

Come Find Me Christina Martinez!
By Siegfried Daniel Collins

I hate winter. Even in LA, being cold is misery for me. I so badly crave summer. It's the first Saturday of the year and my heater isn't working due to some electrical failure. I have little ambition to cook and generally seem to do it out of necessity most days. It feels like it's about to rain from all the dark overcast clouds throughout the day, and my gardener hitting my small patch of grass at the crack of dawn was a tell-tale sign, for sure. And finally, a small crew, including my ex, her son, and three or four other guys managed to tow away Jonny's car today. That fucking car has been parked, stalled, never to function again, complete with at least one flat tire, outside of my front door for at least two, maybe three years. During that time, Jonny bought another car and then went missing about a year ago. I had asked her during the holidays if she would do something about his abandoned car on my doorstep, and today was the day when she finally followed through. And now I'm wondering if I should acknowledge the gesture and thank her or continue down our strange path of minimal communication. It's now three o'clock in the afternoon and I have yet to make breakfast. Perhaps using the stove will heat up the house some, but otherwise, I'm afraid I'll have to bundle up until I have an epiphany, as I seem to feel rather hopeful that the heating situation in my house will magically fix itself, like the fool that I am.

French toast with Kahlua sounds good with potatoes and veggie bacon. And suddenly, I am inspired and out of bed.

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Thursday night, eight o'clock and I'm already high and drunk.

Thank god I have put the pencil to the paper.

People at work are worried about me, while I'm just trying to revolutionize the place!!!

Listening to my favorite albums of last year, 2018:

- *Brandie Carlile – By The Way, I Forgive You*
- *Travis Scott – Astroworld*
- *Denzel Curry – TA1300*
- *Natalia Lafourcade – Musas (Un Homenaje al Folclore Latinoamericano en Manos de Los Macorinos, Vol. 1 & 2)*
- *Post Malone – Beerbongs and Bentleys*
- *Car Seat Headrest – Twin Fantasy*
- *Noname – Room 25*
- *Death Grips – Year of the Snitch*
- *Rhye – Blood*
- *Vince Staples – FM!*
- *Miles Davis – The Final Tour: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 6*

- *Janelle Monáe – Dirty Computer*
- *Logic – YSIV*
- *Jack White – Boarding House Reach*
- *Judas Priest – FIREPOWER*
- *Armand Hammer – Paraffin*
- *A.A.L. (Against All Logic) – 2012-2017*
- *Anderson Paak – Oxnard*
- *Daniel Avery – Song For Alpha*
- *Chet Baker – Late Night Jazz*

I need to roll a couple joints to make this night complete, and it seems all too easy.

I don't understand why it was so much easier to drink a year ago, and now it seems I so easily am drunk from half of what I used to drink, and now I feel myself spinning, like bed-spins normally would do.

I should stop drinking...

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Yeah, so that was that. I went nearly a full week sober – no drink or smoke. The smoke was the most significant, perhaps longest period of time that I had been without a high. It seemed like I was clearer in thought. Being sober does have its advantages.

However, again, it's Friday night on a three-day weekend, Martin Luther King weekend, I'm at Grand Central Market after a grueling week at work, and yes, I am having a beer, several beers, in fact.

And now I'm fucking flirting with motherfucking Christina Martinez, all via text! I just want to tell her that I have always thought the world of her, and I have no idea why. And even though I know there's a huge gap in our age, I think if I went my whole life, the rest of it, and never told her that, then I would surely regret every minute. But we work together, and I could totally be shooting myself in the foot, look back on this day with ultimate regret. But I have always been attracted to her. We used to be on the same committee at work together, and I remember sometimes staring at her for just the briefest of moments that will be seared in my memory forever, her sitting at the conference table across from me during a meeting, her shoulder-length, brunette hair, all one length down both sides of her cute little lovely face, with her black, thick-rimmed glasses that perfectly frame her smiley eyes, and oh how I love to make her smile. She is very short, easily south of five feet, but still with a lovely shape – a shape that I have had thoughts about.

- Hey, Ziggy! You still in the office?
 - [Image: My hand roll and Sopporo at Kazu Nori]
 - I would hope not 😊
- Must be nice... looks good! Why didn't I get an invite?
 - [Link: Yelp: Kazu Nori – The Original Hand Roll Bar]
 - Come find me Christina Martinez!
- Oh, the lobster hand roll...

- I can't 😞
- It looks great though! Gonna have to try it.
 - It's my favorite "sushi" – I'll seriously take you whenever you want to go.
- Yeah. Sounds good
 - I've taken so many people from work.
- Have they all liked it?
 - [Image: Me and two smiling co-workers sitting at Kazu Nori waiting for our food while I take a selfie]
 - Rave reviews, except it can be challenging getting a seat because it is a small place and there is always a line to get in. But it's so worth it if you're not in a rush. Once you're seated, it goes pretty fast, sometimes too fast.
- I don't eat raw fish though, LOL. I'm afraid!
 - I'll protect you.
- Protection is needed. Raw fish are dangerous 😬
- So pretty much everyone from the office has gone. Great 😊
 - It's not a place where you take more than two or three people.
 - I usually go by myself and get seated right away. Two is good, but more than three is tricky.
- I'm just teasing you.
- I believe you. Almost every sushi place is tiny.
- They must do that on purpose 😏
 - Especially if the place is good 😊
 - I suppose the more people you have to serve, the less attention to detail. More love in smaller groups.
 - So was there something you wanted from me?
- Yes!
- It's a budget question.
- I'm taking a training survey that was sent over by the funder and it was something regarding the budget we have for staff to attend trainings. I'll try to catch you Monday if you have time. If not, probably next week because I'll be at the Sacramento Forum.
 - So you'll be coming to my house on Monday? I'll be sleeping in, but I could make you a little breakfast. I was going to cook some beans tonight and make huevos rancheros tomorrow. I have tomatoes and habanero peppers that I was going to grill and make salsa. It's gonna be a beautiful weekend 😊

- I forgot about Monday! 😊 Wow. Sounds delicious! You had me at habanero salsa 🤤
 - Do you prefer black beans or pinto?
- Ooh you're serious?
 - I don't know what it is about you, Christina, but I've always been attracted to you. I think if I lived my whole life not telling you that, then I would never forgive myself. If you have no interest, then I would be happy with just your friendship, but at least I'm letting it out. Otherwise, you are more than welcome to come to my house and spend time with me. I live alone in a very private house. I have HDTV, PS4, Netflix, HBO, Hulu, and 5.1 JBL surround sound (my house sounds awesome!). And all you have to do is answer one question: black or pinto beans?
 - [Link: Spotify: Toro Y Moi – Outer Peace]
 - This is what I was listening to when I wrote that 😊
- I was not expecting you to say that. I don't know what to say.... I'm very flattered Ziggy.
- Are you trying to lure me with HBO and your PS4?
- I'm not going to lie and say I'm not attracted to you, but I really don't think it would be a good idea...
 - No one needs to know
 - I'm totally single right now. I am yours for the taking.
 - With HBO and PS4
 - ...and huevos rancheros with habanero
 - [Image: about a dozen Roma tomatoes stacked on my cutting board with two habanero chilies sitting on top. At the bottom of the picture are two small bags of dried beans – pinto on the left and black on the right.]
- Well the PS4 is not of any interest to me... So I wouldn't use that to try and convince me. However, the salsa is another story...
- If you ask me, you also need more habaneros for all those tomatoes.
 - Ralph's is right around the corner.
 - I just got the PS4 a few weeks ago, and I'm kinda already bored with it.
 - Right now, I'm listening to Toro Y Moi
- I've never heard of them. I listened to it for a bit though. I like it.
- What games do you play?
 - The first game I played was Uncharted 4, which I finished in 4 days. That was during New Years. It was a fun game, but very linear. Good story, but not very challenging for me.
 - I have some other games, but the one I like most is Batman: Arkham Knight, which is crazy hard, but challenging in a good way. The only thing I don't like is that it's always night and raining in Gotham. After a while it can get a little depressing,

especially when it's been so dark and depressing with all the rain we've been having.

- That's exactly why I never finished watching the Dark Knight. I started watching it but was too dark and depressing. It was too much.
 - I've always been a Batman fan. He was my favorite superhero when I was a kid. But come on dude, lighten up a little.
- Ugh, I know! I love Batman. He's the best! But I just couldn't. I'm lame LOL
 - You're awesome, Christina Martinez!
- What is it with you and calling people by their full names?
 - Some people's first and last names sound good together.
- I agree 😊
 - What music do you like?
- Oh that's right. I'm not as adventurous as you when it comes to music. Mostly mainstream music. I like pop, 90's R&B, alternative. Love John Legend, the Killers, Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift 😊
 - You never answered my question.
- What question?
 - Black or pinto?
- I can't answer.
 - Understood
 - I'm making black anyway, should you change your mind.
- Ok
- Sorry
 - Don't be. I'm just glad I was finally able to tell you, and it makes me happy to know you weren't repulsed by the idea 😊
- Well I'm glad you told me
 - Goodnight Christina Martinez

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The next day was Saturday and I texted her a picture of my huevos rancheros.
(Get your mind out of the gutter, cochino!)

I grilled a few pounds of Roma tomatoes and two habanero chilis on charcoal in my Smokey Joe, blended with a stiff shot of salt. It's good to let it sit for a short while, but ultimately it should be at least warm, if not hot when it goes on top of the dish.

I simmered the black beans for three hours, adding salt and chopped onion in the last half hour of cooking time. I turned off the heat and let cool overnight. In the morning the beans are strained from the water and put in the blender with enough of the bean water to almost cover them. They then cook down in my large cast iron skillet until they are thick.

The way I make huevos rancheros differs from the traditional way. I fry my tortillas until they are crisp, like a tostada. Then I spread the refried black beans on the shells and arrange three on a plate. Three fried eggs, sunny side with crisp edges, are nestled on top and smothered with warm to hot salsa, queso fresco, and chopped raw onion.

- [Image: my huevos rancheros and a big bowl of salsa]
- That looks amazing. So jealous! I had a bagel for breakfast 😬
 - There's plenty of leftovers
- Umm tempting
- Do you have song recommendations that I could add to my workout playlist?
 - What kind of workout?
- Strength training workout. Maybe yoga at the end.
 - [Link: Spotify: FEVER 333 – STRENGTH IN NUMB333RS]
- Interesting
 - [Link: Spotify: James Blake – Assume Form]
- I like this one
 - I will forever think of you doing yoga when I hear it.
- 😊
 - You can do yoga at my house.
- Are you joining me?
 - Absolutely
- I'll think about it 😬

- Are you a night owl or an early bird?
- I would say more of an early bird.
- I'm used to waking up early for work.
- You?
 - I think I'm naturally nocturnal, but I do love getting up to see the day begin. I also love to sleep in on the weekends.
- What time do you usually wake up on the weekends?
 - My weekend mornings are often a series of long naps, and I try not to get out of bed before noon. Hunger sometimes gets me up sooner, but I try to recharge my batteries whenever I can. But I easily get up early to go to work. Sometimes my commute is the best part of my day.
- Noon? Ooh that's definitely sleeping in. That sounds great though.
 - So how late does Christina Martinez stay up on a Saturday night?
 - On a three-day weekend?
- On a typical Saturday night, it's probably somewhere between 12 and 1. On a three-day weekend, it's probably the same LOL.
 - [Link: Spotify: Natalia Lafourcade: Musas (Un Homenaje al Folclore Latinoamericano en Manos de Los Macorinos) Vol. 2]
 - This was one of my favorite albums from last year.
- I haven't heard this album yet. I've listened to some of her stuff though. I like Carla Morrison better though.
 - What are you doing?
- I was reading and browsing condos for sale.
- Where did you buy?
 - Culver City
- Oh nice
 - It's very quiet here – makes it very easy to sleep in on the weekends.
 - I can't wait for summer.
 - I don't like it when it's cold.
- Same here. Hate the cold/rain. I would rather it be hot.
- Today was pretty nice though.

- Today was a gorgeous day.
 - The air is always so nice after the rain.
 - Everything looks clean.
- It was. I wasted a good portion of my day picking up my new glasses. 😞
 - Send me a pic.
 - Are they different than the ones you had?
- I'm at Kaiser and trying them on and the man that's helping me out looks at my patient file and says, "You're 31? You look like you're 19. Ugh 😞"
- They are different. My old ones were red.
- Here's a pic 😊
- [Image: conservative pair of black rimmed glasses sitting on a brightly lit wooden surface]
 - I bet they look better on your face 😏
- LOL – I sure hope so.
- You know I don't like taking pictures.
 - I thought you were younger, but I was glad when you told me you were older.
- How old did you think I was?
 - I easily put you in your twenties
- Early twenties?
 - I thought you were too young for me. When you told me you were 31, it gave me hope 😊
- Okay, but this guy said 19. 19? C'mon. I don't want to look like a teenager.
 - Well you definitely don't act 19. This guy obviously does not know you.
 - All I have to say is, enjoy it while it lasts, Christina. Embrace your youth while you still have it.
- How old are the women you typically go out with?
 - Well, recently I don't go out with any women. But of all of the women who I've been with, they all held a level of maturity that was not dependent on their age.
- So age is never a factor you consider when you're seeing someone?
 - When I was younger, I once had an affair with an older woman. When I was older, I had a two-year relationship with a girl eight years younger than me. In the last 19

or so years, I've only been with two women. The first of which lasted 15 years. She was a year younger than me. The other girl was an on-and-off-again whirlwind that spanned about nine months.

- I enjoy being by myself. I can typically keep myself entertained. But I do miss the affections of a woman. I miss feeling reckless passion.
- I feel the same way. That's been one of the issues I've had in past relationships. I like having space. Perhaps it was too much but the last couple guys I've dated were very clingy. Let a girl miss you!
 - But I don't feel passion with just anyone. I have to feel it, typically in ways that can't be easily explained. I just feel attraction.
- Did you feel it with the girl you were dating last year?
 - Not in the same way that she was feeling it with me. We had a clashing of expectations.
- What were your expectations?
 - I was raised, essentially, to appreciate the moment and space that I am in right now, that I can't change the past, and no matter what, the future is bound to come. I enjoy relationships for as long as I enjoy the relationship. Sometimes it's not a fit, and I wouldn't want to be with you if I didn't make you happy.
 - Mahal was the name of the girl I dated last year. She was so insecure and needy. It was bad and I put up with it for as long as I could. There was a brief moment when I felt it might work, but in the end, she sabotaged everything. She was at times a whole lot of crazy.
- That sounds easier said than done, at least for me. Enjoying something that you know leads to nowhere is hard to wrap my head around.
 - Most things lead somewhere. We learn from every relationship. Worrying about how it all ends up tomorrow is nothing to ruin today over.
- My longest relationship was with someone who was very insecure. Always relied on me to make him feel better. But nothing I ever said/did was ever enough. It was really frustrating.
 - How long were you with him?
- We broke up once, then got back together again. First time was three years – the second time four.
 - How long has it been since you last broke up?
- With him? That was three years ago.

- And you've been dating ever since?
- I dated two people last year. One was significantly younger than me. Ended quickly and not on good terms.
 - Where did you meet them?
- One was someone I knew from school. The other one was a neighbor of mine.
 - Do you have any issues seeing people from work?
- I have in the past. That was my longest relationship. I'm not sure I could do that again.
 - I met Mahal on Tinder.
 - I hate Tinder.
- I don't have any experience with online dating. Why don't you like it?
 - Because it takes out the element of physical attraction. I have chatted with so many girls from Tinder and have only met two of them. One was Mahal. The other was a girl who I had zero connection with.
- But you'll know when you meet them. I would think it makes it more interesting since there's a level of mystery. Will they look like their picture? Did they Photoshop themselves? No? LOL
 - I think it's better to pursue those who I already know I'm attracted to.
 - Frankly, I don't care for dating.
- That significantly narrows your pool of people.
 - So how early are you planning to come over tomorrow?
- 🤔
 - Still thinking about it?
- Yes
 - I love it when you say yes.
- Have a good night 😊
 - Good night Christina Martinez 🥰

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Yesterday was Saturday, and I had her in my mind all day. I became a little obsessed with our text message conversation, reading it over and over again, typically from when I first told her that I've always been attracted to her and how she responded by telling me she too is attracted to me, but it just felt like I had an opportunity and fearlessly took advantage of the moment. At times during the day, it took all my will to keep from texting her. I had felt like I was close to showing her too much attention, that she might quickly get sick of me. I had spent the day at home. I tried to watch TV and play a little PS4, but my mind was occupied by her, enjoying the moment I'm in, feeling her hopefully thinking of me, wondering if she thinks of the passages we wrote to each other, if she obsesses over whatever this is, like I do.

- I'm sorry; I like Carla Morrison, but I just don't hear at all how she is better than Natalia Lafourcade, been trying to wrap my head around that thought but can't...
- You're not listening close enough, Ziggy. I love her voice. It's incredibly soothing. I find her songs/lyrics easier to connect with.
 - Yeah, well lyrics, I can't relate since they aren't Spanglish enough for me. I just know what I hear. You know Lafourcade wrote and produced Morrison's first album?
- I didn't. I like her second album the best.
- I thought you understood Spanish? LOL
 - I usually understand enough to know what's being said.
- So, I could've been talking to you in Spanish all this time?
 - Dejenme Llorar seems to be Morrison's most popular, and I love her sound. But I think Lafourcade has a much broader body of excellent work. Just my opinion 😊
 - Just had to get that off my chest...
- Difference of opinion, I guess.
 - Of course 😊 You're still awesome Christina Martinez!
 - I wasn't gonna text you today, but I couldn't help myself. My bad...
- So you really had to get that off your chest or were you trying to find a reason to text me?
- I was going to text you actually.
 - Admittedly, a bit of both, but I was afraid I might come across as a little "clingy"...
- You're not, silly.
 - Just want to be sure I don't overstep.
- Understood...

- Did you have something to text me about? Or were you thinking of something to get off your chest?
- I wanted to know about the older woman you had an affair with. What happened?
 - I was 19 in the summer right before I moved to LA. She was a waitress at the Fox Ridge Resort where I used to cook. I was a sauté chef. Her husband was a party chef there too, and they had two children. At the time we hooked up, she told me she was going to leave him, and being so naïve, I thought she would leave him for me. But she was essentially using me as a way to get her husband's attention. He found out about us in the most heartbreaking way, but never took it out on me. She was a bit of a wild child, and at the time of our brief affair was a perfect situation for both of us. It was mostly a sexual thing. I never saw or heard from her again after I moved away. I've often wondered about her.
- Did the husband leave her after he found out?
 - I'm pretty sure, but I don't really know the end of that story.
 - I think she left all of them, if I were to guess, she just wanted out.
- All of them? She was with multiple men?
 - She had kids.
- Oh...
 - That was a crazy situation. I really had no clue what was really going on. If this beautiful waitress hadn't hit it off with me, she would have been with some other fool.
- Would you have changed what happened if you would have known?
 - It was going to happen anyway. I, personally, had nothing to do with the situation. I just enjoyed my time with her, and that was that. I was also the envy of all the other guys at work when the news broke out amongst the staff. Looking back, I do shudder at some of the situations that she put me in, but she said that her husband and his family abused and shamed her for not being a refined woman, as they came from money and she didn't. In the end, she made me appreciate my mom more, and that was important as this was right before I was leaving her too.
- Hmm that's interesting...
- The guy I was with (my longest relationship) also started off as an affair. If I could change that, I would, in a heartbeat. But there was a lot of issues wrong in that relationship...
 - It's nearly impossible to find potential partners who are completely void of any past relationships. Truly single people who are also "available" are an anomaly, almost a contradiction!

- You really think so? How is everyone around me finding available partners? Haha
 - Without really knowing, I would suggest that some of those “available partners” had a few strings to settle before those new relationships truly became monogamous.
- Hmm... perhaps
 - Did you say that relationship was with someone from work?
- Yes, he was also older than me.
 - How much older?
- 12 years
 - You liked that he was older?
 - I shouldn't be worried about our sizable gap in age?
 - I get a little freaked out because of my age when I'm around pretty, younger girls. I'm not comfortable when I feel insecure.
- I did. But it made it very uncomfortable when we would go out. He looked older than he was, and I obviously looked younger than what I was. The gap looked bigger than what it was. I didn't let it bother me as much as time went by, but it was always in the back of my head.
 - What caused that relationship to end?
- A lot of issues. One of the bigger ones was that there was no progress in the relationship. We talked about moving out and living together, but he always had excuses as to why he wasn't ready or why it wasn't the right time. He was also very controlling. He knew what to say to keep me around. I got tired and fed up. I had wasted too much of my time.
- Towards the end we were fighting constantly. It was exhausting plus my family never did want to except him.
 - So, does the optics of you being with an even older guy prevent you from wanting to get closer to me?
- Honestly, yes. Plus, we also work together.
 - I would have been surprised if you said no...
- You wouldn't care if people found out at work?
 - No one at work has to know. It's none of their business. We're adults, and I have little tolerance for playground politics.
 - On the other hand, if the whole world knew that Christina Martinez was my girl, I don't think that would be a bad thing either.

- I know it's none of their business. But people talk. It's inevitable.
 - But this is all hypothetical. We are presupposing a relationship that I'm not convinced will happen.
- Agreed. It's hypothetical. Just wanted to put it out there.
 - But it could be good, Christina. I would be open to at least finding out how it feels. I've been in enough relationships to know not to rush in. All good relationships take time. In no way am I in a rush, but it has been nice having you in my mind this weekend 😊
 - I am willing to take whatever you're willing to give me. I'm not controlling, and I love my space probably more than you love yours.
- I have to think about it...
 - Again with the thinking 😊
 - So, if people talk, as you say, because "it's inevitable," are you afraid of people just finding out? Or do you think there might be some administrative pushback?
- A little bit of both I guess. I've worked in that environment before and it was hard to deal with. Granted, it was a different atmosphere, but still.
 - It's not like we work close together. If you got mad at me and never wanted to speak to me again, that would be very possible, even though we might see each other in the bathroom area every so often. I am not spiteful.
- Haha. That's what you say now.
 - Haha, and I suppose I'm a fool to think you wouldn't be a different person than the Christina Martinez that I know today. But I'm willing to take the risk 😊
 - I think you're worth it.
 - You may not like what you see in me outside of work in the environment that I live. And I may not like yours, but we can't judge until we join each other in our respective space.
- I could be different. You never know 😊😊
 - The truth is that everyone's different in their personal relationships and space.
- True. We really only know one side of who we are. We could feel different once we see the whole picture.
 - I have no expectations in that regard, or at all for that matter. All I know now is that I like you, Christina – I've always liked you. And either way, I would hope to always

have you as a friend at the very least. I try not to make enemies out of the people whom I genuinely care for.

- Agreed. I wouldn't want to have any enemies at work or be in any uncomfortable and stressful situations at work.
 - Clearly, we are in the same boat.
- You've always liked me? Don't lie LOL.
 - I wouldn't say from the moment I first saw you, but definitely when we first started working together on the committee. You're very soft-spoken, but I don't think it took me too long to really see you and get a sense of you. And the more we worked together, the more I liked you. And after this past weekend, I can say that maybe I like you a little bit more 😊
- Have a good night, Ziggy 😊
 - Goodnight, Christina Martinez 😊

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- [Link: Spotify: Maggie Rogers – Heard It In A Past Life]
- Never heard of her. Adding it to my workout playlist 😊
 - I had never heard of her either. This is a debut album that just came out. I was listening to it today and thought you'd like it. Kind of a nice mix of different pop genres.
- How were your buttermilk pancakes?
 - I didn't make the pancakes and I need to use this buttermilk soon. I have until Friday to use it before the expiration date. It's still unopened, so it might still be good, but buttermilk is so hard to tell when it goes bad.
 - Friday is my day off, so it'll probably be pancakes then for sure.
- I imagine it's hard for buttermilk to go bad though with all that acid.
 - Really? I've never thought about it actually. I've always thrown some of it away just because I didn't know.
- It was a nice day. Took Brinkley for a nice walk but it got super windy.
 - I suspect Brinkley is a pet of some kind?

- Haha. Yes. My dog.
- I won't keep you up. Have a good night. 😊
 - Good night 😊

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- Hey, I didn't get a chance to stop by your office today.
 - Hey, I'm going to lunch soon. Any time after 2:30 I should be around. Let me know.
 - You can come talk to me – might be easier to help you.
 - I can't silly. I'm not there. I'm waiting for my flight to Sacramento. Won't be in the office until Monday.
 - Oh – haha. I didn't know you were leaving today.
 - Can this wait until Monday? When do you need this?
 - Need it by Monday. That's okay. I'll talk it over with the program manager.
 - Okay – let me know. Have a safe trip.
 - I'll let you know 😊
 - I would have gone over if I was there 😊
 - Just making sure I didn't scare you away 😊
 - No. Not at all.
 - Well, at least not yet... haha
 - I hope I never do.

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- It's cold here
 - How cold?
 - 49. That's cold!
 - Too cold for me...
 - When I went back home to visit my family in Maine last November, it was 9 (nine)!
 - Now that is cold...

- Oh no. I couldn't do that.
- Sounds painful.
 - I did not spend much time outdoors, if I could help it. It's why I left for LA to begin with.
- Yeah, that's crazy. LA is much better. Good move 😊
 - I've been trying for 30+ years to get them all to come here, but they insist on staying crazy (SMH).
- Really? Why don't they want to move?
 - Something about moving from the country to the city doesn't excite everyone, I guess. My parents are from rural parts of Michigan. Living in the city is definitely not for them.
 - My father would probably prefer NYC over LA anyway. He and my stepmom are big play/musical people.
 - When they came out to visit me many moons ago, I took them to see Wicked before it went to NYC, and they loved it. I thought there may have been hope then, but surely, I was mistaken...
 - They live in a big retirement community that keeps them really busy, so I'm thankful for that.
 - My mom keeps busy with my sister and her nine-year old. (I think that's how old she is – dammit, I should know this... so bad...).
- Your mom lives in Michigan too, or in Maine?
- Tsk. Tsk. You should know that Ziggy!
 - My mom and sister live in Yarmouth, Maine. My dad and stepmom live in Southbury, CT.
- How old are your parents?
 - My mom turned 80 last year, and I think that makes my dad 82. What about yours?
- Oh nice. Do you visit them often? I bet it's hard to live so far away from them.
 - When I was self-employed as a real estate broker, it was really difficult to get away for anything for any length of time. Now that I'm more financially secure and nine-to-five, I was able to go twice last year. I will go back this year sometime too, just haven't made the plans.
- Oh right. I'm sure that was hard.
- My mom is 67. Dad is 66. Both came to California in their early twenties from Mexico. Mom and dad are separated, but he still lives nearby.
- Tell me if I'm keeping you up.

- I usually go to bed around 11-12, but you can keep me up for as long as you want to talk.
- Why did you stop being a real estate broker?
 - I was doing both real estate and mortgages, which was very cool because I got to help people get a loan and find a house. Money was really good when I made it, but lenders started getting difficult to work with, mostly from all of the regulation that came after the sub-prime quagmire. It became impossible to do both real estate and loans, and so the business model fell apart. The year before I started working for the County, I worked my butt off all year long and did not earn a penny! It was horrible, and I went through an awful year of depression and anxiety, and that wore down my 15-year relationship – wasn't the reason per se, but it was a factor. That was a really bad time for me. My job with the County pretty much changed my life.
- Oh wow. That sounds horrible.
 - Now you know why I'm so happy to have it.
- I'm glad you were able to get out of that and join us.
 - Plus, I get to work with great people like you 😊
- True. That's an extra perk 😊
- I feel like you started telling me one time last year but you didn't finish the story of why you didn't get married in that 15-year relationship?
 - She was still married but separated when we met. They had a business and some real estate together and, as a result, it took her eight years to get divorced. There didn't seem to be much motivation for either of them to actually file the paperwork until I pushed her to do it. But by then we were living together, and pretty much everything else that goes along with marriage. In our last year together, she tried to push marriage, which was very unusual for her, but that was when she started sabotaging the relationship anyway. Yeah, so the relationship essentially fell apart before the marriage happened.
- Why do you think she wanted to sabotage the relationship?
 - In the last year, she had convinced herself that I was cheating on her, which was so unfounded that I wasn't even willing to discuss it because it was just so absurd. She took that to be a sign of guilt, which made it worse. But instead of discussing, we were screaming at the top of our lungs fighting about it. She went through several of my female friends and accused me of having affairs with some of them. She then narrowed her scope on a tenant that we had and went so far as to evicting this poor unsuspecting woman and her mother without me knowing about it and completely

did it against my wishes. That was the last straw! So, when the tenants moved out, I moved in. I've been here for nearly 4 years.

- You don't have to answer all of my questions if you don't want to.
 - I'll tell you anything you want to know. I speak the truth.
- Poor lady. Did she know what she was being accused of?
- So does she live in the front house
 - So she gave them notice on her lunch hour from work on the first day of May. On the 15th of May, I got a call from a property management company asking for a referral for my tenant. I gave them a good referral (because they were, in fact, awesome tenants), but I told them I wasn't aware that they were moving. The company said they filled out an application and put down a deposit. I then called my ex and she said it was something she had to do and that she had told me she would do it despite what I said. It is my house – it's my mortgage, but we are both on title. So, yes, she does live in the front house. I hardly ever see her and, when I do, it's by accident. We share financial responsibility 50-50 – I text her once a month with her itemized half, and she transfers money into our joint account. That is absolutely my only interaction with her right now. Otherwise, we stay out of each other's business.
 - As a result, it costs me about \$1,800 a month to live here, and it's a nice place... for a rental that is. There are some things I still want to do here, like redo my kitchen and flooring, I don't foresee myself moving away anytime soon
- That sounds like it could be an awkward situation.
 - I assure you, it is not. I promise.
 - There was never an incident when Mahal was here – not even close.
- She never brought it up? You wouldn't feel weird seeing her with someone else?
 - I had thought I saw her with a guy here for a short while this summer. Haven't seen him for a while, but it's rare that I see her at all anyway. But no, I'm far from hung up on her. It does not bother me – she can live her life how she wants so long as it doesn't interfere with mine, which so far it hasn't. I assure you, that relationship is over!
 - For all the shitty things she did to me, she never once apologized for any of it, except for one time in therapy under duress. It's way, way too late for her to make amends.
- That's really hard to believe, but OK.
 - What is?

- That it's not awkward and that it doesn't bother either of you. Maybe my train of thought is just different.
- I wouldn't want to see any of my exes. Unfortunately I have to once in a while because he lives a couple houses from me but not by choice.
- Sorry. I'm not judging you.
 - If I didn't live here, there would be zero connection. It's actually only awkward when I see her on the train, because she commutes to. I don't really have windows in the front part of my house, so it is very private here. There is a gate that closes off my half of the property. You'll have to come see what I'm talking about. I assure you, again, there is nothing here or with her that you would ever have to worry about. I give you my solid word.
 - Cross my heart, hope to die...
- Hmm okay.
- Don't want to keep you up any later. I feel bad LOL. I need to get to sleep in a little bit. Don't have to wake up at five-ish 😊
 - It's like a weekend day for you?
- No. A little earlier. I'll probably get up by 6:45. Conference starts at 8:30.
 - How long will you be there?
- Until Thursday. Get back to LA around seven I think.
 - Maybe this weekend we could actually do something together, if you wanted.
- Let me think about it. I'll let you know what I decide.
 - I'm going to sleep now, but I did want to tell you it was nice to briefly see you this morning after your total occupation of my thoughts over the long weekend. You are a very pleasant distraction. 😊
- It was really nice to see you this morning. As brief as it was. Have a good night. 😊
 - Good night 😊

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- [Link: Spotify: Empress Of – Us]
- This was nice to wake up to.
 - 😊

- I listen to a lot of music, so to ask me for recommendations is a pretty easy request for me.
- I figured. That's why I asked 😊
- [Image: Screenshot: Email sent by Spotify notifying me that in 2018, I listened to 6,888 different songs on the Spotify app]
- Wow. Where on the app does it say this?
 - Pretty sure they sent it as an email.
- Ooh
- It's probably one of the thousands of emails I have in my inbox.
 - Oh yes, they make a series of playlists on your Spotify home screen, and there should be a playlist for "your top songs 2018".
 - There's no number though, just the top songs you play the most.
- I'll check it out. It will probably be a lot of Top 40 stuff LOL.
 - I'll do what I can to change that.
- What's wrong with that?!
- Nothing, just that there's more than 40 songs at any given time.
- Ok ok
 - For example:
 - [Link: Spotify: Leon Bridges – Good Thing]
- This is good. The first one you sent me (Strength in Numbers) wasn't. I'd take Top 40 any day over that. 😊
 - Oh, haha – I really didn't expect you to listen to that one. It's probably music I would work out too. It for sure wasn't anything close to what you said you liked. Everything else, I think would be similar to what you said you liked. Yes, Fever 333 is definitely an acquired taste. They're actually from Long Beach.
 - I definitely appreciate your honest critique. 😊
 - I think I was trying to imagine you doing yoga to it.
- LOL why did you send it to me then?
- I am honest. I'll tell you what I think.

- I think it was what I was listening to at the time. When you said “interesting,” I thought that was sarcasm. I then gave you James Blake and you said you liked that better. I really didn’t think you’d ever go back to Fever 333.
 - I hope you weren’t trying to do yoga to that music. Please send video if you did.
- LOL
- No I wouldn’t do yoga to that.
- Don’t expect a video.
 - You’d probably hurt yourself. Wouldn’t want that.
 - How was your seminar?
- It was good. Better than other years. They had less sessions to go to but the topics were more applicable to our work.
- Other years were pretty bad. Felt like a waste of time.
 - Oh that’s good. At least you get to get out of town for a few days, even if it is Sacramento.
- Just getting back to our hotel. We were at a mermaid bar, but she never showed – LAME!
 - Who?
- The mermaid?
 - I’m sorry, what kind of bar is this?
- There’s a giant tank. And she gets in and swims around LOL.
- It’s called The Dive Bar.
 - Nice!
- She wasn’t there.
 - Are the drinks good?
- Umm, I don’t know.
- Mine was pretty strong.
 - Are you drunk texting me right now?
- I don’t think so
- Usually I’ll only have one but I started a second one
- I didn’t finish it.
- It was too much
 - What was it?

- It was a cranberry vodka
 - A Cape Cod
- What's that?
 - A cranberry vodka, pretty sure.
- I don't think they put enough juice.
 - Haha
 - Is vodka your typical alcohol of choice?
- Not really
- I don't drink that often.
- I like Micheladas though.
 - So why drink tonight?
- I wanted to try it.
 - Really?
- I didn't finish any of them.
 - In the summer I make fresh margaritas, sometimes strawberry if they're on sale.
- Strawberries are always on sale in the summer.
 - I could make them whenever, but it's just such a summer drink.
- What does a margarita have?
 - So essentially, it's like fresh lemonade with tequila and triple sec.
 - It's a lot of acid though, but they are yummy!
- Ooh that sounds good.
 - I'll make you some 🍷
- Not too strong.
 - I'll try not to let the alcohol overpower the drink.
- Ok

- I like to drink, but I don't like to get drunk.
- I don't like getting drunk either. I don't like losing control.
 - I would take care of you.
 - I would maybe cut my usual amount of alcohol in the recipe for you.
- Yes, half the amount is better. The less, the better.
 - I also think I could probably drink you under the table.
- Drink you under the table? What do you mean?
 - I mean that I could probably out-drink you.
- Everyone can out-drink me
 - Awww... you poor thing
- I'm fine – don't care
 - Just playing
- Not a skill I want to improve.
 - Especially if you're learning on a curve.
- True. I'm okay. I don't mind being a lightweight.
 - Just so long as you're with good company.
- Drunk people are not attractive.
 - I know my limit.
- What is your limit?
 - I can't really say what my limit is. I tend to not make my drinks strong and then I can last longer. It's dependent on the amount of alcohol during any period of time and what I've had to eat (full stomach or not).
 - I do typically have a good sleep when I drink. I only drink on the weekends though.
- Do you have a hard time sleeping?
 - Not really
- Oh okay

- You had a beer of Friday. Don't lie.
 - Haha – I sent you a picture of many from the night.
- LOL – were you drunk texting me?
- Is that why you told me all that stuff?
- How many did you have?
 - When I wrote you that long text that first said I was attracted to you, I just got in the Expo line from DTLA to Culver City and wrote the whole thing during most of that ride. I was not drunk, but I was feeling good, mostly because I was texting you. But they were true feelings, and I'm very happy that I told you. I don't know if I would have sent it had I been sober, but the conversation seemed so effortless, like I was supposed to tell you, and so I took advantage of the moment.
 - Going to bed now. Sleep well Christina Martinez, you lush 🥰
- So you weren't sober then?
- Okay. Good night.

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- [Link: Spotify: Rhye – Blood]
- Nice but putting me back to sleep...
 - Wanted to be sure I didn't augment your hangover this morning.
- Haha
- Not hungover
 - [Link: Spotify: Jungle – For Ever]
 - Perhaps this will get you out of bed.
- Better

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- Good night, Christina. I trust you got home okay.
- Good night, Ziggy. Thank you. I did 😊

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- [Link: Spotify: MØ – Forever Neverland]
- [Image: Screenshot: Email sent by Spotify notifying Christina Martinez that in 2018, she listened to 3,135 different songs on the Spotify app]
- Found it!
 - Wow, that's far more than I would have guessed. Good job. You may be more adventurous than you thought.
- Haha. Most of those songs are probably Taylor Swift and Ariana Grande 😊
 - Really, between those two, they have that many songs? I guess, maybe...
- Ok, well maybe not most of them. But maybe a good portion.
 - Did you find the playlist that shows what you play most?
- I just found it
 - What was your #1?
- The songs are ranked? In order?
 - I believe so.
- [Link: Spotify: Christina Martinez's Top Songs 2018, A Playlist by Spotify]
 1. Kendrick Lamar – All The Stars (with SZA)
 2. Taylor Swift – Delicate
 3. Kali Uchis – Lottery
 4. Yuna – Lullabies (Adventure Club Remix)
 5. Zayn – TiO
 6. Halsey – Alone
 7. Odesza – Say My Name
 8. Camilla Cabello – OMG
 9. Sam Smith – Too Good At Goodbyes
 10. Troye Sivan – My My My
 11. Loren Allred – Never Enough
 12. Ariana Grande – No Tears Left To Cry
 13. Hailee Steinfeld – Hell Nos and Headphones
 14. Kali Uchis – Tyrant
 15. DJ Snake – Magenta Riddem
 16. Niall Horan – On the Loose
 17. Dennis Lloyd – Nevermind
 18. David Guetta – Like I Do
 19. Odesza – A Moment Apart
 20. Becky G – Sola
 21. Keane – Somewhere Only We Know

22. SZA, Calvin Harris – *The Weekend (Funk Wave Remix)*
23. Christina Perri – *A Thousand Years*
24. Kacey Musgraves – *Butterflies*
25. Kali Uchis – *Know What I Want*
26. Lana Del Rey – *Lust For Life*
27. James Blunt – *You're Beautiful*
28. Yuna – *Best Love*
29. Charlie Puth – *Done For Me*
30. Alicia Keys – *In Common*
31. Bruno Mars – *When I Was Your Man*
32. Ansel Elgort, Logic – *You Can Count On Me*
33. John Legend – *Let's Get Lifted Again*
34. Post Malone – *Congratulations*
35. Louis Tomlinson – *Back To You*
36. Selena Gomez – *Fetish*
37. Taylor Swift – *Gorgeous*
38. G-Eazy, Halsey – *Him & I*
39. Zayn – *Let Me*
40. Ellie Goulding – *Only You*
41. Alex and Sierra – *Little Do You Know*
42. Christina Perri – *Jar of Hearts*
43. Lauv – *Getting Over You*
44. San Smith – *Stay With Me*
45. Leona Lewis – *Bleeding Love*
46. Bruno Mars – *It Will Rain*
47. Calvin Harris – *One Kiss*
48. Taylor Swift – *Style*
49. Yuna. – *Hold On We're Going Home*
50. Ellie Goulding – *Anything Could Happen*

- Top of the list: Kendrick! I didn't think it was possible, but I like you even more now
🥰
- There is a lot here that I haven't heard. Nice!
- My list is totally different...
- [Link: Spotify: Ziggy Collins' Top Songs 2018, A Playlist by Spotify]
 1. Post Malone – *Rockstar*
 2. Denzel Curry – *Black Balloons*
 3. Dave Matthews Band - *#41*
 4. Travis Scott – *Stargazing*
 5. Armand Hammer – *Dettol*
 6. Logic – *Overnight*
 7. JPEGMafia – *Thug Tears*
 8. Lil Yachty – *Boom!*
 9. J.I.D – *General*
 10. Jay Rock, Kendrick Lamar – *Kings Dead*
 11. Daniel Avery – *First Light*
 12. Post Malone – *Over Now*
 13. Jack White – *Respect Commander*

14. *Natalia Lafourcade – Danza De Gardenias*
15. *Travis Scott – Night Crawler*
16. *U.S. Girls – Velvet For Sale*
17. *Noname – Blaxpoitation*
18. *Car Seat Headrest – Stop Smoking (We Love You)*
19. *Kids See Ghosts – Feel The Love*
20. *Drake – Nice For What*
21. *JPEGMAFIA – 1539 N. Calvert*
22. *Post Malone – Paranoid*
23. *Denzel Curry – Taboo*
24. *Daniel Avery – Stereo L*
25. *Logic – Yuck*
26. *Dirty South – If It All Stops*
27. *Janelle Monáe – Pynk*
28. *Death Grips – Hahaha*
29. *Judas Priest – FIREPOWER*
30. *Kids See Ghosts – 4th Dimension*
31. *Amber Mark – Love is Stronger Than Pride*
32. *Billy Woods – Groundhog's Day*
33. *Miles Davis – All of You*
34. *Denzel Curry – Cash Maniac*
35. *Travis Scott – Carousel*
36. *Logic – One Day*
37. *Sofi Tucker – Bat Shit*
38. *Dave Matthews – When I'm Weary*
39. *Vince Staples – Norf Norf*
40. *Big K.R.I.T. – Big Bank*
41. *Kanye West – All Mine*
42. *Czarface, MF Doom – Nautical Depth*
43. *Judas Priest – Lightning Strike*
44. *Bob Moses – Back Down*
45. *Nine Inch Nails – Shit Mirror*
46. *Daniel Avery – Projector*
47. *Japanese Breakfast – Diving Woman*
48. *Wiz Kalifa – Blue Hunnids*
49. *Kendrick Lamar – King Kunta*
50. *Janelle Monáe – Make Me Feel*

- I think between the two of us, we have most of modern contemporary music covered.
 - I'm impressed that your list is mostly pretty recently released music. I like the classics, but I can only hear the same song over and over again for only so many times...
 - Yuna is an artist I've never heard of. Nice.
- I find comfort in listening to songs that I already know instead of browsing through new stuff.
 - You have several Janelle Monáe songs. I'm not a fan at all.

