



DEBBIE ADE

Morning darling,

I hope you're doing well. Overnight you were particularly active you made me worry, but I know not to – you're strong, like me, or maybe even stronger. I'm getting all excited out here just thinking about you as I await your arrival. I've also bought matching clothes for us, shoes too.

You know, I had my first dream of you a few days ago – four nights ago to be exact – I think it's 'cause I'm starting to feel you more, and although you're like a mystery to me as I know nothing of you but your heartbeat and size, my dreams have been nonetheless quite vivid it's ethereal.

Yesterday I went shopping with my sister – your aunt – and grandpa. We bought a cot for you and a car seat too; your grandpa drove and thanks to you I could once again clearly see him since your father. He had an endearing smile on his face, one that greatly resembled your father it almost made me miss him, but I can't miss him 'cause I have you--you shouldn't either.

On our way back home, your grandpa wanted to buy you a bouquet of flower and your aunt agreed – sneaky that one, she knows how much I hated flowers but still agreed – she chose you some tulips; white, purple, pink and orange, got them snipped and arranged in a bouquet and placed them in my arms. As the flowers grazed my tummy bump before falling hard on the floor, I thought I felt you kick---- your kick felt desperate it compelled me to pick up the flowers. A day has passed but I still don't know what it was I felt as I caressed the petals to rub off the dirt, but whatever it was it gave me goosebumps. As a warm shudder coursed through my body, I felt chills down my spine – the good ones. With the goosebumps, came chills and with the chills came emotions I couldn't tag.

After successfully assembling your cot and designing your room with grandpa and aunt, I bade them farewell and intended to return to your room to simmer in your nearing presence. Arranging your room made me forget all about the flowers but returning to the house from the gate, I spotted them where I had left them. This time I only felt the untagged emotions without the process, and with that I realised I had no flower vase at home. Before heading out to the supermarket I searched up on tulips and how to care for them----interesting isn't it. I've deliberated hard on what your kick meant as I want to understand you, but my love I'm yet to have answers and I can only guess. Imperfect as I am, I will provide you with all it is you desire – even those in passing – although now it seems, it is you doing the providing, one I cannot seem to fathom. Since the beginning, it's always been that way – you provide me with things that cannot be tagged. My life before you was to see, recognise then tag, but since you, I have realised there is more to see and experience, and less to tag – your father was that way too.

The past I remember as dark-----the beautiful dark. The time with your father I remember as black and white----a balanced combination, and the seasons before you and after him as bland and empty. The scorching sun before the fallen leaves and that before the wilting. Then, the falling snow before the melting; fleeting moments with no immersion---providing nothing of substance to experience.

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In the prime of summer, last year, I travelled out as per your aunt's suggestion – she wanted me to “get out of my shell” as she put it and “experience the world” – and although I wasn't very keen on the idea of being idle all summer, your aunt meant business and colonised my house, doing everything she knew I disliked with the support of my parents, I found it annoying and ridiculous at the same time and since I had nothing to lose, except money, I eventually gave in and booked a one month trip to Paris, France.

Although I had been to France, especially Paris a few times, they were all work-related trips, so I never truly looked around. My colleagues tried to drag me along with them to a few night activities after work, but I always declined. Regardless, thanks to their pestering, I had a few places to photograph and send to your aunt to reduce her daily calls. A week in and I was wallowing in regret. After begging your aunt and yelling at her through the phone, we reached a compromise of an extra week before I could return home.

In my hotel suite I could get a clear view of the Eiffel tower. I remembered testimonies of those that had seen it and couldn't relate to them, like with everything else. My pitchblack world was beautiful as it was – quiet and peaceful – and I wanted to keep it that way; it was the only thing I had ever known, and it seemed those that had it different didn't fare better than I – except your aunt that is. Before your father, she was the only one I knew who saw things in a more coloured narrative than I did and fared better – she had a well-paying job, was always radiating rainbows, and had a family of her own; a wife and your two-year old twin cousins. There were times my curiosity got the better of me, and I tried mingling with people, smiling and laughing with them ----- but humans are only surface animals from what I've seen, the reasonable and genuine ones are like hermit crabs in a reef, not necessarily hiding but are in a world so vast they're almost invisible.

