

Rose opens her eyes, looks into the mirror on her nightstand and sees her one and only ride or die. Herself. She smiles and tells herself she's beautiful, brilliant, brave and breathtaking. Today's letter is clearly B. Every day she finds three to five adjectives to adequately describe herself. Practicing self-love was her main focus when starting each morning. Too many mornings, had started with self-loathing, hate, anger and sadness. She would not continue with that pattern. She promised herself once she was able to break-free from his grasp that she wouldn't ever allow herself to think those things of herself again. More so, she wouldn't allow anyone who felt that way about her to continue to have a place in her life.

Rose heads into the bathroom and sees her outfit from yesterday, still laid out in a neat pile on her counter. She takes it and places it in the bag of items to take to the cleaners next week. She washes up, puts on her workout clothes and slides a makeup wipe and lip gloss in her side pocket. Grabbing her phone, earbuds and keys, now she's ready to go. As she runs thru the park, she's calmer than yesterday. It's early, but not so early. She begins to work out some of the drama from last night and decides it may be time to clarify her relationship with Sam. She needs to make sure that they are on the same page.

She gets a text from Sam at 7am, confirming that she can still meet up for breakfast at 7:30am. She makes her way around the Reservoir and starts heading toward Sam's apartment. She arrives at Broadway and 82nd Street. Taking the makeup wipe out of her pocket, she wipes the sweat from her face, neck and boobs. Not even almost caring about the fact that she's doing this while standing in the street. Then applies more lip gloss. She didn't need to get all fancy with Sam, but she knew he'd give her a kiss hello and she didn't want him kissing her sweaty face. When she arrives in front of the diner, she sees Sam dressed extremely casually. He's in shorts and a tank top. She can tell that he also just came from working out. He sees her and immediately stands and is beaming. She wraps her arms around him to give him a hug and discovers that he himself is still sweaty. As she pulls away, he kisses her lightly on her lips. She wasn't expecting that. He never did that in public. She tries not to think too much on that.

As she sits, she realizes that he had already ordered her a coffee and even stirred in a touch of cream. He was good like that. Like the few times when she had spent the night at his place, he set the coffee pot to brew so it'd be ready for her in the morning. One time he even got up and made her breakfast. She refused to allow herself to be

like that with any guys ever again. She may be an amazing cook, but only cooked for large parties or just for herself. Never just for herself and one other person. Never again would she allow someone else to make her feel like she was only good for her cooking and her body. Her next person would want to take care of her more than she wanted to take care of them. As she sips her coffee the waitress comes over and asks what they would like to eat. His response startles her as he opens his mouth and says, “Her. But as that’s not what is on the menu yet, so I guess I’ll have...” and as he places his order, she can’t even hear his words. She’s so taken aback by his response. It’s so abrupt. He’s never been this forward before. Not knowing what she was ordering, Rose simply says she’ll have whatever he’s having.

When the waitress leaves the table, Rose punches Sam on the arm and asks what has come over him. Looking her dead in the eyes, he says, “Sometimes it’s hard to keep from being a little bold around you. You make me want to be more forward. I don’t know what it is. Maybe it’s because I haven’t seen you glowing like this in a while. I just really want you.” Okay, Rose thinks to herself. Maybe this isn’t the day that they should be having this conversation about their relationship boundaries. Or maybe it was the perfect day. She had no idea. Sam gets up and Rose thinks that he’s going to use the restroom, but instead he comes to her side of the booth. Again, something he doesn’t normally do. He sits next to her and begins kissing her neck and rubbing her thigh. Yeah, maybe they can have this conversation at a later time. Rose was starting to get a stirring and they were going to need to leave soon. The waitress comes back to see if they need a refill on coffee and startles Sam, who then asks her to have the kitchen pack up their breakfast to go.

Rose looks at her watch. It’s 8am. She had time. Her conference wasn’t until lunchtime, she could give him an hour or so. The waitress brings the to-go breakfast, with a huge smile and Sam hands her thirty dollars, clearly overpaying for whatever he ordered. As they walk out of the diner, Sam firmly plants his hand on Rose’s ass. This was just too much public displays of, well, she doesn’t know what, but if he didn’t stop soon, she’d start to get really uncomfortable. They walk down the block to his apartment door. They only had to go up one flight of stairs, since his apartment was on the second floor. He unlocks the door, holds it open for her and before she even notices, is scooping her up in his arms and carrying her up to his apartment. He puts her down in front of the door and all she can think is, she’s so grateful that he put her down and didn’t carry her over his threshold. She didn’t think that she would be

able to recover from him doing that. She would literally go running for the hills if he was brazen enough to do that to her.

