

The Date

Nate never really enjoyed working at his job, especially after lunch. It's not like he hated working and was lazy, it was because days tend to go by super slow after lunch when there's usually no rush of people to make the day go by faster. Nate works at a packaging store, like FedEx, but this was an off-brand packaging store named Premium Packaging. He's worked at Premium Packaging for 2 years. He wasn't planning on staying there for that long, but it was the only job in the area that paid a decent amount of money for him to save up for college and an apartment.

There are usually two people working at all times during store hours, he got lucky enough to work with his friend Evan who made the job more fun. They both work the opening shift from 6 am to 3 pm. Evan and Nate would talk about the most random things towards the end of the workday since no customers would come in, but what Nate would talk about the most is the girl who works next door, Alyssa. Alyssa worked at the flower shop next door. How Nate knew of Alyssa, is from working the same days as her, and he would see Alyssa walk into work from the window. He thinks that she is one of the prettiest girls he has ever seen even though most of their interactions were passing by each other to get to their car for lunch or to go home. Alyssa would acknowledge back him as well, if Nate said hi passing by her, she would smile and say hello back.

“So, are you going to ask her out on a date? Or are you just going to keep staring at her like a creep?” Evan asked, leaning on the cash register.

“I'll ask her soon.” Nate said. In the back of his mind, he was too scared to ask her out, Nate was afraid of her saying no.

“I’d ask her out soon or you’ll get unlucky, and some random guy would ask her out before you.” Evan replies. “You guys had a few conversations it’s not like you’re complete strangers.”

“The most we did was say hi and smile at each other.” Nate said and was getting ready to get off work since their shift was almost up.

“How about I cover for you for the end of the shift, but in exchange you gotta ask Alyssa out. Just for dinner or something. The worse she can say is no.” Evan said looking out the window seeing Alyssa walk to her car. “I’d ask her out now or I’ll run out there myself and ask her for you”

“No!” He shouted and then coughed to clear his throat, “I mean no it’s fine I can do it myself.” He then walked out of the store and rushed over to her, “Alyssa! Hey!”

Alyssa turned around and smiled, “Oh hi Nate.” She was a little suspicious because she noticed he ran out of the packaging store.

“Are you busy tonight? I would love to take you out to eat.” Nate smiled hoping that would help ease the awkwardness.

“I’m not busy tonight. I’d love to meet at a restaurant for dinner. Do you already have a place in mind?” Alyssa asked. Nate paused for a moment, he didn’t expect her to say yes, but he also wasn’t thinking she’d say no either.

“I was thinking maybe Texas Roadhouse, the one by the Walmart on exit 355” Nate kept smiling, “I know it’s not the fanciest but maybe we could just go out to eat there and get to know each other more.”

“Alright I’ll meet you there at 7 then.” Alyssa smiled and walked to her car.

Nate was at Texas Roadhouse waiting for Alyssa at the table that was reserved for them. Nate had to call immediately for a reservation to make sure that there was a table available for them around 7 pm. Nate had arrived a little earlier to make sure that they had a table that would be ready once Alyssa arrived. He didn't want to have a situation where himself and Alyssa were waiting awkwardly for a table to open with a bunch of families around them.

Nate had ordered water for the both of them and also appetizers, so they'd come out a little later once she arrived. He began to think in his head that he should've waited for Alyssa but at the same time he wanted to show her that he was prepared. Alyssa arrived inside and walked over to the table.

"Wow you already ordered?" Alyssa sat down laughing a little to ease the tension.

"I hope you don't mind, I just got us waters and some fried onion rings. The restaurant seemed busy, so I didn't want you to wait so long." Nate smiled back.

Nate had really enjoyed himself with Alyssa on the date. They had conversations about where they were originally from, why they work, where they work, what they do during their free time. He didn't know why he was so nervous to ask Alyssa out on a date, she's so cool. Her music taste is awesome, her interests in shows were awesome, Nate just liked everything about her. Towards the end of the date Nate paid for everything and walked Alyssa out to her car.

"I had a really fun time tonight." Nate said.

“I did too. Hopefully we could do this again?” Alyssa said and took out her phone for Nate to put his number in. “Here, put your number in my phone so you don’t have to run out of the packaging store again.” She laughed.

Nate put in his number and waved goodbye to Alyssa. He was so happy that the date went so well.

It was the next day and Nate was at work with Evan and was telling him everything that had happened on the date. He told Evan how the night ended and how it wasn’t on a bad note, he also told Evan that she ended up getting his own number instead of him asking for her number.

“Dude! That’s so great. Aren’t you glad that I made you ask her out?” Evan said proudly.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever I guess you can take credit for that.” He brought out his phone because he had been texting Alyssa all last night and this morning.

“Are you texting her?” Evan rushed over to Nate to see what their text messages said, “Have you guys made out?”

“No, I don’t want to scare her off by rushing her. Besides we’re just talking.” Nate said turning his phone off so Evan couldn’t see.

“Whatever you say dude.” Evan said.

It had been a week since Nate and Alyssa had gone on the date to Texas Roadhouse. Towards the end of the second week from them texting back and forth, Alyssa began to reply less and less. Nate got nervous, he thought it was from being uninteresting or maybe too clingy. He didn’t know what he was doing wrong for her to reply less and less. Nate's thoughts were clouding his mind, but luckily his friend Evan was telling him to calm down and maybe something came

up. Nate decided to take the advice from Evan and calm down. It was hard for him to not ask what was wrong and why she was being so spacey from him.

The last message he had sent her was asking how her day has been. That text message was sent around 11 am, it was now 5 pm. He decided to text her again to ask if he did something wrong or if something was happening to her. Alyssa had texted back, and Nate's heart had dropped. She said that she apologizes for leading him on and that she is currently not looking for any relationship at the moment.

Nate had gotten really upset. He had felt like his time had been wasted. A whole week of his life gone. He didn't know what to text her, so he decided not to text her at all. He was debating whether or not to call off work tomorrow, so he didn't have to see her face. He wanted to respect her space, especially when she said she wasn't looking for a relationship, but at the same time he wanted to confront her face to face and ask why she led him on. After an hour of having conflicting thoughts about how to react towards Alyssa, he made up his mind to text her back that he wasn't upset and thanked her for letting him know now and not weeks later. She instantly replied that she was happy he didn't get mad or ghost her either.

Nate was happy that their conversation wasn't angry or dramatic, they listened and understood each other's feelings about the situation, but one sentence in that text Alyssa had sent that bothered Nate was: "I hope we can be friends instead." Nate knew it would be hard to just be friends with her since he liked her, but he would suck it up and try to win her back the slow way so he wouldn't have to stay in the friend zone.