

## Bård: Tour Guide

"Should or shouldn't was the only thought that was unmistakably rambling through my head once I had first opened my eyes. I hated that I basically spent half of the day pondering over the same thought. I deeply sighed my frustration, forcefully running my hand through my hair as though that would result in a solution, and finally deciding my initial thought would not be such a bad idea as a rule.

Without allowing myself enough time to go through my decision for the momentary time and give myself the possibility to change my mind once again, I picked up my phone and dialed her number. While I waited for the call to connect, I made a realization it was the first time in years that I felt as nervous as a fox at a bound conversation about a simple phone call. To make matters worse, I could feel every wave of quivery tremble torturing my abdomen.

Before I managed to register that she had taken the call, being far too busy trying to pull myself together, the seriousness of her voice greeted me with one "Hey" reached my senses. She appeared distracted, her voice coming out in a slight whisper to confirm my doubt.

"Hey to you too," I replied amusedly at her greeting.

Her reply following my words was hasty, as if she had woken up from some kind of trance, "Oh, hello professor. I wasn't..." she trailed off, leaving me with the perfect opportunity to finish her thought.

"Expecting me?" I provided, waiting for her to give any response to my questioning tone. Yet, she remained silent so I realized that she had no intention of confirming what she knew I was aware of, so instead I continued, correcting her, "And it is Bård, not professor. I thought we agreed on that. This is the last time I am correcting you, okay?"

"Yeah, okay," she said through yet another whisper, only to continue more sure of her words the very next moment, "Can you give me a moment though?"

"Sure," I swi lly replied, wondering as to what had got so distracted. The line was still open, so her words, which interrupted my thoughts of wonder, managed to elevate my curiosity even further. Even though the sound was muffled and was following some rustling, I could clearly hear her say, "Hey, sorry. I will call you back in a minute and we will continue, okay?"

The response she got must have been a fuming, since a second later her voice was, once again, addressing me, "Back. What is going on?"

Though obvious, wanting to satisfy my curiosity in knowing who she was conversing with, I asked, "Did I interrupt something?"

"Yeah, kind of. But never mind that," she mumbled, her voice as gentle as ever.

"Well, sorry," I whispered under my breath, feeling somewhat awkward calling at a bad moment. I shrugged my shoulders at the horrible timing in which I executed the decision I had been pondering over for hours, sighing in the process. The very next moment I regretted it, hoping that she didn't register the sound, which I assumed she didn't since she made no comment about it.

"No need to apologize. It is fine. Why were you calling?" she asked, changing the subject entirely, to my utmost gratefulness.

"I was wondering," I began, taking a deep breath with the intention to continue, but the words got lodged into my throat involuntarily and I couldn't proceed. I didn't have the nerve to do it, fully aware that there was quite a possibility to ruin the friendship – if it was indeed that – very easily.

"Yeah?" she asked by drawing out the word, expectation ringing in her voice.

The choice of going back was lost. I couldn't just pretend I didn't say anything at all. It was impossible to pass it up as a nothingness, not with someone possessing that intellect. She was expecting a reply, while I was still clinging on to the wish to get to know her better, so I was vigilantly aware of my words, as I, while half lost in a misty zone, replied, "Well, Adela mentioned yesterday that you haven't seen the city yet and I canceled our our lesson on Thursday. So, I was wondering whether we could go out tomorrow and kill two birds with one stone. We can catch up on the lessons and I get to show you the city. What do you think?"

My last words were but a tremble. I was nervous at the least, my palm was clapping the phone with all its strength, and was consequently beginning to sweat. I skipped a breath at the anticipation of the reply Catherine was supposed to provide. But, she was reluctantly avoiding it, making me consider that it was maybe a wrong move to ask her such a question.

As to what me appeared to be a long while, she asked me, "Wouldn't your girlfriend object to your spending the day showing me the city?"

I heard a light chuckle hidden under her breath and yet detectable, even though I was quite sure that her primary intention was for it to go unnoticed. I breathed out, the unnamed burden still pressing weight on my lungs.

I continued in the same tone, as I responded, "Oh, now you are just teasing. Still, I could ask you whether yours would object to me showing you the city."

"Oh, but don't have a girlfriend," she retorted, making me laugh, and I hurried and replied, "You know what I mean, but fair enough. I don't have one, so no objections on my side."

