

Hey,

It's Eve.

I'm the blonde girl from How-To, with the tattoos. We had a little bit of crossover in 2009. I remember you moved to a different department. It's okay if you don't remember me. It's okay if you don't read another word and throw this in the bin.

Either way, I'm writing to let you know that I'm out. Like you.

I know the badgering squad has been giving you hell. I'm sorry. If it was in my power, I'd of found a way to put an end to it. But I'd have been making myself the problem. I don't know how much you know about what happened after you left, but basically, I took advantage of your exit to replace Rodney. I had my reasons to want that job, and to want to keep it. They're not important. Not that long ago, I went out with a bang, like you before me. I hope it's made enough of a difference that they won't hound you anymore.

You and I didn't talk much. I suppose all of the women, we mostly kept to ourselves. Maybe it was self-preservation, we knew we'd cop it even worse if they saw any of us getting along. That said, if we'd all looked out for one another we'd have at least had that. It's sad but, I guess.

One conversation we had, you and I did a video together. Probably the only one with you and I in it. It was a Finger on the Button about adoption. We were waiting for them to sort out some technical issue, and we did the unbelievable and talked. I don't know how we got onto it, I think we went from adoption, to parenting, to relationships, to you asking me if I'd ever been in love.

I said no. That was a lie.

And it haunted me. I mean, really haunted me. Whenever I thought of you, I had that exact image in my head, you sat there, asking me if I'd been in love. It was so casual in the moment, but so pointed and accusatory in my recollection. There was this shame that hit me each and every time you came to mind. And God, you came to mind a lot because you didn't fuck around, you just left. I could never just leave.

That's to say, I lied to you. I'm sorry. And maybe you were just being friendly, but since you asked: yes, I have been in love.

After Dad died, Mum was different. Somehow meaner. Like she'd finally got rid of him but here I still was. An echo of a life she'd almost escaped. Every morning she'd greet me by looming over my bed. She just watched me until I ~~to~~ woke up to the smell of her cigarette. She'd say "good morning" in that horrible tone. Like I should've done a better fucking job of sleeping.

I used to say that New World Strategies changed all that. That they swept me up and gave me my own room and good solid work and an excuse to get away from her. That I started reading the books and taking the lessons and had finally figured things out. That wasn't it.

It was meeting Alison, because of course it was. I was at a party - back when going out and having fun was normal. I mean, more normal anyway. It wasn't my scene. It was a friend of a high school friend's party, to which I was miraculously, and mysteriously, invited. I'm not even sure why I went, but I think I knew if I stayed in my room that night, I would've done something stupid. So instead, I was at a stranger's party, letting some creep talk me up. He had his hand on my thigh, his arm around my waist. I didn't tell him where to get off, because I'd tried that before with Dad.

But this girl charged in, this gorgeous girl, all frantic. "Tyla," she said, shaking my arm, distraught. "I need to talk to you right now, please."

Obviously, there was no Tyla. The gorgeous girl was a white knight. But my instinct was to think I was in trouble for something. I started apologizing to her, insisting that I wasn't Tyla, sorry that I wasn't Tyla. And I was mad at her, too. The scariest thing in the world right in that moment was the idea of upsetting that creep.

She grabbed my hand, pulled me away from him, dragged me to the back of the house.

And I just sobbed. Hysterically. I lost it. I didn't usually cry. I looked away, because I couldn't stand the idea of this beautiful stranger laughing at me. I thought about the creep back in the house, he'd be wondering where I went.

But then I felt her touch. She reached around me, hugging me so gently and softly that it lit up my entire world. I gripped her hands tight as they folded around my torso. I didn't know what was happening, who this girl even was, but I felt. I don't know. Looked after

It took me a while to come back to reality. "I'm not Taylor" I told her. She pulled away from our embrace. She could've made fun of me, gave me a look like I was being slow. But no, when I was brave enough to make eye contact, she had tears in her eyes too. She swept them away, giggled, and said "okay, then what is your name?"

