

Break or Make Me (Take All)

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This fictional story is inspired by the struggles of an individual mustering up the courage to fall in love and facing the possibility of getting hurt. Falling in love does not guarantee us a lifetime commitment, and some relationships end even before they begin. For others, love exists and some believe that it doesn't. As it is said, love can either break or make you.

For Erika, love has been hurtful and cruel. Mitch on the other hand acknowledges the pain brought upon by love, without the intention of either falling in or falling out. As soon as she met Erika, she a broken-hearted, sad and lonely. She knew in an instant, she was the person whom she'd spend her life with.

As they both agreed to date, Mitch's secrets began to surface which tested how far the two of them go for love. Will the love they have break or make them? And will they be willing to go for a take-all?

Disclaimer:

This is an LGBT-inspired creation, names and places are fictional and just a product of the author's imagination.

PART 1: STARTING OVER

Erika slowly opened her eyes as the light coming from the window pierces through the glass and into her face, she moved away to the other side on her right with her sheets on her face. She was aware of the time she crawled into her room, trying not to disturb the entire house of her arrival she even removed her flip-flops and tip-toed on her way to her bedroom.

“Have you gone mad? Is this all that you can do?” her older brother’s voice sounded more irate than usual and pulled the sheets off her face.

With a grimace Erika pulled her pillow and covered her face with it.

“Shall I call dad?”

She’s got no choice but to get on her feet slowly, if their dad steps in, she know she’ll be in a huge trouble.

“You are scheduled to meet a client and this is how you start your day, for goodness sake it’s already ten in the morning!” Errol throw the quilt on the floor and raise his voice.

“I already have sent them the proposal, what else do you want me to do?”

Erika been trying to live on her own, only to end up in the same roof as her older brother.

“Two months ago, you were bawling your eyes out as you beg me to give you another chance. You promised that you’d be more responsible this time, I took your word and this is what I got?”

Not wanting to hear any more of his brother’s rants, she slowly walk her way to the shower.

As her body got soaked on the warm water coming out from the shower, she went back remembering what happened two months ago.

2 Months ago.....

She woke up in the emergency room, she's got intoxicated as she drank a lot and took half bottle of her sleeping pills and her bestfriend Andrei found her unconscious inside her place.

Tanya, her girlfriend for three years have decided to call it quits. Devastated and broken, she wasn't able to think clearly and thought of ending her life.

She was rushed to the hospital, her brother Errol have prevented the news on getting to their father which she was grateful and made a promise to be more responsible and act maturely.

Tanya wasn't the first woman who broke her heart that she had taken so seriously, she once have had cut her wrist, crashed her car and even got overdosed with pain reliever.

She was sent to a mental facility for rehabilitation, regular visit and counseling session with a psychiatrist.

Just as she heals and recovers, she would fall inlove again and got broken and again and again. All her life, she thought Tanya would be different, but it turned out she wasn't at all. So here she is, inside her brother's home which she promised him that she'd behave and act properly.

Erika got dressed, her usual style. It's seven thirty in the morning and she got home at three in the morning, she walk past the dining area and her brother caught her.

“Aren't you gonna join us for breakfast?” Errol called out.

Erika went on without any response, which caused Errol to take a deep breath and a sigh. His wife Jamie taps his shoulder lightly and smiled.

“Take it easy, she'll be fine. Just leave her be, your sister is trying her best to start all over and you should see that at least.”

Comforted by his wife's words, Errol nodded and continue sipping on his cup of coffee.

PART II: ENCOUNTER

After a month of behaving according to her brother's house rules, Erika was allowed to go back to her place in one condition. She'll have to spend the weekend with the family and her weekdays are monitored as well, with her silence and nods. Erika admits that nobody understands her well than her brother. Errol is just two years older than her, and he's been very considerate to her ever since.

He took his father's slap which was meant for his sister who came out as gay during college when she was caught dating someone from her department and the rumor went spreading on their circle. He never have issue regarding his sister's gender preference, all there was is a worried brother who witnessed his pathetic sister's roller coaster life.

Saturday came and their parents invited them for dinner at their favorite restaurant, it's a five course meal and Erika despite not liking the ambiance of such formal dining. She remained quiet and silent and only if she's being asked that her voice would voluntarily come out. But most of the questions are rather annoying than polite, and she doesn't want to respond to any of those.

