

GOODBYE Best Friend



MARISHA AZIZ

Life is both exciting and difficult for the ones who go abroad to study. Homesickness mixed in with the wonder that arises from a new environment, the need to make new friends battling with the wish to see old ones — a student has to go through all of this. But what about the friend who stays back?

The feeling of losing your best friend to a foreign country follows stages similar to the “stages of death” (which can either seem to be really poetic or really morbid, depending on how you look at it). When your best friend calls to let you know they’ve been accepted to their dream university, part of you will feel joy, while another smaller part of you will freeze at the thought of him/her leaving. This is when *denial* will kick in. It can range from “Oh, she’ll change her mind” to “California isn’t THAT far from Dhaka; 8000 miles is just eight followed by three zeroes, pfft.” It will only take a few days, or maybe a couple weeks, for you to realise that no one is playing a joke on you, and that 8000 miles are actually really, really far.

Anger will then take over. This stage can last for any amount of time, from 2 days to even 2 months. How could your best friend do such a thing to you? How could they just leave you and go on to “discover new horizons” or do whatever else all those university brochures say? These questions will gnaw at your brain constantly. There will come a point where you will be furious — with your friend for leaving, with yourself for staying, and with the pointless need for higher education. After spending a very lengthy amount of time feeling cheated by the universe, you will suddenly consider making your friend stay back.

The *bargaining* stage will probably last for the shortest amount of time. This is mainly because even though you will come up with many ludicrous deals and offers, you probably won’t use any of them. Lines like “I’ll always attentively listen to every one of your rants” or “I’ll set

you up with that pretty cousin of mine” sound much more convincing in one’s head. Instead of asking your friend to reconsider, you’ll start to wonder how you could even think about trying to stop your bestie from living his/her dream. You’ll deduce that you are, in fact, a pathetic excuse for a best friend.

This thought will act as the final nudge that lands you in the pit of *depression*. The overwhelming feeling of not



being enough will be your constant companion. You’ll start to dwell on every memory you share with your best friend. You might be gripped by the fear of being replaced, or forgotten. Worst of all, you will become aware of how easily you and your friend could drift apart. If you have a whole group of best friends, this feeling will only intensify. You don’t know if you’ll ever have another

hangout at your favourite café, with conversations that are free of awkward pauses. You don’t know if you’ll ever drive down the oh-so-familiar road to your best friend’s place again; if you’ll ever spend a lazy afternoon with each other again, stalking people on social media just for the heck of it.

Then you’ll remember that all of this has always applied to your friendship, because death is sudden and inevitable and could have taken place at any point in the past, and this thought will do nothing but add to your gloom. Soon, you will find yourself sharing those cheesy Paperback Stories you used to sneer at. As you count down the days to your friend’s departure, you will continue to slip deeper into the quicksand of feels that has taken over your life.

The last stage — *acceptance* — may appear gradually, or in the blink of an eye. In either case, one day you will find yourself planning out future Skype sessions with your best friend without breaking down. Or perhaps, you’ll be able to help them pack with fairly steady hands. Your heart will still be heavy, but it’ll be easier for you to suppress the melancholy. You will finally grasp the truth: your friend is leaving, and you can do nothing but support their decision, and maybe give them some bad advice on how to conduct life abroad. Also, there are only so many corny posts you can share before feeling like an idiot.

It would be foolish to think that life after your friend’s departure will even remotely resemble the past. That doesn’t necessarily mean the future will be a terrible thing, though. Nostalgia will knock on your door from time to time, but overall, if your friendship is strong enough, it will survive and thrive.

Despite being a hopeless fangirl, Marisha Aziz lives under delusions of awesomeness. Contact her at marisha.aziz@gmail.com to give her another excuse to ignore her teetering pile of life problems.