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The Day I Fell in Love with Liz

I remember it as, *'the day I fell in love with Liz'*.

We were on holiday, a pretty cottage by the sea, five months into things; five months of laughing, singing and dissecting every part of each other's past present and future. It was inevitable that this day would come, and I had been waiting for it. Waiting for that BOOM moment. I thought it might have happened whilst making love or one evening over a fancy dinner, wearing fancy dresses.

But it turns out love is much more understated than that.

As it was we were running up and down the sand dunes at Freshwater West. It was late November and the sun was low, visible only as a soft yellow hue beneath the heaviness of a thick light grey sky. The wind was howling, our hands freezing and the drizzle soft and fine but relentless, and yet we laughed until it hurt as we scrambled up and down, our feet sinking into the deep sand, our hands grasping at tufts of grass.

At the top of the highest dune we walked along the ridge in silence, hair whipping across our faces in thick wet strands, like seaweed, thighs ice-cold through our soaked jeans, wellies filled with heavy sand, noses running. I reached a hand into my coat pocket and felt the smoothness of collected pebbles: heart-shaped stones of pink, grey, rust and turquoise.

Liz walked ahead, her eyes caught by the wild sea, thrashing and churning, foaming at the exertion. Only our thoughts could be heard. I tried to read hers, she tried to read mine, and then we stopped. And kissed.

Salt. Warmth. Laughter. Cheeks pink. Hearts BOOMing.

And I knew.

I knew as we walked hand-in-hand back to the car-park watching the patterns on the shiny sand as the water rolled back out. I knew as we climbed into the car, soaked to the skin, both mesmerised by crows caught in flight. I knew as we warmed ourselves in front of the fire, she brushing windswept knots from my hair, me from hers; sand piles on the slate floor, wet coats hanging on the door.

I knew it as, *the day I fell in love with Liz.*