

1: NOVEMBER 7, 2002

"I HAVE UNEXPECTEDLY fallen in love." The little white arrow hovered just underneath the words, as though my eyes could be drawn anywhere else.

I had thought I would cry when it finally happened. Instead I felt a sharp click of anger as his rejection crashed through me. I'd stuffed my head so full of dreams that his words didn't fit.

But there was plenty of room for fury; I could feel my body straining to contain it. I wanted to draw up an expense report documenting all the hours I'd wasted and demand a refund. Write detailed lists of the ways he'd disappointed me, make him see that it should have been me doing the dumping. Mastermind a plan that ended with his begging me to come back just so I could say

no. **But pride stood firmly in my path, blocking any satisfying release of energy. Instead I aimed the cursor over the tiny box marked *Delete* and curled my index finger over the mouse like a trigger. I crammed months of regret into those three inches of muscle and sinew and pressed down hard. His words disappeared from the screen, replaced by a reminder about class registration for the next semester. **

Commented [SG1]: More detail. Little white arrow where? On a computer screen?

Commented [SG2]: Good opening line. Sounds intriguing and makes you want to keep reading.

Commented [SG3]: This is good. Descriptive and gives the reader a lot of information.

Commented [SG4]: On what?

Commented [SG5]: You might add something here to introduce the plan. "I thought about writing..."

Commented [SG6]: Same here. "I was going to..."

Commented [SG7]: Good descriptive writing.

Commented [SG8]: Good visual.

Commented [SG9]: The starred section is my favorite of the piece. The writing has a good pace and is appropriately descriptive without being clunky or overwritten.

All that time. All the **minutes** I had spent not just with Nick but waiting for him, a guy organized in all ways but the temporal. All the **hours** I spent driving to his place in Indy, letting myself believe that more effort made us more likely to work. All the **days** we'd spent with each other, sullenly slogging it out. [I'd been an actress in his play, frantically searching for the script while I fumbled my lines and missed my **exits**]. But still I held on, stuck in a place before sense. I wanted one particular semester back more than **anything**, the seventeen **weeks** I'd spent in Australia being loyal. And shortsighted. Stupid, even. It had been almost six **months**, but I remembered Charlie every **day**.

I turned away from the computer screen and the stack of index cards scrawled with vocab words from my neuroscience class, flicked off the lamp, and looked out into the evening's generous spread of stars. I'd stayed with Nick partly to prove to myself that being with him, instead of pursuing Charlie, was the right **choice**. By the time I stopped to survey the wreck I'd made of my life, I was in so deep that I hardly recognized myself.

I had spent months trying to feel less when it came to Charlie. But memories of him had a way of catching me off guard and accosting me from all sides. At that **moment**, all I could think about was my last night in **Australia**. I was holed up in the music **building**, avoiding goodbyes. [Only Charlie figured out where I was. Part of me had longed for that; part of me had begged him not to, knowing it would only make things **harder**]. That night was the first time he had followed me in, the first time we were alone. He knocked lightly on the door, gently pushing it open after a few seconds. He leaned against the doorframe, hat turned backwards, head cocked slightly to the right. "Mind if I sit with you for a bit?" he asked, [giving me a smile as captivating as it was **devastating**].

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Commented [SG10]: This is clichéd without much substance. Stay away from these kinds of broad melodramatic platitudes.

Commented [SG11]: Why?

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Commented [SG12]: There's a ton of repetition here and too many references to time (in bold). You can get those points across much more concisely.

Commented [SG13]: Since what?

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Commented [SG14]: A bit confusing. Who is Charlie? The guy who did the dumping?

Commented [SG15]: This feels more logistical than based on feelings.

Commented [SG16]: Which one?

Commented [SG17]: When was that? Give some context.

Commented [SG18]: Where? At a school?

Commented [SG19]: These two sentences feel unclear and unfocused.

Commented [SG20]: Good way to end it on a cliffhanger.