

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed faculty, cherished friends, and my ever-patient family,

Today, I stand before you as a graduate--something I wasn't entirely sure would happen given my long-standing battle with procrastination and caffeine addiction. It is with great humor and gratitude that I dedicate this thesis to those who have made this moment possible and surprisingly enjoyable.

First, to my parents, who supported my education financially and emotionally, despite contemplating adding "professional over-sleeper" as a career option for me. Thank you for believing in my potential even when I believed the snooze button held all life's answers.

To my professors, who endured my endless questions and frequent, "That assignment was due today?" faces with more grace than I deserved. Your patience should be studied and published--perhaps in a thesis of its own.

To my friends, who were always there to lift my spirits with humor that somehow turned my research meltdowns into sitcom-worthy moments. Your faith in my ability to complete this work was only matched by your faith in never letting me pick the movie on movie night.

And finally, to coffee, my ever-faithful companion, without whom this thesis would be nothing more than a collection of blank pages and unfulfilled promises. You're the real MVP.

Thank you all for your support, guidance, and laughter along the way.

This thesis is as much yours as it is mine--mostly because you all deserve credit for managing to deal with me through this process. Here's to us and to conquering any challenges with a smile--or at least with a well-timed joke.

Thank you!