

LIANA

It's in the middle of a freezing winter day, while I'm waiting for my husband to come home from work, that I see the mailman walking to my door. I've been sitting by this window watching the day go by, feeling sorry for myself, attempting to nurse my bruised heart with doses of positive words. It isn't working. Every positive word appears to have a string of negative words trailing closely behind, and no matter how hard I try, I can't outrun my thoughts.

Slowly I unfold myself from the couch and head to the door. Looking through the peephole I watch the mailman deliver a few envelopes, which I know are bills; hopefully none past due. Peter seems to be getting a little forgetful lately. The mailman whistles, his breath leaving his lips in happy puffs. I don't understand how anyone could be so happy on a day so cold.

With a half turn he starts walking back toward the street. Our neighbor's lively, white Pomeranian barks out a greeting and does a few laps around his feet. When I see him turn carefully into their yard, so as to not step on the dog, I open my door and retrieve the mail. I shiver violently when the cold air hits me and quickly close the door. While I wait for my temperature to stabilize, I count my breaths making sure that my lungs fill as much as possible; which is another form of therapy that isn't working. After what seems like forever, I am somewhat warmer and I head to the loveseat to check the mail.

As I assumed, there's the water bill, the electricity bill and a slew of credit card offers. Then I see a different kind of envelope. It is lilac, my favorite color, and it has my name and address on the front. The letters flow softly from one to the next making my name look exotic, sexy. I feel a tingling in my bones and a shudder in my soul. There isn't a return address on its corner, adding to the mystery. Who could have sent it, and why is my body reacting with excitement?

I look up at the grandfather clock that's ticking the day away and notice that it's still not time for my husband's return. I'm never quite sure what time he'll walk through the door. If they have a big project at work, he'll stay past five. In the past few weeks they must've picked up a huge project because he's been coming

home closer to seven. With this in mind, I make supper quite early every day, except on the days I have to work late, and keep it in the oven on a low temperature so it will stay warm, awaiting his return.

I look back down at the envelope, feeling my heart flutter and then I glance out my window. For some odd reason, I still don't want to open it. I know anyone else would've torn open the flap as soon as they'd discovered it, but I have always been more disciplined when it comes to prolonging excitement. I want to wait until it bubbles up through me and I can no longer stand it; until I feel like anticipation is going to kill me; until my hands begin sweating with nervous delight.

I watch as the world outside accepts a blanket of snow to cover its bareness. The day is still and white. If I could concentrate on only that, I could find peace. But life is not about watching a day go by, it's about choices. Some I wish I didn't have to make.

I flip the envelope and start to run my finger under the flap, carefully so I won't tear it. I still don't have a clue as to who sent it, but I have a premonition that what I'm about to read will affect me. I'm simply not sure if it will be in a good or bad way.

The flurries outside my window pick up, as does the fluttering of my heart while I pull the paper out of the envelope. I unfold it and purposefully do not look to see who has signed it. As I said, I am incredibly disciplined.

Things are meant to be read from top to bottom, left to right, and that is what I do.

Dear Liana,

Please forgive me for not introducing myself. It is better this way. I have a story to tell and I must tell it to you, since you're a key player, even though you have been unaware of such an occurrence.

You see, one day as I was strolling downtown, minding my own business, I saw this beautiful woman walking toward me. She was about 5'2", or 5'3"; of thin build and with long, caramel cream wavy hair. Eyes: chocolate, lips: glossy pink. I thought to myself that I had to be seeing visions or that my mind was playing tricks on me because on that particular walk I had been thinking about what I would like to see in the woman I would ultimately give my heart to.

Then you happened beside me and a quick whisper of the wind caught the sleeve of your silky, navy blue dress and it grazed me. A current of electricity bolted through me! I turned, shocked and unbelieving that I could have such a reaction to someone completely unknown to me. I began wondering if you were real . . . and sure enough, there you still were, walking away, alive and very much real.

I followed you, a feat made easier by your leisurely pace, like a true stalker, for this I apologize, but I had to know more. I confess this to you, not to scare you, please don't think of me as some maniac, I only wanted to know about you: your name, your

life, your likes, your dislikes, your passions and your heart.

It took some time, but finally I learned that you work at the library, you love the color purple and that you are a married woman. This last bit of information prevents me from walking up to your doorstep and making my presence known.

I realize you may be asking yourself why I decided to write. The answer is simple. Your eyes were sad. I feel the need to try to make them happy, but I'm not exactly sure how.

Oh, but wait! There is one thing that I can give you in hopes that I might succeed. Words. My words are not empty. My words are yet but humble creatures. These words I give to you for storage in your heart and in your mind. Carry them with you, pull them out when you need to. Caress them, like the wind did to your dress that one day and gave you to me.

Stop reading, if you must, and close your eyes. Envision everything that makes you happy and allow me to take you there. If you need a walk in the rain, let me take that walk with you. If you need a cry alongside a riverbank, let me be your shoulder to cry on. If you need to make a wish upon a star, let me be the one that finds the star that will make your wish come true.

Forgive me again. I should not speak to you like this. A woman such as you is honest and true. That is why I will admire you from afar. Maybe one day I will have the chance to reveal myself to you, but now is not the time.

With love and respect,

Your Admirer