

April 18

Alex,

Originally, I was going to be sitting here waiting. I was going to call out as you approached, "So, I know you can't actually climb a tree. But I'm accommodating," starting in the middle of a conversation, per our agreement. But then this weekend happened, which makes everything about today different.

Now, don't worry. I'm still not standing you up. I'm here - No, no, don't look for me, you won't find me. I'm a master of stealth. Just listen.

There are some things I haven't told you about what happened this weekend. I haven't told you because they aren't the kind of things that you share over text message, and also, I've been so confused about how to approach them that I've second-guessed myself at every turn. But they are things you need to know, and things I want you to know. I'm just afraid that if I try to say them out loud, I'll lose my nerve. Hence my decision to stick, for the next little bit, with the mode of communication I know I can do with you.

Well, kind of. And that's part of the story.

Okay.

When Emma came into the shop and demanded I stop writing to you, she accused you of being in love with me. And I just knew how crazy that was. I knew

it wasn't true, and I said as much. But she had evidence. A CD she'd found on your hard drive.

I wasn't going to listen to it. I figured that if you'd wanted me to, you'd have given it to me yourself, and since you hadn't, I should respect that and let it remain private. But with everything that happened this weekend, I thought that maybe, if I knew what was on this mystery CD, I'd have a better idea of why Emma had done something so insane. So I listened. And came face to face with a whole slew of things I couldn't ignore anymore.

We've miscommunicated enough, Alex. I'm tired of it. I'm so tired of it. So let me be absolutely clear.

Alex Carter, this is a love letter. From me, to you. This is a love letter. And I'm not talking friendship love, okay? I'm talking crazy, insane, over the moon, head over heels, can't eat, can't sleep, can't focus for the daydreams love. I have been falling for you for months now.

Alex, that letter was about you. Not Kevin. Kevin just helped me open my goddamn eyes. I'll tell you that whole story in person, I promise, but that letter was about you. You were the one I had fallen for. Yours was the friendship I was so desperate to keep. You were the one I honestly believed could never love me back because by the time I saw what you really meant to me, I thought it was too late. Emma was back in your life, and yeah, you'd said you thought you were getting over her, but that was before she was there, all the time, taking an interest. And knowing that that was what you'd wanted for so long, what right

did I have to lay any sort of claim to you? I didn't want to be that girl. I was determined not to be that girl.

So I wrote you that letter, and I knew when I did that you would think I was talking about Kevin. I misled you, on purpose. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Because if I'd just said something, if I'd ever opened my mouth and told you – I could have put us out of our misery months ago. What we've been through since February is my fault. And I'm so sorry.

But this is a love letter. I'm saying it now. This is a love letter, because I am so far gone on the path toward loving you that I couldn't turn myself around if I wanted to. And I don't. I very much do not.

You are amazing. And you are everything I could ever imagine wanting, and if you can forgive me for putting us through this and for causing you pain, then I am yours. If you want me, Alex, I'm yours.

Alex Carter, I'm in love with you. And I can't believe I waited this long to say it. So can I say it again? Over and over and over:

I'm in love with you.

Yours (yours, yours, yours)

Zoe

PS - I know you're going to rush off in search of me now. But you don't need to move an inch. You just need to look up.