They enter the apartment and Sam places the bag on the counter, takes Rose's hand and guides her into the bathroom. Without releasing her hand, he reaches into the shower and turns on the faucet. Rose is a little confused as each of their previous encounters took place in the bedroom. He kicks off his sneakers and then his socks. Rose stands there watching as he then slowly removes his tank top and athletic shorts. She's fighting the urge but gives in and she begins to bite down on her lower lip. She's starting to get really excited and starts to take off her own sneakers, but Sam stops her. He bends down and removes each one of her shoes and socks for her. Rose can feel the dripping down her leg as his hands run up the length of her calf, over her knee, now making their way to her thigh. He tugs at her shorts, pulling them over her plump bottom. As he stands, he runs his tongue along her thigh to taste the juices that have started flowing from her body.

She lifts her hands over her head, so he can slide her tank top off of her. She's happy she wore a sports bra that unzips from the front to avoid that awkward removal of a sports bra spin. He slowly unzips her sports bra and as her breasts release, she's instantly self-conscious. She didn't understand why she felt nervous. She shouldn't have felt any sort of uncomfortable. Not with Sam. They had been naked with each other over a dozen times now. What was different about today? Was it because she was sweaty? Maybe that was it. Maybe she was self-conscious about her sweat.

He walks her into the shower and begins to clean her off. She takes a bar of soap and begins lathering her breasts. She was most awkward about boob sweat. Then she begins cleaning the rest of her body. He just watches as she does this. He admires how she so delicately and thoroughly cleans every inch of her body. She doesn't wash her hair but allows some water to hit it. They reposition themselves in the shower, so he can clean off. Now it's Rose who's admiring Sam as he cleans off. Cleaning his chest, working his way down. Rose is so distracted as she watches him clean his member that she completely forgets all the reservations that were running thru her head.

She laughs to herself, wondering what it was that she was so nervous about. This was Sam. He was her go-to, her just chill guy to be around. There was no need to be weird around him. As they finish up, Sam gets out first, grabs a towel off the rack and hands it to Rose before taking one to dry himself also. As they stand there drying

themselves off in the bathroom, Rose's last bit of nerves settle, and she drops her towel to the ground and grabs Sam's hand to guide him into the bedroom. But Sam won't let her just take control. He stops her in her tracks and begins kissing her passionately. His kisses were deeper, stronger, more intense than ever before. What had him like this?

He lifts Rose up, and she wraps her legs around his midsection as he walks her over to the bed and lies her down. He climbs on top of her and like a hot knife into butter, he glides inside her and her moaning is immediate and loud. There was always something about being like this in the morning that made her forget her inhibitions. She was as loud as her body wanted and didn't care one bit who she disturbed. Normally, when she screamed this loud, he'd cover her mouth. But there was this morning was different. Today, he wasn't just doing her. This didn't just feel like sex. She wasn't just a sure thing. She was this amazing woman who he wanted to make love to.

Rose could feel Sam's love for her with each intentional motion. With each thrust deeper inside her body. She tried to fight it. She didn't want to give in to these feelings, but she couldn't help herself. With Sam mounted on top of her, she sat up and wrapped her arms around his delicate body and kissed him. Sam's kisses had a new fervor she hadn't felt before this morning. She was completely consumed by not only his touch but his emotion. As she rolls him over, now dropping his back to the bed. Looking down at him, she runs her nails down his bare chest; leaving red streaks on his skin. He grabs hold of her waist and keeps her firmly planted there as she grinds, and her ass weighs down on his balls.

Now it's Sam that's moaning loudly. This isn't something that Rose was used to either. He was never this audible. Again, focusing on just the two of them, staying in the moment, she continued to work his body all the while leaning down and kissing his lips, neck, chest. Removing one of his hands from her waist, she takes it up to her mouth and begins sucking on his fingers one at a time. Sam then uses his moistened fingers to trace her nipples and Rose is losing her control. Sam looks up at Rose and utters the words, "Cum with me." Rose doesn't have to be told once. She had held off for so long, normally she would've climaxed three or four times by now, but today she just wanted one good release.

