1994

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Abstract
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This journal article is available in Kunapipi: https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol16/iss3/10
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Sarah and James were a fine, well-suited couple. Through all the many years they lived together it never once entered their minds that they would separate. Eventually, however, they began, slowly, tentatively, to discuss the idea of marriage.

At first it struck them that everyone was doing it. As a social trend in their peer group, marriage must therefore enter their conversations. And somehow the topic moved onto the personal plane. But they'd never wanted to be like everyone else anyway.

Once raised, marriage was not so easily dismissed. Marriage was a public demonstration of their commitment to each other. But their private love was surely the only bond necessary. Marriage was the ticket to greater clarity and ease in the legal world of society's institutions. But the law was becoming more mindful of less conventional liaisons. Marriage would please their parents. But they should act for their own fulfilment now they were mature adults, not children. Marriage would be a firm foundation for their own children. But, did they want children?

In every debate on why to marry there was no conclusion. So why marry? Yet, Sarah and James kept coming back to: why not?

The Wedding Day was set. Sarah took a girlfriend into town and bought a gorgeous white dress. An upmarket caterer was contacted, a limousine booked, the invitations, gilt-edged, printed. Oh, and they arranged the ceremony with the priest at the local church too.

It was a busy, and actually quite an exciting time. Dinner conversations were filled with preparations and expectations. Sarah had never looked so beautiful. A golden glow radiated from her as she sat at the kitchen table scratching out endless seating plans for the reception.

'Oh dear, we can't have David and Angie on the same side of the room, not since the divorce' she laughed, scratching, rearranging, again and again.

To her it was just one wonderful party, thought James, with an edge of bitterness. He knew he loved her beyond anything, but Sarah seemed more interested in the wedding than the marriage. Come to think of it, she hadn't argued too strenuously through the months of debate. Did she love him as much as he loved her? As James watched the seating plan come together, he was filled with doubt.
They were sitting at the same kitchen table when James said quite calmly, "I'm sorry Sarah, I don't know why I did it, it was only once and it does not affect my love for you. But I was unfaithful."

Sarah smiled. James was always joking around, and if the topic was somewhat questionable, so were most of his pranks. The laughter became nervous as her lover confessed to no jest, only infidelity.

'Who, who?' she gasped, trying to pin the evil down.

Sarah screamed and Sarah sobbed. James held her tight and James was rammed into the night. Anger gave way to sorrow which rose to rage that exploded in disbelief. The shrapnel of her words hurt her as much as they did him.

His only defense was: "I'm sorry."

How she could continue to live in the knowledge of such treachery astonished Sarah. In a motel room on the coast, suicide fought with a huge history of common sense. And she didn't want to die because she wanted to be around to hurt him as much as he'd hurt her. James opened the door on her return and instead of hurling anger she was so glad to see her best friend. The pain grew and grew, festering in an open sore of distress, but evening followed day, and night was spent in his arms. It scared her. How lonely she would be without him.

Fury and savage, impotent horror and pure dismay shuddered to the surface of her days in the time that followed. Nobody could see her wounds, but she was stabbed by the betrayal, like a butterfly pinned to blotting paper. She struggled, but each movement only hurt her more, ripping the wings that once flew. It was better to be still. The silence of the damned? The quiet of defeat? No, the stillness of forgiveness.

Sarah put James' betrayal down to pre-wedding jitters.

The wedding went ahead in every planned detail. All their friends celebrated and were truly happy, for James and Sarah were the perfect couple. James and Sarah too were happy, snuggled together in the honeymoon suite.

'I'm glad it turned out like this' sighed James. 'I was scared you did not really love me. I wasn't unfaithful, I could never do that to you. I just wanted to see if you would stay with me through good times and bad, if you would love me for better and for worse. Thank you for being true. I love you Sarah.'

James was surprised to find Sarah gone from the bed next morning. Nor was she at home sulking. In fact, all her personal belongings were missing too. She had not even left a note.