

FOR ANJALI

Before I *say goodbye.*



A BOOK OF SEVEN LETTERS

01 / 07



Bangalore / Sobo Aditya



Maybe somewhere along the way, you started thinking I became someone complicated.

Bangalore Aditya.

SOBO Aditya.

The person who started doing things differently. The person who changed. The person who became difficult to understand.

Maybe you look at me now and think I've become someone completely different from the person you knew.

But I'm really not.

I'm still just me.

I'm still the same stupidly simple person you've known for years.

I still get excited about the smallest things.

I still want to sit somewhere with someone I love and talk for hours.

I still want to go on random drives.

I still want to eat good food.

I still want to watch movies.

I still want to make things.

I still get attached to stupid little memories.

I still remember things other people would probably forget.

I still care way too much.

I still love deeply.

And honestly, I'm still figuring out my life just like you are.

Bangalore didn't turn me into someone else.

Living alone didn't.

Work didn't.

The people I met didn't.

The things I experienced didn't.

Maybe I changed in some ways. Of course I did.

You changed too.

We're not supposed to be the exact same kids we were when we met.

But underneath all of that, I'm still the same person.

The same Aditya who used to look at you and think you were the most special person in the room.

The same person who could get ridiculously happy over something small.

The same person who would remember some random thing you said three months ago.

The same person who wanted to know everything about you.

The same person who wanted to make you happy.

I didn't become some complicated person because I moved to Bangalore.

I didn't become SOBO Aditya.

I didn't suddenly become someone who doesn't understand what matters.

If anything, I think I became more aware of how complicated life can get.

But what I want from life has never felt small to me.

I want to make things and create something I'm proud of.

I want to keep growing, keep learning, and find out how much

more I can become.

I want to travel, see more of the world, laugh, eat good food, and make stupid memories that turn into stories I'll carry for years.

I want the people I love close, and a home filled with warmth, curiosity, and joy.

I want a life with room for ambition and tenderness, for new places and familiar comforts.

I want to look around one day and feel that the life I've built is fully mine.

Maybe those hopes sound ordinary by themselves. Together, they're the life I'm reaching for.

And maybe that's something I never explained properly to you.

You knew me when I was younger, when everything about me was easier to understand.

Then you watched me grow.

And maybe somewhere along the way, the things around me became bigger, but I didn't become someone fundamentally different from the person you knew.

I'm still me.

Still the same idiot who fell in love with you.

Still the same person who remembers your writing.

Still the same person who thinks about you when he sees something you would like.

Still the same person who wanted to come back.

Still the same person who wanted a simple life with the person he loved.

Maybe that's the part I want you to remember.

Not Bangalore Aditya.

Not SOBO Aditya.

Not the version of me you've built in your head from the last few months.

Just Aditya.

The person you knew.

The person who loved you.

The person who, underneath everything that happened, is still actually very simple.

And maybe that's all I've ever really wanted you to understand.

I didn't become someone else.

I just grew up.

And I'm still me.

LETTER 02 / 07

Goodbye



I wasn't prepared to say goodbye to you. Okay?

I knew maybe I would have to. Somewhere inside me, I knew that this could be where we were heading. But knowing that something might happen and actually having to live through it are two completely different things.

I had to ground myself so many times. I had to tell myself that maybe this was really happening, that maybe I actually had to let you go.

But if there was going to be a goodbye, I really wanted it to be a beautiful one.

I wanted to spend time with you. I wanted to go to that Airbnb with you.

Not to convince you. Not to argue with you. Not to somehow talk you into loving me again.

I wanted to show you that I don't believe everything between us is lost. That I don't believe it is simply too late. That after all these years, I still believe we're capable of being something beautiful together.

And selfishly, I wanted to spend a little more time with you.

A few more hours. A few more moments. Maybe just being around you without trying to solve everything.

Because I knew that if this really was goodbye, I wanted some memories of you that weren't just messages, arguments, crying, blocking, and trying to hold on.

I wanted one last piece of us that felt like us.

