

'My wife left me for a lesbian'

As told to Jerome Gomez

MY WIFE AND I were together for nine years—13, if you include the years from the first time we met. And throughout that time, I had no idea our marriage would end the way it did.

We started dating in the late 1980s; we were both working students. I was a manager at a fast-food chain; she was a member of the service staff that I was to train. She was pure Filipina, a couple of years older than I, very pretty. She reminded me of Lorna Tolentino. I've always been drawn to Pinays—their beauty, their *lambing*, they're very *maalaga*. Of all my past girlfriends, only one was, like me, Chinese.

She was simple, never *maarte*, always straightforward. My dad was against the relationship. He was very traditional Chinese. He passed away shortly before I found out she was pregnant, and we married soon after.

I guess you could say we went through all the struggles young married couples go through: having kids, losing jobs, financial woes. We were just starting our own small business then, and money wasn't always enough to go around. She wanted us to move out of my family's house—we were living with my mother—but I couldn't afford to have our own home at that time. Still, I thought we were doing okay. We had the kids. We had each other.

Until that fateful day when, as I was going through bills and documents in her files, I saw several letters. She was in the U.S. then for job training and I was left alone with the kids at home. They were love letters addressed to my wife, from a woman who was

her college friend.

I was furious, especially because some of the dates in the letters were quite recent. I was heartbroken and felt betrayed. Even before I discovered the letters, I sensed she was changing: she spent a lot of time going out—by herself, without the kids. She seemed uncomfortable being seen with me in public; she was cold and would refuse to have sex.

When she got back from her training, I confronted her, asked many questions. She tried to deny the affair at first but eventually owned up. One night, she didn't come home until dawn. I waited up for her. And when I heard a car pull up, I went to the window and saw them both.

Still, I was ready to put it all behind us—family was very important to me and our two kids were still very young. I wanted to see if we could save the marriage. She didn't feel the same way. She told me it would be unfair for her to stay in the relationship.

At the suggestion of her sister, we even met with a marriage counselor. But she had already made up her mind. She left on the evening of Father's Day after a petty squabble. She packed her bags, headed to her parents' home, and much as I tried to convince her to come back to us, she believed that the marriage was over. She filed for an annulment in 2002.

I went through a long bout of depression, drank a lot, fooled around with women—something I never did when I was married. I had a beautiful wife; there was no reason to look at other women. People have asked me if it would have been more difficult to ac-

cept the fact that my wife left me for another woman? I wouldn't know. But I guess pain is pain—no matter what the gender of the third party might be.

She had custody of the kids, when we first separated. But when her work took her out of the Philippines too often, the children eventually moved in with me. This time, she moved to Dubai to be with her lover, who found work there.

Three years ago, they came back to the Philippines because her lover needed to be confined for medical treatment. Shortly after, her lover died in the hospital from complications.

My ex- and I are friends now. She comes to the house regularly, goes out with the kids, and takes care of them. She has since explained everything to them, but the details behind her reunion with the kids, what she said and what transpired—I chose not to find out. To me, her lover's death was my closure—cruel as that may sound.

We have since both moved on. But while I have an active dating life, I am more careful with the women I meet. I got married at 25 and now I am 46. Here's what I know for sure: I am never getting married again. Sometimes when I look back, I think things might have been different if we had been more financially stable from the start. But even that has its blessings. When we separated, we didn't have properties to fight over. And since then, we have all forgiven each other. And, most important, in some round-about way, our family has become whole again. Well, sort of. ♫

