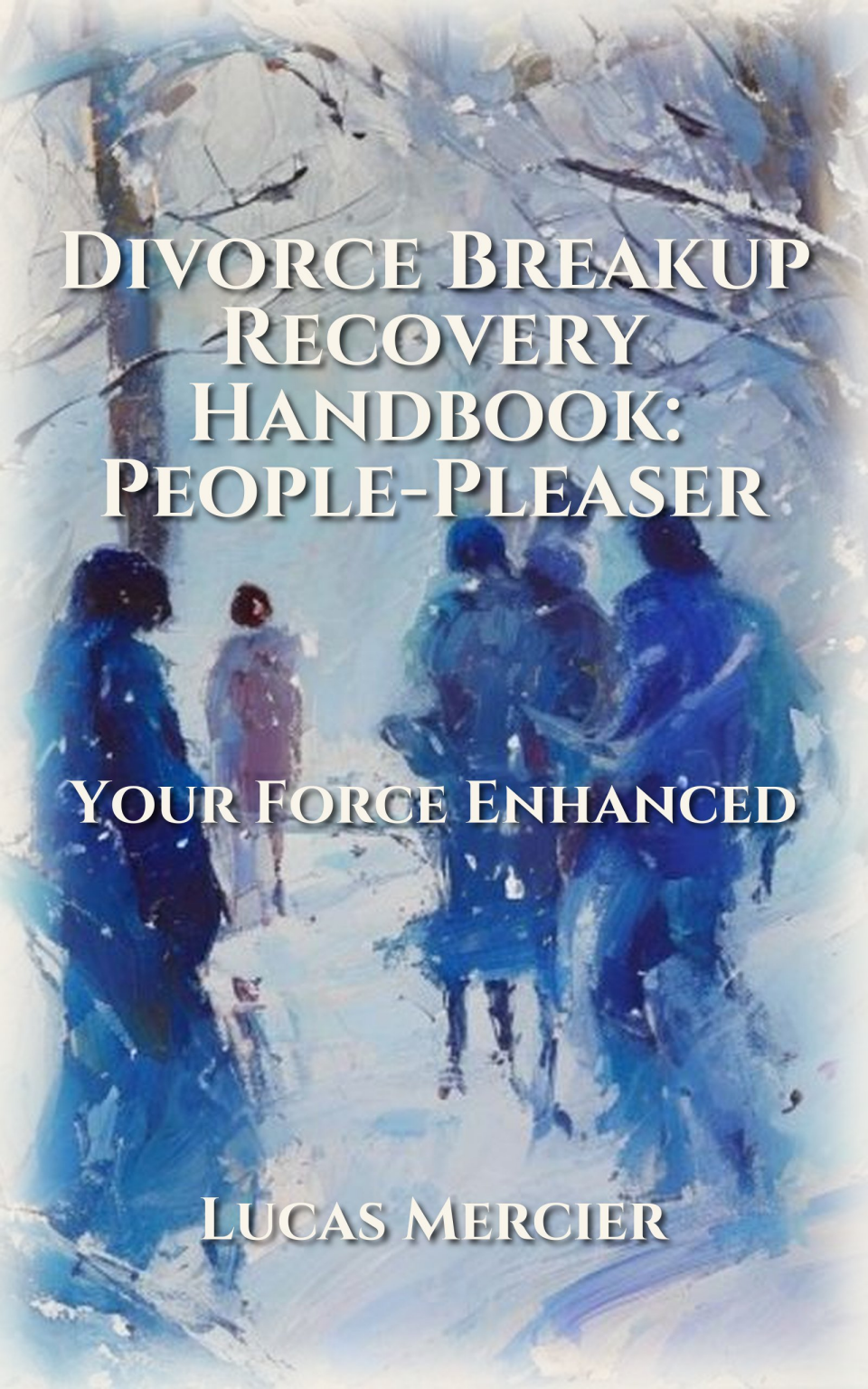


An impressionistic painting in shades of blue, white, and purple. It depicts a group of people in a snowy or wintry landscape. In the foreground, a person in a dark blue coat stands on the left, looking towards the center. In the background, several other figures are visible, some standing and some walking, amidst bare trees and a hazy sky. The overall mood is cold and contemplative.

DIVORCE BREAKUP RECOVERY HANDBOOK: PEOPLE-PLEASER

YOUR FORCE ENHANCED

LUCAS MERCIER

DIVORCE BREAKUP
RECOVERY
HANDBOOK:
PEOPLE-PLEASER

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CHAPTER 1

THE PEOPLE-PLEASER DIRECTION: REVEALING YOUR VITALITY

The minivan idles at the curb, a predictable tableau of strained coexistence marking the end of every exchange involving your ex-partner and child. You anticipate the routine drop-off, bracing yourself for the emotional residue that always follows these exchanges. What you dread most is the moment they begin to unload their grievances—not necessarily shouting accusations, but weaving them into a low, persistent monologue about how **you** handled things last week, or how **you** failed to adequately support the co-parenting logistics involving the school bake sale committee. Instinctively, your shoulders tense, preparing for the performance of perfect understanding. You find yourself nodding along, absorbing every nuance of their narrative, even when you know, logically, that the point has been made three times already. Listening becomes an act of self-erasure; it is easier to let them talk until you are emotionally exhausted

than to interject with a factual correction or a boundary statement like, "We agreed these logistics were handled by email," because such words feel too sharp, too likely to trigger a defensive spiral. The pull is undeniable—the deep, ingrained need to be the calming presence, the agreeable sounding board that makes the tension dissipate through sheer volume of attention given. You find yourself cataloging their grievances in your head, not for rebuttal later, but simply to prove to *yourself* how much emotional labor you are willing to perform just to keep the peace within those ten minutes standing on the curb. This automatic agreement, this silent contract to absorb whatever they throw at you, defines the exhausting choreography of co-parenting after a breakup, and it drains you down to your core reserves.

