

Now That I See You

Emma Batchelor

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In Emma Batchelor's semiautobiographical novel *Now That I See You*, a thirty-year-old woman processes her reactions after her partner tells her they are transgender.

When her partner, Jess, reveals that they are femme, the narrator is relieved: she knew Jess was hiding something. But the truth isn't easy, either. Thus she works through her new reality via emails (sent and unsent) and therapeutic journal entries, even as she and Jess attempt to change nothing about their lives. But Jess's autism prevents easy communication, and the narrator begins to realize that she knows very little about her partner of six years. She untangles their life together in small pieces and via reactions.

Batchelor's storytelling is personalized and raw. The narrator's perspective is the only one. She tries to explain Jess's side of the conversation, but their relationship becomes toxic before she notices. When Jess is angry at her, they stop talking. Jess is hesitant to dress femme in front of their partner at first; they are irritable when she attempts to teach them to put on makeup or paint their nails. The narrator falls into the habit of making Jess happy, rather than expressing her feelings. Unable to talk to Jess, she becomes depressed, and her journal entries and therapy sessions become more frequent. Her one-sided recollections make her somewhat unreliable, but they're also human and intimate. When she is given permission to tell her friends about Jess and their ever-changing relationship, she uses her newfound confidence to structure her journal entries and help herself.

Marked by vulnerability, *Now That I See You* is a novel that's focused on a person who is left behind when their partner comes out.

ADDISSYN HOUSE (January / February 2023)

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