

AND THEN WE FALL

...IN LOVE OR APART?

A SHORT STORY

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AND THEN WE FALL

So I'm gay. Problem is, every other girl in my town was either straight or LGBTQ+ and taken already. That or they were hiding out in their fictional closets. Mind you I liked to think they were still in hiding. You can't keep saying how cute your best friend looks in that tank top and have it solely be platonic.

Still, I wasn't really looking for love. Not really. Well, maybe a little bit. Okay, sure. I thought about looking, but in a sea of Koreans who mostly seem to dispel anything not, well, Korean, it was hard. Sure, all my fellow foreigners seemed to fall on the queer spectrum, but again, taken. The whole lot of them. How was that even possible? Granted my town was small, but like, surely one of them would be available and my type?

But it's fine. I'm fine.

youllbealoneforever

I'm fine.

It was weird being back in the closet again, however. I was afraid to say I was out and proud at work for fear of being fired or just simply, not rehired. I've heard horror

stories of this happening and I for sure didn't want to be part of it. I loved my job and I planned on living in Korea for a very long time. I'd like to try and become a citizen, even. (Not that that would grant me access to be out in the open among the general populous, but still). Only with other foreigners could I be myself.

Thankfully, I had my wonderful soul-kitty, Sorren, to keep me company. Who needs human companionship when you already have your soulmate in cat form?

Right?

crazycatladycrazycatlady

Not to mention, Sorren was an amazing cuddler, too.

But I wondered what it would be like to cuddle a human instead of a cat. To come home to see someone who loves me just as I love them welcome me back from a long day of work. My cat was great, sure. But for all her cute meows as a reply, it wasn't not the same.

That's when Facebook came into play.

Sorren was there for me, as per usual, but I was wondering where I could find others like myself. Y'know, someone queer. And also, single. Good old Facebook groups to the rescue.

I thought, sure, why not look for some LGBTQ+ clubs or something. Yeah, Korea is hella conservative but it's also modern. There's bound to be something out there. Right?

Oh, most definitely right.

The very first group I found; I asked if there were any gay places in Seoul. Yes, a newbie question, but I was a newbie to Korea at the time. One girl responded.

"I know of a few places. I'll be visiting them soon during Seoul Pride. I'll be going with a few friends. Message me if you want to join us!"

Okay, so, wow. Wasn't expecting Korea to have Pride. I'm not sure why I was surprised but I was.

So, I messaged her. I hoped it wasn't weird that I was basically third wheeling myself to join this girl and her friends.

thisisacrazyidea

Turns out this girl lived in Busan. She sent me a picture of herself, and we called each other a few times, and I was instantly curious about her. She told me she was half Scottish, half Korean. Imagine a ginger Korean with a Scottish accent.

wowsheishotohmygod

Days went by and I was already crushing hard on this girl. But, whatever. Did I really think I stood a chance with her? She was probably already dating someone. Maybe one of those friends she mentioned.

Still, I never let it bother me. Much.

I can't believe I pictured her every night before I went to bed. Sure, I had a crush on her, but certainly nothing more.

The day for Seoul Pride finally arrived and I finally got to meet my crush in person, and I couldn't have been happier. It was the perfect day to meet a love interest at Pride, I'll admit. It had rained not long before our first meeting and a literal rainbow hung over the sky. I kid you not, a rainbow. At Pride. How cool was that? I whipped out my Polaroid (why yes, I may be a hipster) and snapped the perfect picture of that joyous occasion. Could that day have been any more movie perfect?

Well, like with any movie, there was bound to be some conflict.

Out came what I like to call "The Anti-Love Protesters." You know, the super conservative Catholics that haven't realized yet that it's okay to be gay and that God loves everyone.

There were so many of them. They lined the entire parade with signs and megaphones shouting what I assume they thought was the Lord's message but really was hatred towards us.

"It's a sin!"

"You're going to hell!"

"It's Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve!"

"Jesus says..."

What did we yell at the protesters who spewed hate at us the entire time? Love, of course.

"We love you, too!"

"Happy Pride!"

"Have an amazing day as well!"

"Jesus loves you, too!"

And my crush? She held my hand as we marched proudly through the crowd.

But all good things come to an end. Even if it seemed to be something amazing.

My crush asked me to visit her during my upcoming summer vacation in Busan. Having never been, I greedily accepted.

dontscrewthisupdontscrewthisup

Seoul Pride was amazing, ignoring the protesters of course. I met so many amazing people. I'm still friends with most of them. I'll never forget how they made my first Korean Pride such a memorable experience. It was them, not The Anti-Love Protesters, that showed true compassion and adoration.

Days after Pride and talking to my crush over text pretty much all day, every day, my summer vacation was finally here. I was so excited to visit Busan for the first time. Seeing the city with my crush was a bonus.