- I loved that album.
- I like Post Malone though.
 - She is an acquired taste, but super talented.
- Love his new song.
 - Yeah, his last album was fire.
- What about Dua Lipa?
 - I haven't heard much of her music. Saw her on SNL last year, but sadly it was not memorable 😞
- Really? I like it. I have a couple of her songs on my playlist.
 - ...and I will listen to them all in order.
- Let me know what you think.
 - I usually listen to artists by the album, obviously.
 - Here's a list of my favorites from last year.
 - [link: MY FAVORITE ALBUMS OF 2018]
 - *Brandie Carlile - By The Way, I Forgive You: This was one of my favorite albums of 2018, by far. It still remains as fresh and catchy today as it did the first time I heard it. Carlile's voice, at times, is sonically loud and, at other times, is delicately soft. Her songs tell tales of her parents, her daughter, old high school friends, bitter old lovers, and this album is written in a universal way for anyone listening. This album is a wonderful achievement in songwriting, production and performance.*
 - *Travis Scott - Astroworld: This album is a psychedelic, atmospheric hip-hop journey through the hot Southern summer dreamscape in the mind of one of the greatest Trap producers of all time. With features from Stevie Wonder, John Mayer, Drake, the Weeknd, Kid Cudi, James Blake, and others, Astroworld is Travis Scott's best work, which is saying a lot, since his first two albums were brilliant.*
 - *Denzel Curry - TA1300: This three-act opus presents a progressively dark depiction of mental disease, particularly as it relates to being black in America and growing up in the hood. Curry's flows are always on point, his delivery is*

aggressive as always, and the instrumentation is hard and gritty. A perfect hip-hop album.

- *Natalia Lafourcade - Musas (Volume 2): Every single note, beat, chord, melody, harmony - every single second of this absolutely flawless production is a tribute to traditional Latin music in its most fundamentally basic, yet sophisticated approach and execution. If you feel nothing from listening to this exquisite performance, then I question your ability to feel at all. This is a must listen!*
- *Post Malone - beerbongs & bentleys: Party album of the year! Catchy, anthemic choruses glide over clever Trap bangers. And even though every song could easily be heard on the radio, it's hard not to feel sorry for this poor bastard and how fame and fortune has shook up his life with parties, drugs, and shallow women. For hours these songs would repeat over and over in my mind with just the thought of any of Malone's addicting hooks. This album just reeks of hot summer excess.*
- *Car Seat Headrest - Twin Fantasy: This is a remake of one of the remarkable, Will Toledo's first albums. And thank god, because the original recording is so DIY and raw that it's an almost impossible listen. We now have a much more refined recording of what is a very enchanting collection of songs from when our protagonist was at the wildly innocent age of 19. Will Toledo is one of the most underrated, under-appreciated musicians in our lifetime.*
- *Noname - Room 25: Best new artist of the year! This young lady's flow sounds so effortless, it feels like she's just talking to me, incorporating organic jazz and R&B instrumental stylings. Miss Fatinah Warner tells stories of her friends, family, and faith, what it's like growing up in Chicago, moving to Los Angeles, and having a good life and still struggle as a black woman in America. It will be very exciting to hear more from her hopefully very soon.*
- *Death Grips - Year Of The Snitch: This is hands down the craziest punk-rap you will ever hear. Coming deep from within the bowels of Sacramento, this entire auditory orgasm is rotten to the core from the band's aggressively frenetic attack on the guts of the song, chewing meat from its bones. This album is a musical and emotional whirlwind, mixing savage and raw production with unthinkable textures and angular melodies against the roaring screams of MC Ride. Death Grips is always a crazy listening experience.*

- *Rhye - Blood: Milosh and his girlfriend must be one of those couples that make you sick when you see them together because they're so passionately in love all the time. Groovy, sexy, and still so very chill, the slow rhythmic pacing of this album inspires procreation. There is also brave acknowledgement of their differences and how the couple works them out, but more importantly how the music is the source for their healing. This album has repeatedly and randomly shown up in my queue ever since my first listen. This album is brilliant.*
- *Vince Staples - FM!: I don't understand how this record dropped in November when this is clearly a summer album. Staples tells stories of gangster life and the hood politics of Long Beach, CA. The music is always original and funky, and his goofy drawl can be both funny and yet so serious. And this is a seamless listen with outros and interludes transmitting broadcasts from a local radio dj, adding an extra helping of coolness.*
- *Miles Davis - The Final Tour: The Bootleg Series, Vol 6: 2018 was a year when a lot of rare jazz, some never heard before recordings, was released. Three hours and forty minutes make up this bootleg series of recordings from Miles Davis' tour with John Coltrane, a tour Davis begged Coltrane to join. At the time, Coltrane wanted to break away and do his own thing, but reluctantly agreed to the European tour. The anger behind Coltrane's protest is quite loud and obvious in these raw, but good sounding recordings. And the ever-competitive Davis seems to feed from Coltrane's aggressive delivery. The end result is brilliance. This is a piece of history that every jazz fan should experience.*
- *Janelle Monáe - Dirty Computer: definitely the cleanest production on my list mixed with Monáe's commanding vocal and general attack of the song with high sexual energy. Sounds great through good speakers with lots of bass. Monáe definitely wears her influences on her sleeve, as this soundtrack to an equally compelling video is an obvious nod to Prince and 80's synth-pop, with the bouncy modern influence of Farrell Williams, and a very futuristic, pro-vagina battle cry. For a sexy, funky pop album, Dirty Computer is flawless.*
- *Logic - YSIV: Logic is an artist who has improved well over time with every release. And even though I did like Bobby Tarrantino II, which I felt was his best at the time, YSIV is just*

that much better with thick boom-bap beats and many obvious nods to classic Kanye West and one track that reunites the original Wu-Tang Clan. This kid, right now, is hot and a true inspiration.

- *Jack White - Boarding House Reach: I've never been a huge Jack White fan, not even much of a White Stripes fan. But this album is definitely his best, as it is his most experimental. While still staying true to his classic rock roots, White takes some well executed risks with his sound and songwriting approach, weaving in strange verbal passages that set an otherworldly vibe. The production is tip-top and high energy as Jack White continues to evolve as a musician while still staying true to his roots.*
- *Judas Priest - FIREPOWER: As a teenager, I was a pretty big Judas Priest fan. They were one of the first bands I saw live, opening up for Iron Maiden at the Civic Center in Portland, Maine some thirty-five years ago. I lost interest in the band after Defenders of the Faith as the music industry was changing and Metal's momentum during the 80's waned from the rise of Grunge in the 90's. It seemed like Priest had become long forgotten, until the release of FIREPOWER, an album that sounds like an echo from thirty-five years ago. Although much of the band has been replaced, Rob Halford sounds just as awesome as he did back in the day. Seriously one of their best.*
- *Armand Hammer - Paraffin: I have such a love for underground New York hip-hop. Somewhere close to the top of the list is Billy Woods, one half of Armand Hammer and who released one of my favorite hip-hop albums last year. Abstract, poetic lyricisms over gritty, boom-bap beats and psychedelic, dissonant jazzy instrumentation. Without knowing exactly what or who Woods and Elucid are specifically rapping about, Armand Hammer's emotional purge is visceral enough to convey the duo's overall message from a different dimension. A great hip-hop album.*
- *A.A.L. (Against All Logic) - 2012-2017: This album was written and produced by the great electronica legend, Nicolas Jaar whose ability to put the most unusual musical and sampled sounds together to make music that is groovy and fresh is genius, and this album is proof of that.*
- *Anderson Paak - Oxnard: It's hard to not like Anderson Paak. Not only is this the best of his three albums, but it finally recognizes Oxnard as his home turf, even though much*

of the album is conceptually about his rise to stardom and all of the tribulations that come with fame and fortune. There is so much talent that went into this production, including Kendrick Lamar, Pusha T, Snoop Dogg, J. Cole, Q-Tip, and production from the amazing Dr. Dre.

- *Daniel Avery - Song for Alpha: Smooth, chill, and groovy electronica at its best, this album incorporates interesting textures, static, fuzzy sounds, and hypnotizing rhythms. This album may not be for everyone, but it's great background music and calls to me occasionally whenever I'm looking for something to listen to.*
- *Chet Baker - Late Night Jazz: This album reminds me of walking through the city late at night when live music still echoes in the streets between the buildings of downtown Los Angeles. This album is very basic and, on the surface, may not resonate with hardcore jazz fans. But for me, this album has a special place in my heart for its traditional approach to the genre. This album definitely lives up to its name.*
- *HONORABLE MENTIONS (in no particular order):*
 - *Nine Inch Nails - Bad Witch*
 - *Kids See Ghosts - Kids See Ghosts*
 - *Chris Stapleton - From a Room, Volume 2*
 - *Bob Moses - Battle Lines*
 - *Wiz Khalifa - Rolling Papers 2*
 - *Kamasi Washington - Heaven & Earth / The Choice*
 - *Lil Yachty - Lil Boat 2:*
 - *Sofi Tucker - Treehouse*
 - *J.I.D - DiCaprio 2*
 - *Jungle - For Ever*
 - *John Coltrane - Both Directions At Once*
 - *Andrew W.K. - You're Not Alone*
 - *Kanye West - Ye*
 - *Pusha T - Daytona*
 - *Dirty South - XV*
 - *Dave Matthews - Come Together*
 - *Samantha Fish - Belle of the West*
 - *R+R=Now - Collagically Speaking*
 - *Jimi Hendrix - Both Sides of the Sky*
 - *Amber Mark - Conexão*
 - *Van Morrison - You're Driving Me Crazy*
 - *Kendrick Lamar - Black Panther Soundtrack*
 - *Jpegmafia - Veteran*
 - *U.S. Girls - In a Poem Unlimited*
 - *Cardi B - Invasion of Privacy*
 - *CZARFACE - Czarface Meets Metal Face*

- *Soulwax - Essential*
- *Sons of Kemet - Your Queen Is A Reptile*
- *Empress Of - Us*
- *MØ - Forever Neverland*
- *Superorganism - Superorganism*
- *Logic - Bobby Tarantino II*
- *Leon Bridges - Coming Home*
- *Princess Nokia - Metallic Butterfly*
- *Milo - budding ornithologists are weary of tired analogies*
- *Rosalia - El Mal Querier*

➤ *What music did you like last year? Let me know. I always appreciate good recommendations from friends.*

- Do you have a blog or do you make this list for yourself?
 - I make this list every year (this is my third or fourth year).
- Impressive
 - I post them on Facebook.
 - You have plans this weekend?
- Not much. Meeting up with my dad for a bit tomorrow morning. You?
 - [Image: My homemade blueberry pancakes with O'Brien potatoes, OJ and veggie bacon]
 - Still thinking about it?
- I didn't know if you still had time.
 - When?
- This weekend.
- When are you free?
 - Right now.
- Haha. Okay.
- I'm out for a walk rig now.
- Free any other time?
 - Jasper is at my house right now playing my PS4. I'm either gonna go hang out at his place, or I'll stay and hang out with you. He will understand.
- I can be free today, but it will be later. Don't want to ruin your plans. Are you free tomorrow?

- I can be home in 20 minutes, most anywhere in the city within an hour's notice.
- By the time I finish and get out there it will be after 9. Is that okay?
 - Whatever time works, I'll make it happen.
 - It will be a late night for me either way.
 - (You have no idea how excited I am right now)
- Question
- What are your expectations for tonight?
- Ziggy??
 - You can come to my house and leave whenever you want. If you're hungry, I can make us some pasta, maybe fettuccini Alfredo, with shrimp?
 - Or we could Door Dash something
 - Or I could make you blueberry pancakes.
 - Or quesadillas with Casique (although I may need tortillas)
- Ok
- What's your address?
 - [Link: Google Maps – My house]
 - I just left Jasper's
- Ok. On my way.
 - Let me know when you're close and I'll come out.
- I'm here
- I can park across the street right? No restrictions?

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- I'm home
- I had a good time. Thank you 😊
 - Thank you 😊
 - It was nice having you in my space.
 - I can still feel you on my lips.
- I can still feel your hands on me...
 - I can still feel my hands on you too...
 - I hope you come back.

- I don't know if I will but I'm glad I went today. I would've always wondered what it felt like to be close to you.
 - You don't wonder what it would be like to get closer?
- Do I wonder? Yes.
- Am I willing to try it? Not sure.
 - I would want you to be sure. I would want you to enjoy it – it's how I enjoy it.
 - I want to kiss you everywhere.
 - Good night Christina 🥰

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- [Link: Yelp: La Placita Del D F]
- Ooh pambazos
 - Yes, pambazos – yummy!
- They also have chicken pozole. Damn. Wish I knew this back when I ate chicken 🤤
 - Are you a veggie?
- I still eat fish.
 - But only cooked fish.
- Haha. Yes
- I eat ceviche though
- Technically, it's cooked right? LOL
- Ceviche/aguachile
 - Haha – a little bit from the acid. But all good fish should be partially cooked anyway.
 - Do you eat seafood? Shrimp? Scallops?
- Shrimp and fish mostly. I think I've tried scallops before. But I don't like anything else (e.g., squid, octopus, oysters)
 - Shrimp is kind of a staple protein for me. I typically have a lot of fish and shrimp in my freezer.
 - Can I make you some dinner tonight if you don't have plans?
- I don't think I can.
 - Will you get in some kind of trouble?

- LOL
- No
- To be honest, the weed is kind of a deal breaker. I don't think I can ignore it. I'm sorry....
 - I won't do it around you, or before I ever see you (if I can help it). If I knew I was seeing you last night, I would not have smoked or drank. I am well aware of how sober you are, and I respect that and will never insist you change. I would rather you be a good influence on me than me be a bad influence on you.
- I don't think that's realistic for you.
 - What? Be sober around you? It's just as realistic as me being sober at work.
- You said, "if you can help it", like that's hard for you to do...
 - No – haha. Like when I know I'll be with you. It's not an addiction, I assure you. It's completely within my control.
 - Last night, I didn't know I would see you and I had already started. Hence, I couldn't help it.
- Haha. Ooookay.
- Going into this we both said we might not like the other side of us. I like work Ziggy. Funny, sexy, smart Ziggy.
 - Was I not that Ziggy yesterday?
- Umm no not completely. You weren't sober. Maybe towards the end of the night.
 - That's true, that I was more sober at the end, but I was more flustered in the beginning because you were here more than anything.
- You weren't flustered LOL. You started telling me a story about your friend and you forgot what you were talking about.
 - Yeah unfortunately that happens whether or not I'm sober, but you were a bit distracting.
 - The last thing I felt like doing last night was telling you stories about my friends.
 - It was a big deal for me to have you here.
- It was a big deal for me too.
 - You didn't seem flustered at all.
- I didn't? I was able to hide it I guess.
 - You were very cool the entire night.

- Well I've had practice. I feel like I always get flustered around you at work.
 - Really? Maybe flustered is just how I know you.
- Haha. Yes that's me.
 - Would it have been better if I had hidden it and never told you?
- No I appreciate you telling me.
 - I haven't used at all today because in my mind I'm hopeful that I might see you.
- Ugh. It's so hard to say no to you.
 - 😊
 - I can make a fresh batch of salsa with extra habaneros and make quesadillas with sautéed shrimp...
 - Please say yes.
- I can't. I'm sorry. I hope you enjoy your night 😊
 - Are you saying you can't tonight, or you can't any night?
- I don't know if I will change my mind later, but this is "I can't" for tonight.
 - Understood.
- It would probably make it easier if I just said no for any night.
 - 😞
 - Breaking my heart, Christina Martinez, but I'm happy for what you gave me.
- I feel stupid for going back and forth. I'm torn.
- Ugh. Ignore me 😊
 - Sooooo.... Is it now a yes? 😊
- LOL
 - ...still sober...
- Another day...
 - I'll be happy with that answer.
 - I just want to feel your lips again.

-
- I really like the Forever Neverland album 🥰
 - 😊
 - I've been resisting texting you today. So glad you did instead.
 - I couldn't resist.
 - I was thinking of texting you just to tell you that I was a failure at not texting you...
 - Yeah, like I said the other night, I used to listen to it back-to-back with the Empress Of album. They feature on each other's albums.
 - I don't remember you saying that. Both of those are really good. Favorites so far.
 - I was telling you at the end just before you left. I started playing the MØ album – maybe you didn't recognize it at the time.
 - How was your day? Did you meet up with your dad?
 - It was good. Yes, he came over. I was helping him dispute items on his credit report. He recently had his identity stolen so his credit report is a mess. Did some errands and had a good workout.
 - You?
 - You were saying he's separated from your mom. Did that happen recently?
 - No. Long time ago. Almost 19 years ago.
 - He left my mom for someone else. Never remarried though. Pretty much ruined everything good going for him at the time. He had another kid, eventually lost his job, the lady he was with left him, he filed for bankruptcy. Sad but his own fault.
 - That is sad. How is he now?
 - He's doing better. His job is okay, health is good. Trying to move through. The landlord's son where he currently lives is the one who stole his identity.
 - What happened with your mom during your dad's..., uh, BS (for lack of a better term).
 - It was obviously a really hard time. I don't know how she did it. She didn't have a job at the time. She was a housewife. She had a mortgage to pay and we were a big family (I have four siblings). She started working from home and never asked him or anyone else for help. We owe her everything we have. She's amazing. She didn't take his BS and left him not knowing what she would do but knew she deserved better. They divorced, but she never remarried either.
 - I guess when you described them as "separated", that sounded recent.

- Oh no. Meant to say divorced.
 - You were 11 or 12 – that couldn't have been easy for you either.
- It wasn't. We were not his priority at the time. We spent a lot of time waiting around for him to pick up and spend time with him, but he wouldn't show. Always had excuses. Grew up resenting him and being angry at him.
 - Your mom sounds amazing. Probably would have a lot in common with my mom.
- Your mom went through something similar?
 - Well, the circumstances of the divorce were different, but my mom did raise me and my sister by herself. My dad paid alimony and saw us every month, and my sister and I love him. But he never had interest in having kids, and my mom was a home economics major in college. They had been married for ten years when my mom, as she described it, "forgot to put in her diaphragm." There are a lot of pictures of me and him together in the first 18-ish months of my life. But when my mom got pregnant with my sister, things changed. He may have cheated on her during her second pregnancy, but the fact of the matter is there is a lot about their breakup that I don't know, and that's probably a good thing. They have always been civil to each other, and if you saw them together, you may say they are good friends. But my mom secretly still loves my dad. And to this day, my dad still has a heavy head of guilt.
 - [Image – Me, my sister, mother, father, stepmother from Summer 2018]
- You never questioned why they separated?
 - It was hard to understand when we were kids. My sister and I would forever ask them, and they would tell us that they just drifted apart, which is actually the best way to describe it even as I understand much more about the circumstances as an adult. I think my dad was pretty clear about not having kids, and for someone like my mom, having kids was a risk she was willing to take to the detriment of her marriage. They really are two different people entirely.
- That's true. It really is hard for kids to understand. Sounds like they were very civil about it though, not always the case.
- Who's in the pic?
 - From L to R: me, my mom, sister, dad, and stepmom.
- Your mom is so cute 😊
 - She is cute, but she is one of the toughest women I've ever known. She is my confidant. She knows everything about me, even the bad stuff.
 - ... well, maybe not EVERYTHING! But most everything.

- LOL oh no 🤔
- Sounds like you have a really good relationship with her. Can you say the same about your dad?
 - Like my dad doesn't know that I use or grow marijuana, not because I don't want him to know or that I think he'll think differently about me. It just hasn't come up, and I don't feel compelled to just tell him. My dad is a funny man – loves to entertain and is the least confrontational man I have ever known.
- So your mom knows? What did she tell you when you first told her?
 - My mom doesn't judge me. I've done and said some awful things to and about her when I was young and stupid. But she keeps loving me, and it's hard to be mad at that.
- By the way, I really liked that other picture you sent me of you and your co-workers. Love the facial hair. Just wanted to say that. 😊
 - You like my facial hair? I was concerned that it was rubbing too hard against your soft skin 😊
- In the picture it was a lot more noticeable. I couldn't tell if you had any on Friday, but I did feel it a bit.
 - The thought came to me in the morning, so it was not as long at the time. But yes, I had some stubble. I would have shaved had I known you were coming.
- No. It's a good look. I like it.
 - It's my weekend look.
 - Now I'm conflicted if I ever see you again outside the office if I should be shaven or not...
- Hard no.
 - Understood 😊
- You never finished telling me why you never had kids.
 - With my 15-year ex?
- With anyone, I guess.
- But with her I guess would make more sense.
- You said something about not being a good father figure.
 - The last two girls already had kids. I don't think I was ever in a relationship when we planned to have kids. One girl miscarried, but she was on the bad side of crazy, so

that was a good thing. Another girl aborted without me knowing she was pregnant because she was convinced I would make her keep it. I've been engaged twice, and both times ended well before children could happen.

- Would you have wanted her to keep the baby?
 - I think she may have questioned who the father was. She was that kind of girl, unfortunately.
- Is your 15-year ex one of the ones you were engaged to?
 - I guess the 15-year would be a third, but we were never officially engaged. I think most people assumed we were married anyway.
- You didn't answer the question...
 - If I would have wanted her to keep it?
- Yes
- If it was yours, would you have wanted a baby?
 - I think the decision should be made by both parties and ultimately, I believe the woman should have the final say. I would also say that generally speaking I am both pro-life and pro-choice. If it was my baby and I felt that baby would be brought into a good home/family, then I would choose life.
 - Having said that, she was the relationship that was eight years younger. She was a slut, an alcoholic, and a compulsive drug addict. So even though I understand why she did it, I was especially upset that she did it without telling me. Ultimately, the abortion was what broke us up.
 - She was 20 when we broke up.
- Understood.
 - What are your thoughts on the subject?
- I'm pro-choice. I've never had to make that decision (thank God). But I imagine it's not easy. Ultimately, I believe the women should have the choice to do what she wants. If I am in a serious and committed relationship, I would tell him. I couldn't imagine having to decide to keep the baby or not without letting him know.
 - Are you using any kind of birth control?
- Yes
- Abstinence
- 🤔
 - By choice?

- Is it ever done by choice?
- I typically use birth control pills.
 - Haha – So I can say that I have abstained since April of last year, and that is not truly by choice.
- Ooh LOL
- I don't typically have sex unless I'm in a serious relationship.
- You broke up with your ex since April?
 - With Mahal, yes.
- Oh. I thought it was a lot more recent.
 - Oh no, it's been almost a year. It took her several months to get over me, and I had to ignore her random texts and calls. I think she finally gave up around August, but she waved at me through IM a few weeks ago that I also ignored.
- Actually, I didn't have sex in the last relationship I was in. So I guess that's not always the case either. Haha.
 - Why not?
 - Sex to me is one of the highest forms of intimacy with the right person.
 - Were you not physically attracted to each other?
- I didn't feel it was ever the right time. I liked him but my feelings weren't as strong. There wasn't any passion on my side. That's ultimately why I broke up with him.
- He was attracted to me but I didn't have the same feelings towards him. He had a lot of good qualities, and I think that's why I dated him for as long as I did.
 - I have trouble having sex with someone I don't have a mutual attraction toward. If she's not enjoying it, then I'm not enjoying it. That way I can be aggressive, but not to that extent. If you want to go home, then I will not stand in your way.
- Yeah, that's not enjoyable.
 - Sorry if this conversation went into an awkward direction.
- Haha. That's okay.
- Have a good night 😊
 - Yes, I was just getting ready for bed right now.
 - Sleep well Christina – hope to see your pretty smile tomorrow. 😊

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- [Link: Spotify: Amber Mark – Conexão - EP
- 😊
 - Not the smile I was hoping to see today, but I'll take it 😊
- Ok ok. This one is better → 😊
 - True, but neither aren't nearly as nice as the one on your face.

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- Did you get a little flustered?
- Haha. Noooooo...
 - Are you sure? It was the first time I thought I saw it.
- First time? That's impossible.
 - I guess I see it now that I am aware of it 😊
- Hopefully not too obvious 😊
 - It was at least a grin, which is better than an emoji 😊
- 😊
 - See, now you're just teasing me...
- 😊
 - It's okay, I like to be teased 😊
- Haha. Good then.
 - When will you let me see you again?
- Ummm... maybe soon?
 - Like tomorrow? 😊
 - (Pushing my luck...)
- Haha. Not tomorrow silly.

- I can wait until Wednesday.
- OK. Wednesday of next week?
- Or maybe next weekend??
 - This coming weekend?
- Not sure yet what I have going on this weekend. I'll let you know.
- My best friend is supposed to come down for her bridal dress fitting. Not sure if it will be this week or not.
 - Where is she?
- San Francisco 😞
- She recently moved.
 - How long have you known her?
- Since we were kids in elementary. We went to the same schools all through high school. She lived a block behind me too.
 - Wow that's awesome you're still friends
 - I think in that situation, the term "best friend" is definitely appropriate.
- Yes. We are really close. Still really bummed she moved so far.
 - How long ago
- Last year in August.
 - Will you be in the wedding party?
- Yes, maid of honor 😊
 - Of course.
- Me and another friend will be her maid of honor.
 - The three of you are all tight?
- Yes, we are really good friends. I don't know her as long, but we've been friends since high school.
 - Where is she, the other MOH?
- She is still nearby. Lives in Bell.

- Well for sure I am not getting in the way of that unless the three of you want to come over. I'll give you all a bachelorette party.
- Wow, sounds like someone's having too much fun with this conversation LOL.
 - Haha.
- Are you lending us your house to throw a bachelorette party?
 - If your friends are like the smell of weed.
- Haha. That's probably a no. Darn.
 - I have plenty to share.
- I'm sure you do.
 - Just sayin'...
- Funny guy
 - Pretty girl
- Are you smoking now??
 - Why do you ask?
- Just wondering...
 - To be honest, I smoked a little when I got home, but it's gone now. I can't sleep when I'm high.
- Keeps you up?
 - It stimulates my creative thinking.
 - I can't shut my brain off.
- Oh interesting.
 - It's why I write.
- Did Mahal ever mind that you smoked?
 - Mahal didn't drink or smoke – she was very sober and clean. But her previous boyfriend was an idiot and used to smoke it in her apartment with all of her kids. So she objected to my doing it at first, and as far as I know her kids never knew I did it

at all (it's nobody's business but mine). But when we were at my house, the rules were different.

- * I just read this again and wanted to be clear that he wasn't smoking weed with her kids - they were just there.
- Oh ok. It's true. It's really nobody's business what you do.
- Were her kids still young?
 - The four range from 12 to 27
- Oh yikes
- Getting ready for bed. Have a good night, Ziggy 🌙
 - Sleep well Christina 😴 hope to see your pretty grin tomorrow 😊

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- [Link: Spotify: Weezer – (Teal Album)]
- I haven't listened to Weezer in such a long time.
 - I know, and now they're doing karaoke...
- Karaoke?
 - It's an album of cover songs – well done, but still a bit karaoke. Thought I would send you something a bit more up-tempo today 😊
- I liked Happy Together the best.
 - In contrast, this is not karaoke.
 - [Link: Spotify: Amber Mark – Love is Stronger Than Pride]
- Ah, I see.
- I liked it. It was okay. 😊
 - It gets stuck in my head
 - ...just like you 😊

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- [Image: Screenshot of Weather app page showing 16 degrees in Yarmouth, ME]
- Oh hell no...

- 16?! Oh god. That's insane. Who leaves their house in this weather?
 - I guess the Mid-West is getting hit with an Arctic blast. I saw a map that showed wind chill at -40 degrees. I can't... why?
- Oh no. That's horrible.
- We'll see how much rain we get this week.
 - I need to get my heating fixed. Do you know any good electricians?
- Yes, I'll get the number for you.
 - I love it when you say yes 😊
- Don't get used to it 😊
 - I'll take whatever you're willing to give me.
- [Image: Business card for Ivan, an HVAC specialist]
- Here you go!
- He's pretty good and prices are reasonable.
 - Thanks – just left a message.
 - He does speak English, yes? His message was in Spanish and I left a pretty lengthy message in English.
- LOL
- I was gonna say I didn't know. But his card is in English, the other in Spanish, soo...
- I think most of his clients are Latinos and his language of choice is Spanish but I think he does.
- Guess you'll find out. Haha
 - Yes, he speaks English 😊
- He called you back?
 - Yes, he's coming Thursday night. Thank you.
- Oh good. No problem 😊
 - Maybe you should come over and translate just in case...
- I don't translate for free.
 - What would be adequate compensation for your services?
- You can't afford it 😊

- Try me.
- I need to know if it's worth my time.
 - I will need a Scope of Work, T-specs, a reference quote, service order checklist...
- Yes, all that will be needed.
 - Well if you're going to be a sole source vendor, I will need to know how your services will differ from any other translator, or else it will go out to bid...
 - Are you worried that I will waste your time?
- You can put it out to bid, but you won't find anything better.
 - But you're the one I want.
- Perhaps...
- Then I hope you compensate me properly.
 - Soft kisses and habanero salsa?
- That's a good start.
 - I think that's a good start to differentiating yourself from other Spanish translators.
 - You're hired!
 - I can still feel your lips on mine, faintly, but still there. I need a refresher...
- A refresher sounds good.
 - So you'll come now?
- Ummm nooo. I'm just teasing you.
 - Thursday?
- I thought this was a hypothetical proposition...
 - Oh no, I need my heating fixed, like yesterday.
- No, I meant the part about me translating haha.
- Ziggy! I thought we were joking.
 - I'll compensate you for just showing up
 - I really do look forward to seeing you again.
 - I will forever flirt with you to come back.
- I want to. I don't know if I can this week.

- I understand, and I hope you don't think I'm pressuring you. Although I love it when you say yes, I will always hear you when you say no.
- Thank you for not pressuring me.
- You have a way with words that I love.
 - The feeling is mutual.
 - And your clever use of emojis 🙄
- You're being nice
 - I can always hear your voice in your words, and the emojis help.
 - Do you write at all? I mean, other than writing T-specs and SOWs...
- No, I don't write. I rather read. Words don't come easy to me. They never have.
 - You've always been a habitual reader?
- I've always loved to read. I stopped while I was going to school because I didn't have time.
 - Do you have a top 5 or 10?
- Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier would be on my top 10 for sure.
- And all of the 50 Shades of Grey...
 - Really?
- JK!
- You responded before I could say just kidding LOL.
 - You've read them though?
- The first two.
- I don't know how many there are... 4?
 - I thought it was a trilogy.
- I read them to see what the fuss was about.
- Maybe I'm confusing it with the movie series.
 - I only saw the first movie.
- Me too.
 - Did it make you want to get spanked?

- Hmm.... I don't remember thinking that. It looked too extreme to enjoy, but the idea in general doesn't put me off.
 - This is the kind of teasing that I like 😈
- Haha 😊
 - It was an honor to touch your booty the other night – just sayin'...
- Oh really? It was worth the possible "sexual harassment complaint"?
 - When I was in your office today, I was remembering how small your ribcage was when I was hugging you, and the moment I took to appreciate the moment. I really was very thankful that you were there and, in retrospect, wished I had been more prepared.
- Prepared in what way?
 - I was not convinced that you would come.
 - But I would not have been drinking.
- I'm still really glad I went but, to be honest, it did take away from the experience.
 - I know, and that's why I wish I had been more prepared. It wasn't the best first impression, but it wasn't terrible either.
- No it wasn't terrible. I still had a good time.
 - I remember asking you if it was okay to kiss you, and then when you paused, I just told you that I was going to kiss you and to stop me if it was a no.
 - And then how soft your kiss was...
- Your lips were so soft.
- You took me by surprise when you said that. I didn't know what to say. That's why I paused.
 - I figured.
 - I'm just happy that you agreed to come over on Thursday to translate 😊
- Nice try...
 - Alright, I guess I'll settle for tomorrow then.
- Ummm... no creo
 - Como?
- Dije que no

- Comprende
- Que?
- Se dice: comprendo
 - Seriously, you expect me to conjugate?
- LOL – well?!
- So what you’re really trying to say is that you’ll come on Friday?
- 🙄
- No no...
- [GIF: Cat shaking head no]
 - Oh my god, I can’t stop looking at it – make it stop!
 - Emojis are one thing; cat gifs are another...
- [GIF: Dog shaking head no]
- 🤔
 - I think you’re asking for a spanking
- [GIF: Woman saying, “wait, what?”]
- Okay promise that was my last one
 - I’m still gonna spank you.
- Sure you are. You keep saying that.
 - I mean, that’s what I’m hoping anyway...
- Good luck with that.
 - Hey thanks 😊
 - You’re the one who was asking for it...
- I don’t remember asking...
 - It may have been inferred, but I’m pretty sure it was implied.
- I beg to differ.
 - You call that begging?
- Don’t make me send another GIF.

- Are you looking for more reasons for me to spank you, a la 50 Shades of Collins?
- Wow. How long did it take you to come up with that?
 - I'm doing research for a book I'm writing.
- Titled?
 - 50 Shades of Collins
- Thought you'd get a little more creative with it 😬
 - It's a working title
- Oh good because I would never put that on my top 10. Just saying...
 - It was either that title or Rebecca.
- Ugh. How dare you!
 - It's gonna be about an unassuming young heroine named Rebecca who finds her life changed overnight when she meets a handsome and wealthy widower whose sudden proposal of marriage takes her by surprise. And then chaos ensues.
 - That's all I've got so far.
- Very unique and original
 - Goodnight Christina 🙄 Hope to see your T-specs tomorrow 🙄
- Goodnight 😊

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- Good morning pretty girl 😊
 - It feels like I'm running out of music to send you. So, until I am freshly inspired, I'm just going to say, Good morning pretty girl 😊
- Good morning 😊
- What? You're gonna make me go back to Top 40?? LOL
 - Fine: [Link: Spotify: Charli XCX – Pop 2]
 - I wasn't crazy about this Charli XCX, but there were some highlights and maybe something you'd like.
- I'll check it out.

- I want a full assessment by the end of the day.
- Plus my T-specs?
 - Mmmm... I can't wait to see your T-specs.
- Right... that's not going to happen today. Charli XCX is a full day of work.
 - And I would compensate you properly if you let me.
- Let me?
 - Yes.
- I'm confused. Let you what?
 - Compensate you with soft kisses and habanero salsa.
- Hmmm... that's tempting.
 - I'll meet you in the supply storage room in five minutes...
- 😊
- Not a fan of this album.
 - I've been waiting for you in the supply room all day.
 - Yeah, it's too synthesized for my taste, especially her vocals.
- You have not. Which supply room? LOL
 - Oh... I guess that wasn't clear – dammit.
- 😊
- [Link: Spotify: Tash Sultana – Jungle]
- Have you heard of her? My Lyft driver last week had this playing.
 - I've heard of her, but not a lot of her music.
 - So your friend is coming this weekend for sure?
- I don't think she's coming.
- She mentioned she might postpone until the end of February.
 - So does that mean I might see you this weekend?
- Maybe
- Friday might be best if I can.

- 😊 Yay!
- I'll confirm on Friday. My sister might need me to babysit. I'll let you know.
 - You're working on Friday?
- Yes
- I wouldn't go straight from work.
 - Cool, because I'll probably be leaving super early.
- You work too right? We have the same RDO?
 - We do.
- Oh, okay
- What time do you usually leave?
 - Typically, I leave around 3 on Fridays, but sometimes Fridays can be the busiest days.
- Why are they busy?
- So you're leaving earlier than 3 this Friday?
 - I wasn't planning to stay longer than a few hours, hoping to leave by 11 at the latest.
 - But I was just planning to come home. I haven't any plans.
- Ohh nice.
 - I do get bombarded at work constantly, and so Fridays are often the only days that I can seriously concentrate on bigger projects. And typically, I'll just leave when I'm done.
- Oh okay. That makes sense. Lucky you!
 - Well typically I stay there every other day until at least 5, and by then most of the other managers are gone for the day. But I love staying late and working on projects when it's all quiet. So I allow the luxury of leaving early on my last day before the weekend if I can.
 - And my manager basically told me not to be there any more than I had to. I might just take the day off.
 - "Work from home"
 - But I also look forward to seeing you 😊
- Considering you would just be going in for a couple hours anyways.

- I would really go just to maybe bump into you at work.
- That would be nice 😊
- Didn't get to bump into you today.
 - Well if you hadn't left me hanging in the supply room today...
- Oh right, you were "waiting" for me. Darn.
 - I'm looking forward to finally seeing you on Friday.
- I am too.
 - Can you just come over here real quick for a short visit? Right now?
- That's tempting
- I can't though
 - Will you get in some kind of trouble?
- No but I would have to give my mom an explanation of where I'm going.
- One of the reasons why I need to move out.
 - Tell her you're starting your Christmas shopping early this year.
- The other day when I left to go to your house, she said it was too late, LOL. It was like 8:40.
 - Tell her you're craving a donut.
- Wow. That's a great excuse.
- Ooh a donut sounds good.
 - There's a Yum Yum Donut close by. You can pick me up. We can go...
 - They're open 24 hours.
- Let's save it for Friday
 - I can lick glazed donut off your lips...
- Mmmm...
 - Do you like glazed donuts? What is your donut of choice?
- Strawberry frosted with sprinkles is my favorite.
 - Even better.

- LOL
 - I now have a clear vision of you eating a strawberry frosted donut with sprinkles.
- That will be me on Friday.
 - Can you just tell your sister you have plans?
- I can. The only thing is that my nephew just got the flu and she has my 3-month-old niece she might need help with. If he's better by then I'm sure she'll be okay.
 - Well if it's later, it's okay too. So long as it's before 8:40 apparently.
- LOL. Right? 🙄
 - Your mom still worries about you?
- Yes – mothers will always worry.
 - True
 - My dad worries more than my mom though. He sometimes still sees me as a kid. When I was there over the summer last year, we hadn't spent time together for, I think, 7 years. He kept asking me about all of my travel arrangements and if I was going to be okay. My stepmother tells him, "He's a 50-year old man." It was at that moment when my father had a moment of clarity.
- Aww. So sweet.
 - My dad is a sweet man.
- My dad has left all of the worrying to my mom. I would argue that he's probably never worried about us since he left. Mostly because he knows my mom is with us.
 - I've thought a lot about what you told me about your dad. How did/do you cope with it?
- I was angry for many years. My other siblings would defend him and make excuses for him, but I couldn't. He never apologized to us or to my mom for treating her the way he did when he left. He would just pretend everything was okay and never talk about it. I really didn't know how to cope with it. Just late last year he apologized to me for everything.
- I forgave him.
 - That sounds like it was quite the moment.
 - You're the youngest of your three sisters, but your brother is the youngest of all of you? Is that right?
- He's my twin brother.

- I hope he looks nothing like you – might freak me out a little.
- LOL
- We don't look that much alike. He's a lot taller than me 😊
- [Image: Her and her brother posing in front of a birthday cake at a kitchen table]
 - Yeah, you're definitely the better looking one.
 - Hey, why does it seem I haven't seen you wear your new glasses?
- I wore them yesterday.
 - I guess you did. You just don't look me in the eyes at work as much 😊
- That's not true. We were looking at my computer screen though...
 - And not into each other's eyes
- 😊
 - I'd probably end up in your lap.
- Noted. Don't look Ziggy in the eyes.
 - Haha or make room for my butt in your lap.
- Haha!
 - Goodnight Christina 😊
- Goodnight Ziggy 😊

.....

- This really cool girl I know introduced me to this artist recently:
- [Link: Spotify: Tash Sultana – Flow State]
- No no. You had already heard of her. I don't get credit for that.
 - I had heard about her, but not much of her work at all. They may play her a little on KCRW, but I wouldn't be able to tell you much more than that.
- Oh ok 😊

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- I have to work on controlling that stupid grin whenever I see you...
- That was a record number of times that we ran into each other today. Are we coordinating our breaks? 😊
 - We definitely made up for yesterday. I forgive you for the supply closet snafu.
- We made up for yesterday and in case I don't see you tomorrow.
 - Although, the supply closet probably would have been more interesting.
- This is true.
 - I hope you mean at work, because I won't be there. But I will see you tomorrow, yes?
- I'll confirm tomorrow morning, yes?
 - Okay, but only if it's a yes.
- Unless you wanted to make other plans. Don't want to hold you up.
 - I would tell you, but I can't think of what else I'd rather do.
- 😊
- What are we doing??
 - What would you like to do?
- Open to ideas – order something to eat?
 - Yum Yum Donuts?
- Maybe.
 - It's gonna be a beautiful sunset.
- It's so cold though, for LA at least.
 - I walked home from the station because the air is so fresh and clean. I might just go for a walk later.
- I'm walking right now.
 - To my house?

