

5 STAGES

of Falling out of Love



TABEYA AZDASIH

In retrospect, you might find the separate parts have bled into one another, an amalgamation of the end and the beginning wrapped like a present – ready to be opened at your nostalgic pleasure, whenever you want a nice hour or two of introspection. How did it happen? When did it start?

With enough time between yourself and the event, you might feel relief that you fell out of love when you did. Maybe things were going wrong from before that happened, maybe they were not good for you to begin with. Most painful of all, maybe it could have worked but somewhere down the line you started to feel like you don't care if it does or if it does not. That is the beginning of the end.

Stage 1: Denial

There is a sort of wrongness in their sense of humour. An anecdote that you did not know existed blooms between their lips, to another companion instead of you. A shared experience with someone else. A feeling of isolation begins to set in, like a fog, slowly but surely. You sit by them in the car, Fleet Foxes playing softly in the background and you realise that maybe this is the sound of settling – feeling more like friends than lovers. You reject the thought that it may not be something you want.

Stage 2: The Emperor of Maladies

You are angry at yourself. This begins with a confrontation that should not have happened in the first place – over a little thing, over all the little things. Their concern makes you angry, their habits make you angry, their quirks lose novelty. You start thinking about

romantic love objectively. Your playlist brims with Daughter, Bon Iver and in desperate times, Damien Rice. It is less dramatic from the outside, more so through their eyes as they begin to wonder what they did wrong – or worse, they dismiss your mood and you notice them do it.

Stage 3: A Reckoning

You see their features in the mirror and come to face what is really happening. Because they are not as beautiful as the light around your pedestal had made them look. You spend time thinking and overthinking how things happened, why they happened, if they can be fixed and whose fault it is. You read up on Psychology Today articles that reassure you that falling out of love, even if it seems to be for no reason, is a completely normal human thing to do. You reject the idea that it is, in fact, a human error. You are better than that; you would never hurt someone who was there for you and kind to you. You begin thinking about your own dissatisfaction. On days when you have your feet on the ground, and you are around your friends and everything seems good, you think maybe you could go on doing this pretending thing. It isn't too bad. Maybe you could even love them again. They are your best friend, even if their eyes are not the

same as when you met. On worse days you think, how do I pretend that my best friend is more than a friend?

Stage 4: Honest to God and to you

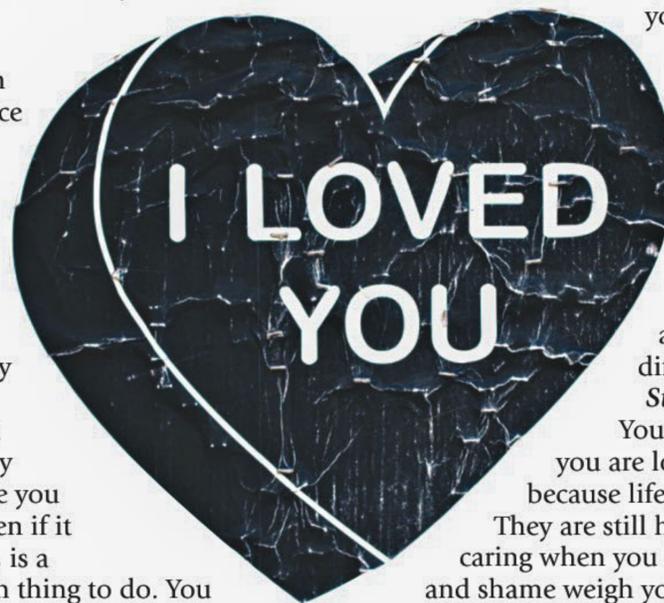
The day you break – when they do something kind, when they do something that reminds you why you fell in love in the first place – you decide they deserve better than pretense. If you have the strength to tell them, as you should, you do. But if you don't, it comes through anyway. That day you decide, "Why, what can I do, is it something I've done or said" are the worst questions in the world, less because they remain unanswered, more because they are difficult to ask.

Stage 5: Gloomy Sunday

You meet not years later, when both of you are looking better as you are supposed to, because life does not always do you favours. They are still haggard, but beyond the point of caring when you have seen them at their worst. Guilt and shame weigh you down, for now. When you do meet years later though, when you don't listen to Fleet Fixes anymore, you see a shadow of someone dear – but mostly a strange, new face. And if you are prudent, you decide to stay away.

But life does not always do you favours.

Tabeya Azdasih identifies as a Boeing AH-64 Apache helicopter and will rain missiles down upon those who like anime. Send moods to tabeyaazdasih@gmail.com



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