I will remember our relationship fondly, even if you don't.

I will remember it for what it was not only for how it ended. I won't rewrite our entire history just because the ending hurt. I won't go searching through all these years for every mistake, every failure, every reason we should have walked away.

I won't change the script just because the last chapter was painful.

And please don't tell me that you will remember it the same way if that's not genuinely how you feel.

Because I have heard your words. I've seen your actions. And some of the things you've said about us don't sound like the relationship I remember.

Maybe one day you'll see it differently. Maybe you won't.

But I don't need you to remember it the way I do.

I just need to be honest about the way I remember it.

I loved you.

I loved what we were.

And even if this is where our story ends, I don't want the ending to convince me that everything before it wasn't real.

I really pray and wish for your happiness.

I think I have, ever since the day I met you.

From every little problem you ever had, every time I saw you hurting, every time something wasn't okay, all I ever really wanted was for you to be okay.

Even when we weren't together, somehow my mind would still go there.

Is Anjali okay? Is she doing alright?

I'd see something and think, she would love this.

I'd hear something and think, she'd laugh so much at this.

I'd go somewhere and think, it would've been so nice if she were here.

And I'd think about all those tiny things without even trying to.

I don't think that part of me is going to disappear just because we're saying goodbye.

And Anjali, I'm proud of you.

I really am.

But you know me. Our relationship was built on honesty, so I'm going to be honest about this too.

I see so much more in you.

I see so much potential in you that sometimes I don't think you even realize how much you're capable of.

I want you to do well. I want you to grow. I want you to become everything you are capable of becoming. I want you to have a life that makes you genuinely proud of yourself.

And I think I've wished that for you for longer than you probably realize.

I remember being a kid and praying for you.

I remember when we were in 10th and you used to overthink everything so much. I remember looking at you and wishing I could somehow take that pain away from you.

I remember praying to Ganpati Bappa,

"Please, please take her pain away. And if you can't do that, give that pain to me."

I was just a kid when I prayed that.

But I meant it.

And maybe that's one of the simplest ways I can explain what you've meant to me all these years.

I never wanted a life where you weren't okay.

Even now, even after everything, some part of me will always wonder if you're okay.

I hope you are.

I hope you become everything you want to become.

I hope life is kind to you.

And I hope, wherever life takes you, you never forget how deeply you were loved.

LETTER 03 / 07

Apology



I'm sorry.

I don't want this part to become another explanation. I've spent so much time trying to explain why I did things, what I meant, what was happening in my head, and why I wasn't trying to hurt you.

But sometimes explaining why I did something doesn't change what it did to you.

And I'm sorry for that.

I'm sorry for the times you needed me and I wasn't there in the way you needed me to be.

I'm sorry for the nine months we spent apart. I know there were things happening in your life when you needed me, and I wasn't there beside you. I can explain why I left, what I was dealing with, and what I believed at the time, but none of that changes what my absence must have felt like to you.

I'm sorry for the times you felt alone.

I'm sorry for the times you felt unheard. There were moments when, instead of sitting with what you were feeling, I became desperate to make you understand what I was feeling. I kept explaining myself because I was terrified that you were seeing me as someone I didn't believe I was.

But sometimes you didn't need another explanation from me. You needed me to listen.

I'm sorry I didn't understand that sooner.

I'm sorry for the times my actions made you question how much I loved you, even when loving you was never something I was confused about.

I'm sorry for the times I didn't give you the space you needed.

I know there were moments when my fear of losing you became stronger than my ability to step back. I kept reaching for you because I was scared of losing you completely.

But loving someone doesn't give me the right to take away the space they ask for.

I'm sorry.

I know I wasn't perfect. I know I made mistakes. I know there are things I should have understood earlier, things I should have handled differently, and things I wish I could go back and change.

I'm not writing this to say that everything that happened between us was my fault. It wasn't. We were two people. We both had our wounds, our reactions, our mistakes, and our moments where we failed each other.

I'm simply taking responsibility for mine.

I'm sorry for the pain I caused you.