- It's nice, but still.
 - I can't wait for Summer.
- Mmmm... hot Summer nights.
 - Mmmm... with Christina Martinez
- 🙄
- Did the heater guy show up?
 - He just called and said he was coming right now from Pomona.
- Oh yikes.
 - But at least it's getting fixed.
- Hopefully.
 - You looked so cute today standing by the elevator 😊
- Thank you 😊 I tried to not make too much eye contact. Haha
 - Were you cold when you were here?
- At your place? No.
 - I kept you warm?
- You did. A little too warm.
 - Is that a complaint?
- LOL. No not at all.
 - Could have been hotter?
- Hmm I rather not...
 - I mean, it will be hotter once the heat is fixed.
- LOL. Oh right.
 - What were you thinking?
- Oh so now you're teasing me?

- I like it.
 - 🐱
- 😊
 - So if you do have to babysit, is that an all-night affair?
- Umm maybe not
 - You could still come?
- If it's not too late.
 - Because 8:40 is your curfew?
- That's pushing it. It's really 8:30...
 - Hawaiian time?
 - Hello? Tomorrow night is Friday night? 8:30: the night's just getting started.
- Oh is it?
 - The heater guy just showed.
- Oh good.
 - Yay, I have heat 🔥🔥🔥
- What was wrong with it?
 - The thermostat was the wrong voltage. He's actually right now fixing a pretty sizable leak, which should make the unit more efficient.
- Oh nice, glad he was able to fix it.
 - Thank you.
- You're welcome 😊
 - And just to update you, he doesn't speak English. He brought his own translator – one not nearly as cute as you 😊
- Oh really? LOL. So that wasn't him who called you back?
 - No.

- Oh interesting.
 - Both guys were cool though.
- Yes. He is really nice.
- They finished?
 - They just left
 - You're free to come over now...
- On my way
- Oh wait... it's past my curfew.
 - Not in Hawaii – aloha.
- That's nice. We're not in Hawaii.
 - So? What's your point?
- LOL – I think you know.
 - Bring donuts.
- Any other requests?
 - Can I rub your feet?
- LOL.
 - I don't know why that seemed like the natural thing to say at that moment...
- No gracias 😊
 - No foot massage?
- No no – back massage better.
 - Full body?
- That wasn't a typo.
 - Common, you deserve it 😊
- It says "back massage" 😊
 - I could do your front too...

- Ooh, that sounds interesting.
 - I'm just saying, why do just one side?
 - And, yes, I would make it very interesting.
- Mmmm...
 - So, if you're not babysitting, then when do you think you might be here?
- Maybe around eight.
 - Okay, just so I have an idea. I'll probably be here all day, so you can come over whenever.
 - Like right now.
- I remember someone saying, I will always hear you when you say "no". Who was that?
 - The only thing you've said no to is a foot massage.
- Hmm...
- True true
 - You missed Andrew's sendoff today. It was really emotional.
- I went too late. He was still there but I missed the speech. What did he say?
 - That he loved us and all the opportunities he's had and friends he's made. He really will be missed.
- Ugh. So bummed. He's a great guy.
 - That is one of the parts of this job I don't like, the fact that people come and go so quickly.
- Aww. Did he tear up?
 - Everyone did.
- Still sad Nancy left 😞
 - Yeah, I'm still a little mad about Nancy.
- Yeah, Nancy is great, but she waited for a long time and she got something better. I would have done the same.
 - You would leave me?

- If a better opportunity comes my way...
 - I'll miss you.
- I would miss you too.
 - I hope you don't forget about me. You'll keep in touch?
- Mmmm... maybe.
 - Are you on any of the County lists?
- Just on the Health Program Analyst list
 - Yeah, that's the list you need to be on.
 - Unless you want to be a Fiscal Analyst 😊
- Haha. I don't have any experience in finance.
 - It's not for everyone. It requires a certain amount of crazy.
- I can imagine. It seems intense. It would be a big learning curve.
 - It's actually fun, almost like doing sudoku, solving a Rubik's Cube, and playing a game of chess, sometimes all at the same time. Good times...
- I don't like any of those games 😊
 - Well that definitely answers the question.
- Right? LOL
 - Nevermind...
- Well you don't have to be mean about it! Geesh!
 - Haha – I'm sorry. Did I hurt your feelings?
- Yes.
 - How can I make it up to you?
- You have to figure that out...
 - Full body massage, minus the feet?
- Maybe

- I'm kinda liking it when you say maybe 😊
 - Sounds promising
- It's not. I wouldn't hold my breath.
 - I just want to hold you.
 - I'm super tired – so glad I'm taking tomorrow off.
- Enjoy your day off tomorrow 😊
 - Not until you get here 😊
- 😊
- Have a good night Ziggy.
 - Goodnight 🌙 See you tomorrow 🌙

-
- [Link: Spotify: Emily King – Scenery]
 - Should be free tonight.
 - ::JOY!!!::
 - 😊
 - You're still free today?
 - I've been waiting for you all day.
 - Trying to be patient.
 - LOL. Ok.
 - Gonna leave in a bit. I'll let you know.
 - I can hardly wait.
 - Leaving
 - Yay!
 - Walking in.
-

- Text me when you get home.
- I'm home.
 - I was a little worried with the rain. Glad you made it home safe.
 - Thank you for coming. Hope to see you again really soon. I don't think I can wait another week...
- Had a great time 😊
 - You are too sexy – damn!
- Thank you 😊
 - Oh no, thank you 😊
- You make it so hard for me to control myself around you.
 - I hope you see that as a good thing.
- I do. Mostly good 😊
 - When can I see you again?
- I'm not sure.
 - Tomorrow?
 - I love it when you say fuck, by the way – so hot 🔥🔥🔥
- I can't this weekend
 - Will you get in trouble?
- LOL – you keep saying that
- I need kind and luck
 - Did you fall asleep?
 - Good night Christina 😊 Sleep well

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- Hello?
- Hello
- Sorry. I fell asleep last night.

- Oh – haha
- I have no idea what I was trying to say there – LOL
 - Glad it wasn't just me. Almost looked like you were drunk or something.
- Ha ha! I remember trying to respond. I guess I was half asleep.
 - You had a very exhausting night.
- I did.
 - Please tell me you'll come back today.
 - I'm craving you in a bad way...
- I can't today. Have to catch up on some errands and some paperwork my dad left.
- I wanted to check out a listing today but it's raining all day 😞
- I can't stop thinking about last night. So good...
 - 1. Will those things take all day? What about after/later?
 - 2. I would be more than happy to go with you to look at listings. Going out to Boyle Heights would be very easy for me.
 - 2A. But going to Boyle Heights today maybe not because of the rain, but I mean generally speaking.
- 1. Not sure
- 2. Thank you. Maybe I'll take you up on it.
- 2B. Of course not. I don't even want to drive in the rain let alone take public transportation.
 - I would send an Uber for you in the rain.
- 😊 ok
 - Ok? So you're coming over? Yes?
 - I still feel you all over me...
 - [link: Spotify: Yellow Days – Is Everything Okay In Your World?]
 - I don't imagine you'd be crazy about this album, but this is the band I saw last year in NYC.
- Still feel your hands and lips on me...
 - Please come
 - (making me beg...)
- You're making it hard for me to say no.
- Sounds good so far. I was imagining they sounded different.

- [link: Spotify: Yellow Days – Harmless Melodies]
- This would have been good last night.
 - Could be good tonight...
- My brother just walked into my room as I have this album playing in my Google Home Mini and says, “Hey Google, play better music.”
- Google ignored him...
 - As it should...
 - Do you two typically have similar musical tastes?
- We used to have some similar tastes when we were younger. I don’t know what he listens to these days.
 - Obviously not good music...
 - I just found a long black hair in my sink. Pretty sure it’s not mine.
 - It’s here if you want it back 😊
- LOL sorry 😊
 - It made me want you more, if that’s even possible.
- [link: Altonbrown.com – The Difference Between Waffles And Pancakes]
- FYI
 - Well, if anyone knows the difference, it’s Alton Brown.
 - I will weather the rain to get a waffle iron from Target if you come over tonight.
- Why must you keep making it harder for me to say no?
 - Because you made it so hard for me to say goodbye to you last night 😊
- It was hard for me too...
 - Not hard enough...
- 😊
 - Stopped raining here, you should come now.
- It did. Took advantage and walked Brinkley.
- I should.
 - So when do you plan to be here? Rain might start again soon.

- Hurry! 😊
- It already started!
- I've been recruited to babysit my niece.
 - No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no!
- Yes yes yes
 - Soooo... does that mean you're coming?
- No but will you be home later?
 - I'll wait for you all night. 😊
 - What time are you thinking?
- Oh I don't think I'm going today. I meant for something else.
 - 😞
 - What do you mean something else?
- Something.
 - Are you teasing me?
- LOL – I'm not.
 - I'm a little lost right now...
- I'm sending you something.
 - I hope it's you.
 - If I don't kiss you soon, I'm gonna lose my mind!
- It's not me
- Better
- Should be there any minute
 - [image: cupcake with white frosting in a small cardboard box. Printed on the top in red frosting: HAPPY BIRTHDAY]
 - Thank you 😊
 - Just as you said that, there was a knock on the door, and I was a little disappointed to see a large black guy and not you.
 - But that was really sweet of you 🙄
- You're welcome 😊

- Can I come babysit with you?
- Haha. She just fell asleep.
 - So you can sneak out?
- No silly, I can't.
 - I would rather have a Christina cake.
- 🙄
- You don't like Susie Cakes?
 - I do like a good cupcake, but I've been craving Christina cakes all day.
- I'm craving your kisses.
 - How long will you be babysitting?
- She didn't say but I can't imagine her coming anytime soon.
- They left to go to the mall.
 - Will they be back before 8:30?
- Are you hanging out with Jasper?
 - Yes, he is here. I may go over to his place, but I don't want to have to come back in the rain. You should come pick me up 😊
- You're too much 🙄

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- [image: night scene, Venice Boulevard in front of Venice High School, facing East. Everything looks wet and shiny after the rain.]
- Walking home?
 - [image: aerial shot of two Yum Yum Donut bags. One bag contains two glazed donuts. The other contains a strawberry donut with sprinkles]
- Mmmm... donuts
 - If you had a fictional name, what would it be?
- Hmmm that's hard

-
- I don't remember sending this. I was probably asleep 😴
 - I got a little obsessed with you coming over yesterday, despite what you were telling me. I was playing, but also hopeful. Sorry if it felt like I was pressuring you.
 - I assumed you were joking most of the time. But I did feel bad saying no to you.
 - Thank you for my cupcake, but I don't know if I want to eat it, because then it would be gone...
 - You didn't eat it 😞
 - Well I wasn't gonna share it with Jasper.
 - I could have it for breakfast.
 - Don't have it for breakfast silly!
 - Can I have you for breakfast?
 - YES!
 - I love it when you say yes 😊
 - I don't have my waffle iron yet, but I have eggs, potatoes, buttermilk for pancakes, French toast...
 - I'm actually making French toast right now.
 - I'm just lying here in bed all by myself naked on a rainy Sunday – you're welcome to join me 😊
 - That's quite the invitation 😊
 - Very tempting, but I don't have time today 😞
 - I have a bunch of things to catch up on.
 - I don't know when you're joking any more!
 - I don't think I have ever joked about spending time with you.
 - That is a serious matter.
 - When you invite me, I don't know if you're serious (like yesterday) or not.
 - If I didn't want you here, I wouldn't joke about it.
 - You are always welcome here.

- Thank you 😊
- How was your day yesterday?
 - For the most part, it was like any weekend day when I hang out with Jasper. Talked to my mom in the morning and got a lot of messages from friends on Facebook. But underneath the surface, I had so many wonderful memories and residual feels from your visit on Friday.
- Sounds like a relaxing day 😊
- You were on my mind all day
 - When will you let me be with you again?
- Ummm... not sure.
 - [image: screenshot of an earlier conversation:
 - *I'm still gonna spank you*
 - *Sure you are. You keep saying that.*
 - *I mean, that's what I'm hoping anyway...*
 - *Good luck with that*
 - *Hey, thanks 😊*
 - *You're the one that was asking for it.*
 - *I don't remember asking...]*
- Haha
- You didn't waste any time spanking me. You did it almost as soon as I got there.
 - I have always been one to seize opportunities when they arrive at my doorstep 😊
 - I actually think more about later in the night when your jeans were at your knees and I spanked your bare ass – so yummy you are...
 - Kneeling down in front of you, taking in your mostly naked form, inhaling your deep kisses...
 - Yeah, you deserved that spanking.
- I didn't see it coming. It caught me by surprise 😊
- I think about your hand grabbing my ass and then sliding in between my thighs... so good.
 - ...and my fingers in you. I want more of you.
 - I felt you were close to orgasm.
- Mmm... I can still feel them.
 - So yes, I do flirt with the idea of you coming over, mostly to exhaust every possible probability that you might say yes. But nothing would make me happier than to hear you say, "I'm on my way." Especially if that was today 🙄
- You've pretty much exhausted every possible probability for today.

- Are you watching the game?
 - Yes
 - Are you?
- No, I was only going to turn it on for the half-time show and I missed it. 😞
- How was it?
 - You should come watch it here – it's a horribly boring game.
- Football is INCREDIBLY boring.
 - See, there are still possibilities. The day's not over yet 😊
- Cute.
 - I am not a sports fan, but I do like a good game. Baseball is a horribly boring game. I like basketball, but I don't have a love for any particular team.
- I'm not a sports fan, but if I had to pick, I'd probably watch baseball.
 - Haha – why?
- I find it easier to follow than football or basketball. Plus, players are much cuter to look at.
 - Haha – I see you have a certain bias for baseball.
- Did the half-time show have any special guests?
 - No. Big Boi played, but I think he was scheduled to play.
- Oh ok. I heard Cardi B would come out.
 - I missed the first minute or so, so if Cardi B was there, it was in the beginning.
- She probably didn't. It was just a rumor.
 - Cupcake was delicious by the way 😊
- Glad you liked it 😊. If I had known it was your birthday, I would have taken it on Friday.
 - You were the best present that I could have hoped for 😊
 - I didn't want to make you feel obligated. I mean, I pressure you enough as it is...
 - Especially when you were saying your BFF was coming...
- That's true 😊

- I'm sorry – can't help myself sometimes. I'm working on it...
- That's ok 😊
 - I think you like it...
- Perhaps...
 - So are you coming over, or what?
- Not likely, but what are your plans if I do?
 - Get back down on my knees.
- Mmmm...
- I'm picturing it...
 - It's easier to see over here.
- Haha
- It would, wouldn't it.
 - Still early...
 - Let's call in sick tomorrow.
- LOL – I can't silly.
 - Will you get in trouble?
- No, I have things that I need to work on. Preparing for a big meeting on Tuesday.
 - How about Thursday? Can I at least see you after work?
- Maybe Thursday 😊
 - Call in sick???
- Thursday? I thought after work...
 - Haha – yes, after work would be nice.
- LOL
 - Anytime would be nice 😊
- Ok 😊

- But I would call in sick to spend a day with you.
 - You don't seem to get sick that often.
- I don't... can't remember the last time I called in sick.
 - I'd say you're long overdue 😊
- The pressure...
 - Haha 😊
- I remember you saying you would like your space more than me 😊
 - Yes, I do like my space, but I don't recall saying I liked it more than I like you specifically. At some point, I would hope to have you in my space more than once a week. I am hopeful that our relationship will evolve and that we both grow from having each other in our lives. But I'm in no rush, so I find the beginning of whatever this is to be very sweet. It feels good to me. I can't deny my attraction for you and the passion I feel when I am fortunate to have you in my space. So I invite you to be here for as long as it makes us both happy.
 - Good night, Christina 🌙
- I'm still trying to come up with the right words to respond to your text. It brought up a lot of thoughts and questions that I don't know how to answer right now. I need to sleep on it.
- I'll say goodnight for now 😊

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- [link: Spotify: H.E.R. – H.E.R.]
- This was nice for my morning drive.
 - 😊
- Thank you for the donut! 🍩
 - I don't expect you to eat it – it was a donut I bought on Saturday night. It's been in a Ziploc since, so it should still be good, just not fresh. Enjoy 😊
- It's still good 😊
 - If you need help with that frosting, I'll be right there to help 😊
- Haha. I'll keep you in mind.

- I was hoping to see you when I dropped it off in your cubicle, but I wasn't gonna wait around without knowing when you'd be back. It's taking all my will to keep me from just walking over there and saying hello...
- Hopefully I run into you before the end of the day 😊
 - Supply closet?
- [GIF: scary looking cat saying: no, no, no, no, no, no]
 - Yes, yes, yes
- LOL
 - What do you usually do for lunch?
- Eat in my cube or with coworkers in the lunchroom.
 - Do you usually go at a certain time?
- Not really. It varies depending when I get hungry... 😊
 - I typically don't eat lunch.
- Why? You don't get hungry?
 - I only get hungry for you 😊
 - I typically only eat two meals a day. If I eat in the middle of the day, I get sleepy in the latter half, depending on what it is. Walking for lunch gets me out of the office and clears my head.
- Oh man. I couldn't do that... I'd be starving!
 - You're welcome to join me, but I don't know how much walking we'd do...
- Thank you for the invitation 😊
 - Well, when I eat, I eat at my desk, or I snack on crap, moderately.
 - I also eat a pretty sizable and healthy breakfast that gets me through the day.
- Your yogurt, granola, and berries breakfast?
 - You remember 😊
- Haha. I always see it on your desk in the morning.

- I imagine you probably eat your breakfast before you leave your home in the morning.
- Oh no, I don't have time for that. I eat when I get to work too.
 - Do you always see my desk in the morning? Where am I when this happens 😊
- No LOL. When I used to stop by before, I would always see it.
 - You should stop by my desk more often 😊
 - And just remember: cat GIF = spanking 🐾
- What!
 - I mean, I'll spank you regardless, especially upon request 😊
- No no. I'm good for a while! LOL
 - You didn't like it?
- Of course, I did. Just afraid you're going to do it harder next time.
 - That ass is hard to not wanna spank – just FYI.
 - Maybe we should have a safe word.
- Who are we going to be talking around that we need a safe word? LOL
 - Safe words are only between two people.
 - [link: Wikipedia: Safe Word]
 - They didn't go over safe words in 50 Shades of Gray?
- Yes, I got it. I thought you were talking about when we're at work.
 - That would not be appropriate.
- LOL
 - It was nice sitting with you at your desk for a short while today 😊
- I felt like everyone around my cube was listening to our conversation by the way.
 - Why?
- Because you can hear everything.
 - We weren't talking loudly, were we?

- I can hear every conversation around me.
 - Even in whisper?
- We weren't whispering though.
- I can hear them whisper LOL
 - When I said, "So what time will you be over," I nearly mouthed the words to you. You didn't seem to hear me clearly either.
 - Are you concerned that we were heard talking, or concerned about what people will hear us say? We were friends before. No one needs to know any more now. It's not their business.
- What people will hear us say.
 - But I will keep my distance if you prefer.
- Maybe I'm just being paranoid...
 - I for sure don't want to make you feel uncomfortable, especially at work. I'm pretty good at talking in code if I have to.
 - You ever see Joe and Donna hang out, take lunch together? Pretty sure nothing's going on there, but I don't know otherwise, because nobody really seems to care. If all of a sudden they started making out somewhere, that might be a little inappropriate. They could at least go in the supply closet.
- Clearly that's what supply closets are for...
 - Right?
 - So I will keep my distance if you prefer. But I like the idea of coming over for a quick hello.
- It's okay if you do or I do, but maybe not every day...
 - And just to be clear, I don't plan on spanking you at work, even though the thought does cross my mind sometimes.
- Glad you cleared that up 😊
 - Unless it's by request 😊
- Haha. In the supply closet?
 - Exactly.
 - I think the culture might be different on your side of the office. People come visit me on my side of the office all day long. Does that happen as much on your side? It is awfully quiet over there sometimes.

- People in the finance unit?
 - Just the whole tobacco side.
- It depends. Sometimes it's really loud.
 - Goodnight Christina 🙄
- Goodnight Ziggy 😊

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- [link: Spotify: H.E.R. – I Used To Know Her: The Prelude]
 - Good luck at your meeting today.
- Thank you 😊
 - It was nice to see your T-specs today 😊
- Were they all that you expected? 🙄
 - Not the ones I saw today – I had to use my imagination...
- Oh good 😊
 - Awfully quiet today...
- It's quiet in the office? You should walk over to our side. It was loud.
 - How was your meeting?
- It went well. We had a good response from our agencies.
 - It's so freaking cold right now...
- It's CRAZY cold. I just got back from walking Brinkley and I'm shivering. Clearly, I was wrong the other day when I said it was cold... This is cold.
 - I need you to keep me warm 😊
- I'm getting under the covers.... That's where you'll find me 🙄
 - Teasing me now...
- I need to workout actually. I can't...

- Get under my covers and we'll see how hot it gets 🐱
 - I'll give you a workout...
- Haha. I'm sure you will 😊
 - Very much looking forward to Thursday – hope we're still on.
 - Can't wait to kiss you again 😘
- I'm still thinking about Thursday...
 - Our President is an asshole.
- Ugh, he is an asshole.
- Can't look at his stupid face...
- Sounds like an idiot...
 - He is an idiot.
 - It's actually a pretty good speech, except he's so obviously reading it. Such horrible delivery.
- Because he's reading a script...
- LOL
- Yes
- If he wasn't, it would be complete gibberish.
 - Babbling...
 - I swear I heard a crackhead on the train give the last ten minutes of that speech the other day.
- 😂
 - Stacey Abrams is such a breath of fresh air.
- She is such a strong speaker.
 - Such a striking contrast.
- Clearly
 - So, what's to think about Thursday?
 - You know, you can bring Brinkley, if you want. Jasper brings Mac. Just throwing it out there...
- Umm... just having second thoughts?
 - Why?

- To be honest, it's reminding me of the time I dated my ex when we still worked together. I have really bad memories and I don't want that to happen again.
 - I swear to you I will keep my distance. I'm sorry if I freaked you out yesterday.
- It gives me anxiety just thinking about it. If I could go back and change my decision, aside from any good memories and everything I learned from that relationship, I would instantly.
- I would rather keep you as a friend while I can instead of ruin it...
- And not be able to talk to you at all.
 - I'm not asking you to be anything more than a friend. But I do enjoy our time together, and it feels like you do too
- I know you're not.
- I do enjoy our time together. Not denying that.
 - I don't think it's fair that you compare me to another man.
- I didn't mean to compare you. Sorry if I did. I think we both have different ways at looking at this. You don't mind not knowing where something will lead you to. You enjoy the moment. It's hard for me to do that if I don't see this going anywhere.
 - I will always be your friend, Christina.
 - I'm still a fan.

.....

Such horrible sleep. So much melatonin and still I struggle to stay below the surface of consciousness, my head bobbing below the hot, sweaty blankets. Am I hot or am I cold? Fuck, I can't get agitated. I must rest, even if I'm not asleep. If I look at my fucking phone again to re-read our texts, there will be no point trying to sleep at all. Her touch, so faint, and yet so clear, and my memory of her naked body like the wallpaper in my mind. All I wanted was just a little bit more for just a little while longer.

Be careful what you wish for.

And I am.

And still I manage to wake up fine. Other than my sad droopy face, I managed to pull myself together rather well. Some of my staff at work noticed my melancholy. But still I pressed on, missing her horribly, with this sudden thud of silence between us. I wanted to text her, as I normally would, but I had nothing to say. And by the end of the day, I was beat. I walked out the doors of my office on the eighth floor of the Metroplex in Koreatown, and there she stood by herself by the elevators. With a smile, I told her she was the last person that I had suspected to run into at the very moment when we both were headed home. She asked me how I was, and I took a deep breath and told her that some girl that I was really attracted to threw the hurt down on me the night before. And down eight floors we talked some nervous bullshit. And it was quiet for the last two floors, as I stared at her with a hurt grin and she looked up at me with a grin that I was waiting for. She could smell my fragrance on me, but well

saturated on my heavy coat. The elevator doors opened and I told her to have a good night. She wished me the same, and we each went our separate ways.

- Ugh. That was hard...
 - I felt you about to kiss me.
 - The invitation for tomorrow is still open.
- I don't know if I can...
 - Please reconsider
 - Today really sucked
- Today did suck.
 - Will you get in trouble?
 - You're gonna make me beg, aren't you?
 - Please?
- Stop asking if I'll get in trouble 😊
- That's not it
 - I know – I'm kidding, but I'll stop.
 - Please?
 - Why is this better? Wasn't it better yesterday? Who cares how long it lasts? It's like you're killing it because you're afraid of the worst-case scenario. This is just between you and me – no one else needs to know. All I want is you and just a little bit of your time to show you a good time. You can leave whenever you want.
 - What do you want?
- I am afraid of the worst-case scenario. I've experienced it, so I know what it's like.
 - If you forever hold yourself back, from anything, because you're afraid of the worst-case scenario, then you will forever hold yourself back and never move forward.
 - What do you want?
- It's not an easy question for me to answer.
 - Do you know what you want?
- I want to keep what we have but without any repercussions... which sounds silly because that's not likely.
 - What repercussions are you concerned about? Like, you'll lose your job?
 - I am not a spiteful person. I never wish to harm you, and I will do everything I can to be good to you.

- Look, I got a little crazy there around my birthday, and I shouldn't have been so blatant visiting you in your cube. You've made it clear that it freaked you out, and I won't do it again, you have my word.
- Yes, mostly work. I don't want work to be an uncomfortable place for either of us. Or what if either of us meets someone else that we actually want to date. I don't want any hard feelings. I feel like there's so many wrong things that can happen and I'm afraid of investing myself in something that I know is not going to lead anywhere. That's why I am reluctant.
 - When you say "lead anywhere," where would you want it to go?
 - What would be the best case scenario
- Be anything more than us having a good time.
- I know I overthink. Sorry, I can't help it.
 - I want to help you (us) sort this out. I get it, you're a heavy thinker, just like my Virgoan sister 😊
- What would your best case scenario be?
 - Well, you're right that I am a very in-the-moment, spontaneous kind of guy. This is why I so value every second of time you've allowed me to spend with you. I'm not going to tell you that I see us living together or one day getting married or anything of that nature, even though both of those possibilities are possible. But I don't have a crystal ball. I can't make those promises because those are things that we have to decide together, as a couple, whether the world knows we're a couple or not. All I can tell you, with absolute certainty, is that right now, I am a much happier man with you in my life the way we've been these past few weeks. All I've felt passion for during this time is spending more time with Christina Martinez.
- No, I don't need you to tell me any of that. I clearly know that. If you ever did tell me that, I know that you'd be lying.
 - Has it ever occurred to you that I might have more to lose than you should our relationship become an issue at work?
 - I'm also happy that I got to use the word "Virgoan" in a sentence 😊
- Of course I've thought about that. I don't want that. I'd feel terrible Ziggy.
 - I just ask that you try to consider how good we could be together. We were fucking awesome on the committee together, and so I have a very strong baseline. You're not just some pretty girl that I'm just getting to know. You're a girl that I've had a crush on for years who I now have the privilege of getting to know more about. I just don't see how this all can be so easily thrown away.
- I'll think about it...

- Yay?
- Please?
- You want me to decide now?
 - No – haha. I actually wouldn't expect it that you would. I'm just happy that you're thinking about.
 - I'm going to bed early. I'm pretty beat. I'm glad we got to expand a little on our expectations, and I'd be more than happy to discuss this with you whenever you want. I find it very easy to express myself to you, and I hope you know that you can always talk to me about anything. I really hope to see you tomorrow. Sleep well, Christina 🥰
- Thank you. Have a good night Ziggy 😊

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- [link: Spotify: H.E.R. – I Used To Know Her – Part 2 – EP]

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- Hey
- Hi
 - What are you doing?
- Just left the office.
 - Will I see you tonight?
 - Please say yes...
- No, I can't
- My sister needs me to watch my niece
 - Will you make time for me at all this weekend?
- How about tomorrow?
 - Black or pinto?
- Black??
 - ...beans

- I'm asking which do you prefer, and I'll make some for tomorrow.
 - Habanero salsa?
 - Pinto?
- I know LOL
- I meant to suggest black.
 - That's racist.
- LOL
- Shut up
 - So yes, black?
- Yes 😊
 - I love it when you say yes 😊
- 😊
- What time is good?
 - What time can you be here?
- During the day or night?
 - All day all night
- Ha ha
- No no
 - How soon can you come?
- So you'd rather me go in the day?
- Umm around noon
 - That sounds perfect 😊
- Ok 😊
 - Yay!
 - Noon tomorrow can't come soon enough...
- Can't wait...

.....

I met her at the end of my driveway. Her face lit up with a smile, and I kissed it as soon as her lips were within range. I finished charcoal grilling the tomatoes and habaneros, by putting it all in a blender with some salt. The beans had already been refrying in my large cast-iron pan. I fried up some eggs and produced two plates of huevos rancheros. She ate most of a very generous portion. I found myself staring, watching her eat my food, occasionally stopping to look at me, noticing my stare, and looking away with a bashful giggle. And once the meal was done, I was quick to wheel my dining room chair over to hers, giving her uncontrollable kisses, each one getting me closer to where we left off last time. My hands on her waist, sliding them across the soft skin of her stomach and the small of her small back, kissing her soft, wet lips with a hunger. I thought she was gone forever, never to return, and now I've unhooked her bra and gently tugged on her perky nipples with one hand and my other between her ever-widening thighs, taking us right back to where we left off last weekend when she left me down on my knees carving my fingers deep inside her tight little pussy, the one that is right now right beneath my fingertips pressing upon her warmth in a circular motion. And I have literally pushed her into the corner of the room with one of her hands on the back of my head, the other feeling my cock through my jeans. "Let's go upstairs," I tell her. "This would be so much easier if we were laying down." I took her by the hand and lead her upstairs. I sat at the edge of the bed and took off her V-neck T-shirt, then her bra, licking and sucking on her nipples. Her fingers rake the back of my head as her breath gets heavy. She grabs my head and kisses down on my lips, sucking, inhaling hard. I took down her tight jeans and she stands before me in just a tight pair of boy shorts, and now her pussy feels warmer and softer against the fabric of those boy shorts. And so it was just a quick matter of time when those panties had to go. And so down they went. And now behold, there before me was Christina Martinez, standing naked at the foot of my bed. I stand up, turn her around, back her onto the bed, spread her legs, and there before me was a tiny pink pussy, so adorable, just the pussy I expected to see every time I imagined what she had going on down there, and I gave her a tongue lashing that pulled no punches, licking softly, tickling her clit with the tip of my tongue, my thumb pumping in and out of her soft wet pussy. I look up to see her head tossing left and right, her straight brunette hair dramatically fanning out around her head. Her nipples are hard pillars of happiness like beacons of light guiding in a sure-fire orgasm. I spent an easy twenty minutes face-fucking her, and so many times I felt she was close, shaking her body in spasm just as my mouth would find certain parts of her vulva. But I could feel her battling away the urge to cum like flies buzzing around her head. And before me again is an image of me going down on her. Soon the room became unbearably hot, I stood up, opened the window, took off all my clothes, pulled the covers off the bed, laid down and pulled her on top of me, her ass in both of my hands, to which I gave that ass a good spanking. And as my cock rests against her pussy, the tip poking into her hottest spot, I asked her what her favorite position was, to which she hesitated, and I told her that right now, it was going to be this position. It was decided at this time that I would put on a condom. For most of my life I've been a strong advocate of condom use, and that was back when getting and maintaining an erection was easy to obtain and maintain, and that really wasn't so long ago. But having just turned 51, results in the past year have varied from nonexistent to constant morning-wood that I would have to do something about before my day could even begin. I now can't tell you the last time I had a spontaneous erection inspired by any thoughts of sex. So, after going to the bathroom and putting a condom on, I returned to the same position with a less than optimal degree of hardness, and because she was so tight, her being on top was a less than optimal position. So, I flipped her around again on her back and managed to thrust into her my now hard sledge, hammering in and out of her tight pussy, getting stretched out. And behold another image that I have longed to see; Christina Martinez in missionary while I thrust deep and hard in and out of her hot little body with full strokes, slow and methodical. She at times look like she was in pain but loving it just the same. I was close to orgasm but didn't want to end the festivities. I have wanted to fuck this girl like no other girl in recent memory, or possibly ever. After several solid minutes of thrusting, I moved to her left side, lifted up her left legs and wrapped my legs with hers until I was

able to penetrate her. But from a different angle, the condom was simply not making this any better, and so the momentum slowed. We continued to kiss passionately while caressing each other's body. My fingers could not stay away from her pussy, as I tried my hardest to make her cum, and again her body would convulse and spasm under the influence of my fingers against her clit. She tells me she's never had an orgasm, that she enjoys it, but never has. It is now my mission to make that happen. But unfortunately, that won't be today as the rest of my time with her was spent laying naked in bed, touching and fondling each other's bodies and kissing each other's lips. No music was playing, and the only sounds came from the open window in my room with the Spring sounds of a quiet Friday afternoon.

But the visit was cut short because the Sandman was planning to pick me up when he got off work at three. When he called me that morning, he sounded confident that he could be at my house by four. I knew she would be here and didn't want anything encroaching on my time with her. But the Sandman wanted to drive down to Aliso Viejo where the Quadman and his girlfriend will join us to say goodbye to Marvin, a guy I've known just as long as any of these brothers. He's moving to Houston for his job, and this may be my only opportunity to see him before he leaves. The Sandman's plan, however, lacked the following consideration: that it's Friday afternoon and he would be coming from Woodland Hills and driving to Culver City, and that ultimately he is the Sandman. And so the likelihood of him leaving his work, getting in his car, and heading out of the parking lot of his office building at or before three o'clock is extremely unlikely. Both of our phones have been buzzing during our hot sexual exchange just now when she switched to my right side because she was more coordinated with her right hand on my dick than her left. At 3:45, he texted that his ETA to be at my place was 4:45. I told her we had an hour, and she said that's not an hour. "You don't know the Sandman," I told her. "He won't be here until at least five." She got dressed and put herself back together. I walked her to her car and kissed her goodbye.

I just had sex with Christina Martinez – no greater words have come out of my mouth, at least not recently. The ghost of her encircles me, still kissing me, grinding against me, and I can't believe she's gone and my time with her is now over. Until next time.

- Still feel you all over me.
- I had a GREAT time
 - The Sandman showed up at 5...
- Haha
- You know him well...
 - This would be a great Groundhog's Day.
- Huh?
 - Have you seen the movie?
- No
- I've heard of it and seen clips but not in its entirety.
 - We can stream it at my house, pretty sure.

- Tomorrow?
- LOL
- I can't tomorrow. I have plans for tomorrow already.
- Tell me...
 - Sunday?
- Not sure I can Sunday
- Tell me!
 - Tell you what?
- Why you said it would be a great Groundhog's Day.
 - In the movie, Bill Murray experiences the same day, every day, which is Groundhog's Day.
- Oh haha
 - This would be a great Groundhog's Day.
- I would agree.
 - Sunday?
 - Chillaquilles?
 - (You have no idea what it took to spell that word correctly.)
- LOL
- You put two extra Ls – LOL
- It's chilaquiles
 - Dammit!
- Good try though.
 - The Internet can not be trusted after all.
 - [three images: me with my friends at a fancy bar in Aliso Viejo.]
- Cute! Looks like a good time 😊
 - You should be here.
 - I would love for you to meet my friends.
- What do you think they would say?

- They would think you're awesome!



- I would definitely have more days like yesterday 😊
- Did you have a good time last night?
 - I did – got a little crazy, but that's to be expected with that crew.
- Haha. Everyone needs one of those crews in their life.
 - I liked getting a little crazy with you too 😊
- I did too 😊
 - ...so yummy 😊
- I'm sore in all the right places...
 - Chillaquilles? Really?
- LOL
 - It's pronounced chi-la-la-la-qui-la-la-la-les.
- Clearly
 - I can not explain how that mistake was made, except that a few beers were involved.
- That makes sense.
 - When will I see you again?
- Not sure...
 - I should have expected that answer 😊
 - Is tomorrow possible?
- During the day I'll be busy
 - Chi-la-la-la-qui-la-la-la-les for dinner?
- I'll let you know tomorrow?

- I can still feel you all over me...
 - [image: aerial shot of two fried tortillas on a plate sitting next to a bowl of beans and salsa sitting next to a plate with sliced queso fresco]
 - Care for a snack?
- That looks good 😊
 - I have plenty, you should come
 - I want to taste you
- Mmm... so tempting
- I can feel your mouth on me. So good...
 - Let's sleep in tomorrow
- Sleep in?
 - Until noon
- That's almost impossible for me to do.
- I'm up around 8 🙄
 - It's more like just staying in bed.
 - I read, write, listen to music, rest my body, dream of Christina Martinez...
- Ooh I see...
- That sounds good 😊
 - You should come
- I should
- But it's too late.
 - It's so early...
- LOL
- For a night owl like you
- I wouldn't be able to sleep next to you.
 - That's kinda the point of staying in bed until noon. Eventually you will sleep.
- LOL
 - Bring your books, bring your dog...
- Very persuasive

- Yes?
- [gif: cat shaking head no]
 - Asking for a spanking?
 - I want to see your real pussy 🍑
- Haha
- Yes
 - Yes?
- Answering your question
 - So you are coming?
- Not tonight
- Maybe during the week
 - Tomorrow?
- I don't think I'll have time tomorrow
 - Please don't make me wait too long.
 - I crave you something fierce.
- Can't wait to feel your hands on me.
 - Are you falling asleep?
- No not yet
- You?
 - Are you in bed?
- Yes
 - What are you wearing?
- What are you picturing me wearing?
 - Nothing
 - Do you masturbate?
- Yes
 - So you have had an orgasm?

- No. I told you. I still enjoy it...
 - You hold back
 - You need to let loose.
 - My lips are so swollen 😊
- I overthink things... clearly. I try not to think about it.
 - You need to relax
 - I remember thrusting in you, quite clearly.
- I felt like I was close yesterday.
 - I have total faith that I can make that happen for you.
- LOL
- Don't take it as a challenge.
 - Don't make it a challenge.
- I'm not
 - Then it should be relatively easy 😊
- Haha
- We'll see...
 - Tomorrow?
- So persistent
- I wish I could. I just don't think I'll have time.
 - I'll go to that open house with you if you want.
- It's raining tomorrow.
- Think my mom is coming with me.
- Thank you though
 - See, it would be better if you came before the rain starts.
- It would...
- Then I'm not gonna want to leave.
 - The rain will be over by three
- My appointment is at noon.

- Wouldn't you rather snuggle with me during a rainstorm?
- Haha
- Yes...
- So hard to say no to you
 - 😊
- Going to sleep silly
 - Sweet dreams Christina 😊
- Good night 😊

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- I have morning wood, and it's all your fault.
- Mmmm... too bad I'm not there.
 - Come now
- I can't
- Gonna leave in a bit
 - For your appointment?
- It's later, but going to the store before with my sister.
 - I would really love to see you today, even for a short visit.
 - [image: my hand with one of her bobby pins laying across the palm]
- There it is!
 - It misses you.
- Oh does it? What a shame. It's gonna have to wait...
 - ...until when?
- Maybe Wednesday?
 - That feels like an eternity.
 - Did you make it to your appointment?

- Yes and no
- I made it, but they had left already.
 - Yeah, rainy days will do that.
 - They may have canceled.
- They didn't cancel. They were there. I confirmed. They probably just left early.
 - See, you were probably better off coming over here 😊
- I was. At least I had time to get my errands done 😊
 - Do you have plans for Valentine's Day?
- I don't have plans for V-Day. But I'm not a fan 😊😊
 - I hate Valentine's Day
- LOL
- Do you?
 - Well "hate" is a very strong word.
 - It just seems like a day of possible disappointment. Especially in a new relationship.
- Yes. I agree. Too many expectations and it's just cheesy.
 - Can we celebrate Valentine's Day on Wednesday instead? Do it our own way? Soft kisses and habanero salsa?
- Well that sounds like we're celebrating Valentine's Day. Don't want to have any disappointments or expectations. I like what we have going right now. We're not exclusive, we're enjoying each other, and the time we spend together 😊
- Did you use all the leftover salsa??
 - There's a little bit left. It's not 8:30 yet. How soon can you be here? 😊
- I'm already making dinner at home 😊
 - Come over for dessert.
- Mmm... dessert sounds good.
- It will be too late. I can't come today.
 - Just for a kiss?
- Haha. I couldn't just stay for a kiss. I'd want more...