"Dad, Erika made that deal possible. It wasn't me who worked on that, I think she deserved the credits. Besides, she's been really good with her job. She deserved to be on that party." Errol stood firm.

"I'm fine Err-

"No, you worked hard for that and I want you to be there."

The dinner ended, all of them walk to the lobby. Bid goodbyes, and when their parents left.

"Would you like to join us? Jamie's friends are gathering and they invited us over, let's grab some drinks and relax?" Errol proposed.

"Yeah, come with us Eri." Jamie seconded.

"I'll only hold you two, you go I'm fine. Besides, it's your party and I know no one you know I can't last long in a place where I feel like I'm alone." Errol tap Erika's shoulder.

"What are you blabbering, you got us. If you don't like it there, then you can leave." Erika took a deep breath, just a simple nod and she's already tailing them on the way to the place.

Greeted by a spacious space, situated in the outskirts of the city. It has a mini-bar, a swimming pool, a billiard table and a wide balcony.

“Guys this is my younger sister, Erika.” Errol introduced her with such a proud voice. Jamie grabbed her hand and joined the ladies on the couch. After a while, the door opened and a woman in a white shirt, ripped jeans and boots came in with a smile greeting each and everyone in the room.

“Oh my gosh, you came!” Jamie exclaimed as she kissed the woman on the cheek as she sat down beside her.

“Well, Raf texted me. He said you and Errol came with your sister-in-law. So I told myself, I wouldn’t be lonely joining this coupled night. So you must be Errol’s sister?” Erika nods simply, Jamie smiles and introduces Erika properly to their friend.

“Hey, Errol!” Mitch called him in.

“Yes?”

“Did you force your sister to come here tonight?” Mitch teasingly asked looking at Erika and Errol alternately.

“I kind of, promised that she won’t feel alone if she comes,” Errol replied.

“Then you should’ve texted me right away.” Everyone laughed, Erika took her glass of whiskey and drank everything from it.

“Okay, that’s what I say an act of loneliness.” Mitch quipped, pulling Jamie away from Erika’s side to switch places.

“Anton, pass me a bottle of the best whiskey please,” Mitch called in, and a bottle and an empty glass came into her possession in no time.

“Would you mind?” Erika raised her glass as Mitch offered to pour her some liquor.

“Cheers, it’s a pleasure to meet you.” A nod and the rim of the glass went straight to Erika’s lips, one glass after the other and both of them felt the liquor letting loose of their thoughts towards one another. Mitch raised her glass and Erika received it to acknowledge their first time together.

“Cheers!”

Part III: LOVE EXIST

Things went well for Erika and Mitch, after spending that night they started to see each other occasionally. Until she got invited to Mitch's photo exhibit, Errol on the other hand was glad watching his little sister having a good time with Mitch. Erika spends more time outside than hiding inside her cave, curtains down and spends time sleeping the whole day out.

“Woah, I didn't remember us talking about this matchy-matchy clothes.” Mitch exclaimed as she greeted Erika inside the hall. She was late due to some work in the office that she had to finish.

Plain white tees, black jeans, black flat boots and a black cardigan. Mitch placed her hands on Erika's shoulders and pushed her gently to somewhere. A moment and the two of them stood quietly in the huge frame.

Erika is in awe, watching herself on the frame. The photo looks raw, her freckles, the lines on her lips, the curves on her face, the strands of hair touching her face, the light wrinkles on her knuckles as she held her hair with one hand, the wrinkles on her forehead as she caught Mitch taking photos of her that one afternoon in the beach when they decided to kill time in the shore.

Erika turned to face Mitch on her left with a question on her face which Mitch had noticed right away.

“Love exists Eri, I just realized that too that very day we went on the beach. It’s kinda weird, I promised not to fall again. But as soon as I was convinced, you came. That night at Raf’s place? I was, I was smitten. You came, bruised, flawed and broken. Just exactly what made me realize that you are perfect, I want to love you Eri.

“Are- are you?”

“Date me.”

Before Erika could say another word, Mitch grabbed her by her waist and pulled her gently as she kissed her. She could hear her heartbeat, punching her chest and she slid her hand onto her waist and allowed Mitch to kiss her.

