

Title: We Might As Well Be Strangers (lyrics that follow by Keane)

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Rating: PG, for the nearly sexual situation

Characters: none that I can name.

Warnings: very sappy, very angsty, very similar to an altered reality. If you don't like the sappy, avoid.

~I don't know your face no more~

Things have changed since they saw each other last. Time has both taken away and added to her, a body encased in a corset and low-slung jeans that used to be comfortable only in a tee and sweats. He's taller, a business cut changing the way his hair used to stick straight up. Time has changed them to the point where he can feel bold enough to come up to her to say hello and only by the eyes can she tell who it is.

The glass in her hand reflects the light, casting her in an amber shadow. Something in the way she stands called to him, begged him to come over and say the one thing that comes to his mind. "Have we met somewhere before?" She smiles and her voice is drowned out in the swelling of the music. He fancies he knows her somehow, though she'd never let on.

~Or feel the touch that I adore~

He asks her to dance as something Latin graces the speakers. She leaves the glass, not caring to finish the drink and takes his hand as he leads her to the floor. It's a crowded song, all moving bodies and passion. He asks her for her name, when there's no "your space" and "mine". It nearly crosses her mind to tell him a name he'd recall, just to see the shock cross his face when he knew who she was. "Ashe," she finally says, voice not allowing much else as his hand rests on her side.

He can feel her every breath through the thin fabric. She can feel every bit of his heat. It is driving her crazy, the sheer remembrance of that touch of so long ago. Her knees are weak again and time is slipping away from her again, making her the shy girl she once was. He doesn't seem to realize it and continues to hold her close as the music crescendos and drowns out any other talk. They move together as if they are a single being, as cliché as it sounds. Each center of their being linked and shifted until it's nearly uncomfortably close.

~It's just a place I'm looking for~

The song ends with them pressed close enough for the heartbeat of one to trick the other into syncopation. Thumping out of time with the music as it starts back again. He's enthralled with her now, watching the way she walks and the way her clothes hang so tantalizingly low. He's longing for her as she makes her way back to the bar and asks for something clear and winks. Ice water. Of course she's been here before.

He can't be this needy, he thinks to himself, as he asks her to come home with him. He asks her, though he's never asked anyone before, and has no desire to. He's never wanted anyone as much as her and his pride is bruised when she says no. And though she's still never been able to say no to him, not since they were young, she says it now. With a condition, inviting him to her place instead. And no one is surprised when he agrees.

~We might as well be strangers in another town~

Her house is cold and pristine, sterile and penitent. A mask for the woman she is. He thinks to ask, something of why she has no mementos of a former life. She shakes her head before he even makes the statement. "No questions, please. Don't ask what I can't tell." He almost asks what she means by that, but she silences him with her fingers on his lips. "Don't ask. I'm begging you." He nods, just as content with knowing a name and an address, in case he should have to take extreme action some other time. With time come answers.

She pulls him along the halls to her bedroom, the vulnerable girl of earlier replaced with determination and the cloak of the time since senior year. She's living proof that you can grow beyond what a memory is. He follows her to the slaughter like a lamb, ready to give himself easily to the recent acquaintance.

Something about it all seems wrong to her, though she was willing only a moment sooner. She stops with her back to the door, seductive and innocent once again. "Do you know me?"

~We might as well be living in a different world~

"Do I know you?" he asks, laughing and pressing close again, like on the dance floor. "Should I?" She raises an eyebrow, truly wondering if she can be the only one to remember him. "We might as well be strangers then, hmm?" she asks herself, closing her eyes and pushing him away.

He follows her to the kitchen, where she's beginning to make herself tea. He wonders if he missed some signal he was supposed to have caught long ago. She's mumbling to herself and shaking her head. "You may as well take a seat, Mikel. Do you want some tea?" He scoffs, wondering what happened to the wild girl in the corset he was with at the club. Some replacement had taken her place, a stranger where he'd seen something familiar, and yet... still familiar. "Tea?"

