

George was usually a pretty normal guy. He wouldn't do what he was doing at that moment because, like most people, he thought for a long while about how dumb it was. He was cursed with one of the most evil curses known to mankind though, and that was love. He had a crush on a girl that he knew, and for some reason he thought the only way to win her heart was to play a boombox outside her window late at night. It worked in movies so surely it had to work in real life.

He spent months thinking about her. The way she smiled, the way she could light up a room with one joke, or just the way she gave him lots of nicknames that were never really mean. She wasn't like the guys she hung out with, who took every chance to beat him up or insult his family. This girl was amazing. He spent a relatively short time in comparison then thinking about how he would confess his feelings.

He wasn't a guy who enjoyed big gestures, or doing anything in the public eye, as he was a terrified guy in most scenarios. He could barely hold it together doing a presentation in class and whereas the situation outside her house would have less people, it'd feel like a lot more attention. If he cast his mind back to those classes, pretty much no one was looking at his presentations. Everyone was staring into blank space or sneakily playing on their phones under their desks. Now he was about to blast music on a

small suburban street, and everyone would be laser-focused on him while he made his big gesture. He was scared.

Some people might think, why not just do something small and sweet? A love letter, maybe a few roses, or just an honest heart-to-heart chat about how he felt. Well George had actually prepared that chat, and as he approached her in the library one morning, she was already engaged in a conversation about first impressions. He was even ready to politely ask her for a few minutes alone, but something inside him panicked. He quietly walked past and stood within earshot while he pretended to inspect some books. She said she hated how boring most guys are, and how she wants someone who is different. George, in his own mind, was nothing like that so he had to think outside of his comfort zone.

Here he was, on the porch of a girl he liked, in the middle of winter, with a boombox in his hand. *What song do I play* he thought. He had a selection of three songs. He picked three that he one hundred percent knew she liked, but which one? A wave of anxiety entered his mind, because it was such an important choice. He could play a song that she was only jokingly into, or a song that she loved but has gotten over. He could even play a song that “reminded her of an ex”. *What song do I play* he thought once more, before sighing deeply. *This is so stupid.*

George put the mixtapes into his pocket, and picked up the boombox. He turned around, realising how silly his plan was on every level, and stood still for a moment. He pondered whether he should do it, but in his heart he admitted defeat. He was too scared, and too full of anxiety, to go ahead with his plan. Then he heard a voice.

“Are you doing what I actually think you’re doing?”

It came from one of the windows up above. George turned around, looked up, and saw her! He could barely see anything proper due to his poor eyesight, but he could make out a faint smile and wave. She also sounded sincere. George then replied with an honest answer, and confessed what his plan was.

“I like you too. Do you want to come in and listen to those? Only if you promise to turn the volume down.

George smiled, and went inside.