She invited Mitch to her place after the after-party, and they both reek of liquor from the after-party. In a rush, they undressed each other as soon as they got inside the room. Erika responded to Mitch’s touch and kisses, their clothes fell on the floor and naked as they reached the bed.

Erika woke up, and Mitch's head was on her arm. She could still hear her heart pounding hard against her chest. Mitch hasn't been in a relationship for two years after a huge heartbreak. Her girlfriend died in a car accident with a man whom she suspected was her girlfriend's lover. Despite knowing the truth, Mitch chose to keep it to herself trying hard to protect her girlfriend. After the accident, she promised to distance herself and avoid love as much as possible. Until the two of them met that night.

"What are you thinking?" Mitch's voice.

"Nothing, I just want to look at you."

"Kiss me instead." Mitch jokes, that Erika did eventually.

"What was she like?" Erika asked after their lips parted.

"Who? My ex?" Mitch clarified and, Erika nodded.

"I don't know, honestly after seeing you that night I just realized that I was finally free. I couldn't remember that much about her, maybe due to the pain that she gave me. Maybe, what's left in me now is that her being the last woman I dated. My doctor warned me that I might not remember her that much, since I was in too much pain and they said it has to do with my brain trying to forget her, something with trauma."

"I see, are you happy now?"

"I am, very. It feels like I'm having a whole new life and a more promising life with you."

"I love you."

"I love you too."

PART IV: FEAR

A few broken hearts and someone might fear falling inlove, that's a given. But in Mitch and Erika's case. It's more than that.

"Mitch? Hi, I mean. Hi, it's been a while."

A pretty face came to their table one afternoon in a café, smiling and jolly. Erika looked at the woman and Mitch's reaction which was more hesitant than happy.

"I'm sorry, do- do I know you?" Mitch asked looking at the woman and Erika.

"Don't you remember me? I'm Patricia – I'm sorry I didn't mean to be a nuisance." The woman looked at Erika.

"Do you guys know each other?" Erika asks.

"Ah- yeah, we dated 5 years ago. You must be her girlfriend? I'm Patricia."

"Hi, Erika." Erika threw a look at Mitch who remained puzzled and lost.

"I'm sorry for barging in, I better get going. I was just glad seeing her after so many years, I didn't mean anything."

"Oh, it's okay. It's fine, I'm sorry she seems not to remember you."

"Yeah, I can't believe it either. But anyway, I'm glad she seems happy and you two look good together."

As soon as the woman was out of Erika's sight, she turned to Mitch.

"Oh- God, Patricia," Mitch exclaimed.

"You remember her just now?" Puzzled and confused, Erika stared at her girlfriend.

"Oh God, I was rude, wasn't I?" Erika nodded and smiled, pinched Mitch's cheek gently and gave her a quick smack.

"Adorable," Erika whispered.

Erika tried not to mind the incident at the café, however...

"Were you hurt? Oh my God, what happened?" she received a call from a nurse informing her that Mitch was brought to the ER.

There's a brace on her girlfriend's neck, bruise and cut on the forehead.

"I'm fine, I lost control of the car and it crashed."

A medical staff came to take Mitch to the laboratory for xray and other needed test, while Erika was waiting a police officer came and gave her the details regarding the accident.

"There were no casualties, the driver crashed on a road railing. The impact was quite strong that the car was distorted and in bad shape, good thing that she was fine and was rescued right away. The CCTV showed that there's a sudden increase of the speed, some swerving before the crash."

"Is there anything needed to be done?" Erika asked.

"The driver will have to face some penalty and for the damages in the scene, statement and all good."

"Thank you officer."

The officer left, Jamie is on the phone talking with Erika. Then there's Mitch's parents rushing their way to the ward.

“You must be Erika? I’m Cathy, Mitch’s mom and this is my husband Tom.”

“It’s nice to meet you both.”

“We are very sorry for the trouble our daughter has caused,” Tom said holding Erika’s hands.

“It’s okay Mr. Perez, I’m glad to be here for Mitch.”

After a while, Mitch came out but was unconscious. Erika followed to where the staff was taking her girlfriend and so as Mitch’s parents. When she was transferred to her bed, a doctor came and greeted Mr. and Mrs. Perez which made Erika feel even more puzzled.

“Shall we head to my office?” the doctor asked the couple, Mrs. Perez glanced at Erika and smiled.