As they climax, Rose is looking directly into Sam's eyes and sees a trickle of one single tear drop fall from his right eye. Rose goes back to that feeling of fear. What

was happening here? Sam really needed to snap out of it. Rose unmounts Sam and lays down next to him, on his arm. They had laid like this countless times. Even before all the inappropriate stuff. They would sit or lie together fully dressed, just talking. Sam would hold her, and she'd melt into his chest, tracing the ripples on his arms with her fingertips. She hadn't seen it before now, but there was something so incredibly sexy about Sam. This level of vulnerability she hadn't allowed in years. She shutters for a moment, being scared of being this open with someone. What if this wasn't what he was feeling also? What if she was manufacturing this reality in her own mind? What if she just needed to feel this way with someone, but it wasn't Sam that she needed? She couldn't hurt him like that. She also couldn't ever be stuck in a relationship of nicety or convenience. Even if Sam was the nicest guy on the planet, she couldn't be his forever person if she didn't feel those sparks.

Sam being as preceptive as he always was with not just her, but everything, knows that something isn't quite right. He begins running his fingers through her hair. He knows that this is a sure-fire way to get Rose to relax. When he played with her hair, she turned into a cuddly little kitten. She'd roll over, curl up and be completely consumed by his touch. This time was just as all the rest. Rose is now relaxing all of her muscles, rolling over and taking the deepest, most soothing breaths. Sam leans over and begins kissing her shoulders, down her spine and to the small of her back. Knowing she could use it, he repositions himself, so he's now mounted behind her and massaging her back. Sam was a trained masseuse. He had become certified back in college to earn extra money and his hands helped keep him very comfortable while living in NYC. He definitely had the best hands in town. He had never done this before for her. He had always offered to massage all her tension away. Rose thought it was a cheesy pick up line and a way to get his hands on her naked body. Never had she imagined it would feel this amazing.

Sam kneads out a knot that Rose was convinced had a permanent home up at the top of her back. He continues rubbing her back and relaxing her for nearly an hour until she's completely melted into the bed. With her body completely relaxed and while he's still mounted on top of her, Sam enters her body from behind. Not asking for permissions because, well, she had said numerous times, he could do whatever he wanted to her body. He had never been inside her this way. It wasn't that opportunity hadn't presented itself for this position, but he didn't ever want her to feel like he was there just to get off. Now as he thrusts inside her he feels something

else stirring inside him. He's feeling a deeper appreciation and wanting for Rose. He's regretting not doing this sooner. Their connection as he's like that with her is undeniable. She's moving fluidly with his body and pushing hers back up against his. Rose utters three words that send Sam into overdrive, "More. Please. Deeper."

Grabbing tighter onto her waist, he's pushing forward with every bit of force in his body and she's matching his vigor in kind. They both climax again and Sam's body is now the one melting, but on top of Rose's back. As he lays there on top of her, Rose thinks to herself, "I guess I'll be taking another shower before leaving Sam's house." She enjoys having Sam's body weight on hers. His body felt so good and his weight was a welcome addition to her day. Worried he might suffocate her, he rolls next to Rose and takes her into his arms, again kissing her deeply. So much so, that again it begins to make Rose feel uncomfortable. She wants to be consumed by his touch and passion, but worries he is going to want more than she has to offer in this moment. She doesn't even begin to know how to pull away from his embrace when everything he's doing feels so incredible.

Their encounter doesn't stop there. They become more consumed by each other's presence and climax again. This time only from each other's touch. She's certain it will be the last for the morning. Rose is able to finagle her way out of his grasp and is laying on her back, looking up at the ceiling. Sam begins to tickle Rose's side of her body and it occurs to her that he may have more in him and she jumps out of bed. Nervous she'll let the entire day go by without leaving this bedroom, she motions to leave the room. Sam wanting her to stay, stands, wraps his arms around her and begins kissing her neck. While he's kissing her, Sam starts shifting them over to the bathroom. If he wanted more, she thinks to herself, then he can have it in the shower, because she had to be at The Museum of Natural History in about than two hours. They enter the bathroom; Rose turns the shower on and they both climb in under the water.

Sam takes the sides of Rose's face in his hands, staring deep into her soul and kisses her in a way she only ever imagined being kissed. As her knees become jelly from his touch, Sam lifts her up. Rose wraps her legs around Sam's waist, and again he enters her body. He walks them over to the shower wall for support and as their bodies move, a steady stream of water from the shower covers their bodies, providing an additional heat that wasn't necessary but is so very welcome. Rose's moans have graduated to screams and all inhibition has gone away. She's living in this moment.

