

## Amiss

By Sébastien Sargent-Charbonneau

I do not understand my place here. What should I be doing? Is there a plan of action? I wouldn't think so. That's too bad really. If I was to consider that I don't know people I ask, what if I could just read their minds. How easy could that be? I mean, knowing what they expect of life and me should make things easier right? But I don't know what to expect of them, or of life; so how are they? Man, things are hard. On top of it, life just started for me. So young but yet I find myself seeing someone old, not someone young. Someone with a voice that matters, not one that needs to be taught. Oh well, I'm just a kid right? Ripe in my twenties, just hoping for a bright simple future. “What are you thinking about?”

“Leave me be already!”

“No seriously! You've been staring at the wall there for 30 minutes. It's starting to worry people.”

“The fuck I care what they think!” I actually care a lot. Their thoughts scare me. Things that I don't know about scare me. “Well then, did you do that assignment in Professor ...” I started to zone out. I didn't care about school, nor did I want to start caring. I put on my face though, so people don't bother me. So they don't tell me that I should think about my future and should work hard to have a good paying job. What if I don't want a good paying job? What if I want something comfortable and easy, just a simple job that can pay for my internet, rent and food? That's all I want. Well I guess it's back to pretending like I care.

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“We've been at this for hours! How do you still not understand?”

“I am trying OKAY!” I really wasn't. I hate lying but it seems like I need to do it so I don't have to explain how pathetic I am. HELP! Well maybe I should ask to go to the washroom... Wait! What am I

five? Geez! "I'll be back."

"Washroom's in my room"

"I know. I know"

Why is this room so messy and dark? I know you like to write stories, but come on, why must there be papers everywhere! Ignore it, you only need to go pee and get out, and then back to the tutoring session.

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Do we really have to go through this? "Do we really have to go through this?"

"Yes! We have to! How else will we celebrate your birthday?"

"By not celebrating it..."

"Don't be such a stick in the mud." I'm trying really hard not to act pissed that someone is putting this much effort into a meaningless life. I might as well try to enjoy whatever plan you came up with.

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I smile today. I got to hug you tight. Losing a family member sucks, I felt even more lost than usual. I never got to hear their last thought. I never got to be there for when it happened. You listened and you hugged me as long as I needed it. I loved every second of it. It makes me sad that this moment can't last forever. It's sad how I will just end up forgetting about the dead. Just like everyone does.

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Why am I around idiots? Who knows, but only one more month to go and I'm out of here. No more studies, just one steady job, my room, a computer and my thoughts. I can just ignore the world as long as I want now. Silence will be great. Why am I so sad about it then? Why must I be here alone, with no one to understand me? Even you, the one person I spent the most time at this god forsaken place. Then again I don't try to understand about others, so how could they? I guess I do care about people, but it feels useless. Well not much more to do. "The last exam is tomorrow. Are you ready for it?"

"For sure!" I lied, but these things seem to work out in the end.

“Good! We’ll actually get to graduate together; isn’t that great?”

“It really is...” Why do I feel so sincere? This is a total lie, but it doesn’t feel like one.

“You okay? You seem off today?”

“Oh I might be catching something. I’ll head on home and get some rest so I can do well tomorrow.”

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I actually did get rest and did do well. How out of character for me.

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Just the two of us. In this room full of papers. It’s so weird. I wonder what you write about. I wish I could actually tell what you think about. I wish I could do that with everyone. You leaned in on me, my back against your door. I really don’t feel comfortable right now; what are you trying to pull? “Have you ever felt like you needed to do something before it was too late to do it?”

“Does this have to do with us graduating?” I was curious.

“It does... sort of...”

“Well what do you mean?” I know exactly what you mean and I am not fooled here; you really hate the program we chose and now want to do work as a historian or actress. How typical of everyone, they study for years, wasting years of their youth just to end up...

YOU KISSED ME!?

*I love you*

What did you say? Wait! You didn’t say anything. Your lips are pressed against mine. So you didn’t say anything. This feeling, though, it feels just right. Maybe this is what I need.

*This is my only chance I’m going to kill myself tomorrow.*

WAIT! WHAT?

“What did you say? You want to kill yourself!”

“What? I kiss you and you tell me this? How insensitive can you get!”

“But I heard that.”

“I thought I actually had feelings for you! GET OUT!”

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It's been a week. I keep coming back to apologize. I didn't know how to explain it. It was like I could understand your thoughts. I'm glad you didn't actually kill yourself. I found out I care about someone.

“Will you please let me talk to you? I'm sorry. I freaked out. Didn't see the kiss coming. I'm afraid of commitment.” I have to lie. I don't want to lose you.

“I understand. I really shouldn't have put you in that position. I guess I expected a more confused reaction than the one you gave me.”

“I really care for you.” That was the truth.

“I do too.” You leaned for another kiss. I kissed back.

*Thank you for coming back. I couldn't hold back any longer.*

Why did you stop kissing me? Oh you wanted a hug. You are crying now, I don't know what to do.

Why are there tears flowing on my cheeks? These emotions I don't understand.

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It has been a year since you killed yourself. I finally saw what was written on all of those papers. Suicide notes. I should have known. The second you gave me that kiss. I am here alone. IN A BAR OF ALL PLACES. Man, I would never have seen myself going to a bar ever. “Does your face always look gloomy?” A new person who thinks my life has promise. I seem to have a magnet for people like them hidden somewhere.

“Yes. I always have this face. You know it is my face.”

“Well we need to change that. I've seen you here every week for 3 months and I still haven't gotten the chance to go to your place.”

“It's messy...” Wasn't an entire lie. There are things I don't want you to see.

