

## Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder

Absence makes the love grow fonder. Words of wisdom. So now I'm writing this love story about a boy and a girl who have spent an impressive amount of time, say, four years together. It all started sweet, with a handkerchief and a tie both with yellow dots as exchanged gifts. But, you see, I've been writing about toasts with one side burnt, paying for the rent, evening concerts, dull everyday stuff like that and I get bored. Whoever gives me those words of wisdom, I'm more than grateful—absence is exactly what they need, so that when they're brought back together, their love continues. What is love without drama, without hearts broken and mended back, without sorrowful tears and desperate kisses? To make it bigger, I place them in the 1940s, so that the boy can be sent to the battlefield. They miss each other like hell in the next four years. Once the girl learns that the boy is killed by a bomb, she cries so hard that she ruins her yellow-dots-patterned handkerchief. But one day in 1945, the boy shows up at the door, alive but with only one leg, his yellow-dots-patterned tie around his neck. She throws herself at him and kisses him desperately. Forget about the leg; he is alive with a heroic legend to tell. There comes our happy ending.

But only—what if we continue the story? What if the girl gets tired of taking care of the boy? What if the boy gets sick of being taken care of? One day, the girl burns her handkerchief and his tie and leaves. Bye, she writes a note, forget about me. Or one day the boy does the same thing. And thus ends their love. As an author of a love story, I cannot let this happen.

Therefore, the boy has to die. He has indeed died on the battlefield. His sacrifice will be praised forever, and he will be missed, loved and cherished by the girl forever. The girl ties her handkerchief to his tie and puts them beside her pillow. She remembers him for the rest of her life, and rests beside him fifty years later.

But when the boy dies, the girl is in her early twenties. She is pretty, or she wouldn't have made it to a love story. So what if a new boy knocks at her door? What reason does she have not to let go of her grievous past and welcome a new life? So the yellow-dots-patterned handkerchief and tie are shoved into a drawer, for the girl has bought blue striped ones. That cannot happen either, for I'm only fond of yellow dots. So the girl has to die too. One year after the war, she commits suicide, a tie wrapped around her left wrist and a handkerchief wrapped around her right wrist. A scene of eternal love. I don't know about you, but I'm deeply moved.

How I wish all this could happen, and it would have, if, at the very beginning of the story, I hadn't set the story in the present, a time without war. What a shame that there has been no danger in their lives, no chance of absence, no leg to lose, no tears or kisses, no dying for love. Every day they wake up, have half-burned toasts for breakfast, pay for the rent and go to evening concerts. The girl wears a red handkerchief, and the boy wears a green tie. The yellow-dotted ones are lost seven years ago, or God knows when. They secretly want one another to die, so that they can love one another again in a yellow-dots-patterned way. What is this that they have right now? Is it love? Well, to

be perfectly honest, I have no idea. It must be some kind of love, or I wouldn't be writing a love story about them.

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