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Coachella Love.

1.

Lisa had barely slept that night. Not because she was nervous—feasible, not only because of that—but because her head was overflowing with anticipation. It was finally here. The day she'd been looking forward to for months. Coachella. The festival everyone was talking about, where dreams leaked out to collide with music, sunsets, and chance encounters that could change lives.

She lay on her bed in her small apartment, somewhere just outside Los Angeles. Her suitcase sat half open on the floor, clothes piled haphazardly, even if they could decide to leave at any moment. Her phone vibrated again on her nightstand: a group chat that kept blowing up.

"LISA GET UP" "WE'LL BE THERE IN 2 HOURS" "THIS WILL BE LEGENDARY"

She grinned and rolled onto her side. "Okay, okay," she mumbled to no one in particular. She got up, put on some music—something light, something summery—and let the day begin slowly.

In the shower, she let the water flow over her as she tried to sort out her thoughts. They hadn't expected a love of drama. She was going for the music, for the freedom, for that feeling that anything was even possible. And yet... somewhere deep inside, she sensed that this day would be different.

She chose her outfit carefully: a light white top, denim shorts, boots she could dance in for hours, and sunglasses just big enough to make her eyes look mysterious. She let her hair down—slightly wavy, and she knew it would dance in the warm desert wind later that day.

As she closed the door behind her, it also felt like she was closing a chapter. And without knowing it, she was walking straight into a new story.

The drive to the festival was loud, chaotic, and filled with laughter. The sun was high in the sky, the air vibrated with heat and anticipation. People everywhere, colors, music that could be heard from afar. As soon as Lisa stepped onto the grounds, she felt it: that collective heart beating faster.

Coachella was bigger than she'd imagined. Stages everywhere, light installations, palm trees adorned with lights, people dancing as if no one was watching. She lost herself in the crowd, in the rhythm, in the moment.

Hours flew by. She sang along with artists she'd been following for years, danced with strangers who briefly became friends, and laughed until her cheeks ached.

The sun began to set, the sky turned pink and orange. It was that magical moment of the day when everything seemed softer.

She felt thirsty. Seriously thirsty.

"I'll get a drink," she called to her friends, who were too preoccupied with a conversation only she seemed to understand. Lisa slalomed through the crowd toward the bar, her arms full of energy, her head still buzzing with music.

The bar was busy. Very busy. She leaned against the wooden ledge and tried to make eye contact with the bartender. While she waited, she looked around. And then it happened.

"May I pass?"

The voice came from her right. Calm, warm, slightly lower than expected. Lisa turned—and almost bumped into him.

"Sorry!" she said simultaneously.

They laughed. One of those laughs that comes spontaneously, without thinking.

He had dark hair, slightly tousled, as if he hadn't put any effort into it yet it was still perfect. His eyes—deep blue, almost sea in the light—lingered a little longer than was polite. And she noticed.

"No problem," he said. "It's chaos in here."

"But good chaos," Lisa replied.

He nodded. "Always the best kind."

They ordered simultaneously. The same drink. They laughed again.

"Okay, that's suspicious," he said. "I'm Zac."

"Lisa," she said, and as she said her name, she felt something shift. Something small, but unmistakable.

They started talking. About music. About how he'd only really come because a friend had canceled. About how Lisa had had this festival on her bucket list for years. The world around them seemed to soften, as if the volume had been turned down.

"Do you want to come to the next show?" Zac asked suddenly. "I don't want this conversation to end because my drink's gone."

Lisa didn't hesitate for a second. "Yes."

What started as watching a show together turned into dancing together. What started as dancing together turned into getting lost together. They walked without a plan, without a goal, just following where the music took them.

At some point, they came to a barrier. Backstage. Security was standing by, but there was a strange nonchalance in the air. As if no one was really paying attention.

Zac looked at her, a mischievous smile on his face. "You want to do something crazy?"

Lisa felt her heart pounding. "Depends on how crazy."

He took her hand. "Trust me."

They acted as if they belonged somewhere. As if they knew where they were going. And to their own surprise... it worked.

Backstage, everything was different. Quieter. More intimate. Performers walked by, crew members were busy, and somewhere in the distance, the music still sounded—muffled, but present.

Lisa stood still. "This isn't real."

Zac looked at her. His voice was soft. "This is real. And it's ours."

They stood there, amidst the fairy lights and voices, and for a moment, it felt as if the world had chosen them.

He touched her hand again. This time he lingered. "I'm glad I ran into you at that bar."

