

Negotiations  
By: Elizabeth Carrier

Sitting in a coffee shop.

JESSIE: Hey so uh thanks. I just thought it'd be better if we talked about this in person. *(starts to get out phone, stops)* Is it cool if I like go through your text? I think that would help me organize my thoughts *(He indicates 'yes' she gets her phone out and opens the text. Not entirely unkindly:)* And I want to say everything before you respond. You said your part now it's my turn. We can discuss when I'm done. Is that alright? *(He indicates 'yes')* So... your first reason for me not coming is that it 'makes you uncomfortable'. You haven't said anything about my presence being a problem for the last three years. Yeah it's been three years since we broke up, almost to the day. I wouldn't have even noticed but I looked because this was so- *(represses a curse word)* out of the blue. So I've been coming to your house on Tuesdays for three years since we broke up, two years before we ever dated, so I don't understand what's changed. If my presence has been tolerable this whole time I don't understand why the situation is any different now. I stay out of your way, we don't even talk, and when Molly and I talk- Look Molly seems like a pretty rational girl, if she feels threatened by me at all, that's on you for not making her feel secure in your relationship. You and I haven't even made eye contact in three years. I don't want to date you, you don't want to date me, there shouldn't be a problem here. Either way... moving on to the next point *(looks down at her phone)* When we started dating, I made it clear that my relationship with your Dad, your family, our friends, was not going to change no matter what happened to you and I. We've made it this far, why screw it up now? And I really, truly, honestly don't have a problem with you but- I also have no respect for you. I owe you absolutely nothing.

Maybe if you'd been honest when you broke up with me or if you had ever been kind to me since then I'd feel an ounce of remorse for your "uncomfortable feelings". The fact that after all this time you can not see me as a neutral presence or heaven forbid, a friend is dehumanizing to me and concerning for your- your- maturity level. These are my friends Ethan. They're my friends more than yours and we come to Taco Tuesday to see each other and your Dad. Your Dad, who is definitely going to ask where I am when I stop coming to Taco Tuesday and I'm not going to lie to him. What do you think he's going to say? Your dad, who came to my baptism and ate lunch with me in highschool when no one else would and who brought me ice cream when we found out why you broke up with me. You're an adult now Ethan, if you don't like who he invites to his house, move out! *(collects herself)* If he, if your Dad, Mr. Blanchard, asks me to stop coming to his house, I'll stop, no questions asked. I respect that he might need to prioritize his relationship with you and Mrs. Blanchard. Even if this is all complete bullshit. Besides, your sister is transferring to my school next year, don't you think it'd be good for her if- *(Receives text notification, it's Mr. Blanchard, she stops dead in her tracks and skims it, we watch her go from fighting to entirely resigned, she looks back up at Ethan)* Ok. If that's how this is, I don't know why I'm here wasting my time. *(Starts to collect things to leave, Jake tries to say something, she cuts him off)* No! You don't get to fucking say anything, not a single word. Good luck living in highschool forever and never moving out of your parents' house. I can't wait until Molly gets smart and dumps your ass. *(Jessie Exits)*