforting! I like to think we receive comfort as a reward for our good intentions, our noble thoughts and active involvement. Same as with the smile, comfort is brought by that someone who stands by us unconditionally. That someone who knows us better than we know ourselves. It is vital that we keep our pillar close. No matter how lost, alarmed, stressed, sceptical or hopeful you feel, your pillar would always appear. In its presence, everything will work better, sadness would not last long, possibly would even pass by unnoticed.

Us meeting was predestined for both of us. It is important not to lose the support, and if we get lost on our way, we owe it to our life to do all in our power to get it back.

“To stand by someone” means you need to support your pillar when it needs help, a hug, a smile, a kind word or comfort. Or all of them at the same time. I could write a whole book about my pillar of strength! She lights up the darkness, turns tears into smiles, calms the tempest, turns despair into reason. She can be objective and subjective at the same time. She is generous and grateful when she receives, hard to influence, standing tall when things get tough... all these and many more. It is healthy to have a pillar-soul, that we could share everything with, tell the truth without hiding, admit to every good thing we did as well as to any mistake we regret. Uncensored communication, with no boundaries, is useful only when it is mutual and freely accepted on both sides.

We rarely feel ecstatic and most of the times, we understand ecstasy after it has passed. It is happiness lived with such intensity that we cannot comprehend. Happiness leaves deep memories that will live forever in our hearts. It is so good to be able to smile anytime, even without reason.

Like when you would drink a cranberry tea, for example... Do you know what I mean or am I living in a parallel reality? If you can find yourself in my words, then that's a sign that you're a super Gemini! :)

Do you know that moment when someone tells you “ I smiled!” ? It is overwhelming! No... Uplifting! No, I don't think the word to describe that feeling exists. Thank you!

Each of use goes through moments when we feel stuck, or haunted by uncertainties, or put to difficult tests which can either destroy or consolidate a relationship. Being involved, we strongly feel the desire to repair the situation. No one can blame us for wanting to make things better. We have to find the way to marry the clam and patience with despair and uncertainty. When we succeed in doing that we become invincible. Do not give up! I didn't...

Now I know the reason why I appeared in your life: to cherish you, to hold you, to look after you, to learn to be a better man and to stand by you whenever you would need someone to rely on. I kept asking you to be my support because I felt small and weak after all I had been through, but you needed me just as much, A. I had found my place - to be your sweet haven, to protect you and to listen to you when you wanted to be yourself, when you needed to give up all your power and talk freely, to laugh or to cry. That's what I was meant to be.

During those days I got to find out a lot about you. I went through a beautiful time when I got to know you for real and to feel I was discovering you, and then, to make you smile. Or who knows, maybe I hardly got to discover who you were in our times together. And I only got to know you in the painful moments. And the time when I will discover you for real will only come after you finish reading this letter. You do know what hope is, don't you? Mine is merely for you to read this letter. Then, to choose wisely, with kindness, if you are going to write back.

"The smile is the rainbow of our tears, the expression of the happiness and emotions which overwhelm us. Genuine, real, beautiful and happy. That's how you fill my heart with happiness."

People say that the feelings that hurt are beneficial for us, they make us understand that whatever is at their core really matters to us. I didn't need to ache so much. I knew how much you meant to me right from the start. The final design was in your hands only and I believe that is what hurt more than the actual break up - the way it unfolded, your choice. Honesty could have been so useful. Our commitment. I felt scared for a long time. I kept postponing this moment. But

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today I am ending my fear. I decided to listen to my instinct, the same instinct that made you love me and then, hate me.

I loved you more than I loved my life. I will always stand by you whenever you need me. Our days together were wonderful. My embraces landed in your arms softly. And I made the new shore in your life feel close, welcoming and intimate. Home... Like a fool, turned upside down by your appearance, I cherished you. I cherish you now too, for all that you are. You are not an illusion. You exist, A, without pompous words, the most worthy of admiration, the most thriving and most loved gift my life has given me.

I will always tell you what I feel is good for you. Now and always the decision will be entirely yours. I will never hide from you what I feel in my heart for you - eternal gratitude to you and to your impulse.

I felt I had everything when you were by my side. I knew it then and I received a confirmation when you left me. I locked myself in my own chamber. I saw how lonely and how distraught I was. You had refreshed my life, you gave it life, do you understand? What you did to me was extraordinary! When I saw you, I felt so happy...

You came at the right time in my life just like an angel. It was unbelievable, but it felt like I knew you from the hopes I never hoped and the dreams I never dreamed.

The idea of A was deeply rooted in me. We gave each other all that we had more beautiful in us to share. Having high expectations, I gave you my hopes and my dreams, and I placed myself in your palm, just like this letter is doing now.

You, my precious and my darling, took me, stroke me and then blew over me, in your palms, plenty of happiness. I saw you. You took me. We enjoyed each other, stranger. And you poured extraordinary happiness into my heart. This is what makes you so special.

My dear,

At times we are not fully aware of the value of something we live, or of a situation we find ourselves in. We are living complicated times, and we risk to abandon the values that surround us. We forget to focus on the people around us. We get lost in projects, in priorities. Until one day, we realise a lot of time has gone by since we last had a meaningful conversation with a relative, or with a friend.

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When we stop and think, we see how, instead of showing admiration and gratitude to that person, we spoke to them hastily, in a temper, in a raised voice and, without meaning to, we said words which were not true to what we felt. And we don't get the chance to apologise.

When we get tired, we cannot even achieve our goals anyhow. We have many unproductive moments, we keep postponing things for later, and when we see no results, we give up. This is how months can go by, even years without achieving anything important in our lives, for us or for others. My dear, please approach the things that matter to you with commitment. If you want to meet a target, work hard, incessantly, and don't leave anyone else derail you. Laziness and chilling bring us short lived satisfaction. Remember, your aim is to find personal fulfilment. So keep marching on, reach your targets and achieve happiness! Put your personal life ahead of everything else. If you are happy and fulfilled professionally, all other good things will simply come into your life. Don't ever stop dreaming. I didn't do it either...

I felt the strong urge to tell you this now that you are far away from me. I hope you will cherish these words someday.

