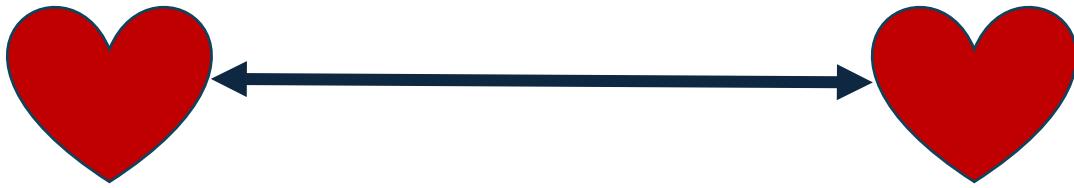


# A Thousand Miles Apart



By: Alejandra Canchola



## Introduction

When I hear the front door open, it brings me so much joy, knowing my husband has come home safely. Waking up in the morning, feeling your arms around me, makes me feel so loved. And as we walk next to each other, our hands lightly brush, a jolt of electricity and a warmth that spreads through my body. Even that split-second touch is enough to feel everything at once.

I remember our first date so vividly, the way your cologne smelled at the coffee shop, the way you stood so close to me when we were waiting in line. Which drinks we got, and where we sat. The conversation we had felt like I've known you before. Talking to you was easy, simple, I wanted to pause the moment and appreciate where I was. I remember being nervous about my first impression of myself in your eyes. I wanted to be your dream girl, the girl you felt happiest with. The girl you wanted to take out on a second date. Turns out, I am her.

After 10 months of fun dates, sending letters to each other, and talking on the phone for hours, you asked me to marry you.

Someone pinch me!!! The man whom I had a secret crush on in High School is my husband! He is my best friend, the one whom I can go to for everything.

But our ‘happily ever after’ wasn’t secured by a simple text message or a lucky swipe. Our marriage, which started with a high school crush, endured months of us being separated only able to communicate through letters made our bond stronger. Our Relationship was built on a physical, tangible archive: a stack of paper, doodles, and pen ink. This is not just a book of sweet nostalgia. It is the story of how a daily, intentional practice of writing love letters to each other not only kept our long-distance love alive but ultimately became the enduring foundation of our life together. Every word, every “I miss you”, and everything put into the letters was to keep our hearts together. We were fighting for each other, we wanted to create a future together, and that is exactly what we are doing now. We have started to check off our list of things we wanted to accomplish together, and every day we get closer to checking off one more thing. Wow, how amazing is that?

**Some background information:** We both grew up in the same small town, went to the same High School, but he is a year older than me. We had the same History class together, and we even sat together at the same table for five months, we didn't speak to each other simply because we were talking to other people. Due to the COVID-19 shutdown, we didn't see each other again. The true obstacle was that he was off to ASU, a three-hour drive away. But that didn't stop me from telling him how I felt about him. I had him on Snapchat, and I swiped up on his story one late night and confessed how I felt about him. I told him I thought he was handsome and sweet. I obviously said more, but I'll keep that secret from my readers. From September until January, he would drive those three hours to see me on the weekends.

After talking to each other for some weeks, he told me he wanted to join the army that he wasn't looking for validation or a conversation to try to get him not to go. I remind just looking at his face into his pretty brown eyes, and knew immediately: this was a man who would achieve anything he set his mind to. The world saw an 18 year old making a difficult choice; I saw the unshakable potential of the partner I had always dreamed of. In that moment, the only thought I could cling to was "if we are meant to be, then God will make all things work out."

For weeks, I put my future in God's hands, praying relentlessly that Adrian would be the one, the forever connection my soul recognized instantly. My heart didn't just feel loved; it resonated, vibrating with a profound, once-in-a-lifetime certainty. This wasn't a teenage crush, it was an absolute commitment being formed in secret. I sought reassurance from God, yes, but more than that, I was pleading for destiny itself. I prayed for Adrian's safety, mind, body, and soul, even while we were only in our talking stage, because even then, I knew: I had already found the man I was meant to be a wife for. That feeling was the terrifying, beautiful battle between Hope and Control, and my feelings for him were the most intense, serious, and defining I had ever known.

Today, my reality is the answer to that girl's intense prayer. I wake up next to the man whose name I whispered to God, and when I feel the familiar jolt of electricity from the brush of our hands, I know that our love was indeed destined, but only because we chose to fight for it. Our story isn't romanticizing folklore; it's a testament bound in pen and ink. The stack of letters, that our commitment was real, intentional, and worth every mile of separation. We wrote it, letter by letter. And every single time I hear the key turn and that front door opens, it confirms the most beautiful truth: the future I risked everything to pray for is now the safe, warm, incredible present I get to live.

The words we speak go long ways, in this case, more specifically, a thousand miles away. Each letter holds more than intimate details and inside jokes, they are the foundation of our everlasting love. Intentions were pure, youth was present, and our future was being written by our own hands. Years later, the letters remain, a testament that we will love each other until we don't wake up.