I was already beginning to think that she was trying to find a way to escape it, but then her swi lly reply a er my words convinced me otherwise. "In that case, I believe we will be fine."

"So, see you tomorrow?" she asked a er a short pause, and I felt that I was slowly beginning to relax.

"Okay. What about ten o'clock in front of the university?" I wondered, as I rushed to add, "We will work on vocabulary, so there is no need for you to drag the books along. Is that okay?"

I was ebullient and it was showing, but at the moment I couldn't care less. All I could think of was that she did accept. My heart was thumping for a completely other reason this time around, but I couldn't bring myself to care. It wasn't much of a date, but despite what I was aware of, my thoughts kept providing, "It's a start in a chance."

"Sounds good. Bye," she shyly replied. I could almost picture her biting on her lower lip, her cheeks flushing at those words. I only wished I could know if that was indeed the case.

"Bye," I whispered a reply and ended the line, placing the phone back on the table and leaning into the sofa. A sigh involuntarily escaped my lips. My eyelashes brushed my cheekbones once I closed my eyes, a warm sensation engulfing in my chest.

My lips curved in a smile, as I felt beginning to relax from the bundle of nerves I was moments ago.

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The night didn't seem to go as fast as expected. Even though I tried to persuade myself I finally got to sleep and have some proper rest, somehow I ended up doing the complete opposite. It was as if my entire body was fighting the thoughts that my mind produced. If the mind ordered to calm down, my heart would start pounding in my chest. It was a battle, while my body was going through. A battle of sense and sensibility. Eventually, I stayed up until three in the morning – or at least that was the recollection of the last time my gaze landed on the phone and caught the time – turning in the bed and thinking of the following day.

I knew what we agreed on was only a day out, and could I now go classily as a date, but I was nevertheless nervous. I wanted to spend the day with Catherine more than I had desired anything in a long time. Since the day was simply refusing to arrive quickly, I was an agonizingly sweet anticipation to wait for it. There was something about Catherine which made me smile and made me feel like a teenager again.

I was thinking about her far too much, more than I should have allowed it. The intensity of the sentiments I nurtured were beginning to raise an alert in my senses. I did enjoy her company, but I was beginning to worry. She was, as a er all, my student and I couldn't allow myself to go in the direction I was heading. And, I was heading there with full speed.

However, as much as I wanted to deny it, it was as clear as a day that I had become fond of her. More than I should have, for sure, but it was my heart that was in command of that part. It was not my rational mind that was leading me in the direction of something beyond friendship. I liked the way she shyly smiled when she was happy. I liked the way she bit on her lip when she was nervous, the way her sparkling eyes pierced through my gaze whenever I made her smile. I liked it when I made her smile. Simply, I liked her and I wanted to get to know her better.

Since all those thoughts were roaming through my mind, I barely got some rest even when I managed to doze o. The sleep that finally caught up with me was more because of my being tired rather than relaxed, so it didn't exactly help me feel unwearied.

I opened my eyes, only to find the alarm from the clock on my nightstand angrily staring at me. It was as if it, through the blinking, was trying to tell me, "I tried to wake you up, you moron."

I took my phone, just to check the time. I was somehow convinced I hadn't overslept, but making sure was necessary. Just as I supposed, there was a window of more than two hours.

As I sat up and sprangling in the bed for a while, I sat up and headed for the bathroom. I spared a glance at the mirror only to find just the repetition of forehead pressed on my expression. From there, the morning was both a confusing riddle and tempting anticipation.

I got dressed in a rush even though I knew I had plenty of time before we had agreed to meet. Oddly enough, picking out which clothes to wear took more time than the dressing itself. I made myself a strong cup of coffee which was meant to clear my head, and compensate for the lack of sleep which was clearly clinging and clouding my thoughts. I stretched out on the couch lazily, trying not to fall asleep, but the coffee finally seemed to have its ect of making me feel more awake than ever. It didn't finish the preliminary job, as I also turned me into a hyperactive mess. Through my attempts to watch TV, I ended up fidgeting and nothing seemed interesting enough to catch my eye or steady my nerves.

"Christ, what is my problem?" I act like a fifteen-year-old. I hissed through gritted teeth to prevent myself from screaming, as I got up from the couch. I took my phone and the car keys, showing them in my pocket sloppily. I grabbed the jacket of the hanger as I passed through the hallway and le the house.