“No doctor, we can hear you here. This is Erika, Mitch’s girlfriend and I think she needs to know.” Mrs. Perez went on, and the doctor nodded. Threw Mitch a look and back to the couple and Erika.

“Hmm..we are lucky that no vital points have been hit especially on her head. But based on her X-ray, the lump on her brain is growing.” Erika’s sight seemed to have gone blurry, and all she felt was a warm pair of hands holding her, Mrs. Perez.

“You need to know, we are sorry, but you need to know.” The old woman whispered.

“Her eyesight has gone black, and when she recovered she already has crashed. According to her, there’s a series of events in the past few days and weeks that she’s become more and more forgetful. I’m afraid to say this, but it seems that her condition is worsening.”

“Wha-what’s going What do-do you mean? She just got into-

Erika’s tears fell, trembling and shaking her knees had given up and if it weren’t for Mr. Perez she could’ve fallen on the floor. The doctor left, and so Mitch’s parents were sitting in front of Erika, Mrs. Perez holding Erika’s hands and pressing them gently.

“Mitch is ill. She’s got this lump on her brain, and the doctor said that it was the reason why she’s been forgetful. It started when her – her past girlfriend died in a car accident. She was devastated, she stopped eating, and she stopped living her life. Her body, her health, mental health deteriorated. She lost weight, a lot. She started receiving psychiatric sessions, and the more she started oppressing her memory. One day, she was screaming, crying and asking for help. We took her to the doctor and did a lot of tests, especially on her head which she complained to have been painful. The doctors found a lump, it was located in a spot where an operation could not be done.”

Every word was like bubbles exploding in thin air, Erika was devastated and saddened by what she had heard. She dialled Jamie's number, as soon as her sister-in-law picked up her call. Erika released her fear and frustrations.

"Did, did you guys know about it?"

"What are you talking about? Okay, your brother and I are already in the car right now and we are heading to you. Can you wait for us?"

After a few moments, Jamie runs to where Erika is standing blankly with her tears falling non-stop. They phoned Rafael and heard what seemed to be the reason for Erika's tears.

"We're sorry, we didn't know Eri."

A loud cry bursts, Erika's shoulders are shaking and she hugs Jamie tightly while Errol gently taps her sister's arm for comfort.

"What do I do? Jamie, what do I do?" the wailing continued, and it took a while before Erika calmed down. Her brother is holding her hand and gently giving her a massage as they sit down, Jamie is still hugging Erika.

Love can turn into something dreadful, and for Erika just as soon as she finds real joy with Mitch. It quickly turned into something that she'd feared with all her life.

PART V: CHOICE

It took a while for Erika to cope with the truth, she then chose stato standere Mitch was standing and holholdr hand as much as time could give them.

“You don’t have to do this.” Mitch insisted as Erika pulled her luggage inside her apartment.

“What do you want me to do then? Stay in my place while I think of you?” she replied, Mitch hugged her from behind.

“I’m sorry, I rea-

“I don’t need you to be sorry, just tell me that you want me here to stay with you.” Erika tried to keep her voice calm as her tears started to flow.

“I-I want you in here, I do,” Mitch replied, giving Erika’s nape some soft kisses. Erika turns to face her girlfriend, and places both her hands on Mitch’s cheeks.

“Let’s keep this moment be something that we both would carry on with us, let’s just stay inlove, this way, just this close, you and-

Mitch's lips landed on Erika's, soft and passionate kiss. With tears in both their eyes, they shared a night filled with love and longing for one another. Knowing what lies ahead, they both embrace the reality that sooner or later they'll have to bid each other goodbye.

While time is being generous, both Mitch and Erika have decided to make the most out of the remaining time that they have.

It was a tough decision that they both have decided to face head-on, believing that the love they feel for each other is enough. They remain hopeful for a more meaningful moment together, despite knowing that it is not going to be that easy for both of them.

The doctor has warned Erika about the mood swings, the loss of appetite, the vomiting and midnight screaming due to severe headaches. Decided and willing enough, Erika made her choice and that's to stay and be with the love of her life until the end.

Seconds seem to grow minutes, minutes to an hour and hour to a day. Until it was days and weeks, it was fine until Mitch's condition had worsened. She was required to undergo dialysis, alongside pain relievers.