I'm sorry for the moments when loving me became harder than it should have been.

I'm sorry for the things I did that made you hurt, even when hurting you was never what I wanted.

All I can do is finally say, without defending myself or trying to explain it away:

I'm genuinely sorry.

Your writings



I love your writings even after all these years

From the time when you used to write poems on a notebook to you starting a page

From the time we were just kids to now that we are young adults

From the first word that i read

From the time that i got to know you write

You intoxicated me and your words held a special place in my heart

I still follow the poets and writers that you found online the one you made friends with remember ?

I want to tell you something about this “you were waiting the whole time”

Take a deep breath and remember (ofc you dont remember)In first year when we started dating i asked you question about this only

You told me you are scared of how much you love me. That was your way of explaining how deeply you felt about me.

And then I asked you why so much of your writing seemed to follow the same theme. You told me something along the lines of, “Because I’m scared that I’ll lose you, and you don’t want to show that to me, so you write.”

I remember your writings.

I remember so much of them.

I got into writing because of you. I started reading poetry in school because of you. Not because I wanted to be like you. Not because I wanted to impress you. Not because I wanted to attract you.

I did it because I loved you.

Because anything that helped me understand you a little more felt like breathing to me.

So yes, it hurt when you told me that all those things you wrote were about how you were constantly waiting for me.

It hurt because I remember what those words meant to you when you wrote them. I remember what they meant to me when I read them. And I remember the person you were when you were writing them.

And now, when you tell the story of those writings as though they were simply records of you waiting for me, it feels like the entire meaning of them has been rewritten.

Maybe you see them differently now. Maybe time has changed what those words mean to you. Maybe you've had to find a version of the story that makes more sense to you now.

But Anjali, I was there too.

I lived that relationship with you.

I remember the things you wrote. I remember the things you said. I remember the things we were to each other.

And I don't know how to reconcile that person with the story you're telling me now.

I'm not saying your pain wasn't real. It was. I'm not saying you didn't wait for me. You did.

I'm saying that wasn't the whole story.

And that's what hurts me the most.

LETTER 05 / 07

Anjali



Anjali, my high school sweetheart, my love, my princess.

Oh, how special you are to my eyes, even if you seem completely normal to everyone else.

For me, even after knowing you since school, there wasn't a single moment where I didn't find you special.

This spark usually fades away after so much time. You get used to someone. They become familiar. You stop looking at them the same way.

It didn't happen for me.

Because I really love you. And I really care about you.

I did what I did for you.

I don't care what other people say or how they perceive me because of the decisions I made.

I did come back for you.

I was trying so hard to come back to you.

And it really was something special in my mind.

I have known you for so long.

I've loved you for so long that I don't just think about you as you are right now.

I've imagined you growing old.

I've imagined what you'll look like when we're older, when the things that make you beautiful today inevitably change.

When your face changes. When your body changes. When your beauty fades in all the ways that time eventually makes it fade.

And I still imagined loving you through all of it.

Because that's what loving you meant to me.

It was never just about how you looked at one particular age or how beautiful you were at one particular moment.

I wanted to know the woman you would become.

I wanted to see you grow old.

I wanted to be there when life changed you, when time changed you, and when we both became completely different versions of the people we were when we first met.

And somehow, even when I imagined all of that, I still imagined you as my person.

That's how long I've loved you.

That's how deeply you've existed in my idea of a life.

And I think that's what I've always wanted with you.

Not just the beautiful parts.

Not just the girl I fell in love with in school, or the person I was completely obsessed with when we were young and everything felt new.

I wanted all of it.

I wanted the ordinary parts too.

I wanted the mornings when neither of us looked good. The days when you were tired and irritated. The days when life was boring and nothing particularly exciting happened. I wanted to know what you would become when you stopped being the girl I knew and became someone I hadn't met yet.

I wanted to meet every version of you.

I wanted to watch you change your mind about things. I wanted to watch you grow into yourself. I wanted to see the things you were afraid of become things you weren't afraid of anymore.

I wanted to be there when you achieved things you once thought were impossible.

