

The Second Confession

by Jeff McCrory

Most people come to dislike me because of the things I say. I'm cold, insensitive, snobbish and judgmental, and sooner or later a remark will slip through my screen of politeness and reveal this about me.

However, a few people started hating me because of my silence. I had a housemate once who got all bent out of shape because I occasionally went into his room when he wasn't home to borrow an ink pen or one of the pornographic VHS tapes he kept in a footlocker under his bed. It bothered him so much he went out and bought a new door knob for his bedroom door. It had a lock, but I found it easy enough to pick with a tiny screwdriver I had. It annoyed me that he'd tried to lock me out, so I started going into his room everyday. I tried to put everything back exactly where I found it, but I guess I forgot or got lazy sometimes.

One morning, my housemate put a strip Scotch tape between the door and the jamb before he left for work, and that night he confronted me with the evidence that I'd been going into his room without his permission. I confessed everything and promised never to do it again. I groveled like a dog. He forgave me, but his forgiveness rankled me, and I stopped speaking to him. He'd walk into the apartment, and I would not even glance up from the book I was reading. When he spoke to me, I answered him with a shrug or a nod as often as I could. Eventually, he stopped speaking to me in turn, and we became a couple of ghosts who split the rent.

One day, I was sitting at the kitchen table, doodling in the margin of a notebook. My housemate came out of his room and informed me he was moving out at the end of the month. He accused me of giving him the silent treatment and ruining our friendship. He

asked me if I had anything to say to that. I just shrugged my shoulders.

After he moved out, our silent feud continued. We had friends in common, so we still ran into each other at parties and bars. As time went by, we eventually let bygones be bygones. Instead of pretending that the other person didn't exist, we started trading terse nods. Once he even stopped by my apartment with a mutual friend. I'd moved into his old room, and he didn't seem at all disturbed when I went in there to fetch my pot pipe. The three of us got high together in perfect harmony.

However, I seriously doubt that he ever really forgave me that second time.

