

Maggie's Mayhem

by M. Barns

Maggie told the universe she would kiss him if the rain would just stop. That she would put her high heels on, walk in the damp soil to the middle of the field and tell him exactly how she felt. Tell him that she loved him. Or maybe loved him. Or fully loved him, but that she was sure that she loved him in *some damn way*. She was tired of the universe screaming at her. Tired of the song she once dedicated to him coming on the radio at the exact moment that she started her car, tired of work letting her off early on days he wanted to go to the beach. But mostly she was tired of her body screaming to get closer when they brushed skin, of setting her hand close to his and hoping he'd grasp it, of holding her breath and not knowing when she could exhale.

Tonight was no remarkable night. The sun would rise and set without question, children's hearts would break with truths, around the world millions of people would lose someone they cared about; millions people would fall in love. It was an average day—it was unremarkable. It was May 16th, and a Wednesday.

Maggie remembered the way she first told him she liked him. It was in middle school, she passed a note up the rows through her trusted friends who had spent hours the night before on three-way with her perfecting its details. It was written on lime green paper with a pink felt-tipped pen. They had decided against the glitter colors, and Janie made her rewrite it three times so there wasn't even the slightest hint of a heart above any of the I's. They decided to keep it simple, that way if Mr. Teds caught them he wouldn't try to correct the grammar on the over-head projector. They also thought it would be best if she didn't sign her name— she would smile at him when he read it, that's how he'd know.

But when he got the letter, and read : *Do you like me? Mark ☐Y or ☐N*, he quickly turned red and flung it under his desk. He never looked up so that she could smile, and didn't bother to turn and ask Janie who passed it. Maggie shamefully grabbed it on her way to lunch that afternoon, and shoved it into her pencil box without peeling it open again. It took her well over ten years to get up the courage to try again, and she was wondering if a twenty three year old could get away with passing a note to someone she liked when she was ten. She imagined how much easier it must have been when people wrote love letters. How with the various types of social media you were forced to be reminded in every possibly way if you were rejected, instead of being able to pine over your lovers lost response in solitude like generations did before.

She wondered if the universe would hold her to her promise if it stopped raining just before midnight, or if she fell asleep and slept until two in the morning. Did the universe operate on standard time, or did she have until sunrise to kiss him like in the Disney movies. She had never been so nervous to kiss a boy before, in fact the last boy she had tried to chase was the boy she fell for after him in junior high. Once she developed breasts, an affection for first-person shooters and bought a closet full of low-cut tops she never had that problem again— until now.

Things with him were easy, simple. She didn't think of him the way she thought of other guys— dating him wouldn't be a game. He made her want to be a better person, and that scared her. But a promise was a promise, so when the sky cleared she strapped on her heels, walked to the field where the ceremony was being held, and stood in the corner until he noticed her. As he walked towards her she tried to exhale but caught herself holding her breath.

I have something to say, she paused, sliding an old green piece of paper into his hand. *But first I need to know, are you in, or are you out?*

