

The Dummy's Guide to Marriage Proposals

by J.A. Pak

She first asked him to marry her when she was five, when 'marry me' meant 'I like you more than anybody else' and she loved everybody around her who was nice to her. And he was so very nice to her.

She waited two more years to ask again. He informed her, with regret, that he was already married. She shouldn't have dallied at recess. She wanted to ask again when she was eleven, but she'd begun that process of self-suppression. Her next proposal was when she'd just turned nineteen. She was a little on the drunk side and he was so beautiful and all her emotions, her desires, her ambitions, her hopes just kept tumbling and tumbling out of her. It was her longest proposal — about twenty minutes. She cried. And cried and cried.

She didn't have the opportunity to ask again until she was fifty-six. She asked very lightly and he said that he loved her and always will.

Time flew and suddenly they were eighty-two. Week by week he came by and they took long walks and he'd find himself proposing. And she'd smile and hold his hand and the question flies in circles, in small, looping circles like a toy aeroplane caught in a drift of warm air.

