



Perspective/Opinion

Stories of Love in the time of Medicine: Let's Do This Together!

By Jacqueline Tran

It was not love at first sight. In fact, Brennen and I were both annoyed by each other throughout the first few months of knowing one another. Despite our shared annoyance, our mutual friends kept us within social orbits. With time, late night library studying turned into Chipotle date nights. I realized that even though he acts like a tough guy who works out a lot (which he totally does), he is actually a softy and quite the goofball. Despite first impressions, I found that I enjoyed his company. And so began our story.

Throughout my fourth year of undergrad at UC Santa Cruz, my mom incessantly asked me, "What are you going to do with your biology degree when you graduate?" To be quite honest, I had no idea. Med school was not something I had ever thought was attainable for me, nor had it ever been on my mind. Brennen, on the other hand, had always been driven and set on applying to med school. One morning, as he hid away in the depths of the library on Science Hill, I sat on Oakes Bench thinking, "Where is this guy on a beautiful Saturday morning?!" I was inspired by his dedication to the trials of applying to med school.



Eventually, I was reeled in, and I started spending more time in the library just to hang out with the guy.

At our graduation two years later, we were met with a tough decision – do we stay together or part ways? His parents had moved to Idaho, which is where he wanted to be. I wanted to stay in California, making the distance between us greater than 500 miles. Though initially a tough decision, given my writing of this piece, it's obvious that we decided to give long-distance a try. The long drives, many horribly delayed Southwest flights, Facetime movie dates, cheesy love letters,

and holiday trips were worth the challenge. We spent another two years in this long-distance relationship.

I watched the process of Brennen applying to med school, and I learned so much about this opportunity. I was inspired to pursue med school myself.



My decision to apply to med school brought us to our next fork in the road – what if we don't get into the same school? Do we stay together or part ways? We struggled with whether it would be wise to share at our interviews that we were a couple, so we decided to keep that factoid to ourselves. Of course, here we both are at the Medical College of Wisconsin; the decision was easy when MCW decided to accept us both! We have spent the last three years studying (and struggling) together. I honestly cannot imagine going through this

journey alone. The next big milestone for us will be met on Match Day – will we end up at the same institution for our residency training? Time will tell, but I am confident that we will continue to navigate whatever life throws at us.

To Brennen, you are not only my partner in life but also my mentor, tutor, standardized patient, gym coach, sound board, teammate, motivator, #1 fan, and personal chef. I am very grateful to go through life with you and excited to get married in April of 2024!

Jacqueline is a third-year medical student at MCW-Milwaukee campus. She is originally from Northern California and comes from a big family with over 200 living members! Her hobbies include playing board games and learning new songs on the ukulele. Brennen is also in his third year of medical school and grew up in California and Idaho. His family cares for three horses, one pony, a large German rabbit, and a neighbor's cat who refuses to go home. Brennen enjoys weightlifting and collecting fragrances, is an avid cook, and is learning to speak Vietnamese.