



If Pepper Could Talk

to Maya

together since May 2023

Dear Maya,

I don't have words. I have something better — a tail that tells you everything, ears that hear your car three houses away, and a heart that points at you like a compass.

But if I had words, just for one afternoon, this is the letter I'd write you.

Because there are things I want you to know. And I think you should hear them from me.

Here is what I love about us. And I notice all of it.

I love our breakfast handoff — a sprig of parsley over the side of the hutch, every single morning. That's my favorite part of every day. I start waiting for it before it's time.

I love the little burst of happy squeaks you make the second you hear the fridge open. I know you think I don't notice. I notice everything.

And I love that you came home tired and sat on the floor with me anyway, in your good clothes, because I was there and that was enough. You talk to me in your real voice — the one nobody else gets to hear. I keep all of it.

I'm not just fine. I'm not just okay. I'm happy — the kind of happy that doesn't need a reason. You did that. That's you.

People think the big days are the ones that matter. The beach, the birthday, the snow.

I'll tell you a secret: it's the ordinary ones. It's popcorning across the rug like the floor is made of springs. It's the spot at the cosy fleece tunnel by the window where the afternoon sun pools, where the sun lands and the whole world goes warm and I have nothing to do but be near you.

I don't need much. A walk. A window. The sound of you in the next room. You, coming back — you always come back, and I am amazed every single time.

That's the whole secret. The days don't have to be big. They just have to have you in them.



So here's the truth, since I've got the words for once.

You are my favorite. Not my favorite thing — my favorite, full stop. The person I look for when I hear the door. The one I'd pick out of any crowd, any room, anywhere, with my eyes closed, by the sound of you breathing.

I know I'm not always easy. I bark at nothing. I steal the socks. I wake you up too early because I can't believe it's already a day with you in it.

But I want you to know: I'm not waiting for a better life than this one. This is the one I'd choose. You, and the spot by the door, and the ordinary good morning. I already have everything.

So go on. Have the good day. Eat the good thing. Take the long way home.

And when you walk back through that door — I'll be the one who acts like you've been gone a year. Every time. That's not me forgetting how long you were gone. That's me, telling you the only way I know how:

There you are. There you are. It's you.

I love you. I always do. As much as a friend can love — which, it turns out, is an enormous amount.

Yours,

Pepper

Pep, Sir Pepper, the little potato

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