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Simply an Infatuation

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Simply an Infatuation

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Simply an Infatuation

FRANCHESCA AMOR A. AGUILAR

There she was, again. Sitting on the white-tiled floor—the same floor they occupied almost every day. The walls were still covered in pictures; the same pictures that seemed to stare her down. She didn't want to see those. Why did she do this?

“Why don't you just tell me the truth, Elliot? What's on your mind?” she whispered, scared that if she spoke any louder it would break the delicate silence that surrounded them. The chatter from the hallway ceased and the only thing left was the broken silence.

“The truth, Liz?” he questioned. “You. You're on my mind. And I can't seem to get you out of my head, no matter how hard I try to. That's what's on my mind.”

Liz tucked her face between her hands, her hair brushing against her shoulders and falling onto her lap. With her eyes closed, she hid a wave of emotions. It felt like everything was crashing down on her, that gravity increased in that small space she occupied. She couldn't look at him anymore, afraid that she'd reveal too much with one glance.

“Me? I'm sorry. I'm sorry for ever coming into your life like this.” She sighed.

“No. Stop. You're an absolute blessing to have in my life, Liz.”

Am I, really? she wondered. Lifting her head only the slightest, Liz watched Elliot from in between her fingers. His thick black hair framed his forehead—messy curls that she wanted to run her fingers through instead of holding her own pitiful face. Liz let go of her face and began tracing imaginary figures into the sky. She felt anxious.

“I wouldn't lie about that, Liz,” he said, looking down at his hands. He was shifting too, restless like Liz. “I know my words are already worthless to you, I've already hurt you enough to know that.”

“You're just so confusing, Elliot! I don't know what you want from me,” she whisper yelled in frustration. “You obviously already know how I feel.”

He can't look her in the eye. He always told her that her eyes were a beautiful shade of oak brown.

“What do you think, then? What's on your mind?”

She paused. "I feel like I'm some second option to you. That's what I feel."

"Wha—" Elliot tried to interject, but Liz didn't let him.

"No, let me finish. You're the one that's in a relationship, Elliot. A relationship! What am I supposed to think? That I'm just some plaything for you while you leave your girlfriend at home, wondering what you're doing? What am I to you? You don't know how many times I've questioned my self-worth... how many times I've tried to hate you, Elliot. But I can't. That's the thing. *I can't.*"

Elliot took a deep breath. He noticed everything about Liz: how her features became more defined as she become more upset, and the quick flutter of her fingers. His eyes flicker around the room to anything but her.

"Just hate me, Liz. I'm not good for you."

"You don't know that."

Her eyes flitter away from him, away from the pictures that scatter his walls. Alexis. On his desk. Alexis. By his bed. Liz can't escape her existence. Yet, she still comes back to him every day. She's upset at herself for being jealous of Alexis being up on his walls because she has no right to be. I'm just another girl for him, right? she thought.

"All the times I've tried... I manage to forgive you in every scenario," she continued, her voice shaking. "Don't even tell me to hate you. I've sat in my room for hours, wondering why I keep coming back. Why don't I just move on with my life, and forget this whole thing happened."

Looking up momentarily, Liz caught his gaze. His bare face was exposed: his hood was down, and his glasses were off. The face she knew all too well, the one that she couldn't seem to get out of her head. The slight stubble that lined his chin that always brushed against her cheek. His sharp nose that'd always bump into hers, left right up down center. His eyes that has seen all of her, with their long thick lashes that always brush against his glasses leaving dirty streaks whenever he cried.

"When Alexis was here this weekend, I tried to break it off you know. I tried three times Liz—three times! Why am I still in this mess?"

"You have to have enough respect for yourself and for her to end things officially. I did that with my... person. Because I like you enough to actually do something about it, I actually respect Charlette to tell her the truth. I'm actually a decent person Elliot, how about you? What do you know about respect?"

Her teeth ground against each other, stressing her jaw. She wasn't used to speaking so negatively about him because she often cracked a joke instead of addressing the serious problems in the relationship, friendship—

whatever it was.

“You’re right. Maybe I am just a dick, like what your sister said about me. A worthless human being, that’s what I am. I’m just a terrible person in general, Liz.”

She wanted to tell him he’s wrong. No matter what kind of pain he put her through, she appreciated him. She liked him. She liked him so much. And she hated it.

“Liz, I can’t keep hurting you. I can’t just keep acting like it’s okay to hurt you like I do. I’ve tried to forget you, but every time I see you, my mindset changes again. Seeing you that night? In your red dress? Gosh, I was at a loss for words—you were so beautiful. Every thought of me forgetting you vanished in an instant.

“Whenever you told me that this whole thing was just an ‘infatuation’ and that I’d forget about it, that I’d just forget you and go back to Alexis, I now keep thinking back to it. Your words loom over me, Liz. Infatuation. This ‘infatuation’ led me to almost end a relationship with someone at home, this ‘infatuation’ led me to tell her everything about my feelings for you. You said it would fade away, but quite frankly, it’s not.”

