

*Unpublished Final Letter from Sam to Alex*

May 10th

Dear Mr. Knightley,

Alex, you've created a problem. I can't sleep. As you know, I wrote to Mr. Knightley when I couldn't sleep. He's been gone for some time now and I don't miss him; but the problem remains... it's 2am and I'm awake. So after we marry, I'm passing this problem to you...

You were sweet to talk to me for so long tonight, but when you fell asleep about an hour ago, it was time to let you hang up. I hope you are sleeping well and dreaming of tomorrow. My mind is full of it.

I can't believe it's here. I'm delighted it's just the two of us tomorrow evening. The calm before the storm. Our last evening of sanity. I love your plan: grab you at the airport then head straight to Chicago Pizza and Oven Grinder. We won't let anyone know you arrived early. And I get you all to myself for a few hours. Thank you.

And Topolobampo for the Rehearsal Dinner? What an incredibly thoughtful treat. Yes, Mom told me you arranged it; but you must not blame her. Ashley's *thoughtlessness first betrayed to me that you had been concerned in the matter; and, of course, I could not rest till I knew the particulars.* Thank goodness, darling, you not only find this habit endearing, but you participate fully. Otherwise, we'd be in trouble. Lizzy Bennet really does express things well, doesn't she?

Speaking of “well,” I’m so pleased that my last day at the *Tribune* went smoothly. I know I told you all about it; but I don’t think I thanked you. I wouldn’t have taken that internship if you hadn’t encouraged me. It felt bold and risky – it was everything I feared and everything I needed.

And now I move on. I think this may be the first time I approach “change” with joy and anticipation. I’m so thrilled to move to New York, Alex. I can’t wait to share that city with you. And I think long-form work will suit my writing style better than newspaper. *The New York Review of Books* is ideal for me – for now. While I’ve planned our wedding with Mom, I’ve refined some of my story ideas with Dad. He helped me plot a few of the children’s and I even began a couple early drafts. I’m so excited. I wanted to share all this with you after our honeymoon – but there it is.

You were right on another point too – although I’ve missed you desperately, I needed to stay in Chicago these past months as you needed to work in New York. I don’t think I could’ve gotten much done with you in reach. And look what you’ve accomplished. You finished the manuscript by our wedding. Well done! I’m so impressed. And it’s your best yet, Alex. You are truly a gifted writer.

Just one point — Cole’s girlfriend will need more flaws and fears in your next book. I want her to stick around for years and years. She reminds me of someone. But I must say – it took a lot for them to come together. Goodness, what lies! What conflict! Hits close to home, darling... But I’m happy to say, I forgave you much more quickly than she did Cole. You were pretty rough on him.

In the end, though, it did work out, didn't it – for them and, more importantly, for us? And it culminates in three days. Saturday will be a celebration like nothing I can imagine. Mom and Dad have taken care of that. There is first a brunch, then all sorts of dressing details, the ceremony and then the reception. A whirlwind. Mom even says we must attend the brunch at different times. Seems you're not supposed to see me before I walk down the aisle. I wanted to protest, but she's vibrating with excitement — I can't steal a single moment from her.

So your first sight of me Saturday will be in the church – all in white, if you can find me. Mom has packed the place with so many lilies I may get lost. It's everything I never knew I wanted. Part of me adores it all, but the sensible part wanted to rein her in. Dad says I must accept that parents live to dote on their daughters. You'll be the same someday, I'm sure.

Enough now. I will send this — I hope your phone doesn't beep when an email arrives. It's time to shut this computer down and try to sleep. I will dream of you. I will dream of your eyes – locked on mine during one single shining moment.

“I do”

Those are the only two words I want to hear and say this entire weekend. Mom and Dad can have their parties and I will try not to retreat from all the fun — just keep a tight grip on my hand and I'll stay.

But that moment, Alex, that's ours. Only ours. I promise not to cry. I will only smile. No, I may laugh. You once said Jane Bennet was too timid for me; she smiled during her wedding in *Pride & Prejudice's* conclusion. Lizzy laughed. But, seriously,

only you and I know what it's taken to get us here. That's the journey, the love that may bring tears to my eyes.

Good night, My "Dear Mr. Knightley." And Alex, I'll see you tomorrow...

Yours forever,

Sam