

Together Forever

March 13th. A misty Spring day; one that is about to change Castor's life forever.

Meet me on Scarona Beach at 0800. I have a surprise for you. Wear your favorite dress.

Nervously ruffling his pale blond hair, Castor paces the black sand beach, the scent of his cologne making his heart race. He's an hour early, but he needs some time to prepare what he's going to say. Breathe, Castor. Everything will turn out for the best.

Glancing back and forth, Castor slowly opens the small black box in his hands. A lovely, butterfly-shaped engagement ring glitters in the sunlight. Everything has come down to this moment. If he messes up his proposal, he'll never forgive himself and he'll never forget his mistake. Gently removing the ring from its cushion, he studies its features.

He has selected the butterfly motif because Juno's favorite creature is such. Made of rose gold, the ring is centered with a heart-cut emerald (his eye color) in a three-prong setting and a heart-cut amethyst (her eye color) also in a three-prong setting. Four small, pear-cut diamonds surround the other gems.

...He learned a lot of ring terminology that day.

Castor sighs dreamily; the perfect ring for the perfect woman. Juno enjoys collecting things: bottle caps, pressed flowers, coins—really anything shiny or pretty. And she especially loves all things vintage: clothing, books, jewelry, electronics, and especially vinyls. He grins at the thought of Juno and him dancing together, hiding his blush with his hands. She's always so excitable. She's adorable that way: curious, passionate, innocent.

God, she's wonderful. I love her so very much.

Castor reaches for his back pocket and removes his wallet. Opening it up, he finds dozens of polaroid photos he's taken of her on their hundreds of dates. He's shown her every single one

of his favorite places across the world thanks to her vessel and his hard-earned money. Juno's warm smile greets him in every single picture, no matter what stylish outfit she's wearing. His heart flutters. Once more, he sighs dreamily, his cheeks glowing a soft pink color.

She's so beautiful.

He's been saving as much of his extra money as possible for so long. Hopefully she'll love the ring.

All right. He really should prepare what he's going to say to her. He could go on and on. Going over his words in his mind, he puts his wallet away and goes to open the box, when...

Wait a minute. Where did I put...?

He checks his pants pockets. He checks his wallet. He checks the box again.

No. No, no no! Shit!

"Where is it?!"

Please, this can't be happening!

Quickly checking his watch, he realizes that it's 0755. She'll be here in five minutes.

I might be sick.

He figures the ring must be nearby. Maybe it dropped into the sand? He scour the beach for anything remotely shiny, but finds nothing. Now panicking, tears spring to his eyes. He triple checks his whole person hoping and praying he missed something. He finds nothing. Suddenly, as he looks up, a lone figure appears on the shore, slowly approaching him. His heart squeezes in his chest and his hands tremble. He'll have to improvise something. Maybe he can pretend to have summoned her for a fun date and look for a replacement ring later. Unfortunately, he's not sure he can afford one as special as that again. Just barely hiding his tears, he waits for Juno to come close. He failed her. And now he'll remember his mistake for the rest of his life.

“Castor?” Juno’s low, soft voice breaks him from his self-hatred. He blinks rapidly, then looks at her. His face turns bright red upon recognizing her presence in front of him. Juno wears a vintage crimson dress with white heart patterning and a sweetheart neckline. A white belt is cinched around her waist and she wears stylish calf high red boots with black laces. Her silky brown hair is done up in her signature braid crown with some loose strands elegantly framing her pretty face. Her flawless fair skin smells flowery and sweet.

“Oh! H-Hello, Juno!”

“You... wished to speak with me?”

“Ah, yes, um... about that message I sent you...”

“...Your eyes are red. And your nose. Have you been crying?”

“What? Oh! N-No. Everything’s fine, Juno.” He gives her a wistful smile. She frowns, unconvinced.

“Okay, um... so, what did you want to talk about?”

How am I going to propose without...

“I’m sorry, I...” He sighs, defeated. “Juno, I... I have something to ask you.”

“Okay. Go ahead.” A smile creeps onto her face once more. Her hypnotic purple eyes shine with wonder, gold flecks sparkling in the sunlight. Can he do this without crying?

“As you know, we’ve... been together for three years now.”

“Mhm.”

“A-And we’ve become... close... in that time.”

“Indeed we have.”

Just speak from the heart. She’ll understand.

“Juno, you are the sweetest, p-prettiest, and most wonderful person I-I’ve ever met. I love hearing your laugh and seeing your smile. I cherish every memory we have shared together. Honestly, I... I can’t believe I’m yours!” A nervous laugh escapes him. “I-I’m sorry, I’m a bit of a mess.” Castor cannot stop his tears now.

“Continue, Castor. You’re okay.” She grabs his free hand gently in hers, running her thumb over his knuckles.

“I want nothing more... than to spend the rest of my life with you.”

Complete silence, other than the gentle lapping of ocean waves. Surprise. And then...

“Hold that thought.”

“...what?”

“I am sorry. I spotted something shiny in the water.” A light, shy blush crosses her face. Castor’s eyes widen. Could it be...? Juno approaches the ocean and kneels down, picking up a small scoop of black sand; something inside the inky substance shimmers in the light. She stands back up and looks through the sand with her left thumb. After finding what she was looking for, she rinses off her hand and returns to Castor, holding the object out to him.

“Were you, perhaps, searching for this?” she asks, a warm smile on her face. Inside the palm of her fair hand lies the ring. Castor gasps, then clears his throat, embarrassed.

“...Y-Yes,” Castor admits. Juno laughs, then kisses him lightly on his nose.

“It’s beautiful... I love it.”

“...May I try again?”

“You may continue.” She smiles; a subversion of his words, for he has made no mistake in her eyes with his proposal. With those words, Castor smiles in relief and kneels on one knee.

“I love you, Juno Graves. Will you marry me?” He holds the ring up to Juno whose lovely purple eyes soon drip with tears, a rare sight for him.

“Yes! Absolutely!” Juno joins him down on the sand and kisses him passionately. She doesn’t care if the inky sand stains her dress. She doesn’t care about being drenched in the ocean waves. All she wants is to celebrate with him. Castor gently slides the ring on her finger and kisses back, tears running down his cheeks.

Only a bit longer and their *together forever* shall come true.