

You always remember your first
love.

Unfortunately, it's the breaking up
with her that's the problem...



Sabrina

January 1991–March 1993

I knew college would provide me with expanded lessons in common educational subjects such as English, science, algebra, and anatomy. I failed to realize these lessons would not all be taught in a classroom. For instance, I had an idea one could have a relatively good command of the English language, however, after a small consumption of keg beer, I would be reduced to the following phases: “You’re the coolest ever,” “I love you,” and “No seriously, I really love you.” In the area of science, I learned you cannot mix cheap brown liquid consumed from an aluminum can with any other color liquid consumed from glass bottles or two-ounce glass vials without having a serious chemical reaction. My algebra lesson came from finding the answer to the question: If at approximately 10:45 p.m. you pour a twelve-ounce container of liquid into a funnel with a six-inch circumference, which then travels at approximately sixty-five miles per hour down a two-foot-long clear tube which has a one-inch circumference, what would be the approximate time you arrive at the toilet? The answer: 10:46 p.m., 10:49 p.m., 1:00 a.m., 2:14 a.m. Then there was anatomy.

My best friend, Kristi, and I ended up choosing the same college. Besides being tall, beautiful, and an excellent student, Kristi was also a skilled basketball player who had been offered a full-ride scholarship. Then there was me: not-so-tall, not-so-beautiful, not-such-an-excellent student. My parents saved all their college aspirations for my A-obtaining younger sister since there were no offers in my mailbox. Despite that, it had been easy to pick a school. My options were some Harvard place that seemed somewhat pretentious if the movie depictions were accurate; some place that required a long flight over water, which I thought would be

a little obnoxious when bringing home laundry for mom to do on the weekends; my hometown college; and a college at which I had attended a week-long basketball camp.

My very, with an extra helping of very, Baptist hometown college didn't seem like a likely choice since I didn't really like going to church, or to school for that matter. Therefore, I figured I wouldn't excel in classes that taught church. And since I already have a fair amount of explaining to do once I arrive at the Pearly Gates, I didn't think I needed the added task of explaining an F in Religion. So, a non-church, non-pretentious, get home to wash your clothes without jet lag college it was.

I enjoyed college life for the first semester. However, by the second semester I knew I'd flunk out if I didn't replace the sport of seeing how high I could stack empty beer cans with more useful activities. I pondered my athletic talents and deemed I have above average skills in most sports. Basketball was my favorite sport but, by college standards, I was lacking in the height department and in the skill department since I failed to impress the basketball coach in camp. So I quickly ruled out basketball. Volleyball was a sport I excelled in, but once I discovered that in college the women wore underwear over their underwear instead of shorts, I quickly decided I didn't have the thighs for it. I considered track and field for a millisecond until I remembered I hate running and I didn't figure at five-foot-six and 125 pounds that my long jump or shot put skills would impress anyone. All that remained was softball.

With softball, I was relatively confident in my fielding, throwing, and batting skills, but I heard that college softball was largely populated with "dykes." I didn't know what dams had to do with softball. Training, maybe? I guess having to run up and down them could be beneficial and add a little fun? Adds kind of an American Gladiator element to the game.

On the first day of tryouts I was a little disappointed the outfield was the typical flat green expanse. There were some American Gladiator like she-men on the team, but they never once hit me with foam-ended batons or yanked me by the ankle off a large pyramid of exercise mats. They did, later, swiftly remove me from a table at a local bar, but that was really for my own good and for the good of the rest of the patrons. Damn two-for-one shot specials.

I made friends quickly but developed an especially close friendship with the left fielder, Sabrina. Sabrina was friendly, attractive, could beat me eight out of ten times in the torturous after-practice sprints, and was the coach's favorite.

Sabrina was also living with her boyfriend, Ryan. When I wasn't studying or practicing, I hung out with Sabrina. Ryan, as most guys would do when a single girl is always hanging out with their girlfriend and severely limiting their opportunity to have sex, started with the "you should go out with my roommate" suggestions.

"How about Tom?" Ryan suggested first.

Tom was one of those know-it-all, arrogant, geeky computer guys. I pictured that one date with him would end with me letting him know where he could byte me and where he could shove his hard drive.

"Ahhh, no thanks," I replied.

"How about Dwayne? He's cool," Ryan offered as a second option.

