

IF YOU TAKE A CHANCE,
YOU JUST MIGHT FIND TRUE LOVE.

Take Me There



SUSANE COLASANTI

By the author of *When It Happens*

*Take
Me
There*

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藏书章

SUSANE COLASANTI

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WHAT IS LOVE?

RHIANNON

My life could not possibly suck more than it does right now.

I try not to cry.

And to let it go.

I don't want to be this totally depressed person, with a heart so broken it hurts every time I breathe.

I still love Steve. And here's the worst part.

I want him back.

NICOLE

Danny was my first real boyfriend. He just came right up to me with his cute smile and customized Vans and his yellow rubber bracelet that says MOMENT OF ZEN and his radical attitude and picked me to be with out of everyone else.

And it was great at first. But then there was that night. So I had to break up with him. I couldn't deal with it then and I still can't deal with it now.

JAMES

I don't like the way he's looking at her. And I definitely don't like the way he said, "If you ever feel like hanging out . . ."

Whatever. It's her life. I don't know why, but it's like I go into this hyper protective bodyguard mode whenever some dude tries to hit on Rhiannon.

"Oh," Keith goes. "Are you two . . .?"

"No!" Rhiannon yells. "We're just friends."

Dude. Why'd she have to yell like that? Is the thought of us together so horrendous? I mean, it's not like I want to be with her, but jeez.

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FOR PIERRE,
who proves that true love
is something real.



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PART ONE

May 20–23



*To move the world,
we must first move ourselves.*

—Socrates

RHIANNON

CHAPTER 1

Saturday

MY LIFE COULD not possibly suck more than it does right now.

I try not to cry.

And to let it go.

I don't want to be this totally depressed person, with a heart so broken it hurts every time I breathe.

I still love him. And here's the worst part.

I want him back.

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The homework pile on my desk is laughing at my pain. *I'm not laughing with you*, it says. *I'm laughing at you. You pathetic idiot.*

The homework pile is right. I am pathetic. I am an idiot.

I vaguely remember remnants of my normal life. They're

like a dream. These detached, blurry images that may belong to someone else.

I hate being like this.

And then other times I'm like, *Okay, Ree. Enough already. Get over it.* Because how can I let someone who doesn't love me anymore turn me into this person I don't even recognize?

Being awake sucks.

My Persian cat Snickers, aka Snick-Snick, jumps up into bed with me and purrs. He curls up in a fluff ball, pressing against my ribs. I pet his long, soft fur. He feels sad, like me.

Question: When does the pain go away?

I reach over to my nightstand for the remote and my glasses. I turn on the TV. Here's the agenda: I'll watch a gazillion movies, read the huge stack of magazines I've accumulated because I never have time to read them, and snarf horrifying amounts of junk food until it's time to get up and go to school on Monday.

Getting dumped is crazy times. Like . . . what? You're supposed to instantly turn off all your emotions just because he says it's over? You're supposed to go on with your life like nothing happened?

Garden State is in the DVD player. I press PLAY even though I just watched it a week ago.

I wish Steve were here so bad, watching the movie with me. We had this way together. I would lie against him with my cheek on his chest, feeling his heartbeat. And he would hold my hand with my fingers folded in between his. He had this way of making me feel so good by not really doing much of anything. Just by being him.

Question: Where did all that love go?



Last week I went through the motions of school on automatic. I cried at the most random things. Someone would be pouring a glass of water and I'd suddenly feel tears running down my face. But the absolute worst was when people asked if I was okay. Because then I had to admit that it was real, it happened, and we weren't together anymore.

And yeah, it got better. My stomach eventually went back to normal. I didn't cry every day.

But my heart. My heart will always be broken.



Just when Zach Braff is screaming into the rain, Brooke comes barging in with Cinnabon.

Brooke's hair is wrapped in a towel because she's in grad school and on break and it's two in the afternoon and that's what time she gets up. Brooke is ten years older than me (I'm seventeen), so you have to wonder what my parents (who are over fifty) were thinking. She's in this endless PhD program for art history. Dad's always ranting how she'll never find a job after. But it's just what she's into, and she's not changing her mind. That doesn't stop Dad from trying to change it for her, though. He's an international currency trader, and he's all about the big bucks. As in he wants us to get paid the big bucks when we grow up. Which is highly unlikely, considering the types of careers we want.

But Dad is really stubborn. So he got this summer internship

all set up for Brooke with a broker at Citigroup, where he works, hoping that she'd see the light and become someone she's not because that's what responsible adults do. But she was like, *I'd rather eat dirt than expose myself to the corruption of impressionable minds*. So Dad was like, *Okay fine, be like that, but don't expect me to keep paying for it*.

Anyway, Brooke has an apartment in this sketch neighborhood uptown near Columbia, where she goes, but she always stays here for breaks since the downtown nightlife is where it's at. She works the bar-and-club scene something fierce. Like she's nineteen and just having fun instead of twenty-seven and interviewing potential husbands.