You have no idea how special you are! I got to know you, stranger! And let me tell one more time, you can achieve anything you want! Don't let anyone else tell you otherwise! People will try to distract you from your path, for fear you will leave them behind, and for fear you might be successful when they are not. So they try to make you doubt your choice, by telling you it is not possible to achieve what you have in mind, because they are the ones who find it impossible. I got to know you! When you plan to achieve something, you do all that it takes to succeed. And this is a power you need to hold on to!

It seems that the world we are living in has not fully baked. The events in a day, the situations we face, but mostly the people we encounter were either baked too little or too much in the metaphorical oven of life. We want to change things, to remove the burnt crust. Indeed it is difficult, but if something is important enough to you, you need to invest the necessary time and feelings. We are beings run by reason, will and emotion. Many times, if we get involved in something, our word, deed, or action can change things for the better. Into something that is needed. Knowing you, I am certain you will know where the fine line is.

Look after yourself in moments like these. Something might seem to be worth your efforts, but try not to harm yourself. Don't run away from problems, face them. And always remember, you come first. Nothing is ever more valuable than your life, your health and your happiness. Protect yourself and the people around you. Become immune, like you taught me too.

There will be times in your life when nature will cause exactly the opposite to what you desire to happen. You want to achieve something, you fight to obtain it, but no one pays any attention to you. Lacking the love you are looking for, you feel you are falling deeper and deeper into a sadness that you find it difficult to come out of. You consider giving up, because everything around you seems to move so fast you feel you cannot keep up. The good part is that you only need to do just one thing in order to succeed. Pure and simple, carry on. Trust me! And do that with the same enthusiasm you feel when you achieve good things. When you feel like you want to say you've had enough, give yourself one more chance. Or give that chance for my sake, ok? :) Take another step. Maybe it will work this time round. Don't let obstacles knock you down. You are powerful. So prove it to yourself! And never forget that!

Dear A, being fireproof doesn't mean that there will never be a fire. So, when the fire bursts, make sure you survive. It might seem difficult but it is the only option worthy of being chosen. That is only fair. Being apart had an impact on us both. See us as the salt and pepper, glued together. Although completely different, always side by side. We need to stand by each other, come rain or come shine. If you pull the two apart, after they were glued together, one or both of them will damage. I went through so much pain that I feel I cannot put into words. And I don't think you ached as much as I did, or you would have done something. This thought is somehow comforting me. I couldn't have lived with the thought that I caused such deep pain in you, after all the smiles I had put on your face.

I cherished all the obstacles life put my way. I knew they were there to help me. So I never shied away from sadness. But the pain that came after you left, crushed me. It killed me almost. It determined me to make wrong decisions impossible to repair. I also stepped into that world which was not at all ideal. Ideal was everything I had lived with you from the day you entered till the day you went out of my life. Our time together was ideal. After that, nothing appealed to me.

Your words didn't come to life when you thought them , nor did they die when you spoke them to me. On the contrary, they came to life after you said them. Then they would have this power over me, to either cheer me up or make me sad. Although I feel like scolding you at times, I prefer to be wise instead of snappy or feisty, and simply recount some of our situations. Our words reflect most of the times, our deepest feelings. Use your words carefully, for they can either hurt or bring joy.

Perhaps not enough time has passed for us yet. You see, despite the fact that I understand now how strong you made me become and how much good you did by me when you left, I would give this strength up in a heartbeat in exchange for a day, just one more day with you by my side. Perhaps this pain was necessary to get to fly through difficult times if they were ever to come. That was the turmoil I had to feel in this life to be able to grow and evolve. I must admit, that effort is what we sometimes need in our life. But now that I became immune, something we both found so difficult to do at the beginning of our relationship, can you please come by my side? Only for a few seconds... could you, please, do this for me?

I am waiting for you to come to me, to smile to me, and talk to me. To hold me in your arms again and to wash away any pain with just a few words. It would only take a second for you to snap me out of my sadness, to remove my stress - you breathe, and having you next to me, everything becomes beautiful, light and alive. I so long for us to stand by each other in the many moments when we need support. You have me, A, unconditionally by your side...

Octavian Fînaru

Chapter 10

Acceptance

... and I want you to know I will always be close to you.

Ok, enough. I don't want to bore you...

When I isolated myself in the middle of the sea, I couldn't think of anything else apart from you...and those moments when our cheeks hurt. I would stand, alone, staring with no focus, and then, would turn around in the hope I might see you there smiling as you used to. With your eyes shining. And your voice saying "my cheeks hurt". But you were nowhere in sight. The frame was shaped perfectly only on my mind. And

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I would wonder something worryingly strange. When I think of you, where does your image come from? Because I can see you without closing my eyes.

Only for a fraction of a second. And I am grateful that we, humans, have this biological ability. Because it would have been unbearable not to be able to remember you once you left.

The waiting... the birth of a smile is hanging on the hope this letter brings. I want you to know everything. Everything defines what you asked from me, what you hoped would not lead to destruction. The waiting can either kill the hope for a chance, or it can give that chance life. I chose the middle way. I sent you small signals but now I am giving you everything...

You know, this is tormenting me. The process is painful. What I am doing right now, I mean... Not only because I relive those moments, but because I don't know what the consequences will be. I am scared of the next choice. I hope for a smile and all I need to do is to ask for one. I regret everything I did to you. Please, believe me. Forgive me. For the sake of our most beautiful memories, please smile at me one more time...

I wonder if you changed in all this while, since we last saw each other, and if I had an influence over you in any way. I would like to believe it was a good one, otherwise... I prefer indifference! I hope you got some of the strength you gave me in all this time.

The world needs people like you. On the 10th of June, when my mind couldn't comprehend the truth, I felt your words in public. Then understood how much you value life. After a long silence, you finally spoke - not to me, but I heard you. And I believe I was the only one who understood you. Give me some value too, please.

You see, A, us, humans, often do unthoughtful things, have crazy reactions, take random decisions. When we have fulfilment ahead of us, we don't care about the people around us. You taught me how to behave differently. You showed me you cared, you paid attention to me and appreciated me when I didn't deserve any of those things. And when I understood that, I planned to learn step by step how to be like you. A better, wiser, more caring, more understanding and calmer man.

