

November 11

Zoe,

Let's try this again. Just don't get into my love life, okay? I didn't want you to think of me like some lovesick puppy, because that's not it at all, and that's part of why I got mad. Basically, Emma and I are friends, good friends, and I'm not ready to ruin that.

I'm sorry you thought that the rest of the letter was me being mad at you. It wasn't. The parts about your douche weasel (that's feels weird for me to say about someone I haven't met, is there something between that and "dad" I could use?) were real. I'm kind of blunt, and I'll speak my mind, but I wasn't mad that you didn't take my advice.

And, as I said before, while I remember the general gist of my letters, I don't remember word for word. So, I apologize. That first letter was a while ago, and I didn't remember that I phrased it questionably.

In the interest of continuing our correspondence, I suggest I start the last letter over ignoring the portions that bothered me. Actually, why don't I just answer your questions again and then move on.

1) Can I curl my tongue? Yes, I can, though I have to work at it.

2) Do I believe in Big Foot? I'm not much into fantasy as reality. I mean, the stories are fun, I guess, but I don't believe in much of anything unless I can see proof. Do you believe in Big Foot?

3) Okay, now you're just getting silly. It's okay though, when I'm not pissed off it's kind of- cute? Can I say that without weirding you out? And yes, I like banana peppers! I like lots of spicy foods actually, and banana peppers are the mildest of them!

5) My preferred name is Alex. It's short for Aleksei. Aleksei Nikolai. (And you thought your mom had a problem with odd spellings!) Grandpa on Dad's side was Russian, and Dad wanted one of us to pay homage to the 'Mother Russia.'

Oh and you asked about Imaginary Friends in that letter. I never had imaginary friends. ~~It was about seven years between~~ Dad was "single" - Well not single, he dated Rachel some - for seven years, so I got pretty used to having just the two older brothers. Will played with me a lot, though, even once he made it to high school and it was no longer "cool" to play with your kid brother. Sometimes he even convinced John to join in. Will was into sports, so we'd play catch, one-on-one soccer, that kind of thing when he picked, and I would pick the board and video games. I guess that's where my competitive side comes from. He let me win a lot, I think, so when Emma started beating me at everything I took it really personally. I'm kind of used to it now, but I still have the competitive streak so I still try and beat her.

I hope you find these answers more satisfactory. In your reply I would like you to answer the following:

- Since you don't like banana peppers, what do you like on your pizza?

- How many pickled peppers (which are likely banana peppers, I might add) does Peter Piper pick daily?

- You've said that you're fairly happy with your name except for the spelling, but if you had to pick a different name, what would it be?

Sincerely,

Alex

P.S. In the interest of restarting correspondence, I didn't include a puzzle with this one. Why don't you start that? I'll pick up my clues from Andi at Cuppa Joe's in a few days.