One afternoon, Sunday, Erika just finished cleaning the mess of Mitch's vomit and some napkins. They hired a nurse to help her, just that Mitch's mood has grown bitter and bitter each day. Holding in was the only thing Erika could do, at times when Mitch's mood was better.

They'd spend a long time talking and sharing dreams. Although both of them are aware of it to be impossible, Erika wants Mitch to feel the love she has for her and her gratitude towards felt.

"How have you been holding?" Errol asked as soon as the two of them were seated on the couch, Erika's voice trembled and just as soon as she responded her tears burst. Errol quickly wraps her sister in his arms.

"It's too- too much pain. Errol, what do I do?" she cried. Errol took a deep breath and tightened his hug around his sister.

It went on the same, day after day. The weaker Mitch is turning, the more pain Erika feels inside. She knew for herself, that Mitch would eventually leave her any time soon.

Despite knowing, she couldn't help but cry herself silently whenever Mitch was asleep. Morning came, and Erika fell asleep after tending to Mitch who vomited at dawn. Mitch opened her eyes, she saw Erika sleeping on the couch beside her bed.

She got up slowly, with the pain in her head and the pain in her chest as she noticed the dark circles on Erika's eyes, the exhaustion on her girlfriend's face and the sad expression of her sleep. Made Mitch feel double the pain her illness is giving her, she placed her hand on Erika's cheek.

It was warm and she closed her eyes and began to trace the lines and curves of the face she fell inlove with a year ago.

“I’m sorry that I can’t be with you longer than what we hoped for, for keeping my illness a secret. I love you Eri, and if I can be reborn again. I’d love to meet you on that lifetime and I would love to be the one taking good care of you.”

Mitch wiped the tears from her cheeks as Erika move, slowly her eyes opened and she smiled as she saw Mitch’s face.

“Do you need anything?” she asked gently.

“No, I just want to look at you while you were asleep.”

Erika held Mitch’s hand that was on her cheek and closed her eyes. Unlike hers, Mitch’s hand is cold and pale.

" Can I make you breakfast?"

Mitch asked, as soon as Erika nodded. They walk their way to the kitchen. Mitch held Erika's hand.

"What would you like?" she asked. Erika pretends to think of something.

"I'd love to have some bacon and eggs." the only thing Erika wanted was to avoid making her girlfriend feel that she could no longer do things. If she knew her body was doing well, well-rested and did not have any pain. She'd allow her to do simple things.

"And coffee?"

Mitch added as she landed Erika's hand with some soft kisses.

"It's a must, so, yes, please?"

Mitch went on with the eggs and bacon while watching her carefully.

"Do you want to go out after breakfast?"
Erika asked.

"Where to?"

"Hmm..anywhere you'd like to go."

"How about the beach?"

"Okay, it's quite far so we must bring Nurse D with us."

"Sure, as long as it's the beach with you.
That's perfect."

At night when Erika is watching Mitch whose sleep is interrupted by the pain, all she can do is cry silently. Mitch's mood was the most affected by the worsening condition, which made her decide to savour the times when she could see her smile and relax, temporarily free from the pain.

As soon as the food was served, Erika started eating while Mitch watched her enjoy the food with a happy contented face. For a million times, Erika got hurt thinking of how cruel her fate was. She found the person whom she would share her lifetime with only to find out that it is going to cause her just another heartbreak.

Yet, at some part of her head, she knew that she was grateful for having Mitch in her life. Even if it was going to be short-lived and momentary, she knew that she'd cherish and treasure every moment she shared with her.

In love, the hardest part is when someone is caught between choices. For Erika, the choices were to walk away and then regret it or stay and get hurt. It cost her sleepless nights, tears and pain in the chest just to think that even though she'd stay Mitch won't be there for long.

And if she chooses to walk away, she is certain to regret it in the future.

"I Love her so much Errol, just thinking about not having her beside me is already breaking me into bits and pieces. It doesn't matter if I walk away or stay, I don't have that much of a choice. I, I just want to make her feel the love I have for her up until it's all over."

Erika cried in desperation.

"Then make a choice, and no matter which choice you take. I will be here for you."

Love is about choices, not being wise but knowing what choice one chooses. To love or to leave, to die and stay, to believe that love exists even if it means hurting both people. A choice to believe that love doesn't end just because goodbyes are to be said, love stays and it's a choice for someone to choose to believe it does.