Given that I headed for the university too early and had no stops to make along the way, I thought I would be waiting for a while. I was ten minutes too early when I was upon arrival, and since I was under the impression women usually had the tendency to be irrevocably late, my presumption was founded, however incorrect because just as I turned on the corner and entered the parking lot, I realized how wrong I had been to think that.

I spotted Catherine right away. She was already there, waiting before the entrance of the university patiently. Her gaze seemed lost somewhere in the distance, so she didn't even take notice of my arrival as a result. I parked the car and once I stepped out, I noticed she was intently looking in the direction of the horizon. I headed towards her. She didn't notice me until I was only a few steps away, greeting her in a whisper as to not scare her, "Hey."

She shook her head as though shaking away the thoughts, and turned towards me, greeting me back, "Hey, I thought I was going to wait for at least ten minutes. I got here far too early."

"I actually thought the same thing," I whispered through a smile, and then I went on, "But, I can see we were both wrong. Come on, let's go."

I motioned towards the path, allowing her to walk beside me as we both headed towards the car. I smiled under my breath while my gaze fixed on the path underneath my feet. I risked throwing a rapid glance towards her, only to see that her eyes were also settled on the path.

"Her warm smile, those blue eyes that were twinkling when looking at me. God, why does she have to be so beautiful? Though looking back down at the path before me, for a moment wishing to understand why and how I began liking her in the first place. I had no answers for that, but then again liking her might be considered to be an understatement.

She cut the silence short with a light chuckle and once I looked up at her, my gaze met with hers, as she wondered, "You are not going to drive like the last time, right? Cause if you are, I might as well catch a bus."

"No, I am not. I promise you that," I replied sincerely, trying to assure her in my words, "I am usually a very responsible driver."

"Oh, really?" she jokingly enquired, half-questioning and half-exclaiming in a teasing manner, the chuckle still not dying away fully.

"Yes, really. I confirmed once again, while observing her reaction. But, then I thought of another possibility and therefore I suggested, "Do you want to drive instead?"

It took her a second to reply, her smile shi ng into something I couldn't quite understand along with her entire expression, as she declined, "No, thanks. I will leave the driving to you. Thanks for asking, though."

Right a er saying those words she entered the car, comfortably settling in her seat. Following her lead, I did the same.

"So, where exactly are we going?" she wondered, while fastening her seatbelt. Trying to reply to her question, while maintaining eye contact, proved to be extremely difficult. When she directed her gaze away from mine, the situation didn't get any easier. As I was buckling the belt, her hair falling somewhat to cover her face, she appeared more than beautiful.

Her gaze focused on the buckle, as she was subconsciously biting her lip, her cheeks flushed. It all drove me in, making me wish to kiss her right on the spot and see if all the thoughts which roamed my head had any foundation. I wished nothing more but to capture those red lips with my own until both of us were le out of breath. I felt my heart pounding harder, while my body was fighting the urge to contemplate the orders of my desires. I managed to pull myself together, as she curiously looked up, waiting for my answer.

"You will see. It is a surprise, so be patient," I croaked out, just a er clearing my throat. It was barely audible, my voice hoarse despite clearing my throat. "In the meantime, while I am driving we could work on the vocabulary. What do you think?"

Catherine only nodded as a response, and I was pulled out of the lot and headed for our destination.

"So, what should we begin with?" I asked her, once I was able to both stir the car and begin a conversation, addressing her a brief gaze and a smile.

"Well, technically you are the mentor. So, I think it is your job to decide what we should begin with, don't you?" she cheerfully replied, grinning at me.

"Okay, what about something you might not know?" I teased and her smile disappeared, her eyes showing a disapproving look. But, I ignored it and asked her, "What is the Norwegian word for architecture?"

"Arkitektur," she instantly replied, which honestly came as a surprise for me. The word didn't differ much from the English version of it, but it still needed a basic encounter with the word to voice it correctly as she did. I remembered not to actually mention it and yet she knew it, with the exact pronunciation, without taking time to even consider the reply.

I couldn't hide my astonishment, so I right away asked, "You knew that?"

"Yeah, it was the first thing I looked up in the dictionary," she exhaled.

"Why?" I further inquired.

"Because, it is what I love," she said, her gaze relocating out of the window. I focused on the road, yet our vocabulary lesson continued during the drive.

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I stepped out of the car, shutting the door behind me in haste, as I oered her my hand to help her out, noticing a slight reluctance in her as she took it. When she finally got out, facing me, I smiled and said, "Kate, welcome to The National Museum of Architecture."

