

November 2

Zoe,

You did ask for questions! Ask and ye shall receive and all that nonsense. Of course it was Eddie who made you drink the whole thing. He can be a jerk sometimes, and he probably "misunderstood" me on purpose. His punishment has been served, though - He'll be pulling the 4 AM shift for a week! I know you said you've become decent friends, but let me assure you that he's been power-hungry since he was promoted to manager at the beginning of August, so when I suggested taking him down a peg or three, it didn't take much convincing.

All A's since 6th grade, huh? Remind me never to tell you what my grades typically look like. My step-mother is always telling me "You could do better if you would just try." It's frustrating.

The thing is, you can't necessarily be the best at everything. I know it seems like it in high school, but eventually you'll have to decide what you want to be best at and do that. I know, how do I know since I'm the same age as you? Well, my second oldest brother, was exactly like you - overachiever in every department until he went to college and suddenly his whole life fell apart. His first year was absolute hell, because he didn't know how to focus. He tried to take six honors courses, all of them the hardest in their respective departments, and instead of acing them like he expected to, he ended up with one B, two Cs, and three Ds. It was devastating for him. Anyway, now he's settled on Computer Science and is about two years from getting his degree, and he mostly gets As again. Just don't ask him about his humanities Gen-eds.

It's interesting that masks make you uncomfortable, especially in light of our recent conversations on alternate personas. Even your own happy, peppy personality can be a mask, especially when people expect you to wear it all the time. I think-- well, I don't want to assume things, but I think maybe your experience of a bad day is a better way of showing you what I mean by alternate personalities. You don't want to have them, fine, but you do, because everyone expects you to be wearing your happiness constantly, and that is clearly not you sometimes. It's like, because you've built this persona of constant happiness, you're not allowed to take a day off and be somebody else. You may not think of it that way, but it's the same thing.

I am so glad I asked how you and Gabe met. I laughed so hard! Not in a mean way. But it made me smile, and seems so very you!

You thought I was a girl, huh? I wondered. I mean, you being you, you probably wouldn't have treated me differently either way. Still, I'm inclined to offer to help with your forfeit money, but then, you did take the bet with very little information to go on. (Don't feel bad, I probably would have too.) I mean, you're the one that was reading my letters, and according to you Gabe had only a 20-second slapdash description to go on.

My Halloween costume was indeed a hit, and would have won... if Emma hadn't pulled her usual Emma and gone so over the top that I couldn't possibly beat her. I might even accuse her of colluding with Gabe, if she hadn't been doing this for years. She wore an absolutely fantastic she-devil costume with the full white face paint, a lacy veil, and a sexy slinky dress. It was close, so we had an outside judge

decide the tie (I still think my death scene should have won), and she took it. At least there's always next year.

As for the rest of your questions: I unfortunately do not attend Torrey Pines. I attend Canyon Crest. So, Zoe, it appears that we are rivals. I sincerely hope you are not a big sports fan.

My mom is not something I talk about to, well, anyone. Even Emma doesn't know, or if she does, it wasn't me who told her. Basically, my mother is gone. She's alive as far as I know, but-- that's all I'll say. Don't be offended, it's not just you. It's everybody.

In an effort to not seem like I'm avoiding all of your questions, I will attempt to answer your romance one. I hate to sound like a Facebook update, but it's complicated. Do Emma and I get asked if we're a couple? Only any time we hang out without her boyfriend of the week. Do I wish it weren't like that? Kinda. Normally I wouldn't say this, but you don't know me, so who would you tell, right? Basically, I'm the poster child for the "friend-zone." It's not fun watching her run through boyfriends like they're tissues, but there isn't much I can do about it.

As for what you should do about the douche-weasel, I honestly don't know. I know what I would do, which is ignore him as much as possible. If I were forced into a meeting I didn't want to have, I would probably just go and refuse to talk. That doesn't seem like you, though. You seem seem the type to forgive, or at least give him a chance. He is your father, right? Maybe he feels bad about what he did.

To me that wouldn't matter much, but doesn't it matter to you? Really, though, it's your decision.

Oh, and this wasn't technically one of your official questions, but I do have a pretty good memory. I remember the gist of what I've said. I couldn't quote anything word for word, though, so if you want me to remember something very specific, you'll have to quote me. Which you have, so that's fine.

Let's see, some questions for you. What's your romantic life like? You did ask me after all. What will you do about the Douche-Weasel? What is your favorite thing to do on a day off?

Alex

P.S. A block radius is fine. I was also wondering about Del Mar Highlands Town Center - it's only a five minute walk after all.