



Topic: HERE TO WHERE

## THE LOVE YOU NEED

"Breakfast is ready, Lily", mom's voice came from downstairs.

I put down the book in my hand and replied, "Coming ma!"

Opening the door of my room, the delicious aroma of hot pancakes hit my nose. I dashed down the stairs, not forgetting to pick<sup>up</sup> my school bag from the bed, and sat around the dining table. Dad, already clad in his beige and brown coat for work, had started eating. The sizzling from the kitchen as batter<sup>was</sup> poured onto the pan reached my ears, making my mouth water more.

With a plate <sup>of</sup> hot pancakes, mom came into the dining. The steam from the pancakes



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was a warning for me to not burn my tongue.  
"Have you finished studying?", mom asked.  
"Not yet. I still have a few topics to finish  
off studying", I told her.  
"You need to fasten up and not waste your  
time, Lily. Only a month remains until your  
final exams begin. This is a crucial time,  
you're in senior year. These are the  
marks that will determine . . .", before  
my mom could complete her sentence I  
spoke,

"My future. I know ma," I whined at  
the end as I was tired of the same  
advice.

"She will study honey. Let's stop talking  
during eating", my dad's grumpy and deep  
voice shut the conversation.

I wasn't sure if he was speaking for my  
support or that he was just annoyed at the



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Voices

Before I had to go to school, there was one more thing I needed to ask. Hesitantly I started again, "There's something I have to ask to you guys. Kate, a friend from my class, she has invited me to hangout with her friends tomorrow evening. If it's okay with both of you, may I go?"

There was a silence in the room and it made me tense up. Dad was the first one to speak,

"You never went out with your friends too much. I'm quite sure you once mentioned it to me last year that you preferred being at the comforts of your home.

"Then why now?"

"Well, that is true, but this might be my final chance at enjoying school life."



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The upcoming days, everyone is going to be busier than ever. I tried to make them accept my request.

"I've seen Kate. I'm not sure if I like you spending time with her. Something about her is off. You shouldn't go!", it was my mom this time.

"Your mom is right, Lily. You shouldn't go!", dad's tone was enough for me to understand that it was the end of discussion. Heaving a sigh, I looked down at the plate of pancakes; they had gone cold. Suddenly, it didn't seem that tasty to me anymore.

"I know I told to stop talking a while ago. But if I don't ask this question now I might forget later. Have you send out your college applications? You've chosen the business course right?", Dad started off.



another conversation that I dreaded to  
indulge in.

"About that, dad, I want to take  
creative writing course. I don't... like  
business.", I spoke timidly.

I could see anger rising in the eyes of  
both my mom and dad.

"Creative writing won't lead you anywhere  
in life, Lily. Listen to us and choose  
the business.", mom's voice was laced  
with underlying anger.

"We know what's best for you. So do  
according to <sup>what</sup> ~~at~~ we say.", dad's stern  
voice followed.

I felt myself burning with anger, hearing  
their words. It was like them adding  
fuel to the fire of anger residing quietly  
inside me.

"Obviously, I don't think the same. If you



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had known: what's really best for me, then . . .  
you wouldn't have asked me to choose . . .  
a course I dislike, you would've known about  
the <sup>two</sup> sample books I wrote, ~~to submit~~ you  
would've known that I love writing. I'm  
totally sick of you both telling me to  
choose according to your opinions. I'm  
going to study creative writing, and I am  
going with Kate tomorrow. And that's final,"  
the chair scraped against the marble tiles  
as I got off it with my bag in hand.  
I rushed to the front door without  
waiting for a reply. As soon as  
the cool breeze kissed my face, I  
was suddenly aware of the situation:  
I was heavily breathing, my body felt  
warm and I just spoke back to  
my parents - something I've never done  
in my whole life.



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I was scared of what would be their reaction once I return home but I was relieved at the same time - to have finally gotten a chance to get it all out of my heart.