PART VI: FAREWELL

The wind is warm, and the sun is at it's but since it's a little cloudy. Nurse D went straight to their cottage, Mitch wanted to walk on the shore.

She isn't allowed to walk barefoot even at home, but this time Mitch asked Erika to let her walk on the sand without anything on her feet. Erika bent to remove Mitch's shoes, her heart ached seeing how skinny and pale they went.

She held it for a while as her tears fell, trying to avoid Mitch's attention, she quickly wiped it off and gently patted her girlfriend's feet.

"Off you go." trying hard to smile sweetly as she lent her hand, Mitch smiled back and the two of them went onto the shore.

"Does it hurt? I mean the sand? Let me-

"It's fine, it stings but manageable and bearable. Don't worry, I'll let you know if it hurts."

"Okay, then let's walk slowly."

"Babe?" Mitch called softly without looking at Erika.

"Hmm?" she turned to face Mitch whose eyes were far away.

"Thank you." only then did she look at Erika.

"Whatever you are thankful for, you are very much welcome." she tried to hide the pain inside her heart, and Mitch released soft laughter.

"I love you, so much." Mitch paused and pulled Erika closer, she wrapped her in her arms.

Kissed her gently on her cheeks and her lips and pulled away. Erika knew why, one time when she kissed her. Mitch pulled away quickly.

"What's wrong?" Erika asked holding Mitch's face gently.

"Don't I reek of medicine and disinfectants?" with teary eyes, Erika pulled Mitch gently, closer to an inch distance.

"I love you and it doesn't matter, I just love you and that's it." she kissed her longer.

Erika thought it might be the same reason that she ended the kiss quickly, she pulled Mitch's face gently and reached her lips and they kissed again.

The time passed and Mitch rested after walking, sunset came. After checking on her girlfriend's vitals. Erika instructed Nurse D and allowed the nurse to take some me-time while they were set to watch the sunset.

The resort arranged a cosy set-up for lovers, after seated comfortably. Mitch and Erika enjoyed the sunset with refreshing fruit juice and some snacks that were good for Mitch as well.

Babe?" Mitch called.

"Yes?"

"You'll be fine right?" Mitch asked, starting at the glass of orange juice. Erika's heart skipped a beat, she could hardly clear her throat as if something was blocking her passage. "Will you be okay? It sounds stupid, right? I'm sorry that you had to get through all these things. When I first saw you, I thought a miracle might happen. I, I want to love you. I want to stay beside you, wake up every morning with you. I thought about all that, and I let my emotions take over. I don't want to die." tears fell from Mitch's eyes, it broke Erika's heart. Trying her best to hold back her tears, she hugged Mitch.

She allowed her to pour it out, Mitch went on.

"I'm so sorry for not telling you that I'm sick." Mitch continued, all that Erika could do was to gently tap and comfort her girlfriend.

"I'll, I'll be fine. I promise." Erika let out, trying hard to control her voice. "It's not your fault, and I'm glad you came to me, grateful for the love you've shown me. I couldn't ask for anything more, I met you and you just made me feel special. Thank you, thank you, babe."

Sober, Mitch pulled gently. Erika's tears were flowing, and her shoulders shaking as she tried to hold her tears back.

"Even when I am no longer beside you, remember that love exists. It might break or make you. Don't be scared. If love knocks on your door, take it all babe. Just take it all and be happy."

Erika failed to hold it back and she broke down, Mitch pulled her closer to her chest and let her cry it out.

That was the last sunset Erika shared with Mitch, they went home before sunrise the next morning. Later that afternoon, Mitch passed away in her sleep.

Erika was about to wake her up to check on her vitals when her girlfriend was unresponsive. Nurse D took over and declared Mitch dead upon failure to respond after several attempts.

A day after Mitch was laid to her final rest, Erika together with some cleaners started cleaning Mitch's apartment. Holding back her tears as she scanned through all the posted photos on the wall, tears fell as every corner reminded her of Mitch's laughter, her scent lingering inside the room, the indoor plant that they bought together after she had contained about the place being too bland.

Some photo works stacked in the storage room were already sorted out, some were sent to Mitch's parents, and other pieces were sent to a photo gallery chosen by Mitch's manager. Some of the frames were labelled and tagged under her name. As the last cleaner steps out of the apartment, Erika is left alone. Mitch's parents have given her the right to decide whether to keep or sell the apartment, they only took some clothes to keep Mitch's memory with them.

