

# This Story Isn't About You

by Jennifer Donnell

This story isn't about you, even if it seems as though it is. Still, when you delve into paragraph three, you might decide that it's less about the cosmos and more about your smile. Paragraph four will define one of ten different facial expressions I've seen you make. When I list my observations of your character, like a scientist observing mice, you'll wonder if paragraph ten is hostile. Section eleven will distract you. I'll sway off topic and climb atop my soapbox, threaten to resume being vegan and rant about animal testing. I'll edit most of that out later, to save face. The closing paragraphs, fifteen and sixteen, will be sentimental bullshit- sappy and effusive affirmations. Granted, some of the lines will tug at your heart strings. Others shall lead you to research whether all romantic love is based on assumption and personalized mythology. A week after first reading it, you'll fold the story in half and place it in a book upon your living room shelf. How charming it will be to read back in twenty years, you'll think. Until five years later, when you'll sell that very book at a garage sale, forgetting the pages contained within. Whoever buys the book will find my missive, read it, and hold it to their chest. It will strike a chord of nostalgia for the deep, kindred, crazy kind of love the pages seemed to authenticate, which they've yet to find. They'll seek it everywhere, in everyone, maybe finding it... or not.

I wish I'd known this before we met.

