



Dear Diary

I don't know what's happening to me. I've only
~~been talking to Kai for like three weeks, and~~
already I feel kind of... obsessed?

In a good way, I think. They're just so into me.
They message first thing in the morning and
right before I go to bed.



They even remembered my weird smoothie
order - no banana, extra oat milk, which is
honestly impressive. They even commented

You're mine
~~~~~~~~~

on one of my selfies, which made me blush!

Mum and Dad are already side-eyeing the  
whole thing though - they said Kai's a bit much,  
but I think they just don't get it. Kai said not  
everyone understands us.

Part of me was like, whoa that's intense, but  
another part felt kind of... special? Like I matter  
more than anyone else. My mates said to take  
it slow, but honestly? I like the way it feels.





### **Diary Entry 1: All in**

Coercive control can initially feel like love, attention, or intense care. The early stages can be confusing, especially when intensity is mistaken for closeness.

1. This is Parker's first relationship – why might they be excited? Do you think there are some red flags that Parker isn't seeing and why?
2. What are some early signs that something might not feel quite right, even if it seems romantic? What is love-bombing? Do you think it applies here?
3. What might be going on beneath the surface when Kai says, 'Not everyone understands us'? How could that influence Parker's thinking?
4. From Kai's perspective, what might be motivating their behaviour?
5. How can we tell the difference between intensity and genuine care?



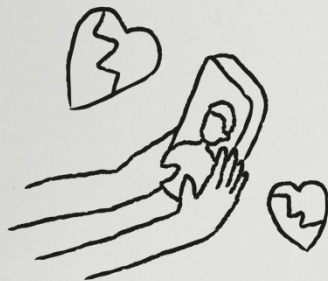
Dear Diary



Something happened today that made my stomach feel kind of weird. I put up a story of me and some people from class hanging out, and Kai replied straight away: "who's that sitting next to you?" I told them it was a classmate from physics - literally not a big deal - but they didn't really drop it.

They said they're just protective because they've been hurt before. Then later they asked me to text them when I get to school, and again when I leave, and then after basketball too...

They even asked for pics to prove I was on my own. I guess it's not a big ask? They said it makes them feel calmer. It's probably fine. I mean, who doesn't want someone who cares that much?





## **Diary Entry 2: They Just Really Care?**

Control can be disguised as protection or concern – these behaviours can escalate over time.

1. What might make Parker dismiss their gut feeling, even though something about the situation felt off?
2. How can "protectiveness" cross the line into controlling behaviour? What signs of control are showing up here?
3. Why might someone like Kai use past hurt or trauma to justify controlling behaviour? Does that make it okay?
4. These kinds of behaviours can escalate over time. What might this pattern look like if it continues?
5. What things might make Parker think this behaviour is okay — from Kai, their own thoughts, or what they see around them?





Dear Diary



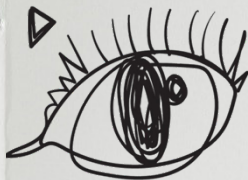
I wore my favourite top today - the yellow one with the little embroidery on the sleeve - and Kai looked me up and down and said, "You're really going out like that?" I laughed it off, but it kind of stung. They said people would stare and "that kind of attention isn't always safe."

I changed before we left, even though I didn't really want to. We were hanging out with some friends at the mall and I wasn't really keen for PDA, and Kai got all cold with me afterwards.

They said I embarrassed them by not holding their hand or kissing them when they tried. Later they texted, "You used to like me more. What changed?" I didn't know how to respond.



They also get annoyed when I hug other people, even mates. Sometimes I feel like I'm always doing something wrong. I still like Kai a lot, but it's like I'm constantly trying to keep them happy - and failing.





### **Diary Entry 3: It's Just Little Things... Right?**

Small behaviours form a pattern of control.

1. Why might Parker be questioning themselves instead of the relationship?
2. What do Kai's reactions — like getting cold when Parker didn't show affection or commenting on their clothes — tell us about the power balance in this relationship?
3. Why do you think Kai's comment — "You used to like me more" — might be hard for Parker to respond to?
4. How do small moments of control or criticism affect someone over time in a relationship?
5. Why might Parker be ignoring the pattern and focusing on how much they still like Kai?



Dear Diary


Today I got this message from Kai asking for my social media password... I didn't want to send it but they said that people in a relationship should ~~trust~~ trust each other. And then when I didn't text back straight away, even when I'm at basketball, they said I was being shady.


I tried to explain but they kept sending messages like, "wow, I guess I don't matter." It's not like we fight exactly, but I always end up apologising - even when I'm not sure I've done anything wrong.

They've also started saying things like:

"Don't let your family ruin this"  
~~and then they say~~

whenever my whānau ask questions about our relationship. It's getting harder to keep making excuses for the way they act. Sometimes I feel like I'm walking through mud trying to keep things okay. I haven't seen some of my closest friends in weeks.

 when did things stop feeling fun?





### **Diary Entry 4: Is This Normal?**

Coercive control isolates people and turns them against their support networks.

1. Why might Parker be starting to feel like they're the one always doing something wrong — even when they're not?
2. How does asking for social media passwords or constant texting link to control and trust?
3. What does it say about the relationship when Parker feels like they're making excuses to others or hiding parts of what's happening?
4. Why might Kai be trying to turn Parker against their whānau or friends? What's the impact of that?
5. How can someone tell when a relationship has shifted from intense to unhealthy?





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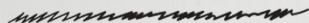


Everything feels small now - like my world shrank and Kai is at the centre of it. They get snappy when I take too long to reply, and if I say I'm going out without them, they either guilt-trip me or accuse me of being selfish. Even when I'm tired, they'll ask, "So you don't love me enough to cuddle me now?" Like, it's never just okay to say no.

I bailed on kapa haka practise with my friends again tonight. Kai said they weren't feeling great and that I "shouldn't be going out when they're at home upset." I didn't want to deal with the drama, so I stayed in. That's three in a row now. I didn't even realise how much I've pulled back until one of the group messaged me after school asking if I'm okay - said I've been really quiet lately.

I didn't know how to reply. I still care about Kai, I really do, but I don't feel like me anymore. I keep second-guessing what I wear, what I say, who I talk to.

And when I look at where we started, I don't know how we got here. I didn't even realise how much I've changed until I saw an old photo of me with my mates from Matariki weekend last year, laughing with sand all through our fish and chips.



I miss that person. I'm scared to talk to anyone about it. What if I'm overreacting?







### **Diary Entry 5: Where did I go?**

Coercive control builds slowly and takes away freedom - it's confusing, emotional, isolating, and exhausting.

1. How do guilt and emotional pressure show up in this diary entry? How do they keep Parker stuck?
2. Why is it so hard for Parker to reach out or ask for help, even when they know something feels wrong?
3. What role does isolation play in this relationship now — and how does it affect Parker's ability to make decisions?
4. When Parker says they miss the person they used to be, what does that tell us about the impact this relationship has had on them?
5. If someone using controlling behaviour — like Kai — started to realise they were hurting their partner, what would they need to do to take responsibility and get help?