You liked when I made you smile. Now I dedicate entire nights to you, looking for the right words to recreate in this letter the spring, or sometimes, the autumn of our story. Slowly, I start to fall in love with these pages, only because you are in them. And as amazing as you always are, you embellish everything with your presence. Even in absence... We'll live and see what will come next. I, for one, can only hope for a "one more time".

People say that happiness is not something you can ask for, that the moments when we are happy and smile are the most valuable in our lifetime, and all we need to do is live them as they come, and keep welcoming them in our lives. At peace with myself, I defy all absoluteness and aspire to another "one more time"...

If you were to reject my feelings, I believe that writing this letter killed any chance of you ever smiling to me again. It is the last thing I would want but equally, I could never meet you again without addressing the things that happened between us. These things had to be said, for my peace of mind and for you to know. You deserved to know the truth. I want to stand by our commitment.

Oh, God! I will never stop thinking about you!

Some days, I wake up in the morning and it seems that my life is no longer a prisoner to our past. I look at the sun and tell myself I can continue to live without you. Then I close my eyes, trying to avoid its brightness and begin to look for my path... I manage to find it by accident and start to walk down that path until the memories overpower me and that's when I return to the comfortable armchair of our first meeting. That warm apples and forest berries beverage you chose at the beginning is the fastest route back to the past. I wanted to make you happy and not to care about anything else...up until I didn't even care about myself. And life showed me, with your help, that I was wrong.

I would like you to come to me, to look at me, and then for time to stand still while I would continue looking you in the eye. I would understand everything that is going on in your heart, and find all the answers you have for me... With one look only, you would manage to answer all the doubts that I have now, milady. And that would bring me peace.

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I am right here, A. For one more day with you, for our happiness, for our memories, because time passes, the days go by. Full of smiles, A. I am right here.

Thank God we were born in the same age, and that it was part of my destiny to meet you. If I hadn't met you, I would have never known that there is something so beautiful in this world as you are. And I wouldn't have liked to live this life without getting to know what your smile looks like. As well as mine, when you are by my side.

From my window I can see a hill and the trees. From my bedroom window I can see the lake. I can see the sky's reflection in it. The dew on the grass in the morning, and the breeze in the air are on my side, as well as many comforting and painful dreams of you, but it feels like I have nothing. As far away from you as I am, nothing seems appealing any longer. The tempest in my heart doesn't seem to calm down and I have already lost count of the nights I have lived without you.

The other day, I counted 480 something... Days in which I haven't seen your face apart from my memories and in the

pictures. I feel haunted in fact, tortured by your last words, our breakup.

I am now a one hundred years old young man. And I walk in this young body down the street, in the park, on the train. I realise that the world feels sad, because it doesn't know you. You have an amazing gift to show people who know how to see things, your beauty. People are so used to small things and not know gratitude the same way I was used to thank life incessantly when I would see you smile at me, get closer to me and take me in your arms.

I am a fool falling prey to nostalgia and living on air and memories. I can still remember that moment when you smiled at me for the first time; the day when you looked into my eyes for a few long seconds; how you made me tremble when we touched hands. The emotion I felt turned into a shiver that spread all over my body making its way to the extremities. Now I tremble as I feel its absence. And this shiver comes from fear. Fear mixed with hope, the hope in the chance of a "one more time".

I sit sometimes and wonder if it wouldn't have been better for me that you never came into my life. It would have

been quiet. An oppressive kind of quiet, really. But still, quiet. Submission. I could breathe unburdened.

I knew that I had nothing left. I could not smile, but I didn't even want to. I was left bare of happiness and hope. It was raining inside me, from the top of my head, throughout my whole body, heavy drops falling down inside my entire being. During my long walks I could see the world unravel around me, past me, and I didn't belong there. Life went on, but inside me everything was moving so slowly, it seemed to me it was standing still. I had no hope left. But you had to appear, to take everything that you found in me, to light me up with that spark in your eyes, to give nuances with the beauty of your smile, to give me life. To open my eyes and make me see that there was still hope. To be born at the same time with you and for you to give birth to me. To contaminate me with your strength and cure me with your presence. To take our first steps together in this life and to live. To find life in everything we did. To get drunk with life, and not to get tortured by it. To feel it in every single cell of our bodies and to feel unique. Unstoppable. To feel beautiful. Perfect. To be two and then, one. To encourage each other and be the perfect loving pair. To take the shape of my body with every embrace. You believed in me and taught me to believe in myself. You

taught me to believe in an authentic “Myself”, and I believed in myself because you were there by my side.

And I felt that I was exactly where I was meant to be, how I was meant to be, and with the person I was meant to be. And I wanted you to believe in yourself, in who you are and in your potential. You didn't put a smile on my face, you were the smile. Now everything has come to an end. But I will never accept that it was all an illusion. Both of us were real. And we will always be. No matter how long the time we will spend apart or how big the distance between us, we will always stay united, for eternity. In each other's arms, with the same perfect, intense, moving smile that made us live, and feel that our cheeks hurt. Connected in a thought, beyond time and space, as painfully sweet as it is, we will always be together. You. And I. And everything you meant to me.

The bad thoughts vanishes as soon as I regain clarity. Of course I love that you walked into my life, you brought so many beautiful things with you. How could I ever regret the fact that I met you despite the long and suffocating pain I felt after you left? Perhaps I would be entitled to that, but I refuse... No, definitely. That's why I can't stop hoping for another “one more time“. There must be another chance. It

can't be too late for things to take a beautiful turn; I will prove it to you. If we both want to give it another chance, the future will exceed our imagination.

I try and remember all the moments we shared when we went for a walk, or talked on the phone, when we sat on the sofa, in a relaxing silence that only the sound of our laughter would interrupt at times. How happy those times we spent together were and how emotionally full my soul felt. I saw you shine and knew how you felt, enthusiastic and blessed with well being. I knew because I felt the same way. That is what people call fulfilment but you put it so well, simply physically - "my cheeks hurt". Indeed, you were right. I realised that as I kept listening to you and watching you. I could feel how our cheeks were expanding with the many beautiful words and conversations at the beginning of our friendship. We had a lot in common and were similar, in our opinions, ideas, thoughts and principles. We needed each other and when I was not with you, a fluffy panda was going to hold you whenever fate didn't make it possible for me to be by your side. This need brought us together and I was aware of that right from the first moment. I didn't anticipate for one second in all that time when I lived without reason, waiting for life to take me to

a new level, that I would meet such a... perfect pillar of strength.