We sat down on an old, shitty, veranda couch, and she stayed by me while I caught my breath. She did most of the talking, to make sure I knew I didn't have to. She was amazing at that. She rambled about how she didn't really know anyone here, how she was learning guitar, how someone had split a goon sack all over her and she had to borrow her friend's jacket to cover the stain.

Here was this girl, who'd come here with her friends, taking time away from a party to help some stupid panicky girl she didn't know calm down. At least that's what I used to think. As I would get to know her, I'd look back on that night as something other than charity; she genuinely enjoyed it.

We had ~~the~~ fun that night too. We played 'hide from the dickhead' while he scouted the party, asking around, thinking I'd fucked off. We hung out. We drank. I don't think we kissed, but we came close about twenty different times. She made sure I got home safe.

I didn't even know I was gay, but from that day on, time spent without her was time spent missing her. Just how much that was a feeling I'd come to get used to.

We started talking to one another over Facebook. She suggested I come to another party that her friends were hosting this time. It'd be a bit smaller, and the music a bit quieter. I said I'd love to. Somehow, I felt both joy at being wanted by someone beautiful for the first time in my life, and very excited about my new platonic friend. Denial is a funny thing.

At that party, Party 2, she made damn well sure that I was comfortable with her friends; she introduced me to everyone as if I was the most amazing person they were ever going to meet. It was a lot to live up to, but somehow the way she sold me made me believe what she was saying. I could tell by her friends' familiar reactions that this was just who she was. There was nothing underneath the surface, waiting to pull the rug out. She was completely and utterly wonderful.

I didn't really connect with her friends. They all had lives and jobs and funny stories about their families that just didn't resemble mine. I suppose it didn't matter, because I spent the whole night with Ally anyway.

And the very first moment we were alone, with no one else around, in a spare room with a lock that only sort of worked. It was like lightning struck. Suddenly, inevitably, we were making out. God it was hot. It was wrong. Girls leissing in a stranger's bed. There was the kind, gentle Alison, throwing caution in the wind, showing she could be a little selfish. That was such a turn on.

And being with her that night was special. It was sex with pleasure. I didn't know anything like it. And the best part, I didn't even think about that. I wasn't distracted by how abnormal it all was for me; I didn't get caught up with how much I didn't deserve it. It was just pure fun. It was always like that when I was with her.

I always felt like I was a stray dog she was willing to put up with. Maybe I was right. If someone said that to her, she'd probably slap them - she's not a violent person but she would have. The thing is, I knew her. I know she would have preferred a girlfriend with a little less baggage. If I were her, I would've given up on me. But we're different people. Instead, she loved me. No one had ever done that before.

She felt like home.

And that was scary. It was so scary that I traded all that for scripts and emails and Nick Fucking Reynolds. All of it was time spent without her. I was so guilty about it. Guilty because I broke her heart, guilty because you asked about it, guilty because I didn't have your strength.

I've spent a long time pretending to be someone I wasn't, for people I didn't like, who didn't like me. But at least that was a role I knew how to play; Eve Robin Smith, Media Distribution Strategist & Professional Hardass. But Eve Robin Smith, distributor of nothing, doesn't have a five-year plan. She doesn't have a ~~the~~ tomorrow plan. The future is blank, like white noise. It's terrifying, but calming maybe? You might understand that having left it all behind. I never knew you well enough to say.

I hope you get this. You're the only person who may actually be able to stand hearing from me. I had an address for you, but I think it's old, so I'm using one that this phonebook says belongs to Freda Isone. Whether you're the right Freda, I've no idea.

If you are, then I hope you're able to pretend too. You were so, so kind to me. In another time,

and another place, I like to think we could've been friends. I guess that's true of a lot of the people we knew back then. But there was no room for that, was there?

If you aren't, then whoever is reading this, I want you to know that we're going to be okay. That's not necessarily true, and I mightn't believe it, but there was someone who once made the choice to tell that to a complete stranger, and it changed her entire world.

So thanks for asking.

Best,

Eve.