

# The Fray III: Never Say Never

By : smehta

There was a boy. One that changed my life. One that made me understand love. Though our relationship, I took solace in music. Letting the words wash over my heart, the songs were the soundtrack to my thoughts.  
Based on the beautiful songs by The Fray.

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*Some things we don't talk about.* While others can openly share anything and everything, the we that we once had is restricted, as rare as left-hand turns made on red lights. And like those turns, our we is true, but doubted, torn down by skeptics and known to very few; I can't say he's entirely faultless in our obscurity, having been the one that buried us in the rubble of his earthquakes. *Rather do without* you, he had told me that day, which I'd like to remember as gray and dreary, but which was in reality a perfect day for blossoming. Was that the sign I was meant to take? That, while all I could feel was a torrent worthy of Pirates of the Caribbean fame, the reality all around me, barely registering in my film noir perception, was the chirping-bird, red-leaved warm breeze of September? Of all of the signs since that day, which I dissected and molded to fit my seemingly endless optimism, which I knew were as imagined as my 9-year-old life as Odette, the Swan Princess, the most important was the only one I knew to be real.

*You can never say never.* Be it hope, hope in that faraway concept of fate that I can only seem to see through the wrong end of my cracked binoculars, or naivete and an inner insistence to ignore reason, my psyche will not give up the possibility. The possibility that there really were crossed signals and split-second timing. The possibility that maybe, if I had sat an inch closer, typed "hey, what's up?" in my instant messenger box to him a minute earlier, everything would have gone topsy-turvy. And everything would be different. There is no algorithm for me to know, no derivation I can solve to reach my desired conclusion (though that's my most successful calculus topic), or any conclusion for that matter. It's simply a choice between dragging my feet along in disappointment, shame, and disillusionment, or picking myself up, relacing the elephant-printed hi-tops of my youth and replacing the bounce in my step with renewed hope and the promise of a chance encounter that could set the track back in motion. While my knowledge of contrapositives and reasoning and permutations of probability tell me otherwise, I'm younger now than I was before. I have closed my mind to logic, locked that door, and I find myself somersaulting up a hill into the cotton candy-colored clouds of a horizon like the ones in the movies I spend too many hours watching. I have not lost my maturity, nor have I digressed into a throw-caution-to-the-wind-type made up of flowy skirts and flowers hanging out of my hair. While I will pin a flower into my hair on an occasional morning, I make sure it is secure, affixed with something substantial, so this time it can't come tumbling down without my noticing.

*Don't let me go.* I don't profess to be a psychologist, psychiatrist, or anything else with the prefix "psych" (including psychotic hopefully), but I have a feeling that the one whose mind was once connected to mine, whose hand I held (platonically, even in the figurative world), secretly wants me to squeeze tighter, to pull him back from that iron curtain he won't be able to come back from if I let go, because its builders laced it with kryptonite. Well, it's a good thing I'm not Superman, I guess; though I wish I had the strength of steel so the tug-of-war would be victorious even against the gleaming diamonds and pearls that await at the other side, I now realize my strength will not wane. I ---won't cough and wheeze like Clark at the approach of the mysterious green mineral, won't keel over with the push of a finger without a fight. I won't let him go while I feel as though he is asking me not to with the ever-rare cuts of the blue eyes toward me, gazing in mine before icily snapping away, giving way to crinkled grins in the direction of someone else.

*I will be your guardian when all is crumbling, steady your hand.* I always knew this sentiment would be true for us. So maybe I had the speaker and the audience mixed up, but I can handle being the steadier if I know that one day he will regain the strength and the respect to squeeze back. It doesn't necessarily need to be my hands he is squeezing, but I need to know that one day he will have the strength to feel, openly and

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unabashedly, to speak in front of a thousand people without needing the special effects of his advance PowerPoints to hide the text in those slides.

The vision is still too cloudy for even the Fates to decipher it, but they have taken a different course in telling his story. No longer does it certainly involve perceived happiness; it has a glimmer of something growing in the very center, threatening to tear the story apart completely and tell a new one. One of authenticity, of emerging confidence in the boy we all once knew and loved, the boy whose robots were the first thing he would show a stranger, who would excitedly recount his plain day and keep keen interest in return, simply out of loyalty and genuine care.

The boy is still there, making his way out of the hazy maze at the pace of the molasses that he used to help his mother pour into cookie batter, distracted by insignificant fears and inconsequential hiding places. Nevertheless, he will come out, and perhaps he will not be open to reacquainting himself with the little girl who bolted off of the bus to reach home and talk to him regardless of her asthmatic disposition. But perhaps he will, and she will be waiting by her window just in case, a hint of a smile playing on her lips as she gazes into the distance.

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