

Deserving

“I think I’m in love with you, “ Fred said, looking up at May’ eyes closely. Her blue eyes widened and her curly blonde hair shook a little as she blinked.

“What?”

The re-run of *Simpsons* was entirely forgotten. Fred and May were curled up on the couch in their apartment watching TV as usual. They were roommates and had been friends before that. Presently, they were a little more. They had started kissing every now and then about a month and a half ago. It had grown into make out sessions. It was possible that it was just a ‘nobody else is around’ thing, but Fred was convinced it was something more. Engrossed in television, they hadn’t spoken in ten minutes. For the previous five Fred had been deciding the best way to make the statement.

Fred knew this wasn’t going to be easy. May didn’t just brush the statement aside though. He repeated, “I think I’ve fallen in love with you.”

“No you haven’t.”

Fred smiled. “Oh, well, I must have been mistaken then. Sorry for the misunderstanding.”

“What makes you think you’ve fallen in love with me?”

Fred was ready for this question. “We’ve been living together for over a year now-“

He knew she was going to interrupt him, and she did, “As friends!”

May had a way of always making him smile no matter what mood he was in. That was one of the things he loved about her. Fred smiled. “Could you let me finish?”

May gave an annoyed sigh. “Go ahead.”

“We’ve been living together for over a year – as friends – but we don’t spend much time with anybody else. In fact we prefer each other’s company to anybody else’s. We’re best friends-“

“Exactly.” May interrupted again standing up. “Why would you want to ruin that?”

Fred was expecting this. “Ruin what? We’re suedo dating already. We just don’t have any of the physical stuff.”

“And what if we broke up? That would ruin our friendship.” May was pacing around the living room now.

Fred sat calmly on the couch. He could tell that she was wavering. She was considering the consequences of getting involved instead of just dismissing the possibility. “What makes you think we would break up? I thought you were the optimist who believed in forever love. I’m supposed to be the pessimist.”

“I do believe in forever love. But what if we did break up?”

“Even if we did, I would always love you as a friend. Whether we’re together or not, I will always be there for you. I just think we have a chance at something more. I’m in love with you, and I think you’re in love with me too.” Fred smiled as he saw the startled expression on May’ face. He knew what she would say.

“You’re crazy, I’m not in love with you!”

“Yes, you are, you just aren’t willing to admit it to yourself.”

“I would if it was true, but it isn’t.”

Fred smiled at the schoolgirl sound of the statement – ‘I know you are, but what am I?’ When in Rome, talk condescendingly. “Yeah, just like you didn’t get sooo jealous when I was seeing Kristy for that week.”

May lost her condescending tone. “I was just annoyed that you were never home.”

Fred knew she was almost there. “And why do you think that is?”

“Because I don’t like to be alone.”

Fred stood up and said, “Maybe, but you prefer to not be alone with me.”

“Because you’re my best friend.”

Fred smiled. May was backing herself into a corner. “And do you always kiss your best friends?”

May finally sputtered out, “I’ve kissed Emily.”

Fred laughed. He always knew what May was thinking. He knew what she was going to say before she said it. Emily was a mutual female friend, and May and her had kissed on the lips once when they were drinking as a sort of teasing act for the men around. It was completely different and innocent than the kisses May gave Fred. Fred waited a few seconds to pretend he didn’t have a response for May, and then said, “And have you ever made out with Emily?”

“That’s not the point.”

“No, that is the point. We’re almost going out already. We spend all our free time with each other. We’re best friends. We even sleep in the same bed half the time. And we make out every now and then. It’s more than just you hating to be alone. You want me.”

“Even if I did, why should we risk our friendship?”

Fred knew he had her now. She was done fighting; she was just hanging onto broken ropes. May was standing still, and Fred walked over to her. “How can we not risk our friendship? Who would be better to date than your best friend? Someone who knows you better than anyone else? Someone who knows you better than yourself? Someone who loves you more than most others could? If we have a chance at happily ever after, we owe it to ourselves to take

the chance. Nobody could make me happier than you. I will always be your best friend. Let me be something more as well.”

May hesitated, opened her mouth to speak, and then closed it.

Fred looked into her eyes. “You know you love me, stop fighting yourself and let me in.”

May opened her mouth again. Fred put his arms around her and pressed his mouth over hers. He knew she was through arguing.

But for some reason she pushed him away. Fred was confused.

“What is it?” he asked.

“I don’t want to be with you. I’m sorry if I have led you on.”

“But what about-“

“No, Fred.”

“But...”

“No!”

As May walked away, Fred considered the possibility that he didn’t know her as well as he thought. Where did he go wrong?