Dwayne was nice enough, but he looked like the Count from Sesame Street, minus the monocular eyeglass. I could've almost overlooked that resemblance, but in my head, every time Dwayne spoke I heard a Count-like ending.

Dwayne: "Hey, would you grab me a beer?"

In my head, I heard, "One beer ahhh-ah-haa."

Dwayne: "Dude, how're your grades?"

I heard, "2 C's, 1 B, 1 A ahhh-ah-haa."

Knowing this, I couldn't imagine going out with Dwayne, let alone having sex with him. I'd be hearing, *two boobs ahhh-ah-haa, one penis ahhh-ah-haa, one vagina ahh-ah-haa, zero orgasms ahhh-ah-haa.*

"Uh, no."

That would now be two nos, ahh-ah-haa.

"Okay, how about Jeremy?" Ryan asked, sighing.

Jeremy? Jeremy? Why am I so reluctant to date any of Ryan's roommates? It's not like guys have been beating down my door since I started college.

Pondering a date with Jeremy, I suddenly flashed back to my junior year in high school.

I had found myself standing in front of Kristi—confused, speechless, trembling, and changed forever. Kristi had known there was something wrong when I stood shaking in front of her. She looked at me with concern and care.

"What's wrong?"

I didn't and couldn't respond immediately. I only stood there looking at her, attempting to find my balance while feeling a growing ache and throbbing coming from my upper thigh. I reached for her in desperate need, grasped her, wanting to cling to something familiar, for her to hold me. She placed her hands on mine with growing concern on her face.

"What's wrong?" she asked again.

Finally, finding my voice, I blurted out, "I just saw Jeremy Stringer's balls!"

It had been my worst day in PE history. I'd just been struck in the thigh by a rubber ball thrown by Randall Butler, who had freakishly good dodgeball skills. As I hobbled to the side of the court and past all of Randall's other victims, I looked down at my leg to see if the bastard had actually left a mark this time, when out of the corner of my eye I saw something protruding from the inside of someone's shorts. It was like passing a car wreck. I knew I didn't want to see but I couldn't help but turn and stare directly at the catastrophe.

And there they were just hanging out, all wrinkly, hairy, sweaty, and disgusting, just sitting right on the hardwood floor. *Geez, couldn't he feel the difference between gym floor and cotton?*

I finally peeled my eyes away to look up at their owner. Of course, it couldn't be Shane, captain of the football team, or any member of the "hot popular guy" clique. It was Jeremy Stringer, whose sole reputation was based on eating boogers, not all of which were his and not all of them when he was in elementary school.

I shivered at the memory, came back to the present, and looked back at Ryan to say "NO WAY," but he had a desperate look on his face. *Sigh.* "Okay, fine. Jeremy. But tell him he has to wear pants. No shorts. Ever!"

"What? Why? Wait ... never mind. I'll tell him!" Ryan said with just a little too much relief in his voice.

I was a little relieved, too. I was kind of tired of being the third wheel when I went out with Ryan and Sabrina, and the pants-wearing Jeremy was a nice guy. He was an Eagle Scout, a twenty-two-year-old Eagle Scout. I didn't realize there was a career in Scouts after the age of thirteen. I was apparently wrong. But hey, it might turn out to be a good thing. I mean with his sworn oath to uphold the Eagle Scout honor, he'd be handy if we got lost in the woods and I got a hankering for a s'more. He could just build a fire on the spot with pocket lint and a stick. Not to mention, he was a virgin who was saving himself for marriage so I figured he was a relatively safe date. I was counting on his vow of abstinence unless we got drunk, flew to Vegas, and got married. I wouldn't have to worry about seeing another Jeremy's sweaty, hairy danglies anytime in the near future.

As the softball season went on Sabrina and I grew closer and closer. We'd hang out after practice and on the weekends, occasionally including Ryan and Jeremy, but more often than not finding reasons for it to be just the two of us. We went on this way for several months until she

called one night to ask if she could come over. She said Ryan was having a party, she was tired, and she wanted to go to bed. Always willing to help a friend and happy for any excuse to not study art history, I quickly replied, "Sure!"

It didn't take long before I heard the front door to the house open and close, and footsteps head my way down the hall. When she got back to my room, she dropped on the bed next to me, not the least bit tired acting.

"So what's up?" I asked.

"Nothing. I just thought we could talk for a while," she replied.

"I thought you were tired?"

