

April 7

Alex,

I cannot believe we have been doing this for six months. I don't think I've ever written this much before in my life. It is incredible.

Alex, can I say something about Emma? You know her better than I do, of course, but I think there's a possibility that she's not avoiding something so much as seeking something else out. Maybe I'm wrong, but it looks to me like it's you she's focusing on. I think she's right where she wants to be, and that she doesn't want to go home because it means not being with you. This is just one girl's opinion, but I think she's waiting for you to talk to her, and not about what may or may not be going on at home. I know how much you've wanted this, so I hope everything works out.

You don't need to text me to make sure my homework is done. Keep making jokes like that, and I'll send you a picture of my glare, so you can have it for future reference. And if you hold my letters hostage, know that I will find out where you live and come and get them from you, and make you watch Doctor Who while I'm there — you're an invalid right now. I think I can take you.

Did you really not expect enthusiastic support from me? We've been doing this for six months, Alex. Don't you know me well enough by now to know that I'd have enthusiastically supported a decision from you to be an alpaca farmer in South America if you'd been passionate about it? And when you're passionate, even tentatively, about something that honestly suits you? Of course you'll have my full support. Even if what you want changes in the future, you'll have my support. That's what friends do. You've been so much help to me as I've tried to figure out what I want to do. Do you really think I won't return the favor?

Mom would make a face if she knew I was recommending that book to you, but she always makes faces about her early novels. *Writers. Never satisfied.* It's my favorite, though, so it's always where I tell people to start. I hope you like it, when you get around to reading it, and I hope at least a part of you comes to believe in the miracle.

Okay, fine, yes, you're right about the snark. I would do exactly what you said. Either way, though, I think it would be fun. I want to do this for real, now, though, without the ghostly factor. I'd like to people watch with you sometime. I hope I could make you smile.

I'll get my work schedule on Saturday for the next two weeks, and then I'll let you know about your birthday. I know I have Sunday off because we're closed for Easter, but that may not be the best day, being Easter. I have to check on a few things.

I'm choosing not to comment about my blushes and whether or not they are present and what shade of red they might be, so yeah. We're done talking about it. (But how'd you know about my red bicycle? *peers suspiciously*) No, honestly, I didn't pick Lissa because of everything that came along with it. Like, yeah, I wished for a sister, but I didn't want another person to go through what she did in order for me to get one, you know?

Okay, questions.

1) Hardest question I've ever answered? I dunno, but I bet it's one of yours. :P No, honestly, if you'd phrased it as 'ever been asked' it would still be this whole thing with Thom and the money, but since I haven't answered that one yet...

2) The biggest surprise I've ever had was definitely finding out I had a sister.

3) (At the moment, I most want to finish your birthday present. :)

Sorry, this one is gonna be super short, again. I feel awful about it, like now I'm the one neglecting you, but I swear, I will make it up to you, if not next time around, then definitely for your birthday, okay? I just, I've got some stuff I need to push through right now. It's been one of those weeks where things kinda crept up on me unexpectedly. I know you want bubbly Zoe back. I do, too. But I'm just not there at the moment. I'm trying to give myself time, but I'm so tired of feeling like this, and I don't know what to do to make it go away. I'm trying, though. I just need a little recoup time.

Anyway. Talk to you soon.

Zoe