

THE HEART BOX

Writer Number: 25-DE03-W15

Logline:

An ancient artifact forces Mia to either cling to familiar fears, or to gamble on a potentially fantastic future.

FADE IN:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

The coffee shop hums with life. Baristas call out orders, espresso machines hiss, and customers pretend to be deeply engrossed in their laptops while actually scrolling social media on their phones.

MIA (late 20s, witty but emotionally guarded) sits at a table by the window, stirring her coffee absentmindedly while chatting on the phone.

MIA

(on the phone)

...It's a company refrigerator!  
If Marty isn't going to label his  
yogurt then he can't complain when  
someone else eats it. I thought it  
was fair game!...

Mia's eyes float toward a MAN (70s, wise and weathered) rising from his seat. He finishes his coffee, adjusts his coat, and shuffles toward the exit.

As he moves away from the table Mia notices a small, ornate wooden box left on the table he departed. Mia's brows knit together as she watches him disappear out the door.

SARAH (O.S.)

(in phone)

Hello? Are you there?

MIA

Yes, sorry. I think someone just...  
left something.

She grabs her things, and strolls over to the table.

SARAH (O.S.)

Are you sure?...

Mia inspects the small, ornate wooden box left on the table.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Do they have a lost and found?

Mia's eyes flick toward the register. A small wooden sign reads: "LOST & FOUND." She considers it...

MIA

What?

SARAH (O.S.)  
Lost and found?...

Mia inspects the box. It's beautiful. Smooth dark wood, gold carvings along the edges, an intricate latch.

SARAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
...Mia?...

She reaches out, touching the lid gently.

SARAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Mia! You should turn it in.

Then—she smirks.

MIA  
It's too pretty to leave it to  
regular lost and found.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Mia!

Mia ends the call as she tucks the box under her arm and heads for the door.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia's apartment is peak "I have my life together, but also, there's a three-day-old coffee cup in the sink."

The wooden box from the café sits on the counter. Untouched.

Mia balances the box, Chinese take out and her mail as she rushes into the kitchen.

MIA  
Home again. Home again.

She dumps everything on the counter and starts flipping through her mail.

MIA (CONT'D)  
Past due... Act now to lower your  
interest rate!... Scam.

She pauses at an envelope. It's slightly crumpled, handwritten, addressed to her.

Her face softens—just for a second. She recognizes the handwriting instantly.

A beat.

She tears open the letter and skims it.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 (to herself)  
 This is dramatic.  
 (reading aloud sarcastic)  
 "Dearest Mia... I have thought long  
 and hard about this, and I cannot  
 ignore it any longer..."

She snorts.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 Oh wow. We're really going full  
 Pride & Prejudice.

She keeps reading, rolling her eyes, but we can tell she's affected.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 (mocking, British accent)  
 "I don't want to keep dating like  
 it's just fun."

She pauses. Her smirk fades just slightly.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 "...I want to build something real  
 with you. I want to pursue you the  
 way you deserve—"

Mia clears her throat to stop the real emotion.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 (folding the letter)  
 Nope. I don't care if you're  
 perfect. I refuse to get married  
 before I'm 30. That's science.

She spots the box and shoves the letter inside defiantly.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 (shrugging, walking away)  
 Meh. Where it belongs.

She grabs her takeout and heads to the couch.

A faint glow pulses from inside the box.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Mia sits at her desk in a bright modern office space,  
 mindlessly scrolling through emails, when...

A LOUD squeal of excitement erupts from across the office.

Mia glances up as her coworker, LISA (early 30s, sweet and chipper), waves her left hand in the air excitedly.

LISA

Oh my gosh, you guys—Brad proposed last night!

The office erupts into excited gasps and CLAPPING.

Mia smiles politely, unbothered, about to go back to her screen when—

Her face twitches. She SNIFFS. Her throat tightens.

MIA

Wait... what—?

A single tear escapes.

She touches her cheek like she's been personally betrayed by her own tear ducts.

Lisa rambles on, oblivious.

