Dear Diary,

Wow…. **what a morning**. Actually, what a freaking 24 hours…

So yesterday I was at Dylan’s place in Denver and I accidentally left my phone in his apartment while I went to the coffee shop to do work for the day alone. In the afternoon, I received a voice text from Matt -- I didn’t get the chance to listen to it before another text came in, and five more, and ten more… and before I knew it, he was sending me walls of texts all day.

I didn’t respond because i didn’t want to have a text conversation with him, but I didn’t have my phone so I couldn’t step outside for a moment to have a real conversation with him.

The walls of text were all over the place and ranged between Matt calling me off and telling me how awfully I’ve treated him and that I’ve kept him on a string as a backup choice and how fucked up that is (and to a certain degree, I agree that I’ve done that, because there are still parts of me that really see that things could have worked out between us -- but also fundamentally there is **no way in hell** we would have worked out, mostly because he talks too much, he isn’t intellectually compatible, and I don’t feel like I am myself around him). He talked about how he was going through a hard time and struggling with being sober, how I had done this to him, how he loved me and just wanted to be with me, how he never wanted to see me again, how polyamory is something I deserve and how that’s his vision for the future, how he thought I was that girl, and how I’m not that girl, how I must love Dylan because he is an older and mature guy, how I could never love an immature boy like Matt, etc…

It was ALL OVER THE PLACE. I think he was having a mental breakdown.

Anyways, I chose to not respond last night even when I got back to my phone -- I wanted to let him cool down and sleep it off. Then he sent me an email late an night saying that he dropped off my books on my lawn. I was staying in Denver for the night so I asked my roommates to bring it inside… and then things got weird.

I walked into my room this morning (with Dylan because we were going to eat breakfast together) and I saw my books, the necklace I gave Matt, and a huge **pile of gifts**… including…. *A freaking MARIMBA.*

*Yep. That’s right.*

A FREAKING MARIMBA.

It was bags full of chakra stones that are really expensive from my favorite stone store. Earrings of nice stones that matched my eye color. A box full of my favorite rocks and pajamas and things that I think were Matt’s that probably remind him of me that he needed to get rid of. A card with sentimental words on it for how he felt about me, along with a hand crafted stone guitar pick… and A FREAKING MARIMBA.

I called him this morning and he didn’t pick up. So I left him a voice message telling him that there is no way I can accept these gifts and he needs to let me go. I told him for what it was worth, because he needed to hear it, that we were over. There was no future for us. There *is* no future for us. I release him. I set him free.

It felt weird to do that. Those words are words that I should have said back in March when he was leaving to go to death valley. I should have told him those words when he got back. I should have told him those words when I left to Utah. Or when I was there. I should have told him those words in the coffee shop 2 weeks ago.

But I didn’t. And now here I am. And so I told him those words over a voice message this morning.

AND NOW I HAVE A MARIMBA.

* Brief intermission to go buy my plane ticket to Cali to visit Wesley for christmas and new years!!!!!!! -

Aaaaand now I’m back.

Basically, TLDR. Dylan and I got into a fight today because I think that if Matt doesn’t want this Marimba anymore because it reminds him of me… then I mean… I wanna fucking keep it. Dylan thinks its a power move and an abuse tactic and I should get rid of it ASAP.

And now I’m conflicted lol. I mean.. It is *kinda* funny. Like this is straight out of a sitcom… I’ve had crazy stuff happen to me while dating but this might be a new bar!!

Anyways -- I’m going to switch the narrative of this journaling session now so I can prepare for my therapy appointment in 30 minutes, because my therapist assigned me homework last week to (ironically) reflect on some of my issues with conflict and breakups (LOL THATS SO IRONIC). So, here it goes.

**What is my connection between being hurt in my first relationship with Chandler and feeling the need to be in control in my relationships now?**

First, I think that this plays into the fact that I want to be able to be in multiple relationships and not just tied to one person. It allows me to be in control and to call all of the shots and just do what I want. Also, my offering of the men that I am dating to do the same basically puts them in a position where cheating on me is impossible -- which also puts me in power, because then even if they did want to be with someone else, it would be under *my* terms. Do I actually realistically want to be in a full on relationship with multiple men? Eh, probably not. Sexually, that would be messy and would probably make me more closed off in my sexual life with all of them. Emotionally, it would be stressful and I just feasibly don’t have the emotional bandwidth for that. Time-wise.. I literally barely have time for 1 relationship, and definitely not more than that.

So what am I trying to experience in multiple relationships? I think I am trying to experience feeling love from many people. Being able to share my love with many people. And also -- to a certain degree I think I am trying to put a wall up between myself and my partner. I am trying to emotionally distance myself enough to where I can be all-in one minute and then the next minute I can just as easily envision myself being perfectly fine if we broke up in that same day. (Probably also because it would likely be under my terms).

I see that happening a lot with Dylan. It’s like one minute I see us being together for a long time and I get so scared of losing him and the amazing comfort and love that I experience being with him all the time… and then the next minute I realize that I’d be totally fine without him and in fact, I’d be better because I’d be independent and alone again. I’d be able to do whatever I want, date whoever I want, and spend my time only doing stuff that I am interested in doing.