She took me to all the famous places in the city. Okay,

she took me to all the most popular foreigner bars by Haeundae beach. Semantics. I'm not much of a drinker, but I'd sip a drink or two to be near her.

I learned a lot about my crush during my vacation. I learned that she had a pet rabbit, Angus. I learned that she spoke three languages. I also learnt that she was a poet and published a few of her works in some Scottish magazines. But most importantly, I learned that I was falling in love with her.

The last day of my Busan trip, my crush and I, as well as a few of her friends, decided to pull an all-nighter on the beach and stay up to watch the sunrise. It was amazing. Sitting on the sand making sandcastles. Telling stories about our lives. The bridge put on a light show that dazzled in the water's reflection. The perfect breeze and live music.

Her.

I had confessed to her friends that I liked her, and they had confided that she may feel the same.

ohmygodohmygod

I needed to tell her. The moment was right.

She stood alone in the shallow waters, with literal fireworks above her head from a nearby group of kids. If this wasn't a movie moment, I didn't know what was. So, it was time to grow a pair of lady balls and tell her.

holyshithollyshithollyshit

"Hey," I said, trying to sound a lot calmer than I was.

She smiled sweetly. Damn that smile.

"So, uh, we've been getting to know each other this past while, and I think you're hella cool. It's okay if you don't feel the same way or anything, but I just wanted to know that I like you. A lot."

Fireworks sounded loudly above our heads.

"I fancy you, too," she finally said.

I would have stumbled if I was walking.

In an instant, her lips were on mine. No kiss I'd had before even compared to this moment. This was pure magic and bliss. It was the only way I could describe it. And with each tender kiss, it confirmed that though our lives were hectic with all the traveling, we were bound to work it out to be together. After all, I had been there for her since our first Pride together and I would be there for her until time separated us. If anyone told me otherwise, they could all go suck it. Because when I found her, I knew I'd found the closest thing to heaven.

lieslieslieslies

I should have known that with a movie moment like this, it was bound to fail. Something bad must happen to counteract the good. I mean, I'm usually an optimist, but yeah. This was not a fairytale ending.

Sure, things were going great for the first few months of dating. I'd traveled to Busan almost every weekend and we attended Pride events all over Korea. I do *not* recommend day tripping to Jeju-do for Pride during a typhoon.

We talked on the phone for hours, FaceTimed every few days, and overall, we were just in sync.

But I was blinded by love. I didn't realize the effect she was having on my mental health. My friends saw it, warned me about it, but I didn't listen. Even my cat warned me in her own way. (She would "eject", er, "get sick from the mouth." I have an extreme phobia of that so can't actually say the word, sorry!) I should have listened. I mean, she didn't eject before my girlfriend was around. (And lo, she stopped after things were over but yeah).

I didn't listen.

whywhywhywhy

It was small things at first. Like not following me back on

any social media. No big deal. It's fine. Totally normal not to have your girlfriend follow you on everything.

It's fine.

Or how she hated coming to my small town because she was too good for it (her words not mine). I went broke, literally, going to Busan all the time. The five-hour journey wasn't cheap.

She started telling me stories about her life, which like, yeah. Not a bad thing. But these stories were so outlandish that they didn't sound believable. But I agreed with her because that's what girlfriends do. Be supportive and all that. (Like, I'm sorry. I don't care how VIP you apparently are to an airline. If you are late and the pilot supposedly calls you to make sure you catch your flight on time and when you do get on the plane everyone is excited and claps for you because you made it, well. No. I don't buy it. I don't care if you were the Queen of England. If you delay my flight I'm not going to be pleased. Also, they don't know you? So weird).

Then she lost her job and thus I had to pay for everything but I didn't have the money to spare. Yet somehow, I found the cash to help. I loved her, after all. I was going to help her no matter what.

stupidstupidstupid

Still, I only saw the romantic side of things. Granted, looking back at it now, there wasn't much. At least, not from her end of the relationship. I thought I was happy. I truly did.

I wasn't.

I was miserable because she was being rude to me all the time. I'll spare the details. They weren't nice words.

Then the 'incident' happened. Otherwise known as the absolute worst night of my life.

It was New Year's Eve. My friend and I joined my girl-

friend at a local bar in town. I was so happy that my girlfriend decided to join me in my town and spend this special holiday with my best friend and me. It was great at first. Lots of fun stories were shared and our comradery was building. We even shared a kiss into the new year, something I'd always wanted to do. It was magical.

stupidstupidstupid

Now that it was a new year, my friend left early, leaving me alone with the girl I thought I loved. She was absolutely wasted. Having only had one drink earlier that night, I was fine. But my partner? Gone. To this day I'm not sure if it was the alcohol or the mental illness. I later found out about what brought about the 'incident'. But whatever it was, I wasn't ready.

Here's where things got really dark and complicated.