I wanted to see you become successful and probably annoy you by telling you I always knew you would.

I wanted to be there when you failed too.

When you came home disappointed. When you questioned yourself. When you didn't know what you were doing with your life.

I wanted to be the person who reminded you that one bad day didn't make you a failure.

I wanted to know the version of you that nobody else gets to see.

The sleepy you.

The angry you.

The overthinking you.

The ridiculously happy you.

The version of you that laughs until you can't breathe.

The version that needs someone to sit beside her without saying anything.

I wanted all of it.

And maybe that's why I've found it so difficult to let go of you.

Because I wasn't only attached to who you were.

I was attached to who I believed we could become.

I had already imagined so many years that haven't happened yet.

Places we haven't gone.

Things we haven't experienced.

Versions of ourselves we haven't met.

And somewhere inside me, you were still there in all of them.

Even when I imagined myself old, I somehow imagined you there too.

And that's such a strange thing to lose.

Because I'm not just saying goodbye to the person standing in front of me.

I'm saying goodbye to a thousand little futures I had quietly built in my head without even realizing I was building them.

And maybe you'll never know how much space you occupied in those futures.

But you did.

You always did.

You were never just someone I loved.

You became part of the way I imagined life itself

LETTER 06 / 07

Hurt and Anger



You took away my last few moments with you.

And no matter how much you deny this, no matter how differently you choose to remember what happened, that's what it felt like to me.

You were mean to me. You were unkind to me. And I never deserved to be treated the way I was treated.

Not even 1% of it.

And fuck you for that, Anjali.

Because I loved you. And even when I was completely falling apart, even when I was desperate and scared and didn't know what to do with myself, I still never thought you deserved to be treated cruelly by me.

But somehow, towards the end, you became someone I barely recognized.

You were so fucking hurtful to me.

I asked you for help.

Somehow that conversation ended with me taking the blame.

When my dad was sick, you never once offered to come.

And then while we were arguing, you told me that you offered to come and help me.

What a fucking lie bro , you never asked me

I was sleeping for 22 hours in hospital managing everything and not once you asked me to be there

How much you will lie just so you can sleep peacefully without any guilt

How much you will change the story just so you can fucking sleep with the guilt

Do you understand how much that hurt me about you lying about that part

Because I needed you then.

And even if you couldn't come, even if there was a reason you couldn't be there, I would have understood that.

But finding out that you had lied about even offering to be there for me made me feel like even something that painful in my life had become something you could rewrite.

I was having panic attacks.

And somehow even then I ended up taking the blame.

I wanted to fix things.

I was fucking devastated trying to fix things.

And somehow even that became another thing I was made to feel guilty for.

I wanted to talk to you normally.

Just normally.

I wanted to know how your day was. I wanted to tell you something stupid. I wanted to hear about your life. I wanted some tiny piece of the normality we used to have.

And somehow you fucked that up too.

Every time I reached for you, it felt like I was punished for reaching.

Every conversation became another explanation. Another argument. Another thing I had to defend. Another reason why I was somehow the problem.

And I was already fucking hurting.

Then there was everything you accused me of.

You called me manipulative.

You told me I was guilt tripping you. That I was trying to control you. That I was emotionally manipulating you. That I was saying things just to get a reaction out of you.

Do you have any idea what that did to me?

Because I spent so much of our relationship trying to be understood by you.

And suddenly the person who knew me better than almost anyone was looking at the things I said, the things I did, the way I reacted, and seeing some calculated fucking person behind them.

I won't sit here and tell you that I handled everything perfectly.

I didn't.

There were times when I was desperate. There were times when I reacted emotionally. There were times when I said things because I was hurt and scared and didn't know what else to do.

I can own that.

But there is a difference between being emotionally overwhelmed and deliberately manipulating someone.

There is a difference between wanting you to understand how badly I was hurting and trying to control what you felt.

There is a difference between desperately wanting you to stay and intentionally trying to take away your choice.

And it fucking hurt that you started interpreting me through the worst possible version of my intentions.