"Not really. I just said that so I could get out of there."

"Okay, so what do you want to talk about?"

"I don't know. Nothing really," she said, looking around my room.

I was immediately glad I had done a quick floor sweep of dirty clothes before she arrived.

"Kristi here?"

"No. She's out with either the mascot guy or the baseball dude," I answered, secretly hoping she was with the mascot guy. Though the mascot guy spent a small amount of his time in a mule costume, I thought the baseball guy was pretty much a jackass all the time.

Sabrina was acting weird so I started talking to fill the awkward silence. I was thirty minutes into a conversation about resorting to licking the rocks in geology class to recognize them by taste since the typical visual and physical identification techniques were failing me and we had a test on Tuesday, when she stopped me by saying, "I want to kiss you."

I was caught off guard. I looked at her, speechless and a little perplexed. That was pretty much the exact opposite response I'd gotten from the geology class when I told them about my rock-licking idea. Of course, I'd

followed that conversation up with actually licking a chunk of peridotite, which I quickly renamed peri-doo-doo, since it tasted like crap. (I did get that one right on the test.) Sabrina apparently took my non-response as permission and leaned over and kissed me. It was soft at first, just a touching of the lips, but my heart began to thump, my lips went tingly, and my stomach twisted. It was probably my delayed reaction to the peri-doo-doo. Then she kissed me harder. The full impact of her actions hit me. Nope, this is definitely not from licking a rock.

I pulled away quickly, looked at her, and then slid off the side of the bed abruptly. “Um, yeah. Can you hold on a minute? I’ll be right back.”

My mind was swirling and I was a little taken over by the moment, but I managed to move down the hall to the bathroom. I walked in, closed and locked the door behind me, made my way directly over to the toilet, and threw up. Twice.

I’m twenty years, four months, and nine days old. And I’m gay. Gay: The new word my college education had also taught me. I think. I kissed a girl, so I’m gay. Wait. Sabrina kissed me so that doesn’t mean *I’m* gay ... but ... I liked it, sooo I’m pretty sure that means I am. Hmmm ... oh well.

I brushed my teeth. Twice. Then I returned to my bedroom and kissed her back.

I woke the next morning to the phone ringing. Thoughts of last night’s events flashed through my head. Maybe it was just a dream. I stretched and assessed my mental prowess. I decided it was extremely low and that it would be a complete waste of time for my professor to attempt to teach me anything about psychology and personal adjustment this morning. Of course, I was dreaming about kissing girls, so there may be a slight need for some “personal adjustment.” *Nah*. I flipped over to go back to sleep and struck Sabrina in the face with my elbow. She shot

up in pain at the exact second Kristi opened my bedroom door.

“Your mom is on the pho-” Kristi took one step in the room, phone in her outstretched hand, and froze.

I looked at her, looked at Sabrina, and then looked back at Kristi, who cocked her head to the side and gave me a sly smile. The blood drained from my face as a flash of the last two months ran through my head.

During our first week of college, Kristi came back after her first day of basketball practice with two pairs of new basketball shoes, four sets of practice uniforms, and one big lesbian admirer. At the time I found this amusing. Kristi, however, did not. This of course caused me to make fun of her and her wannabe *lesbian* (another word my college education added to my vocabulary) lover at every given opportunity. Now, looking at her half-cocked smile, I was really regretting my actions, especially since my harassment had escalated to a daily persecution after her lesbian admirer had given her a present. This in and of itself justified a small amount of shit-giving. It was a gold necklace and charm with “Someone Special” spelled out in delicate cursive script. For the past two months, I mercilessly harassed her about the necklace. I’d called out to her at random times. “Hey, Kristi, guess what?”

“What?”

“You’re special.”

We’d go out to eat and she’d ask, “What are you getting?”

“Well, I’m thinking about the special, seeing as how I’m withhh someone sooo SPECIAL.”

We’d be walking together and I’d rush ahead to open the handicap entrances to buildings, and as she walked through I’d say “This is the special person’s entrance.” Not exactly politically correct, but it amused me. Most recently I had added to my repertoire of “special” jokes. Every time she was in the bathroom I’d fake irritation, bang on the door,

and yell, “COME ON ALREADY! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? SOMEONE SPECIAL?”

I sighed. This was it. I’m dead. My perfect, quiet, shit-taking friend is going to take this opportunity for the ideal payback.

