

Alex,

Do you honestly think I could ever say goodbye to you? Do you honestly think I could do that and be left standing? That the act of saying goodbye to you wouldn't rob me of so much that I would crumble to dust? You are everything to me, and I am not a girl who says things like that.

Do you know why I don't want to meet in person? Why I'm so freaking scared to meet in person? Because I know that the minute I see you, all of this is going to be all over my face, no hiding it, and while you've missed a lot in my last couple of letters, there's no way you'll miss that. I won't be able to hide it, and you'll see it, and you'll know, and I will ruin everything.

I can't stand there and listen to you tell me that you're sorry, but your heart belongs to Emma, Alex. I can't do it. I can't stomach the pity in your eyes, and I can't watch what we have fall to pieces.

But it's falling to pieces anyway, isn't it? I'm tearing it down with me. You're too perceptive. You haven't figured out what's wrong, but you know that something is, and you just keep pushing, and I am inches away from telling you everything, because in my attempt to hide this, to put distance between it and us, I've somehow given you the impression that I'm about to walk away. Like I could ever do that. Like the thought isn't utterly anathema to my very soul.

I learned that word from Mom, anathema. It means abhorrent, but it's more than that, it's something that is so counter to what you believe, so opposite to what you are, that the very idea is the height of

unimaginable. It's something so foreign, so alien, that the very act of thinking it feels wrong.

Leaving you, saying goodbye to you, is anathema to me. Do you understand? I couldn't do it. I know it's pathetic, being so hopelessly in love with you, but that's