It makes me put up this emotional barrier between the two of us so that at any point in time I can run and I’d be fine. Or he can break up with me and I’d be fine (happy even). Or I can make him hate me so we sabotage the relationship together and then I’d be fine.

So why do I do this? Next prompt.

**What am I trying to avoid experiencing by doing this?**

My therapist prompted me by asking if I was trying to avoid experiencing conflict or commitment. I think to a certain degree -- yes. I am definitely trying to avoid commitment because the thought of committing to one person for a long time, especially at 24 years, is fucking terrifying. It brings me right back to where I was with Nick when I was so desperately seeking to get out of planning my foreseeable future and ignoring my own needs in that by telling myself that “the universe will do what is right when the time is right”. -- I actually read that from my diary entry right before breaking up with Nick. I kept feeling fear about being with Nick long term and I clearly was wanting to experience being single again, but I felt like so much of the relationship with Nick was good and comfortable that I just didn’t have a choice but to hope that in the future the universe would sort itself out and that I’d hopefully break up with him in one way or another without having to deal with the hard parts of a break up.

So that’s probably part two of this -- I definitely am trying to avoid conflict. I think this also plays a role in how I get into these deep relationships that I am in in the first place. I don’t want to tell someone that maybe I’m just not that into them, or that I don’t see a future with them, or that I don’t want to be with them long term, or that there are certain red flags I see in them that make me want to stop dating them. So instead I just tell them what they want to hear. I ignore my internal pleas to listen to what it is that I really want … which often is to stop being with them and to be single again. But I am so afraid of starting that conflict, that I just don’t deal with it in the first place, and so I do the opposite which is give my partner a false sense of reality that I am in it for the long-run, which inevitably makes the conflict even harder when it finally comes time to break it off.

I saw this with Matt. I never told him explicitly that it was over and that there was no future for us and that we should just stop being friends and that I released him and it was over. I never said those things before today. Because I was **afraid to lose him.**

That’s the third motif. I’m so afraid of losing these people forever that I hold on to whatever I can. I was afraid that Chandler was going to hurt himself or kill himself, so I couldn’t break up with him until I was sure that wouldn’t happen. I was so afraid of losing Nick entirely in my life, so I allowed us to remain friends and tried to stay somewhat in his life for a few years and was *heartbroken* when he cut me out of his life entirely. I was so sad when Roshan released me from his life. I was heartbroken when Otto cut me out of his life after the drama with Sam. So I didn’t let that be an option anymore. If I start dating someone, then every start has an end. So instead, if I just stay open and date people casually, I can still enjoy the benefits of getting to know them and getting deep with them without having to feel the heartbreak of fully letting them go out of my life. To say goodbye forever.

That’s why I think of relationships like friendships -- or at least that’s why I try to. Friends don’t ever leave forever. They are always there to some degree. I can always reach back to out to a friend and bring them back into my life. With an ex… I can’t.

The same was true with Matt. I knew that I didn’t want to date him or even be romantic with him in the future, I knew that so much of him would never work or be compatible with me. But, I couldn’t bring myself to cut the chord and tell him goodbye forever. I couldn’t tell him to leave and that we were over forever. I didn’t want to lose him forever. I wanted to be able to in a few years text him and say I missed him and I was single again and maybe we can give it a second shot. But by saying goodbye…. I feel like I lose that.

It is about **power**. I want the power to have control over who we can and can’t see. I want to have the power to see whoever I want to see. To start the relationship and end the relationship when I see fit. To spend as much time as I want to spend with that person. To avoid talking about the future or the hard stuff or how much I do or don’t see them in my future. I want the power to ultimately end things or never allow them to be ended… but either way I hold the power because it will happen on **my terms**.

So what do I do with all of this? I should probably work to break down those walls that I have up so that I don’t feel like I could just leave the relationships at any point in time and be fine… but to get rid of those walls is to give some power to my partner. That would give the power to Dylan to be able to hurt me without my consent.

Also.. what if those walls aren’t just up as a trigger response? What if those walls are actually up because I *would* be fine if my relationship with Dylan ended? I’d probably cry a bit, go for a run, have a few lonely nights… and then I’d be back on top. I’d feel happy that I was alone and independent again. I’d probably do some sporadic stuff like get rid of a lot of my clothes, cut my hair, and re-invent parts of myself… but I’d be fine. Maybe that is an indication that I don’t actually fully love him? Maybe it means that I am lying to myself again about wanting to be in this? Or maybe it means that I am just not letting myself fully love him because I won’t let myself be put in that vulnerable position?

There are so many parts of Dylan that I love so much. I love spending time with him. I love who he is as a person. I love how *amazing* he makes me feel about myself. I love that he helps me be the best me that I can be, especially lately. But I don’t love everything about him. There are some incompatibilities between us, particularly when it comes to the way I see us in the real world, around others, around my friends, my attraction to him in those public spaces… so what do I do with all of that? Am I closing myself off to full love because I am afraid of it? Or because I just don’t feel it?

This is what I want to dive into next.

I think that’s all for now. I’m going to take a moment to recenter before therapy.

PS: Part of me wants to hide the marimba and say I got rid of it… and part of me wants to drop it off at Matt’s place. And part of me wants to just keep it. But all of those have their own consequences..

Stay tuned.

Jess

Age: 24