Her eyes narrowed as she arched a brow.

I watched as I knew, in her mind, she was formulating the ultimate revenge phrase, “I’m sorry she can’t come to the phone right now because she’s in bed with another woman.”

She put the phone back to her ear, straightened her head, and threw me one more glancing smile over her shoulder as she turned. “Sorry, but she must have already gone to class.”

Oh my God, I love her. She definitely is someone special. Think I’ll just have to tell her that later!

I looked back at Sabrina and knew my life had changed forever. *To-do list: Buy a rainbow sticker, some flannel shirts, a chain wallet, and an Indigo Girls CD. Oh, and I should probably call Jeremy the Eagle Scout and let him know he wouldn’t be getting his “manhood” badge from me.*

I quickly accepted this realization and was comfortable being with Sabrina. However, I was unsure if it was just Sabrina I was attracted to or if I was truly gay. I flashed back over my life to see if there should have been any “you’re an aspiring lesbo” signs. I was weirdly drawn to my high school track coach, but that could have been just a “mentor” kind of admiration. I did like Hot Wheels versus Barbie dolls but that really isn’t a good indication because *come on*, who would want to play dress-up with inanimate objects when you can race and crash little cars? When I was five, mom had me sit on Santa’s knee at JCPenney’s, and when he asked if I wanted a cute little doll for Christmas I punched him and told him “No, I want a motorcycle.” Again, not really a good indicator of pre-lesbianism. I mean, would

anyone really want a doll that takes bottles and wets her diaper? I had a little sister that did that all the time and my mom never seemed happy about it. And come on, a motorcycle. Duh. I could only go so fast on my Big Wheel.

Unable to decide my true sexual orientation through a historical review of my actions, I chose to again skip psychology and personal adjustment class to conduct my own psychology experiment. I sat in the middle of campus and played the “Who Would I Rather Sleep With?” game as people walked by me. I figured if I selected mostly women, then I was gay. If I picked men, then I was straight and just going through that college “sexual experimental stage.” If I selected both men and women, I was probably just ... *opportunistic*. The first couple to approach was attractive. The guy was in shorts and a T-shirt. He was cute. The woman was in shorts and a tank top that accessorized her ... umm, “assets.” She leaned over to tie her shoe, and my vote leaned to the women’s column. The next people that approached were a middle-aged couple. The woman was wearing a simple blouse with matching polyester pants. Yeah, nothing. The man was wearing a tight sweatshirt with matching tight sweat bottoms pulled up to his midsection, which accentuated that he hung to the right.

Two votes for women and a note that men should not be allowed to wear sweatpants, especially old guys. The next set of people to walk by was the squad of cheerleaders. This worked because they were an equal opportunity squad, seven women and four guys. The girls bounced by in their little skirts and V-neck tops while the guys bounced by too, but in those weird stirrup pants. Nine votes for women, bonus points for the bouncing, zero votes for men. Yep, I’m gay. And if I wasn’t before, I definitely am now. I also now know the real reason why everyone gets up and goes to the bathroom at halftime.

Sabrina and I spent the next year together as best friends to the outside world, girlfriends and lovers when we

were alone. She continued to date Ryan, though she made up more reasons to be apart, using the excuse, “if we’re going to be together for the rest of our lives, I want to live a little during college” as her staple. She moved out of Ryan’s and in with Kristi and me. We got a dog. Over summer break, she and the dog came home and spent the summer with me. We were inseparable. We thought we were fooling the world with our hidden love affair, which just fed the excitement of it all.

Though Sabrina was content in having our secret affair, as time went on I wanted to explore my new lifestyle outside the bedroom. After a few drunken softball parties we made friends with Alexis and Whitney, who unlike Sabrina and me were a known lesbian couple. I developed a particularly close friendship with Alexis. I liked her immediately. She was outgoing, fun, always smiling, and attractive. She was the “hang out on the porch and drink a beer with” and “take home to mom,” kind of person. I liked Whitney too. She was very attractive and fun but she was wild and sent out the “I might be a bit crazy” vibe and seemed like the “if you survived, it would be fun to have one night of drunken sex with” kind of person. It was nice to actually show affection toward Sabrina in front of other people and they gave us a hard time for not being “out.” Although I was getting comfortable with the idea, Sabrina still had Ryan.