She looked at me, a smile appearing on her lips within seconds, before parting them to let out a contented sigh. Her hand hurried to cover her mouth, just as a gap of surprise escaped her, this time around muffled. I beamed at her because of her reaction. The amount of happiness she was projecting was something I didn't anticipate in the slightest. I knew she liked architecture, she also mentioned it was her passion, but she was too overwhelmed at the proceedings, which surprised me.

Before I could word out anything else, while I was observing her reaction, she turned towards me and pulled me into a tight hug, one although initially surprised I reciprocated when I could gather my surroundings. The hug was the most spontaneous action she ever made around me, consequently addressing yet another shock to my senses. I could feel her hair tingling my neck as her scent enveloped me, her arms wrapped around my neck.

I honestly hoped my increased heartbeat was hidden enough under the clothing from being unveiled. Before I knew it, she pulled away, as she quickly making me feel the loss of her warmth, as she exclaimed, "Thank you so much. Oh my God, thank you."

I gave her a smile once I managed to catch her gaze, asking her, "Shall we go in or do you need a moment?"

"Oh, I need a moment. I would need a few hours actually. So, we can go in."

"Come on, then," I insisted, resting my palm flat on her shoulder. I made urging her to head towards the car by my side. Once the ticket was paid, we walked in the hallway, before stepping into the first room, and we started looking around. I was actually observing Kate's reactions more than I was looking around the museum, but since I had previously been there and already knew the place, I saw no loss in focusing on her.

Her gaze was shi ng from one object to another with burning interest, as though she was drinking in everything before her eyes. I could notice it, since it was the exact same look I had the first time I was at the museum. I had the same look of contempt printed all over my face when Vegard brought me at the building. Her, of course, knew I had wanted to visit the place since it had first opened, but couldn't manage to find the time to do so. He told me he had something planned for my birthday, but it nevertheless managed to surprise me to the fullest. It was the best birthday gift I had ever gotten, and I was glad that she shared the same enthusiasm.

"The National Museum of Architecture was opened in 2006," I began, imagining she would want to hear more about it. "The main building was designed by..."

She interrupted me, once again surprising me, since I didn't anticipate that she would know the detail. "Christian Heinrich Grosch, I know."

Despite the utter disbelief in which I was cast, consequently happening a er everything from the day, I managed to tease her, "Is there something you don't know?"

Her gaze was still investigating places of the exhibition. "Yes, for example, with the exception of that last fact, I know anything else about this place."

"Are you sure? I don't want to start a sentence only for you to interrupt me again."

She looked up, just to reply, "Yes, I am sure. I think I had remembered this without having the wish to do so. And, I will not interrupt even if I know it. I give you my word."

I nodded slightly, before her interest was again pinned on everything but me. "Before being opened as a museum, the buildings were adapted and extended by Severin Fehn, who was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1997." I informed her diligently, knowing that even though she was extremely focused on capturing every detail she could perceive what I was telling her as well.

She smiled at me briefly, as she continued to scan the room, her interest nothing but peaked. I had more information to share with her, but the spark in her eyes when they landed on another, unseen object was not allowing me to speak and break the spell as I was when she was engrossed.

I was glad she was enjoying herself more so than I anticipated, so I ended up only following her lead for a couple of hours while she was scanning the entirety of the exhibitions. When I planned at my watch and finally caught the time, I faced Kate and asked her, "Would you like to see some parts of the exhibition in the study room?"

"I would love to, but shouldn't you order them a few days earlier?" she wondered, fixing her puzzled gaze on mine.

I nonchalantly smiled and gave her a teasing wink, just when I said, "Yes, but I did order some things. I was planning on coming here this week as it was. I need to do some research, so I ordered some stu. If you want to see them come on, study room is this way."

The enthusiastic viewing of the artifacts, in the partially stu ed room, passed swi lly. Catherine enjoyed it more than I predicted she would. She was carefully observing, while I was taking the notes needed. Before leaving the museum, we headed for the shop, whereupon Catherine stumbled upon one of my books, enthusiastically scanning through it and deciding to buy it, even though I insisted on her not wasting her money for it. I was flushed with the words, "I am not wasting money. Despite your effort to give the worst possible recommendation, I am actually planning on reading this."

"Well, you are doing that on your own insistence. Don't say I didn't warn you," I joked.