I walk down the same street I used to walk on those evenings when I saw you off. I can almost feel you by my side. And when I am on my own, writing to you in my corner, I can almost hear your breath in my ear. I look at a picture of us. You are smiling at me, frozen. So I try to stop time in its tracks once again, and again, and again, hoping to come to a halt, so that when we would begin to live again, we would take things from there. We would know to make the right choices and to stay away from pain this time.

This is not me rebelling, although sometimes I ache so much that I get angry. When I am upset I don't want to accept the reality of what happened. Yes it's true, sometimes I behave as if you were right here in front of me, and I ask you then why did you have to do this. But I realise that not the smallest part of you, of my memories with you, of the feelings I have for you can't make me feel angry or upset with you, no matter what. The sadness and the pain in my heart took me through all possible stages a human could go through.

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You made me understand that in life, another soul can hurt you as easily and intensely as it can make you happy. When I think about you too much, I ask myself why. Why did you come into my life, you, the pillar of strength that left me? And I give myself the answer too. So that you could give me all the positive things you gave me and which remained deeply ingrained in me. So that you could change me, a change that is obvious in every little thing I do.

I would like to know if you considered my showing up into your life as beneficial as I did consider yours into mine. We were both meant to meet, but I also need to know that you managed to let go. That you forgave me for the harm I may have caused. That somehow something positive occurred in your life.

I wasn't like the air you breathe to you. You continued to live your life after you walked out of mine, as if nothing had changed, to breathe like you used to before you met me, or almost the same. You healed your wounds. You discovered that I wasn't indispensable. I, on the other hand, fell down. Read this letter carefully, stranger, for you still move me. The days I lived without you felt suffocating. I needed to inhale you more than I needed oxygen to stay alive. I understood right from

day one what a terrific human being you are. You meant so much to me, right from very first the moment I met you. The more I smiled, in our times together, the more I loved you, for everything that were are and everything that you meant to me. Not that it matters much any longer. We will never be able to smile the way we used to until we are certain that we forgave each other. I get worried when I think that you will not be able to do that, because there are still things I would like to tell you, but I cannot do that unless I look into your eyes. I would like to tell you that I forgive you. Please, forgive me too.

I remember I used to look at you and almost hear you say “here I am, it is me you were waiting for. Your pillar! “ Your smile gave me so much comfort I felt I was going to lose my mind from the tremendous happiness I felt inside. Your smile made me feel satisfied and grateful not to be alone any longer. Such intense emotions can make people have sleepless nights and shortness of breath, but thanks to you, to your position and to the generosity of your most cherished emotions, I slept more calmly than I used to when I was a child. Yes, you were my air... :) I hoped no one would ever take you away from me and then I ended up doing that myself.

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Recently, one night you appeared in my dream for the one hundredth time or so. This time, we were on the seaside, in this place I went to a few years ago, before I met you. The sun was shining and its beams were bouncing back from your hair, your eyes, making your smile perfect. I can only remember snippets from the walk we took in the dream...on the sand, close to the boulevard- there were no other people there - by the sea, and then on the wet sand. I felt the waves on my feet. Not at all cold, not at all warm. They had the same temperature with the skin of your hand when I touched it. We were walking by the sea and the water was stroking the soles of our feet, then our ankles, just below our knees. And I remember I was telling you everything I had on my chest, like I do when writing this letter to you. But most clearly I remember the calm I could read in your eyes. It was unlike my other dreams.

You were smiling sweetly at me, looking at me warmly and followed every word I was saying. It felt like you were not at all upset with me, not in the slightest. Nothing else mattered, apart from the peace and quiet I got to inhale with that sea breeze.

My dear, I thank you for all the goodness you brought into my life. I will always love you for how you changed me; I am

afraid that you might never read this letter. And this is all that I wish for from the bottom of my heart. Every cell in my body wants to make you understand how important you were and still are to me.

Let me tell you a secret. I didn't really know how to begin this letter or how long it would be. But I followed my own advice.

"When you don't know what to say or how to begin a conversation, just be honest! "

It is a good piece of advice. My darling writer, I can't wait to read your reply. Please write a book. Wherever I would be, no matter how far or how near, rest assured that I will get it and read it.

It would be wonderful if we could find peace until then. It is important for you to know that I regret how things turned out, you have no idea how much. I am sorry that I behaved selfishly when you told me the truth.

I am sorry that I asked you to choose what to do next. I should have been aware of the fact that the freedom of choice I

was giving you was a form of involuntary manipulation. Every minute without you, without the possibility to ask for your forgiveness, without the chance of a new beginning, landed like a harsh slap. Deep down in my soul I didn't want it and I didn't want to let you go. Until I met you, I had never realised how lonely and isolated I was because... I didn't know you existed. Now that I am all alone again, where shall I begin? You gave me strength but you didn't teach me what to do if we ever broke up.

I want your friendship back. It made me vibrate with emotion. And I want to feel that vibration once again. I want to live that euphoria that filled me up inside, completely, when you would look into my eyes and tell me that you will never walk away from me. That everything will be wonderful. That this is it, "I am a pillar". In your memory, I lost all reason and I am certain that madness in your presence is far better than the reality away from you.

"They say you spend your whole life... "

I so wish for you to be happy. Wherever you are, away from me, stranger, my angel, precious soul. Even if you never

come back, I want you to know that I will never forget you and will always cherish what you did for me. During our time together and afterwards.

I hope you are happy. Forgive me for all the times I hurt you. Rest assured that when you left me, my heart ached, the loneliness I breathed like that, almost suffocating, all made me pay back for my mistakes, a thousand times over.

Maybe it was all in vain... If I can't receive one embrace in exchange, so we can carry on living our lives in peace and happiness, I fail to see what it served. I refuse to believe that. Life can't be so cruel. The universe is not so lame. That didn't happen just to reestablish the equilibrium. That wasn't just a punishment for what I did to you.

Look, with all this passing of time, the question still stands. Why? What for? Or even, what is next? A year and a half has gone by and our story is still being written.

