

Breakup Scene

by Jowell Tan

"I don't think I can do this anymore."

As she spoke a small tear erupted from the eye and flowed down to her chin, leaving a trail tracing the contour of her cheek as it did so.

I didn't reply. I had so many things I wanted to say, my brain was overflowing with words that wanted to leave through my lips, but I held myself back. Those words didn't seem appropriate, at that point in time.

For the past 6 months our love for each other had been akin to a chess game. We avoided each other's traps, fortified our defenses, set up gambits of our own, exchanged pieces of our lives, and now it was endgame. Checkmate. Time to move on.

"I don't know what happened to us, we used to be great together, and now we're barely talking to each other, we're quarreling when we do, we pretty much hate each other.." She's babbling away, but all the words are flying past me. I'm not paying attention to what she's saying - I'm watching her. Her hands, pretty and petite, sit neatly in her lap, an occasional raise to wipe away her tears. Her hair, long and blonde, fall around her, errant strands tucked behind her ear. She's dressed in a yellow blouse top and denim skinny jeans.

I'm watching her because I want to remember her. The way she looked before it all went to hell.

Eventually she gives up on talking. She looks at me, into my eyes, expecting an answer to all that she's just said. She bites her lower lip hard. But I don't have an answer. I can only look back at her, try to apologize without words. I caress her face, and that's when she falls apart. The tears, earlier trickling down like a leaky faucet, now flows down like an out-of control waterfall, and she makes those strange noises that people make when they're crying. I still can't think of the word for it. My hand's still on her face, and it's getting wet. We make eye contact again. I realise that this conversation is about end very, very soon. And it does.

She regains control of herself, recomposes herself into a petite, quiet girl - style posture. She removes the ring from her left fourth finger. We bought that ring together, in our 5th week together, to commemorate our surviving thus far. It was in a pair, and we each wore one on our left fourth fingers. And now she takes her ring in one hand, my hand in the other, and softly places the ring on my hand. A clinking sound rings out as the two rings meet again, after being apart for 6 months. It rests lonely, mournfully in my hand. She looks at me for the last time. She smiles. She leans in for a final kiss.

Then she's gone. And I am alone.