- Two kisses?
- No.
- More.
 - Three?
 - I just want one 🤔
- LOL
 - I'll give you gas money.
- I don't need you to give me gas money.
 - Haha – I wasn't implying that you did. I'm trying to incentivize you 😊
- I'm serious. I can't today...
 - I know
 - I do push my luck with you, but most of the time I already know the answer.
- Ok, I don't know when you're serious anymore!
 - Well, I'm always serious about you coming over, but mostly when I already know the answer. You already let me know this afternoon, and the best I can hope for is that maybe your circumstances might change.
 - But very often, I'm teasing you with temptation.
- Ok. Well it's a little frustrating having to tell you no more than once. No more temptations, Ziggy 🤔🤔
 - You want me to give up so easily?
 - I just wish I could see you more.
- Okay, let's agree for you to give up after the second try 😂
 - Is it annoying?
- You can tempt me. I like you teasing me about going over. But then it sounds like more than you teasing.
 - It would be easier if I could see you more than once a week. Right now, I definitely don't want you here every day, or even most days. I don't know what obligations you have right now that keep that from happening, but if all you can make time for me is a few hours out of one day a week, then I'll take it and be happy about it. You say we're "not exclusive," but just know that, for me, there is no one else but you, and I don't care to look.

- I know it would. It's not that I don't want to see you more than once a week. I like spending time with you. I'm just not used to giving up a lot of my time. It's something that always comes up when I start seeing someone. I'm working on it. And just to be transparent, I am talking to someone else right now.
 - Who are you talking to?
- Someone I recently met.
 - Where?
- A friend introduced us.
 - How recent?
- It's recent.
- I feel like I'm being interrogated...
 - Good night, Christina. Sleep well.
- Are you upset? I don't think I ever misunderstood what we had going on.
- Good night.

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- [screenshot: her text reading: "I don't typically have sex unless I'm in a serious relationship."]
- Perhaps I misunderstood...
- Yes, that is true. It's not typical for me. That's why I resisted the previous times I was with you, Ziggy. But I like you and I'm attracted to you...
- I told you because I didn't want to mislead you or lie to you. I hope you know that. You said you weren't asking to be anything more than a friend. I didn't misread that Ziggy. You said that.
 - Above all, I want you to know that I don't want this to change anything between us. Just know that it stings a bit because it happened so fast, but I'll get over it. I wonder how cool you'd be if I had told you I'm now talking to other girls. I'm torn between knowing and not knowing. It feels like I'm constantly expressing to you how much more I hope to see you only to have you tell me that you wish to see other people – yeah, that stings. I don't recall the subject of exclusivity ever coming up, so perhaps this is a new understanding between us. Either way, you will most likely find someone better than me at some point down the road. Until then, I hope you will let us continue our time together and hope to see you Wednesday.

- I understand. I guess I always assumed that about being exclusive, especially the way we talked about what we were getting into. I just want to make sure that we can continue, and we are both in agreement. I don't want to have any misunderstandings or end anything on bad terms. I really don't...
 - Will I see you Wednesday?
- Are we continuing the conversation then?
 - We don't have to stop talking about this now. I just want to know, like always, when will I see you again?
- I was thinking maybe tomorrow since it's not raining but I have an appointment with my real estate agent.
 - Tomorrow could be good. Can you reschedule with the agent?
- I'll check.
- Let me see what she tells me.
 - Unless you want to make it for tonight?
- Tomorrow works
 - Yay!
- 😊
- So... are we still talking about this?
 - Is there more you want to say?
- I guess not
- You?
 - You know how to pull on my heartstrings...
- What do you mean?
- You're making me feel like I did something when I didn't. I was honest with you in our conversations. We never said this was anything more than something casual. Am I wrong?
 - You did nothing wrong, and I appreciate you being open about it.
 - I'm just scared that if I say anything more about it, it will end up being irrelevant to our situation and make it worse.
 - I just wish I could be everything in a man that you want.
- You're a great man, Ziggy. I only wish the circumstances were different. I think we would both be fooling ourselves if we said this could work.

- My heart is very heavy for you, Christina. I do so enjoy your company whether we are texting, hanging out, or laying naked in bed. And I am convinced that there will be a day when you finally break my heart, and the only one I can blame for that is myself. I know I'm setting myself up for disappointment, and for this, I cannot blame you when that day comes.
- I don't want to make this harder for you or myself. I feel like it will be harder for me to walk away as time goes by.
 - Is it my age?
 - What about us convinces you that this won't work?
- We also work together. I don't think my family would approve. I couldn't be in another relationship that I would have to keep a secret. I did that for a long time and I could never do that again. I can't.
 - You don't think your family will like me?
 - Would I be an embarrassment?
- Don't say that. You're not an embarrassment.
- I just don't think they would approve of someone twenty years older.
- Do you think it could?
 - Even if it was obvious that I was madly in love with you, and would do anything for you? Take care of you?
 - When I have this much attraction for someone, it doesn't feel random to me.
 - I'm speaking hypothetically here – I didn't mean to lob out the L-word just now. But I do feel love for you, and that's as close as I'm going to get to that subject...
 - I don't see why it couldn't.
- I can't exactly know what they will say but I know they will object. My family is very important to me.
 - I know they are.
 - I want to make you happy, and if I did make you happy, why would they object to that? Surely you're old enough to know what makes you happy.
- I know I'm old enough to make my own decisions.
 - It's not like you're a teenager and I'm some creepy old man.
- You're not a creep. I'm not saying that. I would never say that.
 - I'm not saying that you are. I'm assuming the image of anyone hearing the scenario without any reference to our chemistry.

- Ok...
- I don't know how to not make this harder.
 - Haha
- Ummm... why is that funny?
 - You are the queen of double negatives 😊
- What?! LOL – not true.
 - That was brilliant!
- That didn't come out the way I wanted.
 - You told me, "I'm not going to lie and tell you I'm not attracted to you."
- LOL
- I said that?
 - Came out perfect.
 - [screenshot. Three of her text messages:
 - I was not expecting you to say that. I don't know what to say... I'm very flattered Ziggy.
 - Are you trying to lure me in with HBO and your PS4?
 - I'm not gonna lie and say I'm not attracted to you but I really don't think it's a good idea...]
- Yikes
 - Haha!
- Oh god...
 - Seems so long ago, doesn't it?
- It does.
 - I can't wait to see you tomorrow.
- See you tomorrow, Ziggy. Have a good night 😊

.....

- [link: LCD Soundsystem: Electric Lady Sessions]
- Hey

- Hi
 - Good morning 😊
- Good morning 😊
- How's your day going?
 - I can't tell you how uninteresting that committee meeting was...
- LOL
- Why? What are you guys planning?
 - How we get Christina Martinez back.
- Haha. Not happening.
- So I've been thinking about our conversation yesterday.
 - ...oh dear...
- I really don't want to make this harder. I feel like this is already more than I thought it would be... Don't you?
 - I look forward to the challenge.
- I don't.
- I want to avoid it.
 - Why are you looking at it in terms of how hard it will be in the future?
 - No relationship is easy.
- Because I have to?
 - Why?
- I can't function if I only think about today.
- That's not how I work.
 - Today?
- I mean taking it day by day.
 - Will I see you tonight?
 - Please?
 - Are you totally opposed to seeing me at all?
- What do you mean?

- I'm just not sure what you're telling me.
- I'm trying to say that it will be better to end it now rather than later.
 - So you have no desire to see me at all?
- It's not that I don't.
 - Sounds like that's what you're saying.
 - Can we at least have tonight? Then I'll leave you alone.
- It's not that I don't want to see you, but I know that eventually we will have to stop seeing each other and it's going to be a lot harder to walk away then. We are both (or maybe just myself) going to develop stronger feelings.
 - Why throw this away?
 - I don't understand.
- I know you understand.
- If I go tonight you are going to change my mind.
 - I just want to spend time with you, maybe for the last time. We don't even have to talk about anything. Please.
- Ok. Only if you wont pressure me to change my mind.
 - Will you go after work, or later?
- Later
- I have to go home first.
 - That makes me very happy 😊
- Probably by 8
 - ETA?
- Yes
 - I love it when you say yes 😊
- LOL
- I just parked

We end up naked wrapped up together in the upper left quadrant of my bed. Her tiny slender legs slide softly against and between mine with our hips dancing between my pelvic thrusts and my left

hand gripping the cheeks of her ass, spanking her appropriately. Her light frame rests on my right arm that reaches up to grip the back of her small head, pressing her hot, soft mouth against mine, our tongues entwined, sucking on each other's breath, so softly, so sweetly.

She wasn't a minute in my house before I was clawing at her clothes and picking her up by the ass during a kiss, and soon I'm following her hot little body up the stairs and down the dark hallway illuminated at the end by the glow of the light on my nightstand through the door of my bedroom. I pull the covers halfway off the bed, sit down on the soft flannel sheets and strip her down, one piece of clothing coming off at a time when, in no time, she stands before me, Christina Martinez, naked, again, in my bedroom, and just when all hope seem to be lost. And very quickly, my clothes come off too. On her back, knees up, and the moment I've been waiting for, what feels like an eternity – she spreads her legs and, behold, the most gorgeous pussy that I have ever seen, in real life, in porn, ever! It brings me to my knees, between her knees, and I plunge my tongue into her sweet vagina – the vulva! I dig my fingernails into her ass and thighs, occasionally fucking her with my thumb. I sucked, kissed, and tickled her clit, trying to make her come, and she felt so close, so many times, her body still and breathing heavy in gentle spasms, her breathing sporadically staccato in rhythm with her convulsions.

She tells me to take a break, and we switch places on the bed. And that soft mouth that I love to kiss is now on the tip of my mostly erect penis. She made me go cross-eyed a few times, and she said she liked how it tasted. I asked her if she liked my penis and she said, "It's great," with very little emotion, almost like she was trying to be funny, and so I'm a bit unsure of her assessment. Unfortunately, once the condom goes on, it's near impossible to get my deflating penis into her incredibly tight pussy. And by the time it actually gets in her, I could pump a few strokes but ran out of steam by then. She wraps her arms around my head, kisses me deep and tells me it's okay as I catch my breath. She turns me over and gets on top after playing with it until it's hard again. I grip her ass and thrust up hard into her, but I can't feel her because of the condom, and the tightness of her pussy eventually expels my once again exhausted penis. With the help of some coconut oil, she ends up giving me a very nice hand job that makes my whole body erupt at once in spasm that I hadn't felt for a very long time. And all the while she's doing this, my fingers can't keep away from her pussy, whether it's just to tickle her clit or to fuck her with my middle and ring fingers, tickling her soft, wet inner walls. And yet again we find her close to ecstasy, but resisting, and it does really feel like she's trying to tear down that wall, but she doesn't seem terribly frustrated at all because she can't. I ask her, when she's masturbating, how does she know when she's done? And sprinkled throughout all of this is laughter, clever comments, and subconscious outbursts of pleasure. We discussed how many fingers feels good and what feels good. And still I can't make her cum, but I think she very much enjoys my effort.

So we end up naked wrapped up together in the upper left quadrant of my bed, breathing in each other's air. Her face rests between the bed and my head as we continue to wrap around each other in a slow, soft embrace. My fingers glide across her forehead and through her hair. And time seems so inconsequential and endless. If ever I would want a moment to last forever it would be right now. I kiss the side of her face and nibble on her ear. She does not seem at all to be ticklish. As my fingers can't stop touching her soft skin. I can't tell if I'm under her spell or if she's under mine, and I don't really care.

Suddenly, she wants to know what time it is and, when I tell her it's 10:20, she realizes we've been in bed for more than two hours playing with each other. She slowly gets away from my grasp, cleans herself up, and gets dressed. Just as she seems ready to leave, I'll give her a big, warm hug and tell her this can't be the last time she comes here in a sad whisper. "Oh Ziggy," she says with a sympathetic tone, putting her hand on my face and kissing me. And I pray that any one of these kisses will not be our last. She eats a bowl of the shrimp fried rice I had made earlier and we talk and joke about things at work. She eats all of it and I reluctantly walk her to her car, kiss her goodbye, and watch her drive away.

- I'm home
 - Thank you for coming. I hope you come back at some point.
- Glad I went 😊
 - Goodnight, Christina 😴 Sleep well, you beautiful, sexy girl, mmm...

-
- Sorry – I took a quick shower and fell asleep before I could reply. Hope you had a good night 😊
 - I slept very well, thank you. Although, for some reason, I woke up at 5:13 this morning.
 - Haha. 5:13 is a great time to wake up. Damn, I should have snoozed.
 - I had to rub one out with you so clearly in my mind 😊
 - 😊 Mmmm...

-
- So I bought a birthday card for somebody here at work the other day that I thought was cute...
 - [image: front of a birthday card with the illustration of an apple laughing at two peaches with a banana standing between them. One of the peaches is asking the laughing apple, "What's so funny?"]
 - [Image: inside of the birthday card reads, "Your sense of humor hasn't aged a bit. Happy birthday!"]
 - Not realizing what the picture actually meant...
 - Were you thinking of me?
 - Haha 😊
 - What did you think it was saying? I can't see how else it could be interpreted. Silly...
 - I don't know... I just thought the apple was laughing at the fruit 😊
 - I wasn't paying attention. So embarrassed! LOL

At the end of the day, I somehow managed to get the elevator with her on our way out. Being the only ones in the elevator, I attempted to kiss her, the attempt at which was thwarted by her fear of

cameras in the elevator. I wanted to kiss her so bad in that moment, but instead we smiled and walked away when the elevator doors opened. In one direction, she headed towards the parking garage while I walked towards the train station.

- Sorry, couldn't help myself...
 - I have to say that today was a pretty hectic/crazy day, and the only thing consistently putting a smile on my face was the thought of last night 😊
- Silly
 - There are no cameras on those elevators, are there?
- Of course they have cameras. You've never seen the monitors that the people downstairs in the lobby look at?
 - No – are you serious? Where are they? Above the doors? I had no idea.
- You're so silly. I'm not exactly sure where they are positioned, but they do have them.
 - Now I'm going to be all paranoid being in those elevators and be worried if I did something stupid in the elevators in the past...
- Haha. Like what? 😊
 - Probably the worst I've done is maybe adjust myself.
- LOL. I'm sure that's not unusual.
 - Well I doubt I'll do it much anymore. Thanks for the heads up 😊
 - I'm just glad that I didn't just get naked with you in the elevator today 😊
- Yeah, that would've been inappropriate.
 - Haha
- FYI – they also have them in the storage rooms...
 - Seriously? Do you see cameras in your storage room? I'm pretty sure they aren't in ours.
- Just kidding
 - Okay... Whew! So we could still meet in one, like tomorrow?
 - In the morning first thing?
- No silly.

- Well you're the one bringing up storage rooms...
- Haha
 - You know, if you still don't have plans tomorrow, you're welcome to come over.
- I think you already know my answer.
 - Will you ever come here again?
- I don't think so...
 - Can I consider that to be a maybe?
- I do enjoy every moment I spent with you.
 - I won't ask you about other men – I don't care. We can talk about them, either way, if you need someone to talk to. But if what I want has any weight, it's just to spend time with you in a fun/happy/sexy setting, completely on your own time with no demands or expectations, just like last night. I don't want to fight you. I really want to be your friend, Christina, above everything else.
- You know, I never thought I could want that or be able to do that with someone. You make it so easy though. I would love it if we were to stay friends.
 - Can we do what we did last night as friends?
 - I now will happily go back to once a week...
- What changed your mind?
 - Like I told you in the beginning, I will happily take whatever you are willing to give me. It's not much of a choice between that and nothing at all.
 - I'm not really looking for a girlfriend, but if the right girl came along, I wouldn't turn down a good opportunity either. I'm currently not on the market, Christina, and yet, I wouldn't turn down any opportunity to spend any amount of time with you.
- Why aren't you looking for a girlfriend?
 - For all the places I go and all the people I meet, friends, friends of friends, coworkers, dating app nausea, etc., no one sparks interest in me. No one inspires me to pour my heart out, like a fool. Whoever that girl is, she would just present herself at the perfect moment, effortless, and with mutual attraction that can't be ignored.
 - And then there's Christina Martinez!
- Well you never know when she'll show up. 🙄

- Tomorrow?
- LOL
- She's not showing up that soon.
- Would she make time for me over the weekend?
- Not sure.
- I assure you that I will no longer exhaust every possible possibility, but I will continue to invite you. I so look forward to kissing your beautiful smile again soon.
- Goodnight, Ziggy 🌙
- Sleep well, Christina 😴

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- Thanks for my candy gram! I didn't buy any this year.
- It was the least I could do...
- Happy Valentines!
- Well, it's Valentine's Day, not so sure about the happy part...
- Oh stop it. Don't be a grump!
- Easy for you to say...
- Well it's not like I have any plans either.
- I'm just happy I got chocolate.
- The invitation is still open...
 - I'll give you more than chocolate...
- We agreed we weren't celebrating it.
- I don't think that if you did say yes that I would want you driving in the rain at night.
 - I think I'd feel better if I knew when I will see you again.
 - [image: aerial shot of a strawberry frosted donut with sprinkles]
 - My manager bought the same kind of donut for everyone on our side – do you want?
- Oooh 😍
- Thank you! 😊

- Was this one of yours or did she take extras?
 - I didn't want it, but I know someone who did.
- You're so sweet.
- It was delicious.
 - 😊
 - I didn't think it was possible, but you have put a grin on my face today.
 - It's definitely not the same grin that I could not control yesterday...
- You can do better than a grin, Ziggy.
 - I would need your help with that...
 - Storage room?
- Haha. We can't silly.
 - Because of the cameras?
- Because people are going to see us.
 - I'm totally playing with you. There's no way I would believe you actually would. But the thought is nice 😊
- The thought is nice. Mmmm...
 - Looks like the rain stopped for the rest of the day...
- Did you go for your walk today?
 - No
 - I kinda worked through my lunch.
- Had a busy day?
- Are you leaving early today?
 - I'm still here – probably leave soon.
- I want to leave early.
 - Wanna drive me home?
- I can take the elevator down with you 😊
 - When are you leaving?

- In a bit.
- 4:40
 - I'll be ready – let me know.
- Leaving. Just gonna sign out.
 - K
 - It was nice seeing you anyway 😊
- It was 😊
 - Always.
- How's the train ride? Traffic was surprisingly very light. It took me an hour and 30 minutes on Monday to get home.
 - Just think how quickly you can come to me 😊
 - I'm walking home from the train station.
- How far is your walk?
 - About two miles.
- Oh yikes
- It's so cold
 - Not when you start walking.
 - The air is so clean.
 - I walk three miles on my lunch every day.
- Well the two miles is not bad typically, but in this weather?
 - As long as it's not raining.
- I'm walking now... it's cold!
 - To my house?
- Yes...
 - I love it when you say yes 😊
 - But mostly when you mean it.
- Haha
 - The more I listen to this new Ariana Grande, the more I like it.

- I love it when you say “oh yes” 😊
 - When did I say that?
- You were whispering it when I was with you on Tuesday...
 - Is that what I said when I came?
 - That was a good orgasm.
- No, you were saying that when I was going down on you.
- It looked pretty great.
 - The funny thing is that I was thinking about how good it felt in your mouth when I came.
- You were? Mmm...
 - I love it when you make me say “oh yes” 😊
 - I think I need to shop around for better condoms.
 - I’ve never used this kind before.
- They didn’t feel good?
 - I really can’t feel anything.
- True, you’re not gonna feel much I guess but perhaps there are others.
 - And you’re so tight
- Are you saying this makes it worse? 😞
 - I love your pussy 😊
 - I will not speak of it in negative terms 😊
- Well it sounded like you were.
 - Oh no, that’s a good thing.
 - It’s inspiring me to consider other condoms.
- LOL, I was gonna say!
 - Oh no, please be clear of what I’m saying. No complaints, except I can only imagine what it feels like without the condom.
 - I think they make more sensitive condoms. These feel thick.
- Ok...

- They did feel thick. There are better ones.
 - Maybe I'll walk over to Rite Aid later.
- I can't promise when we'll use them again...
 - Will you be busy this weekend?
- I'm not sure about Saturday but it's not a good time this week either way...
 - Are you saying maybe Saturday?
 - Are you talking about next week?
- I'm saying this week I can't.
 - It's Thursday.
- I know. I meant to say this weekend.
 - Are you going somewhere for the weekend?
- No
- I'm on my menstrual cycle, silly.
 - Oh. I'm sorry – I didn't know.
 - Was there a code word in there that I missed?
- Yes, I said it's not a good time this week LOL. I didn't expect you to catch it.
 - You're still welcome to come over.
- Well a co-worker, Tony, is having a birthday party on Saturday and I'm seeing a friend on Sunday 😊
 - Oh cool
 - What about Monday?
- No plans for Monday.
 - Is Tony's thing during the day or at night?
- Tony's thing is at night.
 - Will you consider Monday? Maybe you might be done?
- No, I just started. Not until the end of next week.

- Damn, so a full week. Okay noted 
 - I'm serious that you're welcome to come watch Game of Thrones or maybe a movie? Listen to new Ariana Grande?
 - If you want.
- Ok, I'll let you know.
 - [image: my hand in Rite Aid holding a 3-pack of Trojan "Bare Skin" condoms]
 - These look promising.
- They do.
 - Laura is a trip.
 - Wasn't she holding a wad of credit cards?
- Was she? I couldn't see from where I was standing.
- She's an interesting person either way.
 - She was pulling them from a pocket in the jacket she was wearing. When I asked her why she had so many, I heard her say, when she goes skiing, she gets into a lot of accidents. Isn't that what she said? You heard her, right?
- I heard her say that, but she pulled out her medical card and then said she keeps that too because she gets in a lot of accidents.
 - When she pulled out the wad, she had this total look of disgust on her face, like she was wondering, herself, why she had so many cards in her pocket. I love running into her because she is such a trip.
 - But I would rather have been making out with you in the elevator. Was kind of a bummer that she showed up. Still it was nice to be elevator-close with you   
- I know. I was hoping no one else would show up as we waited for the elevator 
 - Maybe we should take the stairs.
- LOL
- They have cameras on some of the floors. No joke. I'm serious LOL
 - Have you ever been on the roof of the building?
- No.
 - It's pretty awesome.
 - We should go.
- Really?

- You can see the ocean.
 - You can see everything.
- What? How many times have you been up there?
 - Maybe twice.
 - I've never been up there with anyone else though.
 - The stairs on the South side will take you, but it's a lot of work climbing those stairs.
- The doors are never locked to go back down?
 - No
 - If they are, you could just go down to the lobby. But the door on the South side isn't locked, although it has been a while since last I checked.
- They probably don't want people using them.
 - Is roof access restricted?
 - The doors were all unlocked when I went.
- It was when I went up there.
- It was a group of us.
 - Oh, you've tried? When was that?
- A good while ago.
 - Now I want to see if I can do it again, like tomorrow.
 - You went up the South side of the building?
- Yes.
- It was definitely over a year ago.
 - And the door to the roof was locked?
- We stopped using the stairs because we received a notice from management.
- Yes, we checked.
 - Building management? What did they say?
- They sent an email reminder saying stairs should only be used for emergencies.
- We took them more than once that week and since they have cameras, they noticed.
 - Really? How many times did you try?
- That time only LOL.
- The cameras are scattered throughout some of the floors, not all of them.

- Haha – so this is how you know about the cameras?
- LOL yes.
 - You said you took them more than once that week. Then you said it was one time only?
- We checked the door to the roof only once but took the stairs multiple times.
 - Oh, I see. Perhaps this was when I was also exploring the building. I do remember that notice.
- I'm glad it wasn't only us then.
 - I had to use the stairs to avoid Mahal when I was trying to break up with her, because I knew she was waiting for me in the lobby. One day, I found her wandering around the hallways of our floor - she was crazy.
- Oh really? That's funny. So, you just left her waiting there for you? Tsk tsk...
 - Good night Christina 🙄 Thanks for making my Valentine's Day less sucky 😊
- Good night, Ziggy 😊 Glad it wasn't as bad as we thought it would be. I also had a really good donut from someone special, so I can't complain.
 - I wanna kiss you so bad...

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- [link: Spotify: Oneness of Juju – African Rhythms]
 - I don't remember sending you that last text last night.
- I fell asleep. I didn't see it.
 - ...although it is true that I do miss kissing you 🙄
- This music is interesting... The songs are so long.
 - Are you in the office today?
- No, still in bed 🙄 I called out.
 - Are you feeling okay, or are you just taking the day off?
- I'm okay. I don't feel great though. But it is nice to have an extra day off this weekend 😊

- I wanna be in bed with you...
- Are you joining me?
 - Can I?
- I can't stay in bed much longer. I feel so groggy. Getting up. It's so late.
 - You should come to my house – I'll make you feel better 😊
- I'm sure you can 😊
 - I'm surprised African Rhythms didn't get you out of bed.
- I skipped over those songs and listened to the more mellow songs. Haha.
- Listening to Ariana Grande. Do you have a favorite song?
 - Ghostin is obviously about Mac Miller and gives me the chills.

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- Hey
- Hi
 - What are you doing?
- Just got back from the market.
 - I was just about to leave work and you said something earlier about joining you in bed somewhere?
- Haha. You missed your chance. That was this morning 😊
 - Dammit
 - I just walked all the way to Wilshire/Western and the place I wanted to eat at is closed.
- What place is it?
 - [link: Yelp: Wings and Tales]
 - They have really good lobster rolls 😊
 - May have to go to Kazu Nori. Join me?
- I can't today, but what are you doing tomorrow?

- Waiting for you to arrive 😊
 - [image: Oster waffle maker box on a shelf in Target]
 - Wanna come over for waffles?
- If I go, it will be at night.
 - I can make waffles at night, pretty sure...
 - After Tony's thing?
- Yes.
- You can eat waffles for dinner?
- I can't
 - Why?
- Breakfast is only in the morning, LOL.
 - Only if you call it breakfast. I'm calling it waffles 😊
- LOL – it's still breakfast
 - Could be desert.
 - Dammit!
 - Dessert
 - Sorry – I always spell that word wrong.
- LOL
- Yes, I guess it can 😊
 - But you would make a far finer dessert.
 - [image: Aerial picture of a hand roll from Kazu Nori with a beer, soy sauce, ginger, and wasabi.]
 - Come find me, Christina Martinez! 🍷
- 🍷
- Seems so long ago when you said that 😊
 - You know it hasn't even been a month?
- Almost a month. It was before I went to Sacramento.
 - Monday will be a month since I first spilled my guts to Christina Martinez.
- I never expected you to do that. I was pleasantly surprised.
- And I was kidding earlier. You can make whatever you want to eat. Everything I've had has been delicious 😊 The shrimp fried rice was really good.

- Thank you – I’m glad you liked it 😊
 - So where will Tony’s thing be?
- At his house in El Sereno. I’m only going for a little bit. I didn’t want to stay long.
- I’d leave before 9.
 - [image: inside the Spring Arcade building in Downtown Los Angeles illuminated at dusk]
- Ooh... “Best affogato in LA”
 - Come find me Christina Martinez 🍷
 - [image: intersection of 7th and Hill in Downtown Los Angeles at dusk, raining]
- It’s not raining?
 - I am so wet right now 😓
- That’s what she said 🤔
 - You?
 - [image: AON building from the street level – the top of the building obscured by rain clouds]
 - If you come late, consider spending the night, if you want.
- I couldn’t. I don’t really want to go to Tony’s thing though.
 - [image: entrance to Sony Studios illuminated by lights hanging from the ceiling of a columned platform on the left side and Washington Boulevard on the right illuminated by the headlights of cars passing by. It’s night and several streetlights glow in the background.]
 - I will be home all day.
 - Waiting for you to arrive 😊
- Where are you? I’d be freezing!
 - Sony Studios
 - It’s a gorgeous night.
- Oh nice
 - [image: alleyway in Culver Center toward Best Buy from Gaucho Grill. It’s night and it’s been raining]
 - I can’t wait to see you tomorrow 🤔
- If I go, I might go earlier than I thought I planned.

- To his house, or mine?
- I don't want to go to Tony's 😊
 - So, when will you come here?
- Umm... 7-ish?
 - In the morning?
- LOL no
- At night
- Silly
 - Are you in bed?
- Not yet.
 - Good night Christina 🥰 Can't wait to kiss you tomorrow.
- Good night Ziggy. See you tomorrow 😊

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- [link: Spotify: Chaka Khan – Hello Happens]
- Is this new?
 - It is.
 - I thought it was kinda cheesy when I first heard it, but it is funky, and I think she's great.
- You sent that last text as I was listening to "Like Sugar" and I thought: yeah, this is pretty cheesy.
 - Is it 7 yet?
 - [link: Spotify: Betty Who – Betty]
 - This is probably closer to your taste:
 - What a gorgeous day!
- Her voice reminds me of Katy Perry.
 - I hear that.
- I have good news and bad news.

- I hope the good news is better than the bad news...
- What do you want to hear first?
 - To know if I'll see you today.
- I have a tiny sore throat.
- I don't want to get you sick.
 - How do you know I won't make you feel better? 😊
- I don't feel sick...
 - I know you've been fighting something.
- But still...
- This is not why I took off yesterday.
- I just started feeling it.
- What if you get sick? I'd feel bad.
 - I don't typically get sick, and if I did, it would be worth it to see you anyways 😊
 - You've warned me, now hurry up and come over...
- Oh good
- Well, I guess we'll see how strong your immune system is.
- Load up on the Emergen-C
- 😊
 - Are you still planning to be here by 6? 😊
- How did 7 become 6? 🤔
 - Subtract one hour...
- Oh. The good news was if I didn't go, you still had enough time to make new plans...
 - That would not have been good news...
- LOL
- I thought it was...
 - I see how you would and thank you for the thought. But the only news that's good today is that you're coming 😊
- 😊
- Did you need/want me to grab anything on my way?

- I'm planning to make fettuccine Alfredo. The only thing I need/want is you 😊
- Are you sure?
 - Did you leave already?
- No
- I'll probably leave around 7.
 - Ok – I'm actually at the store now.
- Leaving
 - Yay!
 - Now that is good news 😊
- I just parked.

I've been making fettuccine Alfredo for almost as long as I've known how to cook. Sandy McReal taught me how to make it at Ye Yankee Chef restaurant when I was a junior in high school. It became a specialty, and I would make it with shrimp and chicken. When Ye Yankee Chef closed down, they had a big party on the last day, mostly to get rid of the extra food. At the end of the meal, I was alone in the waitress area when a rather attractive older woman staggered in, obviously from the bar, leaning against the wall. "Are you the one who makes the fettuccine Alfredo?" she asks with sex in her voice. I was eighteen with a girlfriend, and if I knew then what I know today, I probably would have played that scenario a little bit different.

When the fettuccine goes into the boiling water, there is exactly 10 minutes that the rest of the dish has to come together. Slowly heat a pan with medium high heat to melt a few tabs of butter. Add shrimp and salt, cooking 50% before adding garlic, removing the shrimp from the pan at about 80% cooked. Return the pan to the burner and add heavy cream to the butter and garlic still in the pan. Control the heat to coordinate the time in which the heavy cream bubbles and the end of the 10 minutes it takes for the pasta to finish cooking. The pasta is transferred straight from the water to the cream in the pan where it all finishes cooking with a handful of freshly grated Parmesan cheese, some fresh cracked black pepper, some chopped parsley, and, of course, the shrimp. It all comes together rather quick if the food is well prepped. And every girl I've made this for has been a girl who typically sticks around. This is the meal that typically sparks increased interest.

And she watches me make it and serve it to her with a garden salad and dinner rolls. It was a lot of food and I told her I wasn't expecting her to eat all of it. She ate all of the shrimp and most of the pasta. We had a nice conversation until the end of the meal when I rolled my chair over to hers to taste her garlicky, cheesy meal on her soft lips, and the kissing portion of the evening was well underway. The kitchen chairs become uncomfortable and soon we move to the couch where she ends up between my naked legs sucking my cock, slow and soft. She doesn't seem comfortable, so we move upstairs where everything comes off except for tight blue jeans, which is sexy as fuck. Our kisses get deeper and more hands aggressively explore each other's body. In the middle of a kiss, I whisper in her mouth, "I wanna fuck you so bad..." Soon she has me on my back and strokes my cock. It takes a little time, but she is persistent, and I end up having a massive orgasm that causes me to convulse while I hug her tiny frame tight. The kissing and touching continue, and I feel her pussy through her jeans. She seems to enjoy it,

but it ultimately frustrates her, and we end up just lying in the bed holding each other. I ask her to spend the night with me, but she tells me she can't. I rub her face softly and almost put her to sleep. Midnight comes and she reluctantly decides to leave. She gets dressed and we go downstairs where I find my jeans under the coffee table. We kiss each other goodbye and I walk her to her car.

When I came back into my house, I noticed that my Canary home protection device had been activated and had been recording since midnight.

- I'm home
 - Thank you
 - Hope to see you again soon 😊
- Thank you 😊
 - My home security took a video when we were leaving.
- It did?
 - It goes into night mode at midnight. I'd send it to you, but I'm not wearing pants for the first half of it. It starts when we come down the stairs.
 - The second half is sweet watching us kiss goodbye on the couch. Yummy 😊
- Are you sending me the second half then? 😊
 - Let me see if I can edit it.
- Oh, no worries.
- Don't want you to go through the trouble.
 - [video: downloaded from my security system app]

The camera for my home security system is positioned on the table that my television sits on and essentially sits in a far corner of my downstairs living area where the entire room can be seen, including my kitchen, the stairway to the upstairs, and both my front door and back patio sliding glass door. When the video starts, I am sitting on the couch in the foreground bent over putting my sneakers on. Christina comes out of the downstairs bathroom and across the screen from the left side, walks behind the couch that separates the living room from the small dining room by the sliding glass doors. She walks the full length of the screen from left to right to get her jacket. And as she approaches the couch, I stop what I'm doing to watch her pull the jacket around her lovely body that I am already missing. She sits on the arm of the couch close to where I am and thanks me for dinner while I go back to putting my shoes on. I tell her I'm glad she liked it and for several moments, the video shows how she looks at me when I'm not looking at her. The attraction between us is beyond words. A few seconds later and I slowly raise my head to take her in for perhaps the last time – who knows. I give her several soft kisses and tell her I'm already missing them, and she smiles and gives me several kisses back. We spend a moment looking in each other's eyes. "So, tomorrow," I kid with her because I know she won't come. She rubs my forearm and leans back to kiss me several times on the cheek before placing her hand on the back of my neck and giving me a final kiss on the lips. She reaches for her purse and pulls it

over her head and across her body. She takes a drink from a water bottle, and, as I've been staring her down, taking her in before she's gone, she slowly pulls away from me. I spank her a few times as it seems that's what she wanted me to do. We slowly walk to the door and leave.

- 😊😍😊
 - What did you ask me in the beginning when I answer, "Would you like to?"
- I said, "Thanks for dinner," and you said, "Glad you liked it."
- Is that what you're talking about?
 - Yes, you're right – I remember.
 - And then I told you I'm missing your kisses already 😘
- Ooh that's right 😊
 - It's worse now...
- What is?
 - Missing your kisses.
- 😘
- Missing your lips
 - When will I see you again?
- Not sure...
- I'll let you know.
 - When you're done down there, I'm gonna pack a lunch and spend some time there 🍑
 - Thursday?
- LOL 😂
- Maybe
 - You can always come any day in between, but you may want to get here early on Thursday 😊
 - Good night Christina 😘

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- Sorry I fell asleep last night
- Why should I be there early?

- Because I wanna spend some time down there 🤔
- Oooh 😊
 - I couldn't get to sleep until late last night – you wound me up too tight...
- What time did you fall asleep?
 - Sometime between 3 and 4-ish.
 - I must have watched that video of us at least a million times 🔥🔥🔥
- Oh man, I'm sorry, I texted you pretty early this morning.
 - My phone was off.
- Oh good.
 - What do you want me to cook for you tonight?
- Haha. Nice try 😊
- You said you wouldn't exhaust all your options
 - If you have better options...
- Huh?
 - Are you saying nothing I say will change your mind?
- For tonight? Not really.
- I'm watching a movie with my mom and brother 😊
 - What are you watching?
- Any recommendations?
 - Have you seen The Cloud Atlas?
- No. What is it about?
 - On Netflix.
- I'll look.
 - [link: IMDB: The Cloud Atlas]
- Ooh... It's a fantasy movie

- Not my fav 😞
 - Love that movie
- Really? Ok. I'll see if they've seen it.
 - It's a combination of six different stories at six different times, some from the past, others from the future, and all of the characters are connected. I have watched that movie on a loop. All of the actors play different parts in all of the six stories.
- Does it switch from past and present?
 - It is not a linear movie – the six stories are all told at the same time.
- Oh
- Ooh John Wick 2 😍
- Why do you like it?
 - Good story, good acting – very well made. Every time I see that movie, I notice something new about it. It's not a movie for everyone, I guess.
- Hmm ok. I'll consider it 😊
 - You can watch it here sometime. I'll watch it anytime.
 - I'm pretty worn out. Jasper just left – made him pancakes. Might go to bed early.
- Oh nice. Mmm pancakes 😊
- Hope you get some rest tonight 😊
 - Come sleep in with me tomorrow?
- Sounds nice but my plans are to stay in tomorrow. I've been out all weekend. I want to be lazy haha
 - Be lazy with meeee...
 - I have the exact same agenda
- Haha
 - I'll make you waffles?
- No. Going out and getting ready is not being lazy LOL.
- That's work
- Mmmm waffles 😊
 - You just have to get up, get in your car, come here, and lay with me in bed. We can watch Cloud Atlas later?

- Save the waffles for next time...
 - Chilaquiles?
- LOL No. I have to get ready.
 - Get ready here 😊
- Ooh chilaquiles – another day.
- So persistent
 - At least I tried...
- You did LOL
 - Always
 - Going to bed, pretty girl 😊
- Goodnight, Ziggy 😊

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- Pancakes?
 - I have buttermilk and blueberries...
- Yum
- I just had breakfast 😊
 - What did you have?
- Egg and cheese sandwich
 - That sounds good
 - I want that
 - Come make me one...
- LOL
 - Do you scramble the eggs?
- Yes
 - I love it when you say yes 😊
- Haha

- And I add jalapenos 😊
 - What kind of bread?
- I had English muffin
 - Make me one please?
- I can't silly. I have a bunch of things to do...
 - That doesn't sound much like a lazy day to me.
- I know, it doesn't 😊
 - Pancakes for dinner?
- You're having pancakes for dinner?
 - I'm asking you for dinner 😊
- Haha
- I can't, I told you I'm busy today...
 - K
- This isn't what we agreed on, Ziggy. You said you wouldn't pressure me.
 - I'm not. Please don't think otherwise. You told me last week that you don't have any plans today. Obviously, that's changed. I was just checking in. I don't mean to upset you.
- But you are
 - How?
- Because I told you yesterday, I didn't plan on going out today and you keep asking me.
- Then you got upset because I said no.
 - I did not get upset.
- OK
 - The “no” was clear, and I was not going to continue the discussion.
- It looked that way.
 - I'm only flirting with you.

- That's the problem sometimes with texting.
- How was that flirting?
 - Just putting the thought of you being here.
- No one says “K” when they are flirting with you.
 - Oh, that was not flirting
 - I almost wrote “understood”, and now I wish I had...
 - Are you upset?
- Yes, it bothers me that you keep doing that. Makes me think we can't do this.
 - Please don't think that. You're right that you did make it clear yesterday, and I ignored what you said with the hopes that maybe you might fit me in today. I'm sorry if I overstepped. Please forgive me from the bottom of my heart. I'll make it up to you any way that I can. I promise. Just please don't see this as a bad thing...
- I change my mind because I think it can be casual and not complicated and I don't think it can...
 - But we've been casual and not complicated.
- No, it hasn't. Look how many times we've gone back and forth.
 - I think you mean you go back and forth. I've been pretty firm about what I want.
- You've changed your mind as well.
 - When?
 - I always want to spend time with you, and perhaps I go a little overboard with expressing that to you.
 - I am willing to take whatever you are willing to give me.
- When we first started, you said you just wanted to be friends and then you suggested you wanted more.
- I'll speak for myself, I know I've changed my mind.
- I hate that I go back and forth.
 - In context, I believe we were talking about what more would look like. Yes, I can imagine more, but that doesn't mean that is what I'm expecting now.
- I think I'm only fooling myself in thinking it can be what we want it to be without it getting complicated.
 - Why fear more?
 - Isn't this a good thing?

- It feels good to me.
- Because it's not going to work, I told you.
 - The only thing keeping it from working is your insistence that it won't.
 - Is it not working now?
 - What's wrong with now?
 - What is the worst-case scenario?
- We've talked about the worst-case scenario.
- We both know.
 - Why is it different today?
 - Because I asked if I could make you pancakes for dinner?
- Because I continue to have second thoughts about this and you keep asking for more time...
 - I'm just asking. I am not demanding it.
 - I don't get mad when you say no.
 - Please don't be upset.
- I thought I could be OK with continuing this, but I clearly can't...
- I'm not upset at you. Mostly frustrated with myself.
 - I wish I could be everything in a man that you want.
- Stop. Don't say that Ziggy...
 - It's true
 - If I was everything you wanted, we wouldn't be having this conversation.
- That's not how you should look at this.
 - It's how it is.
- No, please

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That girl is gonna break my heart one day, and I'm gonna love every minute until that day comes.

The whole rest of the day on Monday and all of Tuesday, I refrained from any contact, and it's been agony.

Maybe she's right that this won't work, but no relationship I've ever had before her worked out either. And yet, I enjoyed my time with each of them with no regrets about their outcomes. I can't tell if

she doesn't see a future or instead doesn't think this will even get off the ground, or perhaps a little bit of both.

