

Three

Lilith and I split once before for a little under a month's time. It was her decision to end it, so I felt somewhat justified in sleeping with someone else, but it was true horror when she did the same. It was a good two weeks that we stayed in contact with one another while I had the terrible knowledge of the affair. My sleeping with another woman didn't even seem to faze her because she knew how much that it bothered me she was getting on with her life.

This is how Lilith was. She was the type who needed the upper hand, and for the most part, she got it. My most recent break up with Lilith still burns today and during the time that I experienced it, I felt that life could not have possibly gotten any worse. Though in hindsight, that first break up was probably more traumatic. In a few weeks time, I lost ten pounds, noticed a few more wrinkles, and lost an unhealthy amount of sleep. I would lie awake at night picturing Lilith's face in some unreal frozen position of ecstasy and the guy, I think that his name was Luke, or maybe it was Mark, doing things to Lilith that I had never imagined myself doing. And her, loving every never-ending second. I do realize that if Lilith and I had stayed split up that first time it would have been for the best. Yes, I am sane enough to realize that. I do realize that Lilith and I are not a good couple. I do, in fact, realize that the reason I wanted Lilith back so much was that she was the one to leave me and not the other way around. Believe it or not, I do think that I realized these things at the time of my undoing, and to this day, I can't answer why it was that I reacted so poorly. It might have been the way that the moon was aligned with Saturn, it may have been bottled-up anger from the Pepsi-Cola Company discontinuing Crystal Clear Pepsi, or it may have been from some subsurface underlying Freudian cause like inadequate penis size. For whatever reason, I can now tell anyone the true reasons why being dumped sucks.

For starters, it's a rejection, and no matter if it is the girl of your dreams rejecting you or some three hundred pound behemoth, rejection hurts. It is another person with flesh and blood, the same as you, saying that you are not good enough for them. Second, your life, due to the break up, has to be altered. You have no one to quietly do laundry with on Sunday mornings. You have no one to take your temperature when you feel fluish, and no one to take as your date to important social functions. Now you are forced to go stag. There is no more unit, there is no more Leo and Lilith, and I am forced now to only be known as Leo, or in even worse cases, Lilith's ex-boyfriend. And when you are known as somebody else's ex, you lose total identity. At one point in life I could have been known as Leo the guy who could paint really well, or Leo with the quick wit, or even Leo the guy with the big record collection, but no, not now, now I am reduced to the guy that Lilith left. Leo, Lilith's ex-boyfriend. But you know what? The worst thing about a break up is running into those people who haven't seen you in a few months time, those morons who just assume that things last and last for eternities or more. And these inconsiderate assholes dare to ask "Hey Leo, how's Lilith?" And whenever those sort of questions pop up, you feel just a bit like Alice after she takes a sip, small very small, small and helpless and on the verge of tears or on the verge of violence. But of course you hold back those tears and restrain those fists and feel even worse after the fact, because now you not only look pathetic for being dumped, you look helpless for having nothing to say or do about it.

Eventually you run to the bottle, meet a rock star, fall down the hole of excessive premarital sex, addiction and violence, set one small fire and find yourself sobering up in some oh-so-trendy bookstore slash coffee shop surrounded by police and holding

three people hostage with nothing but a copy of *Catcher in the Rye* by your side to prove that you are, in fact, a hopelessly insane man desperate and at the end of his rope. This is not the worse thing that can happen. I could have offed myself and ten others. I could have moved to Wyoming and become a necrophiliac. I could have lopped off one of my balls and started a new Holocaust. It could have been worse. I could have returned to my job working under Danny and quietly died inside. I could have paid taxes and found another Lilith to wreck me. I could have become like everyone else.