The atmosphere at Sarah's house felt deceptively warm, scented with rosemary and polite obligation—the kind of gathering where everyone assumed you were still orbiting within the orbit of 'co-parenting harmony.' Mid-conversation, while discussing a supposedly neutral topic like neighborhood gardening tips, Mark leaned in conspiratorially. He paused, letting the comfortable silence stretch just long enough for him to deliver unsolicited advice regarding your shared custody

schedule, specifically mentioning how he thought you should adjust pickup times based on his new yoga class schedule. You feel the familiar tightening in your chest; the urge to nod and say, "That's a good point," is almost overwhelming. Yet, a flicker of something unfamiliar—a small, quiet ember of self-respect—flickers beneath the surface. Carefully, you take a breath that feels suspiciously deep for mere conversation. Instead of agreeing immediately, you pause, meeting his eyes with a steadiness that startles even yourself. "Mark," you begin, your voice pitched just low enough to sound thoughtful rather than confrontational, "Regarding schedules, I really need to stick to the written agreement we established last quarter. My schedule is set for this month." The air doesn't explode; it merely stills, a subtle vacuum where expectation used to be. You watch his eyebrows lift slightly—a micro-expression of surprise—as you hold that boundary in place, refusing to let the momentum of group pleasantries pull you back into old patterns of acquiescence.

It was at a coffee shop, ostensibly meeting up with Chloe, a mutual friend whose understanding of your current reality seems suspiciously thin. The conversation drifted inevitably toward relationship milestones, and suddenly,

she pivots, her tone dripping with well-meaning concern that feels more like anthropological study. "Honestly," she begins, leaning closer over the tiny marble table, "when are you going to stop dating people who don't understand how much stability you deserve? You need someone who will just *get* what it was like when things were good." The words land with the weight of unearned judgment, instantly triggering that familiar, nauseating lurch in your stomach—the guilt spiral. Suddenly, every polite smile feels fraudulent; every word of agreement feels like a betrayal of the boundaries you are desperately trying to build around yourself. You feel the urgent need to smooth this over, to reassure her that everything is fine, that you haven't changed too much for her comfort. But then, recalling the feeling of your own worth being chipped away by constant people-pleasing, you bite back the habitual defense mechanism. Instead, you look at Chloe, not with defensiveness, but with gentle firmness. "Chloe," you say quietly, meeting that pitying gaze head-on, "I appreciate the concern, truly. But my dating life right now is something I need to navigate for myself, and frankly, it's a conversation I'm not ready to revisit with generalizations." The silence that follows feels enormous, yet strangely liberating.

The dinner at Maria's house felt like an elaborate reenactment of your entire shared history, each appetizer tray serving as a prop for nostalgia. The conversation kept circling back, inevitably landing on the annual trip to the coast—the perfect, sun-drenched memory that always seemed too vibrant, too golden, to be separated from the current reality of co-parenting logistics. "Remember that time," she reminisced, gesturing with a breadstick, "when we all got stuck in that rainstorm, and you just laughed so hard you couldn't breathe? You were always such a joy to be around." Every shared memory deployed felt less like fond reminiscence and more like emotional collateral damage, designed to tether you to the 'us' narrative. With every story of your past togetherness—the perfect sunset dinners, the effortless laughter—your muscles tense in preparation for the inevitable pivot back to making yourself small enough to fit comfortably within that idealized shared history. Yet, as she launches into a particularly detailed anecdote about an argument you supposedly had over directions on a specific beach, something shifts. You gently place your napkin down, creating a visible separation between the past and this moment. "That was lovely," you acknowledge softly, allowing the sentiment to hang in the air without accepting its authority over today. Then, you guide the

conversation with deliberate calm: "But speaking of logistics, I actually wanted to ask Maria about her new garden project; did she need any help hauling those heavier bags of soil?" The shift is palpable; the forced warmth falters as the shared narrative momentum breaks, leaving an uncomfortable space where your actual present life—the one you are building for yourself—can finally take root.

YOU'VE READ CHAPTER 1.

YOU ALREADY KNOW THIS ISN'T GENERIC
ADVICE. THIS IS YOUR MAP — BUILT
SPECIFICALLY FOR PEOPLE-PLEASER ENERGY.
THE PATTERNS YOU JUST READ? THEY'RE
YOURS. NOT ANYONE ELSE'S. YOURS.

THE OTHER FIVE CHAPTERS ARE WHERE IT
GETS PRECISE.

CHAPTER 2 GIVES YOU PERMISSION TO STOP
FIGHTING YOUR OWN NATURE. CHAPTER 3
SHOWS YOU EXACTLY WHERE
PEOPLE-PLEASER ENERGY CONSISTENTLY
WINS IN DIVORCE BREAKUP RECOVERY.
CHAPTER 4 NAMES THE STAKES — WHAT YOU
LOSE WHEN YOU IGNORE THIS. CHAPTER 5 IS
YOUR FULL DIVORCE BREAKUP RECOVERY
PLAN, BROKEN INTO THE CYCLES THAT
ACTUALLY WORK FOR YOU. CHAPTER 6 IS
YOUR INTEGRATION — WHERE THIS BECOMES
IDENTITY, NOT STRATEGY.

MOST PEOPLE READ CHAPTER 1 AND THINK
THEY UNDERSTAND. THEY DON'T. THE
ARCHITECTURE ONLY REVEALS ITSELF IN
FULL.

SEARCH FOR "DIVORCE BREAKUP RECOVERY
HANDBOOK: PEOPLE-PLEASER" TO GET THE
COMPLETE GUIDE.

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