

Times of Crimson & Clover



by
Jon Santana

Taking Off

While we were getting ready for bed on the first night of our romantic getaway, you accidentally head butted me & it was the most physically painful thing I've felt in years. I touched the bridge of my nose the next day to feel the sting & we laughed. I thought about that instead of all the pain that I came here to get away from.

A few months ago I was moving heaven and earth to try to find what you saw in me. All the years away from you didn't help me figure it out. But then my brother got married and I had to be there for that despite whatever was keeping me from the life with a white picket fence. Everyone walked so slow during the ceremony that I thought about it & realized that people walk slow during weddings because they took their time to get here & they have the rest of their lives to walk fast.

I started to slow down & let things sink in. & then I thought about you when my brother and his now-wife read their vows, because she told him that she would love him even when he didn't love himself. I think that's what really did it for me. I recalled the way you loved me & how unconditional that was. I thought of the way I loved you & how I could have done so much more. I felt like there was a whole lot of loving you that I had yet to do, so I might as well start now.

You told me lots of sweet things while we were exchanging messages like two people waiting for something monumental to happen. One of the things that stuck with me was when you said that you were praying to a god you didn't believe in every night & pleading that in some way, I'll be able to see all of the good in me that you do.

A few months after that I was boarding one plane after another on my way to finally be with you again. I had only one intention of what to do with my time, & that was to love you like I never have before, to remind you that you are more special to me than anyone on the planet, & to give you the love story that you've always deserved.

Falling Again

I remember the anticipation when I first saw you. We were on a bed where I was keeping my hands to myself & wondering if things were going to be the same as old times. I wondered if you would accept me as I am or if you no longer recognized the man I became. I looked in your eyes & it felt like we never left that twin bed up in the valley. Crying like a teenager, I felt it. I was in love with you all over again like we were only moved closer together as a result of all the distance & time between this moment & the last time I held you.

I kissed you like I had known you my whole life because it felt like I had. I held you that night as if this affection I had for you could be expressed in a simple squeeze. I watched one movie after another with you as if we had all the time in the world. It really felt like we did. You fell asleep in my arms & I couldn't help but think of how you looked so graceful & at peace. I felt like I was, too.

It's All Crimson & Clover, Baby

I found a black & white photo of you sitting in my bed and wearing almost nothing but a smile. You look so beautiful that I trip over old memories & fall gracefully as I make my way to the place where we met. I remember it being cold outside when we were laughing about the way I scraped my hand & I was becoming sure of the fact that I loved you.

Everything happened so fast that I don't recall the seasons changing. I gave you the holidays, your birthday, Valentine's Day, my birthday, & even an anniversary or two. I felt time pass as we stayed in the same place & I adored every second of it. I saw affection I didn't know existed when you became the one who was holding a damaged version of me. That would stick with me so long that I promised myself I'd never fail you.

I still carry all of that today because the color you brought into my world never faded & the luck I felt for having you still follows me now. I'm feeling it now more than ever as I appropriately feel things a few years late. There's a collection of love stories that you've always deserved & I'll make sure you get them no matter how late I am.

I don't feel this party ending until we lock eyes across a crowded room like in the movies. I'll keep looking for things to feel until I find something as electrifying as our first kiss. I'm full of patience & love because my skies are permanently a burning shade of red & my affection is alive. It's all crimson & clover, baby.

Your Heart

I used to be ashamed of how much you'd make me feel loved because I knew that I could never do the same for you. It makes me feel childish to think of that now, because how do we measure how much we love people? You always told me how I was your first love & that I was your fucking heart. Meanwhile I thought of a thousand different cutesy nicknames for you, I came up with a handful of inside jokes and anecdotes for the unique flavor of our interactions, & I never stopped inventing new ways to embarrass you in front of your roommates who would tease you for how in love we were.

No, I never believed anything I did would come close to your grand gestures, so I never stopped trying to outdo myself. You one-upped me in our constant game of tug of war & I was never going to let you have the last word, so I kept loving you. I loved you so much that I didn't know what to do with myself, & not a single love story came out of me while we were together. I was much better at looking back on things, so it only makes sense that I'm only able to express my affection for you now, years after falling for you & realizing you were the most pure & profound love that I've ever felt.

You are one fine specimen of a human being. You're a beautiful creature whom the Aztecs would've had second thoughts about sacrificing because no harvest would be bountiful enough to call it a fair trade. I never once stopped looking for ways to tell you of how you're as lovely on the outside as you are on the inside, & you never stopped reminding me. Maybe I'm biased because of how much I love you, but every once in a while you remind me that I never exaggerated a single thing.

You wore a T-Shirt that read "written & directed by Quentin Tarantino" just for me. I chuckled & looked away before you grabbed my attention again. You jumped up & down to make the letters giggle & said "perfect." You always did know how to throw my favorite things in my face, quite literally at times. You always knew what I liked & I only adored things more when they were coming from you: my favorite person.

I was distracted by something & you told me that you were going upstairs. I dismissed that until you added "where I can take my pants off." I put down what I was doing & said that I'd be right there. I loved how we had those moments just as much as I loved the simple act of loving you. We would've had a completely different relationship if I wasn't able to show you my affection in every way imaginable.

I watched as you cooked dinner naked. I had nothing to do but sit there & be amazed. There was a unique kind of intimacy between us where we could share anything with each other & our bodies were just the beginning. I was so in love with you that I was ready to share my ideas, my feelings, my life, & even my future with you. It felt natural to expose myself to you in such a way that there would be nothing held back. You were just that kind of safe place for me & I was growing every second that I got to bask in such a lovely glow.

Our Time

Our time was coming to an end & I was wondering when I was going to get another chance to love so freely. Tomorrow I was going to wake up without you & the thought of getting used to that was crushing me. I didn't know how long it would be until I found myself in a loving embrace again, & whether or not it would be with you or someone else I have yet to meet. I didn't want to think about that as much as I wanted to remember every beautiful moment we spent together. Surely if I ever love someone else and make them feel special, it will be because of all of this adoration inside of me that I was able to find while being in your presence.

You showed me more love than I ever thought I'd find. You taught me that I don't have to keep it for myself, or even to you, & that I am free to give it away or to hold onto it indefinitely & always feel it. That's what ultimately happened when I felt your love for me. I could never forget all of the ways in which I felt infinite. I'm forever thankful that I got to experience all of that with you. You held my hand in the car ride to the airport & no matter how hard I tried not to, I cried. We didn't say goodbye's, just I love you's. I moved heaven & earth to find what you saw in me, & now that I'm acquainted with the man that you love, I never want to let him go.

Sincerely,
Your Fucking Heart