

LEBRIS

We know

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PIECES OF SUMMER

LETRAS

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1

Sleep On The Floor - The Lumineers

I don't want to go to therapy anymore. I don't have the energy to work on things anymore. I feel like I've been desperately trying to convince you to do something as things were going downhill and we were becoming strangers more and more each day... and there was no response from your side. At least that's how it felt. As if you couldn't be bothered, as if this wasn't something in which you were willing to invest your time and energy. And I guess I slowly started making my peace with the fact that I am alone in this effort and instead, I started slowly dealing with the fact that at some point I will have to say stop, even though I didn't want to, even though the little girl in me was furiously screaming "please, love me, please tell me I am enough, please fight for me, for us, please don't abandon me". I guess I was expecting you to provide her

with some comfort, although it was never your job to care for her. When you told me you wanted to go to therapy, like a last resort nonsense measure you agreed to because your randomly applied “fixes” didn't work, I was already exhausted and at peace with the idea that this is my life now - either I resign and accept it or do the unthinkable and admit that I want more from me, from a partner, from a marriage, from life. It was too late.

I rehearse this speech in my head while I'm waiting for Monkey to fall asleep. The anxiety is clustering in my chest as I try to tell myself that I cannot let him trick me this time. I cannot let him gaslight me. I will not doubt my reality this time. I've had years of evidence gathering, this time it will be different. I will be strong and confident and it won't work. God, I hope it won't work!

I look to my left. This kid, whose world is about to be turned upside down, is sound asleep. I slowly walk out of the room and head to the living room, where Mr. Right is watching a football match. Mr. Right. Was it this nickname that made it so difficult to face reality for so many years? Did I put all of my hopes and expectations about love, marriage, family, and romance into this one phonebook nickname?

Shit. This is it. It's both liberating to finally have the courage and self-trust to speak up and heartbreaking that I ended up in the one place I never wanted to be.

- *Is it okay to talk now?* I ask sheepishly as the bundle of knots in my chest takes over my lungs.

- *Yeah, sure,* he says indifferently.

I adjust my body on the couch and prepare to utter the unspeakable.

- *I don't think going to therapy works for me. I don't think I have anything to give you at the moment. I'm exhausted. I feel like I've been carrying most of the weight of our relationship for years, and now I feel like there's nothing left for me to give. I think we should get a divorce.*

He is now completely focused on me. After years of unsuccessful attempts, I finally managed to say something that got him to stop watching the TV and see me.

- *But we've only gone to therapy two times. And you were the one who wanted it.*

The speech, remember the speech, I repeat to myself. That is your reality.

- *I did, I know. I kept saying we should get some outside help because we didn't know how to communicate with each other. But I kept saying that, nagging you with it for years and you always said that nothing was wrong,*

that it was all in my head and if I kept repeating it, I would start believing it.

It's the first time I manage to say this with a calm and composed tone, knowing that this is true, this is what I lived and no matter what he says, it won't change that.

- And then, when you saw that your approach, this gaslighting thing, wasn't working, you caved in and proposed that we see a therapist. But I'm exhausted. From thinking that I was just imagining things and finding fictitious faults where there were none. From blaming myself for not being happy and at peace in what, to everyone but me, looked like the perfect marriage. From feeling alone and unimportant. From having no one to talk to and share how I felt. From having to hide myself and pretend to be someone I'm not. From not being able to cry or feel any unpleasant emotion because you were never comfortable with that.

His face is now cold and frozen into a controlled shock.

- I rooted for us for so many years, but I was alone in that. You are Mr. Right. And as much as I want us to work, I have nothing to give right now. I'm empty. I don't even know what's mine and what isn't.

- But maybe we need to do this for a while and see what happens, he interrupts briskly. You don't know whether this works or not if you give up so easily. It feels like you are

doing what you usually do. We just started therapy and you're just giving up so fast.

- I know. I'm sorry. I was the one who insisted on therapy, but by the time you wanted to do something about us, I had nothing left to give. And I'm not giving up easily. I've been here for years trying, suggesting solutions, and coming to talk to you.