My eagerness to get out and have a more open relationship increased the more I hung out with Alexis and Whitney, especially while Sabrina was having her mandatory Ryan time. This began to affect our relationship. Sabrina became increasingly jealous and insecure, and I became more envious of a relationship that involved only two people.

Finally, around the hundred and fifty-fourth time Alexis and Whitney asked us to go out with them to a gay bar, I said “Yes.” Sabrina, realizing I would go with or

without her, reluctantly agreed, but under the condition that we couldn't go anywhere in the immediate area so Ryan wouldn't find out. The next weekend we headed out. We'd driven two hours when Alexis finally turned off the highway onto a seemingly desolate dirt road. Yep, definitely little to no chance we'd run into Ryan here. After what seemed like miles, we turned off onto yet another dirt road and I began to get nervous. There was no way there would be a bar out in the middle of nowhere. That didn't make good business sense. Who'd see the inviting neon rainbow signs I was sure would be hanging in the window?

My nervousness grew to anxiety as I began to think Alexis and Whitney were serial killers or cult members dragging us out to some lesbian "Rite of Passage" ceremony. I pictured myself being forced to strip and lie prone on a clitoris-shaped altar in the center, well okay, top center, of a vagina-shaped crop circle. Thank God I had shaved and worn my going-out underwear. I pictured the women wearing red flannel shirts, dancing around me, and chanting, "No Dicks, Only Chicks. No Dicks, Only Chicks." The lead mistress, if she could be called a mistress while wearing red flannel, would come at me with a hot brand in the shape of a woman's symbol. This isn't good, I thought; we just got a toaster! I was about to dive out of the backseat when I saw something glowing in the distance. Hand poised on the door release, I watch as the glow became clearer. It's a ... It's a ... It's a neon rainbow Miller Lite sign. I knew it!

"We're here," Alexis announced as she parked in the middle of a field of cars and trucks, mostly trucks.

We entered the simple metal building. It was like walking into a normal straight bar with tables and chairs all positioned around a dance floor, a bar, and a bathroom, but there were women everywhere. At least I thought they were all women. A couple of them were questionable. We found a table, and Alexis got the first round of beers as I took in the scenery. It was nice, cozy, and comfortable. Actually, it

felt like home. Well, home without the neon beer signs, cigarette smoke, or lack of lighting, and add a sticky floor.

It turned out to be “crazy fun,” as Alexis and Whitney had advertised. Especially after my fifth beer, which happens to be the exact number of beers where I believe I can dance. Sabrina, who either hadn’t consumed enough beer or didn’t have the same high opinion of my dancing abilities, opted to sit out the last couple of songs. I, however, was in the middle of executing a knowingly sexy step right, step left, slow butt-grinding spin move to some amped-up techno song, allowing the other half of the dance floor the privilege of seeing my ass, which I spun directly into another woman. I righted myself and looked at her to give a quick apology, then froze. Her hands and lips were glowing green and pink. She smiled at me and the next thing I knew she was dancing around me, swirling and turning, running her hands randomly over my body. As the song ended she came in close, used her finger to trace randomly within the opening of my shirt, and then with the final note of the song she kissed me. As quickly as it happened, she spun away. I stood motionless. Completely thrown off my dance groove, I decided it was time to sit down and probably time for a girlfriend check-in. I returned to the table and gave Sabrina a big “How are you, I haven’t been doing anything” smile. She did not smile back. I sat down next to her while she looked at my face, my chest, and back at my face.

“Nice,” Sabrina said as she rolled her eyes and turned to the dance floor.

I stared at her and watched her head become enveloped by a cloud of smoke. I wasn’t quite sure if it was coming from the lady smoking on the other side of her, the fogger they’d set off over the dance floor, or directly from her ears. Either way, I was pretty sure there’d be no fun, drunken sex for me tonight.

I sat there for a minute, and then thought there was no reason to ruin the drunken part, so I went to the bar for

another beer. While waiting for the bartender I caught a glance of myself in the Old Milwaukee mirror. I had pink lips and the words "U R SEXY" written in green on my chest. I made a futile attempt to clean off the paint with my beer and a bar napkin. Yep, I'm pretty sure there won't be any drunken sex tonight but just in case there was still hope, I was careful to remove my "someone thinks I'm sexy" smile before rejoining Sabrina at the table.

