

**THE 5 STAGES**

written by

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**INT. SETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

SETH-- 26, a good-looking guy-- lies in bed, phone in hand. At his feet, his beloved cat EDGAR.

He scrolls through a TEXT CONVERSATION with REBECCA. Stopping at his last message--

*Can we talk?*

The message says: *Seen 5:38.*

Seth checks the clock-- it's currently 9:45.

He lays the phone on his chest, then proceeds to vigorously run a hand through his hair. Nearly pulling some of it out.

Seth lets out a low, guttural sigh.

Edgar lifts his head to look at him. Meows.

SETH

What?

**EXT. PARK - NIGHT**

Alone and dejected, Seth makes his way around the path. Hands in his pockets. Sad music BLARING on his earbuds.

He passes an ARGUING COUPLE. Can't hear their words over his music, but gets everything he needs to know from their body language and facial expressions.

**EXT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Seth comes to a stop outside the building. Contemplating whether or not to go inside.

He pulls out his phone.

Finds Rebecca in CONTACTS.

Hits CALL.

After a few rings, Rebecca answers--

REBECCA (V.O.)

What do you want?

SETH

I was hoping we could talk.

REBECCA (V.O.)  
I've said everything I need to  
say.

SETH  
Please don't do this. I love you.

REBECCA (V.O.)  
Do you?

SETH  
Look outside.

REBECCA (V.O.)  
Oh God, you didn't...

The window to Rebecca's apartment is suddenly WRENCHED open.

REBECCA-- 24, wearing sweats, pissed beyond all belief-- pokes  
her head out.

She looks below, spots Seth, and rolls her eyes, hanging up her  
phone.

Rebecca yells down at Seth--

REBECCA  
Really? This is what we're doing  
now?

Seth puts his phone in his pocket.

SETH  
I just wanna talk.

REBECCA  
You've talked, I've talked. We've  
both talked. Now let's get on with  
our lives.

SETH  
I just wanna explain--

REBECCA  
Explain what?! We're just not  
right for each other! Let it go!

SETH  
After four years, you can throw us  
away? Just like that?

REBECCA  
Yep!

Rebecca pulls her head inside, then shuts the window.

She closes the blinds.

Seth stands on the spot. Misery radiating from every pore.

Finally admitting defeat, he turns on the spot and meanders down the street.

**INT. SETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The room is dark. Seth sits on the edge of his bed, looking down at his phone-- at the same text conversation for the hundredth time.

Still no new message.

**TITLE CARD: STAGE ONE - DENIAL**

Seth lays his phone beside him. Stares down at the floor for a long, silent moment.

Finally, he begins nodding ferociously. Trying desperately to convince himself.

He looks at Edgar, who's still relaxing on the bed.

SETH

She just needs time, that's all. I came on too strong, and she just needs time to cool off. She gets like this from time to time, you know that.

Seth stands, stretches his back. A smile slowly spreading on his face. A level of hopefulness often spoken about but rarely seen.

Edgar buries his head in the blanket.

**INT. SETH'S LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Edgar is curled up on the floor, catching some sleep in the sunlight coming through the window.

Seth sits on the couch. His hair oily and messy, several days of stubble on his face. Doesn't look like he's slept in a while.

Seth's phone lies face-up on the coffee table. Still on the text conversation.

Still no new messages from Rebecca.

Seth's eyes focus in on the words Seen 5:38. Almost like they're taunting him. Mocking him.

Seth's right eye begins TWITCHING as a look of fury washes over him. A simmering pot, ready to blow.

TITLE CARD: STAGE TWO - ANGER

SETH

Who the hell does she think she is?!

Edgar stirs. Startled.

Seth looks at him-- the only living thing on Earth that will have anything to do with him.

SETH

I'm a great catch! She should be lucky someone like me wants anything to do with her in the first place.

Seth begins pacing the room. Fuming.

Edgar watches him walk back and forth.

SETH

I did everything for her. How many times did I pick up food for her lunch? Or let her pick what we watch? I've seen so many episodes of *Keeping up with the Kardashians* I should get a damn medal for patience.

Seth PUNCHES the wall with everything he's got.

It doesn't even so much as dent.

He retracts his hand quickly, cradling it with the other. Feeling like an idiot, but too consumed by anger to care.

Seth heads down the hall toward the bathroom, muttering and ranting under his breath as he goes.

Edgar lowers his head onto the carpet, soaking in the sun.

**INT. SETH'S BEDROOM - EVENING**

Seth is on his knees at the foot of his bed, hands folded in prayer. He looks worse than the last time we saw him. More disheveled. You can almost see the stink on him.

**TITLE CARD: STAGE THREE - BARGAINING**

Seth clears his throat, unsure how to proceed.

SETH

Um... Lord, I guess... I know we've haven't really spoken since I was a kid, but I could use your help right now.

He takes a deep breath, then continues--

SETH

You know Rebecca and I are meant to be together, she just doesn't know it yet.

Seth stops, trying to find the words to further his request.

SETH

If you could find it in your heart to get us together again, I'd appreciate it. I'll do anything-- anything! I'll stop drinking, I won't swear anymore. I'll even stop jerking off... well... maybe...

Seth looks up at the ceiling, darting his eyes back and forth, as if expecting a bright light to come shining down on him from above.

SETH

Whatever you want, I'll do it. Just get us together again.

Seth smiles. Pleased with how that went.

SETH

Amen.

**INT. SETH'S LIVING ROOM - DAWN**

OVERLY SAD MUSIC plays at low volume.

**TITLE CARD: STAGE FOUR - DEPRESSION**

Seth lies on the couch, wrapped tightly in a blanket up to his neck. His eyes are full of fat crocodile tears. He sniffs loudly, singing along to the song.

Edgar scampers across the living room. Stops in front of the couch. Meows.

SETH

Leave me alone, Edgar. There's nothing this world has to offer me anymore. Rebecca was right... I am a worthless piece of shit. My Mom should've gotten an abortion, but that would require something to work out for me.

Edgar stares at his owner.

Seth stares back.

SETH

Be thankful you're a cat, Edgar. You'll never know this pain. Sharing your heart with a woman only for her to rip it out and stomp on it. Leaving you forever alone, to wonder if anyone will ever love you again...

Edgar walks away. He has better things to do.

Seth watches Edgar go. Longing in his eye.

SETH

Go... Go, just like all the others. Why should you be any different?

Seth sighs deeply. Continues singing along-- poorly-- to the music.

#### **INT. SETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The room is dark. Seth lies in bed, clutching his phone. Edgar is curled up beside him, fast asleep.

#### **TITLE CARD: STAGE FIVE - ACCEPTANCE**

Seth scrolls through his text conversation with Rebecca. Every text bubble a now-painful memory rearing its ugly head.

He lets out a sigh, then puts his finger over DELETE on the conversation thread.

He stares at the screen, the bright glow illuminating his face.

Seth takes a deep breath--

Hits DELETE.

The thread vanishes.

Seth stares at the phone. He can't believe he did it. He actually did it.

He looks relieved. Like a massive weight has been lifted from his shoulders. It's cathartic.

Pleased with himself, Seth lays his phone on the nightstand.

Rolls over, getting comfortable.

A long beat.

The phone's screen shuts off, plunging the room into DARKNESS.

FADE TO BLACK.