Lisa smiled. "Me too."

They didn't kiss. Not yet. The moment was too fragile, too pure. But the promise hung in the air.

Later that evening, when the music reached its peak and the stars twinkled above them, they stood among the people again. Together. As if it had never been different.

And Lisa knew for sure: this wasn't a coincidence. This was a story that began on an ordinary morning—and ended with something she would never forget.

2.

The music swelled as the evening finally became night. Lights flashed in colors Lisa couldn't name, except happiness. She stood next to Zac, their shoulders sometimes touching, sometimes just barely. Every time they looked at each other, there was that same brief moment of recognition—as if they'd known each other for more than a few hours.

"This set is insanely good," Zac shouted over the music.

Lisa nodded vigorously. "This song is literally my favorite."

He grinned. "Then I have to dance now."

And he did. Without embarrassment, without restraint. Just moving, laughing, going with the beat. Lisa followed, cautiously at first, then more and more freely. Their bodies naturally found the same rhythm. They danced close together, sometimes apart, but always back again.

It felt as if the world had been briefly reduced to this stage, this music, this person.

Between songs, they stood panting next to each other. Zac leaned in a little closer. "Can I ask you something?"

"Everything," Lisa said.

"How long are you here?"

She swallowed. "After tomorrow... back home."

He frowned briefly. "And... where is home?"

"Amsterdam."

The word hung between them for a moment. Not heavy, but not light either.

"Wow," Zac said softly. "That's... far."

"Yes," Lisa answered honestly. "And you?"

"Los Angeles. So yes. Not around the corner either."

They laughed, but Lisa felt something shift in her chest. Not sad—more aware. This wasn't a fairy tale that could easily be continued. This was something beautiful that might be short-lived.

Zac seemed to feel the same way. "Then we'll have to make the most of this night."

Lisa smiled. "Deal."

They were going wild. Really wild. As if they'd decided to lose track of time. They jumped, spun, and sang along to songs everyone knew. Sometimes Zac grabbed her hand to pull her into the crowd. Sometimes it was Lisa who pulled him closer as her favorite beat came on.

At one point, Lisa felt a hand on her shoulder.

"LÍÍS," a familiar voice called out.

Linaya.

Lisa turned and saw her friend's wide eyes—not angry, but alert. Protective.

"Who's this?" Linaya asked, her gaze briefly shifting to Zac.

Lisa laughed. "This is Zac."

Linaya leaned closer to Lisa, her voice muffled by the music. "Who are you dancing with, girl? You were suddenly gone."

Lisa glanced back at Zac, who was now chatting with another friend from the group and starting to move to the beat. He looked at her one last time and gave her a thumbs-up, as if to say: I'm here.

Lisa turned back to Linaya. "It's okay. Really. He's sweet."

Linaya squeezed her arm. "If you say so. I just had to check."

"Thank you," Lisa said sincerely.

Linaya grinned. "Go ahead. He's waiting."

And indeed—Zac was standing there. Dancing with her other friend, but his eyes kept searching. The moment he saw Lisa, his face lit up. He left the friend behind and walked toward her.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

"Yes," said Lisa. "She's just... a good friend."

"I get it," said Zac. "I'm glad you have people like that."

They hugged each other again. Not possessively, but naturally. As if this was where they were meant to be.

The last song of the set began. A song everyone seemed to know. The whole crowd sang along. Lisa felt goosebumps rise up her arms. She turned to Zac.

"I want to remember this," she said.

He looked at her, serious now. "Me too."

He placed his hand on the back of her neck, gently, questioningly. Lisa responded by stepping closer. The music seemed to fade away for a moment, though it still resonated with her.

And then he kissed her.

Softly at first. As if he wanted to give her a chance to reconsider. But Lisa didn't. She placed her hand on his chest and pulled him a little closer. The kiss grew warmer, fuller—as if everything they couldn't say came together there.

Cheers erupted around them. Her friends. His friends. Whistles, laughter, someone yelling "YEEES!"

Lisa smiled against his lips. "This is so awkward."

Zac grinned. "I think it's perfect."

Later, they sat together on the floor, a little further from the hustle and bustle. Shoulders pressed together, still savoring the moment. The night was sultry, the air full of promise.

"So," Zac said. "Amsterdam and LA."

Lisa sighed. "Yes."

He picked up his phone. "That doesn't have to be the end."

She smiled and did the same. "No."

They exchanged numbers. Instagram. They followed each other immediately. His name appeared on her screen, now officially part of her world.