As I walked to school, my thoughts wandered to the college application I send out yesterday. It was unknown to everyone that I had already sent out a college application and that I had chose Creative writing as my course. I had it all planned out, If I am ever provided with an opportunity to get interviewed, I'm going to submit the two books of mine too - the books I currently have in my bag. After an admission is assured, I'll break it out to all. That was my plan.

\* \* \*



That evening, I returned home as slow as I could. I dreaded the part of confrontation the whole day. But on spotting Aunt Maggie's car, I heaved a sigh of relief. I glanced at my wristwatch - it was already thirty past six. She won't be leaving soon, I guessed. Laughter echoed in the living room as I entered. Voices of dad, mom and aunt Maggie reached my ears vividly. I won't be getting scolded today, I thought to myself.

I was welcomed warmly by Aunt Maggie, and astonishingly, mom and dad's faces had a smile plastered onto them. I was in a dilemma, if they were actually happy or were just faking the smiles to hide the underlying anger. But to the grace of God, the night



ended... quite well. With a warm goodbye and tired eyes, Aunt Maggie left around eleven, after dinner. The obvious weariness in all of our faces, was more than enough to tell that an argument is the least anyone would want.

As soon as I got into my bedroom, I jumped on the soft mattress. It dipped under my weight. My mind ~~at~~ wandered to that one question Aunt Maggie asked me when it was just two of us.

"HERE TO WHERE?", she asked.

"Pardon?", I asked baffled.

"From high school-here - to where? What is your next plane?", she explained what she meant.

"I" - "I hesitated before speaking, "I have no plans as of right now".

That was a complete lie, I knew.



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I had a plan ~~but~~ and it is at its initial stage but nothing is to be revealed yet.

\* \* \*

~~The next day, I ~~ste~~ went to school~~

~~As soon as possible~~

The next day, I went to school as early as possible. I didn't want to speak with my parents. From a cafe nearby I had a coffee, which was too bitter to me, and walked to school. December was arriving soon and the cold winds had already started announcing the month's arrival.

Goose bumps rose through my body as the wind kept playing around me.

I spotted Kate at the front gate of school. I informed <sup>her</sup> that I was in for the hangout. The rest of the day passed by as usual and it was soon evening. Kate told me to wear something.



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It was similar to a hoodie as everyone was wearing according to a theme.

Mom and dad were at work so I went in ~~in~~ my house without hesitation.

~~Wearing~~ Clad in my best hoodie, I

went out, locking the front door. The sky was now a blushing red and the sun had already started hiding.

When I reached the destination of hangout, I was quite surprised. In contrast

to my expectations of a comfortable picnic or something, it was a party. ~~Kate was~~

I stood in front of a loud house,

music echoed throughout it and lights

were lit all inside. Kate, on spotting

me ran upto me. She was clad in

a nice <sup>black</sup> party dress, totally opposite of

mine. She dragged me inside without

even a hello. And something about the



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atmosphere. here. seemed. bad. A crowd . . .  
of students. . were. . all around. the dancing,  
talking, drinking. cool drinks. A. . chill. . . . .  
went. . up. . my spine. . . . .

\* \* \*

Tears gushed down my face, and I . . .  
couldn't stop it. The . . moon and . . stars . .  
hugged . . by the . . night . . sky stood above . .  
me. Regret, embarrassment, guilt engulfed . .  
me . . from all . . directions. For . . once, I thought,  
I had made some friends, my lonely school days  
were over. But the dream . . was . . shattered in . .  
a few seconds. Kate . . invited . me to . the party.  
just . . for . . embarrassing, for her entertainment.  
She . . lied . to me, Everyone, there . . was . .  
wearing . . the best . of . clothes, and she . .  
~~asked~~ asked . . me . . to wear . a hoodie. . .  
She stood . . on . top . of a chair, gathering .  
everyone's . attention . and . started . making .