I think about you often and I remember the times we spent together. You come up in my dreams sometimes, looking friendly, other times, rebellious. I watch the sun rise and set, I see the colours of the ocean in front of my eyes and I continue

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to hope. It is never enough, but what else can I do? I did everything that I considered I should have done, and those things I didn't manage to do, now would be of no use. I am afraid that I would do more harm and lose whatever we have left left between us.

My only hope is, simply put, hope. I hope that someday you will come back and you will tell me everything I need to hear.

I am writing these words to you and although I had to go back into the past, I am thinking about the future. I believe that sending you this letter is the best I can do. My biggest wish is to receive a reply from you. Perhaps it won't be exactly what I am expecting, but it will never be as painful as your first reaction after you left- the absence of words, nor as painful as the words we told each other after that. I am going to tell you right away what I have in mind.

I went to the seaside. I wanted to take a walk on the beach, thinking about you. I felt that I had to do this before I would write the last few words in this letter. I feel you are in this horizon, in the sea breeze. I admire you tremendously. So, so much... As much as I used to admire you when we were

together, and I will keep doing that for ever. Please tell me you feel the same. Please tell me that you think of us dearly. Perhaps you wonder if you can ever trust me again, after all we have been through, but please find the truth in your heart. You know how important you have always been to me, how much I cherish you and, although I hurt you without meaning to, how I could never do you any harm. I would do anything to know that you are happy.

I think the moment has come to slowly end this letter. I wish I could turn back time to prevent all those bad things from getting in our way. To never let you leave or take any action that would affect us both. Now I have to look around me, everywhere, and remove all the folded messages I placed under my pillow, the ones on which I wrote down thoughts whenever you would pop into my mind and I would long to dream of you at night, and that somehow my words would find their way to you. Those and another +1000 memories.

“Homo locum ornet” Sssmart...

This makes me feel closer to you. Every evening. You used to say that it was plenty-plenty-plenty, but I took you in turns and cherished you every day. I find myself almost in

every single thing, especially in the seventh one, from the past until present. And since we are talking about the past, have a look into ours, where things are kept written on the 29th November, at 4 o'clock. You had a revelation and you told me that you were about to follow my advice. The next day, you started something with this thought in mind and told me you wanted to keep my curiosity alert. For a while. Which proved to be a long while. You have to tell me what that was all about.

“ Is it over now? “

In case we ever meet, I would like you to think about something. Do you think it's better to be indifferent rather than involved? Of course, that differs, from case to case, but in general, if we were to draw a conclusion. When we get too involved and take everything to heart, the joy and smiling becomes so powerful that our cheeks hurt, well sadness is so heavy that we hardly manage not to faint. If we weren't so involved, the pain would be smaller, possibly inexistent, we wouldn't feel hurt, but equally we wouldn't feel so happy. I know, it seems there is no middle way, and the mind flies to a compromise, but I would like to know what you really think about this...

We felt something in our journey which cannot be put into words.

"I am 19 and I haven't done anything with my life."

That feeling we had will always stay with us, impossible to describe, and both of us will invest all our goodness to replace the tears we shed with a smile.

Yes, I have finally managed to let go of you, I am alive, breathing..., but not entirely. Nothing is more painful than breaking up. I watched movies in which the death of someone brought me to tears. I watched people tell each other things without meaning them, in anger or when upset. I watched people avoid conversations, others, isolate themselves in their sadness. Then, I watched the same people regret their own actions. I also remember other movies in which loyalty was so strong that the admiration and dedication lasted for many years, beyond death. In times of solitude such feelings are impossible to take. I saw the same emotion exist between a man and an animal. In such moments you reconsider everything, any fight, you pick up the phone and call

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everyone, to apologise and to forgive, to tell them how much they mean to you.

I read books, I watched films, so millions of situations and events, numerous characters and life-lessons. I saw people cry. And people smile, but, to be honest, no smile seemed in any way similar to ours. Above everything, I saw tears being shed. I watched emotional stories in which death was the one that removed any smile from people's faces. When someone left and only the other one stayed behind to cry and pray for it all to be just a nightmare to wake up from it. But that wouldn't happen. They got no second chance. But we do! Stay by me, please, and soothe my unspoken pain. Only together we can make this happen. And it is so easy. Only if you want it to happen as much as I do, it is so easy...

I see ourselves in 70 years from now. This thought kills any hesitation I might have to send you this letter. I would regret enormously if I didn't reach out to you. 70 years go by quickly. I want to be next to you now too, in the time of our youth. How could I leave you behind? You were too good for me, A. I don't want us to get to the point of no return. I don't want our youth to go by and to receive your smile too late. To wake up at the end of our youth and realise that our lives

could've been...warmer. And that only depends on our choice. It makes me feel good to think about you and at the same time, it makes me feel bad, although not sure in what percentage. The reality is painful and the reality is that life has left us behind...

I would give anything today to receive your admiration again. The hear your words, those you said then, that you left for me at the end. To know that you thought them again, internalised them and then told them to me, for me to keep for ever, nothing more. The positivity of your thoughts aimed at me. That's what I long for. And I want to talk. I want our last... I want to erase the memory of those cold arms around my neck when we were in each other's arms for the last time. I want you to hold me in your arms like you did the first time, as genuine, as innocent, as wild as you are and vibrant, happy...

Give me one more month in the middle of the sea and I will write you ten times more! How will I manage to send you this letter when I keep getting new things to tell you...? I want to rebuild what we destroyed like two fools. I need your help to soothe my pain. Let me explain...

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EPILOGUE

... to be continued?

Drawing a line and being grateful to life for it brought you my way, we lived some special days together, don't you think? :)

As I told you at the beginning, this letter comes as a request to "forgive me!". Oh, my dear, I am so sorry for taking you through all these stages. Although your decision made us become like strangers and tormented me for a long time, I can't believe you didn't feel as sad and as disappointed as I did.

There were no "unpleasant things and inconveniences caused", so you should not feel sorry about any of those. I am the one who is to blame. You were a good innocent child, who

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brought light over my life. I caused you pain because you were thrilled and felt compelled to give everything up. This could never be cause for distress. I am the only one I blame and hold responsible, guilty all the way, worried until the day you will forgive me. The only grudge I have is that you didn't involve me in your decision, that you didn't give me the chance to be an active part in finding the solution, which would have appeared immediately to bring back peace, if we had been totally open. After you were gone, I was in such physical and emotional pain that sometimes I felt I couldn't, or even wanted to, move any longer. It hurt too much. At the beginning I thought it was anger and resentment. I kept wondering what thought in your mind triggered that course of actions. But now I see it clearly. I discovered the Supreme Good. And since I started writing this letter, I got to see things your way. If there had ever been a moment when I might have been deeply upset with you, although I never had negative feelings for you, I want you to know that in my heart, I had already forgiven you even before the feeling arose in me.