"I'm going to miss you," he said honestly.

"I miss you too," Lisa replied.

They looked at each other one last time, without haste. Without fear. Just gratitude.

Because some stories don't have to end immediately. Some just begin... at a festival, at a bar, with a little luck.

3.

The night was quieter than Lisa had expected.

Not empty—but different. The music of Coachella still echoed in her head, as if her body hadn't yet released the festival. She sat on the bed in the hotel room, her shoes kicked off, her hair loose around her shoulders. Linaya was in the bathroom, talking to herself as she removed her makeup.

"What. A. Day," Linaya said aloud.

Lisa smiled faintly. She looked at her phone. Zac had checked her latest story. That little icon felt bigger than it was.

They had said goodbye at the hotel entrance. No big drama, no long kiss—that's precisely what made it linger. An embrace that lasted just a little too long. A look that spoke louder than words.

"I'm going to miss you," he had said. "Me too," she had replied, and it hadn't been an empty promise.

"Lisa," Linaya said as she left the room. "You're not quite there, are you?"

Lisa sighed and fell back onto the bed. "No."

Linaya sat down next to her. "Zac?"

Lisa nodded.

"I thought so." She smiled softly. "You looked like you had to leave something behind."

"It feels weird," Lisa said. "Like I met someone at exactly the wrong time."

"Or the right time," Linaya said.

Lisa turned her head and looked at her friend. "Do you think this could actually be something?"

Linaya shrugged. "I guess some people don't have to stay forever to mean something forever."

That night, Lisa lay awake for a long time. The air conditioner hummed softly, cars drove by in the distance. She scrolled through her photos. Coachella. Lights. People. And then... Zac. Laughing. Dancing. Looking as if he actually saw her.

Just as she was about to put her phone down, the screen vibrated.

Unknown Number

Hey... this might be weird. But who is this?

Lisa's heart skipped a beat.

She knew it before she read it.

Zac

She sat up.

Zac? Yes. Sorry, I was actually hoping it was you.

She bit her lip and smiled at the same time.

I was hoping it was you, too.

There were a few seconds of silence. Then:

Are you flying back to Amsterdam early tomorrow?

Lisa stared at the words. As if she needed to let them sink in.

Yes. In a few hours already.

Then... can I see you again? Even if it's just for a moment.

She felt a warmth spread through her chest. A mixture of joy and pain.

Yes, she typed. I want that.

The next morning felt surreal.

Lisa dragged her suitcase through the hotel lobby, her coat over her arm, her head still half asleep. The sun was still mild, the city almost asleep. She walked into the coffee shop Zac had suggested—small, warm, wooden tables, soft music.

And there he was.

With a coffee in his hand, his coat over the chair, his hair still a little messy. When he saw her, he stood up immediately.

"Hi," he said.

"Hi," she said.

It wasn't a cinematic reunion. No running, no hug. Just that quiet moment when they saw each other again—this time without music, without a light show. Just her and him.

They sat down.

"I'm glad you came," Zac said.

"Me too," Lisa said. "Although it doesn't make saying goodbye any easier."

He nodded. "I know."

They talked. About everything and nothing. About how strange it was to meet someone so intensely and then have to let go again. About Amsterdam. About Los Angeles. About how they normally would never have met.

"But we did," Zac said.

Lisa smiled. "Yes."

After a while, she looked at her watch. Two more hours.

"I have to go soon," she said softly.

"I know," he said. "But I wanted to tell you this."

He leaned forward slightly. "This doesn't feel finished."

Lisa felt her throat tighten. "It doesn't feel finished for me either."

They walked outside together. The air was clear. The city was slowly waking up.

As they said goodbye, Zac took her hands. Firmly this time. As if he wanted to remember her.

"This isn't goodbye," he said. "This is a break."

Lisa nodded, her eyes moist but her smile genuine. "We'll find each other again."

They kissed. Quietly. Consciously. With everything they couldn't promise, but hoped for.

On the plane, high above the clouds, Lisa stared out the window.

She thought of the bar. The dance. The kiss. The coffee shop. The way Coachella had touched something in her she didn't even know she was missing.

Homesickness came in waves. Not just for him—but for that feeling. That anything was possible.

Her phone vibrated.

Text me when you land, Zac had texted.

Always, she had replied.

Lisa closed her eyes.

This wasn't an end. This was a beginning—across two continents.

4.

Lisa stood quietly before him. The morning was still young, but already felt too heavy.