All I can say is that I'm awesome, and if she doesn't appreciate my invitation, then she is surely the one missing out. Do I really want to be with someone who does not see my value? How much of a fight for her am I gonna put up? Is she really worth it? She is a really good girl, an awesome girl that any man would be lucky to have, and I am surely grateful for what she has given me in the one month time we have been in each other's grasp as she willingly holds on while pushing me away, running from her emotions, deny her attraction, convincing herself that it will all end in ruin. So why bother? I want to go to a show, or to a museum, to the beach, or to get fish tacos, or some ceviche, or affogato, all of which should now be rejected for the only reason that one day it's all gonna end. And yet the attraction between us is still so thick, and even through texts, I can feel her. Whenever I used to say, "I love it when you say yes," she would often respond with, "Don't get used to it." She doesn't say that to me anymore. Now it's hard for her to say no, but only when she's here in my space, in my face, kissing her soft, buttery lips, tasting her tongue, breathing in her sex with hot passion.

How I made it through that Tuesday without a single text, not made nor received, was no easy task. It took a lot of marijuana and several hours playing nonstop Grand Theft Auto V to a playlist of Nine Inch Nails songs and eating a toasted peanut butter and Jelly sandwich with chips and a tall glass of cold milk; the same meal I have two or three nights a week for the past few weeks. My head is so full of thoughts of her that my appetite wanes and, as a result, I have lost a good amount of weight, dropping below 210 pounds for the first time in years. All of this I do semi-consciously for her. Whatever works.

So this morning, I thought long and hard on the train into work if this was going to be another day of misery. How can I turn this around? How can I break the spell? By the time I got into the office, I knew what I wanted to do. I found three Hershey's kisses, a regular one, a caramel one, and a mint one, all from my stash of holiday candy in a drawer and my desk. I find an unlined index card, fold it in half, like a small gift card and write on the inside in red ink: "MISSING YOU". I walked to her cube on the other side of the office and quietly placed them on her desk. I could hear her grown from my sudden presence in her immediate space, but I didn't even make eye contact with her and quickly left, all within the first five minutes of the day.

- Thank you for the sweet note...
 - It was the least I could do...
 - Would you rather I leave you alone?
- I didn't know if you still wanted to talk to me. I'm sorry for all my indecisiveness, it's not fair to you that I keep going back and forth and it's mentally draining for me...
 - I actually miss talking to you the most, but it's so tempting for me to ask you for your time. It's probably been corrected from our last conversation. Are you completely opposed to visiting me again? The offer is still open, and I will do my best to keep a leash on it. Please reconsider, at the very least just for closure. I will always be your friend, Christina, either way.
- I miss talking to you too.... I just hope you know where I'm coming from when I tell you I have a hard time with what we have going. I feel like you don't understand why I'm having trouble with this...
 - Can we talk about it?

- I feel like I only understand from the little that you tell me. You're not very open, and sometimes I can't tell if you're flirting with me or you're being serious, and part of that is due to all the texting and not being able to really feel the other person. Sometimes it feels like I don't fully understand the severity of what you're saying until you put your foot down and get mad at me. I don't want things to escalate like they did Monday. I really want to understand you, Christina. For all the communicating that we do, it would really be a shame if this whole thing fell apart because of a lack of communication.
 - Be safe in the rain.
- Yes, I'd like to talk about it. We haven't talked about it face-to-face and this is probably why we are not understanding each other, even though I think I've tried to explain myself...
- Just got home. Thank you.
 - I just got home too.
 - Are you busy tomorrow night?
- I'm thinking either Thursday or Friday.
 - Thursday would be better for me, but I would have no problem with Friday. Are you thinking during the day or at night? Or both 😊
- Thursday is better? Hmm OK. I'll let you know tomorrow.
 - Tomorrow is Thursday, just FYI 😊
 - Did you hear about a guy that got hit by two cars this morning on Wilshire and Barendo?
- No I didn't. Is that close to the office?
 - it's 2 streets before Vermont. I guess some people were delayed getting to work.
 - Horrible way to go. I walk past that intersection every day.
- Did he die?
- That's horrible.
 - My manager was saying he flew 30 feet when the first car hit him.
- OMG. That's terrible. Why did that happen? Was he crossing the street?
 - I didn't get any more of the story. I thought you may have heard something on your side.
- Oh no, I didn't.
 - You don't know how happy I am that we will be talking about this face-to-beautiful-face 😊

- I'm glad we are going to talk about it too 😊
- I can't say I'm gonna change my mind though.... I just want us to be in understanding.
- Yes?
 - Yes, I just want to understand.
 - Do you like Kung Pao Shrimp?
- Umm yes. Why?
 - Because I can make us some. I'm not sure when you plan to be here. Either way, I'm planning to make it.
- Is that what's on the menu??
- I'd eat anything you make 😊
 - 😊
- Almost anything 😊
 - See when you say that, it sounds like I can easily tempt you here with food. If only it were really true 😊
 - I appreciate the compliment though 😊
- LOL. It's not true?
 - I know this now.
- Know what?? That you can tempt me with food?
 - No, that I can't.
- I mean you would tempt me when you invited me.
- Oooh!
- Now I follow...
 - I'm willing to learn, Christina.
- Learn what?
 - What makes you tick.
- I think you know some...
 - I seem to be learning the hard way, but hanging in there...
- That's not true...

- I know I push limits. I'm like a bull in a China shop sometimes. But I'm used to the pushback. It helps me understand the limits.
- Haha. That's an interesting way of looking at things.
 - Thank you for letting me give you kisses this morning 😘
- 😊
 - Goodnight Christina 😘 Can't wait to see you tomorrow 😊
- Goodnight Ziggy 😊

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- Good morning Christina. Hope you have a great day 😘
- Good morning Ziggy. Thank you. I hope you do too 😊
 - You looked so cute there by the filing cabinets 😍
- You're so silly 😊
 - Leaving soon?
- Yes
 - I love it when you say yes 😊
- LOL
 - Let me know when?
- I just got on the elevator 😊
- You should have told me!
 - I was hoping to leave with you.
- Oh, you should have told me you were leaving soon.
 - Are you still planning to come tonight?
- Yes, I was planning on it, but I think something is wrong with my tire. Maybe a nail or something.

- I put air in it yesterday because it was pretty flat and today as I'm leaving, it looks pretty much the same again.
 - Do you have a spare?
- Yeah, but I don't want to drive on it though.
- Blah.... I don't want to go get it fixed 😞
- The spare is a small tire. Only for short distances.
 - Sounds like a slow leak, which is a pretty cheap fix. If you can make it here, I can change it for you. The spare should be OK to drive on for a short period of time. Boyle Heights to Culver City and back should be fine. But it's whatever you're comfortable with.
 - I could Uber you here.
- Ummm... what are your plans for tomorrow?
 - Waiting for you to arrive 😊
 - I'm sorry you're going through that - wish I could help you.
- OMG. It's crazy cold.
- Well, I just put air in it. I'm gonna see in the morning how it is and take it to get it fixed.
 - Did you hear it snowed today in parts of LA?
- That's what somebody at work told me this morning. That they were expecting for it to snow in some parts.
 - LA would shut down with snow. It's bad enough when it rains here...
- Wow, who would have thought!
 - May have to move to Mexico if snow ever becomes a thing here.
- Mexico? Oh no no
 - Haha - what's wrong with Mexico?
- I couldn't live there
 - Aren't there parts of Mexico with a lot of American expatriates?
- I'm sure there are...
 - They have good tacos
- LOL

- Yes they do.... I'd visit to get good tacos
 - Let's go!
- I barely want to go to my friend's wedding in Mexico! LOL
- Can I go during the day tomorrow?
- Or at night?
 - Maybe both? 😏
- Well day might be harder since I'm gonna fix my tire.
 - Just come when you're done.
- So, my new favorite Ariana songs are Bad Idea and Fake Smile 😊
 - I'm glad you're still listening to it 😊
- I was listening to it today at work.
 - Just got home.
- Did you leave work late?
 - I can't listen to music while I'm working. I'd never get through an entire song.
- Why not? Can't concentrate?
 - I went for a haircut and then went grocery shopping.
 - I'm constantly being asked to do things, especially from my boss.
 - Listening to music is a non-work activity.
 - I listen to KCRW on my lunch and Spotify on the train.
- Well yes, but the music is just playing in the background...
 - It was so cold during my walk today.
 - So, you don't listen through headphones?
- No, most of the time without headphones.
 - I like music at a certain volume, or else it's just background noise. You must not play it loud with all the ears around you.
- No. It's not loud. Just loud enough for me to hear.

- I studied music when I first came to California to the extent that it's very visual for me. I can dissect a song very easily. So it can be very distracting if I'm trying to balance budgets and manage staff.
- OK, that makes sense why you say you can't do both. I'm not analyzing or dissecting the songs. Just enjoying background music 😊
 - Are you sure I can't Uber you here?
- No silly. Tomorrow is better.
 - I know, just looking forward to seeing you 😊
 - Are you thinking in the afternoon, or will you not know until tomorrow?
- Maybe afternoon or noonish?
 - Should I still make Kung Pao, or maybe something else?
- You can make that. Unless you are eating that today
 - I want to make it for you.
- What are you eating today? How did you get through the day without eating if you got home so late?
 - I just don't get hungry enough to eat anything substantial. I'm now making a veggie burger.
- Oh nice.
 - What did you make?
- My mom made lentils today, so I made some rice to go with them 😊
- I made veggie chili yesterday.
 - Veggie chili sounds awesome on a cold night like this.
 - Do you have a recipe, or do you just wing it?
- I had a recipe that I would use as reference.
 - How long do you let it cook? Sounds like you just go home and make it then eat it.
- Well it doesn't take as long because I don't use Turkey anymore. It takes maybe like an hour and a half or two, max. I let the broth and veggies simmer before I add all the beans and then let it cook/boil for a while.
- What do you mean? How else would you do it? LOL

- It would drive me crazy smelling chili cook for two hours before I could eat it. My mom used to always make it in a slow cooker in the morning and then it would cook all day. House smelled amazing.
- In the slow cooker sounds good.
 - Hello?
- I was falling asleep 😴
 - What are you wearing?
- It's freezing! I'm wearing multiple layers of clothes 😊
 - It's OK to lie to me about that...
- LOL
 - I bet you still look sexy...
- In that case, small shorts and a bra...
 - Yes please
 - It's nice and warm over here...
- Warm enough to take off all my clothes?
 - I think at that point, it would be more hot than warm 🔥🔥🔥
- Mmmm...
 - I can't wait to kiss you.
- 😊
 - Goodnight Christina 😴 sleep well 😴
- Goodnight Ziggy 😊

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- [Link: Spotify: Kehlani – While We Wait]
- Tire is getting fixed 😊
 - Food is prepared 😊

- 😊
 - What a gorgeous day!
- On my way.
 - Yay!
- I'm outside

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When she makes me cum, I grab at her body, hugging her tight, convulsing, trying not to crush her in my grasp. It's one big orgasm made up of a series of smaller orgasms that cause my legs and arms to tentacle and shake uncontrollably around her tiny frame – every exhale is another wave. A wave that started with a kiss after the meal of Kung Pao Shrimp, which she ate most of the fairly large portion that I prepared for her. She was amused by my ability to eat rice with chopsticks. She did not resist me as the kisses got deeper and more intoxicating, and soon she is under my spell again. And I feel pretty confident that I can suggest we go upstairs without much pushback, and I can see hesitation in her face. I pull her close to me and tell her I know we have things to talk about, but I just want this first, and I follow her fantastic ass up my stairs and down my hallway. Again, we strip each other down, and again she kills me in her little boy shorts and her French bra – such a succulent little morsel she is, so yummy. And soon she is stroking my hard cock while I grab her ass like there's not enough of it to grab while kissing her deep, both of our free hands on the back of each other's heads pressing our lips harder against the other's. The panties drop and I am standing behind her as she faces the bed. I wrap my arms around her from behind, one hand on her pussy the other gently pinching her nipple while I kiss her neck, her head tilts away and my cock is stiff and stabbing her lower back. She seems a little uncomfortable with bending over the bed but is more willing to lay on her back. And when she spreads her legs, rays of light from the heavens majestically glow onto her gorgeous vagina. I feel I have some ground to cover since she was having her period during her last visit. I gave her a righteous tongue lashing and still couldn't make her come. But she definitely enjoyed it, as did I. There are many things that drive me crazy about her, but the fact that she leaves absolutely no scent; she doesn't wear any perfume and her body gives off no natural scent. And so once she is gone, I have nothing tangible to remind me of her. She lays me down on my back and gives me one of her sweet blowjobs that almost makes me cum. But it isn't long before I am putting on a Bearskin Trojan and sliding it into her hot wet pussy with a hotness and wetness that I was not able to feel with the last condoms. It wasn't long before I was thrusting my cock into her small frame. She brushes her hair from her face and my head falls to kiss her lips hard while our bodies repeatedly collide in a steady cadence. I run out of energy and breath. I roll over onto my back and she gets on top. I tried to fuck her, but I'm too winded to put in a huge effort. So, I pull her hips to my face as she grabs the headboard and lets me lick her until she feels right on the edge of orgasm only to have the moment pass. Eventually she lays beside me and tugs on my cock until she makes me orgasm.

She had come primarily so we could talk face to face about our relationship. She had come primarily to express how our relationship wouldn't work. But that's not how the conversation went. I asked her why she was so convinced that this won't wouldn't work. Is it my age? I have to think that if I

was twenty years younger, that we wouldn't have these issues. I tell her that I felt her approach to me gets stuck between the fear centered from the abandonment from her father and the seven-year relationship she had with a man eight years her senior. She tells me the older man was just very controlling as her boss when she worked at Staples. He was married with kids, whom she rarely ever saw, and when she did, they had no idea of her relationship with their father. Once he was divorced, he moved in with his parents. Her main frustration with him was that there was no progress in the relationship. I told her that now that she's in her 30s, most men her age have some degree of baggage, such as being married, having kids, and living with their parents, none of which are characteristics that I possess. I told her I would do everything to make her happy and that I reject the idea that this is impossible. She has to get out of her shell. She doesn't want kids and seems indifferent about ever getting married. At 31, she still doesn't know what she wants or what the ideal man for her would be. It seems all too clear to me that the issue is the twenty-year gap is our age. But I am so infatuated with her, that if all I give her is love, a love that she is willing to accept, then why should anything about my age matter? I know she feels me, and that the message is starting to be clear. I asked her what the craziest thing she's ever done, and she had no answer. I'm bringing her closer to my side of why we would work. Several moments go by in silence where I watch her eyes dart around as she tries to process. She is convinced that we won't work, but she can't tell me why, nor what "working" would look like. I asked her if it was because of my age? Because I don't see what else about me that she has an issue with, except for the fact that we also work together. In her mind, she would like to proudly say that she has a boyfriend and share who he is with the people she works with.

I tell her a story about a day at work when my manager was about to leave for the day, and she noticed something was bothering me. She asked me what was wrong. I told her I couldn't tell her since she was on her way out the door. Two days later, we were driving to a meeting in the City of Commerce and she asked me what was bothering me that day. I told her, "There's this girl," who drives me crazy with this go-away-come-here approach and who I think might be just using me for sex, like I could have bigger problems. Immediately, she wants to know how I met her and what her name is. I tell her that I didn't want to say anything because I didn't know how real it was. She was concerned that she would be another Mahal. I assured my boss that this girl is nothing like Mahal, like the complete opposite in just about every way. Christina laughed when I told her about this conversation, but she then asked if that bothered me, that I couldn't tell her about us. I agreed, but I was happy that I didn't betray an understanding of confidentiality between us. I told my manager that she was a girl I'd known for several years and seized on an opportunity to tell her how I felt, and that she reciprocated, and it's basically too early to talk about.

She tells me a story about how her and two other much older women were saying how good looking I was, and I laughed and wanted to know how that conversation started. She said I came into her area to talk to her and when I left, she and one of the other women exchanged a look that expressed how good looking they thought I was. And when I would come around looking for her and she wasn't there, this woman would tell her, "Ziggy came by to see you," in a tone that suggested it was for reasons that were not business related, and very often that was true. Because I could always call her rather than walk all the way to the other side of the office to see her, but I always look forward to seeing Christina Martinez for any reason.

I tell her about an administrative staff meeting that I was in and was asked to speak on behalf of the committee that we were both on. I spoke off the top of my head and talked about upcoming events and where a certain event would be held later in the year. I also spoke about how much I liked being on the committee because I get to work with other people from other units in our Division, "like Christina Martinez..." and at that very moment, I couldn't think of another committee member's name – her name just hung in the air.

I tell her that I didn't think that if news of our relationship got out at work, that people would be terribly surprised. It seems like there have been coworkers both on my side and her side of the office seeing it between us.

I tell her that I reject the idea that this is impossible.


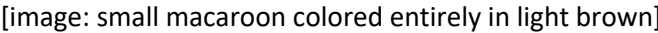
When I walk her to her car at the end of the night, there is no connection between us. She doesn't hold my hand or get close enough to me for me to put my arm around her, which probably would be a little uncomfortable from the difference in our height, as I am close to six feet tall. She gets in her car as soon as we get to it. I give her a few kisses and ask her to text me when she gets home, but otherwise she shuts her car door and drives away with no delay. She's afraid of the optics, even to strangers in a city where she would otherwise not have a reason to come to then to be with me, like someone will surely see us and report us to somebody who gives a shit – I don't get it. She disconnects so easily.

I ask her what she wants, what it would look like if it did work, and not that it's about me at all – I'm asking generally who her ideal man would be, and she has no idea. She talks of moving away from her family into her own condo, but I question how easily it will be for her to step out of her role of taking care of her mother and brother. The rest of her family all living in close proximity to each other, and she's talking of living East of the city. She lived away from home during her first year in college but moved back when she transferred to USC. And other than that, she has always lived at home. I moved out of my mom's house before I graduated high school and eventually moved to the other side of the continent soon after.

Throughout this conversation, we lay naked in my bed kissing and touching each other's bodies. She rests her head on my shoulder and runs her fingers through my short freshly cut hair. I spank her when I feel she deserves it or just when I have an urge at any given moment. She spent five hours with me, the longest we had ever spent together. I think she was hoping the conversation would be different than it did. Slowly she puts her clothes on in what appears to be deep thinking, almost like she's formulating how this will work, or more like she can't fully express to me why she so convinced it won't. Either way, it's nice to see her now doubtful that we won't work. Even though our relationship feels mostly sexual, there are moments during sex when we joke and laugh, and my time with her is always fun and passionate. I listen and talk to her as much as she is willing to tell me, which is not ever with a lot of detail. I don't see how she can't see us working as a couple, except for the optics and the judgment that comes with her dating a man twenty years older. She can't define what she considers to be the qualities of a good relationship with a man when she all the while has me, a successful man who's never been married and has no kids and lives by himself in his own home that's bigger than he needs, and my biggest issue with her is that I wasn't born in the eighties. No relationship is easy, and some of the best ones take the most work that both people involved are willing to make work. At the beginning of our conversation, I reminded her that whenever there was something the committee was discussing that I didn't understand, she would be the one who would always explain it to me, so I would understand, and so I was positive that she would help me understand how she feels about us. And now that she's leaving after this discussion, after another episode of hot sex, after a great meal of homemade Kung Pao Shrimp, and after a flat tire and an easy change of plans, I think she may be disappointed that she wasn't able to easily convince me, that not only did I not understand her point of view, that perhaps maybe I may have altered her point of view. I hope she now sees things my way, and I hope that my way is something that we both want and makes us both happy.

- I'm home

- Thank you 😊

- Thank you.
 - What would you like me to cook for you next?
- Ummm 
 - Eggs Benedict with smoked salmon?
 - Shrimp Pad Thai?
 - Veggie Moco Loco?
 - Veggie burger?
- What's a veggie Moco Loco? LOL
 - A bed of rice with a veggie burger with cheese and a fried egg topped with a red tomato sauce and shredded parmesan. It's Jasper's favorite.
 - Now I want that...
- Wow, that sounds intense.
 - [\[Link: Wikipedia: Loco Moco\]](#)
 - It's considered good hangover food.
- Oh, I see
 - I do remember your cookies, by the way. I think I ate more of them then I was supposed to. They were like macaroons.
- That's not true! LOL
- You can't take back what you said anymore haha
 - 
 - Didn't they kind of look like this?
- Nope...
- Well, kinda...
 - Right?
- It's a sandwich cookie, but nothing like a macaroon.
- What's your favorite type of cookie?
 - Christina's cookie
- LOL
- Aside from mine
 - Oatmeal Raisin

- Oatmeal Raisin?
- Would've never thought...
- That's my least favorite
 - Well, not all Oatmeal Raisin is good either.
- With or without chocolate?
 - I also like a good chocolate chip, but I'm a little picky about chocolate.
- Why picky?
 - I'm not a big lover of chocolate in general. I like darker chocolate typically.
- Ooh
- Interesting...
- I love chocolate
 - What is your favorite cookie?
- I like a good Walnut chocolate chip cookie
 - Should I smother myself in chocolate?
- Mmmm... chocolate covered Ziggy...
 - I can still feel that orgasm...
- It seemed more intense this time
 - [Image: a bottle of Hershey syrup in my hand, my kitchen floor in the background]
 - Those condoms were much better.
 - You were so close to orgasm when you sat on my face – so yummy 🍑
- Yeah, they felt significantly thinner.
 - It was nice to feel you.
- It felt amazing
 - You feel amazing
 - Just need to work those muscles a little more 😊
 - My ass is gonna ache tomorrow, I can already feel it...
- LOL
- Good 😊

- I love that you're a pain in my ass 😊
- You might regret saying that 😊
 - If it means more fucking, then I really don't mind.
- 😊
 - What are you wearing?

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- Missing you in my bed
- 😊
- How's your morning?
 - Laaaaazy...
 - [Image of my half eaten Loco Moco that I made myself for breakfast]
 - Tastes better than it looks...
- At first, I thought it was shredded coconut on top LOL
 - Do you have plans today?
- I do
- I think I need some time to think things through...
 - I feel that
- Glad you didn't say "K"
 - 😊
 - We can always continue the conversation, if you want.
- I have a hard time expressing how I feel... it's always been a problem
 - You should write it down

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- Are you OK?
- [Image: sun shining on an apartment building in Venice with blue skies behind it]
- It was a pretty day

- [Image: Torta con casio with jalapenos and salsa verde from Tatiana's lunch truck]
- [Image: rack of Donuts from Yum Yum with a woman looking through on the other side bent over]
- She says they don't have strawberry frosted with sprinkles.
- Yes, sorry, I'm out with friends
- No pink frosted donuts? That unheard of...
 - Right? I was mad and nearly tore up the place...
 - Be safe and have fun - I bet you look super cute too 😍
 - Goodnight Christina 😴
- Goodnight Ziggy 😊

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- Come sleep in with me...
- I'll make you Loco Moco... 😊
- Sun is out! 😊
- Such a nice day today.
 - It would be a nice day for you to drive to the West side 😊
 - While listening to this:
 - [Link: Spotify: Feed Me – High Street Creeps]
- I don't know about this. Haha
- I'm seeing Bricia today 😊
 - What is Bricia?
- Bricia is my friend from San Francisco.
 - Oh wow, she finally came?
- She did!
 - How long will she be here?
- She's leaving tonight.
 - You were visiting with her yesterday?
- Yes, I was with her.
 - That's cool - surprised you didn't say anything.

- Yesterday was more of a last-minute thing. Today we came to try on dresses.
 - Send pics 🥰
- I didn't try on any LOL. It was her.
 - Would you still send me a picture of yourself? A recent one that you like?
- You know I don't like taking pics...
 - Surely you have one?
 - You wouldn't let me take a selfie with you?
- I don't take selfies LOL. I don't think I have any.
 - Take one now?
- LOL No silly!
- Why do you want a pic?
 - I just don't have any of you, and would like one 🥰
 - You don't even have to be naked...
- That's wishful thinking...
 - I'm totally playing about the naked part.
 - But just a picture of you.
- No no
 - Why?
 - You're so pretty, Christina 😊
- Because... I told you. I don't like taking pics or sending pics of myself.
 - Okay. I kind of thought that would be your answer...
 - It's okay that I asked?
- It's okay, as long as you don't keep asking...
 - It's understood
- How was your Sunday?
 - It wasn't as nice as my Friday 😊

- Slept in, did laundry, getting ready for tomorrow. Feels like it's been awhile since we've had to work a full 5 days.
- Yes, I agree. It's been 2 weeks since I've worked a full week.
 - Are you still with your friend?
- No, I'm not anymore. Catching up on chores and stuff at home.
 - You had a good time with your friend?
- I did. We went for lunch after with our other friend and her baby.
 - Where did you go?
- Ceviche place in Montebello 😊
 - You never answered my question...
 - What would you like me to cook for you next?
- Oh, that's right.
- I would be thinking ahead if I were to answer that question right now. I still need time to think.
 - Did you wanna talk about it some more?
- I need to do it on my own...
 - See, it's true; I can't lure you here with food 😊
 - Goodnight Christina 😊

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- Hi
- How was your day?
 - 😊
 - Pretty blah, but getting better now that I'm hearing from you 😊
 - Kimberly's last day was today... 😊
- Oh it was her last day? Bummer
 - How was your day?
- It was busy. Had back-to-back meetings all day. But had lunch in Little Tokyo 😊

- Did you have Raman?
- No, I didn't. I had a salmon bowl.
 - I miss you terribly... 😞
 - Still thinking about it?
- I've thought about it.
- I've really enjoyed spending time with you Ziggy, but I don't see myself being more than just friends - like we used to be. I have many doubts and I can't ignore them. I hope you understand and if ultimately you just want to be my friend, like you said, then I know you'll understand.
 - Will you ever come visit me again?
- No, I can't...
- But I have really great memories from my last visit.
 - So, you want to go back to the way we were before I spilled my guts to you?
- I want us to be able to stay friends.
 - I will always be your friend, Christina. But in the last six or seven weeks, our friendship has taken a bit of a turn. I really enjoy talking to you and sharing things with you. I love flirting with you and knowing you're on your way, and parking. I love kissing and touching you, laughing and having fun with you. In my mind, it's hard for me to understand how you would so easily throw that away.
- It's not an easy decision, Ziggy. Clearly, I've had a lot of trouble with this and you know that. The more time I spend with you, the harder it gets. If it wasn't hard for me, I wouldn't have gone back and forth so much. But I did because I enjoy spending time with you and everything you mentioned. But I also know that I have to be realistic.
 - If you enjoy spending time with me, why would you not want that? Why pretend like you never enjoyed it? It sounds like you wish it never happened in the first place.
- I'm not pretending, Ziggy, and I'm not saying I wish it never happened. I have no regrets at all. Why would you say that?
 - Because you're saying you "can't" ever be with me again? "Can't" implies that you do not have a choice, and that is the fallacy in your argument. You are choosing to end what you enjoy, and I find that very sad, especially since I enjoy you so very much, Christina Martinez.
 - To say you want it to go back to what our friendship was like before January 18th is like saying you want to erase everything that happened since then. That sounds like you wish it never happened.

- I'm saying "can't" because I can't stay true to my decision if I visit you again, and I know I wouldn't be able to visit you just as "friends". I've told you my reasons for not continuing and you're choosing to ignore them.
- I'm sorry you are taking it that way. That's not at all how I mean for it to come across. I would never think that and it makes me sad you would say that.
 - Was your intention coming here always an attempt to be more than friends? Why can't we just be the friends that we are? Fighting it and taking such a leap backwards just feels so unnatural to me.
- Stay friends like we are now and not develop feelings for you? I can't do that.
 - Are you afraid of falling in love with me?
- Afraid of having more feelings and it be harder to walk away and still work with you.
 - I'm sure you will find someone better and younger than me.
 - Can I see you just one last time, and then I'll leave you alone?
- Please don't make it harder than it already is.
 - It would be easier if there was closure.
- I'm sorry...
 - Why? You're getting what you want.
 - This has just been a day of people who I really care about leaving me...
- Sorry, didn't mean for that.

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*Personal Daily Horoscope of
Wednesday, 27 February 2019
For Ziggy Collins, born 2 February 1968*

-HEALING CONVERSATION-

Valid during several weeks: Under this influence all forms of healing and being healed are easily favored. This influence is also particularly suited for every type of operation on body and soul, whether you undertake this on another person or on yourself. With people who are close to you, you can have deep conversations about those sore points which we all have, and which make us react very sensitively to some things. It would be only too human to avoid this situation for fear of the pain connected with it. But, of course, you should not do so, as healing and becoming whole dim and certain preconditions which are not readily to be found, but which are, during this time, especially favored.

- The interpretation above is for your transit selected for today.

- Mercury conjunction Chiron.
- Activity period from 26 February 2019 until mid-April 2019
- Astro.com

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*Personal Daily Horoscope of
Thursday, 28 February 2019
For Ziggy Collins, born 2 February 1968*

-A CHANGE OF PACE-

This is a good day for doing something different. You're probably bored with the daily routine and would like to do something that provides a stimulating, unusual change of pace. You seek this not only in diversions, but also in your relationships. The people you meet today are likely to be quite different from your usual friends. A love relationship that starts during this time is apt to be electric, exciting, unstable and short. You are not looking for a steady relationship now; as a rule, you desire the unusual. You may make some unconventional arrangement with your lover, such as agreeing to have other lovers. This influence also causes relationships to begin suddenly and then quickly go through all stages of a love affair.

- The interpretation about this is for your transit selected for today
- Venus trine Uranus
- activity period from 27 February 2019 until 1 March 2019
- Astro.com

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*Personal Daily Horoscope of
Friday, 1 March 2019
For Ziggy Collins, born 2 February 1968*

-UP TO YOU-

Valid during many months: this is a period of stability, in which very deep perseverant energies lend themselves to you. Whether you make use of them or not is completely up to you. However, if you do decide to use them, there will be potential for inner growth. From this position you can gain deep insights into the functioning of your psyche which might have shocked you at other times.

This is a time for simplification and for finding out what is really meaningful to you. It is a period when you are not only able to, but should, make changes. It is a time when you are able to eliminate the old and outworn elements of your life with relative ease because there will be little in the way. It may even seem so easy that you are not aware of its being an issue, but you should not rest on your laurels. Take an inventory of your life, your friendships, your possessions and other attachments and involvements. See which of these support you and at the minimum allow you to grow. These should be preserved. But do not struggle to preserve anything that does not serve you, especially if it seems to want to pass away. This is most important, because whatever you do not eliminate from your life now that does not serve you could become a cause of difficulty during more stressful times that may come along later.

- *The interpretation above is for your transit selected for today.*
- *Pluto trine Pluto*
- *Activity period end of January 2019 until beginning of December 2020*
- *Astro.com*

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*Personal Daily Horoscope of
Saturday, 2 March 2019
For Ziggy Collins, born 2 February 1968*

-STIMULATION-

Valid during several weeks: you may need to put the brakes on in your mind today, for you tend to think and speak hastily. Others may seem too slow for you today, and in your haste, you may overlook something significant. At its worst, this influence will make you feel scattered, undisciplined and nervous. But on the positive side, it acts like a stimulant upon the brain. You are interested in new kinds of experiences and very impatient with the usual routine. Do something different or meet new people who will challenge your thinking. Even your longtime associates can show you aspects of themselves that you never knew existed. In conversation with others, you are inclined to be blunt. Just be careful not to overdo it and avoid saying things simply to shock people. Be prepared to back up your word later.

- *The interpretation above is for your transit selected for today.*
 - *Mercury opposition Uranus*
 - *activity period from 28 February 2019 until mid-April 2019*
 - *Astro.com*
-

- [Link: Spotify: Solange – When I Get Home]
- It's hard to tell when each song ends and a new one begins...
 - It's a seamless listen.
- Oh... no wonder.
- Do you like Solange over Beyoncé?
 - The two are different artists, but I prefer Beyoncé.
 - How have you been?
- Been okay
- How have you been?
 - To be honest, heartbroken...

- I'm so sorry...
 - I can't tell you how much I miss you.
- I miss talking to you.
 - Can we have some closure, please?
- Don't you think that makes it harder?
- How do you define closure?
 - I just can't see how you can let it end so coldly like that. I didn't do anything wrong and tried to do everything you asked of me. I feel like I'm being punished.
 - I understand the circumstances, and you're right that it probably wouldn't work. You will always have a place in my heart, Christina. I have had a crush on you for nearly as long as I've known you. I respect your decision, but I just want to say goodbye. I just want to have one last meal with you, just one last kiss, and then go back to being friends.
- I never said you did anything wrong. Let me be clear, you didn't. I was afraid. Afraid of getting to a place too hard to get out of later on...
 - I need to let you go, Christina. You're all I ever think about. I don't see how this is the easier path.
- if you know I'm right, then why make it harder and make me feel worse about it?
 - Why is this all about how you feel? Do my feelings matter at all?
- Yes, they do. But you're also agreeing with me. You know it's not going to work. Why develop stronger feelings for someone only to know you're gonna be heartbroken in the end?
 - I'm already heartbroken.
 - I'm not trying to change your mind.
 - Can we just spend time together and not get deeper with our feelings? Can we just enjoy the friendship that we have? Just for one last time?
- Let me think about it.
 - I'd really like to have this conversation in person.
- Talk about what?
 - Can you not talk to me in person?
- I can.
- But what do you want to talk about? Having one last night or trying to change my mind?

- We don't have to talk if you don't feel we have anything to talk about. I would prefer to just have a good time with you.
- You're saying you're not trying to change my mind but then you say you want to talk about it in person...
- Sounds like you're saying two different things...
 - Texting is just exhausting because things get lost in translation. I just want to say goodbye and texting it would not be the same.
- Let me think about it, please.
 - I would expect you to want to think about it. Just please consider the invitation, and I promise that you will have a good time. It will ultimately be what's best for our friendship, and that's what's most important. I want us to be good.
- Why do you say it will be best for our friendship?
 - To have closure?
- OK...
 - That is the goal, yes? To be good between us? I don't want to feel mad at you, and I just feel like if there is no closure, I feel there will always be some bitterness between us. I don't want that.
- Yes, I agree.
- Are you mad at me right now?
 - Only because it feels like your decision has affected our friendship.
- I'm sorry...
 - For what?
- For making you feel that way.
 - It can be fixed.

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- Are you seeing the lightning?
- That's awesome!
- And it's not raining.
- Holy shit it just started raining really hard right now when I sent that text...

- How bizarre...
- Really? I'm not seeing anything
- Or hearing anything
- It's raining hard?
- It's not here
 - Like right when I sent that text - weird
 - It's probably moving in your direction.
 - The thunder and lightning stopped, and now it's just pouring.
- Weird
- Not even sprinkling here.
 - It wasn't at all before I sent that text. I was standing out on my patio.
 - Sorry, got caught in a moment there...
- The clouds must have heard you...
- They wanted to prove you wrong.
 - They knew I was texting you ...
 - Or maybe they gave me something to text you about 😊
- It's possible.
- Starting to watch a documentary.
- Not sure if I will regret it...
- 😊
 - Which one?
- Ted Bundy
- On Netflix
 - Yeah, sweet dreams tonight...
- Ugh
- Have you seen it? My brother keeps telling me about it.
 - I have not.
 - Do you think your brother is messing with you, or does he really think you'll like the movie?
- He's just saying it's really interesting.
- I'd be interested to know what you think of it.
 - Personally, thunder, lightning, and rain sound more interesting.

- Now I don't know 😞
- You watch it!
 - It's just called Ted Bundy?
- Ted Bundy Tapes
 - It's a series?
- Short - only four episodes.
 - Yeah, I don't know how much time I want to devote to this...
- LOL
 - It sounds awesome.
 - I mean the actual sound of the film...
- He's crazy
- I can't finish watching
- Next
 - Did you get through the first episode?
- No
- Midway
 - How far?
- When a bunch of girls in Utah end up dead and bodies found in the mountains.
- Don't watch it.
 - The production is so dramatic.
- Are you watching it?
- I'm watching Seinfeld instead 😊
 - Did you mean Utah, or Washington?
- Utah
- He moves.
- Don't watch it! LOL
 - I thought it was around Seattle
 - Hold on...
- Wasn't it Utah?

- He was in Washington, but then he moved states.
 - So most of them happened around Seattle, a few in northern Oregon, but no mention of Utah.
- Really? Clearly I wasn't paying attention.
- LOL
- Okay, so where did he go after Washington? When he started school?
 - Puget Sound
 - I kept watching until the very end for it to switch to Utah, and it never happened...
- LOL
- Sorry
 - You deserve a spanking after that one ...
- I don't think so...
 - I guess we're gonna have to agree to disagree on that one.
 - I just watched it twice...
- Hey, it is Utah.
- What did you watch?
 - S1:E1
- I'm looking at it right now.
 - Where?
- They are showing a map of Utah.
 - At what time in the show?
- Oh wait, this is episode 2
 - Thank you...
- I think I skipped episode one.
- I don't know how that happened...
 - So you're saying you do deserve a spanking?
- No...
 - I'm just playing with you, Christina.

- I was about to give in.
 - I accept your apology... 😊
 - You're not getting any of this thunder and lightning? It is raining there, yes?
- I saw some lightning earlier.
- It's not raining here yet.
 - How strange.
- Definitely thunder.
 - [Video: my backyard, night, three minutes of four or five lightning and thunderclaps. The sound of rain falling on my brick patio in the background]
- Sorry, I fell asleep.
 - Goodnight Christina.
- Goodnight Ziggy.

.....

- Good morning. Be careful driving out there in the rain.
- Good morning, thank you 😊
 - It's been a slow week. Wish I was at home in bed.
- Being home in bed sounds great.
 - Yes, you're welcome to join me 😊
 - How's your day?
- Day is going okay. Trying to catch up on stuff.
 - I had udon for lunch, and now I'm totally sleepy. I was thinking of asking if you wanted to join me, but I was pretty sure I already knew the answer.
- Mmmm udon...
 - Are you a practicing Catholic?
- No, I'm not religious.
- Are you Catholic?

- Oh no, I'm not religious at all. But people in my unit were talking about what they would give up for Lent. I told them I would give up cigarettes and meat.
- You can't give up something you are already doing. LOL. What would be something you would be willing to give up?
 - It would depend on what I would get in return.
- You don't get anything in return, silly.
 - Yeah, and that's why I'm not a religious person...
 - What would you give up?
- I never gave up anything for Lent, back when I was a practicing Catholic. But if I had to choose... maybe sweets? 😊

.....

Leaving for the day, I wait for the elevator by myself. With the doors open and I step inside, the doors from the office open and Christina rushes with all of things for the elevator that I hold open for her. She stands in the middle of the elevator, the two women standing to her left were engaged with their phones and the rather tall Korean man dressed in a tired business suit stared straight ahead, ignoring everyone. And I stand by the door turned to face her, to take in every moment of her presence in the company of strangers in a crowded elevator ride that won't last longer than a minute. And I stare her down. And she knows it. Unfortunately, the elevator does not stop at any other floor in the building that we came eight floors down from. But somewhere around the third or second floor, she broke form from looking straight ahead to looking up at me for the briefest of moments just to see me grinning down at her, and she smiles and laughs a little before quickly looking back ahead. No one in the elevator seemed to notice or care. We said goodnight as the doors opened and she went in the direction of the garage as I headed in the other direction for the train.

- Pretty girl...
- 😊
- How was your train ride?
 - Not as nice as my elevator ride 😊
 - You got home safe?
- I did, thank you 😊
 - So, will you make time for me this weekend?
- Mmm I'm torn.

- I was gonna make habanero salsa, quesadillas with sautéed shrimp, beans and rice...
- Sounds like a feast.
 - It would be a shame to have to eat it all by myself...
- Good try.
- 🙄
- Going to sleep. Goodnight 😴
 - Is that a maybe?
 - Leaving me hanging...
- That's an, "I'm still thinking about it."
 - That's fair
 - Sleep well, Christina 🤔

.....

- [Link: lamag.com: 20 Bonkers Photos of California's Recent Lightning Storms]
- Wow. Crazy pics.
- Where did you get udon yesterday?
 - Wasabi
- Oh okay
 - You want to go?
- I'm thinking of lunch options.
- I didn't bring lunch.
 - I have chocolate?
- Chocolate is not lunch.
- I've had too much chocolate already.
- Want something spicy...
 - Like habanero salsa?
- LOL
- I've been craving BCD Tofu House. You doing something for lunch?
 - I am hungry. Are you inviting me?

- Yes. Are you free right now?
 - I have to send an email. But I don't think it would be a problem if I took lunch early.
- Okay.
 - Where do you want me to meet you?
- Elevators. Are you ready?
 - Yes

.....

- Thanks again for lunch
- You're welcome. Thank you for joining me.
 - So will you come over tonight?
- Ziggy...
 - Please?
- I think it's better if I don't.
 - You don't think we can just hang out as friends?
- What do you define as friends?
 - The way we are.
- Friends having sex?
- I can't. I told you.
- We went over this Ziggy. You tell me you understand me and then you keep trying to change my mind. I don't like that.
 - No, I'm not trying to change your mind. I just can't turn off my attraction for you. I understand your logic, but it also feels like you have some feelings for me.
- I don't want to make things more complicated. Please.
 - How would you coming to visit make things more complicated?
 - Can't things just stay constant? Do they have to escalate?
 - I'm just trying to understand. I'm not trying to upset you.