Forgetting about time constraints. Forgetting about obligations. Forgetting that Sam wasn't "the one." Ignoring the fact that she was already worried Sam was getting attached. Just truly enjoying the fact that she could have an intimate connection with someone. Especially someone who made her feel so safe.

As they remain there, in the water, in each other's embrace, Sam pulls back for another moment and again is staring into Rose's eyes. He continues to thrust and just stare at her. For the first time, Rose didn't look away. She allowed herself to acknowledge that he was truly looking at her. Just her. Not the vision of her that he wanted to see but the raw naked version of her truest self that she was allowing him to take part in. The bathroom was bright, being nearly the afternoon. Rose was examining all the small intricacies of Sam's lovely face. The shape of his eyes, his little freckles, the straight line of his nose. His lips. She really liked his lips. They were so soft and did such a good job with her body. They made her feel secure and today they made her feel passionate. She takes his lips into hers once again and as she moves down to his neck, he whispers into her ear, "Cum with me." Rose liked the sound of that, so as she bit down on his neck, with one final scream, she obliged his request.

Carefully allowing her to dismount, Rose and Sam are now standing in the shower, finally cleaning off. This time Rose knows she has to take care and actually wash and condition her hair. Her hair dries fast, and there's no doubt it'll be mostly dry by the time she gets home. Sam finishes and steps out of the shower. He places another fresh towel on the bar outside the shower for Rose to use when she gets out. He leaves the bathroom and Rose's mind starts wandering into all of her obligations today. She had to go to this conference, then meet up with Mr. Johnston and pack an overnight bag for her sister's house. She's kicking herself that she didn't already pack her bag. She needed to leave first thing in the morning, and she'd be tight for time already. It takes three and a half hours to get to her sister's place out in Montauk and she needed to be on one of the first trains that left Penn Station at just after seven or nine-thirty. She didn't like getting out there too late into the afternoon. Her sister put the kids to bed so early that she never felt like she had enough time to bond with her niece and nephew. Even her sister and her husband went to bed early. Rose always ended up sitting by herself on the porch, with a glass of alcohol in hand, listening to the nighttime creatures, watching the stars and thinking about life.

Rose steps out of the shower and immediately thinks that this was all a bad idea. Her running attire was tight and musty from her sweat. What was the point of

her showering to put back on clingy, dirty clothes and then have to shower again? Just as she finishes that thought, Sam re-enters the bathroom with clothes in hand. He had grabbed her a wife beater (an expression that hit too close to home and she did not like at all), a t-shirt and pair of shorts. He explains how he found the smallest pair of shorts with a draw string that he owned along with the smallest shirt and a tank top (since he knew the other term would make her cringe) to secure her breasts, so she doesn't feel like she's not wearing a bra. Rose thanks him and as he leaves the bathroom, he kisses her on the cheek.

Rose begins putting on his clothing. As she puts on each layer, she notices that it all smells of Downy fabric softener. She was happy to have the fresh scent on her skin. Everything fits nicely. Not too baggy and not too clingy. As she leaves the bathroom, she notices that Sam even has a pair of new socks out for her. While putting on her socks and sneakers, she acknowledges to herself that this level of care makes her instantly uncomfortable. She wouldn't allow herself to get used to this. This was not what their relationship was. It was supposed to be one of inappropriate convenience. A friendship that occasionally got friendlier and that was all. None of these extra special niceties. This would get her real comfortable, really quick and eventually she'd just settle for Sam. She refused to live a life without that spark. Sam didn't make her heart stop. He didn't give her that pause in her breath when she saw him. She still needed to have that talk with Sam, but today was not that day. Looking up at the clock on his microwave she realizes she has no time at all.

Sam seeing the panic on her face, grabs his phone and after about thirty-seconds announces that a car will be arriving downstairs in five-minutes to take her home. With a sigh of relief, Rose smiles at Sam and thanks him for understanding she had already pushed the morning's activities a little too far. Sam hands Rose the bag with her breakfast still in there. He lets her know that there's also a piece of cherry pie in there for her beloved Susan. Rose smiles and shakes her head, appreciating that he had done this. She would've felt so bad returning home empty handed to this kind elderly lady. Sam rides the elevator down with Rose and as the car arrives, pulls her in for a delicate hug, followed by one entirely too intense kiss. Rose looking up at Sam and tells him, "Thank you for an enjoyable morning, but I really do have to go now." Sam finally releases his grasp of Rose and she's on her way home.