I got a cab for us back to my home. She was on the phone in the cab, although I'm unsure if she really was because one second, she was talking to me and the next she wasn't. The moment the driver pulled up to my house, she rushed out, still on the phone and started going the wrong way home. She's stupid drunk, right? Nothing unusual. Yet.

I told her to go home and she ran waaaay the hell down some other road, screaming into her phone telling them "to stand down don't shoot" or something like that. Then when I caught up with her, she flew herself to the ground and was bawling hysterically, saying her mom shot and killed her sister. I'd never seen her so upset. And really, who could blame her? Her mom just murdered someone? Was this even for real?

shitshitshit

After that, she got up and started wandering aimlessly and trying to walk in front of cars and that's when I started calling everyone I knew. I was panicking. When she plunked

in the middle of the road, I ran in front of cars to stop them from hitting her. I was so scared I was gonna have to watch her die. Some Korean guy was walking home and I asked him to call an ambulance. What else does one do in this situation?

But then my girlfriend buggered off to my place and so I dismissed the ambulance.

I rushed home to find her on my roof. She was muttering some phrases over and over for like 10 minutes. She came when I tried calling the ambulance again. Only my partner thought it was her birthday in 2006. (To clarify, we are now in 2019). And my 2006 girlfriend was kind of a dick.

She took my phone away from me so I wouldn't call anyone and stepped on it (thankfully the phone was fine) and threatened to burn her cigarette in my face after calling me *peasant* a few times. I tried to convince her who she was and what year it was but she was just not buying into a word I said. When I told her about her tattoos, she didn't believe me but when she saw them she was in shock.

Fear.

She didn't recognize them because she didn't have them in 2006. She freaked out, told me to get away from her and ran inside.

I found her in the bathroom over the toilet and she now thought I was her butler Kevin.

Oh yeah, did I mention she was supposedly super rich and had a like a billion mansions back in Scotland with servants and butlers? Yeah. That was a thing apparently. Did I believe her? Not really. No supporting evidence. But I believe she believed it.

So I played along and got what she wanted (mostly water and heat) because it was better than the 2006 version

of herself. When I got her to lie down, I called the ambulance again because she still wasn't back to herself. They came, did some quick tests and said she was fine. She even knew who I was and what year it was! I had a little breakdown when I thought she was back to her normal self. But then the paramedics left and she was gone again.

This time she thought I was her late friend Callum. I played along. It was better than her being confused as to why we weren't in Scotland on her birthday and who this stranger (me) was. This lasted until like 7AM when she finally fell asleep.

fuckfuckfuck

I was so mentally and physically exhausted. I couldn't sleep. I stayed up to make sure she was okay and dozed off for half an hour until I got a call from her best friend (whom I called earlier. I thought maybe a more familiar voice would bring her back but she wasn't around to answer the phone). Anyway, I fell asleep after that until my girlfriend woke up around noon. She was finally back to herself, albeit hungover. I spent the rest of the day in tears, shaking, weak, exhausted. I thought I'd lost her so many times.

It was the worst experience of my life. And you know what? She didn't recall any of it. Told me she just remembered coming home from the bar and went to sleep.

But it's fine. We were fine. Everything was now fine.

notfinenotfinenotfine

Even though she claimed to not recall that literal living nightmare of a night, something was off about our relationship after that. She became more distant, increasingly straining my mental health. I started becoming upset over literally nothing and she was of no comfort to me.

What happened to the girl I met at Pride?

gonegonegone

As fate would have it, though I wouldn't have agreed with that statement at the time, she broke up with me a few months later. By email. Classy. Claimed I was the reason her work fired her because of the same-sex relationship. My friends and I knew that to be bull. There were no pictures of us being romantic online. There were like two pictures of us together, but you couldn't tell we were more than friends. We weren't even touching!

But whatever.

It was shitty, but suddenly a weight was lifted. I met one of my best friends a week later and she helped me become my happy self again. I started to enjoy life like I did before. No longer was I bound by a relationship that was only one sided.

No longer did I feel the need to cry at random over nothing. I didn't have to strive anymore to make someone, who clearly didn't care about my feelings, happy. And as an added bonus, my wallet suddenly became a little heavier. No complaints about that.

Not going to lie, the breakup was hard. It was not easy to break my attachment that I felt for her. But I grew from it.

Sure, when I found her, I thought I found the closest thing to heaven. But what I found after her, was something words can't describe. I was now ready to move on and find new love and friendships.

I was free.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mina “미나” Molloy (A.M. Molloy) is a Spanish major graduate from the University of Prince Edward Island in PEI, Canada. She currently resides in South Korea and shares her home with her soul-kitty, Sorren. She practices self-care by indulging in both reading and writing on topics she is passionate about. In hand with enjoying the simple pleasures in life, such as snapping the perfect picture, finding just the right song for the mood, and spending time with the best fuzzy friend someone could ask for, she aims to bring you on a journey through her works.

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