

FIRST LOVE COFFEE

Evie received the message on her phone whilst she was in her French class.

“Evie Nichols put your mobile away in class please!” roared Miss Bloom.

Evie immediately put it away and gave pretence of getting on with her work, but inside she was smiling to herself and thinking about the message she had just received from Luke.

Luke Jones was in the upper sixth; Evie was in the lower sixth. She'd been flattered and thrilled when Luke had taken a shine to her at one of the student's 18th birthday parties. He was tall, muscular, with dark hair and deep brown eyes. He was also very clever and tipped to go to a top university. Evie knew that other girls fancied him too. She'd been looking her best at the party, wearing a tight blue dress that complemented her blue eyes and long blonde hair and showed off her figure. Luke had chatted her up; they'd laughed and danced together, and at the end of the evening they had kissed.

Evie's parents noted the sparkle in her eyes following the party, and it wasn't long before she was proud to officially confirm that she was Luke's girlfriend. Luke and Evie hung around together at break times and during lunch hours. They attended parties together and had dates to the cinema and bowling alley. Evie's confidence and self esteem grew over the weeks and then months that they were dating. They had met each others' families, chilled out in each others' houses and canoodled in their bedrooms when they could get away with it. Evie thought she had never been so happy. She was certain she was in love; so certain that she gave herself to Luke on the back seat of the car Luke borrowed from his Father. He didn't say he loved her but she was sure that would happen.

Evie glanced at the clock and looked out of the classroom window. It was 3pm and gorgeous late Spring weather outside. A whole hour until 4pm when she could be with Luke again. His message had said to meet for coffee at Meg's Brew, the new cafe in town. How sophisticated she mused to herself, and which coffee should she choose, she wondered.

Evie daydreamed about ordering a latte but then thought that too fattening, she was conscious of keeping her figure for Luke. She wondered about a cappuccino but that might leave chocolate marks around her mouth. A flat white might be most suitable she thought. It was impossible to concentrate on French verb conjugations.

It was with some relief when the end of lesson bell rang and Evie could pack her books away. “You look to be in a hurry” commented her friend Sarah. “I'm meeting Luke for a coffee at the new cafe in town” Evie proudly informed her. Sarah felt left out; Evie used to hang out with her after school, but she didn't say anything although she wondered why Evie and Luke weren't walking to the cafe together.

Evie rushed to the girls' loos and applied some mascara and messaged her Mum to let her know about the coffee date with Luke. Evie promised to be home for dinner. Mrs Nichols assumed Evie would return around 6pm.

Evie made her way into town and found the new cafe. She looked through the window and saw that Luke was already there. He's keen she thought to herself. That's good.

The table Luke had chosen was in the corner, and the cafe was quiet in the late afternoon. Evie beamed at Luke as she sat down. A waitress took their order and Evie nattered away telling Luke about her day until the coffees arrived. Evie sipped her flat white; “this is gorgeous” she murmured, feeling so grown up.

“I need to talk to you” whispered Luke. Evie gazed at his serious face. “Is something the matter?” she asked Luke.

“The thing is, as you know, I have a place at Oxford and I must obtain the grades I need. That makes it difficult to continue going out together and in any event you have a further year of school to finish. And we wouldn't be able to see each other once I'm at university as the terms will be very intense. I think it's best we cool it now before we get too serious.”

Evie stared at Luke with tears filling her eyes. “I thought we were already serious.” she cried, feeling blind-sided and lost for words as she had not seen this coming.

“We've had some fun” Luke remarked. He gestured to the waitress for the bill and paid it promptly.

“I'll see you around” Luke said and stood up to leave. Evie watched in disbelief as he put his jacket on and departed the cafe. She knew if she started sobbing she wouldn't stop. The waitress was putting chairs on tables and cleaning. Evie knew she had to get out of there. She wanted the sanctuary of her home.

Mrs Nichols was surprised when Evie came through the front door around 5pm with mascara running down her cheeks. Evie rushed into her mother's arms. “He's finished with me” gasped Evie and clung to her Mum.

Evie's mum steered her into the front room and on to the sofa and fetched a box of tissues. She put her arms around her daughter and encouraged her to talk it through; to try to process what had happened.

Almost an hour later Evie went to wash her face and change. Mrs Nichols messaged her husband. As the three of them sat down to eat, Evie's Dad tried a joke to lift the atmosphere: “at least you'll have some time for us now” he said with a kindly smile, and quickly added “we're here for you always, you know.” Evie looked at her parents gratefully but knew she had ahead the hard task of facing her friends and schoolmates once the news broke.

“Coffee?” asked Mrs Nichols of her husband as they finished their meal. Coffee thought Evie, I could never drink it again.

The end
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