

April 3

Alex,

I would apologize for taking so long to get to this, but that will just invite a scolding, so I won't. But, yeah, work sucked for three days straight, and then yesterday, I had to catch up on schoolwork, and I know you understand all that, but I feel out of sorts missing so much time.

Alex, I think you being a counselor is a fantastic idea. Honestly, I think you would be really, really good at it. Your background and the things you've gone through this year have given you some solid insights, and you are wonderful at listening and knowing what to say and helping people to verbalize what they can't or aren't willing to admit. I'm excited that you've found something you want to pursue, at least tentatively. Let me know if you want me to put you in touch with Allie. She's almost done with licensure requirements, and she could give you a sense of what it's like.

Now you just have to pick a school, like me . . .

I'm glaring at you right now. You can't see it, but I am. Stop putting yourself down, Alex, and stop misunderstanding me because I know you know what I meant. I have plenty of good things to say to you, and I have said them to you, so me agreeing that there is something maybe possibly slightly messed up in how you trust the world around you does not mean what you're implying it means. And again, it is not a reflection on you. It is a reflection of the circumstances that have surrounded and shaped you. And if you're going to be a counselor, and counsel people to self-forgiveness, you have to start with yourself, okay?

~~Just because I haven't been~~ I've still been Subdued, huh? I want to be able to argue this so badly. But I can't, can I? ~~I hate being like this~~ I want to get back to bubbly Zoe, too. I'm trying. I'm sorry I haven't had as much success as I'd like. But you asked about the Loretto Chapel, so maybe I can bubble here for you.

The Loretto Chapel in Santa Fe was built in 1878, but the builders were kinda dumb and built a choir loft with no way to get to it. The nuns of the convent brought in all these carpenters to fix the problem, but they all said the same thing -- there wasn't room for a staircase, so it would have to be a ladder, which was not a solution the nuns were happy about. So they held a novena to St. Joseph, asking for his help. On the final day of the novena, a carpenter arrived, looking for work. He came up with a unique solution -- a spiral staircase. Legend says that he built it in a week, but records say it was more like a few months. Regardless, the resulting staircase was an incredible display of craftsmanship -- it had no visible means of support and was built with wooden pegs rather than nails.

But that's not the miraculous part of the story. See, when the bishop went to pay the carpenter, he was nowhere to be found. And when the bishop went to settle the bill at the lumber yard, he was told that no one had ordered wood for the chapel. Further analysis on the wood used in the staircase revealed that it is not a wood native to that part of the country. All of which leads most people to believe that the carpenter was St. Joseph himself. My favorite of Mom's books, The Staircase of Loretto, tells this story. And she went out there all the time for research, and didn't take me (granted, I was three at the time), so I'm thrilled that I eventually got to see it! It's one of my favorite stories because in a world so full of cynicism, it's nice to see evidence of miracles once in a while.

Regarding your corrupted pineapple, I don't know, Alex, you may have said those things to me, but as soon as you used the word 'pickled' in conjunction with the word 'pineapple,' my brain just shut down from the sheer wrongness of it, so I honestly can't recall. :P I can bring the snark! I can totally bring the snark! Did I or did I not just snark at you about pineapple? You think you're the only one here who can snark? Maybe I don't snark as much as some people, but I can bring the snark!

Okay, the word 'snark' no longer looks like a word.

Oh, you will watch the season finale of season 2. You will watch it. I will make you. And you will cry. Real men cry, Alex. It makes the girls think you're sensitive. Girls like sensitive guys.

I would like to hang out, I mean, at least for a little. If you have the time. If we schedule it now, I can absolutely have the day free. You choose, and I will take care of the rest.

God. You're welcome. I'm burying my face in my hands in utter mortification for how the compliment came across, but you're welcome.

Was I possessed by the ghost of a greeting card writer last letter? You're my wish come true? Really, Zoe? That's not what I meant. At least, I didn't mean it like that. I just meant that, gaining a friendship like this, that was the pipe dream of this project, you know? Except that I got lucky, and it came true for me. And I don't think I'm making this better, so I'm just gonna say, "You're welcome" and leave it at that. Yeah.

Wow. I honestly have no idea what to say about the name calling. Sometimes people are so ugly. I'm sorry that you or anyone else has to deal with that. It kills me that there are people like that in the world.

Let's see, what else. Oh! Prom is, like, a month away, so planning for that is in full swing. We're selling tickets every day at lunch, which is a fun adventure. The stuff for Grand March is being delivered, and we've collected so many strings of white Christmas lights that I'm pretty sure we could light the highway from here to LA and back. Seriously, I'm drowning in them. I've gotten to be an expert at marking them with masking tape to keep track of what belongs to who.

Lissa continues to be okay. She has good days and bad, and she says her dad does, too, and that he has also started going to a counselor, which I think is really good, especially since Betsy headed back to Irvine yesterday. I told Lissa she can call me if anything with her dad ever seems off, or anything like that, but I'm not too worried about Thom doing anything drastic. I really do think he's trying. So. There's that.

It's short this time, and I'm sorry. I wish I had more to write about, but I'm not going to wish for more drama just to fill up pages! :) But yeah. I'll talk to you soon.

Zoe