The street in front of the coffee shop was quiet. Cars drove by, unaware that here, on this small stretch of sidewalk, something was concluding that had barely begun. Zac stood across from her, his hands in his jacket pockets, his posture relaxed, but his eyes betrayed something else. Something he tried not to show.

Lisa took a step forward.

She didn't know why this was so difficult for her. She'd only known him since yesterday. A few hours. A festival. A kiss. A night that hadn't really been a night at all, but a series of moments that felt too big for their timeframe.

And yet.

She threw her arms around him. Not hesitantly. Not fleetingly. Really. Her head against his chest, his arms automatically wrapped around her. She inhaled his scent, as if saving it for later. For when she missed this. Because she already knew she would.

"This feels so weird," she said softly, her voice muffled against his jacket. "Good weird," he replied.

She pulled back slightly and looked at him. His face was close. Too close to pretend this was nothing. Her hand slid up, her fingers against his jaw, as if checking if he was really there.

Then she gave him a kiss. Softly. Briefly. On his mouth.

It wasn't a passionate kiss, not a promise, not a dramatic goodbye. It was that simple, tender gesture that made everything so difficult.

Lisa felt her chest tighten.

"I don't know why this affects me so much," she whispered.

Zac smiled wistfully. "Because some people don't need much time."

She swallowed.

Linaya's voice sounded behind her. "Lies... the taxi."

Lisa nodded slowly. She grabbed her suitcase, looked at Zac one last time. As if she was trying to memorize his face in every line, every look.

"See you soon," he said.

She wanted to ask when. She didn't.

"See you soon," she said back.

The taxi drove away while Lisa was still looking back. Not exaggeratedly. No waving. No tears. But her gaze lingered just a little too long on the sidewalk where he was standing, until he disappeared into the bend in the street.

Then she sank back into the seat.

Linaya said nothing. And that was just right.

The drive to the airport felt strangely quiet. As if her mind had been left behind by the festival, by the music, by him. Lisa looked out the window, saw palm trees drifting by, sunlight on buildings, people starting their days as if nothing special had happened.

"I feel so strange," she said finally.

Linaya nodded. "Happy and devastated at the same time?"

Lisa laughed weakly. "Yes. Exactly."

The airport grew busier. Noises. Announcers. Suitcases. People with things to do. Lisa suddenly felt small, as if she had landed back in the real world too quickly.

At security, she gave Linaya a hug.

"This was real," Linaya said. "Don't forget that."

Lisa nodded. "Thank you for being with me."

"Always."

On the plane, Lisa found her window seat. She tucked her bag under the seat, sat down, and fastened her seatbelt. Her hands shook slightly. Not from fear—from everything she was trying to hold on to.

She looked outside. The airport lay silent under a light haze. She thought of Zac. Of the way his voice sounded without the music in the background. Of the look on his face when she said goodbye.

Her phone vibrated.

Zac Are you on the plane yet?

Her heart skipped a beat.

Yes. On it.

I just wanted to say... thank you. For everything.

Lisa stared at the screen. Her eyes burned.

Thank you, she typed. I'll take this with me.

A few seconds later:

Me too. Sleep in a bit. I'll text you when you land.

She smiled. Put her phone away. Leaned back.

As the plane began to taxi, Lisa felt a lump in her throat. Not because she was leaving. But because she was leaving something behind that hadn't yet been named.

Once they were airborne, she rested her head against the seat. Her eyes closed. The past few days were catching up with her. Coachella. Music. His laugh. That kiss.

She fell asleep.

Amsterdam greeted her with gray skies.

When Lisa woke up and the plane landed, it felt like she stepped out of another world. Everything was quieter. Cooler. More familiar. She took a deep breath as she walked with Linaya toward the baggage claim.

"As if it never happened," she said softly.

Linaya looked at her. "But you know better."

The suitcases passed by one by one. Lisa grabbed hers, wheeling it behind her toward the exit. Outside, the car was already waiting. The ride home felt... normal. Too normal.

Houses. Streets. Bikes. Everything that had always existed.

She got out at her parents' house. It felt familiar. Safe. As if her life had effortlessly embraced her again.

Inside, the smell of clean laundry and coffee. Her mother was standing in the kitchen.

"There you are," she said with a smile. "Had a good trip?"

Lisa put down her suitcase and walked over. She gave her mother a hug.

"Yes," she said. "Very good."

"Your father is still at work," her mother said. "He'll see you later."