

March 8

Alex,

I think there's something wrong with my CD player, because I could have sworn that instead of pronouncing TARDIS like tar-dis, you spelled out each letter, and also, that you didn't know what that was.

I'm crazy, right? You know what a TARDIS is. Right? TARDIS? Time And Relative Dimension In Space? Big blue police box that's actually a Gallifreyan time ship with a broken Chameleon Circuit so it just looks like a big blue police box? Bigger on the inside?

Alex. Alex. You need to go watch a thing. Like, right now. Specifically, you need to go watch Doctor Who, an amazing British TV show. Joe loved the show when he was a kid, and he introduced us to it when they rebooted it in 2005, and it's amazing.

This must be why I got no reaction to my Doctor joke a few letters ago.

Sorry. I am not going to spend this whole letter talking about Doctor Who. But I'm stalling because I'm not sure what to do with this letter. I mean, answer it, obviously, but I don't know if I'm waiting for more from you? I guess I'll just respond to what I have, and then if there's anything waiting for me tomorrow, I'll add to it then. I guess?

Sorry, I just don't want us working against each other.

Wait – you have an idea for something for your birthday? Alex, you know that's not how birthdays work, right? We give you presents. Not the other way around.

I'm already working on your gift, actually. I'm really excited about it, but it's a little time intensive, and your birthday is only a month and a half away. Then we'll be the same age. Because I'm seven and a half months older than you, and I figure I should lord that over you at least once. :)

Okay, I will not promise that I will never get mad at you. Never say never, never say always. But I will promise that I won't get mad at you for telling me the truth, and if I break that promise, you are allowed to force feed me banana peppers. Because here's the thing — I can't get mad at you for doing what I've asked you to do. I want you to be honest with me. Therefore, I can't get mad at you for being honest with me. I'm not allowed. Zoe's Rules.

And a small clarification. I never said that just anybody has the right to come up and spout unpleasant truths at me. There are a very small handful of people who I want to always tell me what they think, no matter what. You are one of them. I know that if you're telling me something, it's because I need to hear it, even if I don't want to. So please, don't ever stop. Okay?

I'm not jealous of ~~Emma~~ the time you've been spending with Emma. And I know, that's what jealous people say, but I'm not. It's just, I miss you.

Which may be the most ridiculous thing I've ever written down, because I'm pretty sure one of us is composing a letter to the other just about every day. But I think it's the recordings? And I don't want you to stop! But, when you write with paper and pencil, there's no time lapse. Like, Mom just called me downstairs to do the dishes between that last paragraph and this one, but you have no way of knowing that unless I

tell you. I can take my notebook and carry it with me throughout my day, and work little by little. But with the recording, you have to be able to do it all at once, so you have to have the time for it, and it's more obvious to me when you don't. Not that you don't have the time, but you don't always have the consecutive time.

Are you getting this, or am I doing as shitty a job of explaining it as I think I am?

Before I couldn't tell, so it never felt like you were running out of time for me, I guess. ~~Which, you're not, you're~~

I'm gonna stop. Because I'm messing all this up, and I sound petty and demanding, and it is a poor friend who begrudges another a celebratory dinner. I would never discourage you from living your life with people you care about. I hope your conversation with Emma goes well (went well?), and I'm really glad you finally won a game. I knew you would eventually. And, see? Poker. I was right.

And that's all. Sorry this is so short. I just don't have a lot else to write about at the moment.

Your Friend,  
Zoe

PS - March 8, late

I gotta stop writing things like that; I'm tempting fate, apparently. Betsy called. Michelle's lung collapsed. They reinflated it, but they think she's taking a turn for the worse. I know there's nothing you can do, but that's the update.