Forgive me! First of all, I shouldn't have been so thrilled and confident when - unconsciously manipulating you - I put the decision in your hands entirely. You would have

taken that decision secretly. I am guilty for this too, one more time. Then I should have behaved differently when I expressed my worries and intention to protect you, to be close to you, to give you back some of the admiration and worth you gave me with generosity.

I am sorry. Please forgive me. I lost your trust and didn't respect you, I was badly wrong and hurt you unfairly. And even if I never get to see you again, you deserve to know and I need to tell you that I am very, very sorry.

I might be sensitive, but only due to some unique feelings. You are the most correct, most vibrant, valuable and loving human being I know. You are the most special thing that has ever happened to me and this will always stay the same. I don't want you to try and change these thoughts. You were by my side exactly when I needed you most. You are all I hoped for, although I didn't know what I was asking for... You are so perfect! And you will always be.

It took me a long time to regain clarity when thinking of you. It's painful to admit that I feel fine, even now, without you... what you did helped me evolve.

Many things that have a good beginning and then finish are there to help us grow and appreciate what we had. Making decisions...hurts. It hurts too much. The pain crippled me so much that I couldn't see how wrong I was. I wasn't the only one who got hurt. You were upset too. I see that clearly now. Well, it's been a while since it all started to make sense. Writing to you now I understand the situation even better.

I have to be honest, I can't take this any longer. Although I still find this painful, I could not leave you behind just because I can see things more clearly. I get lost inside myself and think about you again. We need reconciliation. We need to look each other in the eye. We need an honest word and one more embrace.

From the highest point of the detachment I could reach, I confess that I want to wake up thinking of you, because you give me the comfort my everyday life needs. You infuse me with your highest intensity of positive energy.

One day, you asked me to stay out of a fight with certain people. I did that. And I kept doing that ever since, and had resisted the temptation even when I felt that a

quarrel was somehow needed. I understood we could be kind in any situation as long as we stand by what drives us. When certain events were making me angry, I would think of you, remember your kind voice and that would calm me down immediately.

I don't know if you remember the circumstances when we spoke that time - I was about to get out of the building I get lost in, on the verge of doing something illegal in order to help you, and you kept sending me text messages, until you managed to persuade me not to take action; consequence of which, whenever I feel like I want to scream, get angry, pick up a fight or get involved in one, thanks to you, I manage to keep my feet on the ground. Controlled, balanced, calm. As you liked me to be. Calm. You see, you made me a better man! :) How will I ever get to thank you for that?

Look, thanks to you and to the pain you made me feel, I am not afraid of anything any more, apart from God. The many smiles I saw you smile filled me with hope. And the fact that I came out of so much pain alive means I am invincible. You helped me and made me stronger! Sometimes the harshest of all slaps is needed to make you find the strength to carry on. I hope you will feel this strength someday too. There will come

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days when you will need it, it's unavoidable. I hope when such moments come, you will think of me. Look for me, please, so I can hold you tight when you need comfort. When you need me. No doubt, I will be there for you, and welcome you with open arms. My sadness wasn't replaced, but made room, rather, for the certainty that nothing can knock me down in life.

You helped me build up an immunity I never thought I could achieve. You will always be with me for the rest of my life, everywhere I go. All the time. In everything I do, I say or listen to, your whispers will live in me. Your face will forever be ingrained on my heart and I will forever be grateful that you came into my life. You let me hold you in my arms. You made me cherish you, and then, you walked away from me.

This is why you did me good. It feels like I have been under a train, and somehow I managed to come out in one piece. I am immune now, impossible to let down.

My dear A,

Thank you! Thank you for coming into my life when I needed you most. Thank you for letting life introduce you to

me. Thank you for all the happy moments, for all the smiles, for all the tears, for all the hugs, and all the punishment. Thank you for all that suffering that made me become stronger and for all the lessons that made me wiser. Thank you for this immunity that I spoke of in our first conversations and which you believed I had mastered. Only you helped me achieve it. Thank you for not making the lesson any easier for the sake of a brighter future.

Thank you for sacrificing your hope for my well-being. Thank you for being patient all this while and for staying calm when I couldn't understand what you were doing. Thank you for all the positive thoughts you planted in my mind even when, lacking clarity, I didn't deserve them. Thank you for teaching me that I can overcome any obstacle and I can face any disappointment. Thank you for showing me that I can achieve any goal as long as I have a good strong motivation. But most of all, thank you for showing me that you will never disappear, no matter where my life will go from now on. Thank you, dear A, for the faith I have today in a genuine reconciliation between us.

I would like to know what impact our time together had on you too. It pains me to think I hurt you beyond repair or for a long period of time and that it was hard for you to get over this, but even if that would be true, I would really like to hear it. I want to know if our time together did you any good and if there is anything beautiful you kept inside from that time. I would like you to remove sale from the time that came after we broke up. I would like to know how you changed since then. I would like you to come back, without making the time that went by and all the suffering matter so much. I would like us to hold onto the lessons we learned instead. And looking ahead, I would like to get to know you as you are now.

My whole life has changed. I need to know how your days go by now. Same as I want you to know how my days go by.

Here is a thought I would like you to consider when reading this letter. It is perhaps yet another lesson to learn, for us both, one that might come handy on our journey on earth. Always give people the opportunity to make things right. A few minutes out of your time don't mean that much, in anyone's diary. But those minutes can mean a lot for two people and the comfort their hearts need. Reading this letter,

have you ever wondered what it would be like to meet again? I, for one, would like us to be calm, just like the smile I gave you that day, a smile that you said so innocently moved that you still kept on your face. I would like us to speak for all the days that went by without a word between us. I would like us to be confident in our friendship for it has not vanished, not for one second. I would like us to feel comfortable and not to be aware of the hours flying by. I would like us to know that we can tell each other anything, no matter what we feel in our hearts. I would like us to be so powerful that if we wanted to achieve something, we could prove we can get there, with honesty, wisdom, harmony, loyalty, with a smile. And I would like us to end with an embrace to reassure each other that we can feel free to call each other any time from now on, with no pain and no remorse in our hearts, that our friendship is still alive and that we made peace with ourselves.