We le the museum a er she bought it.

Once we were outside, the fresh air reaching our senses, she repeated herself from earlier, "Thank you so much for today. This was amazing."

"Anytime." I smiled at her, adding, "But there is something else."

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I took her to the park I frequented, which was located close to my house. It was my favorite place, where I always went to think and relax. Maybe because it was peaceful and maybe because it was absolutely stunning. Either way, I wanted to share it with her. The sun was already drowning behind the horizon, leaving a trail of blood on the sky, announcing the night when we stopped our walk in order to sit down.

"This place is breathtaking," Catherine exhaled, before looking directly at me. "I really hope that there aren't any paparazzi around."

Those words caught me by surprise so my gaze snapped up to meet hers almost immediately, but it was rather obvious she was bound to find out about my being a celebrity. As a er all, she was in the very place, where everyone recognized me, gawked at me and she was counted in the best informed group of people in the world – students. I did anticipate she would be presented with that celebrity part of my life, sooner or later. Yet, I couldn't bring myself to say any word whatsoever, feeling as if I was caught red-handed in an awkward situation. Or, maybe it was only the feeling of guilt since I didn't tell her myself.

Noticing I was avoiding her gaze, not replying anywhere at all, she continued, matter-of-factly, "A er all you are a celebrity."

Her voice sounded just as it always did. There was no judgment, no disapproval, no reproach. It was only normal. Like she was just stating something ordinary. Despite myself, I smiled at that, glad nothing else was hidden behind her words.

It gave me encouragement to continue the conversation, without creating judgment, by saying, "You caught on that rumor finally, huh?"

"Yeah, Adela was shockingly informative. It explains why she wasn't being herself when she first saw you. Why didn't you tell me you were one?"

I faced her, only to find her gaze examining my expression. I shrugged my shoulders, through a whisper uttering, "I don't know really. I guess I just wanted you to behave normal around me."

"And you thought telling me would change it?" she swi lly asked, her expression puzzled.

"Honestly, when you have people consistently gawking at you, some even stalking you – the paparazzi included; you just want to feel as normal as possible at those few moments of privacy you get to have. Or rather get to steal from the flashing cameras," I truthfully related everything that was on the bottom of my heart. She was a keen listener and I found that the environment and her company gave me strength to open up my feelings and thoughts. "Don't blame me for thinking that you would not be an exception. I am sorry I thought it, though."

"It is okay, I don't mind. Is it really that tough then?" she inquired, only urging me to continue.

"Yes, it can be from time to time," I admitted. "You know, I could very well have done without the attention I get. At times it's nice to get acknowledgement of what you do. But I'm not that comfortable with being 'seen'," I uttered, my fingers immediately placing an apostrophe on the word. "When I have the job I have, many people probably think I'm finding attention. It can be flattering, I must admit, but privately I prefer sitting down in the far corners."

"Well, I am sorry," she whispered, her gaze trailing o to meet the horizon.

"Am I making you feel uncomfortable?" I asked her, not wanting to bore her with my nonsense.

"No, you are not." A shy smile was directed at me. "But, I have never been in such a position, so I can't give my own input. I can see your point, though."

"So, what did Adela exactly tell you about me?" I wondered, since I knew there were some pretty ridiculous recordings of me out there, so my curiosity was more than understandable.

"Well, I will put it this way," she paused dramatically, "I know what the fuss relating my name was all about." She ended with a chuckle, making it rather impossible for me not to join in.

"You really didn't know the song before?" I asked, still having hard time to believe that such was the case.

"No, I had never heard of it, which is probably why I didn't know you either. She said it was a pretty good giggle." Not knowing a song that went viral within hours. Lame, huh?"

"No, not at all. Just strange. So, now that you do know it, what do you think of it?"

"Honestly, it is a catchy song, but I will not be becoming a fan," she replied, as a er which she furrowed her eyebrows looking up at the sky while biting the inside of her cheek quite noticeably. I kept my eyes on her, as she went on, "But I do have to ask you one question though..."

"Go on."

"I don't remember the title of the song, but it was something about liking the club step."

"You saw that too?" I asked, freaked out as much as I could be. I thought whatever she saw, with the exception of the video where I was nude couldn't get any worse than that, as the song was by far the least favorite thing I did.

"Yep, Adela showed me a couple of dozen videos."

