

Heartbreak Hotel

I met you on my way out of the hotel lobby.

We brushed shoulders because I am

The absolute, biggest, dumbest, uncoordinated klutz there is.

My nose buried in my phone, my arms full of luggage I was too indignant to ask for help with,

And I bumped into you.

“I’m sorry,” you muttered, as if afraid of your own voice.

You brushed the hair out of your tired eyes and smiled apologetically,

But defiantly.

The kind of smile that acknowledges weakness in the self, but knows exactly what kind of chaos it’s capable of.

You were weaker then, but you didn’t forget how to stand on your own two feet.

As I reached for the door, I could hear you talking to the woman at the front desk.

You booked a room and I started having second thoughts.

So I decided to stay a while longer.

This is the Heartbreak Hotel.

A place between worlds. A limbo – if you will.

Or, really, a place between nothing and everything.

Because that’s what heartbreak feels like.

It’s the gray colorlessness that marks everything: your present, your future, your morning commute, your favorite meals.

The way they say your name.

Fits of crying and sore eyes turn to weeks and trash bins full of snotty, tear-soaked tissues.

We’re all here waiting to leave of our own accord,

Or be dragged out by some fool willing to take pity on us.

Stays here are indefinite. And there is no housekeeping.

My room feels like it’s on the complete opposite end of the hotel from yours,

But that doesn’t stop me from finding an excuse to run into you again.

We make small talk in the elevator that's
Way, way too far from my room.
There's a pause as your phone rings,
And I flinch when I hear his voice on the other end.
Your eyes cloud over, your shoulders slouch, and your voice hushes.
He hangs up and – God, does this elevator ride take forever. When will it end? – you look up,
apologizing once more.
He's the reason you're here, isn't he?

Maybe it's the drinks we share at the hotel bar or maybe we actually do have so much in
common or maybe you're just so much funnier than I'd like to give you credit for,
But you make me laugh.
A lot.
My cheeks are warm from booze and taut from smiling too much.
We spilled our secrets and hearts nearly as much as we spilled these drinks on ourselves that
night.
She found someone else. He wanted freedom.
And I thought he was crazy because I can't imagine anything nearly as liberating as the way
you're making me feel right now.

The next morning, I went into town and met some friends for brunch.
They are adorable. Obnoxiously so.
The rainbow over their heads shines brighter with every passing day,
And the storm cloud over mine won't stop pelting me with rain long enough for me to see the
sun every once in a while.
I drank too many mimosas
And couldn't stop myself from rambling about you.
I was drowning my French toast in an absurd amount of maple syrup,
Blabbing about the girl with cheeks that resemble a squirrel storing acorns when she smiles too
much and the NASA sweatshirt with the Post-It notes running down the arm,
When you walked in. Alone.

And the three of us recognized you.
A few weeks had gone by and I was set to leave.
I triple-checked my bags and headed down to the front desk.
I felt guilty about checking out,
Like it was unfair to leave you behind while you toiled within the confines of these drab walls.
How fitting it is then that we'd run into each other again in the lobby.
You pulled my hand from the door and I turned to face you.
"I'm not ready to leave yet."
There was a slyness in your smile underneath the melancholy of your tone.
How presumptuous
You were to think I'd stick around and keep you company while you healed instead of going my
own way.
But you were right.

The concept of what lies beyond the Heartbreak Hotel
Isn't as daunting to me as it used to be.
The light outside is terribly bright, even blinding at times,
Almost as a warning to all those who dare fly too close to the sun.
I'm not heartbroken anymore,
But I'm not sure if I'm as ready to leave as I once thought I was.
Does it matter?
These walls don't look so dull after all.
That pesky storm cloud has stopped bothering me.
And for the first time in a long time, I feel like I'm enough.
"You're more than just enough." Your words echo and rattle inside of me,
Threatening to upend all the cobwebs of my rib cage.

Maybe this place isn't so bad,
Especially now that I'm staying in your room.
And maybe I don't want what's out there
When I belong in your bed.