

Moments I: Morning Announcements

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Moments from the relationship of high schoolers Lily Andrews and Jake Harrison.

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Lily arrived to school early, having been told the day before by Jake during a conversation on her AIM account that she would be presenting the next morning's announcements at school for the day. Her post was one of "ALTERNATE PRESENTER," which she was completely satisfied with due to her aversion to public speaking. The feeling was pure, it was unadulterated and often caused immense anxiety and nausea. The true reason Lily had even applied for the post was to continue her sister's tradition of the Andrews girls as confident, poised and sophisticated. In reality, Lily was not. While in an intimate setting among friends she was eloquent and witty, with perfect comic timing and use of sarcasm, she was the complete opposite when making presentations or being in front of a camera.

This morning she had taken care to put herself together with the help of her sister, who had blow-dried and straightened her deep brown hair and chosen her black turtleneck dress and suede boots to wear. It was decided that this was an outfit that would most fit the part of anchor while allowing Lily to look fun and attractive. Her efforts were not futile, because at 7:20 AM she swung her tan satchel-style backpack off of her shoulder and nodded her acknowledgement to Jake, the school's resident "A/V TECH," which was a deceptively official title, since she knew he spent most of his time during these jobs playing computer games and reading up on the newest technologies in cell phones and video cameras.

Often times he would repeatedly tap Lily's shoulder, eyes wide with excitement, and exclaim, "Look at this! It's the new Nikon digital G47! It has more clarity than any other camera and can take up to 15 hours of video with one battery life!"

Each time, though Lily would laugh and reply, "Wow! That's so awesome!" she really knew nothing about video cameras or the other esoteric technology pages he would show her, but she read all of the features that he pointed out to her with avid interest because this boy with the blue eyes and pink cheeks was one of her most intimate friends, and anything that interested him interested her. She was excited that he liked to share things with her, and so she shared things back. This was the basic formation of their friendship, and this she thought would never change.

However, all was forgotten when, at 7:22 AM, the door swung open and John emerged from behind it, rushing into the room. He was taken aback by the sight of Lily fixing her microphone on her dress and stopped there, his face breaking into a beatific smile as he gazed at her from across the room.

"Oh- hey Lily! You're on today?"

"Yeah, Annie couldn't make it, I guess."

"Well then I'll be watching specially for you!"

Lily laughed, and was about to respond when she was interrupted by Jake, who brusquely faced John and asked, "What do you need?"

"I- oh, right. I needed Mr. Webster to ask him about the French homework, actually. Isn't he usually in here?"

"He's not today. And we're actually about to start, so it's"

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Unceremoniously, he tried to usher John out of the room, but not before he could look lingeringly at Lily and say, "See you later. Don't forget, I'll be watching!" Lily could only smile before he ran back out of the room.

Jake immediately went back to the computer screen. Lily, feeling her anxiety approaching, asked worriedly,

"Are we really about to start?"

With a smirk she could not comprehend, Jake said, "No. Not at all! It just, um, gets really crowded in here fast, so..."

"Oh, okay, good. Now I can never get this microphone right with my hair. Maybe I should just put it up?"

Though the latter part of her rambling was meant for herself, Jake suddenly interceded.

"No, don't, you look good with your hair down." Stunned at her friend's complimentary interjection, Lily looked up at him, unable to speak. Jake Harrison was not a person to compliment anyone, even by accident. He was a dry, sarcastic being, which is the reason the pair got along as well as they did. The comment hung in the air for a moment, until Jake cleared his throat and said, "Well, time to set up."

"Okay..."

Lily left her hair down, blushing at the comment and reading over the slips of announcements that were her script for the morning as Jake bustled around the room, turning on monitors and cameras but never looking at her.

Lily was brimming with pleasure, and it showed in her flushed cheeks and her breathy voice. The saccharine taste the encounter with John had left her with emanated from her every mannerism- her smile was glowing and her insides were full of that sticky, sanguine hope that John shared her feelings. She realized Jake's eyes were on her as he held up the time signals with his long, slender fingers: *3, 2, 1, GO.*

"Welcome to AMTV, I'm Lily Andrews, today is Wednesday, November 12th, and Day 2. This week, the Leukemia-slash-Lymphoma society..." As she read the rest of the announcement mechanically, Lily realized with a start and with a prickle in her cheeks how insipid she must have sounded. *Leukemia and Lymphoma society*, she thought to herself. However, the true crux of her embarrassment came when she made this ridiculous blunder:

"Have a great Thursday- no, wait, sorry." She froze. The word that she had just spoken so clearly seemed to evade her, stubbornly remaining in the inner corners of her preoccupied mind. She turned to Jake, who was staring at her, mouthing *WEDNESDAY, WEDNESDAY*, at her in horror. "Have a great Wednesday." Struggling to muster a smile and opposing her tears as the monitor in front of her shut off and became reflective again, she went into absolute hysterics when she had ascertained that she was off the air. Before Jake could berate her for her mistake, she started doing it herself.

