

**Alex:** March 14<sup>th</sup>, morning

Hey Zoe. This one's short. I just . . . I didn't think I should leave you where I did. I'm okay, really, I just, uh . . . I did something stupid."

**[Long pause]**

Did you know that when you have a broken wrist you shouldn't punch walls? I . . . I was so frustrated that I just kind of forgot that I'm a helpless invalid, for a second, which is stupid because that's what I was frustrated about.

I'm fine, and I'm feeling . . . less angry. We went to the ER to get my wrist checked, and the doctors weren't exactly pleased. They said it didn't look like it had shifted, but that I'll need to go in and have them redo the cast, just in case. That's later today. *And* they also said that because I was stupid, I have to keep the cast on for *another* two weeks. I'm supposed to get it off a few days after my birthday, now. That feels like *forever*.

Anyways, a few hours' sleep helped things. And before you apologize for waking me up (because I know you're going to), don't. I honestly don't mind.

I know I said I had replied last night, and, well, as you now know that was technically a lie. But I do have something to say now. **[forcefully]** You are allowed to feel the things you're feeling. That is *normal*, it's *human* and it's okay. You are *not* allowed to hate yourself for being human. Nobody is perfect, Zoe, no matter how much you try. And that's *okay*. Those flaws, those imperfections, are what make you so very *Zoe*, they're why . . . they're why the people in your life care about you so much. And the fact that you don't like how he makes you feel is just like you, okay? So please, *don't* hate yourself. Nobody else does, I promise. You are *allowed* to be upset at Thom, you are allowed to

wish he wasn't as happy as he is, and it *doesn't make you a bad person*. Okay?

You're probably not going to believe me. I know you, you're going to martyr yourself and tell me that it *does* somehow make you a lesser person, but you know what? I don't want to hear it, okay? It was . . . it was worrying at first, when you were all happy, flowers, and sunshine. In my experience, *nobody* is that happy all the time, *nobody* loves everybody like that. But you proved me wrong, and I *still* believe that you're that loving, happy person. Just because there's one person you can't stand doesn't change that. Even Superman had Lex Luthor after all.

So, stop beating yourself up, okay? Please. For me?

**[Pause]**

Okay, *chica*, that's enough for now. I need a nap — my best friend needed me in the middle of the night, and I gotta make up for it.

Talk to you soon, *chica*.