

Sly Statements

by

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Cast of Characters

MELANIE:

early 20's

LEO:

early 20's

Place

Apartment

Time

Late Evening

Setting: Queens, New York

At Rise: Melanie and Leo are in their living room.

Melanie: You know, this was suppose to be our day! We were suppose to go out, enjoy some sun for once, seeing as we've been trapped inside this apartment for a whole month! And you know what, you've ruined it! I don't even want to go anywhere with you right now.

Leo: But you do things that make me lose my patience with you and I try to stay chill but you don't make it easy to stay calm.

Melanie: Don't you care about me?

Leo: Of course I do.

Melanie: So why is it so difficult for you to be patient?

Leo: Why is it so difficult for you to not work me up?

Melanie: How? How do I work you up?

Leo: You're doing it now. You hang on a point and don't let it go. You wrestle me to the ground with it until I can't breathe and I---

Melanie: You have no patience, Leo.

Leo: (sighs) If you can just---

Melanie: When you speak to me sometimes...we can be talking as simple as we are talking to one another right now...you say things in such a way that is so insulting but yet you do it with such subtlety. It hurts me. To put me down makes me think about a certain someone and I really don't want to tell you who because I'm not ready for that but when you say things on the sly, you are putting me down and I cannot be with someone in my life who does that to me, especially as frequently as you.

Leo: You're only telling your side of the story---

Melanie: Leo, listen to me...listen to me, please. This is important and I don't want you to defend yourself with excuses. What I'm saying you really need to listen to...I don't know if you have something against me or if you think I'm dumb or less educated than you are or whatever you have going on but I will not tolerate your indirect insults anymore.

Leo: I don't think you're dumb---

Melanie: You know what I'm referring to...ALL the times you say something real slick, instead of just coming out with it directly, which makes it even worse for me...I'm telling you this now because I do love you and I do want us to be together...if you can't stop condescending me, I will walk.

Melanie (cont'd): I'm not going to be with someone who doesn't love me for me. I want to be treated with the love and respect I deserve.

Leo: I get that but you can't ignore my end of this either. You know, I get what you're saying and I don't want to say the things I've said but you get me so angry because you ignore me and then you repeat yourself fifty times over, you go over the same thing and no matter how much I agree with you---

Melanie: I repeat myself fifty times because you don't change. I feel like I have to drill it into you.

Leo: And how is that working out for you?

Melanie: Not good.

Leo: Exactly. You know I have a head like stone. One time! One time is all you have to tell me and I'll work at it.

Melanie: But we've talked about this so many times before and I'm fed up by this point, I don't think the "One time" is working!

Leo: Melanie, you don't give me the time to see it work. I need to digest what we talk about. You expect everything to be perfect as soon as you say something. It doesn't work that way.

Melanie: Tell me how it works then.

Leo: What I just said to you. You talk about patience, well you need patience also.

Melanie: But how long is patience? I mean, this has been an issue for like a year now, right?

Leo: A year?

Melanie: Yeah. A year or longer it feels.

Leo: (sighs) However long it's been, it only makes me more irritated.

Melanie: You see? That's what I mean. You're short tempered. Hot-headed! You're a hot head!

Leo: Mel, I'm trying, I'm really trying here...fuck!

Melanie: Calm down.

Leo: When is it ever going to get easier?! Nothing I do is ever good enough.

Melanie: I just don't want you to talk shit to me anymore. Not like you did today. And I can't tell you anything because look at how you get! Look at how you just reacted a few seconds ago, is that normal?

Leo: Normal? What's normal? Normal people argue in life! They argue, they release their frustrations, they get them out into the open! I'm not perfect. If I call you an idiot or dumb it's only out of frustration. It doesn't make it right but just- cut me some slack!

Melanie: No! I'm not cutting you any slack because I won't tolerate it. I'm not going through that again!

(pause.)

*Melanie fills with rage and almost bursts into tears.
Leo senses a deep sadness in her.*

Leo: What's wrong? (beat) What do you mean *again*, Mel? (beat)
Mel...what's up?

Melanie: I don't want to tell you.

Leo: How are we going to communicate better if you can't open up to me?

Melanie: No...no.

Leo: Alright. (beat) Did someone...did you have someone in your life that was--

Melanie: Shut up!!

(pause)

We were engaged to be married. I was in love with him and---well, whenever we'd get into a disagreement he had a tendency to talk down to me and I would always feel ashamed of myself. He always somehow made himself right about the situation and would always make me feel inferior to him and...over time...this pattern emerged between us and he had this authority over me, not like a parent but yet sort of like a parent or guardian or something and it was controlling, like, he had this control over who I was and my opinion had no place there. I always gave into him, I always let him overpower me and for the longest time I had this voice inside, whispering to me at first but slowly growing louder and louder over time until this voice, my voice, became a scream and I couldn't take it anymore and one day, one day we got into a physical confrontation, he smacked me so damn hard across my face it felt like a punch. My whole body went lopsided and the world began to spin and when I focused my eyes on him, he, he smacked me again and walked away as I dropped to the floor...he waited for me to make eye contact with him...I thought he was going to help me but instead he hit me even harder than the first time...

Leo: I'll kill this guy.

Melanie: It's a forever long time ago...

Leo: I'm so sorry baby...I'm so sorry that you experienced that.

Melanie: Not your fault.

Leo: You were gonna get married?

Melanie: Was. Didn't.

Leo: Wow.

Melanie: Yeah.

Leo: I feel like such a loser right now.

Melanie: Why?

Leo: ...Because I'd rather kill myself than ever hurt you like that and I know I've said some things that for me, where I come from, are sadly normal but I'm realizing that---I'm learning from you it's wrong. I feel wrong for being like that to you. I don't want to be that guy.

Melanie: You're not.

Leo: Never.

(they kiss)

Baby, maybe your past pain is our happiness. Maybe what you went through you were meant to go through so you and me could be stronger and love one another on a deeper level. Do you think that's possible? Like, maybe all the bad shit you've gone through and all the bad shit I've gone through, kind of helps us make a better road moving forward together. What do you think about it?

Melanie: I think you're crazy.

Leo: Do you?

(Melanie laughs)

Melanie: I do, but I think you're right.

Leo: Yeah?

Melanie: I think that's a really good way for us to look at it together.

Leo: Right. (beat)

(Leo kisses Melanie cheek and lips)

I'll make all those bruises go away.

(Melanie smiles and nods)

(they hug)

END OF PLAY