

Trust, Devotion, and Other Non-Essentials

A cold breeze blew into the living room. Clouds infiltrated the apartment windows, casting a gray complexion throughout the residence. Atop the glass coffee table sat a lukewarm cup of coffee, an empty ashtray, a box of tissues, and a vase with wilted roses. The love seat, betraying its name, harbored an angry heroine with an afflicted heart.

Mary's voice trembled with emotion. She was tired of having the same conversation with the man she had given up so much for.

"How do you expect me to trust you when you keep doing this shit?"

It was a rhetorical question. She knew it. They both did. Trust never played a key role in their relationship. Mary learned to accept that a long time ago. But lately she had been experiencing a particularly dangerous feeling: hope.

Hope that honesty could carve its way into their love. Hope that they could somehow restructure their foundation with morality. Hope that Bob would change.

"I'm sorry. You know I don't love her. She means nothing to me."

A generic apology – one that lacked the passion needed to match Mary's fury. Bob knew he had made a mistake, this much was obvious, he just wasn't sure where exactly the mistake lay.

"I didn't want to lie to you. I know you're upset but I told you I'd be upfront with you and I've kept my promise. Give me that, at least."

"Do you want me to say 'thank you'?" Mary quipped. "Christ, Bob, you're sleeping with another woman. You come and go as you please and you think I'm just going to welcome you with a smile every time you walk through the door?"

Mary's slender brown eyes swelled up. Tears tightly gripped her lashes as if they were too afraid to let go.

Bob carefully searched for the answer to Mary's question. His worry escalated with every muted second. After three insufferable minutes of wounding silence, he offered Mary his only solution.

"I'm really sorry, baby. I love you and never meant to hurt you. If you want us to get a divorce, I'll understand."

Mary's tears finally escaped, trickling down to her flushed cheeks. She rested her face in her hands and let out a surrendering sigh. When she lifted her head, she wiped the thick dark hair out of her face and revealed a forgiving smile.

"No, that won't be necessary. I just don't know how much longer I can do this. Susan was my *best* friend," Mary explained, "but she's *your* wife."