Her mouth opened but then closed again. She wanted to say something to him but didn’t know what to say. The boy was always observing Liz, always wanted to know what was on her mind, what she liked, what made her smile. He wouldn’t put that much effort if he didn’t at least care, Liz, she thought to herself.

“I’m sorry,” she apologized, for lack of anything else to say.

“What! Don’t be sorry!” he quickly responded. He felt like the culprit here. “I just want to make this better.”

“Just... do what makes you happy, Elliot.”

“What makes me happy, Liz?”

“How am I supposed to know that? You’re so hard to read,” Liz explained, ruffling through her hair again. She couldn’t quite grasp why he was doing all of this: was it for entertainment? was he just playing around? did he really love Alexis? does he do this to everyone?

“I don’t know what to do, Liz...”

“Me neither, Elliot. You already know my answer.”

It was always hard for her to read him. With his fun and quirky personality, she knew she was eventually going to fall for him. Like the good friends they were, Liz and Elliot were used to spending almost every hour with each other doing something silly like dancing or playing video games. Sweet and charming, Liz couldn’t help but feel attracted to Elliot despite him having a girlfriend. She knew it was forbidden and kept the secret

to herself. She hid every fluttering heartbeat and every wave of “infatuation.” Every instance of her liking him was concealed, until that one night she realized she couldn’t anymore.

...

“Liz...” Elliot dragged out her name, sitting slumped in his chair.

“Elliot...” Liz piped back.

It was another Saturday night, and, as per usual, Elliot was drunk, and Liz was his sober guardian. Covered in sweat and beer, she had a 165-pound man leaning against her petite frame once again on a weekend. Her bare shoulders shivered as he planted his drunken face in her neck.

“Let’s get you to bed, buddy,” Liz said, trying to lift the man up with her thin arms. He was fighting against her.

“I’m not tired,” he said, trying to bring her back down to him. His arms wrapped around her waist like a snake curling around its prey, and she was trapped beneath his strong grip.

“Come on Elliot, it’s almost 3 a.m. I know you’re tired,” Liz responded to his lie.

“No, *stay*,” he whined. “I’m sorry I can’t always be there for you Liz... you deserve the world. I know you get sad because of home, because of Charlette, and I don’t ever want you to be sad again. Tell me how you feel.”

“Tell you how I feel? About what?”

“Anything.”

Liz started to talk about everything on her mind, from her day to the things that happened in the frat to her moments with Charlette. She continued to ramble on until Elliot interrupted her.

“Hey, hey, hey,” his voice reached her ears and she was pulled out of her thoughts.

“Huh?”

“Stop talking.” His hands found their way to her cheeks, cupping her face and positioning it directly in front of his. His eyes lingered on her lips, and he inched closer and closer. “Stop talking or else, or else I’ll do something weird.”

His lips grazed over her lips. A small gasp escaped her mouth. Her heartbeat sped up and she gripped the back of his shirt.

“Elliot... Hey, what’re you doing?” Liz’s voice was faint—she knew that she should move away but couldn’t bring herself to do it. He won’t remember this Liz; a little kiss wouldn’t hurt anyone right? she thought. She felt horrible but couldn’t bring herself to pull away.

“Shut up Liz.” Elliot’s lips were suddenly on hers, pressing onto her

lips innocently.

Liz's eyes widened, and her mouth remained limp against his. The pressure on her body increased, enough to wake her up and gain the strength to finally push him off.

"Oh, whoa, okay, it's time for bed now," Liz sputtered out. Her breath was shaky. "Get up now Elliot." She stared at the man she considered her best friend and hoped that he would never remember this night.

"Oh god..." Elliot began to break down in tears. "I'm so sorry I ruined our friendship, oh god, I always mess up everything. Please, please don't tell Alexis... Oh god, I'm so sorry I'm so sorry."

Liz sighed. "Come on big guy. Don't worry about it." Guilt wormed its way to her gut. "Let's just get you to bed, please." She felt hopeless. He sat there, holding his face in his hands looking defeated. Both parties wished for something they couldn't have.

"Oh, Liz..." Elliot began, but Liz stopped him mid-sentence. She lifted his body up, placing his arms around her shoulders and maneuvered her way to his bed until he was safely planted. He curled up in a ball, hiding away under his covers. "I'm so sorry... Liz, you can go. Just leave me here."

"You're crazy if you think I'll just leave you here like this. You're not okay, so I'm not leaving you alone," Liz stated firmly. They both promised each other to never leave the other at just "okay"—it had to be "okay" and a little more than that. *Are they like that now?* she pondered.

Liz brought herself out of her thoughts and stared at the present-Elliot. Broken and not the same Elliot she knew last semester, his once striking eyes were now lifeless—like her own. Staring at him, she realized they were never going to be the same, that this incident would loom over them for the rest of the semester. A mere infatuation... was it really one though? Liz thought to herself. She'd never get to find out.