

# “I Fell for a Woman— While I Was Engaged to a Man”

AT 25, SARAH\* HAD THE BIG THREE DOWN PAT: GREAT JOB, GREAT GUY, GREAT FRIENDS. THEN A GIRL CRUSH CAME ALONG THAT PULLED THE RUG OUT FROM UNDER HER PERFECT LIFE.

As told to Annie Daly

When I turned 25 in July 2010, my life was golden. I loved my family and friends, I had a great live-in boyfriend, Mike, and I was going to graduate school in the fall at a university close to my hometown in California.

Then classes started, and I met Bree. Bree was a short, quiet brunette with piercing blue-green eyes, and she had a mysterious vibe about her. She seemed cool yet vulnerable at the same time. I wanted to know more about her, so one day after class, I invited her to join a study group I had organized. Her face lit up, and she asked, “Do you need my number then?” As we parted ways, my heart started racing. *Why are you nervous to text her the info?* I thought. And when she wrote me back, “You’ve got it, woman :),” my heart fluttered again.

Turns out, Bree couldn’t make it to my study group, so we got coffee instead. After that, we started hanging out a lot. It was mostly study-buddy stuff at first, but we gradually began sharing personal stories. One afternoon, we made a list of stuff we’d

**Straight, gay...it's not  
always that simple.**

MICHAEL EDWARDS: Fashion Editor: Charles Manning; Hair: Lydia Foster for Exclusive Artists; Using Kleasase Paris; Makeup: Thora for Nails Cosmetics; 1. Kate Evans for Nails Cosmetics; 2. Angela Delgado for Chanel; 3. Sarah Daly; 4. Jennifer White and Warren; 5. Ashley Intimates; (On her, left) sweater; (right) shirt; Forever 21

These are professional models.



never done but wanted to, and before we knew it, we were meeting to cross stuff off our list. For instance, Bree had never gotten a manicure (I know!), so we got her first one together. And I'd never owned a pair of Chuck Taylors, so we went shopping for them. During that period, my deep interest in Bree intensified, and I wondered, *Could I be attracted to her?* Bree had told me that she'd been with girls before, but she wasn't openly a lesbian—I thought she probably didn't feel comfortable enough with herself to go public with her sexuality. Plus, I had a great guy. I decided to let everything lie and hoped the feeling would pass.

It did not pass. It grew. In October, we decided to take a trip to the beach together. When we got there, we sat on a blanket and held each other's hand. Hers was soft and small, and it fit right into mine.

Bree and I kissed for the first time in November, one week before Thanksgiving. We were in the car in her driveway, saying good-bye after a concert. It was a soft, simple kiss, and it made me wonder, *What's going on here?* I didn't have time to think, because the next week, Mike and I flew to the East Coast to spend the holiday with his parents. On T-Day morning, he woke me up to go for a drive. We got out of the car to walk in the woods, and...he proposed. I was shocked, and I said yes right away—I'd dreamed of this moment since I was little! We took tons of engagement pictures to show our families, then called them.

But during the drive home, my stomach clenched. I loved Mike, but I knew I had feelings for Bree too. Looking back at those pictures, there was fear in my eyes. I called Bree that afternoon, and she was shocked. She couldn't get how I'd said yes when something was going on with us. I was on autopilot all day, and I didn't sleep that night.

The second I saw Bree back home, I cried. I was so confused. At that point, she'd had days to process the news, so she wasn't quite as shocked anymore; she said she was there for me. Meanwhile, Mike had started having a crisis of his own. He wasn't happy with his job and didn't know

what he wanted to do next. Instead of sharing his feelings with me, he began to shut me out—and the more he withdrew, the more I chose to spend time with Bree instead of him. Bree and I started hooking up frequently, although only in a PG-rated way. I even told her I loved her, but she wasn't ready to say it back. She said, "I know you do."

Even so, I realized I didn't want to sleep with Mike anymore, and the weird part was that there was never a moment when we actually had to turn each other down. He sensed that something was off, so he didn't try to make moves. We both knew deep down that our relationship felt broken, but we went into denial.

In March, Mike cracked. He was so suspicious that he read my journal, which he knew I kept in my bedside table. It was all there. Mike confronted me, sobbing, with the journal in his hands. I felt violated; even I hadn't fully grasped those thoughts yet. But I also felt ashamed—not because I'd kissed a girl but because I'd hurt the man I loved.

We didn't break up that night, but we postponed our wedding indefinitely. He still loved me, he said, and wanted to help me through my confusion. We told people we were too stressed to plan such a big event. I told some family members the truth then....That was a really difficult summer. Finally, in November, we called off our engagement for good. When I told my dad the truth afterward, he replied, "*And?*" Meaning, he wasn't judging me. He loved me for me.

Once I had that support, I felt secure enough to ask Bree if she'd go public with our relationship. But she said she wasn't comfortable enough to come out. And that's when I knew I had to end things with Bree too. I didn't want a secret affair; I wanted the full package.

After I cut ties with both Mike and Bree, they were devastated, but I finally felt free. I was no longer beaten down from being emotionally invested in two half-relationships. Now, I have no idea what the future holds for me—maybe I'll end up with a woman, maybe a man—but I do know that I'm ready and excited to explore all my possibilities. ■

*\*Names have been changed.*