- Because I don't want to be influenced and change my mind if I go.
- I'd rather not.
 - You sound so convinced that if you came, just for one night, you would so easily change your mind. Would it be that easy? You don't think you could keep your feelings from going any deeper?
- I'd just rather not. Please understand. I don't want to get upset.
 - OK - I'm sorry.
 - This last week was really nice, and I don't want to ruin that. I'm glad we were able to at least have a meal together today in public, and I will surely join you again.
 - Just know that I will continue to be attracted to you, and flirt with you, and flirt with you about coming over. I have very fond memories of being naked with you, kissing you, and I would love to spend that kind of time with you again. But I certainly don't want it if you feel you're under duress. Just know that my intentions with you are always good. I don't want to hurt you, make things difficult, or be any kind of burden on your life. I'm just trying to offer you a good time.
- It was a good week. Let's keep it that way, please.
- I have really good memories too and I know you mean well. Thank you.
 - Just go back to thinking about it, OK? I didn't mean to pressure you about tonight. The invitation will always be open. I would like to think that we will have moments like that again. But that's not nearly as important to me as us just being cool with each other.
 - I will always crave me another slice of Christina Martinez 😊
- I agree. It's not important 😊
 - But it was really so very nice, Christina. I felt so much passion with you. I often get flashes in my mind of us naked in each other's arms, our legs entwined, with your soft lips kissing mine. I'm very thankful for having felt all of it with you. It's just hard for me to think I'll never feel you again. I trust that you see my point of view too. This isn't easy for me either.
 - Goodnight Christina
- I'm sorry, I fell asleep, I was so tired. It was so nice being with you, Ziggy. I have such great memories and thoughts as well, so I understand what you're saying.

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I can't get her out of my head! She's all I ever think about. And I saw her today at work. We passed quickly by in the lobby this afternoon and she flashed me her beautiful smile, and now it's seared in my memory. And before that, first thing in the morning she called me on my office phone to follow

up on a procurement item that we've been working on. And she speaks in such a whisper, just like when she would whisper in my ear when we lay naked on the bed, feeling each other's bodies, soft skin and hair. I can still feel her kisses and her fingers in my hair sliding down my neck to my cock. And how she kneeled on a pillow between my legs sucking it while I sat on my couch downstairs, and she wore nothing but her little booty shorts for underwear and went all the way down with her soft tongue and wet mouth. And how perfect her tight, pink pussy looked and tasted. I spent a good twenty minutes licking her, fingering her with two fingers, massaging her G-spot, bringing her ever so close to orgasm only to just come down from some peak, like she talked herself off a ledge. What Heaven it was the one night she sat on my face, grabbing at the headboard while I gripped her ass with both hands, hovering her pussy right where I can lick it best, and she was so close again, her head falling forward and then back, rocking on my face with every deep inhale and exhale. And yet it seemed like all she tried to do was keep from going over the edge, keep from losing control. And I wonder how strong those memories are for her, if it's ever anything she would want again, just to feel each other's passion again, just to feel each other's kiss again. Oh, how I love to see her smile. I want so badly for her to love me. Perhaps she had to end it just to slow it down, because by leaps and bounds, with every visit the sex got better and better, and she was afraid of getting too attached. One more visit, and surely I would make her come, and maybe that might be the only step she wants to take with me. There did seem to be a destination too far that was quickly approaching, and perhaps it would have been near impossible to get away when it was perhaps truly meant to be, and why waste time on that? Love is not logical. It cannot be planned out. It cannot be predicted. You either feel love or you don't. And I just find it so hard to believe that within that whirlwind of passion between us, that I was the only one who felt love, that she didn't feel anything, that she had had enough? That's it? Adios? Thank you, next?

Finally, it's Friday, and I'm back at the negotiating table with her, trying to keep her engaged, keeping her decision from being final, holding onto my last shreds of hope that her and I could actually be something, that our attraction wasn't a fluke, that it was more than a half dozen nights of food and sex. Please let there be more! I crave her like no other girl, like an addiction that I'm trying to quit. I itch from the withdrawal from her touch, from her kiss. This just can't be how it ends. I find myself begging, pleading with her, making every argument that I can, and she continues to think about it. She doesn't deny that she misses me, that she doesn't think about when we were intimate, when we were one, when we were breathing each other's air, tasting each other's taste. What I wouldn't do for another taste, another lick, another stab at her. I just hope that by sticking with her, that by not giving up on her will prove to her that I am worthy of her companionship, that I deserve a chance. In my mind, there is no better man for her than me. I am awesome, and if she can't see that, then that's her problem. But then it feels like that's my problem too if my intent is to keep her from going away forever, and by pressuring her, I fear that possibility only growing. And I often wonder if losing her forever is worth my pursuit of her. And what if in the end, she's right? Perhaps this is just a test, and maybe to get to that level with her, I need to fight for it. Maybe throwing myself down on my knees, begging and pleading for her to come back, to stay with me for as long as she wants, and please let it be for a night or two, or even just an hour or two, I'd be happy. And even if she told me to fuck off and that she never wanted to see me again, I would still cherish every moment that I spent with her, and I will always long for her, dream of her, want every girl going forward to be just like her. It's pain getting over her. And like the pathetic fuck that I am, I still text her for the only reason, to text her, to stay in her orbit, hoping not to overstay my welcome in her headspace. My time there is either dangerously limited or I'm just getting started.

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- [Link: Spotify: Sigrid – Sucker Punch]
- If only you could read my Journal... mmm...
- 🤔
- Well
- ?
 - ?
- You're not gonna tell me?
 - Tell you what?
- An excerpt from your Journal...
 - [Image: page from my journal in my handwriting that reads:

"Yeah, so that was that. I went nearly a full week sober – no drink or smoke. The smoke was the most significant, perhaps longest period of time that I had been without a high for quite some time. It seemed like I was clearer in thought. Being sober does have its advantages.

However, again, it's Friday night on a three-day weekend, Martin Luther King weekend, I'm at Grand Central Market after a grueling week at work, and yes, I am having a beer, several beers, in fact.

And now I'm fucking flirting with motherfucking Christina Martinez, all via text. I just want to tell her that I have always thought the world of her and I have no idea why. And even though I know there's a huge gap in our age, I think I would..."

In the upper right margin is written:

▪ *Toro Y Moi – Outer Peace*

- How was being sober for a week?
 - I go through periods of sobriety. I tend to overdo it during the Holidays, eventually I start enjoying the company of the hopelessly sober, start losing weight ...
- Overdo it? How? LOL
 - This was the general entry before:
 - [Image: page from my Journal in my handwriting that reads:

I need to roll a couple joints to make this night complete, and it seems all too easy.

I don't understand why it was so much easier to drink a year ago, and now it seems I so easily am drunk from half of what I used to drink, and now I feel myself spinning, like bed-spins normally would do. I should stop drinking...

In the upper right margin is written:

- *Natalia Lafourcade – Musas Vol. 2*
- *Post Malone - beerbongs & bentleys*

- In the top margin, I'm referencing what I was listening to when I wrote the entry.
- I thought that's what that meant from the first one you sent.
 - As long as I feed myself before I drink, then I won't get drunk. And the trek from downtown to Culver City, especially walking home from the train station and potentially eating again along the way, will sober me up by the time I get home.
 - The voices between the two entries are very different.
- They are very different. Your actual writing is different too. It's hard to make out some of the words. Do you write only at home or when you're out?
 - Grand Central Market is a great place to write. Anywhere I can have a good meal. Union Station. Santa Monica Pier. Downtown Culver City. Dive bars. The train, sometimes the bus. Whenever I'm inspired, but typically on the weekends when the juices are flowing.
 - So I probably write more at home during the winter and more when I'm out during the summer.
 - I sometimes will go back and rewrite the letters in the words, but I tried to keep the actual words and phrasing as it was when I originally wrote it. Sometimes I like to keep the handwriting on the page.
- Why do you do that?
 - Because sometimes I can't read my handwriting because I'm writing so fast. I'm just trying to get the words down on the page before I forget them. I break more lead in my pencil than actually getting it on the page because I press down with extreme urgency. It's very therapeutic.
 - But sometimes the drama of my handwriting tells a different story. I like to write what I'm feeling in the moment.
- You only write in pencil?
 - Yes
 - Can you believe I've written nearly two notebooks full about the last two months?

- Oh wow. How long does it usually take for you to go through one book?
 - Three to five months.
 - [Image: my eggs Benedict with smoked salmon]
 - I think Jasper is mad at me.
- Oh no, why?
- That looks good. He didn't go over?
 - I kind of blew him off last weekend, and that's because I was blowing everyone off last weekend. And now he's not responding.
- Oh no. Why don't you just go over.
 - He says he never got my text.
- Do you think that's true?
 - Doesn't matter...
 - I'll probably go over later
- Well, I'm glad he responded.
 - Yeah, he's one I worry about if I don't hear from.
- Does he have any family?
 - In NYC
- No girlfriend?
 - He definitely is not boyfriend material, and he seems okay with that.
- Oh okay
 - What are you up to?
- With my niece and nephews
 - Just a reminder that it only takes me 20 minutes to get home from Jasper's house 😊
- You already know my answer...
 - I do.
 - [Image: corner of Venice and Overland from the westbound bus stop at 6:00 PM. Colorful clouds glow in the sky above.]

- Have a good time with Jasper.
 - Have a good time staying at home.
- Well that sounds kind of spiteful...
 - That wasn't the intention.
- I'm enjoying my family. Thanks
 - [Video: Jasper's dog whining and whimpering while I pet his head]
- He's so cute!
 - [Image: night image of sidewalk in front of Venice High School.]
 - Come find me Christina Martinez!

.....

- [link: Spotify: Foals – Part 1 Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost]
- I like this. Never heard of them.
 - It's a nice piece of indie dreampop. The whole album has a nice arc.
- What do you mean by arc?
 - It starts slow and each song builds up and swells in the middle with songs like Degrees and Syrups. Sunday begins as a cooldown, but has a driving, danceable finish. And the finale is a nice sad ballad that wraps the whole album nicely. It's very well put together.
- Hmm... I see. I have to finish listening to it then.
 - Beautiful day - you have plans today?
- Running some errands. Going grocery shopping.
- Make dinner and lunch for tomorrow.
- You?
 - I've spent most of the weekend gardening, and I'm now feeling the urge to get out of the house, but I still have so much to do...
 - What's for dinner?
- That sounds fun. What type of gardening?
- Most likely a veggie stir fry.

- To start, I had to harvest this bad girl...
- [Video: One marijuana plant in my 8' X 4' grow tent in my upstairs spare bedroom. The plant encumbers most of a 4' X 4' area of the tent as it has been bent back onto a trellis net from its three-gallon container. The camera zooms in to show large buds growing]
- Clean the tent and then move eight of the clones from downstairs up into the tent upstairs.
- I've been up and down my stairs so many times in the last two days...
- So do you sell any of it?
 - No, it's all for personal use.
 - Although Jasper does benefit from the fruits of my labor.
- Haha. I thought so.
- How much is permitted?
 - I'm not sure, now that it's recreational.
 - But that was one plant, and I'm sure you would have no idea, but that one plant is huge. I'm hoping to yield close to 1/2 pound. That's the biggest plant I've ever grown.
- How long would half a pound last?
 - Depends on how much you smoke. For me it would take several months.
 - So what time should I be over for dinner? 😊
- Ummmmm... 😊
- 😊
 - Haha - didn't think so.
- So why are you moving the clones upstairs?
- Do you put the bigger plants up there? Are you planting more?
 - The plants downstairs are in a vegetative state where they grow from seed or as clones after rooting. The light is set to an 18/6-hour cycle, which mimics the summer sun cycle.
 - The plants upstairs are in a flowering state where they show their sex and start budding. The light is much more intense and is on a 12/12-hour cycle to mimic the fall/winter sun cycle.
 - It's too hot to grow during the summer months, so this is all I'll grow this year.
 - That's why I'm growing so much now.
- So what happens if you run out during the summer?
 - Never happens. I usually end up making concentrate out of it.

- Does the sex of the plant make a difference?
- Concentrate?
- So many questions!
 - I have answers.
 - Male plants make the seeds, female plants make the buds.
 - Concentrate is stripping the THC from the plant. It's how edibles are made.
 - Marijuana is not a bad thing. It helps a lot of people, particularly veterans with PTSD.
 - I suffer from anxiety, depression, and insomnia.
- Oh I see
- I never said it was a bad thing.
- But it is still a drug with side effects.
 - Every drug has side effects.
 - Even coffee.
- I know.
 - Cannabis is much safer than opioids and most anti-depressants and pain relievers.
- Oh of course.
- Dinner turned out to be more of a tofu and mushroom teriyaki...
- [image: bowl of cubed tofu in a Brown sauce on a bed of rice with chopped green onions on top.]
 - Wow that looks awesome. Looks like my Mapo Tofu.
 - [Image: two bowls: one with white rice in it, the other with cubed tofu in a Brown sauce which green onions on top.]
- Mapo Tofu usually has beef, right?
 - Pork
 - But I see it on the vegetarian portion of some Chinese menus.
- What's the sauce made of?
 - Fermented black beans, chilies, vegetable broth... it's pretty simple and easy to make, but I did have to order a few ingredients from Amazon.
- Is it spicy?
 - It can be as spicy as you want. It's one of the things I had wanted to cook for you.
- But you didn't...

- But I would...
 - Okay. Going to sleep...
 - Sleep well, Christina
 - You too.
-

- Good morning Christina
 - I doubt this would be anything you'd put into a regular rotation, but it's become one of my faves as of late.
 - [Link: Spotify: Blu - A Long Red Hot Los Angeles Summer Night]
 - Good morning
-

- Did you bring me a donut?
 - Like hours ago.... I assume you've been out?
 - Thank you! 😊
 - I just got in. We had an early meeting at Cal Endowment.
 - I hope it's not too late for you to enjoy it.
 - Of course not.
-

- Your smile just kills me...
 - And your voice...
- You're silly 😊
- You looked upset.
- Was everything OK?
 - I miss seeing your smile.
 - I miss hearing your voice.
 - I miss you Christina.

- I was melting inside when I saw you today 😊 I was definitely not upset.
- Oh okay. You looked so serious. It was pretty warm in the office.
 - Especially after I saw you...
 - It was a beautiful day – had a nice walk at lunch.
 - Although Daylight Savings Time kicks my ass every year, I so love the longer days and can't wait for summer. I get spring fever bad.
- It was really nice today. I went out for a walk with a friend. It was pretty windy though.
- I love the longer days. I don't have to take Brinkley for walks in the dark.
- BTW, the album you sent on Monday was definitely not my style. But you already knew that.
 - Blu? Yeah, I didn't think so.
 - I can't get enough of that Foals album though. That might be one of my favorites this year. Part II is supposed to drop in October.
- Blu?
 - Blu is the artist's name.
- Oooh

.....

There are moments when I see her at work. Neither one of us goes out of our way to see the other. It just happens, typically in a communal area between her side of the office and mine, which basically means the bathroom and the reception area where the water dispenser is located. When it happens, the moment is extremely brief, about enough time to say hello, how are you, maybe hear a response when walking away. But today, she came into the lunchroom when I was in there all by myself and we had a brief conversation, as if we never talk and have no other connection then work. I asked her what she was doing for the weekend and she said she was doing her taxes. I told her, to her face, for the first time without texting that the invitation was still open. And she laughed and I asked, "Is it futile to even ask you anymore?" She shook her head with a big smirk on her face, and I can't really tell what her reaction is as she walks away.

- Is it okay that I ask you if you make time for me? I really miss you and want to see you.
- I don't think it makes sense to continue asking...
- My answer hasn't changed.
 - And it never will?
 - I mean, I only ask in hopes that one day you will miss me and want to see me too.
- It's not that I don't. I'm not willing to change my mind though...

- Ever?
 - It sounds like you're conflicted.
 - Christina, I am willing to do whatever you want to be the man that you want (within reason, of course). I am pliable. I can change. I'm sorry that this is such a struggle, but my feelings for you are running deep and I can't just give up on us. Please understand.
- Ziggy, please don't do this. If it's this hard, maybe we shouldn't text either.
 - I'm sorry. I don't want to keep telling you this or for you to be upset. I thought we both agreed that it was better if we would just be friends and still be able to talk.
 - I will always be your friend, Christina. You can always talk to me. I keep having to tell you that, but you don't seem to believe me. What goes on between us outside of work should not affect what goes on between us at work. That is what I'm agreeing to. I think I've demonstrated my ability to separate the two, to be your friend at work even when I feel tremendous pain from your unwavering decision and how you refused to give me even the smallest of chances to be closer to you outside of work. I just don't see how what we had can so easily be thrown away. I mean, we work so well together at work. Why can't we work well together outside of work? How are you so convinced? I'm sorry, but I need to be convinced.
 - I meant for us to be friends outside of work like we are at work. That's not true either. I did give you/us a chance to be closer. If I didn't, we probably wouldn't be having this conversation. What you are comparing are two different things, Ziggy. Yes, we work well together, but that doesn't mean things will work outside of work. They are completely different situations and different factors that affect each one. You know that. I don't have to tell you that.
 - They are different situations - I'm not saying there not, except that it does logically follow that there is a correlation; We work well at work, so we should work well outside of work, right?
 - I just don't understand how you're so sure it won't work. How is anyone ever sure before they get into a relationship.
 - You never gave me a chance to actually be your significant other. We were always here at my house. We never went out. We never went to each other's favorite restaurants. We never met each other's friends or families. We never traveled together. That's what I'm talking about. Just you coming here a half dozen times to eat and have sex with me is how you're going to judge us as a couple? What is it about us that can't be worked on, that's not even worth the effort? What is it that you want, Christina?
 - There's no correlation. I work well with a lot of people, but it doesn't mean it would be the same outside of work. You work well with Pamela; would it mean you would work well outside too?
 - If I was attracted to Pamela, sure.

- People can know without getting into a relationship. I know you are trying to make a point, but that's stretching it. You don't need to get that far to know sometimes.
 - What is my point stretching? What?
- There are things that we can't change or have control over. It's not so easy.
 - You're speaking in abstract generalizations.
- You're saying that you have to be in a relationship to know if it's going to work. When that's not true. There are things that you find out before you get there that can make that clear.
- Can you change the difference in our age?
- We can't change that we work together.
- And I know you are not going to stop smoking. I wouldn't expect you to. These are not things that can be changed, Ziggy.
 - What does the difference in our age have to do with our success as a couple? Because I couldn't care less about what others think about us if my intentions with you are good, if I treat you like the amazing, beautiful girl that you are, and if I ultimately do everything I can to make you happy. How can anyone think that's a bad thing?
 - You, however, are different. You have a family that you care about, that cares about you and, ultimately, that you care quite a bit about what they think of you. You also care quite a bit about what others at work think of you. And I have total respect for all of that and I have changed my behavior on many occasions to accommodate that respect.
 - People at work do not need to know our business. Whatever happens between us, I vow to you, Christina Martinez, that I will always maintain a professional and respectful relationship with you at work. I promise you that! But as far as I'm concerned, the people at work are the last people who need to know about us outside of work, even though some of them might be rooting for us to get together.
 - Furthermore, no one needs to know about the marijuana. That is my business, and I'm a much better person with it than without, believe me. You had no idea before I told you - no one does. I don't do it before I see you or when I'm around you, and you agreed with me that cannabis isn't a bad thing. I'm very responsible with it and I really don't understand why it's an issue. It makes me feel like I shouldn't have told you in the first place.
 - I just don't see why we can't talk about these things and come to an agreement instead of just flushing it all down the toilet. I wish we could approach this from a perspective of hope and success and not of judgment and failure. Because, from my perspective, the only thing keeping this from working is your insistence that it won't.
- Sorry, I'm really tired and I'm falling asleep. I'll respond to your text tomorrow.
- Hope you get some rest.
 - Goodnight, Christina. Sleep well.

- Thank you. Goodnight Ziggy



- You're making everything sound easy when that's not the case...
 - Relationships are never easy 100%. Most are a lot of work. What I'm suggesting is that you and I are far from impossible if you would just believe in me and let it happen.
 - [Image: my beer on the patio of the Grand Central Market in the midafternoon]
 - Come find me, Christina Martinez!
- I know they aren't easy. But you're making it sound like these aren't things to consider and they aren't really issues when they are. They are to me anyways...

- Yes, they certainly are issues. And by addressing them, I'm certainly not dismissing them. Every relationship has issues. I'm just not convinced that we can't work around these issues. It's not perfect, but no relationship is.
- [Image: sign at bar on patio at Grand Central Market advertising MICHELADAS!]
- [Image: Page from my Journal in my handwriting that reads:

"...Does really feel like she's trying to tear down that wall, but she doesn't seem terribly frustrated at all because she can't. I asked her, when she's masturbating, how does she know she's done? And sprinkled throughout all of this is laughter, clever comment, and subconscious outbursts of pleasure. We discuss how many fingers feel good and what feels good. And still I can't make her cum, but I think she very much enjoys the effort.

"We end up naked wrapped up together in the upper left quadrant of my bed, breathing in each other's air. Her face rests between the bed and my face as we continue to wrap around each other in a slow, soft embrace. My fingers glide across her forehead and through her hair. And time seemed so inconsequential and endless. If ever I would want the moment to last forever, it would be right..."

- Does anyone read this but you?
 - No, it's personal.
 - I'm only sharing it with you because it's about you.
- Okay...
- I really like your style of writing.
 - You're welcome to read more.
 - [Image: ESPN building at LA Live across the street]

- What are you doing there?
 - Taking the train.
 - Spire 73 wouldn't let me in because of my backpack 😞
- What's that?
 - [Link: Yelp: Spire 73]
 - It's the tallest building in LA.
- Oh, I thought it was the US Bank tower
 - Used to be.
- Oh okay
 - [Image: Santa Monica sunset]
- So beautiful.
- It was such a nice day today.
 - It still is 😊
 - it's supposed to get into the eighties this weekend!
- I know! But next week is supposed to be rainy again and in the 60s 😞
 - [Image: aerial view of my lobster roll, French fries, and two Blue Moons on a late-night patio table]
 - All the more reason to enjoy this weekend.
 - You should come over.
- That looks good.
- Where is that?
 - [Link: Yelp: The Albright]
- [Image: screenshot of a picture of someone's lobster roll from the Yelp app]
- She thinks the lobster roll is not worth it 🤔😂
 - She does not speak for everyone.
- The soup looks good.
 - [Image: Night scene of an alley outside of the Seventy-7 speakeasy in Culver City]
 - [Image: Cereal aisle at Ralphs]
 - What's your favorite cereal?

- Your grocery shopping now? LOL
- I like Cheerios.
- And Raisin Nut Bran.
 - [Image: My hand holding a family sized box of Raisin Bran Crunch.]
 - Close enough?
- LOL
- Not even
- A little
- Are you trying to entice me with my favorite cereal?
 - Whatever makes it happen!
 - What are you doing?
- Watching a movie with my brother.
 - What movie?
- Cicaro 2
- Have you watched it?

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- So I came home, put my groceries away, went upstairs to charge my phone, sent my last text to you, passed out in my bed, and woke up at 3:30, naked with the window open. It was seventy-two degrees in my house last night and the heat was not on. Felt like summer.
- [Link: Spotify: Sia, Diplo, Labrinth – No New Friends]
- Yesterday was perfect. It was the first day that I've left my window open at night in a while.
 - You should feel it here.
 - What are you doing today?
- Chores and taking Brinkley for a long walk in the evening...
- What are you doing?
 - Waiting for you to arrive.
- [Video: her dog sniffing around the perimeter of a sunny backyard from the distance of a small lawn space. Towards the end, her voice calls out in a whisper and she giggles sweetly]
- Brinkley enjoying the sun...
 - He's so far away.

- She
 - Sorry, my bad...
- That's okay. I guess Brinkley is more of a boy name...
 - Come visit me.
- Ziggy...
 - Christina...
- I don't think that's a good idea.
 - I think it's a great idea.
- Haha
- Of course you do
 - I'll cook you dinner?
 - Desert?
 - Breakfast?
 - Dammit!
 - Dessert?
 - Habanero salsa?
 - It's gonna be a beautiful night...
- Haha! OMG
- That doesn't get old 😂
 - So is that a yes?
- Noooo...
 - I promise you'll have a good time.
 - Let's have some fun tonight.
 - I know there's a part of you that wants to come.
- I know I'll have a good time. I'm not arguing that
 - Come...
 - Coooooommmmee...
- I can't Ziggy
 - Why?

- For every reason I've already told you.
- There is a part of me that wants to go, but I also know that I would put myself in a situation I don't want to be in again.
 - Yes you do...
- No I don't, Ziggy.
 - So nothing that I've said to you in the past two days has made you think more positively?
 - You just said there is a piece of you that does. There is a piece of you that sees it happening.
- I've thought about it, but I don't have the same positive perspective that you have.
- I don't think things will be like you say they will.
 - I'm not making you any promises except that you will have a good time if you come visit me tonight. You know you'll have a good time, and there's a part of you that wants that. So why is that a bad idea?
- I can't. I already made plans to make dinner with my mom.
 - Come after.
- You are so persistent.
 - I really miss you...
 - I'll give you dessert 😊
- Yeah... it's not a good time for that type of dessert.
 - I just want to kiss you.
- Ziggy please
 - Christina please...
- I'm not going tonight.
 - Tomorrow? Come for breakfast?
- No Ziggy. I'm serious. I don't want to keep telling you no. It's frustrating.
- If I ever change my mind, I will let you know period until then, my answer stays the same.
 - Understood

.....

And so it is: the girls I want don't want me and the girls who want me, I don't want. I'm just looking for a balance in between, something with that spark of mutual attraction. I'll know it when I see it. I believe in love at first sight, but I also don't believe we only have one soulmate. People come together randomly, for random reasons, and it is only by chance that at the moment the mutual attraction is realized, it is at that moment convenient for both parties to couple and coexist. It seems almost by chance that one actually finds love and makes it last for a long period of time. Bravo to those who do it. And isn't it wonderful to think that one can be so in love, so engrossed with another person's soul, forever craving their company, forever and ever until death do they part! To be constantly passionate, sexually attracted, forever desiring, never-ending lip-smacking mucus fest between the sheets of red-hot romance, a flame that forever burns, unstoppable earth-shattering orgasm's, every day, twice on Saturday and maybe Sunday, and three times on Holidays and birthdays. But that shit never happens. That shit exists only in the bindings of total fiction. True love is a figment of the imagination in the mind of the hopeless and foolish romantic. Save that shit for the romance novels and the Hollywood films.

So brief and probably gone forever. My memories of her seem so faint and long ago. It's been a week without a single text. A week ago, I was gallivanting across LA, sending her pictures, flirting with her, and sharing my journey with her. I pushed too hard for her company, and how it feels I've overstayed my welcome with her in general. Now it feels like the way we were before our brief two-month affair happened, but now I don't look forward to seeing her. I can't even look in the direction of her cubicle. I just can't produce the same smile I once so effortlessly had every time I would be lucky enough to bump into her at work and say hello. And now it feels like a bulb has burned out in me, a spark that was once there is now gone forever. I don't think I ever realized how much I looked forward to work because she was there. I'm still baffled about how easily it was for the two of us to so easily come together, like it was supposed to happen, and by no fault of my own, she decided that I was not worthy of her love, and now I'm not so sure she is worthy of being my friend. This sucks, and I hate it. I know she misses me and thinks of me, but is this really what she wants? For me to just let her go in hopes that maybe one day she'll come to the realization that it was me all along, the man whom she should be with. And who's to say that at that time, I will still be open to her? Who's to say that I haven't moved on by then? Who's to say that I haven't didn't find someone better than her? And who's to say that maybe this is all a lesson that perhaps I should just stay single and be alone. I am happiest when I am by myself. I know how to keep myself entertained. But there is no substitute for a hot, passionate love affair. We can talk, text, call, and post with anyone at any time. But we can't fuck when we're by ourselves. Fucking and masturbating are two different things.

Today, I looked up the phrase "Lovesick" just to be sure I was self-diagnosing myself properly. The urban dictionary defines it as:

A deep, often depressing, feeling of wanting to find love; to be without a companion to share one's life with, though it is desired deeply.

A physical feeling you can get. Some people truly think it doesn't exist. Simply because they have never experienced it. It could be as little as missing their other half and waiting by the phone just to see a text or receive a call. In other cases, you can get physically sick over it. It's less common, but it is very possible to actually throw up because of the pain. It feels like a major cramp in your stomach, perhaps a bad case of the butterflies. Some people end up not eating or sleeping much. It is a lot more serious that

many people perceive it to be. Some are not able to come out of love sickness until they are really reunited with their love, whether or not they were actually dating. Love sickness can be filled in through having a crush, being in love, having a boyfriend/girlfriend, being married, and it also can wash over you after a breakup. Love sickness is hard to cure but takes the time and affection from others. It is no game.

When you are in love with someone that every single emotion you could possibly have is all wrapped up into one intense feeling. You can imagine them, and you shake. You can go days without eating anything. Everything else fades in the background when you see them, and you can barely speak.

It's been nearly two weeks since I last texted her, since she put her foot down and strenuously objected to any and all of my invitations, provocations, and suggestions that she visit me again. She shot me down and broke my heart, just like I knew she would. And I swore I would love every minute of heartbreak that resulted from the brief one day a week visit that lasted nearly two months. And now that my heart is breaking and it feels like she might be gone forever, now I'm not so sure it was worth it, if she is so cold as to just walk away from me, reducing our relationship down to what it was like last year when we would talk only when we had to and only about work related matters, when we would only say hello if we happen to run into each other in the lobby at work, when we never had expressed attraction and affection to each other. Now I must hang my head in quiet sadness, as if I were mourning her soul, our soul, the spirit of us, the ghost of whatever it was we had. And I find my head shaking in disbelief that I can't get over her, that I can't just snap out of this lovesick daze that I am in. But to not be in communication at all with her after nearly every day for two months is jarring. It is a shock to my system - a disturbance for sure. During these two weeks, I've had to completely change my mindset and behavior, resisting every urge to text her, to send her new music, pictures of my travels, and share my random thoughts I might be having at any given time. I admit that part of my motivation to cut her off from my life entirely is in hopes that it will cause her to miss me. And it does so disappoint me that she doesn't at least say hello or check in on me. This is probably what she wants - not having me in her life probably makes her life easier not feeling pressure from me to do things she has already made very clear to me that she does not see us ever being intimate again. And yet I know there is a part of her that does want more of me in her life in some way. I can't tell if this will work and she will one day soon come to her senses and change her mind about me, about us, even as good friends. She has to be the one to text next, but I can see why she doesn't, to keep provoking hope. She said she would let me know if she ever changed her mind. Those were her last words to me, and any subsequent words from her would obviously signal that change of heart. So of course, she doesn't want to aggravate that wound. It feels like she cut me pretty deep. I don't feel like the funny, sexy, smart guy she once described me to be. Does she miss me? Is she thinking about us still? Is this how she wants it to be? Forever? Last weekend was Cesar Chavez weekend, and with my RDO, I had four days off, and it was so difficult not reaching out to her even in the smallest of ways. Tomorrow is Friday, and we both work. I'm hopeful that eventually we will text, and the reality is that she probably won't, not wanting to show any weakness in her position, not wanting to give me false hope: I just hope that from my strong resolve from the past two weeks that she will at the very least try to preserve the pretty awesome friendship that we once had. I do so miss her.

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It's Friday afternoon in the beginning of the second weekend in a row that I have not invited her to my house to spend time with me. I worked this morning thinking we would continue to ignore each other like we have for the past two weeks. But surprisingly she called me shortly before noon following up on a training order that she had requested, and it had been several months since I had given her an update. The conversation was very pleasant and professional, much like it's been, and it was nice to hear her sweet, soft little whisper of a voice, like she doesn't want anyone to hear. I told her I would call procurement and give her a call right back, and that was the end of the conversation. So, I got an update and called her back, and she must have gone to lunch. I called her several times in the 12:00 o'clock hour and she didn't answer. Three months ago, and every day since I've been working with her, I would have continued to call, maybe even would have walked over to her cube, hunted her down until I could talk to her in person, back before we started ignoring each other. But I left at one o'clock without giving her an update, without sending her an email or leaving a voicemail. It really was a matter that could have waited until Monday, which made the timing of her inquiry a bit puzzling, the fact that it was Friday it was almost the only interaction we had had for nearly two weeks. I know I have a habit of reading too much into things, but I felt almost like she didn't want me to forget about her, like she was provoking me, like she wanted to make amends, maybe even give me a little closure, well surely that is wishful thinking. But surely there should be some kind of closure. Surely it couldn't be this way forever. Perhaps she wants to keep me on standby, keep me as an option, as a friend. Perhaps she's been taken off guard from my dramatic persistence of being in her life with some kind of frequency, on the daily like it was during the two months that ended 2 weeks ago. It's Friday, the day I normally would send her some kind of new music that had just come out, because Fridays are the days when new music comes out, and the debut album from Billie Eilish just came out and it's good and I know she would like it. But my abstinence remains resolute! I wonder now how this weekend will play out.

It's gonna be hard not sending her this new Billie Eilish album, because it's so good, and I know she would like it. And now I'm conflicted over whether or not I should send it to her. I need someone to talk me off this ledge, especially when it could open the floodgates again. And do I really want that? It's not like it can get worse than it is now. But my position as of late is that if she doesn't want me as a lover, then she doesn't deserve me as a friend, at least not on the same level as my good friends, which has the level I was putting her on before our relationship blew up. God, please, if I were to ask you of anything, I ask that you please either bring her back to me or let me easily move on, either to someone else or just let me be happy being alone. She has definitely set the bar pretty high for whoever the next girl is. It's just hard for me to believe that I am done with this girl. And yet, the farther I stay away from her, the happier I am. Because, in the end, she does not make me happy. In fact, she makes me miserable. The fact that I can't have her, any bit of her, for fear that things between us could get worse, just is so hard for me to imagine. And it wouldn't be so bad if I didn't see so many girls in my travels who are these short, thin, little Latina girls with long, straight dark hair, parted down the middle with dark rimmed glasses, just like her. Girls who look like her are everywhere in Los Angeles, and yet none of them are her. I still can't define what it is about her that makes me long for her so. All I know is that I want her with a passion, and I just feel it in my gut that she wants me too with the same kind of passion. I wish she were as lovesick as me. Please let her come back to me, pronto! I can only wait for so long, and yet there's no one yet immediately available to fill the huge void she's so effortlessly widened in such a swift, almost deliberate, amount of time. Bless that girl in all the life and sexual lift that she has gifted me. She is perhaps a very painful lesson, and yet, if given the chance, I would do it all exactly the same way again, and oh how I would relish living those days again, a gift that may never give again, as we end up as ships passing in the night. Please text me tonight and tell me you're on your way, that you've had a change of heart and never meant to break my heart and do whatever it takes to make amends. Please, can we please just make amends? Please?

Strong resolve!!!

Please give me strength!!!
Somebody!?
Anybody!?

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Her name was Jocelyn and she cut my hair perfectly. She told me I had nice hair, and I told her she had nice hands. When she was done, I looked in the mirror and said, "I am a sexy man again," and she said, "Yes you are!"

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- [Link: Spotify: Billie Eilish – When We All Fall Asleep Where Do We Go?]
 - Don't know how I feel about this album...
 - It's growing on me.
-

- Is there a reason why you don't respond to my texts this past weekend?
 - I'm not sure how to talk to you anymore or if you just want me to leave you alone. It feels like this is how you want it, despite how I feel. I do still miss you terribly, and it only feels a little bit better if I just stop putting myself in a situation where we're upsetting each other over my desire to see you again. I was on the fence about sending you that album, because it is a good album and I thought you would like it. I guess I was expecting a different response, and ultimately, I didn't get a sense from your response that you're expecting a continued conversation. I'm sorry this has become so complicated, but I can't deny how this feels in my gut.
- I guess I thought we could still talk but I know that's hard and it's not the same. I feel selfish for saying that. But I agree with you. I don't think it's a good idea to put ourselves in a situation where we continue to upset each other. I would hate for you to be upset with me.
 - I'm not sure I understand what you're saying.
- What part?
- I guess I don't know how to explain myself - sorry
 - Christina, this whole thing has been upsetting. Your decision was selfish. You're cold detachment since has been selfish. And I have been so lovesick and heartbroken over you that I now struggle with how to be your friend. You won't let me cook for you or hang out with you, which are things I like to do with my friends.

I wish I could change your mind and, if you let me, I will probably always try to make you reconsider. So you will either need to be patient and continue to reject me, or you will have to stop being my friend outside of work, of which both options, to me, are pretty shitty. I just don't see how this is the best way forward.

- So when you say that you would hate for me to be upset with you, I'm not sure I understand what you mean by that. When does the hating begin?
- Hate? Wow. Okay
 - I don't mean when do we start hating each other. I mean, hate as in wanting things to be different and good again. Unless you like how we are...?
- I still don't understand what you meant.
 - About?
 - I don't understand what you mean when you say that you would hate for me to be upset with you. What do you mean by that?
- Ay. We're going in circles.
- I meant to agree with your previous text. I don't want to continue putting ourselves in situations that are going to upset us. Because I don't want either of us to feel that way towards each other, but clearly you are upset with me.
 - You wouldn't be upset if you were me?
- I had to detach myself, Ziggy... you kept asking for more and I couldn't do that.
 - You were giving me one night a week. I wasn't asking for more than that.
- Yes you were Ziggy
- Go back and read your text messages
 - I mean, I did, but, after you shot that idea down, I was happy with once a week. I never wanted you to completely go away.
- No you didn't. We would agree something and then you would bring up the same thing again.
 - What thing?
- Being more than friends
 - I think you allowed it to be more than friends when you came over here the first night. And then the half dozen times you came over since only made me want you more. I felt a strong, passionate attraction between us. I fell in love with you, Christina. And you just ended it and requested it that we go back to the way we were before it happened, like it never happened? And now you blame me for having wanted more?

- I don't know what to say...
- You said you weren't asking to be anything more than “friends”. This was after I had already gone over. Please don't say it's my fault now.
 - You were very persuasive about changing my mind.
- You're making it seem like it was a very easy decision for me to have made. It wasn't. Don't you know how much I thought about it? I would go back and forth thinking about it.
- Changing your mind about just being friends?
 - If it was that close of a decision, then that sounds like it could have gone either way, like there is a part of you that wants me that is almost as big as the part of you that doesn't want me. And all I want to know is what do I have to do, Christina Martinez, to make you want me?
 - And FYI, I have no idea what you're thinking.
- It was a hard decision. It's difficult to explain what I want Ziggy, but I do know what I don't want. And that's why I pulled away.
 - Why did it seem like you wanted me when you were with me?
 - Was it just my imagination, or was the attraction not mutual?
 - I don't think you know what you want.
 - I would be very good to you.
- It's not that I didn't want you. I did. Of course, I was attracted to you.
- If I wasn't attracted to you, I wouldn't have gone over the first time, second time or every other time after that.
 - So how can you just kill it?
 - With no respect for how I feel?
- Because I couldn't get past the issues that would eventually come if we would have continued. I don't want to develop any stronger feelings for you. I did respect how you felt. I didn't want to develop any stronger feelings for you.
- I did respect how you felt. I didn't want to continue leading you on knowing it wasn't what you wanted.
 - It is what I want.
 - You can't get past the “issues that would eventually come” because you aren't willing to confront them. Instead, you run away. If I truly love you, then that's the only defense I need. Everything else is trivia.
 - You abandoned your true feelings for fear of being judged.
- You're right.
- I wish I felt differently.

- You're awesome, Christina. It doesn't matter what other people think.
- That's easier said than done 😊
 - What is?
- Saying you don't care about what people think and actually not caring.
 - I'm not saying you shouldn't care what others think. I'm saying it doesn't matter what people think. No one can define you by judging you.
- Did you tell anyone at work?
 - The only people I've told is Jasper and my mom. And the Sandman, but he's probably already forgotten about it...
 - Have you told anyone at work?
- No. Only told Bricia
 - Why do you ask?
- Just curious
 - You made your decision soon after her last visit. I assumed she was not supportive?
- No, that's not it. She would have supported any decision. I told her my reasons.
 - I had often wondered about the timing and how steadfast you are with your decision.
- It wasn't out of nowhere. You knew how much I was struggling with our situation. Your continued persistence pushed me to make my decision more abruptly.
 - I know, and I do regret that. I just couldn't control my pursuit of you.
 - Would you ever reconsider, even if it was just for a few hours?
- What are you proposing?
 - Whatever you're willing to give me.

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- [Image: Picture I took of the sun setting from Jasper's roof deck. The sky is very blue and cloudy.]
- Your photos are always perfect.

- How was your day?
- It was good. Helped my mom out with my niece and nephew. They're a handful.
- Had an appointment to see a house with a realtor, but he never showed. Found out he had a stroke 😞 So sad...
- How was yours??
 - Made eggs Benedict with smoked salmon and O'Brien potatoes for Jasper. We're watching Walking Dead right now.
- What are O'Brien potatoes?
 - They are hard to explain. You'll have to come and let me show you 😊
- Hmm... How hard can they be to explain?? 🤔
 - [Link: Foodnetwork.com: O'Brien potatoes recipe]
 - This is kinda how I make them, but I boil the potatoes first, and I also add fresh garlic and paprika.
 - I also add red chili flake.
 - But the only way you can taste them is...
- Mmm... That sounds good.
- It's like potato hash?
 - Yes
 - So what time will you be by tomorrow?
- If I were to reconsider, what happens after?
 - You tell me - please state your terms.
- That sounds messy all over again.
 - More like a continuation of...
 - It was never messy.
- It was... it still is
 - I guess you'd have to define "messy", because I can imagine how we could be much more messy. I think it's been pretty clean actually.
 - Please state your terms.
 - I can be whatever you want me to be.

