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Chapter 2: Somewhere This Works

I like to believe that somewhere in another universe, timeline, or other plane of existence we work. Of course this “we” is only according to me because the awful truth is that I never asked him for his feelings, and despite all the “what ifs” I’ve formulated in my head this is one of the few I’ve come to accept. Now I know what someone might think of me. “How can you be so certain this person taught you a valuable lesson on relationships and love if you never were really with them?” Well my dear reader it isn’t because of what did or did not happen it is because of what they made me feel. Some emotions are hard to come by on your own. These special emotions can also oftentimes only be evoked by certain people. We don’t choose who these certain people will be and we don’t choose what hurt they will bring with them. Yet despite the hurt they may bring, we learn from them and most importantly we learn to trust ourselves once again. Most importantly I am one step closer to finding the long awaited puzzle piece that brings me one step closer to finding the right one.

I first met him when we were both adolescents and during that time nothing ever feels serious. School isn’t serious, work isn’t serious and most importantly relationships aren’t either. However, we’re adults now and I still find myself often pondering over him. What it would finally feel like to be seen by him, to be wanted by him. For him to care about me the way I find myself feeling so deeply over him. Now, I understand that some might find these feelings to be infatuation but to me this isn’t quite it. I would never go out of my way for him and I never expect him to return. I think that was one of the greatest things about “us,” there were no expectations and no standards. Maybe that is the volatile truth, that I allowed myself to be a constant force that was never moved. He entered and left my life as

he pleased and only allowed glimpses of his own life to be seen by me. Therefore, I refuse to be the force that pushes “us” into momentum, if it were meant to be it would have already occurred. Now, he’s beginning to settle down, leaving behind his roaring twenties and wanting a stable relationship. I know he has his eye on the girl within his friend group. It would be a lie if I said I didn’t feel a pang in my chest when he describes her to me because it’s as though I’m facing a mirror and see everything I’m not. Yet that is neither here nor there, but instead this is the story of the only thing he has ever gifted me.

My first real relationship can be attributed to being possibly the closest thing to being in love that I have ever been. I say this with confidence because despite there never truly being an “us” this is one of the purest caring moments I have ever experienced with someone. I met him during the most developmental period of everyone’s life. He is older than me, and had been at the time preparing to attend college. Within that short time of us being able to spend with one another began the cycle of him leaving and re-entering my life periodically. However, during those moments in which it felt like I truly had him even just for a moment it felt like he saw me. That he saw my feelings and saw how badly I wanted to be dear to him but of course I knew deep down that he was oblivious to it all. A game of jax and ball ensued for the following four years and probably even to this day if I were to allow it. Moments where he would glide his way back into my life with a simple hello and then proceed to stay for a few weeks before he makes a swift exit that I forget to even miss him.

Frustration is what I used to feel because I could never understand why I could not manage to hold onto him longer. The thought of having to eventually return him into the world was something that made me feel like I was being shredded on the inside. I was so sure that if I were to have a future

with someone it would surely be him. However, I was wrong but it took this feeling that he would spark within me for myself to realize that the feeling I experienced with him never truly left with him. The ditzy floating emotion I thought he provided came from a place of romanticization. For a long time I believed that in order to feel lovely was in order to be in love. That I needed to be wanted by someone else in order to feel seen within my own life. This is where my sudden realization that I had my ideas set out incorrectly, because after he had entered and exited my life for what I decided to be the last time is when I concluded that the power will always be in my hands.

Patient and kind is what I felt that I always needed in order to be an option for him, I believed that he only liked beautiful and lovely girls. I wanted to be like the girls that he described at his school, he liked their noses and long hair, he preferred women that seemed elegant. Someone of a mystery that he barely knew, I quickly realized that I had made the mistake of being an open book to him. I too quickly displayed my emotions. I left little to the imagination of who I am to him. However, this was all wrong. I was wrong because he didn't want to see me. I wasn't and am not an option and that's okay because I decided he wouldn't be one of mine either. The way of thinking that I needed to be lovely for him is what dictated how I would present myself in order for him to one day decide to come back. I wanted him to love me the way I thought I loved him but instead he taught me something much greater without intending to. As time went by and I kept waiting I realized I wanted to shift my focus from him onto myself. However, this shift came as a total change in perspective for other relationships in my life. When the decision of no longer waiting for others and wanting to appeal to the gaze for others I became happier. Romance came in the form of little things in my life such as perfecting my coffee order or learning that I really enjoy other minuscule aspects of my life. In addition to accepting

the small things in my life I also learned how to create grandiose moments for myself without needing others' company.

Waiting for him was a game, one that involved me staying constant and experiencing my emotions that were suffocating. This was because despite everything I felt for him he was interested in me and didn't seem to consider me as an option due to how he openly expressed his lust for other women. This further pushed my own goal of accepting myself and no longer seeking validation. I realized that his lust was simply that and no more, therefore, I turned my attention to myself. During this period of awakening my inner romantic for life I began to accept him as a friend. I allowed myself to escape our game of ball and jax and began to perceive him as only a friend. I came to the conclusion that I was thankful for his friendship because despite the brewing emotions I had for him I came to further value his warmth and presence as friendship. This time, however, it was simply friendship, nothing more. No longer was I plagued by the thought of dissecting his intentions and because of that I enjoyed and valued the slow burn lesson he unintentionally taught me.

As I have grown from this moment I also began to learn not to worry where love will come from. Love is all around, it is experienced in sequences throughout one's life. Within the smallest things such as a friend asking if you got home safely or someone asking how the book you were reading a month ago ended. These things that are found in daily life can be easily overlooked but it added onto my goal of romanticization. It showed me how I tried to idolize his actions and how truly that not everything that glitters is gold. He was only golden because I wanted him to be, and it was my turn to become golden. It often feels as though taking the care we give to others and putting onto ourselves seems selfish. That in order to be a good partner or friend we must always be selfless and ensure that we

continue the actions that we know will please others. Mainly when we are surrounded by those of who we are expected to be glamorized for such as possible partners. Instead, these actions need to be seen by oneself because then it will radiate through other aspects of our life.

When my romantic feelings for him were dissipating I began to value our actual friendship more. I started by noticing how he would always respond even if he was busy with school or work. It might have taken him a few hours but he would always respond. Also, how since he had known me for so long he knew exactly how to make me laugh. I always knew our friendship was sort of superficial because I don't even know his sisters names, or exactly when his birthday is, however, I do know his career aspirations and what hobbies he hopes to get better at. My delusions faded and suddenly his departure from my life began to no longer sting and instead it began to manifest into a situation of see you next time. This moment of realization that I also entered and exited his life gave me comfort, it also gave me freedom. Freedom of my ties to him and freedom from the senseless connection I had to him. I wanted something to hold on to. I needed something to hold on to, and I did. I got myself and it is one of the best things to have.

Never begging for someone to stay is part of someone telling you that they don't want you. No one ever needs for someone to tell them that they don't want you more than once and that was something I needed to learn. By staying constant and always welcoming him back into my life with more care than I would for was me only damaging my own emotions. Therefore, when suddenly I made the shift of no longer offering him the care I noticed how normal of a person he was. That because of my light and my tender emotions he was special and anything can become greater if you apply the same energy towards it.