"Couple of dozen?!" Oh, God!" I exclaimed, but soon realizing I even wanted to know."

"We will get back to what I think later. Now I have to ask about the song. There was this segment when you scream 'Please, just take this fucking flowers'," so I was just wondering whether that was the way people in Norway always treat ladies or was that you in particular?"

She was grinning, her gaze locking with mind for a second, and then declining somewhere aside, the smile never fading in the least.

"Oh, you really are constantly teasing." I received a cocked eyebrow at my words.

"I am sorry, I just... I just couldn't help it." She mumbled through a smirk. "In all seriousness now, how is working with your brother?"

"Working with Vegard is absolutely amazing. It is more fun with him around, that is for sure. Besides, it is what makes me go on. It makes me incapable of quitting everything – the work, the talk show and the fame."

Pushing a strand of hair behind her ear, she continued, "So you and your brother are very close then?"

"Yeah, we are. We have always been. I don't know how to explain it to you, but it is as if I stopped short, trying to find the right words. People rarely understand the connection Vegard and I shared, making it that much harder to depict it somewhat faithfully, particularly to those who didn't know him or hadn't seen us work together."

"Time passes faster when you are with him."

"Exactly," I exclaimed. "The thing is Vegard and I had this unexplainable, unavoidable connection since we were just kids. It was like we were hidden in a small world of ours, the walls of which were unbreachable for everyone on the outside. We knew exactly what the other thought and felt, so, being able to do something I love with someone I love is the best part of it all."

The last tremble of my vocal chords got registered, before dying in the air, as the sun was falling deeper down the horizon, darkening the sky and sharpening the air with coolness.

We sat there in silence, the breeze playfully messing up both mine and Kate's hair, as we were enjoying the sunset. The relaxing silence reminded me that even though I complained about my life and she had the ability to find out everything just by googling my name, I didn't bother to ask anything about hers.

I took a deep breath and without shi ng my gaze, I inquired, "So, what about you?"

"What about me?" she asked in a whisper, ever so slow and tranquil.

"Well, I complained about my stressful life. Isn't it now your turn to complain?"

"Oh, look who is teasing now," she commented, before answering, "My life is not at all interesting. Giving you yet another nondescript picture would definitely ruin the charm of this sunset."

"Nonsense, there must be something. You are the foxiest person I know," I replied, all too hastily, and regretted my words at the very second. I could feel my heart picking up the pace on its own, and my mind scolding my mouth for its unnecessary speed. My thoughts, on occasion, needed to be kept secret, and this was most definitely such an occasion. She didn't take it against me though. In fact, I despite her silence, she gave me a small, approving smile, and it was all I needed to make me relax again, and yet I had to ask her, "Why did you say that?"

I looked at her, but she only silently shook her head. As her eyes were sailing with the sun, the bright light that landed on her irises was immediately dimming becoming irreversibly lost. She appeared to be sad, burdened even. I wanted to enquire, but above all I wanted to see her smile again. As cheerfully as I could pull o o, I said, "Come on, there must be someone in England you miss."

"Yes, just my family," she mumbled, ever so slow.

"Come on, a boyfriend or some friends must be in the picture as well."

She reluctantly uttered, "Not really, no. None of that?"

I shrugged my shoulders, rather confused and she must have caught it since she added, "Told you I was boring."

"Wait, not a single friend?" I wondered. Her choice of words – surely, that was just an expression.

"Not one. As you can see I am not really good at that part." It was a swi lly forced smile, but it was a start.

"I think you are doing just fine."

"Really?" she sardonically asked, "Adela is the only friend I made since I got here, and I was practically a necessity since we share the same roof, and I have scarcely spoken to someone else."

"I would like to flatter myself that I might be a friend."

"You are," she whispered, ever so shy. Yet, behind the honesty, there was a slight trace of something unrecognizable in her voice. Something between sadness and belief. "But, uhm..."

"What?" I inquired, repenting for interrupting her the very next second.

She shook her head. "Nothing."

"No, tell me. What is it?" I insisted.

"It is silly. Can we just pretend I never said the 'but'?" she wondered, her gaze locking with mine, her eyes sparkling from the remaining sun beams. I wished to know what was hidden behind that single, yet puzzling word, but I still nodded in agreement thinking that my curiosity would be put aside. Then, maybe when she was ready, she would share it.

"We should get going," I whispered, as the first stars sparkled on the sky.