And here we are now, you, reading my letter, me, looking for your smile. This can be our last chance. I would like you to take it so we can rejoice in it. I would like so much to see you, when the right time comes and when we both decide that that is a good thing to do, and that our friendship is invincible. Really it is up to both of us. If the time comes for us to meet, amongst other things that I like to know, I would

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like to find out if our time together was as meaningful to you. I would like to know that you are not upset with me and that you have forgiven me. I would like you to know that I have forgiven you and thank you for everything.

This is what I long for, should we ever get to meet again. For everything to be smooth between us and for conversations to start with the same enthusiasm we had when we first met. On an emotional scale, the admiration and esteem I have for you, my gratitude and longing for your forgiveness are infinitely more valuable than my feelings, all the suffering and sadness I reconciled with. I could never judge you, I would only bring up the sad things in our conversation only if there would be something good to gain from that. When I think about you, I get a warm, friendly feeling of gratitude and admiration for you.

I wish you felt at peace too. I wouldn't ask you to give yourself over to me, quite the contrary, not at all. But what I believe you could give me is just a drop of who you are, a bit of your heart, a genuine smile and words from your heart.

A few minutes of your time and a trip in town to see it shouldn't be that much of an effort, especially if we were to

think about the comfort that would bring this and how valuable that is. I am overwhelmed with grief at the possibility that I will never hear back from you or that the answer I will receive will be full of indifference. I, my dear, would like to see you, not to read your letter. You would have a chance that I don't have right now. It is important for me that you understand how much I would love to meet you. It is possible that these pages won't mean much to you or perhaps, that they will find you cold and full of resentment, as anything does coming from me. I know that. It makes me sad, but no longer blind. :) I would rather not receive a negative response from you, or different one. I would like to keep this good feeling I have now thinking of you, despite the lack of fulfilment and of reconciliation. I would prefer silence. This is just a thought. A few seconds later, I realise that I couldn't stand living a lie. We need to cherish and accept whatever reality has to give us.

Running away or hiding from it is not the answer. We should face our past and our actions. Who knows, if I don't hear from you, in a year and a half I may write another letter to you. Part two, a kind of "I forgot to tell you that..." :)

Simply put, we are two people on a planet, and I think we owe it to each other to understand one another and not to

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end everything abruptly. I believe you will find peace if you listen to your heart. At least this is what I found listening to mine. I will be content and at peace, knowing that you did the same.

There are still a few feelings to relive from our time together. One or two...

Plus, like I've already said in this letter, there are two or three things I chose not to write about here. It is not a pretext for us to meet, I would only prefer to tell those things face to face, looking into your eyes. Please, don't feel scared or alarmed. These are not intense or embarrassing things. They are just some ideas that I would like to share with you. I would like you to find out about them. Knowing you a little, I believe you would feel good hearing them.

Occasionally I was a bit of a masochist in this letter, wasn't I? :) You used to tell me something similar, that your writing fed off your disappointments in life. This makes me think, once again, that our first discussions somehow anticipated how our story was going to end.

“Someone should write a book in which the hero gets to gradually fall in love with the reader.” Utopia? :) You said it was a phantasy, but through this letter you made the phantasy become real. And you did that, as all good things happen, unintentionally. Imagine what great things you could do intentionally! Because, dear A, now that I relived all these feelings when writing this letter to you in the past few days, I can see things more clearly, and I feel stronger. But above all, I learned to appreciate even more what we had, and I felt even deeper in love with our feelings and happiness. It was amazing to surround myself with your presence when I started writing this letter. How many things were predestined right from the beginning!

I really don't know what else is left for me to tell you now. I think I could write whole chapters in my attempt to make you understand me, to show you how vital it is for me to release the tension between us, to finally say “Farewell”. We moved on and we learned how to move on. All I long for is “one more time”... I start to shake when I think we might meet again.

And there is no exaggeration when I say that even ten years from now I will still be waiting for you to show up...

As a conclusion, A, if my letter didn't succeed to create in you an impulse, an emotion or desire to write back, please keep following you heart to be happy. But if the appreciation you once had for me is still alive, and you will take me up on my invitation to meet, then please meet me on the 5th day of the following month, at 5pm, same place, on the same street where we had pistachios and held each other in our arms for the first time.

I will wait for you every month, year by year, for 15 minutes every time. And we will have cranberry tea together, the tea in which our souls will find reconciliation. And in that emotion and smile, we will find peace and satisfaction.

*Missing you dearly,
to my pillar of strength !*

Writer's Note

Some stories are worth being told. The feeling of love is worth being kept in our hearts. The emotional journey we took with someone is worth remembering for the rest of our lives. The main purpose is that when we look back at our lives, we feel reconciled and fulfilled.

This letter is more than just a call, and says more than "forgive me" and "thank you". It is a story hidden in the heart of a character, who is looking for peace, with quiet despair and energised inner calm. It is up to you to decide if he ever finds it and if he does, for what reason.

No price is ever too small to pay for our own happiness. That is why, the sender of this letter is neither in two minds, nor fearful, in the rather limited story he tells and in the actions he chooses to take. He knows that the feelings he

experienced are worth any effort and, now that he has clarity of thought, he is ready to fight for himself and the receiver of this letter.

The reality we live in keeps us with our feet on the ground but at the same time, it shifts our focus from the real values and our goals on this earth, from what makes us truly happy. I would like to think that every woman on earth feels that she is, or could be, one day, the receiver of this letter.

It is important to get over the chaotic and foggy moments caused by uncertainty and to understand what we love what makes us happy and what impacts our thoughts, words and actions we have on others, how it can influence our connections with others, to remember to tell people how much they mean to us, to cherish their love, to keep our hearts open and to welcome love in our souls, to find out when we can be of help, and not to lose ourselves in the confusing mix of unfulfilling elements, to keep bringing joy to our dear ones, for that will come back to us to help us resonate, come to terms with ourselves and with the environment we live in.