Whitney and Alexis came laughing and stumbling back to the table. They had pink and green neon lips and handprints all over their faces, necks, chests, butts, and nether regions. I was pretty sure they would be having drunken sex. However, looking at the location of some of the handprints on their jeans, they might have already had it. I diverted my eyes from the two drunken, sexually painted, neon billboards and began watching the dance floor that had become illuminated with painted women. I saw a shirt and bra fly off one, then another. Oh this was definitely "crazy fun." Everywhere I looked there were women either lifting or taking off their shirts to allow themselves to get painted a variety of circles, swirls, and heart designs.

Apparently, I was a little too enthralled in the activity because Sabrina hit me across the arm and said, "Do you have to stare? It's not like you haven't seen boobs before!"

"But I haven't seen *THEIRS* before," I said, since I had drunk the exact number of beers to make me lose the filter between my brain and my mouth. The night ended shortly thereafter.

After the adventure at the bar, Sabrina became more and more possessive of me, but she hadn't made any adjustments to her relationship with Ryan. I began to pull away from her while Ryan tried to pull her closer and closer. After a weekend visiting my family I came home to Sabrina sitting on my bed with her head down and crying. We'd spent several weekends away from each other so I doubted she was overwrought with grief from being apart.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

She replied by lifting her hand, which was now newly accessorized with a diamond ring.

“Ryan asked you to marry him and you said ‘yes’?” I filled in. I made a quick assessment of how I felt about this new development. Turned out I was pretty okay with the idea. I wanted something more than a shared girlfriend in my life.

I sat on the bed next to her. “Maybe this is for the best.” I hadn’t planned on breaking up with Sabrina when I awoke this morning but I thought on the cusp of her engagement to another person was probably as good a time as any. “It’ll be okay. You want to be a teacher and have kids, so you should do that.”

Sabrina was silent.

Maybe she was thinking the same thing too and she was just crying because she didn’t know how to tell me. “Are you okay?”

“I love you! I want to be with you!” she finally belted out.

Okay, maybe she’s not thinking what I’m thinking. “I love you too, but I think you know we can’t carry on like this. It’s not fair to any of us. We can still be friends,” I said with my best “soft, calm, sad but we’ll get through this” voice.

She replied in turn with her “outside, in a packed stadium, yelling at the ref for a stupid call” voice. “I DON’T CARE IF IT’S FAIR, AND FUCK FRIENDS!”

Okay, definitely not as simple as I’d thought. I’d never really had a difficult breakup before. With all my ex-boyfriends, I just made up some lame excuse and only had to say “no” when they asked if we could have breakup sex. Simple. Okay, so maybe a new tactic. Maybe charm and lighthearted humor will work.

“Well, we couldn’t really be fuck friends. I was thinking more like non-fuck friends,” I said with a little laugh.

And that was all it took. She exploded. She went off on me for a solid five minutes. *Note to self: Do not try to be funny during a girl breakup.* She told me my faults, which I found were grossly overexaggerated. She told me she loved me and she hated me in the same sentence. She yelled, she cried, she wiped snot on her sleeve. When she was finally exhausted from her tirade, she flung herself on my bed and buried her tear- and snot-streaked face into my pillow. *So, that will need to go in the washer later.*

My ears were hurting and I knew now more than ever I wanted out of this relationship.

“I’m sorry,” I said while I stealthily slid my pillow from her arms and walked down the hall to the washer.

She yelled from behind me, “DON’T WALK AWAY FROM ME!”

I kept walking.

A second later I heard a loud thud in the hallway. Thinking she had resorted to throwing and breaking things, I cautiously looked out into the hall, fully expecting to see my stereo in pieces all over the floor. Instead, Sabrina was in a half-sitting, half-lying position up against the wall and seemingly unconscious. My heart leapt. I leaned back in the laundry room, hit the start button on the washing machine, and then dashed to her.

I did a quick check—no blood and no apparent injuries. I sat behind her and pulled her into my lap. “Sabrina, come on. It’s okay. Wake up.” I began to brush her hair out of her face. “It’s okay. Come on, wake up. Wake up.”

She finally fluttered her eyes and woke in a suspiciously overly dramatic kind of way.

She looked at me and softly said, “I love you. I don’t want you to leave me. I was coming after you and then I must have fainted.”

“Hmmm ... It’s okay, just relax. It’s all going to work out.”

“You’re not going to leave?” she asked.

“We’ll talk about it later. Let’s not worry about it now.”

