

## *A lady's letter...*

Dear Mr. Brighton,

Although this situation is rather ridiculous on the whole, I don't feel I shall be able to ignore it much longer.

We both know that it is society that imposes on young women to attend as many parties and balls as possible, so as to satisfy the want of a man for a wife, especially if he is in possession of a good income.

Fortunately, my father's hard work has allowed me to indulge on my family without having to fuss about finding a husband, getting married, settling in to another home, having children and living the life of a house mistress who's satisfactions and joys are those of buying silks and laces while she isn't taking care of the family.

Nevertheless, for no reason am I excused from attending balls and parties. Father requires "necessary", for he does hope that his oldest of two daughters shall one day find a match.

It was precisely at one of these balls that we were introduced and you began making things less predictable.

Until your arrival, I had been as gay and merry as could be.

The gentlemen who had made *advances* had been politely turned down as I continued to pretend I couldn't find the "one who would make me happy", while really the prospect of getting married was no where to be seen in my future, at least, according to myself.

Obviously, your intentions were different.

The moment you set your eyes on me you had decided I would be your wife and from the look in your arrogant eyes, you thought you already had me.

On the other hand, I thought I was convinced you were to cause no problems.

Dear me, how wrong we both were!

There is no denying you were rather amiable, what with your proper manner, quick mind, business accomplishments and agreeable features but admiration from my part was the strongest feeling I had planned.

Naively, not in my wildest imaginations did I think a *man*, who had so much as talked to me, could have me tossing and turning during sleepless nights.

At first, it seemed your purposes were rather clear, and when I had made *my* intentions even clearer, I relaxed for I thought you had understood.

I dare say I chanted victory too soon for whenever we met again you always respected the unspoken boundaries and yet it looked like you were pushing them to the limit.

Every conversation we started without other people present gave me an uneasy feeling for I felt constantly on guard with the need to defend myself or to attack if occasion presented itself. There was no explicit flirting and still I felt you were teasing me from beginning to end whilst enjoying an absurd inside-joke.

One day you barely minded me at all, and the next thing I knew you were asking, if not imploring, me to dance with you at Madam Katrina's winter ball, saying I was the most charming lady in the room!

At this point, your mood swings were becoming preposterous for I had tried to be patient and wasn't going to have any more of it.

Yet, inexplicably, your presence intrigued me and I hadn't the courage to tell you to not consider me at all as I found myself hoping to meet the young mysterious man who seemed to want and yet to not desire me at all. It was a new experience to find that I was having emotions mixed with longing, desire, necessity that had nothing to do with my travels.

Here was when I discovered myself confused with my own behaviour. What was I thinking?

Why was I yearning to see a man? For what reasons were my thoughts occupied more of fantasies than of my future travels? Had I been a fool to put up a barrier when really we barely knew each other? Was I really getting fond of you?

Misinterpretation wasn't the case here, for you weren't exactly the first man to take a fancy to me but you were very certainly the first to make me analyse your actions one by one.

While my heart felt the urge to implore your pardon for putting up my foolish barriers that I was so used to having to avoid falling into the trap of love, pouring out the thoughts that had had no pity on my tormented psyche, my mind wasn't blessed with patience and couldn't risk this situation ripening, in order to avoid any risky business.

You see, never before had I not been able to answer my questions with a rational response, and this was altogether unbearable so it had to be the first and last situation in which I could be so uncertain. No good looks, talent nor mystifying behaviour could possibly put aside my hard labours of preparation for the New World.

I never was and never shall accept being so vulnerable to men or anything else for nothing can spoil my plans.

Mr. Brighton, the truth is that my dreams were had never been filled with love and future children, but with American planes and far away journeys.

My beloved books aren't romances or those absurd, sweet talking poems for they are adventure stories and maps.

Don't you see?

I don't want a husband. I don't want a marriage.

Frankly, I don't see why one can't be happy without saying "I will" in front of rows of people with a smile on their face when really they're willingly accepting the last legal form of human slavery.

Conscious that I must sound rather affected and spoilt, there is no other way to make you see that my dearest wishes are those of leaving Chestfield and exploring the world like Christopher Columbus.

Surely now you understand why accepting the proposal of any man would ruin my arrangements.

Perhaps you think of me ill, for you know I intend to abandon my family and my home, leaving behind sorrow and shame while living the dreams of my life, and yet, it would be much more wicked to allude my relations, a man or myself into thinking that a quite life in England would suit me just fine.

Nana is really the only person aside from yourself who knows of these modern wishes, the only person who knows the real, sincere, and natural me. Although considered a disgrace to the family, being a young adventurer herself, she truly understands me. Apart from ourselves and her, no-one knows yet, so pray make no mention of it to anyone else.

Putting aside my bewildered feelings who are totally irrational and a complete muddle, for they don't know what they want, I wish to end this silly chapter in my life so as to stay focused and achieve my purposes and faraway goals as soon as I can, without any complications of any sort.

Experience hasn't made me wise for I have none in the romance area but I feel safer trusting stable, sensible grounds that my mind has thought rather than my heart and its rash sentiments.

I possess no tribute of love or a heart generous, tender enough to give you so please be so kind so as to try not to nettle me much longer for your teasing gives me false hope and distracts me from my objectives, whilst your cold manners leave me feeling vain, selfish and miserable.

Furthermore, for your sake you must know a woman like myself could never satisfy nor gratify a man like yourself taking care of him with due respect and adoration for I'm too busy worrying about nonsense and my future on-solo travels.

Hoping you will find what you are looking for,

Rosalie Edwards