But most of all, let's keep hoping...

Some people say that hope is dangerous. That it lights up our expectations, which can or cannot be met. And when things don't turn out the way we want them to, we suffer. With every grief, the human being takes the shield out to protect themselves emotionally.

That defence mechanism comes as a barrier between our own self and the people around us, allowing our minds to conquer our hearts, our reality to kill our dreams, for life to pass us by. In disappointment and sadness, the human aspires to embrace this perspective, to take it on with conviction and even, to spread it around. If we could all activate this force in us to fight for our dreams as persistently as we fight to give up hope, things would be totally different. Because, when our sorrow ends, a beam of light comes out to make us contradict ourselves without delay; we whisper to our self "hope is a positive thing".

If we took a close look, we would notice that this defence mechanism is yet another type of survival, a sign that we are alive. We need strength and motivation to live life beautifully. It is extremely important that we never lose our reflexes; that would make room to indifference, the most certain path towards discontent.

Like I mentioned before, there are three things that can bring the peace desired by the sender of this letter: honesty, hope, love. He is honest, because he knows honesty is highly appreciated by the receiver. He is full of hope, because this is the only good thing left to do. And he loves, because he got over any negative feeling he might have felt in some moments in his life.

Honesty helps and comforts us. It brings peace to every second. It protects us from any hidden things and keeps us on the right path. It can't ever harm us, because it comes hand-in-hand with love, which stands for kindness, help, encouragement, loyalty, support, truth, respect, friendliness, fairness.

Life is too short to be unhappy. It is exhausting to live in a parallel universe, or in our own bubble. It is suffocating to live under stress, hurt, scared, worried, sad, when we were given a voice and words. Words indicate emotions, feelings, wishes and help us make ourselves understood. Simply put, our voice, interweaving the tone of our hearts with the rhythm of a passing moment, speaks out the truth, with honesty, everywhere, hoping and receiving answers. The fear vanishes.

There is no room left for uncertainty. We take the next step forward and we live, fully awake, the present.

Honesty, hope, love.

The person receiving this letter must be very lucky. She receives from its sender something he looked for even before he met her - support. In this letter, the sender speaks openly, then sends it full of hope as he wrote it from a place of love.

This proves how mature he is, now that he has managed to get over the difficult times, the grief, to ask for forgiveness and be grateful for all the suffering. In his maturity he already knows that life is love and approaches everything around him with kindness.

The writer hopes that she will accept to read these pages and will cherish them as much as he cherishes her. Every single one of us needs someone like that by our side. A strong friendship keeps our feelings alive only if it's based on mutual trust and appreciation.

How comforting an embrace can be!

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I invite you to end this reading with a text which talks about every molecule of an emotion - the Kiss. This kiss will be, for each of you, an opportunity to connect with a feeling of fulfilment, as you would like it to be, as you call it in your imagination; it can be a kiss, it can be an embrace, it can be a handshake, it can be a look, a walk in nature, a summer day on the beach or the flavour of a spicy tea.

Set yourselves free. Set your emotions free!

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Our quiver in a kiss

Kiss me! Get close to me, make the wait short so our lips can touch. Breathe in, my love, our fulfilment, and rejoice! Kiss me, love me forever! When I kiss you, everything lights up inside us. You heal my longing, my pain, and my heartbreak. A memory comes to life on my lips and you are living it; we love each other passionately. No holding back, no waiting. We hold each other in the kiss of our love. With your kiss you put a soft smile on my lips and I go with your passion; tempestuously, you plant the illusion of sublime happiness in me, you uncover me completely and hold me close so I can feel every drop of it. Kiss my tears when my longing becomes unbearable, come from behind and surprise my thirsty lips.

In the morning, kiss my closed eyes, awaken them with your sunny love, kiss my skin with your fine lips, caress my hair too with the comfort of your palm, so the vibration of your love makes me shiver all over. And let our feeling of completeness in that kiss wake up every cell in my body, so I am born again and again, in the flow of this feeling, for ever alive through our love and our time. Let me cherish, with every kiss you give me, always so familiar and yet so new, unique, the colourful rain of delicate petals falling freely on us.

Kiss my smile, touch my ear, so that I can remember how I used to tremble when you touched me, in time and in the dream that ended, let's live that again through our love; kiss my forehead until you slowly get closer to my smile, because I want to feel your whisper running through my ear. Kiss my life in this moment of our eternal love, kiss the tempest of my dreams, spark them with your being, stay close to my soul and give me strength, darling, to help. Kiss me passionately in this ecstasy we reached together, so that your lips can unchain the spring of burning desire which will run like a river inside me; to get drunk in our infinite sunset and only the trembling sensation of delight running through my whole body to keep me awake.

Kiss me every day, every night, with the desire born from our love, looking into my soul at sunset, to find comfort in the peace of our becoming one; kiss me, breathing at ease with your impulse in my arms. Kiss me gently. Kiss me deeply. Kiss my lips so I can cry a smile; kiss me warmly with the breeze of your mouth, kiss me for ever, don't stop this exhilarating quiver; stay here, close to me, in union, so my chest can feel the beat of your heart which rises victoriously in the flavour of our love.

I love you; kiss me at night, under the moon, so I can feel the space between our lips slowly disappearing, our kiss to be more complete than the sea - our touch electrifying, the perfect fit; our gentle movements drawing a clear path, the touch of our lips giving us fulfilment in unity. Kiss me under the sky full of stars, to

light up in space our pure love, to take in the flavour of our kiss passionately, abandoning ourselves to the wave of our burning quivers. Kiss me so I can only live in the shaking sensations which soothes me inside, with the tip of your tongue you give me a sensation impossible to comprehend - only the two of us, stranger, can stay captive in our shore, free.

Kiss me long! As if for the last time! Kiss me for an eternity. I am so afraid I might lose you someday and, if you had to leave, love, my dream would be to remain stuck to your lips. Stay with me, love, so we can rejoice in the communion of our bodies; I want to have you close, to look into your eyes, to know that you are here. Kiss me, do not stop; my heart runs to the stars, in the aurora borealis of our love; I explode. And your lips make us quiver warmly; love smiles at us, I am shaking all over; in the cool pool of our love, we find delight, together.

Kiss me, again, at sunrise!

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