

Alex: Zoe's letter, April 1st

Can you believe it's the first day of April already? Cause I can't. And, I don't know if you count or anything, but March was six months since we started writing. We've been doing this for more than half a year, Zoe. How incredible is that?

[Pause]

Zoe, if you need to skip a letter to get your homework done then *please* do so. I don't want to be the reason you are so stressed, okay? And as much as your manager sucks, you're stuck with him, at least until you quit - you aren't *quite* as stuck with me. I promise I won't panic . . . well, I won't panic much, and if you text me and let me *know* it's going to be late, then I won't panic at all!

[Pause]

See? If *you* have to admit my need for validation is messed up, then it must *really* be messed up, because *you* can find something good to say about *everything*.

[Pause]

Bubbly, huh? I like that. I think it fits you very well - though perhaps not as much recently . . . can we get back to bubbly Zoe soon? *I'm* the subdued one in this relationship, remember?

Let's see . . . what else. Ah yes. I *don't* know the story of the Loretto Chapel so you'll have to share.

Did I, or did I not, *just say* you're not allowed to knock pickled pineapple until you try it, that it is *nothing* like *any* of the pickled things you're thinking of, and that it's actually very sweet and you would *like* it?! **[mock teasing]** I swear, it's like you don't even listen to me.

[pause]

I'd be happy for your company in the afterlife. We— well, okay, *I* can snark about the people passing by, and you can tell me why they're amazing, and— it'd be fun!

[Pause, tone becomes hesitant]

And . . . your advice comment reminds me of something else I wanted to talk to you about. I've been thinking a lot lately about what comes next— you know, college, and majors, and what I want to do eventually. And I have an idea, but . . . well, I'm not entirely sure yet, so don't hold me to this or anything. I haven't told anyone else, but . . . well, here goes nothing.

As much as it has . . . well, sucked for you, this year has made me realize . . . You— you came to me for advice a few times, and it made me kind of realize that . . . I like giving advice. I *like* being the one people go to when they don't know what to do. And I don't know if the advice I give is helpful at all, but I thought if I enjoyed that so much, then maybe . . . maybe that's what I should do. So . . . *Dios* it's so hard to actually say it out loud, like that makes it more real or something.

[Pauses, takes a deep breath]

I'm thinking about being a psych major. I know it's a lot of schooling, but . . . I think I want to be a counselor. Or a therapist of some kind. Or at least . . . I want to try it. I could be wrong. I could do a semester and hate it and change my major later. But . . . I think I want to try.

Sorry, there's . . . I'm not asking what you think or anything, you don't have to give an opinion. I just . . . wanted to share with someone.

[pause]

If you tell me I'm gonna cry, I'm not going to *want* to watch the rest! I mean, okay, you cry a lot, but I am a *man*. We're not supposed to cry, at least not at things like television shows.

[Pause]

Now, hang on, just because I had a picnic with Emma doesn't mean I can't have a picnic with you! I'm sure your picnic would be just as fun, because you are . . . *you* and you'd find a way to make it fun and amazing, and just . . . it wouldn't be anywhere near the same thing.

[Pause]

As of right now, I don't have any specific plans for my birthday. I mean, I think there's a cake in the works, and probably a birthday dinner. But, you know, if you want to be sure to avoid conflicts, it doesn't have to be *on the day*. Besides, it sounds like you have a really busy work schedule and between that and being with Lissa . . . I don't want to ask for more of *your* time than you're able to give me. So . . . what are you up for? I mean, if you want to hang out, that'd . . . that'd be great. I'd like to get to know you, in person, you know?

[Pause]

Ah, and the supposedly really hard questions!

[Long pause]

I— uh . . . Zoe? Are you telling me *I'm* your wish come true? I mean, no, I mean . . . I . . . uh . . . I don't know what to say to that, I guess.

No wait, I do. It's *my* turn to thank *you*. That's . . . the nicest thing anybody has said to me, well, since this pretty awesome girl gave me a fantastic Christmas present. So . . . thanks.

[Pause]

Ah yes, you're right, we *haven't* done best memory from childhood. I was confused because mine is the same as my favorite holiday tradition, which we *did* do. You know, with Mom and the cookies on the rooftop.

[Pause]

Uh . . . I probably should have thought it through better before I picked this one. Being, you know, half-Latino, and looking it, I get a *lot* of dirty words. I think the worst was probably . . . um . . . "mexcrement" . . . some kid thought he was really clever for thinking that one up on the playground when I was ten.

Sorry, you . . . you didn't need to know that. It's part of my life, but it doesn't have to be part of yours.

[Pause]

Never apologize for being busy, *chica*, I know you are. If you weren't so busy, you wouldn't be *you*. Te— Talk to you soon, okay?