I wasn't sitting there calculating how to manipulate you.

I was scared.

I was fucking terrified of losing you.

I was trying to explain myself because I wanted you to understand me. I was reaching for you because I didn't want to lose you. I was trying to fix things because I genuinely believed there was something worth fixing.

Maybe some of the ways I expressed those things weren't healthy.

Maybe some of them put pressure on you.

Maybe there were moments where my fear became too much for you.

I can accept that.

But I can't accept the idea that my love, my fear, my desperation and my pain were all some calculated attempt to control you.

They weren't.

I was just a person who was fucking hurting.

And then there was the cheating.

I don't even know what words are enough for what that did to me.

Because it wasn't just that you chose someone else.

It was everything that happened around it.

The secrecy. The things I didn't know. The things I found out later.

The feeling of realizing that while I was still believing in us, there were things happening that I wasn't being told.

And I need you to understand something.

You don't get to make me feel like the way I reacted to that pain was somehow worse than what caused it.

I was hurt because I was betrayed.

I was angry because I was betrayed.

I became insecure, desperate, confused and fucking broken because something I trusted was falling apart underneath me.

And yes, I know I didn't handle every reaction perfectly.

But I wish you could understand where those reactions came from.

You keep telling me about my reactions.

I remember what caused them.

And that's something I don't think I'll ever be able to forget.

Because I loved you while all of this was happening.

That's the part that fucking destroys me.

I wasn't some stranger you hurt and walked away from.

I was the person who loved you.

The person who had spent years believing that whatever happened between us, we would be honest with each other.

And then suddenly I was standing inside a relationship where I didn't even know what was real anymore.

And now you're choosing to build something with him.

I'm not going to tell you that it can never work.

I'm not going to pretend I know what will happen between you two.

That's your life and your choice.

But I need to be honest about what I feel.

Whatever you build with him is going to have to live with the way it began.

It will have to live with the hurt.

It will have to live with the deception.

It will have to live with the fact that there was another person who was still emotionally invested in this relationship while something else was developing underneath it.

Maybe someday you'll both make peace with that.

Maybe you'll convince yourselves that none of it matters anymore.

Maybe you won't.

But I can't pretend that the way it happened doesn't matter to me.

Because it does.

And I hope someday you're honest enough with yourself to look back at all of this without rewriting it into a story where I was simply the problem and everything that happened to me was just a reaction you had to deal with.

I was hurt.

I was betrayed.

And I fucking loved you through it.

And what hurts the most is that instead of seeing the person underneath all of that, the person who was scared, who loved you, who wanted to be understood, you started seeing me as someone who was trying to manipulate you.

Don't turn my entire heart into a fucking strategy.

It wasn't a strategy.

It was me.

I was hurting.

I deserved kindness.

I deserved to be heard.

I deserved to be allowed to hurt without being made to feel guilty for hurting.

And I deserved to have my last moments with you be something more than this.

I fucking deserved better than the way you treated me at the end.

LETTER 07 / 07

Hope



This is what I believe.

And I know reading this might make it feel like I'm still trying to convince you.

I'm not.

I'm allowed to tell you what I fucking believe without every thought I have being turned into me trying to convince you.

You can disagree with me.

You can see things completely differently.

That's okay.

But I still have the right to say what is true from my side.

I genuinely believe that the kind of love I have for you is rare.

Maybe someone else will love you.

Maybe someone else will love you deeply.

But I don't believe anyone will love you in exactly the way I have.

I've known you since we were kids.

I've seen you at your best and at your absolute messiest.

I've seen you with your hair everywhere, half asleep, tired, irritated, completely unprepared for the day.

I've woken up beside you.

I've seen the versions of you that nobody else would find particularly special.

And somehow, I still looked at you like you were something

extraordinary.

Like you were the stars in my eyes.

That's what I mean when I say I love you.

It's not just some feeling I had when everything was exciting.

After almost seven years, after everything we've been through, I still look at you and feel something I can't explain.

Yes, there were times when I didn't feel the same.

I'm not going to lie about that.

