

**[Very long silence at the beginning. Is there really a letter on here?]**

**Alex:** I—

**[Another long silence]**

Zoe—

**[More silence. When he finally starts speaking, hardly above a whisper, Alex's voice is full of pain]**

I thought I knew what to say, Zoe, but I turned the recorder on, and I just... don't. It's two a.m., and I couldn't sleep, so I thought... I don't know what I thought. **[slightly lighter]** But hey, at least this way I won't be interrupted.

**[Pause]**

You can't turn it off, Zoe. That's not how it works. It's there whether you want it to be or not, and you just have to... live with it. I mean, if I could have turned it off, don't you think I'd have stopped liking Emma after the third boyfriend? Or the tenth? Or the thirtieth? It doesn't work like that.

**[Pause]**

The thing is, that was me. This is you, Zoe. Or rather, it's not like you. All I know is, liking someone... it's supposed to make you happy, that's the whole point, and—

**[Pause]**

You've had a lot to deal with this year, but these past few weeks, it's like you disappeared, and someone else took your place. I *hate* that he's making you like this.

**[Pause]**

I can't tell you how to do it, Zoe, because it's different for everyone. But the thing people notice is when you're not yourself. For me, it took a lot of acting, and a lot of time. It has been four years that I've been doing this now, and... I guess I just kinda got used to it.

I still wonder though, if it was real, what I felt back then. It's hard to believe it wasn't, you know? But... I don't know. When you like someone, it's not just that you want to be with them, it's that you want them to be happy—

**[Pause]**

You want them to be happy no matter what. And that's what gets you through. Knowing that you're *not* what makes them happy hurts, but you have to push that aside, and know that even if you *aren't* what makes them happy, they've found something that does.

**[Pause, deep breath]**

I don't know what he said to make you think he's not interested. I—

**[Pause, then rushes on]** I could beat him for not seeing how fantastic you are. Any guy would be lucky to have you, Zoe. And... I wish I could be more help, but this is one that... No amount of me telling you what to do is going to help right now. It just— it takes time.

**[Pause. His voice turns strange, as if he's desperate to just be done with this letter.]**

So... that's my two cents. I'm sorry I couldn't be more help.