LISA

It was perfect! He took me to the place where we had our first date, and—

Mia lets out a choked SOB.

MIA

(ugly crying, horrified)  
Oh my gosh, I'm just so happy for you... and also—

She gasps, clutching her chest.

MIA (CONT'D)

(blurting out involuntarily)  
And also I can't stop thinking about my ex-boyfriend and his weirdly sensitive quasi-Victorian love-letter that I totally trashed—

Mia freezes. The room falls SILENT.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 (rambling, unable to stop  
 herself)  
 And how I'm too selfish to hear him  
 out and too scared of missing out  
 to ever allow myself to be  
 vulnerable enough to get married or  
 have a real relationship-

Her eyes go WIDE.

She SLAPS a hand over her mouth, horrified.

The office stares.

Lisa blinks.

LISA  
 ...Thanks?

Mia lets out a nervous, high-pitched laugh.

MIA  
 (fake cheerful, waving  
 hand dismissively)  
 No, yeah, ignore that, haha, I'm  
 just, um-  
 (sniffing again)  
 -I love love!

Her lip trembles. Her face crumbles into ANOTHER SOB as she bolts for the bathroom.

MIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 What is happening to me?!

BEGIN MONTAGE:

A.) INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Mia sits at her kitchen counter eating cereal straight from the box and reading the NEWSPAPER

The wooden box sits ominously nearby.

She flips the page to READ: "ECONOMY COLLAPSE IMMINENT?"

She panics and dramatically tosses the printed article into the box.

B.) INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Mia sits on the couch, SOBBING.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 (wailing into a pillow)  
 I'M NEVER GONNA RETIRE!

C.)INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR

Mia is rushing out the door, digging through her purse.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 Come on... piece of junk car...why  
 can't I open you with my phone.

She finds her KEYS then accidentally drops them INTO THE BOX.  
 She hears her car ENGINE START outside.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 (panicked)  
 No. No. NO.

She throws open her door to SEE her CAR BEING STOLEN.

She lets out a guttural, theatrical SCREAM.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia storms back inside, pacing wildly.

The wooden box is in front of her, taunting her with its  
 unnatural calmness.

MIA  
 No...

She inspects the box: keys, letter, newspaper...

MIA (CONT'D)  
 Mia, you've officially lost it.

She reaches for the breakup letter.

It won't budge.

She frowns, tugs harder.

Still stuck.

MIA (CONT'D)  
 Okay... cool, cool, cool. No worries.  
 Just a little paper with the grip  
 strength of Thor.

She moves to the NEWSPAPER.

She grabs the edge— And yanks.

NOTHING.

She tries wiggling it free. Still nothing.

She tugs so hard she almost flips over backward.

MIA (CONT'D)

Why is this thing glued down like  
the Excalibur of emotional  
baggage?!"

She glares at the box, sweating. Then—her eyes land on her car keys. She pulls them... they won't budge.

Mia turns the box upside down to shake them loose. Nothing.

Then again more aggressively. The jangling sound begins to sound... like laughter.

MIA (CONT'D)

Now you're taunting me?!

Mia takes the box to the trash can and DUMPS IT INSIDE.

She SLAMS the lid down and dusts off her hands.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Mia rolls over in her bed to SEE:

THE BOX IS ON HER NIGHTSTAND.

Mia screams, FLAILS off the bed, lands on the floor.

MIA

Jesus, pleaseeeee take the box!

She lays prostrate in a full face-plant prayer position.

MIA (CONT'D)

Okay. You win. I'm out of ideas.

She sits up and slowly presses her hands together in an awkward, hesitant prayer pose to try her prayer on purpose.

MIA (CONT'D)

Okay, God. Look. I don't know what  
this box is doing or why it's  
ruining my life, but I get it.

(MORE)



MIA (CONT'D)

Maybe. Sort of. Kinda. I don't know—

She rubs her face.

MIA (CONT'D)

I just... I need wisdom. Because clearly, I am not in control here.

She goes to stand up when—

Her fingers brush against something..

Something engraved in the wood.

