

Standing there at the altar today, I remembered how she looked the first time I met her. Her face was red with anger; apparently, someone had just broken her friend's heart, and I remember thinking to myself that I'd never want to be in her range of fire. If only I knew then what the fates had in store for us. I used to gawk at her in class from my place a few rows behind her, although, of course, she never noticed me. I was just an ordinary, awkward guy trying to get through life, while she was this other-worldly and magnificent creature adored by everyone. In other words, if people were rain, I was drizzle, and she was a hurricane. And this is why it came as a surprise when she chose to love me. Being loved by her was the most splendid thing in the world. Her presence was enough to make everything more radiant; her aura, rather than diminishing people, brought out the best in them. In loving her, I found myself. And hence it was so much more terrible when I lost her.

The most beautiful things in the world do not know how much they brighten everything around them. A flame illuminates a place in the times of darkness, but as a result, dark is all it knows. And so was my Mary; she became the light in people's life while she sat alone in the dark. She did not know how lovely she made my life by giving me a chance to love her. It was incredible to even be able to feel a small part of her life. But she could not see this; she could not see anything past her hatred for herself. It was this that drove us away in the end. I knew we belonged together, I cherished her, and I knew she loved me, but her fear got the better of us. She drove me away, and not resisting enough was the biggest mistake I ever made.

Looking at her here today, I know we still belong together. I find myself pulled towards her as the Moon is to the Earth, as all the stars are attracted towards each other from the indomitable magnetic force, keeping the universe in balance. And just like that, I knew what I had to do. I loved my bride, but I could not marry her while my heart belonged to another. I left the altar and went back to my room, and my best man followed me with a tense look in his eyes. He must have realised what seeing Mary would do to me. I went to Nicole's room; she was almost ready to walk down the aisle when someone came to tell her how her groom just left the altar. The look of fear in her eyes went through me like a dagger. Hurting her is not my intention, but marrying her while I loved someone else would not be fair. It would condemn her to a lifetime of sorrow, and she does not deserve that. I tell her why I must go, I know she would resent me for it, but I cannot lie. Not now. An apology feels out of place here. I think I have crossed the boundary of forgiveness, and I shall accept it. I start to leave, and she does not stop me.

Walking out in the hallway, I see her, my beautiful, magnificent Mary, and I remember how terribly I missed her and loved her. Her eyes are brimming with tears, and I want to take them away forever. I run to her and hold her hands. It felt as if an eternity had passed since I last held her but also as if no time had passed at all. She does not need to say that she wants the same thing I do; I can see it in her eyes, in

the way her breaths come and go. I could recognise her by touch alone, by smell; I would know her blind, by the way, her breaths came, and her feet struck the Earth. I would know her in death, at the end of the world. We were like gods at the dawning of the world, & our joy was so bright we could see nothing else but the other.

"I... I am sorry... I have...missed you...ter..terribly", she tries to say between sobs, and I silence her by placing a hand on her lips. "Shhh...", I say, "I know, I know. You have bewitched me, body and soul, and I love... I love... I love you. And I do not wish to be parted from you from this day on." In a flicker of her eyes, I see she is still battling her fear; she still believes she will destroy everything in her wake. "Oh, but you had a chance for happiness, my love," she moans, "Nicole would give you the joy I never can." And I know it is time for her to realise, I could never find joy with another. I need her to see I am hers, and she is mine. And I tell her, "Break my heart. Break it a thousand times if you like. It was only ever yours to break anyway."