"Why am I such an idiot? How could I forget the word for Wednesday? And, oh my god, I cannot believe I said *no, wait, sorry*. I'm so stupid. God. And of course, today had to be the day..." She trailed off. Lily had been about to say "the day John came in", but she did not want to let on to Jake how she felt, not knowing whether or not she could trust him. She tried to avert her gaze from his piercing, light-but-not-bright blue eyes. She turned away and fidgeted with her clip-on microphone, twisting her body

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so that she was facing the opposite wall and all he could see was the back of her left shoulder.

“Today had to be what day?” His smooth voice crossed the closet-sized room to surround her, and she could sense the smirk that his calm countenance belied.

With a quick glance in his direction, Lily noticed his dimples beginning to form. Frantically, her mind came up with one conclusion: he knew. She needed to find some way to cover up, some reason for saying that phrase to make him realize that he was wrong. Of course, being so incredibly deficient in poise, she finally managed, “The day that I’m alone up here.” She pulled at the black ribbed fabric of her turtleneck, suddenly aware of the rise in temperature and the closeness of the small room. After a moment of torturous eye contact with Jake, during which his cerulean pupils connected with her own caramel-honey ones and his features took on an unreadable expression, the bell rang, releasing Lily from her sudden-onset claustrophobia.

Never breaking eye contact, Jake scooped his red backpack onto his shoulder and some stray textbooks in the crook of his left arm and then proceeded to leave, saying, with a final glance back at Lily, “Yeah. See you around.”

At last, when Lily was able to move again, she realized that she had wasted about a minute just sitting there, stunned and silent, in the little room after Jake left. In a frenzy of movements, she grasped her own Vera Bradley backpack and briskly moved to her next class, slinging the bag over her shoulder as she went.

That night, after a long day of joking and sarcastic remarks from all who had borne witness to the morning announcements debacle, she collapsed onto her bed and went through her homework as diligently as she could. She had made it through three out of her six assignments until she could contain the embarrassment no longer. The large, round, individual droplets that Lily was famous for splashed onto her smooth cheeks and black dress. She had already shoved her textbook and papers aside on her bed, and was now falling into her silky, patched quilt. Sliding her hands under it, she lifted it to cover her face, and there she sat, cross-legged, racked with sobs and saturating the quilt with saltwater tears, for quite some time.

It was there that Emily found her, two hours later. She walked down the hallway to their shared bedroom, and saw her sister sitting, silently shaking in her bed. Lily lifted her head from the cradle of her two hands, and saw Emily standing in the doorway, watching her for a silent moment. The two peered at each other for a few seconds, until Emily broke eye contact to rush towards Lily, arms already flung open wide.

“Baaaaby!” That was it. Lily’s silent sobs turned into heart-shattering gasps for air, accompanied with more splashing, gargantuan drops. Lily let her arms hang limp and crumpled into her sister, her check landing in the hollow of Emily’s neck, tears streaming down her skin. No questions needed asking, no answers needed giving, though they inevitably would as Lily explained her day in excruciating detail looking for solace. Lily broke into hysterics several more times, and patiently Emily caressed her hair, rocking back and forth.

After having dinner and watching some mindless television to calm down, Lily asked Jake what he thought of the situation.

Elephantgirl656: how bad was I today?

Swimsalot43: you weren’t.

Elephantgirl656: come on, you can tell me. How embarrassed should I be?

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Swimsalot43: okay, well maybe it wasn't the best read announcements ever. but do you remember that time I said November instead of September? and when Annie completely killed Mr. Sweeney's name?

Elephantgirl656: I guess! I just hope people forget soon.

Swimsalot43: They won't. but don't worry- you have officially joined the We Messed Up on the Morning Announcements Club. welcome!

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