

SINGING LADY MARMALADE

From Bully! <https://apt.org.au/product/bully-2/>

RILEY Felicity and I had been best friends since forever. I can't remember a time without her. Our mums were really good friends too, so she was really more like a cousin or sister than a best friend. (*laughs fondly*) We'd make videos of us singing Lady Marmalade and I used to call her my soul sister. She did all the complicated and "extra" bits, the Christina and Pink, and I did the more subdued Little Kim and Mya parts. We were so different in so many ways, she was so loud and funny and I was the sensible, focussed one. But our differences were also what brought us together. We complimented each other. Ying, yang. We talked constantly, I mean really, really talked; shared our innermost secrets, laughed until we cried. She made up for the parts of me that were missing. I was so self-conscious, so worried about what other people thought, but she was brave for me when I was shy, she taught me how to stand up for myself. We did everything together, spent every minute together. Soul sisters. (*a beat*) And then we went to high school.

We picked different subjects because of our different interests and made new friends... Well, I made new friends... Felicity didn't. She'd just try and hang around with me and my new friends, and pretty soon the things that I used to find so endearing, the differences between us, really started to annoy me. It was pretty obvious that my friends didn't like her either... Not that they ever said it straight out, but then they stopped inviting me to things if Felicity was with me and I knew that I had to make a choice. My new friends, or Felicity.

(*sadly*) Make new friends and keep the old, one is silver the other gold. I remember that poem from a fridge magnet in my grandma's kitchen. "Make new friends, but keep the old... The thing is, I didn't keep the old. I turned against her. I thought if I showed the other girls, my new friends... If I proved to them that I didn't like her, they would stay friends with me. So I was mean to her... Awful, in front of them to prove myself. And of course they took that as licence to be mean to her as well. But the crueller we were to her, the more she would keep coming back... Like a little puppy she kept coming back, no matter what we said to her, no matter what we did to her... She just kept coming back and back and back. (*a beat. This is hard*) Until one day, when she just wouldn't take a hint. Wouldn't leave us alone. We all told her to go, but she acted like we were joking. It was so frustrating. We were all screaming at her, calling her these horrible names, saying she was worthless and to stay away from us. And then I went right up to her and spat "I hate you!" Right in her face. That was it. Her eyes filled with big tears and she turned around and walked away...(*in tears*) I lost my best friend that day.

Her mum confronted my mum about it and they had this huge fight. My mum was so embarrassed, so angry at me, so disappointed... She lost her best friend that day as well. Felicity's mum changed her school and she deleted me on

any kind of social media, and I haven't heard from her since. It's been years... The thing is, I really, really miss her. She was my other half, she was my soul sister, and I threw that away. And those girls, those "new friends" are still around... kind of, but there's no depth to our friendship. It's vapid. We don't really, really talk, we don't share our secrets, we don't laugh til we cry and we certainly don't sing Lady Marmalade. My friendship with them is soulless. Keep the Gold... I'll never have another friend like her.