

A glorious glacier

Why did I lie to myself? Why did I hurt him like that?

My mom storms my room and opens the blinds. I can feel my body rejecting the light from the sun. Eight thousand feet above sea level, Mexico City's sun is hard to reject, but that just shows how far I've drifted away from the light.

Get up, you're already late, says my mom.

I don't feel like going, I say.

You can't be virtual again, your school has been in person for two months now.

I said I don't feel like it.

I can't focus at school anymore, and it's all because of him. *Damn Leo. How was I so stupid.* "Sarah, Sarah!" I hear my teacher yell at me from my computer, but before I can respond I get a text from Julia saying "You're still thinking about him?." I close my computer in a hurry and sink my face to my bed pillow. Since school started I don't go to campus because I get these sudden tear attacks, where I can't control my sobbing.

It's been four years since Leo first spoke to me, his gentle and soothing voice made me feel like I was a baby being rocked to sleep in my crib. But I realized everything way too late. He was bold, but not imposing bold, more like a humble kind of bold. There were a lot of boys that talked to me when I first arrived at school, all shapes and sizes, but he took his time. I noticed since the beginning that he was the oddball from the group, the one that had a mind that wandered through time and space well ahead of any of us. It's weird to describe why he stood out so much from everyone else. He would do these little things to help people. Do the right things at the right time, say calming words when the mood was turbulent, and stand beside you when you needed a pillar to lean onto.

I haven't figured what made him look towards me, but I did notice he had pure intentions for me, beyond a simple friendship. I guess it caught me off guard, he had become such a stable cornerstone in my everyday life, easing off my existence by simply being there, but when he confessed his love for me I froze. I still remember how his eyes were breaking apart while I stood speechless in front of him, how his ever stable, ever dependable self was shattering like a glorious glacier begins to crack in the summer.

Can we talk about this later Leo? Is all I said.

Of course I never talked about it again afterwards, but something began to melt inside of me since that day. Looking back, I definitely began to fall for him after he confessed. Different to what I had seen in most boys, he didn't hate me or scorned me after I technically rejected him. He didn't talk crap about me or avoid me at class. He kept doing his little things, standing next to me when I needed a pillar, saying the right things to fix the mood, being the bigger person. I could see in his eyes that he was holding the glacier together, even though it wanted to fall apart.

Why do I cry every time I think about him? Was it worth it? I don't even hang out with my old friends anymore. He would've been with me now, he would've chosen the same major as I and stayed with me in Mexico.

Somehow, I wanted him to notice that I was trying to be like him, whether it was with him or with other people. I wanted to learn from him, so I glued myself to his existence. My feelings for him grew so much that I couldn't camouflage them anymore, and eventually my friends became weary of him. You could say that there was a moral war between my friends and Leo. They despised how he could see through their smoke screens, know their secrets, understand their real motives. Leo didn't hold back either, everytime he figured one of them was using a boy just for amusement, he would rain hell over them. I'm not sure he has ever been afraid of confronting anyone. So when my friends realized my feelings for him they made sure I "opened my eyes and saw the real scum he was."

I was jealous that he was able to confess his feelings for me but I wasn't, and I allowed that jealousy to burn inside with such strength that even the Sonora desert would fear the temperatures I reached.

How are things with Leo, Sarah? Isabella asked while we were having lunch.

Ok, I said.

C'mon Sarah, we know you've been acting all flirty with him for a while now, you can't lie to us.

I know I should've just shut up and finished my egg and cheese sandwich.

Well, I'm kinda frustrated that he hasn't asked me out yet.

That's because he doesn't deserve you, he's an asshole that only gets into our business. Besides, I think he knows you like him but he just wants to see you suffer as retaliation.

You think so?

Why did I listen, why didn't I just eat that goddamned nasty egg and cheese sandwich.

What I think is that we should do something to make him pay, what do you think can make him know that he can't fuck with you anymore?

Well, every time we cross eyes he gets really red, like super embarrassing red, and he can't help it, so there's no way something using that wouldn't work.

I know! You'll stare at him for a really long uncomfortable time while we record how he reacts after we ask him why he is so red.

I don't think...

It's brilliant!

The next day during physics class I stared at him, still as a statue. It was probably more than five minutes and I could see his cheeks shine a red so bright that it could've been confused with the fire emergency alarm in the classroom. Even though I knew something was terribly wrong I followed through.

Why are you so red Leo? Said Isabella after Leo realized he was being filmed.

What are you talking about? Said Leo.

Is it because Sarah was staring at you, is it because you like her, why don't you confess here in the middle of class?

My heart shrank as I saw Leo stand up, barely holding the glacier together.

Oh, I see, I'm all red because I got my braces tightened yesterday and it makes my jaw hurt. Said Leo as he stepped out of the classroom, clenching his fists and without looking back.

Leo never spoke to me after that.

The next year, after most people switched schools, including Leo, I met Julia, who happened to know Leo since childhood. She helped me understand all the anger that I had built up since that day.

Why would you do that to him? Said Julia.

I was angry at him.

That's no excuse.

Who are you to judge me?

You humiliated a boy that loved you Sarah! A boy that never had a stable home, that never had enough money to pay for rent, who never complained about his situation, who only showed you and the others compassion, who always chose to be the bigger person, who never said a bad thing about you behind your back. I don't care who you are.

That's when my anger shapeshifted into guilt. I had avoided myself for years only because I was angry. *How was I so stupid?*

Six months ago, before I started college, Leo sent me a thorough text.

Sarah, I don't know why I'm telling you this now, but I felt that you should know. Ever since stuff happened between us I haven't been myself. I know it's been years, but the truth is that I have tried to love someone else many times, but I've become incapable of that as well. I still don't know why you chose to humiliate me like you did, maybe I'll never know why. However, you're still in most of my dreams at night, and I'm afraid that I'll never be able to love again or to set things straight with you. It is too late now though. I'm moving to America, in hopes to start fresh. In hopes that I'll be able to love again.

I didn't know my life could get so dark. I'm not worthy of being loved.

I wonder if you've found someone, Leo.