She grabbed a small frame with their photo on it, sank herself into the couch, brought the frame into her chest and released her sorrow and sadness all at once.

A week later, a loud ring from the door woke Erika up. It was Saturday, and she repainted Mitch's apartment and re-arranged everything that was left. She has decided to move in, she wanted her heart to willingly let go and give herself more time to live life with Mitch on it.

"Miss Erika Tan?" greeted the delivery man who was holding a flat rectangular box.

"Yes."

"Please sign here, and this one too."
Erika did what the guy asked her to do.
"Here you go, have a good day." said the delivery man before he walked his way out from Erika's sight. The package was from Mitch, dated a month ago. Her heart pounded as she walked back inside holding the package, she took the kitchen and stabbed the box open.

A photo of her sleeping in the bed, with the ray of the sun on her face. The shadows from the curtain, the white printed sheets on half of her body. It was that morning after they spent the night making love. The frame was labelled with "My all". There was a letter of which Erika's tears fell as she read what was written on the five-page letter.

My Love,

The moment this letter was delivered, means I have left you with a broken heart already. If only there was a way to defy death, I would have done it without hesitation. Even if it meant selling my soul to whoever would trade it for a life enough to spend and share with you, I'd take it. I'm sorry for breaking your heart, for leaving you too soon and for making you cry. I saw how much you tended me with love and care, those nights you spent watching over me, making sure I got to sleep comfortably. The moment your eyes developed dark circles, I knew for sure that you had been struggling that much. I'm sorry, for giving you a hard time.

If it weren't for your love, I would have left lonely and sad. Thank you, babe, thank you very much. If I am to be reborn, I'd trade my life just so I can be with you again. If only, I really would. Thank you for putting up with my mood swings, I'm sorry for making you cry at night when my body reacts to the pain. I'm sorry that you have to clean up the mess I made, for throwing tantrums. Thank you for giving me your all, thank you very much, babe.

I love you, I do. My heart aches thinking about leaving, thinking about the possibility of you finding someone. I was so jealous by the thought of it, pathetic me. What can I do? I tasted love the way you have shown it, I've felt a different kind of love. Addictive enough that I want to be greedy and selfish, for so many times I was tempted to tell you not to fall in love with anyone anymore. But, I can't be that selfish, not especially when I was the one who was leaving you.

Instead, I want you to assure me that you are going to be fine. You are going to be alright as that by the time your heart heals. Give it to someone who deserves it, love exists babe and I want you to grab it when it knocks on your door. Take it all! Do not get taken aback by the memory of me, or the love that we have. I want you to be happy, I want you to be loved as much, or even more than you have loved me. You deserved it babe, and I'd be the happiest when that time comes.

I have here a gift, and when you see it. I hope that you'll be reminded of how beautiful you are, and if I've seen it myself, so as the person who'll love you in the future. Be reminded that I was someone who wished to be with you for a lifetime, and even in death, I have wished for it many times. I wish you to be happy, let my memory be a memory that will remind you about love's existence and not a memory that will prevent you from being loved by someone.

When you're healed, let go of me. Do not cling to the memory of a broken heart, do not live your life in pain and sorrow of me. Live your life the way you wish it to be, the way I want it too. A life filled with love and joy, a life that you deserve more than anyone does. When the right time comes, don't miss it. Bid me your farewell, let go of my memory and continue living your life. I love you and I will forever love you, so go on with your life, be happy, and I swear I will celebrate it with all my heart, wherever I may be.

Babe, thank you. I'm sorry and I love you very much. Your love made me the happiest, and I wish you to be happy as well.

Love,

Mitch

Erika's tears are flowing again.

"I missed you so much, I missed you, Babe." she let her heart pour everything, with Mitch's memory and the deep longing she'd been hiding from the people who checked on her every time.

Love is full of surprises and mystery, the more you push it away the closer it gets to you. The more, deny it, the more it grows within you. And the more painful it gets, the deeper it has become. For love to grow, it takes faith. Someone who believes in it, someone who's willing to acknowledge its existence. Whether love breaks or makes you, you needn't be scared, instead, grab and just take it all!

.....the end.....