She pauses. Runs her fingers over it. Her brows furrow.

She leans in, squinting.

MIA (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

Warning: What you put in will also come out.

Mia leans back, blinking.

MIA (CONT'D)

(gesturing wildly at box)

But did it have to flow out this dramatically?!

She flails her arms, exasperated.

MIA (CONT'D)

Oh, Mia, you ghost good people, avoid real relationships and run from vulnerability? BOOM—here's a week of emotional sabotage! Oh, Mia, you don't value your material possessions? BAM—someone steals your car!"

She sinks onto the couch, groaning.

A beat.

She slowly looks at the box again.

Her face softens. A flicker of understanding.

She rests a hand on it gently.

MIA (CONT'D)

Okay fine. So... I put in a letter and can't stop thinking about the person who wrote it. I put in the newspaper and I start going total doomsday, I disrespect my keys and I lose my car. So... how about the good stuff? Or at least the honest stuff, maybe.

INT. MIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia sits at her desk, a blank sheet of paper in front of her. The wooden box sits nearby.

MIA

(preparing to write)

Okay. Just... be honest. Rip the Band-Aid off. Ignore the fact that you're writing to God after a box literally forced your hand. Okay..

(writing)

Dear God... I'm sorry I took the box and I'm sorry for being a control freak. And selfish. And stubborn. And... I might need more paper.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MIA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Mia lifts the letter, reading over it. Her eyes soften. There is a lightness and calm to her that was missing before.

She slowly folds the letter and places it into the box.

A beat.

She stares at it. Waiting. Expecting. Nothing happens.

Her eyes narrow. She taps the box. Nothing.

She leans in, whispering to the box.

MIA

You've been extra this entire time,  
and now you decide to be subtle?

She sits back, crossing her arms, still staring. She stands up, stretches, and rubs her temples.

MIA (CONT'D)

Okay. I get it. I'll let go.

She carries the box to her nightstand again and crawls into bed, pulling the covers up. She peeks at the box one last time before clicking off the light.

CAMERA HOLDS ON THE BOX.

A gentle glow pulses from within. Soft. Warm. Different. Not magic. Peace.

INT. MIA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The morning sun peeks through the curtains. Birds chirp as Mia slowly stirs, eyes fluttering open.

She stretches, letting out a long, exaggerated YAWN.

A beat.

Her eyes snap OPEN completely. She bolts upright. Her head whips toward the nightstand where she left the wooden box.

THE BOX IS GONE.

Where the box once sat... there is now a neat stack of the items she put inside: The breakup letter. The crumpled news article. Her car keys.

Mia slowly reaches out, touching the items.

Then—her eyes narrow suspiciously.

She drops to her knees and checks under her bed. Then in her closet. On her desk...Nothing.

A beat.

Mia smirks then turns back to the nightstand, picking up the breakup letter.

She tilts her head, studying it.

For the first time, it doesn't make her feel anything heavy.

She glances down at her keys.

Her expression shifts—lips pressing together, brows raising slightly.

A thought forms.

An idea.

She grabs both the letter and her keys, a quiet determination settling in.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Mia's car (which, thankfully, is no longer stolen) pulls into the coffee shop parking lot.

She parks, grips the steering wheel, and exhales.

A beat.

She glances at the folded letter in her passenger seat.

Her fingers drum nervously on the wheel.

She rolls her eyes at herself, then grabs the letter and steps out of the car.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

The familiar buzz of espresso machines, quiet conversations, and soft music fills the space.

Mia scans the room. Then—she spots him. JAMES (late 20s, kind, steady) sits at a table, waiting.

He sees her, smiles. Mia swallows, nerves flickering, but she forces herself forward.

She walks over, sits down across from him.

MIA

Hey.

JAMES

Hey.

CAMERA PULLS OUT as Mia shares her feelings with James who takes her hands in his. As the camera continues to pull out, WE SEE: the WOODEN BOX in the background on a different table. Waiting. Ready for the next person to take it.

FINAL TEXT ON SCREEN:

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it— Proverbs 4:23

FADE OUT.