There were moments when things between us became difficult and I felt disconnected too.

But when I felt that, I didn't go looking somewhere else for a new person to make me feel those things again.

That's the part I've been trying so desperately to explain to you.

Sometimes love doesn't feel like fireworks.

Sometimes it feels quiet.

Sometimes it feels ordinary.

Sometimes you don't get butterflies.

Sometimes you get tired, frustrated, annoyed, and you have to decide whether the person in front of you is still someone you want to build a life with.

And I don't want you to spend your whole life chasing the feeling of butterflies.

Because feelings change.

People change.

The excitement changes.

But that doesn't mean something beautiful has stopped being beautiful.

I don't want you to throw away something that took us almost seven years to build because something else feels intense and new right now.

I'm not saying that because I want to tell you what choice to make.

I'm saying it because I genuinely want you to think about it.

Don't only think about what you feel today.

Think about everything.

Think about what we were.

Think about what we survived.

Think about what we meant to each other.

Think about the person you knew before all of this became so painful.

And then make whatever decision you believe is right.

I just wish you would trust me enough to consider that before you let everything we had disappear.

I really did come back for you.

I sacrificed my job.

I sacrificed my career.

I left a city I loved.

I left a life I had built for myself.

And I came back because somewhere inside me, I still believed there was something here worth coming back for.

That wasn't a small decision for me.

It was one of the biggest decisions I've ever made.

And I know you may not have seen it the way I did.

Maybe when you look at it, all you see is the pressure of knowing that I came back and the guilt you felt about what happened between us.

But for me, it wasn't about making you feel guilty.

It was about choosing you.

I wish you could have seen that.

And then there was that day outside Renee's place.

Please remember how you felt that day.

Remember what you told me afterwards.

You told me you were confused.

You told me about the feelings you had when you went home.

I'm not asking you to choose me because of those feelings.

I'm asking you not to run away from them simply because they're inconvenient or because they don't fit neatly into the decision you've already made.

If you're confused, then you're confused.

You don't have to force yourself to stop feeling something just because you're scared of what it might mean.

You can sit with it.

You can think about it.

You can decide what it means for yourself.

But please don't pretend those feelings weren't there.

And then there was the Airbnb.

God, I wanted that to be beautiful.

I had imagined us having time together without all the noise.

Movies.

Restaurants.

Getting drunk.

Driving in the middle of the night to some beautiful place.

Playing games.

Dancing.

Singing.

Going for walks.

Visiting places.

Going for pottery.

Just being stupid together.

Just being us.

Not sitting across from each other trying to solve our entire relationship in one night.

Not arguing.

Not convincing.

Just spending time together.

And when I came back, I had so much planned for you.

I started learning embroidery because I wanted to make something for you for your birthday.

I wanted to go to school with you for your birthday.

I wanted you to meet my friends.

I wanted you to meet my parents and my relatives.

I wanted you to become part of my life in a way that wasn't just something I imagined anymore.

I had all these little things planned because in my head, coming back wasn't the end of something.

It was the beginning of something.

I thought I was coming back to build a life with you.

And maybe that's why losing you now feels so fucking strange.

Because I didn't come back with the mindset of saying goodbye.

I came back believing I was finally getting another chance to be there.

I still believe there is something between us worth protecting.

I still believe that after everything we've been through, there is a version of us that could exist without repeating the same mistakes.

Not the old us.

Not pretending nothing happened.

Not erasing the hurt.

Something new.

Something more honest.

Something calmer.

Something where we actually know how to love each other instead of just knowing how badly we don't want to lose each other.

And I know you may not believe that anymore.

I know you may read all of this and think I'm still trying to

convince you.

But I'm not asking you to believe me because I wrote it beautifully.

I'm asking you to think.

That's all.

Think about us as a whole.

Not just our worst months.

Not just the things that hurt.

Not just the person either of us became when everything started falling apart.

Think about the whole thing.

Because I have.

And after thinking about all of it, I still want you.

I still want us.

And I still believe we could have something worth fighting for.