

TECHNICAL BREAKDOWN

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The woman walks through the door of the local coffee shop wearing watered down bohemian garb and an almost confident smile. She turns right because it makes sense to sit in the corner. Recognizing the petulant figure sitting upright at her favorite table, she half turns on her left boot heel and heads back toward the door. She stops. *Not this time.* Another half turn and she makes her way to the other side. His pensive stare cuts through the ray of sunshine separating them, but she consciously ignores it while fussing with her laptop. Setting in, she types without looking up.

He notices her the minute she walks through the door, but focuses on the screen in front of him. After a year of phony appointments and an over abundance of strong coffee, he has finally timed it right. *No, don't leave. Please...don't...leave.* Wanting eyes follow her to the door and then across the room until she turns to sit. He looks back down at the blank screen and starts typing. He stops, fidgets, starts again. He can't remember what to write or how long ago he left or why she didn't ask him to stay. He can remember soft skin and a warm smile. And the sound of her voice when she told him she loved him. He continues to type.

She is amazed that he hasn't come over to say hello or *something*. She replays their last conversation for no reason at all, but confirmation: I can't; this hurts. No goodbye. No explanation. *Nothing.* COWARD, she types then fishes through her book bag, avoiding the invading eyes from across the room. Ah, she spots her latest distraction and opens to where she had left off. Black words run together mimicking her emotions. What did it all mean? Where did he go? And why didn't she ask him to stay? She remembers the smell of his shirt collar and the way he held her hand. His hair seems longer. She can't focus. Her fingers fumble across the keyboard.

He considers going over, but their last conversation holds him hostage in his seat: If you leave now, you will never see me again. He types faster. He initiated the break-up. The timing wasn't good for either of them, or so he thought. He watches her fingers flow over the keyboard, wondering who will be the recipient of the email. A new boyfriend, lover, friend? He stops typing, about to give in to his apprehension when he notices her doing that thing with her hair. He begins typing again. *I've been here 47 times in the past year, hoping to run into you. Seeing you across the room reminds me of how much I love you. I was scared and I ran. I'm sorry. I want you back. I've been afraid to call. Will you ever talk to me again? If you leave, I'll understand and never bother you again.* He hits send.

She looks at the black screen. Her battery died twenty minutes ago. She continues typing anyway for something to do, a reason to stay. Angry fingers press smooth keys when she realizes he isn't coming over: SCREW YOU. She slams down the screen for self-redemption, gathers her things and heads for the exit. Did he even notice, she wonders, as she pushes through the door. The words escape without thought as the brisk air slaps her in the face.

A“screw you” trails with the spicy scent of her perfume. He breathes in, checks his in-box then shuts down.

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