Nothing was spoken about the incident for the next two days. On the third day, the whole argument replayed itself after Sabrina suggested that after I graduate we find houses in the same area. I suggested we didn’t, and she became upset again. After a few minutes, I got tired of the insults and walked down the hall toward the bedroom. Shortly thereafter I heard her storm into the room after me. I turned when I heard a thud and crashing sound behind me. I knew this time for sure it would be my stereo or another one of my valuables. Wrong again. Sabrina was collapsed on the floor. Half worried, half suspicious I went over to her and assessed the damage. None. She was the most strategic fainter I’d ever met. She’d amazingly missed the bed, the corner of the dresser, and the wall. Plus, she always managed to fall face up. I wondered if I should call Ripley’s Believe It or Not and cash in on this little freak show, but I bent down instead and went through the same routine as last time, with just a little less concern. She fluttered her eyes open and in a weak, frail voice managed to say, “I don’t think I can live without you.”

Damn. “We’ll talk about it later.”

This time the truce lasted five days. On the sixth day, Sabrina took another rather surprising tack. “I want to be with you. I’m going to break it off with Ryan.”

“Ah, wait. Let’s not jump into anything. I don’t think I want that or this,” I said, pointing from me to her. She just stared at me. “I’m sorry.”

This sparked the biggest fight to date, but I had a new plan. I was not going to walk away and give her the opportunity to pull her little fainting act. I was going to be strong, sit through the ranting and raving, and I was not going to leave until it was done. No more chase-and-faint scenarios—I was going to end this relationship once and for all.

For the next two hours of my life I listened to my flaws, my faults, my annoying habits, everything I'd done wrong in the last two years, how she loved me, how she wanted to be with me, and how she didn't want anything to change between us. I sat silent, not wanting to prolong the fight because I was getting hungry.

If this went on much longer I'd need to get a secret message out to Kristi and ask her to slide me some food under the door. I glanced over and pondered what kind of food would actually fit through the small gap. Fruit Roll-Ups, saltines, Thin Mints, and sticks of gum. How long could I survive on Fruit Roll-Ups, crackers, cookies, and gum? A couple of days maybe, but I'd need something to drink too. Kristi's smart. Maybe she'd think to put a couple of the bendy straws together and get me some water too. Of course, that would just make me need to pee, which presented a whole new problem. What if Sabrina's little emotional tirade lasted for days? I was going to need to pee.

Anxiety started taking over my thoughts. I could go for days without food and water but I refuse to pee in my pants and relive the haunts of third grade. Sidebar: I'd finally beaten my elementary nemesis, Kendra, to the four-square box on the playground. I accomplished this by choosing to bypass the restroom on the way out, despite the teacher's warnings. But I was victorious and Kendra was forced to play tetherball with the other losers while I was playing four square with the cool kids. My victory was cut short when my bladder notified me that the little cartons of milk I drank at lunch were processed and ready to be released NOW. But I

didn't leave, not even after the one minute warning bell rang, because I needed to score one more point to win 3 out of 3 games and become the four square champion, a title I wanted to flaunt over my nemesis for the rest of day.

The ball came to me, I saw the opening I needed, and executed the most perfectly placed Texas Twister in the history of four square. Game! Excited, I jumped up and down. Victory was sweet ... and warm, and wet. I looked down to see a big wet ring had spread down my jeans. Needless to say, the four square champion title was forgotten when Kendra suggested the title of "The Texas Trickler." It took me two whole years for that embarrassment and title to fade.

Yep, no way am I peeing my pants. I started frantically looking around the room.

"Well?" Sabrina's irritated question interrupted my search.

I stared blankly at her. *Well, what?* I was relatively sure she wasn't asking me about where I'd elected to pee and fairly certain she didn't want to know that I had decided it would be the top drawer of her bedside table.

Guessing she was probably asking something about us working it out or staying together, I replied, "I still want to break up."

She looked at me, began to cry, and then stormed out of the room. Relieved that my pee problem had resolved itself, I stood to make my escape from the room and then heard the thud. *Sigh.* I grabbed my money, my book bag, and walked down the hall. This time she had made it into the living room where she conveniently missed the coffee table. I grabbed my keys, stepped over her, and walked out the door. Two seconds later, I reopened the door, stepped back over her, walked down the hall to the bathroom, peed, stepped back over her for the third time, and left the house.