After four days of staying in, on my 11th day, I went to my office's go-to-club out of sheer curiosity to see what the atmosphere they liked had to offer. There, their cocktail had me staying for half an hour before the jazz did, and after a while, the stranger to my left. Just like your aunt, your father was really tricky – after seating himself down beside me by the bar stand since I ordered my first drink, he said nothing and ordered the same drink as I did all three times and after seeing me intentionally leave to a suite upstairs, he asked for the drinks to be sent to my room on behalf of “little red” as he called himself, and by the time I got the drinks he was gone.

I returned to the bar the next day hoping to pay him back as I disliked owing people but ended up sitting by the bar stand for three hours. Feeling a bit tipsy from the cocktails, I gave up on looking for a man I couldn't possibly recognise even if he came in and chose to leave---- it was at that point your father came in. Dressed in red head to toe – it was obvious to anyone he was going by a theme – your father held my hands as I retracted my credit card from the POS. Although I was still conscious of my surroundings, I couldn't trust my senses, but for a while as our hands remained connected the world seemed to have stopped for a second and everything turned black and white, except your father. I could see his red shirt with the amateur sown jewelled words LOVE on it – the O as a heart – his cargo pants that looked like a baby poured red dye over it and his heart-shaped

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red glasses to top his baby-like face and curly hair. He was so ridiculous I vomited from laughing too hard.

After that night, your father and I were like glue. Sometimes we would be at my place in the hotel and some other times at his, but no day went by without us seeing each other. I retained my one-month trip and spent two weeks in France experiencing colours with him. To me, he was a white to my black and to me, you are the clarity and colours to my blurry white and black world your father left me with. During those two weeks I met your grandfather – he was a grumpy old man on my first day – and during the weeks that followed, your father met my parents and your aunt who instantly approved of him as your grandfather did of me after a few days with him. I remember those days as happy days---- even after the incident it remained a summer to remember.

Back in York, at home with your father early august, I experienced pregnancy symptoms. I was over the moon and terrified at the same time – you were an unexpected figure in my life at the time, as everything felt too fast and progressive – I couldn't decide if keeping you was the best decision for the relationship I had with your father and that which I would have with you in the long-run. Keeping you was a slightly difficult decision to make as I couldn't feel you then and wasn't able to relate with you on the same level as I do now---- but I am certain that already from the first pregnancy test, I felt connected to you.

Your father was on cloud 9 upon hearing the news, and we rushed to the hospital for an ultrasound scan---- three weeks old, you were beautiful. Your pictures in our hands, we couldn't get enough of you – your father even cried upon seeing you curled like a comma on the photo scan. Although the time I spent with him was little, there are remnants of him everywhere in the house----together we can remember him and await his return. Your aunt and grandfather have told me to do away with these “delusions”, but I know that, just like me, they believe he is still out there somewhere and for that reason alone I will wait, and with you in my life, summer will come and when it does, it will one day bring him back to us. But rest assured, you are enough for me, and I hope that I will be for you.

Although I long for that day, you bring me so much more. When I hear the birds sing, I long for the beauty out there waiting to be experienced. When I open the curtains and see the sunlight rays on your cot, I think of the approaching nights of your tears for attention and understanding. When I take my walks on the streets, I see the trees bending and dancing to the tune you make me sing. And when I think of you, I dream at night envisioning the beautiful days of us celebrating your birthdays with heaths, decorating the world with your growth and experiencing the beauty of your growth----both good and bad alike, the happy and the sorrowful memories, the little fights I will try my best to solve, and the eternity of a life that awaits us. I'm expecting you my love and I'm sure your father is too.

Tomorrow I'll be heading to the hospital with the tulips; the world awaits you----spring awaits you.

With love,

DEBBIE ADE

Mom.