

Three months.

1 As per usual, she had her back turned towards me. No surprises there, even without that pose I knew I was ignored. But I would not play her game and mask invisibility. Instead I casually slid into the same booth, emboldened by my bitterness. Her appearance seemed unchanged; sunlight locked in copper tendrils of hair, the latest fashion statement meticulously displayed of course complemented by enough makeup to hide the slightest rebellion of blemishes. In other words, she was like the tragic princess, dragged into hardship by none other than myself, the ugly, plain and painfully black and white villain. I'd play the part for now, just to let her indulge in the role of the victim.

4 5 Now that I was sitting opposite her in some trendy café, the well-practised words fled my brain. And she knew it. She hadn't expected to see me here, perhaps she was waiting for the famous Tom and wanted me to disappear before he arrived. But I had enough pride not to ask her. We hadn't spoken for three months, which seemed a short time in the duration of our friendship. Thirteen years it had spanned, through the eras of kindergarten, primary, intermediate and finally high school. I had once worn that statistic like a badge of honour, but now it felt more than an award for endurance. I should have said something which cut into the mocking superiority she presented. For all the effort it took to read her face, I might as well have been illiterate. But she always knew my thoughts, well at least to the depth of her understanding. That's why I couldn't fathom why she had done it. Since we were twelve she had abandoned me for the opposite sex, and her latest "true love" had cost our friendship dearly. Not only was I placed second when she met the gorgeous, oh-so-cool Tom, but I was left alone on the streets of Wellington, alone for seven hours while they sauntered around town doing god knows what. After we returned to Christchurch Sophie was greeted with my icy neglect. I had tolerated enough of her ideals of friendship and decided she was not worth the pain or anger. I only acknowledged her now because our parents were desperate for some resolve, in all honesty I think they were affected more than I was

And even after three months, one look at Sophie was all it took to call my anger back. But before any words could struggle out of my mouth, she spoke first.

3 "I'm sorry." She mumbled, rejecting my attempts of eye contact. With those two words she doused the fire of my rage. Instead pity flowed through me, as deep and strong as the Waimakariri river. She would never change. She was trapped, a slave to her somewhat obsessive perception of love. She considered me "too paranoid around guys", and I knew with a deepset certainty that she expected me to forgive her and carry on as if she never left me for Tom, never pretended that I wasn't standing right in front of her. But a lot can change in three months; the seasons of the year, the ages of two once best friends. And me.

2 6 I stood up and smiled to let her know I was not angry. "I've gotta go, I'm meeting up with Rachel at the mall." I announce, turning my head to readjust my shoelace, fast enough for her to pretend that I hadn't seen the relief on her face. "See ya then." She farewelled me with a false smile, knowing I wanted to be gone as much as she. I waved and then stepped outside.

6 7 3 Once at the mall I met up with Dale, the boyfriend Sophie would never believe me capable of having, and for that left in ignorance. I don't know if Sophie could've handled the concept of me not being single and experienced in the boyfriend/girlfriend department, so I did her a favour. I left her thinking that I was "too paranoid around guys", left the princess in the tragedy she adored.