As the car pulls up to Rose's building, she sees Susan standing outside with a worried look on her face. As Rose exits the car, Susan is visibly calmed. Susan runs

over (as fast as an elderly lady can move without breaking her hip) and wraps her arms around Rose. Then proceeds to scold Rose for not telling her that she'd be back late this morning. She was so worried that something happened to her while she was on her run. Rose feels instant remorse realizing she hadn't mentioned to Susan that she had breakfast plans with Sam. Rose loves and appreciates having someone who cares this much about her in her life. Not having family close by made her lonely at times. Susan was Rose's family, like the grandmother she always wanted. Rose invites Susan up to her apartment while she gets ready for the conference this afternoon.

When they arrive up at Rose's apartment Susan immediately settles onto the recliner in the living room. Rose loves how Susan loved that chair. She really needed to get her one for Christmas or maybe Rose's birthday. That was coming up next month and Rose just needed to get it ordered. She makes a mental note to do that early next week. Rose asks if Susan has eaten and she says she had some coffee and crackers earlier. Rose smiles and takes the food out of the bag to heat it up for Susan. There was no way Rose could eat right away after the events of this morning. Susan sees the plate of eggs, bacon, potatoes and her face lights up. There really is nothing quite like seeing Susan excited about food. "Well if you like that, then wait until you see what Sam got you for dessert later. Cherry pie from that diner right by his house that you like so much." Susan frowns over to Rose and says, "I'm so sad that Sam isn't the one you need in your life. He makes for such a great friend and he'd be a wonderful and caring provider for you and your future children. If only he was your forever someone." Rose appreciated that she had someone in her corner looking out for her that wasn't encouraging her to just hurry up and settle down. She really needed to hear that, especially when she was going to go to her sister's house tomorrow. Her sister was always encouraging her to find someone and be done with it. As if the last five years never happened. Like settling down would fix some level of brokenness that Rose felt in her heart.

Rose starts to get ready for this conference and is kind of annoyed that she feels so inclined to wear a suit to this event. She'd really love to be in workout gear right now. Susan finishes her breakfast and immediately comes over to Rose's closet to play dress up with Rose. At least once a month Rose would ask for Susan's advice on an outfit and allow her to pick out what she'd wear. Susan would treat Rose like a Barbie doll; it was absolutely adorable. Susan takes out five suits, all different colors, none of which are black. "Bold women never wear black." was Susan's mantra. Then she

matches each one with a beautiful silk blouse. The dark brown suit with a pale rose blouse. The light blue suit with a beige blouse. The dark blue suit with a yellow blouse. The beige suit with a green blouse. The pale pink suit with a dark magenta blouse. Then the shoes come out. Every pair of pumps that she brings out is paired with the blouse color. Rose goes over and hold up each outfit to her face, so Susan can properly view Rose's current skin tone to the colors Susan has picked out.

It's decided with Rose's current level of tanning that she should wear the pale pink suit. Rose is happy to oblige any request Susan has and even goes as far as to ask her to help apply makeup. Never has Susan helped with Rose's make up, but Rose has seen so many photos of Susan done up as a young woman and is excited to see how Susan will do on her today. Rose sits at the vanity and while Susan is applying her makeup she asks, "So, you and your Sam must have had quite the roll in the hay this morning. Seeing as how you came home in his clothes. Don't think I didn't notice. Was last night not enough for you young people? Oh, to be young again." Rose begins to blush. "You're going to have me mess up your makeup getting all shy like this. You know you were intimate with him. Don't act like I don't know these things." Rose gives Susan an overview of the experience. Just enough to get her heart racing and to where she says, "That's quite enough, you fresh young lady." Rose smiles and as Susan finishes up her makeup is truly impressed. She contours her face so well, making her appear even more slender than she already is. Susan is proud of her handiwork and thanks Rose for giving her such a beautiful canvas with which to work.

Rose gets dressed and models for Susan. While she was getting dressed, Susan cleaned up the dishes and throws Rose's clothes from her morning workout in the laundry basket. Rose forgot how nice it was having Susan up here. Her very aura made everything brighter and lighter. Grabbing a purse and her external phone charger, Rose is now ready to go. She takes the elevator one flight down with Susan and lets her know that she'll be by after her seminar to say hi, since she won't be back until Sunday night after her nephews' birthday party. Rose is sad that Susan didn't want to take the trip out to Montauk with her. She'd love it out there, but the nearly four hours on the train each way would destroy this dear sweet old lady. With one final hug, Rose is finally off to her seminar.