~I don't know your thoughts these days~

"Tea," she says, "solves all the evils of the world. Yes, tea." She brews herself a cup and sits opposite him on the island. He keeps staring after her, needing to know what was going on. "Who are you and what did you do with the girl at the club?" The tea casts a similar amber shadow across her arm, and she smiles as she sees it. "You wouldn't believe me if I told you." He's beginning to get exasperated, and the added sexual frustration couldn't be helping. She looks up at him again, eyes fiercely sad. "Do you really want to know?" He nods, unflinchingly.

He's nearly undone when she chooses to leave the clear mug on the marbled top, and walks back towards the bedroom. "What--?" He stops when she holds her hand out to him. "I have to remind you, then, don't I?" He takes her hand hesitantly and follows her once more to a bookshelf where she pulls out something with a younger version of them both in its well-worn pages. High school yearbook, senior year. He looks at her, puzzled. Nothing is betrayed yet again.

~We're strangers in an empty space~

He flips to his own picture and grins at the teen version of himself. Hair pointing in all directions, like to take flight from the picture. "Did I know you back there, then?" he asks, not really expecting an answer. She reaches out with unsteady hands, turning the two pages until she finds her own picture. A dreaded sight to see again after so many years away from it. "That was... you?" He sounds shocked, and rightfully so. Time changes people.

He's not watching and seeing the tears in her eyes. When he does, it's still a surprise to him. "Ashe, I..." He can't come up with the words and watches her sit carefully on the bed, the corset a bind to her now, more so than sexy. Tears are flowing freely down her face, and she doesn't seem to care. "Ashe..." he tries again, but still no words come to him.

~I don't understand your heart~

He kneels next to her on the floor, laying the book beside him. She's saying something softly, and only now can he hear it. "I didn't want you to know." Over and over, the same six words. She knows it doesn't clarify anything, but it's the reason why. He takes her hands as gently as he can, memories resurfacing in strange sequences he can't understand.

She can finally calm down, long after he's sat beside her. "Why..." she swallows and tries again, speaking past the lump in her throat. "You didn't have to stay here." He nods and shifts, his knees hurting slightly from the wait. "I know."

~It's easier to be apart~

He stays around much more than he should, under societal rules. He changes her clothes with her, slipping the ties that bound her loose and gently pulling a t-shirt over her head. She makes half-hearted protestations, modesty actually reigning finally as she slips into some pajama shorts. He shakes his head, lifting her in his arms and tucking her into bed with no more than a whispered shushing from him. She opens her mouth once, to thank him, but he stops it before it comes. "Love, just rest."

She falls asleep beneath the comfort of his gaze, her dreams drifting in and out. It's his thoughts that are the surreal painting. Fear and loathing melding with the time that's changed them into who they are today. He doesn't know if he can handle what she's doing to him. Somehow, she's taking him and turning him into a person he's never been. A caregiver. A stranger to himself and any who'd see him now. He gives a soft smile, sad though it is, and leaves the room and her behind, refusing to look back.

~For all I know of you now~

She awoke, knowing the house was as empty as normal. So he hadn't stayed. And nothing has changed for her, she knows. She's still the same girl she was in the past, and the girl she's become today. She hasn't changed because nothing has changed. He'll remain as distant as he was, and she'll be the pristine nobody she hides within.

The bell rings, and something tells her to answer it, though she's most vulnerable in the morning. The bell alarms insistently, though her stride is nowhere near as slow-paced as it seems. "Coming!" she calls, her voice cracking with sleep. She thinks she should have ignored the urge to go to the door at that very moment, as she opens the door to see him. "Breakfast?" he asks, as if that answers all.

We Might As Well Be Strangers Lyrics

*I don't know your face no more
Or feel the touch that I adore
I don't know your face no more
It's just a place I'm looking for*

(Chorus 1)

*We might as well be strangers in another town
We might as well be living in a different world
We might as well
We might as well
We might as well*

*I don't know your thoughts these days
We're strangers in an empty space
I don't understand your heart
It's easier to be apart*

(Chorus 2)

*We might as well be strangers in another town
We might as well be living in another time
We might as well
We might as well
We might as well be strangers now - be strangers now*

*For all I know of you now
For all I know of you now
For all I know of you now
For all I know*