“To bad I'm following you tonight.”

“I have no choice, do I?” Fuck.

“You have no choice.”

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Well you are here now. I am going to hope you don't see it. “Why did you lie to me? This place is clean.”

“I don't like visitors.”

“You grump. You should show me your room.”

“NO!” The look on your face says enough. I scared you. Maybe that will keep you away.

“Sooooory. Well how about you give me a tour of the house. Not your room though.”

“I guess I can do that.” Why won't you leave? You remind me of the other person.

“Now where is the kitchen, maybe you can pour me a gin. I know you must have a bottle.”

“No, but I do have rum.”

“I can do rum.”

I will go get rum. Drink a glass with you in the living room and then send you in a cab home. No longer than an hour at most. I pick up the bottle, turn around and there you are. Your face right there in front of mine. Staring. No please I don't... another kiss. I really wanted to avoid this. Not another person to care for. I don't want to get hurt.

*What are you hiding? Why won't you let me in?*

Because if I did I might get hurt. Screw it, this feeling of loneliness has haunted me for too long.

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“Good morning, would you like some eggs?”

“Eggs sound great!” Did I spend another night at your place? Well I guess that makes sense, but I should really go back to pay my rent.

“So I was thinking. It's been a few months we've been dating, maybe you could move in with me.”

“Maybe...” Definitely not!

“I would really like it if you did.”

“I’ll think about it.”

You lean for a small peck. *Why are you so strange? Cute though.*

You are stranger. Oh well, anyone willing to be with me is strange. “I will see, my lease ends in two months. I might not renew it.”

“REALLY!”

“Really...” I’m going to regret this. But the look on your face as you are doing that ridiculous victory dance. I guess it’s worth it. It might also be a good reason to get rid of those notes in my room.

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We had a miscarriage. Four years of marriage, wonderful. No debts, not fights, nothing wrong. It was a dream come true. Then this. Does life really like pulling cruel jokes? No, this isn’t even a joke. This is some personal vendetta it has against me.

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Our kid is the reason for this. All the fights. The yelling, the quiet nights. Regrets, always regrets; and now you want a divorce. I don’t know what to do. We had it perfect. I thought we understood each other. I thought, knowing what was on your mind would help. But it doesn’t. It actually hurts more. It hurts hearing you blame me for anything and everything. Hearing you think only the negative. I have to distance myself so I don’t hear those thoughts. I think it’s helping, because now your thoughts are those of worry.

*Why don’t you kiss me as much? Is it something I did? You must be mad. I can’t tell.*

It helps knowing that those thoughts that hurt are no longer on your mind. I guess I should speak up more. I will! “I love you and I want this to work out. I want us to be happy...”

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“It’s our fifteenth anniversary!”

“I remember I remember”

“Did you now, what did you get me?”

“It's a surprise; but I have to go pick it up” I haven't lied to you in a long time and I don't intend on starting now. I need to go get it.

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Where am I? Why does my head hurt? What is this feeling on my side? Is that... what is that I...

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In a hospital bed. My car was totalled by a drunk trucker. The way my body was done in the doctor says I was lucky, but barely. My body is living on a thread, heart was punctured. Living with a machine helping my heart out. I guess I don't have very long. I'm glad you are here, sitting there. Smiling, at least we stuck it out together.

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I'm getting released. Can't do anything on my own anymore, but I am alive. I am happy. The doctors seem to think my heart is strong enough now. They say one month here and I'm out. It's about time.

*We can finally live happy. You can live happy.*

Always thinking about me. You are sweet. I am very lucky to have you. “What would I do without you?”

“Probably try to roll up your wheelchair up stairs.”

“I would do that wouldn't I?” That smile reassures me. It tells me everything will be alright.

*I really wish the doctors didn't make me lie to you; I have to do it so you have a final happy moment.*

I wasn't sure what this meant. Didn't think too much of it, I will trust you that I am okay and the lie isn't too bad. Maybe I won't have legs anymore, but that is okay. I won't need limbs that don't work, right?

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Only three more days, and I'm out of here. I did lose my legs, apparently so my heart doesn't have to work so hard pumping blood at parts of my body that don't need it. It's good I will live. I need to live.

So you can be happy with me.

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I guess I should have known. The pain in my heart, the day before my release. I guess it had to happen. It happens to everyone. Please don't cry, I don't want to leave seeing you cry. It really isn't like you to cry like that. Your face looks so much better with a smile. "The tears don't fit your look."

"Why are you joking? That's my thing. I should be the one trying to make you feel better."

"Well you did. The day you forced me to bring you back to my place, that fateful evening. You took me out of a dark place. The darkest I have ever been in. Thanks to you, I found the strength to fight for things that I really wanted. To fight for myself and to care. I never cared about anything before I met you. No that's a lie. I cared about one person and I lost them. When I did I ended up lost. You found me and for the better. These years have made my life full and I couldn't ask for anything better."

*Don't go. I don't know what I will do without you.*

"I know what you will do without me, you will live happy. You will find someone who loves you just as much as me. You will grow old with that person, knowing that they care about you just as much, if not more, as I do now. I love you."

*I love you too.*

Well I guess I'm off. This feeling feels weird but good. I guess I will get to see you after all. I missed you a lot.

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Well I guess I have to move on. My goof is gone. You've been gone for a while. I really don't know what to do. I guess I should just move on with one foot in front of the next. Maybe I should go outside. Yeah, some sunlight sounds like a good idea. I should open the door and welcome life anew. Meet new people. Maybe fall in love again. I mean that is what you asked me to do.

*I miss you.*