He remains silent, staring at me absently. *When was the last time he looked at me so attentively? And why did it take this topic for it to happen?* He scans my face to check if I'm being serious, if his mind tricks will work this time.

A year before we had a similar conversation. I said I needed a break to figure out what to do because I felt lost. I didn't want the rest of my life to be like that, living with a stranger, feeling alone. Living in the same house with someone, looking like the perfect family to the outside world, while lonely and unhappy in our inside world. There was no sequel to that conversation, it was almost like it never happened and I was not strong enough to go through with it. My desire to avoid a conflict, my fear of dying alone, his fear of being abandoned, and the dread of being physically alone in the house were good enough reasons to stop any attempt of a revolution.

But this time I know this is my limit. Being alone doesn't scare me as much as living the rest of my life in a relationship where I have to forcibly program quality time

with my partner and put the remote in a different room so he isn't tempted to switch on the TV.

He looks at the TV, then glances out the window for a second and finally pulls the blanket over his head and starts sobbing uncontrollably.

I have known him for eight and a half years and this is the first time I see him crying. I'm trying so hard not to analyze this and stay in my lane, because if I do, my heart breaks for this kid who is hiding his shame and fear under a blanket.

It's not about you, you're not a horrible person,
I keep repeating to myself.

- Do you want me to come closer? I mutter.

He shakes his head and wraps the blanket tighter around himself.

The guilt is what made me back down every time. *I'm hurting someone because I want things to be better for me. God, I'm so selfish! How can I consider myself a good person when I'm willing to hurt someone else for my own benefit?* I used to think that a lot. All the time, really. Everyone else came first. I had to make sure everyone was ok and then, if there was anything left, it was my turn. It was either them or me. And my turn rarely came.

I sit there in silence, numb and patient. I don't feel anything, I'm just focused on believing in my reality and fighting all the traps. How could I feel connected to someone against which I've raised a wall?

He finally calms down enough to edge in short sentences between the sobs. But nothing is about me, or him, or us. The kid needs a family. The family never breaks up. No matter what, family sticks together. It's not about making it work, about investing, about commitment. It's just about enduring. About resignation. About maintaining a century-old idea that once you sign a piece of paper, you sink with the boat no matter what.

2

My Father's Eyes - Eric Clapton

- Do you want me to hold you?

I can hear myself asking and I realize that, in thirty-six years, no one has ever asked me that.

Monkey doesn't say anything. Instead, he crawls into my lap and gathers his legs and arms into a fetal position. I run my fingers through his dark golden curls and sit in silence as I feel my shirt absorbing his tears.

- I hate divorce! I wish we could cancel it! he finally blurts out between sobs.

I'm so happy and grateful that I can be that parent for him, but the kid in me is so petty and jealous that he gets to be contained and feel safe and heard and seen. I didn't have

a lap on which to rest my head and cry dull tears when I needed to. Not with my mother, not with Mr. Right. And I can feel my tears and my pain swelling up and I have no choice but to let them out in my own lap. Maybe I will never be able to recognize that place where I can rest my exhausted self. I might even be reluctant to accept it. Is there a chance I may have passed by one and didn't even know it?

But I miss something I've never had: a place where I can let go, be imperfect, chaotic, unstable, too emotional, too sensitive, exaggerated, too head-in-the-clouds, impulsive, too nostalgic, a little Taurus, too frowny, too serious, too sad, too analytical, too quiet, too talkative, too in a hurry, too slow, too clumsy, too skilled, too harsh, too soft, too sarcastic, too ironic, too bookish, too childish, too mature, too irresponsible, too careful, too distracted, too good, too mean, too fat, too thin, too intense, too superficial, too romantic, too somber, too naive, too cynical, too shy, too audacious, too curious, too indifferent, too active, too sedentary, too much or too little.

I know that place isn't somewhere out there, in the world, but here, within me. How do I tell that to the lost little girl in me who, back then, was looking for such a place where nothing of the sort ever was?