

## Thank You for Coming

### PRESENT:

I stood by the door, awaiting your arrival. The dim sunlight spread its beams through the skyline and the windows. Behind me, round tables with white table cloths consumed the space that looked out to the view of New York City. Anxiously, I held my phone tightly, gripping onto its side like a stress ball.

I told you the ceremony for the Public and Professional Writing honorees was happening the next day after our first intimacy. A part of me believed that the universe would never grant me a chance to be with someone like you—caring, daring, and loving. I was wrong.

### PAST:

I got to your place in the darkest of time, around 11 p.m. It was after my phone call with my friend who was feeling heartbroken about his own love story. I didn't expect much—just a random spark of adrenaline to keep my mind busy, and away from the horrible dread I was feeling about my own love story. I always thought I was incapable of falling in love because the chances of me finding my true romance was fiction.

I stood outside while red blushing clouds dropped tiny specks of water onto the ground, and onto my horrible skin—all oily and unwashed. The atmosphere was thin and soft, almost magical with orange mists floating in the street lights. I came to the door, and rested myself against the dirty painted drywall. I was impatient and full of tension—I needed a release.

You opened the door in your gritty fleece shirt, all buttoned up. You greeted me with a dashing smile. Irresistible! Somehow, I felt warm, but I was still agreeing with my mind over the notion of a quick release—not attachment.

You led me to your room in your dorm of which you shared with three other people—none of them fitted your personality.

PRESENT:

As one of my colleagues discussed with me about the colorful flowers that we gifted to our mentor, you entered. With the same gritty fleece shirt and that same dashing smile. Seeing you shooting me a smile like that melted away all my anxiety.

PAST:

I entered your room. Your home. Your safe space. The main light was shut, but you kept the colorful, ever-changing LED lights on. They were hung on every corner of the ceiling—feeling like I was in a sci-fi movie where I was in this cube, and the lights kept on changing colors until it ended to a bright white, yet it remained sky blue the whole time.

I saw you were watching a Marvel film, “Guardians of the Galaxy.”—volume one nonetheless. It piqued my curiosity as to why a guy like you—looked all muscular and tough, enjoyed a comic movie with an extreme level of nerdiness. You talked to me most about your obsession with space as you pointed to a “Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope” poster hanging right above your twin size bed. You were charismatic and energetic—passionate about your heightened knowledge of the Force. Suddenly, my tension vanished like vapor from hot water.

PRESENT:

You rushed in to give me a hug—a tight one. Your arms locked to my back as I wrapped myself around your warmth. I perked up immediately, almost a relief from all the anticipation. We locked eyes with each other. I was lost in that dark jade eyes; nothing around could take my eyes off you.

“So tell me about the ceremony,” you playfully asked as my hand gripped your triceps.

“It’s nothing really,” I dazedly replied as if I was under a spell. “This is not my scene. I’m more of a sit-down-at-a-Wendy’s kind of guy.”

You laughed like a child just discovered humor for the first time, and your laughter spoke of medicine that cured away my troublesome awkwardness.

PAST:

I jumped onto your bed, lying down on the soft cushion that was your second pillow. We looked straight ahead at your TV screen, and just spent time talking about our love for films. You made some random comments, but they were funny and out-of-pocket. The conversation went on until time was lost—I didn’t feel like hours were passing by; I felt a lovely moment where time was frozen.

Slowly, we shifted our bodies a little closer together. Our eyes met. Locking in. I bit my lower lips, and went in for a kiss.

PRESENT:

As the ceremony was about to begin, I quickly pulled you aside toward the men's bathroom, tricking you to think that I needed to tell you something important. As you looked at me, eyes wide opened, I kissed you. You were caught off guard, but was pleasant about the trick.

We both chuckled like two teenagers just kissed behind the bleachers—all giddy and full with glee.

I led you to my table, but you were quick on your feet, suggesting that we should get the free food that was being offered. I was not fully hungry, but I was happy to accompany you as you grabbed a paper plate filled with stuffed rotini and baked lemon chicken. I was so in a trance of romance where I felt like I was in a romantic comedy. Who would have thought you were something special, even though I was never envisioned myself with a guy like you.

We sat down among my peers who happened to be all honored, but I noticed his eyes never left my view. The chemistry between us sparked like a flick of a lighter. We were so captivated by each other as if there was only white space around us.

PAST:

Right after our heated play, your eyes couldn't stay away from mine. I was feeling something strong. Something magical. Something that I never believed would happen to me. We wrapped each other so close, so lovingly to the point where we could feel each other's stories and emotions. I caressed your rough cheeks as your hand surfed through my dark soft hair. You asked for my name. I asked for yours—Lewis.

Running deep in my soul, I felt a connection with you—one that I felt like you and I were meant to meet in every universe. Our lives were destined to meet in one way or another. Surely, I was falling—it was at first sight.

My heart bloomed beautifully when you said, “I want to see you again.”

I smiled like an idiot, not knowing how to react.

I mentioned the ceremony. Figured you had plans, but you strike up an effort to support me, even though I was a stranger moments ago. You decided you would be there. For me.

I softly shared a quiet grin with you, but inside, I was jumping with excitement—so much that I couldn't resist from launching myself into the future.

FUTURE:

We were celebrating our one-month anniversary. We just finished our dinner at Tommy's Tavern, and decided to head to the Barnes and Noble next door. A change to a quiet scenery added more layers to our love story.

We strolled down the aisle of fiction, but as we looked, we stumbled upon the same book. It dropped to the carpet floor. We both kneeled down and grabbed it at the same time, and at that moment, we locked eyes. I knew that you were a chance that I had to take, and I was glad I did.

PRESENT:

As the presenters announced the winner of some writing awards, I was too busy admiring you, crushing on you. I was absent for whatever it was in that ceremony. I just focused on what mattered—you.

My shoes slowly touched yours under the table. Your face lit up with redness, obvious to everyone around that you were blushing with extreme glee. You gazed at me with your kind eyes, and I couldn't stop but get lost in them.

My hand gently settled on your knee. My thumb gingerly moved in circles on your brown jogger. Soon enough, my pointing finger unconsciously wrote, “I like you.” It was ambitious whether or not you caught my message, but from that endearing grin, there was no doubt.

PAST:

It was time for me to head back to my own bed, but you walked with me out to my car. Along the way, our hands automatically interlocked our fingers as we tipped back and forth on the pavement. Our giddiness never left our faces.

I unlocked the door and readied to leave. Something in me wouldn’t let me go, however, without kissing you goodbye for the night. My arms hung loosely around your shoulders as you gently held my waist.

After the quick cold breeze told us to break it off, you decidedly turned around and walked back to your room. As your steps make contact with the wet pavements, you spin your head around one last time. Your smile continued to shine through the night as we again locked eyes.

PRESENT:

My name was finally called up to the front of the room, along with my other four colleagues. I was lost in space as I didn’t even hear my name called.

I stood among my peers, but my mind was focusing only on you. Everyone’s eyes were jumping around, looking for a fixed object to devote their awkwardness onto. Mine was on yours—all throughout. I didn’t see you as a fixed object, but rather a lighthouse in the sea of

darkness—a beacon of possibility and hope. I saw somebody who would be there for the best of times and the worst of times.

PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE:

Whenever I caught a glimpse of you, I felt invincible. I felt safe. Through it all, I knew from the bottom of my heart, you were something that kept my mind occupied, kept me up at night. You were the reason why I still believed in love and fate. Across every universe, our paths would always cross each other, and always ended up with us getting lost in each other's eyes.