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- Sorry I fell asleep
 - Good morning 😊
- Good morning 😊
- I still don't know how to answer your question...
 - What time you'll be here? I'm pretty flexible...
 - Was that the question?
- No
 - Haha
- Not really a question I guess
 - What was the question?
- “Please state your terms”
 - I guess it's more of a request
 - Negotiation of terms
 - When you asked me, “if I were to reconsider, what happens after?” What answer(s) were you expecting?
- I know what you're asking, that's not the problem.
 - What is the problem?
- I'm thinking that the same thing will happen again like last time.
 - I remember only good things about your last visit.
- I mean the part about you asking for more even though we had agreed on something else. Then us not even being able to talk.
 - I understand the situation better this time around. I will probably always ask for more, but I will happily accept whatever you give me. Even a rejection from you is better than nothing.
 - I don't ever remember agreeing to never wanting more. I don't think I can make that promise.
- I don't want to make any promises either.
 - I promise that I will always be good to you and I will fundamentally always be your friend. That's the best I can do.

- Well that contradicts your other message. You gave me two options: continue rejecting you or not being your friend outside of work.
 - I'm not seeing your point. I said you would need to either be patient and continue rejecting me or we can't be friends outside of work, but I fundamentally will always be your friend. Where is the contradiction?
- Ugh
- Because now you're saying you will always be my friend when previously you said that wasn't an option.
 - I was saying that you either need to be patient with me or you don't. If you can't be patient with my desire to see you outside of work, then that makes it very hard to be friends with you outside of work, at least with the way we've been these past few months. It was mostly a statement about your willingness to tolerate my constant wanting of you.
 - It was not an ultimatum.
- Oh, that's how I understood it...
 - I'm sorry, that was not the intention.
- Sorry. Didn't mean for this to be so confusing.
 - Wouldn't this conversation be better in person?
- Maybe
 - Over dinner?
- When?
 - Now
- In an hour?
 - You'll be here?
- Too soon?
- Or is tomorrow better?
 - NOW!
- I'll leave in a bit
 - Yay!

- Leaving
 - Cool
- I'm outside

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And it's like a weight of depression has been lifted off me, floating away like a big black balloon. The difference a small change of mind makes is a huge improvement of one's disposition.

It's Friday again, and I'm enjoying a Guinness on tap at the Horse Thief after a long week of work that was tolerated because it feels like Christina and I have finally come to an understanding between and about us. I was a little concerned that her reconsideration would last only for the few hours she spent with me last Saturday, following along with me the same routine we typically follow when she comes over: we have light conversation while she watches me cook, we eat, we kiss, we go upstairs, I strip her down to her black satin little boy short panties and tell her that I am going to lose my mind if I don't go down on her. And it was true - I couldn't have been more stunned that I had put myself through such turmoil these past three weeks only to end up here, back in my bed licking her beautiful pussy that I humbly declared missed terribly, and it seemed to miss me too when I made love to that pussy with a passion and with my mouth, which ended with a long exhale emblematic of a small orgasm, one that she said, in an exhausted whisper, would not qualify as an orgasm, which made me wonder how she would know the difference if she had never had one before. Makes me wonder if perhaps in the meantime, since I first put my lips on her clit, my tongue between her lips, my curled-up fingers, massaging her spot, like maybe I had found it for her. Maybe now she knows how lucky she is that I already know what makes her feel good, perhaps better than she's felt in a very long time, perhaps ever. It really would be a big reason why she changed her mind. And now I'm sliding my cock into her missionary, fucking her slowly at first, but then harder, and then faster. I didn't come that night even though I was close when she returned the favor and went down on me. And I looked down at her with my cock in her soft, small mouth and that is the girl I look across a conference room table with a dozen other staff during an admin meeting that we both attended, and she is so cool – she doesn't look at me except for all of two seconds before she turns and looks over to the person speaking at the table with no reaction, and all I can think of, except for the minimal bit of concentration needed to know what is being discussed at this meeting, is how pretty she is and how turned on I am by her composure, and yet no one in that conference room had any idea that anything between me and her could even be possible.

-
- I'm home
 - Thank you, Christina 🥰
 - Thank you 😊
 - Sleep well 😴

- It's nice to still feel you all over my body again.
- I had a great time.

.....

- [Link: Spotify: Prince: Piano & A Microphone 1983]
- Planning to get a pambazo this afternoon. I don't expect you to join me, but I'm just throwing it out there in case you might want to.
- (they have chilaquiles...)
- I won't have time this afternoon but thank you. Enjoy 🍷
- [Image: My pambazo, a thick drink in a margarita glass, two small containers with small serving spoons – one with red salsa and the other green, and my sunglasses on the table in the background]
- You are totally missing out...
- O
- M
- G
- That looks delicious
 - Right?
-
- Is it spicy?
 - Yes
 - Depends on how much salsa you put on it.
 - I prefer the green
 - It's not overly spicy.
- Yum
- Is that the mamey drink?
 - Si!
- It looks like a smoothie
 - What are you up to?
- I'm babysitting for a bit. Then taking Brinkley for a walk.
 - To my house?

- Haha
 - What a gorgeous day.
- It is. So warm 🤗
 - I feel so much better today.
- You weren't feeling good yesterday?
 - I haven't been feeling good for the past two weeks.
 - Or was it three.... I'll have to check my notes...
- Why?
 - From that gut thing I was referencing before - lovesick and heartache.... Doesn't feel as bad today.
- Oh... you're making me feel guilty.
 - Why? No, that wasn't the message. I'm saying last night made me feel better. It's a good thing 😊
 - I just want to be good with you.
- And I with you 😊
 - Is it too soon to ask when I might see you again?
- Maybe...
 - I guess if there's no answer, then it's too soon.
- It's a little soon.
 - I'm just making sure you give me more than an hour's notice next time.
- LOL
- You said now!
- You didn't give me any notice.
 - Haha - I would say now too. If you gave me no notice at all, I'd be happy to see you.
 - It was really the cooking part that I wasn't ready for. We will Door Dash next time if I'm not prepared.
- Haha. Ok ok. Door Dash it is. But I like seeing you get flustered and burned the garlic. That's the second time 🤔

- I burned butter before...
 - Oooh that's right.
 - You did have me so very flustered last night - it was kind of bad. I was nearly shaking because I was so happy you were there 🥰
 - I'm happy I went 😊
 - That makes me happy 😊
 - Sleep well Christina 🤗
-

- Good morning pretty girl 😊
 - Good morning 😊
 - Muggy out... ick...
 - Is it?? But you like the heat!
 - I do, but I don't like being sweaty when I'm at work.
 - ...Save that for you 😊
 - It was nice to see you so briefly as you were leaving today 🥰
 - It was nice seeing you smile 😊
 - At that moment, I had a lot to smile about 😊
 - I should have slowed down when I saw Kathy going into the elevator...
 - It feels like a summer night 😊
 - Good night Christina 🤗 Sleep well
-

- [Link: Spotify: Yola – Walk Through Fire]
- Going to listen to this at work...
 - Good morning ☀️
 - It's a nice country-soul album produced by Dan Auerbach from The Black Keys. She has an amazing voice.

- Good morning 😊
 - You're so pretty 😍
 - ...just want to eat you up
- You're silly 😏
 - But it's true!
 - Beautiful day out
 - Hey
- Hi hi
- It's so windy!
 - Were you holding on to Brinkley's leash hard so she wouldn't blow away?
- I did. It was crazy.
 - So I just got home from the store and was wondering if I could plan to cook you something soon, maybe this weekend 🙏
- Maybe this weekend.
 - Any requests?
- Hmm...
 - And by the way, I didn't burn the garlic. I scooped it out of the pan with a spoon before it could. I was so flustered...
- I know. I was just exaggerating.
- Your Shrimp Fried Rice was good.
- Kung Pau was good too.
- What did you have in mind?
 - I actually had tofu and could easily have made you Mapo Tofu.
 - I've been wanting to make Shrimp Pad Thai, but I haven't made that in a while.
 - Blueberry Pancakes?
- What does the Shrimp Pad Thai have?
 - You've never had Pad Thai?
 - [Link: [Allrecipes.com: Pad Thai Recipe](https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/238558/pad-thai-recipe/)]
 - Seems like I had a better recipe than that one. Good Pad Thai should have some tofu in it, I'm pretty sure.
- I don't think I've had it. Not a huge Thai fan.

- It's pretty much the only thing I ever eat at Thai restaurants.
- There's a coconut milk based soup that's really good too.
- Habanera salsa?
- I could make some beans.
- You wanna help me make something?

- Whatever you wanna make is good with me 😊
- What can I help you make?

- Chilaquiles?

- 😊

- I have tortillas
- You can show me how you make them.

- Yikes. Now I'm gonna be the one flustered.
- Going to sleep. Have a good night 😊🌙

- Sleep well Christina 😊

.....

- Good morning ☀️

- Good morning 😊

- [Image: Screenshot: Results from STD tests that I took on February 25, 2019, showing that I have tested negative for all sexually transmitted diseases]
- FYI

- Good to know! I should get that done too...

- Yeah, I'm in overall good health other than my blood pressure is a little high. Used to be higher...
- I've been meaning to share that info with you.

- That's good. Do you have to take medication for your blood pressure?

- You mean, other than the ones I grow in my house?

- LOL yes 😊

- No

- I think my doctor was thinking of doing it this time, but I'm a very mild case, like 135-ish.
- Oh Okay. Did he tell you what you can do to lower it?
 - He advised me to give cunnilingus to Christina Martinez as often as possible, at least once a week. Just following doctor's orders...
- I had to look up what that meant. LOL
 - I just remembered I had a crazy dream about us last night. It was actually right as I woke up this morning.
- What was it about?
 - We were having sex at the Line Hotel...
- Oh we were? Hmmm

The Line Hotel in Koreatown is a second home for both neighbors and travelers – for anyone seeking a rich, layered experience unlike any other in Los Angeles. However, what makes this hotel so unique is that every unit in the building is exposed to Wilshire Boulevard with full-length, floor to ceiling windows at the respective ends of the rooms. And if it weren't for the heavy curtains in those windows, people who I work with, who work in the cubicles located at the North-side windows of the building that I work in, would have a clear view of everything going on in that room. Thank God I am not one of those people, because I would get no work done with that kind of distraction.

- It didn't start out there - I didn't know where we were. We were having sex in a room with a glass wall. It was night but the sun was coming up and glowing slowly into the room. I looked up and saw our building across the street. We were suddenly in a panic to finish before people started showing up and seeing us. So we started going doing it harder and faster. And then my alarm went off...
- Mmmm that sounds fun 😊
 - You should come over - I need my medicine...
- No no. You said I need to give you more than an hour's warning.
 - I don't recall expressing that need. You could show up on my doorstep right now and I would lick you for the rest of the night...
- You said that LOL
 - Really? If I did, I didn't mean it...
 - I wouldn't discourage you from ever being here.
 - I did say that I needed an hour's notice if I'm going to cook something.

- But I need no notice to lick you 🍆
- Ooh that's true. That is what you said.
- FYI, I'll be on my period this weekend.
- Have you already started?
- I start tomorrow
 - See, you should have come tonight...
 - Regardless, I still hope to see you 🙏
 - You can still show me your chilaquiles...
 - I guess I do need notice to lick you after all...
- LOL I guess you do...
 - It's so nice having all the windows open at this time of night.
- It is really nice. Windy but not cold.
 - Not windy here at all
 - Good night Christina 😘
- Good night Ziggy 😊

.....

- Good morning pretty girl
- Good morning ☀️☀️
 - Hey - just left work
 - how was your day?
- Hi hi
- Why so late?
 - Budget budget budgets...
 - I have two deadlines next week.
- Do you still have a lot to work on for those deadlines?
 - I did most of it yesterday and today.
 - There's still a lot to do, but I'm ahead of schedule, I think...
 - The train is crazy right now...
 - I think it's because of the Nipsey Hussle ceremony at Staples today.

- Oh yeah. It was still going on when I left work too.
 - So when and if I finally get off this train, I'm planning to go to the store. Do I need to pick up anything for the chilaquiles? I have tomatoes habaneros, tortillas, and queso fresco.
 - and eggs
 - Or did you want me to make something else?
- Hmm I think that's good.
 - Sounds good, right?
- Yes that's good. Onion and garlic, I assume you have?
 - Yes
 - I'm so hungry right now, I could eat my feet...
- You didn't eat anything for lunch?!
 - I usually don't.
- I know, but any snacks?
 - I was seriously too busy to be hungry today.
 - It's now hitting me...
- That's not good for you.
 - It's not so bad on regular days, but when I work late I do need to remember to eat something.
- That is bad.
 - I can only justify my eating habits at work with the sizable breakfast that I have in the morning.
 - So when do you plan to be here? I can't wait to see you 😊
- Maybe Saturday during the day.
 - Gay Saturday! I'll keep it open and you can come whenever.
 - [Image: Tino's Tacos sign illuminated in front of a nighttime Sky]
 - Ever had?
- I've heard of them but never had them. Good?
 - Better than my feet...

- In a pinch, they're pretty awesome 😎
- What kind of tacos do they have?
 - Bean and cheese burrito
- Oh LOL
 - With rice and chips and salsa
- Mmmm chips n salsa
 - I have plenty - you should come have some...
- 😊

-
- [Link: Spotify: Anderson Paak – Ventura]
 - Happy Friday!
 - Happy Friday!
 - Thanks for the chips 😊
 - There's salsa in there too.
 - How's your day going?
 - It's a bit of a continuation from yesterday. I can't decide if I should work to the bitter end of the day or leave as soon as possible.
 - Oh man. On a Friday? 😞
 - I know, right?
 - How are you doing?
 - Doing good. The earlier part of this week was crazy.
 - I'll meet you in the lobby of the Line in twenty minutes 😊
 - 😊
 - What time are you leaving today?
 - Like at 3:40

- Wanna drive me home?
- I can't 😞 I have to pick up food after work because we're having a get together for my nephews birthday at home.
 - Oh nice. I didn't think you would, but I just wanted to throw it out there in case you might.
 - I imagined you stuffing me in the trunk of your car until we left the garage and got some distance away from the building
 - All I can say is that it's nice to be leaving before 5 at least once this week...
- I'm glad you didn't stay too late.
 - The album I sent you this morning is 🔥🔥🔥
- I have to listen to it
 - ❤️ Anderson Paak
 - [Image: the US Bank Building, sitting between two larger buildings, from the perspective from Grand Central Market. The sun is going down and all the buildings are blue as a result.]
 - Come find me Christina Martinez!
 - Tomorrow can't come fast enough
- 😊
- Around noon OK?
 - Hurry!
 - Hey
- Sorry I fell asleep.
- Yes...
 - I love it when you say yes 😊
 - I just left Jasper's - almost home
 - Sleep well Christina 😊
- OK. Have a good night 😊😊
 - Can't wait to kiss you...

.....

- Yay! It's Saturday!
- Should I make beans?

- Good morning ☀️
- Beans would be good
- 😊
 - K
 - If you want to make rice, then you should bring a bouillon cube
- We don't have to have rice.
 - K
 - Sorry for the "K"
- Unless you want rice
 - Oh not necessary, I just think of beans and rice together, but that would be a lot of food.
- What's with the k?!
 - I'm just busy cleaning, and I "K" when I'm in a rush. Please don't read into it...
- K
 - Yeah, I deserved that...
- I'm kidding
 - It's a gorgeous day!
- It's beautiful
 - It's not as beautiful as you thought 😊
- You're silly 😊
- On my way
 - JOY!
- Just got here.

.....

And now it's Saturday night and I'm streaming Four Tet live at Coachella with the lingering feels of her body from her visit earlier in the afternoon. She made me chilaquiles with my habanero salsa. It was a beautiful mid-April Los Angeles afternoon with not a cloud in the Sky. And as soon as the meal is done, I am feasting on her lips, and soon we migrate to the couch where she kneels between my knees

and tries to get as much of my penis in her mouth as she can. She is on her period and is naked except for her jeans.

○

I told her I loved her tonight. I had said it and texted her that sentiment in so many words, but it actually said the words, "I love you, Christina Martinez." And I told her I was telling her knowing she probably would not reciprocate, and she didn't. She says she's still worried that she'll get in too deep and at some point, want out. "Why would you want out?" I asked her, and that's when I told her, that I love her, and the chill that swept across me that came from the most genuine place that raced down my spine and instantly throughout my entire body as the words danced off my tongue, that kisses her passionately. How I miss her lips, her tongue, her kisses. It's my one night a week to have her, and I wait all week for these few hours a week that I am honored to have her company.

We made fish tacos - I grilled some marinated Mahi Mahi on the Smokey Joe that I also grilled the tomatillos and habaneros that made the fantastic salsa. She made a slaw from cabbage, mayonnaise, cilantro, lime juice, and a small amount of yogurt offering a crispy texture complimentary to the pickled red onions that she added habaneros to that offered a soft, salty taste. Hence! One corn tortilla warmed on the dying heat from the grill, broken up pieces of grilled mahi-mahi, slightly charred, layered next with the pickled onions, then the slaw, topped with a healthy frosting of the salsa - it was the perfect bite. She is the perfect bite when we finish eating and I wheeled my chair next to hers, the taste of our food on each other's burning lips. And soon we are upstairs in my bed, naked, and she sits on the tip of my massive erection slowly entering her tight little vagina and as it slides completely in, we both tell each other, almost at the same time, how good it feels inside her. And thrusts start out slow with each upward collision of hips. It isn't long before I am keeping a pretty good tempo that feels so good during my first time using Magnum thin condoms - Yep, I think we have a winner! The search for the perfect condom is over! Rejoice! I flip her on her back at the foot of the bed and start thrusting my cock down deep inside her, sucking on her lips, inhaling her heavy breaths until I was out of breath and suggested we take a break. So much of that looked like she had climaxed in even the smallest of ways. As I removed my penis from her pelvis, I took the opportunity to lick her beautiful pussy. She had forbidden me from going down on her because she wanted to take an STD test. I had recently had one done and shared my result with her, and she wants to get one done, which I am all in support of. But a text from her yesterday stated in very absolute and explicit terms that she wanted to get checked before we "did anything again." I tested negative several weeks after we first started having sex, and we do have protected safe sex, except for the fact that we both perform oral sex on each other with no barriers, and this is why she didn't want me to go down on her in the beginning. But now that I have her in the right position, I remind her of the time when she sat on my face and grabbed onto my headboard to keep herself from falling and how much I think about that as I raise up her legs and lick her pussy for as long as we both could stand it, and again I believe she's had another orgasm. Licking her pussy is, for me, the highlight of the sexual portion of the evening. However, the highlight of the evening was for sure those amazing fish tacos, that I forever will swear were the best I ever had, particularly when they were homemade and created by two people with impeccable palates with natural culinary skills and undeniable passionate attraction - food made with love, whether she's willing to admit it or not - those were bitchin' tacos! And tasting them on her lips was pretty awesome too. The entire night was

magnificent, as it always is. And even though I continue to pour my heart out to her, she remains composed and almost removed from the situation, as she seems to constantly be thinking, analyzing the situation she so often finds herself in with me, naked and in my bed, almost falling asleep from the strokes of my Reiki across her forehead and through her soft hair. How I so love this girl, and she continues to give in to me and resist me at the same time. She is the master of that balance. And it is things like that that so attracts me to her. She was so wet to the touch - I could feel it through her panties the moment I touched her richly colored floral printed little panties that hug her pelvis that I can't help but spank her, every time – it never fails. Sometimes I spank my monkey when I think of her in them standing by my bed that I sit on and kiss and hug and suck on as much as I can before it so quickly goes away. And I beg for her to not leave too quickly when I see her find her panties and I take them away before she can put them on. I drag her to the bed and wrap my legs around her threatening to never let her go. This whole day was about her. I had stayed in bed until noon, resting, and then spent the rest of the day doing laundry, cleaning all of the bedding, vacuuming, sweeping, mopping, wiping down, airing out, all in anticipation of her arrival. And it is absolute joy for me to have her here, cooking, eating, kissing, sucking, and how good it feels to have her attention, even if it's just for a few hours, they are the best hours of the whole week, like my reward for all the hard work I did, and I know firsthand all of the hard work that she does that is fair to say that we both deserve this. She strokes me while I slide my middle finger against her clit. And it just goes on as neither of us orgasm. And yet it felt amazing for the several hours that it lasted when she almost fell asleep in my arms at the foot of my bed, and how can this not feel good forever?

And now it's almost six in the morning and the chances are pretty good that I will watch the sunrise. She gives me so much energy that I can't calm down and for all these reasons I can, without a doubt say that I am head over heels in love with Christina Martinez.

-
- Good morning pretty girl. Had so many crazy dreams about you all through the night. You felt amazing and those fish tacos were the bomb! I can't wait to see you again. Hope you have a great Easter with your family 🥰
 - Good morning! Yesterday was great. The tacos were delicious, and you were amazing. Thank you for a great time 😊

And just like that, it feels like it's over again, and I feel like I'm sick of it. I'm sick of the back and forth of her indecision, of this emotional rollercoaster. Why do I desire her so? Perhaps my life will be better without her in it. I hate this. The time for moving on may finally be here.

- Good morning
- Good morning!
- Sorry, I fell asleep last night 😊
- Me too

- Something wrong?

And it seems like whenever anyone randomly asks if something's wrong, particularly when it comes from a significant other, what they are really asking is if you want to fight. What they're really saying is that they have something to say, to which I always answer that question with a question:

- Why do you ask?

- You're being very short.

Which is bullshit because there has been many a morning when we exchange “good morning”s first thing and not have any further conversation until later in the morning and sometimes into the afternoon. But this conversation, so far, happened by the time I arrived to work at 8:00 AM. Her intention behind the initiation of this conversation was pretty clear, and I would surely take advantage of this revelation, especially after working two twelve-hour days back-to-back in the past two days. I was not in the mood for this bullshit.

- I'm sorry but I'm really tired and a little cranky. Having said that, and I'm sorry if I'm way off base, but I feel like there's something you're not telling me. I really miss you and look forward to seeing you, and it sounds like you have to think about it.

- I'm sorry
- I look forward to seeing you too but I'm having second thoughts.

- What is to think about?

And already it's been a busy morning. I have two budget deadlines, and I cannot be distracted by her bullshit. So, thank God the conversation stalled until the early afternoon.

- Each other's feelings

- You rarely share your feelings about me, so this answer is vague.

- So because I don't share them, they don't count?

- That's not it – because you don't share your true feelings about me, I don't know what they are. I can only assume how you feel and what you're thinking. I try to do everything I can to make you happy and make this work. I pour my heart out to you with every chance I get, and so often your response is that you're still thinking about it. Even after you tell me how much fun you still have with me, still you shrug it off like it's meaningless. It feels like there is a part of this story that you're not telling me. I can't read your mind. I can't see your life at all outside of work and the time you spend at my house, and I am constantly wondering what it is that you're so afraid of. I see a whole half of this relationship that I only know about by what little you share with me. You take hours sometimes to answer my text messages and I often don't know why. I trust that it's all good, but it seems you are very selective

about how engaged you are with me, and I don't know why? You're very secretive and I try to not let that bother me, but when this rollercoaster turns into a downward trajectory, I often wonder if there's something I should be paying more attention to. I don't know if you are talking to or seeing other men. I don't know if you're just engaged with your friends and family. I wish you would just open up to me. I wish a lot of things...

- I have a hard time sharing my feelings. I'm sorry. I can't help it. I appreciate you sharing your feelings but to be completely honest, I'm not asking you to. We're not in a relationship and you're making it seem like we are, Ziggy. That's not what we agreed on. Your expectations and my expectations of what "this" is, are different. And that's what is making me think I can't continue with this and have second thoughts. I don't want to make you think that this will turn into anything else. I already feel like that's what I'm doing, especially after you shared your feelings about me. That's why I'm selective in what I do, say, not say. I also feel like I'm sneaking around seeing you. I don't like doing that. It reminds me of a time when I had to do that for years and it was incredibly hard.
- I've told you what I'm afraid of, Ziggy, multiple times...

It ended up being another grueling day. I worked nonstop from eight o'clock that morning to about four-thirty. I wanted to be sure that there was not a chance that I would run into her on my way out, which meant I had to get out of there by four-thirty or potentially have to wait until after five if I truly wanted to zero out my chances of even seeing her before I could respond. Lately she tells me when she's leaving on the days that I don't stay past sundown. But for sure that was not going to be today. I left early and headed to Grand Central Market and the nearest beer or two before I responded to that madness.

- You really know how to drop a bomb.
- That's not how I intended for you to read that. You already know most of what I said in that text, Ziggy.
 - Yes, and you know how I feel about you and you do this to me AGAIN!
 - It's not okay, Christina.
- Because I know how you feel is the reason why I can't do this. I can't give you what you want. You said you could be whatever I wanted but that's not true. You have expectations of what you want this to be... it's not just spending time together. It's more.
- I'm really sorry Ziggy. I feel awful doing this to you again.
 - I was happy with whatever you were willing to give me. How can I give you what you really want when you don't know what you really want, much less ever conveyed to me what you really want? That's really not fair, Christina. I am very patient with you. All I want this to be is what it is - I'm not expecting you to be anything more than who you are and whatever you're willing to give me. You're the one making more out of this than what it is. It is what it is, and my patience with you is wearing thin.

And it was true. For a day that started out for me being tired and cranky, pile on another heavy workday and a couple beers, and I was ready to have this fight. The truth is that I guess I knew from the beginning that this wouldn't last unless I could successfully change her mind about anything.

- I thought I could go back to what we had before, but I can't because I know how you feel, and I don't want to string you along. I would hate for someone to do that to me.
 - Today was not the day...
- Is it ever a good day?
- Did something else happen?
 - Saturday was a great day, as is every day that I have the privilege to spend with you.
 - If your intentions are to frustrate me so I'll go away, if you're saying your life would be better without me in it, if you're saying all your imaginary bullshit worst case scenarios outweigh all of the really good times that we've had and could possibly have, if you're saying you can no longer be my friend outside of work, if you feel you have better options, then I guess you win. This has been one of the most bipolar, heartbreaking relationships I've ever been in. And yes you should look up that word, because a "relationship" has a much broader definition than you seem to believe. Your inability to see my true value and worth is offensive and I'm sorry to have wasted your time.
- Imaginary bullshit worst case scenarios? Wow. Okay. That's what you thought about how I felt?
 - I truly don't know how you feel, or even if...
- That's incredibly hurtful.
- Hope you feel better after insulting me. I won't waste your time anymore.
 - You couldn't care less about how I feel.
 - No other man will love you like I did.
 - And the only time you ever waste my time is when you pull shit like this.
- No, I guess I didn't care at all. Why would I? I don't have feelings.
 - You obviously feel strongly about not wanting me in your life.
- It's all those imaginary bullshit worst case scenarios that lead me to believe what I believe. No use explaining them to you.
 - You can't even tell me what those fears are with any detail. I have to guess. They're like headlines with no story associated with them. Or when I hear the story, I fail to see how it relates to me. If you could just accept me for who I am, if you could just appreciate my love, if you can just be honest with your feelings, then you wouldn't have to sneak around and deceive. You continue to compare me to your ex, who

sounds like a complete loser. Why do I have to constantly justify myself to you? I am not him! I am not a loser! I am awesome! And you will be hard pressed to find another man with half the love that I had for you.

Waiting for my phone to buzz, for my screen to light up in the darkness of this speakeasy. Why won't she just comply to my every wish? Why can't she just be mine?

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The next day was Friday and I did as much work as I could, mostly to keep her off my mind, but also to leave as early as I could. I was hoping to leave at noon, but it ended up being one that I worked straight through with vigor. As soon as I could get on the next train to Pershing Square and Grand Central Market, the better. Outside on the patio, I enjoy some kind of draft beer from the Horse Thief and pour my heart out onto the pages of my notebook. This is where one can find me within the first hour after my last hour of the work week. It's becoming tradition and almost ceremonial, after a hard work week with some added drama at the end from Miss Martinez. My last text to her was at ten-twenty last night, and she did not respond until six-thirty-two the next night after a day when we were both working in the office and the day went without incident, when she had finally made her get away at the end of her day and somehow made it home with not so much as a peep from me. It was clear that the ball was in her court. By the time she responded, I had three beers and several hits from my PAX2, walked down Broadway to 7th Street and ended up having dinner at the Triple 8 down by Staples Center and had two or three more beers. And then I took the train to Culver City where I walked to Seventy-7 for one of three whiskey sours with Makers Mark, egg whites and extra cherries. I was in the zone! Her text came right at the time that I thought it would - during happy hour.

- For the record, I was not ashamed by you. Never did I say that or imply that. And when I say that this reminds me of previous times, I don't mean to compare you to him. It's not him that I'm comparing you to. You are not like him. It's the situation. It's keeping things secret. Is pretending I'm not seeing you outside of work.
 - Why pretend?
- Because that would prompt a slew of questions.
 - Such as...?
 - [Image: aerial shot of my first whiskey sour, a blank pad of paper with my pencil sitting on the top, and a Seventy-7 cocktail sign displayed together on a dark bar top.]
 - Come find me Christina Martinez!
- You already know what types of questions they will ask.
- Your drink looks good...
 - Who is they? And quite frankly, I don't care what anyone thinks.
- People at work, family...

- And what questions will they ask that will be so unbearable to answer?
 - Questions like, "Why are you in love with Christina Martinez?"
- You would answer that?
 - Absolutely
- I find that hard to believe...
 - No one would ever question our relationship. I am too valuable for that kind of trivia. Until they can prove that it's toxic, it's nothing that they need to worry themselves over. It's none of their business.
 - I wish you would trust me.
- It takes a lot for me to trust and open up to someone. I'm too cautious, too afraid, too insecure, too everything.
- You don't want to deal with that. I'm not gonna change. I am who I am.
 - Your secrets are safe with me. I want to know everything about you.
 - I wish you would trust me.
- No you don't...
 - Why do you say that?
 - Why do you question me?
- I'm saying you don't want to know everything.
 - That sounds like you have some dark secrets, and I'm telling you that you can share anything and everything with me. I will always be your friend, Christina.
- I don't have dark secrets. I just don't find it easy to share.
 - You can trust me, Christina.
 - I want to hear your story.
 - You should come over...
 - I have buttermilk and blueberries and real maple syrup - come have breakfast with me tomorrow, please?
- Ziggy, I don't want to put you through all this again.
 - At this point, it's to be expected...
- I don't want to make it any worse or hurt you anymore than what I already have.
 - You couldn't possibly hurt me by blessing me with your company.

- Yes I can. I can't do that again.
 - Yes you can.
 - I will allow it to happen.
 - I take total responsibility.

Sending those last three texts was such a distant memory. By the end of that day, I had found my way home, drunk, high, and exhausted, both physically and emotionally. I had managed to get to bed just fine, but I woke up at six, like I normally would on any other morning that I would have to get up for work, except that it's Saturday - fucking Saturday! My head hurts, my heart is heavy, and I'm still really drunk and a whole lot high! And all I can think of is if there's at all a chance that she will come over for pancakes, how quickly can I whip this house and myself into shape in the condition I am currently in? Should I get high? Should I masturbate? These are both things I would normally do on my day off if I knew I wasn't going to see her. And now I feel frozen with indecision. Although the chances that she will come over are very small, it is within the margin of possibility where she surprises me sometimes, which by itself naturally widens the margins of probability in my gut more than in my head. I spent the next few hours reading our conversation from the night before, I can say that even though I was very much under the influence of alcohol and marijuana, I meant every word I sent her. My tone was turning spiteful, but I can qualify that by the fact that she knew I was tired and cranky on Thursday, and Friday couldn't have been better. And now it's Saturday.

- Please come...
- I can't Ziggy
- You blame me for this relationship being bipolar. But every time I try to stay away from you, you are incredibly persistent on making this work.
 - What's wrong with trying to make it work?
 - And I don't blame you. I was just saying that's how it is.
- You did blame me. That's what you implied.
 - It's what you inferred.
 - I take just as much responsibility for not letting you go.
 - I'm sorry if I said anything to hurt you.
- You didn't.
 - Wouldn't this conversation be better in person?
 - Put some sunshine in this cloudy day...
- I'm at the store with my sister.
 - Well for the record, I would go through all that pain again just to have another moment with you.

- So you can say that I did it to you again?
 - ...that you turn away from your true feelings.
 - ...that you run away once it starts feeling real.
 - ...that if I offered you what you want, you probably wouldn't know it because you don't know what you want.
 - ...that you're afraid people will find out you've found someone who truly loves you.
- Even if all that's true, it's still my decision Ziggy.
 - It's always been your decision.
- I had wonderful times with you.
 - We could have many more

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- Thanks for the Cuties.
 - My manager just bought lunch for me and I don't think I'll ever eat again.
 - [Link: Yelp: Maccheroni Republic]
- This is one of my favorite pasta places!
- Did you like it?
 - I've eaten here many times - love it!
 - [Image: a big bowl of Zuppa de Pesce]
 - I ate all of it...
- Mmmm that sounds good
- Care for a donut?
- I have donuts at my desk if you want one...
 - I just want to say that when you were reconsidering, I asked what your terms were, which you never told me. I didn't know if you were reconsidering for just one night, if it meant more than the one night, or if it meant more than that. In retrospect, I know I pushed those boundaries a little too far. But at least I know a little more now where those boundaries are than I did before. It feels like this is how I know what you want by eliminating what you don't want. Should you ever reconsider again, I think we should talk about what that actually means so expectations are more in line. Because all I want is whatever you're willing to give me - I certainly don't want what you're not willing to give me. I don't mean to pressure you, even though I know I subconsciously do. I told you I wasn't expecting for you to reciprocate the feelings that I share for you, and I can certainly keep those feelings to myself if they make you uncomfortable. And maybe I won't see you every week -

maybe it's whenever you can visit me. My only expectation is that you don't completely go away, please.

- Having said that, I want to make those fish tacos again and I think you should be involved, at least be invited. Please consider making time for me this weekend. I miss you.
- Maybe I didn't state my terms this last time, but I made my terms clear since we started this, Ziggy. They've always been the same.
 - It's hard to know that when you keep changing your mind.
- I changed my mind about continuing to see you because you make it seem like you understand what I'm asking for and you make it clear that you don't have any expectations, but it turns out you do in the end.
 - What expectations do you think I have?
 - I think I'm pretty clear.
 - And it hasn't changed from the start.
- That's not true. They have changed. You want more, you keep making your case of how you think we can have a serious relationship, and I be honest about my feelings.
 - [Image: nighttime view of the city skyline from the perspective of Pershing Square. Tall dark buildings with spotted office lights inside with a deep blue sky as the sun goes down behind them]
 - Come find me Christina Martinez!
- Where are you??
 - I was downtown, but just got home, battery was low...
 - I think you assume that I have certain expectations based on the feelings that I share with you. Even though my feelings for you have evolved, my expectations remained fairly constant. I also feel that your feelings have evolved too. So I'm just trying to tell you that if you wanted this to be more, then I would be open to that evolution. Otherwise, I think that I've been very clear that I will accept whatever you are willing to give me, that I will probably always desire your company, and that you need to be patient with me, that we need to be patient with each other. I demand nothing from you, Christina.
- I don't want to keep you up. Finish texting you tomorrow?
 - Goodnight, Christina 🥰 Sleep well
- Get find sleep. Goodnight Ziggy 😊

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- Good morning 😊
- Good morning 😊
- How's work?
 - I was just thinking about you
 - I'm at home teleworking
 - Naked in bed...
 - How is your day?
- Must be nice...
 - It doesn't suck ...
 - I need the rest
- Didn't you take the County training on teleworking where they say you must wear work attire?? LOL
 - I did take the class, but I don't recall anything about a dress code. Hope that doesn't mean I have to be naked at work too...
- LOL
- I'm serious! That's what I heard
 - How would anyone know?
 - Will they set up cameras in my house like they do in the building?
- Based on the honor system, I guess...
 - What they don't know won't hurt them.
- It's a nice day today. Came shopping with my sister.
 - During your lunch?
- I took the day off 😊
 - Oh haha!
 - What are you doing now?
- At Home Goods
 - Oh, you're still shopping? Sorry, my bad...
- Get any work done?

- Took a nap...
- Sounds nice
 - What are you up to?
- Going walking with my sister and mom
 - It's a nice day for a walk
 - You have plans for later?
- Making dinner
- I'm really tired though
- Don't feel like doing much
- What are you doing?
 - Waiting for you to arrive 😊
 - Tomorrow?
- You don't want to do this all over again, Ziggy
 - Of course I do
 - I wouldn't be asking
- It pains me to even think about telling you another time that I can't do this anymore. I don't want to do that to you again.
 - It's to be expected...
 - It gets us talking about things
- You said things that were hurtful
- Am I supposed to forget?
 - I told you I was tired and cranky first thing that day, Thursday. The conversation bled into Friday when I was then tired, cranky, and a little drunk. I apologized if any of it was hurtful and you said it wasn't. My tone was spiteful, and I apologize again if you're now saying that my words were hurtful. It's hard for me to read it now because I was so passionately venting, but all of it came from a heart that was breaking, and I hope you can translate it that way.
 - So if it's not already clear, I am very sorry. Please forgive me. I don't want to ever hurt you.
- When did I say it wasn't hurtful? On the contrary, I told you you were.
 - [Screenshot: our text conversation screenshotted on my phone:

- *I'm sorry if I said anything that hurt you.*
- *You didn't...*
- Sorry if I misunderstood
- I thought you asked that because I took a while before replying to your previous text.
- I'm talking about our conversation on Thursday.
- [Screenshot: Our text conversation screenshotted on her phone]
 - *and worth is offensive and I'm sorry to have wasted your time.*
- *Imaginary bullshit worst case scenarios? Wow. Ok. That's what you thought about how I felt?*
 - *I truly don't know how you feel, or even if...*
- *That's incredibly hurtful.*
- *Hope you feel better after insulting me. I won't waste your time anymore.*
 - *You couldn't care less about how I feel.*
 - *No other man will love you like I did.*
- Yes, I know that did not come out the way I intended. Of course you can feel - that is obvious. What I was trying to say was that I can't tell if you can feel me.
- I can't tell how you really feel - I don't really know how to say it.
- I was very angry when I wrote that...
- I don't think so. You meant what you wrote or else you would've cleared that up then. I know you were angry, that's why you said what you said.
 - I meant what I wrote, but I don't think you're interpreting it the way I intended. Please give me the benefit of the doubt.
 - I'm trying to make amends.
- Okay. Apology accepted
 - Thank you
 - Can we kiss and make up?
 - Tomorrow?

- You drive me crazy
 - The feeling is mutual 😊
 - Maybe?
- You don't give up
 - I can't wait to see you 😊
- I didn't agree silly
 - What will make you say yes?

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- Good morning ☀️
- Good morning 😊
- Caught up on your sleep?
 - More than yesterday. You?
- Slept better yesterday. Niece and nephew came early today.
 - That never seems to happen here 😊
 - Will you bless me with your presence today?
 - It's a beautiful day here on the Westside...
 - Fish tacos and fresh strawberry lemonade...
- It's a nice day today.
- Sounds good but I can't
 - Tomorrow?
- Sorry, getting my car serviced 😊
- I have a couple of things going on tomorrow.
 - I suppose you can find better things to do on Sunday too?
 - What's wrong with your car?
- I need new brakes
- I'm not making excuses. But I still don't think it's a good idea...
 - I think it's a great idea
 - We would have a very good time.
 - What's the worst that could happen?

- A lot of things can happen
 - Yes, a lot of things do typically happen when you come over. What is the worst of those things?
 - Burnt garlic?
- LOL
- Nothing worse than burnt garlic
 - And I never did...
 - What's the worst of those things, Christina?
- It's not any of those things
- You know that
 - What is it?
 - Come here and tell me to my face.
- Please don't get like that
- I don't want to develop more feelings for you. The more time I spend with you, the harder it is to pull away.
 - Why would you want to pull away?
 - Let's just think about tonight. What's the worst that could happen?
- Because we're both going to end up hurting.
- I can't just think about tonight.
 - I can't hurt any more than I already do. How could anything be different after tonight?
- So you're saying your feelings can't grow anymore?
- You eventually have to think about tomorrow. Can't just keep thinking about tonight.
 - The only way I can grow more feelings is if you told me your feelings have grown too. I can't grow anymore without you. Are you afraid of falling in love with me?
 - Or are you afraid that you already have?
- I'd rather not analyze my feelings
 - Wouldn't that be a good topic of conversation?
 - Or not - we don't have to talk at all. Just come over...
- You make it sound so easy
 - Just get in your car and come here. How hard is that?

- You don't take me seriously.
 - About?
- When I tell you I can't.
- The only time you do is when I get mad.
 - Are you mad?
- No and I don't want to be
 - I promise to put a smile on your face

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- I'm sorry if I upset you yesterday. Somebody put tequila in my lemonade...
- So you were drunk texting me again?
 - I stopped texting you before I was “drunk”, and I really didn't get drunk anyway. I really didn't think you would come over, so I started drinking with Jasper. I prefer to be sober when I see you, which is sometimes why I need a firm yes or no. Had you decided to come over last night, that probably would have been a total disaster.
 - ...but I think you still would have had a good time 😊
- Hmm ok
 - I'm sober now and have no plans to drink for the rest of the weekend, if that's at all a question in your mind.
- I'm not going over Ziggy. And that is a firm no...
 - I wasn't thinking that you would. I appreciate the clear answer.
- Sounds like you had a good time yesterday though.
 - Got caught up with Game of Thrones
 - Had a nice walk home last night too
 - What did you do?
- Went for a walk and picked up In-N-Out with my sis.
 - What did you have at In-N-Out?
- A grilled cheese

- Had one before?
 - Oh yes, I was just testing your knowledge of the secret menu, but any vegetarian goes to In-N-Out must know about the grilled cheese.
- I know the secret menu better than you!
 - What makes you so sure of that?
- What are other secret menu items?
 - Are you quizzing me?
- Yes
 - Animal style
- Everyone knows that one
 - Yes, but it's not a traditional menu item
 - Double meat
 - 3x3
 - 4x4
 - Is that it?
 - Is there a 5x5?
- Double meat is on the menu
- LOL stop
 - I'm pretty sure they don't have Christina cakes
- Nobody has those
 - I had them once or twice – they were delicious 😊
- Did you know you can get the yellow Peppers chopped on your burger?
 - I did not know that, but I never thought to ask either - good to know.
 - ...and now I want that...
- I win
 - I never doubted you for a minute...
- 😊
 - Cutie...