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fun of me, for my outfit. And everyone just laughed, without even supporting me. All this while, I was at least invisible to the others' eyes. I had become a laughing stock overnight.

My tears never stopped streaming down as I walked back home. I figured out mom and dad was back home on seeing the lit house. Before I stepped on the driveway, I saw an envelope sticking out of the mailbox. I felt a like taking out. Something told me that it was the letter I was waiting for, and for sure it was. I ripped open the envelope on seeing the address of the university. I applied to.

Dear

Madam Lily Johnson,



... We've carefully considered your .....  
application among thousands of others.....  
But we regret to inform you.....

... I didn't need to complete the letter .....  
to know what it said. I was rejected. It was  
a rejection letter. My heart shattered.....  
My plan had turned totally upside .....  
down. I had no idea on what else to .....  
do. I glanced at the house for a .....  
moment ~~at~~ and then started walking .....  
off.....

\* \* \*

... The cold bit me through the fabric .....  
of my hoodie. ~~The~~ My fingers felt numb .....  
from the coldness of the railings under it .....  
A dark matrix stood above me and .....  
under me. ~~I looked~~ I gazed down at .....  
the dark mischievous waves playing around



even during the night. I felt lost. What am I to do now? No answer to the question. But the waves under me kept calling me to join them, to play with them. And at the drop of a hat, I was there with them. A loud splash and then blinding darkness. My lungs slowly started burning as the deep ocean water got inside my body. And as I closed my eyes for one last time, I thought to myself - From HERE TO WHERE?

\* \* \*

I shut closed the book in my hands and stared at the eyes in front of me. They were all gazing at me. "What happened next isn't something to be spoken from written words, it should be spoken from words engraved to heart, I spoke to the audience. ~~HA~~



"What I thought might be the end of my life was the end. But only an end of a chapter in my life. I woke up from that darkness to faint voices in my ears, a fan on the ceiling over me, and white washed walls around me. And a scene engraved in my heart, my mother and father on either sides of me, holding my hand. They suddenly seemed aged old. They looked like they aged over a matter of hours. Dry tears stained their cheeks and the relief in their voices when I opened my eyes were the beginning of my next chapter in life. I remember my mom speaking words of love and my dad speaking words of comfort to me. They told me they were wrong, that creative writing was the best path for me. They had read my books. I was



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in the hospital for about 3 days before I opened my eyes. In the mean time, they read my books. They found it accidentally while searching for my ~~clothes~~ necessities in my bedroom.

I told them, it is true, they were wrong but only about my passion for writing. They were right about Kate, about her not being good, right about most of the things in my life.

So right now, I just want to tell you, parents, they might not be right always, but they are humans. They make mistakes just like us. But don't we all learn from our mistakes. They always want the best for us, but sometimes, just sometimes they might <sup>not</sup> know what is the best for us, unless and until you open your heart to them ~~to~~ and



.. speak to let them read it.. If I ask you ..  
.. right now, does anyone know your future,  
.. what are you planning to do? Where are  
.. you planning to go to do your next  
.. part of life?", I saw a few raised hands.  
.. "I can see a lot of their hands down..  
.. You can't even completely prepare for  
.. your future: I lost the chance at  
.. the university.. I applied to but I also got  
.. another chance at a better university  
.. with the support of my parents. If not  
.. for that I wouldn't be standing here  
.. at the success event of my fourth  
.. book, would I? This book is my life  
.. divided into two parts: The first part  
.. is the only part written <sup>in it</sup> though..  
.. EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON..  
.. You have got to believe it. Never give  
.. up on your life, on what you love..



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and the people you love. What's meant  
to be is meant to be. And never  
forget, no love compares to the love  
of your mother and father, no other  
love. Engrave that in your heart,  
a sound of applause echoed in  
the hall, as I walked down the  
stage to the ~~contented~~ contented smiles  
of the ones I truly love, standing  
there at an end with proud eyes - my  
mom, my dad."