

Death of a Sunset

“This one is the prettiest by far!”

“You say that every time darling, it’s time you settle for a favourite.”

“But each is so much different from the last! How could you possibly make me choose a favourite...”

Oriana and Ivan sat beneath a crimson sky; hints of violet cut through as the sun settled behind mountain tops. Ivan felt the warmth of Oriana’s excitement as their hands intertwined, the couple were sunset chasers, spending the past two years travelling the world to witness the closing act of each day. Ivan cherished these moments, the air never failed to stand still, anticipation of the unknown overwhelming the atmosphere as the death of the sunset paves way for the night. A tightness grew in Ivan as home crept towards them, his love for Oriana had only grown since the start of their journey, each sunset ingrained in his mind not for the scenery, but the glimmer in her eyes as she looked beyond the horizon. He would often catch himself daydreaming of a future, one with Oriana close by, sweeping dust off shelves, choosing produce for dinner, hanging the laundry, the mundane with her right by his side.

As they returned home, a deadline hung over Ivan, the anniversary was merely a week away. Ivan knew that his proposal would be different from traditional ones, in fact, Ivan was not planning to be there at all. It was to his advantage that he already knew Oriana’s ring size; he’d had it memorised from last year, when they visited a jewellery shop for Oriana’s birthday. As Ivan sat in his bed, he laid out letter paper in front of him, he had personally painted the pages inspired by Oriana’s favourite sunsets throughout the years, she doesn’t admit to them, but Ivan notices the shine particular hues would bring to her eyes, and the gleaming smile unconsciously planted on her face would indicate a favourite. With the paper ready, he started to write the most crucial part of the proposal.

My dearest, Oriana,

Look how far time has taken us, across the seas, through the clouds, and now back home where it all began. I still remember the moment I fell in love with you, after a long day of work, the sun covered your home in a shade of golden honey, the light woven through your hair, your eyes sparkling with ambition as you asked me to travel the world with you. Through each universe out there, I would agree without hesitation. The time we’ve spent together has painted my world with a vibrance I thought only existed in fantasy books. My love has started to overflow from my pot of self control, and the spillage has reached the tip of my pen, onto the paper before you.

I apologise for my absence on this special day, a timer is ticking before me, and I had long known that this letter would be my last words to you. This misfortune has plagued me since before we set off on our journey, the diagnosis clouded my eyes and wiped away the hope for the future I had envisioned. But oh, Oriana, chasing each sunset by your side was magical, even if I couldn’t understand each crevice of the canyons, or the leaves hanging on the trees, the colours illuminated your features like spotlights, painting you in shades so clear to me. Even now, I wish to colour the sky

your favourite hues, and feel your breath next to mine as the sun bids farewell, just to return the next day and do it all over again.

Thank you for being the muse of my gallery, one that I will return to when I feel blue, and one forever open for you to visit at the death of sunsets.

Will you marry me?

Ivan.

Oriana returned to a home too quiet, a haunting scent of the hospital clung to her skin. She held a heart too heavy for her own skin. A letter was placed neatly on the desk with a box beside it. When she started to read, her tears darkened the paint on the letter, lifting the lid of the box, a ring glimmered. Threading her finger through, it was a perfect fit. She stood in the living room where it all began, a golden honey covering each crevice, her favourite shade, but now without his warmth. Faintly a whisper escaped her lips.

“Yes, Ivan”