- So how's the last season of GOT?
 - The last episode was pretty epic actually, perhaps the most epic. I have to watch them again - Jasper loves to talk to me when we're watching stuff...
- Haha - that's funny
 - There's still three more episodes that haven't come out yet.
- Only five episodes per season??
 - The last season is six episodes. We watched three yesterday, so there's three left.
 - But episode three was like an hour and a half long.
 - It was amazing!
 - Sounded great too
- Those are short seasons
 - All the other seasons are ten episodes.
 - You have a lot of catching up to do...
- Too much to catch up on
 - It's good storytelling
- I'm sure it is
 - You should come watch more of it.
- These cupcakes are adorable 😊
- Thank you 😊
 - They were an impulse buy during my travels yesterday. Enjoy!
- Are you planning on helping me eat them??
 - I would rather eat you 😊
- Thanks again. I'm about to eat the sprinkles one 😊
 - Did you give one to your mom?
- Yes. The pink one
 - I hope she liked it

- She did. She took off the frosting though 😬😭
 - Why did she do that?
- She probably thought it was too sweet...
 - But not as sweet as you 😊
- 😊

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- Good morning - wishing it was hot and sunny for a change...
- Good morning ☀️
 - I'm thinking you had another nightmare audit today?
- It wasn't horrible like the other two, but they were missing a lot of documents. Just means a lot more following up with them until they complete it.
 - I dropped off another cupcake for you today, so I assume you didn't return. I left a little early today.
- Another cupcake?! 😊 You don't have to keep bringing me stuff silly. Are you secretly trying to make me gain weight? LOL
- I didn't return to the office. It was late and I was in Whittier.
 - Wendy made it, but it had buttercream 😊
- Oh that's right, it was her birthday too.
 - It was a good cupcake - she can bake.
- I think I tried one of her cookies last time. They were ok I guess. Haha
 - Whenever she brings in stuff she baked from home, everyone on my side of the office knows it. She does make some really good frosted sugar cookies. But not everything she makes is great.
- I'm biased though. I don't really care for anything she does. Sorry 😊
 - I almost didn't bring it to you for fear of cupcake overload, but she was looking to give them away.
- Haha!

- I actually had two other cupcakes over the weekend too 🧑🏻
- Oh dear...
- One tiny one at Jen's birthday party and another one that I asked my brother to bring me from Sprinkles Cupcakes LOL
- They were both small but still...
 - And then I bring you a half dozen on Monday... 🤔
- LOL They were delicious, and you helped me eat them. That just means that no more cupcakes/sweets for a while.
 - Back to Clementines...
 - What's for dinner?
- Leftovers 🤔
- I made tortilla soup yesterday
- What about you?
 - Probably a bowl of cereal...
- What kind??
 - Raisin Bran Crunch - only the best...
- Ummm I don't think so...
- You have to try Raisin Nut Bran
- Much better
 - You have told me that before, but the Ralph's that I shop in doesn't carry it. Is that like a TJ's item?
- Yes they do. That's where I find it.
- Ooh I just reread your text. You're right, maybe they don't, but most do.
- What's TJ?
 - Trader Joe's
- No silly
- It's a General Mills cereal
 - [image: picture of a box of Raisin nut bran]
 - ?
- LOL yes

- I don't think I've ever seen this cereal before, but I never looked for it either.
- You should bring a box over and will do a taste test...
- Do you do 2% milk?
- You're funny
- Good try
 - Have you had Raisin Bran Crunch?
 - Are you afraid you'll lose?
- No no
 - You'll have to prove it to me then...
 - Goodnight Christina
- Goodnight Ziggy 🤪

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- Good morning
- Good morning! ☀️
 - Heard some good things about your promotion today
- You did? 😊
 - I did 😊
- It's moving along??
 - So whatever the bottleneck in administration was that was keeping potential hires and promotions from moving forward has been cleared. I asked about you and I guess you were in the mix.
 - There are several positions that I need clarification on, so I may have more information tomorrow.
- That's good news.
 - Other than that, how was your day?
- It was crazy busy today. This week has been pretty busy, overwhelming because everything is stacking up.
- How was your day?

- I'm feeling overwhelmed too. Even after this past long weekend, I still feel like I need to take more time off. I'm thinking of taking Memorial Day week off.
- I was in Ferguson this morning, had lunch with a coworker, and had a big issue with a budget modification only to find out in the end that it was a minor oversight that could have prevented the whole situation.
- If you get too overwhelmed, I will gladly pamper you here...
- Oh stop it 😂
 - I'm pretty wiped out right now – going to bed. Sleep well cutie 🥰
- Goodnight silly 😊

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- Good morning 😊
- Good morning 😊
 - You want to have lunch today or tomorrow? It looks like it might rain and udon sounds good. 😊
- Hmmm... Maybe tomorrow?
 - I love it when you say maybe 😊
- Confession: I had half a cupcake today
- 😊😂
- I didn't even make it through the week! LOL
 - Sounds like you need a spanking 😊
- Haha. No more of that...
 - I guess that means you threw Wendy's away? I wouldn't fault you if you did.
 - I'm sure it wasn't good after sitting on your desk all night...
- It sat there all day and night!
 - 😊
 - ...and was eventually tossed? It wasn't sitting there this morning.
- I had to toss it yesterday.
 - Was it getting stinky?

- No, but it was already dry and stale.
 - I'm sure. I doubt you would have eaten it if it was fresh...
 - So what did you do with the other half of the cupcake you had today?
- I ate it...
 - I could sympathize with half a cupcake, but a whole one? Yup, I think a spanking is mandatory now...
- I don't think so.
- But to my defense! It was a healthy cupcake!
- LOL
- And I'm gonna workout today...
 - What kind of cupcake was it?
- It was a chocolate cupcake made with prunes.
 - That actually sounds like it was good.
- It was good actually. It had a different texture, but it was very moist.
 - What kind of frosting?
- It was buttercream frosting.
 - Was this like a vegan type of cupcake?
- It wasn't vegan - at least I don't think it was.
 - Where are you working out? Do you go to a gym?
- Workout at home. Not a gym person, too many people.
 - Haha - I had a very hard time seeing you at a gym.
- Why do you say that?!
 - I just don't see you in one of those germ-infested, body odor infested, macho environments - call me crazy...
- Yeah, that's pretty much why I hate it.
 - So when you work out at home, what does that involve? I think you once called it "strength training" - is that like using free weights?

- Yes, pretty much. Kettle ball, dumbbells, medicine ball.
 - I bet you look cute working out 😊
 - I was a gym rat for the few years that I lived in Irvine. But I loved that gym - it was a high-end Spectrum Club. It was four stories tall and it had everything in it, including a sauna, jacuzzi, swimming pool, a place to sunbathe, private showers, a running track on the roof, free weights, and every exercise machine you could think of. They had restaurants and juice bars. I would spend hours there. I loved going there, but most of the time not doing much exercising at all. And even though I would leave there each night extremely clean, I still felt like I was infected by other people's germs, not to mention the constant "gym" smell that was seemingly on me all the time. It was like constantly in my nose, the smell of chlorine and bleach. I sometimes think of going again. I might consider a totally healthy lifestyle again...
- Wow that actually sounds nice. Wait, you were there for hours but not working out? What would you do??
- I think you have the discipline to do it again...
 - I did a lot of free weights and the Stairmaster/treadmill. I would get a great workout for about an hour, hour and a half. But then I would take a shower and lay out at the pool and take a long nap. Then I would take another shower and go into the sauna, then go into the jacuzzi, then back into the sauna, then back into the jacuzzi. Then I would take another nap on one of the cots that surrounded the jacuzzi. I then took a final shower before lathering my entire body with liberal amounts of body lotion before putting on all of my clothes and going home. Sometimes I felt like that gym was my home. Of course, there were variations of this agenda depending on the day, but it was loosely like that...

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- Sorry I fell asleep last night. I was so tired.
- Good morning! ☀️
 - Good morning 😊
 - I fell asleep too, And I feel like I woke up even more tired. I took a little nap on the train, but it wasn't enough...
- Oh yikes. Well at least you get to sleep in this weekend.
 - How you doing?
- Okay. I just started working on a new project. I won't have time to go to lunch, sorry.
 - Come for dinner instead?

- I can't. It's Mother's Day.
- Have you tried the pizza next door?
 - Tomorrow?
 - Finally leaving...
- We're doing lunch/brunch with mom and sisters tomorrow. I still don't think it's a good idea though, Ziggy...
- I had to go next door to grab something 😞
- Enjoy your lunch 😊

Mother's Day weekend - it's Friday, just off work, drinking a beer at Grand Central market on a gloomy afternoon trying to formulate what to text her to make her change her mind and let me show her an awesome time. And because it's Mother's Day weekend, I suspect that the chances of seeing her this weekend were near impossible. But it wouldn't be a weekend if I didn't, at the very least, invite her over. This potentially could be the third weekend in a row that she has stayed away. I told her I can't be anymore hurt than I already am and what would be the worst that could happen if she again changed her mind? She's worried that she will develop more feelings for me while I try to preserve the ones she already has – please, may they never go away. Not only do we continue to be friends, but during these past few months, it's hard to deny that our friendship hasn't grown stronger. She's been somewhat engaged with me via text. She is certainly not totally avoiding me, still telling me that she doesn't think it's a good idea instead of flatly rejecting me, the ambiguity of which continues to keep my heart on a string, tethered to hers with a very strong bond, and I don't know why exactly except that I feel an attraction so strong that I can't see myself ever completely letting her go.

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It was Friday and she said “maybe” to having udon with me for lunch at a place close to work, but we were both too busy to get away. I invited her for dinner instead, and she told me that she still didn't think it would be a good idea. I had left work early, then waited until when I thought she would be off work to respond.

- I just hope that one day you might say “maybe”, even if it's for a few hours and if I promise to keep my feelings and take full responsibility for whatever happens afterwards! You know you'll have a good time.
- I know it's Mother's Day weekend and that, either way, the chances of seeing you this weekend are highly unlikely. But if you had a few hours to get away, whenever it's convenient for you, I would really enjoy your company.
- [Image: North side of the of the FIDM building in downtown Los Angeles, a large mural of two left arms, from above the elbow, reaching up from the ground to the top of the eight-story structure that stands in front of a much larger glass building under construction. One arm has white skin, palm forward, eclipsing the second arm behind it with darker skin. The white hand appears to be showing a white supremacy symbol. Both arms appear to be reaching up to a crane, standing taller between the buildings elevated upward toward an overcast sky. It is the late afternoon, but there is no direction of the sun.]

- Come find me Christina Martinez!
- I will let you know if I change my mind. I hope you have a good weekend 😊

It took me forty-five minutes to respond. Even though I know she'll say no, it still hurts a little when she does. But the most disturbing part of her text was how she wished me a good weekend as if to prepare me for excommunication for the rest of the weekend if I pressed her for her time. It was quite clear that how I responded to her response at this time might have an impact on our relationship for at least the rest of the weekend, and above all, I did not want to upset her again. I had spent most of that forty-five minutes walking from Grand Central Market to Pico Station Down by Staples Center.

- Enjoy your Mother's Day with your family.
- Thank you 😊

If I was a betting man at this time, I would have bet that Christina Martinez would not have spoken to me for the rest of the evening. But that doesn't seem to be the case.

- That painting looks familiar. Is it in downtown?
 - Flower and Olympic I think
- What's for dinner in downtown?
 - Wherever you want to meet me... 😊
- Have you tried La Tostaderia at the Grand Central market?
 - Probably.
- Their ceviche is really good. Their aguachile is pretty spicy 😊
 - What time will you be there?
- I can't silly.
- I was giving you a suggestion.
 - Yes, I know. I'm actually in Culver City now anyways ...
 - But I would go back and meet you if I could.
- How was your udon?
 - I honestly wasn't hungry and had work to do anyway. I'm not used to eating in the middle of the day.
- I've been meaning to try the udon at Coco Ichiban. It's the Japanese Curry place on 6th.

- Let's go!
- Oh you didn't go?
- Let's go on our next non-RDO Friday?
 - I will not say no to that 😊
- Okay 😊
 - [Image: long shot of a cereal aisle in a grocery store]
 - Raisin Nut Bran in Culver City is a myth...
- Where are you?
- I find it at Target too.
 - At the Ralphs by my house - I stared at this wall for like ten minutes looking at it...
- LOL
- Oh no!
 - But it could be right in front of me and I don't see it...
- They obviously don't carry it there
 - And I have good vision too...
- I usually find it on the top row
 - I was a little worried that you would see it in the picture and say it's right there. But I'm quite positive that it wasn't there. I even looked down by the oatmeal.
- I didn't find it. I zoomed in. Not there
 - Right?
 - I'll check Target.
- I think you'll find it there.
 - There has been like no good music that has come out in the last three weeks, maybe more. Today was a total donut, except for maybe the new Logic album, but it's just more Logic...
- What about the Taylor Swift and Justin Bieber song? 😊
 - Do you like that song?
 - I usually listen to albums

- I don't like the Taylor Swift song like the rest of her stuff. It's too corny.
 - So much of pop music is corny - it's what makes it pop music, that it appeals to broad audiences.
- She says, "Spelling is fun!" 🤔
 - Did your manager talk to you about the promotion?
- No.
 - Act surprised when she tells you...
- Wait, did the promotion go through?
 - It will
- Oh pues
- Cuando?
 - There's no date yet
 - But there will be
- Oh okay 😊
 - Everyone's being pushed through at once - no one has a date yet.
- Ah I see.
- So how are people being pushed but still no date?
 - Yes, but I can't say that they will all be processed at the same time period they are all very different situations.
 - [Link: Yelp: Curry House CoCo Ichibanya]
 - You're saying this place has udon?
- Yes, it does.
- I've only tried their curry.
- Very good.
 - I've never eaten there, but it looks like an interesting place. Probably passed it a million times. I look forward to trying it.
 - What are you up to?
- Getting ready to go to sleep.
 - What are you wearing?

- Nothing
 - Thank you for that 😊
 - Goodnight Christina 😴 sleep well
- Goodnight Ziggy 😊

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- For a day that was supposed to be rainy and cold, it turned out to be pretty awesome 😊
- it's such a nice day!
- I'm at Target and...
- [Video: shot from her iPhone, the cereal aisle at Target, the camera pans to the second shelf from the floor, wedged between Raisin Bran made by Post Cereal to the left, and Kellogg's Raisin Bran Crunch on the right is a box of Raisin Nut Bran. The camera zooms in and out twice to end the seven-second video on the yellow box to make it very obvious what it looks like and where it is.]
- Look what I found.
 - Haha - I see it now...
 - Is that the Target downtown?
- No, Pasadena
 - Hopefully the one in downtown sells it. Pasadena is a bit far to go for cereal...
- Haha. It is
- I didn't think you would want to take it on the train from work, so I didn't get it.
 - Did you buy a box for yourself?
- No...
- I rarely eat cereal
 - I was gonna trade you a sandwich bag of it for a bag of Raisin Bran Crunch.
- Oh good idea 😊
- Brunch was moved to tomorrow. I went shopping instead.
 - What are you doing tonight?
- Staying in 😊

- [Image: from my iPhone, a picture of the Venice skyline from Jasper's roof deck overlooking Venice Boulevard and Lincoln Boulevard. A dark cloud appears to be passing, leaving a blue-sky glowing behind it, creating a dark silhouette of the flat Venice skyline facing West with the falling sun just beyond the horizon.]
- Come find me Christina...
- Where is this?
 - Jasper's roof deck
 - [image: night view, West Los Angeles Street View from the perspective of someone walking down the sidewalk. It is very dark. On the right side our residential apartments illuminated by their outdoor lights on the left side is Venice Boulevard almost to a green lighted intersection. One car is driving away through the intersection in a blur.]
 - [Video: Late night scene inside Time Warp Records in Mar Vista. It is very dark and several bodies dance in front of a stage in silhouette where the band, Mannequin Skywalker, is jamming to a deep, hard surfer funk-punk groove that aggressively spawns various psychedelic synthesized buzzes, whirs, and sirens soaring over a hard driving beat from a funky bass and drum set. It's hot and stuffy. At the end of the two-minute and thirty-eight second video, the band stops and ends their set to the applause of the dozen or so in attendance.]
 - [Image: Picture from my iPhone: late night scene: aerial shot of a hot bowl of pho from Pho Show in Culver City]

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- Yum. What is this?
- Looks like you had a great night 😊
 - Late night pho.
 - [Link: Yelp: Pho Show]
 - Since I didn't get my udon...
- The pho had the music?
 - No, the music was at Time Warp Records in Mar Vista.
- Did it satisfy your udon craving?
 - Maybe my udon craving (for now), but not my Christina craving...
- Not sure I can help you with that.
 - I think by definition, you are the only one who can help me with that...
- You know what I meant silly

- I think you know what I meant too...
- Haha. Okay
 - How was brunch?
- It was good 😊
- Went to a Mediterranean place in Downey. It was really good.
- But I have a huge headache. I need coffee 😞
 - I have a cure for that...
- LOL
- Does it cure all?
 - Guaranteed
 - Let me rub your temples and your neck and your shoulders and your back...
 - Let me make you feel real good...
- And what else??
 - Whatever makes you feel good...
 - You know that I know what that is...
 - 🙄
- I do know...
- But you also know that's not going to happen...
 - You never think about it? You would never want it again?
- I do think about it. It was GREAT! Loved every minute of it.
 - Let's have more...
- That's a slippery slope and I'd rather not.
 - What's the worst that can happen?
- Go through the same argument/discussion all over again.
 - I guess I'm still not convinced. And I'm not convinced that you're absolutely convinced. I can't just shut you off. I know we can make many more, new good memories without hurting each other. I just want to show you a good time and make you feel good. What's wrong with that? I'm sorry, but I still have hope.
 - Goodnight Christina 🙄

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The next morning going in to work, I resisted texting her until I got into the office and saw a small paper bag in my chair where a Ziploc bag full of a cereal bearing the resemblance of a Raisin Bran of some kind. My day might be a good one after all.

- Good morning, and thank you 😊
- Good morning 😊
- Hope you like it.
 - I'm a little surprised, pleasantly, that you came into my space to deliver it 😊
 - How was your day? I was so sleepy...
- Crazy busy. But it was expected. Didn't get much sleep yesterday?
 - I actually slept like a rock last night and had an unusually hard time getting out of bed this morning. I almost called out today.
 - I do need to take some time off.
- Taking off next week still?
 - If I take Memorial Day week off, I'll only burn three days of PT.
- How come? It's not RDO week?
- Oh wait, it is!
 - Right?
 - Let's go somewhere 😊
- I thought Memorial Day was next week.
 - It's the 27th
 - Let's go to Japan, or Peru...
- You're crazy. I can't do that.
- I wish...
 - You could if you really wanted it...
 - Maybe somewhere more local? San Diego? Santa Barbara? San Francisco?
- I can't just get up and go.
- You do that so easily.
- It's not the same for me.
 - Just put some things in a bag and meet me at the airport 😊

- LOL
- Have you tried the cereal?
 - Not yet - just got home
- you stayed late?
 - A little bit, but I walked a good part of the way home.
 - When the weather is nice, I tend to take my time getting home 😊
- That sounds nice.
 - OK, so I've completed a side-by-side taste test between the two cereals...
 - Although the two cereals are very similar, I believe that one edged the other out.
- Which is "that one"?
 - You said you've never had Raisin Bran Crunch before, right?
- No I haven't tried it.
- Which one do you like more?
 - First of all, I hope you know me well enough to objectively give you an honest opinion, and I also know that you would too.
 - Second, the two cereals are very similar in taste and texture, so if you like Raisin Nut Bran, you'll surely like Raisin Bran Crunch. (Notice how they sit right next to each other in the video you sent me)
 - So I'll bring you some RBC tomorrow so you can tell me which one you think is better. Okay?
- Oh God LOL
- Of course I'll be honest.
 - I know you will, that's what I said.
- Okay so which one edged the other out?
 - I want you to try them both before I give you my opinion. Will you try it if I bring it?
- Yes
 - I love it when you say yes 😊
- I knew you were gonna say that!
 - I don't hear it much anymore, so...

- Goodnight Christina 🥰
- Goodnight Ziggy 😊

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- Very much looking forward to the verdict...
- Beautiful day.
- I was phoneless all day
- I'll let you know!
 - That sucks - did you leave it at home?
- Yes
- Verdict is currently being determined...
 - 🤔
- I see the similarities
 - Yes...
- But there are differences for sure
 - And?
- Drum roll...
 - 🥁
- Raisin Nut Bran
 - Really?
- I think so.
 - Very interesting.
- I like that it has nuts and the raisins are coated.
- The Raisin Bran Crunch has like this cinnamon taste that I like, but I don't like the granola.
- What do you think?
 - I think that you and I have very similar tastes.
- Raisin Bran Crunch is also sweeter.

- The actual cereal tastes sweeter to me.
 - Did you eat both cereals, or just the Crunch?
- Was I supposed to?
- You didn't answer my question.
- Well?
 - I was just curious because I first had a bowl of the RNB. I noticed right away how similar the two are. I like the nuts, but I didn't get a good raisin taste because they were coated, and I wasn't really sure what I was supposed to be tasting. It was a good bowl of cereal, but by the end of it, I was a bit wary of the texture. I then had a bowl of the RBC, and the sweet cinnamon taste mixed with the crunchy granola and chewy raisin texture brought my palette back to life.
- Really??
 - Probably mixing the two would be all kinds of awesome.
- Hmm interesting
 - Now I'm going to run to 7-11 to get milk so I can try the two together...
 - Yes, mixing the two is an improvement
- LOL
 - Sleep well pretty girl 😊

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And how she kills me with every rejection that she throws at me, and still I'm surprised when it goes off and wrecks me for a while. And even though it doesn't hurt like it used to, still it hurts. I guess it's just a matter of time until I can't take it anymore. It's hard talking to her without flirting with her, without my leading the conversation into an invitation that I know she will turn her nose up to, like she is better than to spend time with her good friend, Ziggy. And it's all because when we are alone together, she cannot resist me. She is at a serious disadvantage. She tells me she thinks about us together and says she loved every minute of it, which is somehow her reason for never wanting to be with me again, and she wonders why I'm so confused, why she does not convince. But the longer she stays away, the more I'm convinced.

- Do you have plans this weekend?
- Supposed to go to dinner on Saturday with my mom and siblings to celebrate Mother's Day because we couldn't make it last week.
- I have an appointment to do my Live Scan on Friday 😊

- Did they tell you?
- Well it's not official yet because I still need to pass my Live Scan and stuff.
 - But it's happening! Congratulations!
- Thanks! 😊
 - We should celebrate.
 - I was thinking of making Kung Pao by skewering the shrimp with the red Peppers and onions, cooking them on the grill, and then finishing it off in the wok.
 - You should come over when you're done.
- I hate continuing to tell you “no”, but I haven't changed my mind and I really don't plan on it. I'm sorry Ziggy...
 - I'm sorry
 - Sleep well Christina
- I'm sorry 😞

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The next day was Thursday, and I left work early in the afternoon. I didn't see her at all and hadn't heard from her until just after five o'clock, right when she gets off work and I am well into my third beer at Grand Central Market.

- So do you prefer not to talk to me?
 - Only when you hate what I have to say.
- I don't hate what you have to say.
- I hate telling you no. It makes me feel bad because I know you wish my response was different.
 - So don't say no.
- 😞
 - Which is the hate that you hate more? They hate you feel from constantly having to tell me no? Or the hate you feel after spending a little bit of quality time with me, completely on your terms?
- Neither of the options you're saying or what I'm trying to tell you. I can't put you and I through a situation knowing it continues to get more difficult to separate. Our feelings will keep getting stronger if we continue to spend “quality time.”

- So why separate? Why dismiss the feelings that we already have? What's wrong with "quality time"? Sounds like a good time to me...
- Because I don't see a future and if that's not possible there's no point in continuing.
 - You don't see a future at all with me? Then why be friends?
- If you rather not be friends, then tell me.
 - That is not what I want. I'm asking if it's what you want.
- You're saying if there's no future, you rather not be friends. So then why continue?
 - That's almost what I'm hearing you say.
- You're saying that!
- Clearly, it's hard to stay friends.
 - Really? It's that clear to you?
 - Christina, do you see a future in our friendship?
- Well you only want to see if we are more than friends, so what does that say?
 - That is not true
 - We have always played by your rules.
- I told you Ziggy. As much as I like spending time with you and being with you, I don't see us together.
 - Even when we're together?
 - What about "being together" are you afraid of?
 - Can we not be friends together?
- It's not that I'm afraid of being together. It's that there are too many problems/barriers that I am not willing to look over.
 - When you say, "I can't put you and I through a situation knowing it continues to get more difficult to separate," what "situation" are you referring to?
- I am referring to us seeing each other outside of work.
 - Unless you can show me otherwise, the only problems barriers that I see are the ones you create.
 - Well every time we see each other outside of work, you always leave at the end, so there is a separation every time we see each other outside of work. I don't understand your logic. I have never demanded more than what you're willing to give me.

- So now I need to show you why I think this won't work for you to respect my decision?
 - That would help, yes.
- I've told you plenty of times and made myself clear as to why I think this won't work. You refused to listen to me.
 - You have not made yourself clear, obviously, or else we wouldn't be having this discussion.
- I meant emotional separation. And you have demanded more than what I am willing to give you. That's exactly what's happening now!
 - We are just talking. I am not demanding anything.
 - I'm just trying to rationalize why you think spending time with me is a waste of your time.
 - Especially when you tell me you enjoy every minute of it...
 - I'm only asking for more of the same, and not any more than that.
- You've wanted more time, you wanted to be more than friends.
 - Well, in the beginning, I did go a little bonkers, but I can definitely say that I know you much better now. Without you telling me what you want, I have addressed many possible scenarios in an attempt to assure you that I could deal with them. I wasn't expecting them. I don't share your fear of failure.
- I didn't say waste of time. I said that I don't want to continue to have stronger feelings for you knowing there is no future. Why continue something that is not going anywhere? I made this clear since the start Ziggy. And yet you still don't understand or refuse to listen.
- I haven't told you what I want? Seriously?
 - So our "relationship", whatever you want to call it, has not gone anywhere from the start? We have not evolved at all? It has no future? This is all meaningless? Just throw it all away just because one day it will all end, so why not just kill it now and dismiss the feelings we know we already have? Why?
 - What do you want Christina?
- You can address as many scenarios as you want but I'm talking about how I feel.
 - What about how I feel?
- Ziggy, I'm trying to take your feelings into consideration. I don't want to mislead you, that's why I've explained to you how/where I see things.
 - Christina, I was just inviting you over for an awesome home cooked meal to celebrate your promotion. I would dedicate the entire day to be sure we had a good

time, and you don't even appreciate the gesture. All you can tell me is how you hate to tell me no. And in the end, I'm the one who has to say, I'm sorry.

- Goodnight Christina.

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The next morning was Friday, and she continued the conversation first thing at 8:00 AM.

- It saddens me to know that's how you think of me. If you think I don't appreciate the gesture, you're wrong.
 - At what point did you show appreciation for the gesture? If you think that was at all obvious, then you're wrong.
- I've always appreciated your invitations and the effort you put to make sure I have a good time when I'm with you. If I didn't make that clear, then I apologize. I'm sorry.
 - For someone who doesn't like to express her feelings, you're very quick to express hate once the invitation is given. Strange way to show appreciation.
 - And at the same time you're telling me you're trying to take my feelings into consideration?
- You're reading into that way too much and you're interpreting what I said in a different way. I already apologized and said that I do appreciate your invitations. You're not understanding me 😞
 - I try.
 - I really want to.
 - The more time that goes by, the more I understand you. I wish you would bend a little and not assume that we are doomed from the start. I don't understand how you so easily can just throw us away when it feels like you enjoy our time together. I try to make it worth your time, and you just dismiss the invitation like it wasn't even worth thinking about.
- Why do you make it seem like I'm heartless and don't care about anything? It's not so easy. If it was easy, we wouldn't be having this conversation right now for the tenth time.
 - [Image: About a dozen Roma tomatoes grilling on my Smokey Joe with two habanero chilies sitting on top.]
 - Beautiful day 😊
 - Just come over
- I can't. I'm with my niece and nephews.
 - Already?

- No but I have other plans
 - Of course you do
- No need to be spiteful.
 - Anything would be a better use of your time, right?
- Seriously?
 - Whatever it is, I hope you have a GREAT time.
- If you're going to continue to act like this, I rather you not text me.
 - It's just gonna end anyway, right?
- So you rather it end on a bad note?
 - I'm not the one wanting it to end.
- Stop

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Perez calls me at around ten o'clock on Saturday morning to remind me about the poker tournament at the Sandman's church out in Thousand Oaks that night. He said he was meeting some friends in Venice, where the freaks are, apparently, and told me to meet him there at noon. As soon as we found each other, he told me they all decided to go down to the Pier, and that his two friends took Bird scooters and that we should to. I had never ridden a Bird scooter and actually swore once that I never would, as they seem like catalysts for mayhem in addition to the already chaotic streets of Los Angeles, specifically in the Venice and Santa Monica areas. It couldn't have been more than a half-mile walk - 10 minutes tops, which has a length of time that we exceeded just finding unreserved, operable Bird scooters, downloading the app and getting them to work. I must admit that once I got on one, they were pretty easy and fun to ride, even though the journey on it from Venice to the Pier was both dangerous and exciting. It wasn't long before I was taking jumps off the curb and attempting any stunt I could find. In no time, we were on the Pier, drinking and eating on the Albright patio, watching the freaks go by. As soon as we sat down, I started telling Perez about my last four months with Christina Martinez, who he recognized name from when I would so fondly talk about her whenever I would see him, which was typically three or four times a year. This was the first time I had seen him this year, so I had a lot to tell him. I showed him the Canary video of the night when she was leaving and it's so obvious that she has love in her eyes. I've known Perez for almost as long as the 30 plus years that I've lived in Los Angeles. He's a few years younger than me, pushing 50, and how impressed he was when I told him she was 31, 20 years younger. And not only was the sex amazing, but that we had what felt like a genuine connection as we were constantly texting each other, talking about everything from our life story toward our favorite Donuts and breakfast cereal. We hung out for about an hour before his friends took off and Perez drove us to his house in Simi Valley. A few hours later, we arrived at the Saint

Pascal's of Babylon Catholic Church Annual Poker Tournament and Casino Night fundraiser. In typical fashion, we were over an hour too late to enter the tournament, so Perez and I grabbed beer and bellied up to a blackjack table and had a great time with a pretty, young dealer named Willow. Several hours and beers later, we somehow ended up eating fish tacos at a place I don't know that I ever got the name of - very high and very drunk. I finally passed out on Perez' couch and had a good sleep. It wasn't until the next morning when he was driving me to a bus stop in the San Fernando Valley that Perez shared with me his thoughts of Christina Martinez after hearing me pour my heart out for her for the last 24 hours. He told me he was confident that she fears her family will reject her if she were to commit herself to me. I scoffed at the idea and he told me his family rejected him when he told them he was serious about being with her and her being his wife, who he married only a few years ago, even though the two had been together for at least the past fifteen years, on and off, the majority of which his family refused to speak to him simply because she had already been married and had three kids. I asked him how they get along now, and he said they got along just fine, but that it's different for a girl, especially for the youngest girl in a Catholic, Latino family. He was banished from the house he grew up in so he could be with her, which is not so easy for a girl. If Christina Martinez was going to take a leap of faith for a guy, I was not going to be that guy. He was absolutely right, and I asked him why was it so easy for him to tell me in just a matter of minutes what was impossible for her to say. Because she's embarrassed about telling me that her mother would reject her. It's a cultural Latino thing and very hard to explain to anyone outside of that culture and not be ridiculed. On the bus and train ride back to Culver City and the two-mile walk home, I started questioning every position I ever took in opposition to her resistance to recognizing me as a significant other in any capacity from the very beginning, when she knew there could be nothing of substance between us. She was right the whole time, and I'm just a fool in disbelief, still with a heavy heart for her.

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Monday was a rough day. I ran into her several times as daggers from her eyes came hurling at me, and I felt them even when I wasn't looking at her. I hated the uncomfortable, unnecessary animosity and, at the same time, I've been working long hours completing two budget modifications and creating a new budget for next year in the span of a month. And it was only two weeks ago when we made plans to try the udon at Ichybanya on the next Friday that we worked, this coming Friday. And I was so excited to have those plans with her. And now, they don't seem to exist. I was so happy that she was making time for me. And by Tuesday, my ice cold demeanor had melted by the time I got home from work, tired and stoned. By then, I had a lot of time to think about things, and ultimately, I felt really bad if Perez's theory about her was correct, and now I read every text with her differently, in a new light, with a new understanding. I had to break the silence between us.

- I'm sorry, Christina. I don't want to be mad. I'll stop asking you over - that seems to be when things start falling apart. It's my fault, and I'm sorry. I may still flirt with you about it, but just know that I don't expect you to say yes. I also didn't get a chance to tell you that I accept your apology. I promise you that I would always be your friend, Christina, and I miss being your friend. Please don't be mad at me.
- [Link: Spotify: Tyler, The Creator – Are We Still Friends]
- No, when you start being rude and disregarding what I'm saying, that's when things start falling apart.

- I don't want to go through this cycle of emotions anymore. Don't think it's good for either of us.

I called her and she didn't answer, which was not at all a surprise, but perhaps there was a chance she would. I wanted to tell her the whole story of visiting Perez, almost killing myself on a Bird scooter, getting drunk at a blackjack table at a charity event, getting fish tacos and sleeping on Perez's couch, all the while pouring my heart out to Perez only to have him tell me next day in a matter of minutes as he was driving me to the bus stop the closest thing to the truth that I've ever heard. Never in a million years would I have guessed such a premise, but there it was now in plain sight. It was a revelation that I was convinced should be conveyed to her face to face - no way could I affectively tell that story in a text, or even a series of texts. I wanted to have a verbal conversation. I want to hear her voice. I want to see her face, her lips, herself.

- I don't want to text. Can we talk?
 - Please?
- I don't feel like talking right now. I'm sick and I don't feel good.
 - I'm sorry - hope you feel better.
 - I thought our friendship was most important.
- You didn't seem to think that this weekend.
 - You said you didn't see a future with me.
- Ziggy, that's not something new. I have expressed to you that I don't see this working, so I don't understand why that's a surprise.
 - And that includes our friendship?
- I was not talking about being friends. You know that.
 - That's what I was asking you several times.
- You didn't make that clear. Plus I think it will be hard for us to stay friends. You just said you'll continue to ask me over. And even though you say you won't expect me to accept, the invitation itself is pressure that I don't want.
 - I didn't say I would - I said, "I may still flirt with you about it." If you don't want me to ever ask you again, I definitely can make that sacrifice.
 - This is the reason why texting sucks...
- But that's what you meant. You said that before and you've continued to ask me.
 - I never said I would stop asking. I will stop if it's that upsetting and detrimental to our friendship. If you really don't want to be my friend, I can't stop you. I just thought we could at least preserve what's good between us.

- I'm going to sleep
 - Goodnight Christina

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She didn't respond until 6:30 the next night shortly after she got home from work.

- I don't want to be upset with you. If you want to continue to be friends and be cool working together, then you would need to stop asking me over. I can't continue seeing you outside of work, as friends or any other way.
 - Thank you, Christina.

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The next day was Thursday. I had to call her for something business related and asked her if we were still having udon at Ichybanya like we had agreed two weeks before. She asked if she could get back to me and I told her I was thinking of taking the day off, but she didn't say anything until I asked her about it at the end of the day.

- How was your day?
- It was good. I got a good amount of work done. I think next week will be a lot more calm. How was yours?
 - Have you ever been overworked and headed for a vacation, and the agony that comes in the final days leading up to that vacation?
- I'm sure not to the level you're experiencing.
 - It did feel like a Friday today, and it will feel like a Friday tomorrow too...
- That's a good feeling.
 - Udon tomorrow?
- I thought you weren't going in.
 - I actually have to.
- Why?
 - Because I have to.

- LOL Okay
 - Mostly to have udon with you 😊
- What if we do coffee or something else?
 - You don't want udon?
- That's not it. I don't know if we should.
 - Because?
- Because I would rather us not. We can go for a walk after lunch.
 - So you're going to go to lunch and I'm going to go to lunch and then we're going to walk after?
 - Do I scare you?
 - Why won't you have lunch with me?
- Well you usually don't have lunch so...
 - So am I supposed to wait for you to be done with your lunch in order to talk to you?
- No, why would you say that? I just still haven't forgotten the things you said. And much as I don't want to be angry with you, I still am somewhat upset.
- Why do you always question me this way?
 - You prefer to be upset?
- It's not that I prefer to be upset, But I can't just flip a switch and not be upset.
 - Perhaps if we could talk face to face, you wouldn't be upset. I wish you would trust me. I'm not trying to get you to change your mind. I just want to share my story with you, and I don't want to text it.
 - Can you just hear me out? Please?
- I'm not saying I don't want to talk. I said yes, just not lunch.
 - So when?
- In the afternoon.
- Or are you planning on leaving early?
 - Very early
- What time is that?

- Never mind, Christina. I hope you find happiness in your anger. Goodnight - sleep well.
- Wow. Ok

.....

It's Memorial Day and I'm having sushi at Sake House in Culver City. Thirty-four ounces of beer doesn't sound like a lot until it comes in a large glass mug. I already feel a little drunk from the beer that I had with my aguachiles from Grand Central Market, and then the beers at Casey's soon after. The aguachile is pretty much the only thing I've eaten today, which is a big reason why the alcohol is hitting me little bit hard today. I've ordered a Spicy Tuna Roll and a Spider Roll, which should settle my head just fine, hopefully justifying this thirty-four-ounce Sapporo that may have been a tad bit ambitious – time will tell with that one.

I'm enjoying spending time with myself again. The last exchange with Miss Martinez was enough for both of us to stay away from each other for a while. But she has been successful in reverting our friendship back to the way it was before we started our brief affair. I'm still very hurt by the fact that it ended for what feels like no reason. Knowing what I know now, I'm now puzzled by how she ever ended up with me at all if she knew she was initiating an affair with someone she always knew would never be her other half. I don't think she ever had a lot to think about other than how to tell me “no” without it all blowing up, without the whole world finding out that in fact she was really just using me for sex.

.....

And so it is - that girl totally broke my heart, and just like I knew she would. These are the seeds that I've sowed, and what once blossomed has since died and may never live again. By default, we have reverted back to the way we were before this affair began. Just like she wanted. In retrospect, it seems like it bloomed and died in a blink of an eye, and all I have now are fond memories and very divisive and at times bitter debates about why what we had would work or not. The saddest part for me was the fact that I think I somewhat understood the situation from her point of view and never got to tell her that I think I know why she always said it wouldn't work from the beginning, why she said her family would not accept her if we were in an official relationship, and why at the and she was resisting sex altogether, because if I had gotten her pregnant, then that would have been devastating. She was probably right the whole time, even though there is still a small part of me that still believes that it could have worked if the two of us really wanted it to work. But unfortunately for me, she felt it was too much work, even to the detriment of our friendship – so sad.

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- Christina: At this point, I feel it's highly unlikely that I will ever have a chance to tell you the story that I wanted to tell you. But what I really want you to know is that the end of that story was me telling you how wrong I was and that I am so very sorry for my attitude and overall lack of understanding. One of my oldest friends who was raised in a strict, Catholic, Mexican family set me straight about you in about

ten minutes. And now read our texts with a much different understanding, and you were right that some of my comments, particularly in the final weeks, were rude and spiteful, especially when I was drinking, which was increasingly heavy towards the end when things were falling apart. I told you many times that I will be whatever you want me to be, and if you prefer that we continue to be the way we've been these past three months, then I will do my best to be happy with that. But my heart is still heavy for you, Christina, and I still don't know why. Just please know that I will always be your friend, that I'm still a fan, and that I would do it all again in a heartbeat, but other under completely different circumstances. Regardless, I ask that you please at the very least, accept my apology. I never meant to hurt you.

- Hey Ziggy, I appreciate you taking the time to apologize for how you acted with me. These past few months have allowed me to think about what happened between us and how much of a rollercoaster it was. Although I'm no longer upset, I'm not willing to go back to that, not even under different circumstances. I hope you understand. I accept your apology Ziggy.
 - Oh no, please be clear, I was not asking nor expecting you to reconsider. That was absolutely not the purpose of my message. I just didn't want things to end the way they did without you knowing how I felt in the end. As nice as it would be to enjoy your company again, it's very hard for me to imagine you visiting me anytime soon. Thank you for accepting my apologies and I hope you enjoy the rest of your weekend.