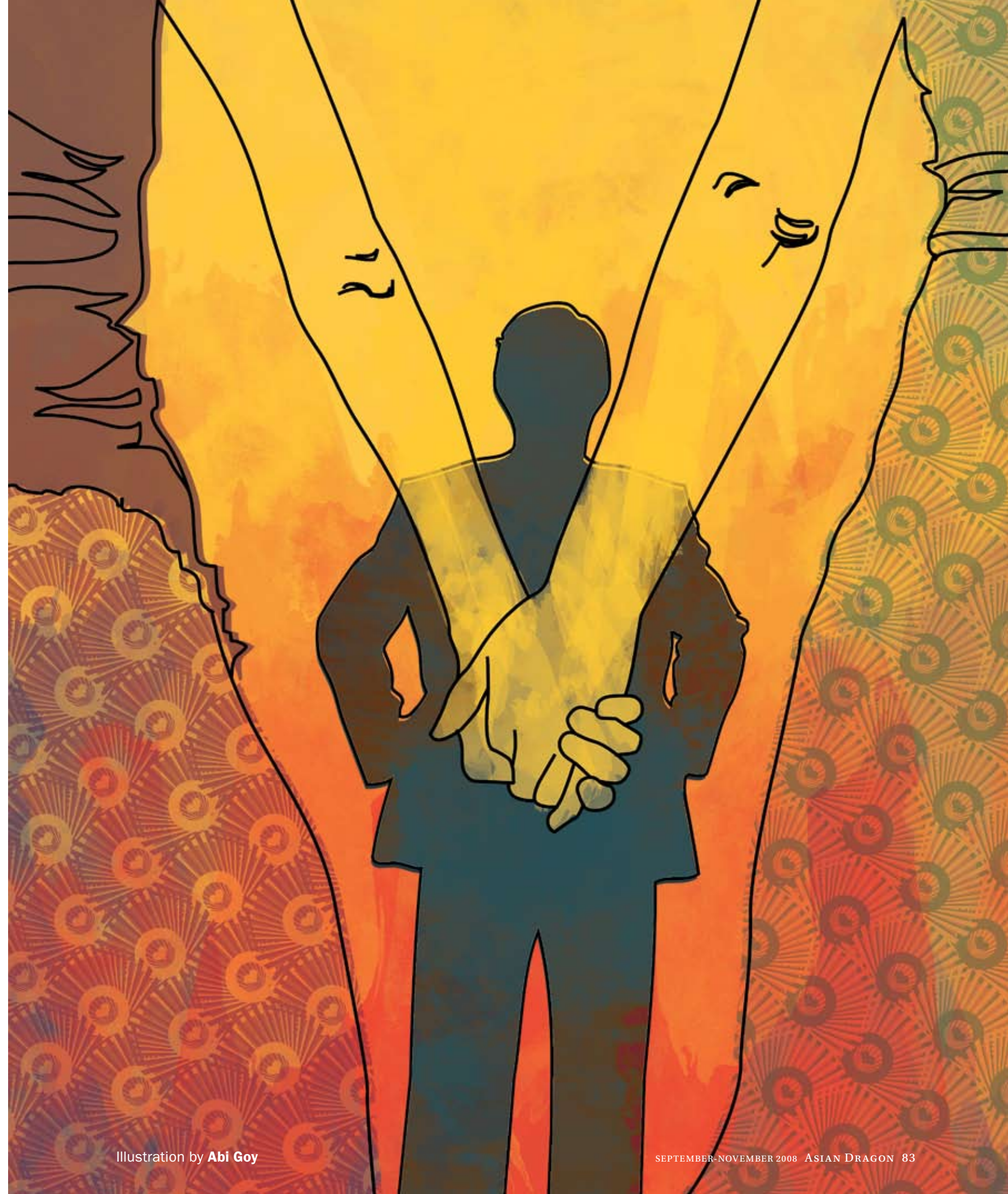


Illustration by Abi Goy

太太為一個女同性戀者拋棄我

Jerome Gomez寫了一篇關於一個男人九年的婚姻因為意外的第三者插足而瓦解的故事。

我和妻子在一起九年了。如果從我們第一次見面開始算的話，有十三個年頭了。自始至終，我沒有想過我們的婚姻會以這種方式結束。

我們從八十年代末就開始約會，當時我們都是工讀生。我是一家快餐連鎖店的經理，她是我在培訓的一名服務部員工。她是一名純種的菲律賓女孩，比我大幾歲，長得很漂亮。她讓我想起了Lorna Tolentino。我總是被菲律賓女孩深深吸引，她們的美麗、討人喜歡和體貼。我前女友當中只有一人是華人。

她很樸素，不會做作，也很率直。我父親反對我們在一起，他是一個非常傳統的中國人。在我發現她懷孕的前不久，父親就過世了，隨後我們就結婚了。

我猜測，你們會覺得我們經歷了年輕夫婦都會經歷的所有艱難時期：生兒育女、失業、經濟困難。我們當時剛開始經營小生意，錢總是不夠花。她希望我們搬出我家自己住，那個時候我們和我母親住在一起，但是當時我沒有能力擁有自己的家。儘管如此，我覺得我們還是過得挺好。我們有小孩，我們擁有彼此。

災難性的日子來了，就在我檢查她文件夾裡面的帳單和文件時，我看到幾封信。當時她去美國進行培訓，把我和孩子們留在家裡。這些情書是我妻子大學時的一個女性朋友寫給她的。

我非常憤怒，特別是因為信中的一些日期是最近的。我傷心欲絕，感到了被背叛。儘管在我發現這些信之前，我就感覺到她的變化：她經常一個人出門，不帶小孩出去。在公眾場合和我在一起時，她會感到不自在。她很冷淡，並拒絕和我做愛。



在她培訓回來之後，我質問了她很多問題。起先她否認，但是後來全部承認了。有一天她直到天亮的時候才回來。我一直在等她。在我聽到汽車停下的聲音時，我走到窗前，看到她們兩個人。

但是我還是準備把這些事情都拋到腦後，家庭對我來說非常重要，我們的兩個孩子都還小。我要嘗試著挽救婚姻。她並不這麼想。她對我說，讓她還保持著跟我的這個關係，對她來說不公平。

在她姐姐的建議下，我們甚至還去諮詢婚姻顧問。但是她已經下定決心了。在父親節晚

上發生了一場微不足道的爭吵後，她離家出走了。她收拾行李回了娘家。我極力說服她回來，但是她認為我們的婚姻已經結束了。她在二零零二年提出解除婚約的申請。

我消沉了好長一段時間，經常酩酊大醉，和女人鬼混。這是在我結婚的時候從來沒有做過的事情。我有一個漂亮的妻子，沒有理由去注意別的女人。人們曾經問我，我的妻子是因為另一個女人而離開我，這是否讓我更加難以接受？我不知道。但是我想痛苦就是痛苦——不管第三者是男的還是女的。

在我們分手的時候，她獲得了孩子的監護權。但是她的工作使她要經常出國，孩子最後搬來跟我住。現在，她前往迪拜和在那裡工作的情人在一起了。

三年前，因為她的情人必須住院治療，她們回國了。不久後，她的情人因為併發症在醫院過世了。

我和前妻現在是朋友。她經常來家裡，帶孩子出去玩，照顧他們。她向他們解釋了所有事情，但是對於她回來跟孩子團聚的細節，以及她所說的和之後發生的事情，我選擇不去探究真相。對我來說，她情人的過世就是我的結束，那聽起來可能很殘忍。

在那之後，我們都繼續我們的生活。但是儘管我現在仍經常有約會，我更加小心我遇到的女人。我二十五歲結婚，現在已經四十六歲了。我很確信：我不會再次結婚。有時候回想過去，我想如果我們一開始經濟更加穩定的話，或許結果就不會是這樣。但是這或許也有它的好處。我們分手的時候沒有任何的財產糾葛。從那時候起，我們就完全原諒了對方。最重要的是，兜了一圈，我們的家庭又團圓了。是的，在某種意義上。