

An adaptation for men of Kirsten Robinson's article "Before You Cheat, Know This":

By Taurus11

Have you been broken like the violent shattering of glass as it crashes to the ground?

You are not alone.

Did she break not only your heart...
and trust...
and spirit...
and joy...
and belief in love...

but did she break your sense of self?

You are not alone.

Do you lie awake, fighting simply to sleep, looking for at least a little time when your mind is not grinding, grinding, grinding—seeking answers that aren't there?

You are not alone.

Do you force yourself to eat, force yourself to flee thoughts of violence and revenge against the man she chose over you? Does she say that she really didn't choose that man over you, that she still loved you while she was lying, scheming, deceiving and sharing I-LOVE-YOUs and her body with another man?

You are not alone.

Has your smile gone?

Do you stare in bewilderment at this crazed, weak, blubbering and raging stranger that has emerged from inside of you? Do you ask how you possibly could have become this? And DO YOU HATE THIS SIDE OF YOURSELF that you didn't even know existed a little while ago, when you thought you were strong and independent and self-sufficient?

You are not alone.

Is her "i-love-you" now like salt water in a raw wound? And even though there is searing pain of things she shared with him, do you long to hear those words anyway?

You are not alone.

Do you hear, inside her words, "You are not brilliant enough....or handsome enough...or attractive enough...or funny enough...or tender enough.....but HE WAS ALL THESE THINGS AND MORE..."?

You are not alone.

Do you VOW to stop saying certain things to her, to think certain thoughts about her, and after you once again collapse into weakness and anger and repeat you VOW to "never again"... find yourself like some unrecognizable weak bumbling fool repeating those same hated thoughts and words again and again?

Have you wondered if this somehow is an inner instinct to finish the destruction that her choice of another began in a vain attempt to exert at least some control over this nightmare that you have no control of?

Have you wept, and wept some more, finding no relief?

Do you hate your own tears?

You are not alone.

Even though you put on your bravest face, do outsiders who know nothing.....somehow seem to know everything?

Do you get a lump in your throat and a dull, deep unspeakable pain deep inside when you pass certain places?

Do you fight your own rage? And keep losing?

Do you curse your own reflection while brushing your teeth, and do you think if only you were more handsome, funny, smart— if only you were more than you are, do you wonder if it would have made a difference?

Do you feel like screaming into the wind by the river, wondering what you did wrong to deserve feeling this way, hoping your words will carry far enough to be heard by someone—anyone—who can tell you?

Is something deep inside of you turning into the stone, the same stone you use to build walls to keep people out?

You are not alone.

Do you feel devalued, discarded, disassembled, disillusioned, distraught—during the times when you don't feel bewildered and betrayed?

Do you feel foolish and small and weak?

Do you choke on your own confusion as you try to hold on, yet yearn to let go?

Are you grieving and mourning the loss of the romance and honesty and sense of one-ness you once had with her?

Has her lack of respect for you caused you to lose all respect for yourself?

Do you remember when all you wanted was to protect her fiercely, to love her passionately, to always be one with her? Are you grieving the death of all this and more?

IS IT SOMETIMES TOO BITTER TO BEAR?

Did you know that she had all this power over you to reduce you to these things?

Are you vowing to never be vulnerable again?

You are not alone.

KNOW THIS, MY BROTHERS:

Now you may feel broken but you will grow back stronger.

Your expectations next time will be lower but your standards will be higher.

Your hatred and self-loathing will not last and you will find relief, release, and self-acceptance amidst the ashes and ruin.

You will learn to trust your own intuition above words from another.

You will purge yourself of those things in yourself that you are questioning and although you will be far from perfect, **YOU WILL BE BETTER THAN YOU WERE.**

Although your ideas of love are crushed, you will regain your sense of self and strength and this time it will be yours to the end of your days, invulnerable to the devastation you are going through now.

You will realize that this weakness that you now despise in yourself was really opening yourself to the vulnerability that a deep and true love required of you and that her betrayal and the violation of your willingness to be vulnerable is, in the end, her shame to deal with and not any weakness on your part at all.

Though your world was burned to the ground, you will pour your heart into rebuilding yourself and your life—and this time, it won't be for her; it will be for you.

YOUR STRENGTH WILL RETURN AND YOU WILL SURVIVE.