

MIKA: I told you to take the Parkway.

RAVI: Wouldn't have made a difference. I'm sorry my apocalypse navigation abilities are not up to your standards.

MIKA: ...They only bloom for one or two weeks out of the year, depending on the weather. Of all the places in the world. It's going to end for us here on the New Jersey Turnpike?

RAVI: I can't control rush hour at the end of the world!

MIKA: You know how much I wanted to see the cherry blossoms in DC, just once. I told you that back when we first met. Every year, it's always something. Too early, too cold, there's a work trip for you, there's a big project I'm on, and then we look on the cherry blossom cam and it's too late. "They've bloomed and we've missed it!" Always! This was going to be the year I made it to see them before the petals all dropped, weeks and weeks of scheduling our itinerary around this one moment in time—

RAVI: So it's all my fault.

MIKA: Is that all you heard just now? I'm talking about regret, Ravi. Big picture stuff. Life stuff.

RAVI: Uh-huh. I don't want you to take this the wrong way, but—Well, but... You could have gone yourself. You didn't have to wait for me, you know.

MIKA: I cannot believe you just said that.

RAVI: What? What did I do now?

MIKA: The entire point was for us to do something together. I wanted to see them with you.

How do you not know that?

RAVI: Oh.

MIKA: Oh.

RAVI: Well, it's just that...it's just that, I... Did you forget about my allergies?

MIKA: What?

RAVI: Every year, you talk about these cherry blossoms and every year, I dawdle and I hem and haw and... The truth is, I didn't feel like all the sneezing and the itchy eyes, the runny nose, the stuffy Nose... It's just that it would have been nice, if you, you know...

MIKA: If I what?

RAVI: If you asked me. If it was something that I'd like to do. That's all.

MIKA: Or, you could have said you didn't want to, and for me to go ahead instead of holding me back!

RAVI: Is that what I do? Hold you back?

MIKA: In this instance. You're otherwise pretty supportive, I guess.

RAVI: Gee, thanks.

MIKA: Rav, I really don't want to spend the rest of our time...doing this.

RAVI: And you think I do?

MIKA: (Small:) I just feel like... The person who is supposed to know me best, out of the whole entire world, the person who I picked, the person who picked me. Doesn't know me at all, in the end.

RAVI: I know you. Mika, I know everything about you.

MIKA: No you don't.

RAVI: What don't I know? I know every little thing about you, like how you can't stand for your shoes to get wet in the rain because you hate soggy socks. How you arrange your books by spine color and somehow still know where everything is, the way you deconstruct an M&M in your mouth, cracking its shell like you're eating sunflower seeds. And you know me. Way too much about me. Like how my parents made me memorize the dictionary as a kid. And you know how I love Toni Braxton. Like love her, love her.

MIKA: ...unequivocally and unironically. Maybe you can't ever really know someone, and they can't really ever know you. Not really.

RAVI: What don't I know about you? Tell me something new then. Tell me, Mika.

MIKA: Did you know that I didn't even know who Toni Braxton was before I met you?

Did you know that I didn't grow up with a television? How my parents bought me an encyclopedia set and told me that was my television? I was to read each volume, starting from A. It took me years to finally get to Zygotes. A dictionary is much shorter.

RAVI: Not a competition in first generation kid woes, but okay. So I don't know everything.

MIKA: My dad never got to see the cherry blossoms. He always wanted to take us every year. He told me it was his one regret in life. Did you know that?

RAVI: Mika, I—

MIKA: I can't be in this car anymore. I don't want to be in this car anymore. (*MIKA gets out. RAVI stays in at first, then gets out too.*) I don't know why I thought this trip would fix everything.

RAVI: Fix everything? Were we broken? Were we broken, Mika? Huh? I know that we were...both annoyed, both grumpy. But I thought we were... okay?

MIKA: We aren't who we used to be. But I thought maybe, I don't know, finally seeing this, finally doing this. It would bring us back, a little closer. We'd see the cherry blossoms, and you'd sneeze, and I'd pass you a tissue, and the National Monument would be in the back and we'd ask someone to take our picture and then we'd always have a photo to look back on, and we'd think, Hey remember the time we finally got to see the cherry blossoms? And over time, the image would fade, but we'd look at it and think, Oh, look how happy we were. For one fleeting moment. We used to do things together. We used to go on road trips and we'd...reset. Things would be better again. I don't know. It's stupid. It's all so stupid. And it's going to end like this. With us like this. And I'm never going to get the chance to see if I was right. If we were still right.

RAVI: Okay, whoa. Hey. I'm still me, you're still you. We can still do this...together. The car can't move, but that doesn't mean we can't. Look, up ahead is the exit to Branchbrook Park in Charlesville, home and hidden gem to its own grove of cherry blossom trees.