So she's been home for a week, but she's going backpacking through Europe on one of those *Europe-on-Thirty-Dollars-a-Day* plans. She's leaving Friday.

"Extra icing!" Brooke reports. She sits on the side of my bed and puts the Cinnabon box on my stomach. I haven't moved since I woke up. Or whatever you call it.

Brooke glances at the TV. "Oh! I love this movie!"

I sniff at the box.

She goes, "But how can you watch it again?"

"It's the best."

"But you already know what happens."

"So?"

"So then how . . . ? Whatever." Brooke looks me over. "And FYI? This is the last day we're letting you sulk. No boy is worth wasting a gorgeous weekend over. It's really nice out, by the way."

"How would you know?"

"I've been out, hello."

I pop open the box. This intense cinnamon smell wafts out.
 “So?”

“So you have to get up and get on with your life.” Brooke rubs her hair with the towel. “He is *so* not worth it.”

“It’s only been a week.”

“Yeah! Exactly!” Brooke rubs furiously. “Which is more than enough time to recuperate. News flash! You live in the best city in the world! There are endless possibilities out there!”

I peel open the container of extra icing.

“And plenty of guys who will treat you better than Steve ever did.”

“He treated me great.”

“Please. The boy couldn’t get a clue if they were giving them away on the street.”

It’s not like I’m agreeing with her or anything. But if your boyfriend, out of nowhere and with no advance warning whatsoever, dumps you for no apparent reason, is it really about you? Or is it all him?



When the phone rings, I have no idea how long I’ve been in bed. All I know is I’m on my third movie, I’ve read two *People* magazines and one *Teen Vogue*, and I’m most of the way through a box of Vienna Cremes. The Cinnabon is long gone.

“Hello?” my voice cracks into the phone.

“Hey,” James says.

“Hey.”

“What’s wrong?”

That’s the thing about James. He knows when something’s

wrong, before you even say anything. He's so not a typical straight boy.

It's impossible to describe my agony. And I'm sure my friends are sick of hearing about it. So I just go, "I'm still . . ."

"Still?"

"Yeah."

"Drag."

Everyone says that it gets better with time and that time heals all wounds and blah-di-blah-blah.

Question: What if they're wrong?

"Tell me about it," I mumble.

"Sounds like you could use a change of scenery."

I wait for him to try. It's not going to work.

He goes, "Nice how Keith's party is tonight."

"I already told you. I'm not going."

"Um-hm, yeah. So when am I picking you up?"

"No way."

"Come on."

"Not going."

"You have to go."

"I'm not leaving this bed."

"Distraction is your friend."

"Not leaving." I so don't want to deal with people right now. Plus, there's a chance Steve will be there. But still. Somewhere in the back of my mind, a voice is screaming at me to get up, brush myself off, and go. So it's complicated.

"Steve is such a dumbass," James informs me.

"I knew it!" I always knew James had a problem with Steve, even though he never said anything. James has been my best friend since seventh grade, when I lost my notebook on the first

day of school and he helped me find it. It's awesome that we ended up going to the same high school, too. "But why?"

"You deserve someone better."

"Better like how?"

"Better like not a dumbass."

"Yeah. He was overrated." Not like I believe what I'm saying. I'm just trying to convince myself that out of me and Steve, I wasn't the one who did anything wrong.

"Exactly," James says. "So what time should I pick you up?"



Top Five Things I Miss About Steve

5. Cracking up together over old SNL reruns of Mr. Bill.
4. When we'd double with Nicole and Danny to see bands at The Elbow Room.
3. The way he'd surprise me by finding out where movies were being filmed around our neighborhood in Greenwich Village. And then we'd go watch.
2. He always remembered that I like extra sprinkles when we went out for ice cream.
1. How it felt to be loved.



"Hey!" James yells at Keith, who almost dumped his beer all over my shirt. "Watch it!"

“Sorry, man,” Keith grumbles, not looking sorry about anything.

James turns back to me and goes, “Freak.”

Which is what I usually think every time I see Keith. So I’m trying to pretend that even though we’re at Keith’s house, I won’t have to see him again. Because he’s totally obnoxious. But he lives in this huge loft in SoHo, which is, like, this ultra-ritzy neighborhood one over from the Village, and he throws these incredible parties. So of course everyone goes. And if you just avoid him while you’re there, it’s a total blast.

We drool over the enormous living room, the balcony, the high ceilings. My house is nothing compared to this. This is ridiculous.

“Did you see the flat-screen TV?” James pants. “It’s gotta be a fifty-inch. I’d never leave the house.”

“Sign me up.”

The music is so loud my bones are shaking with the beat.

“So,” James says.

“So,” I say.

“Are you okay?”

“No.”

“Maybe after, we’ll do Magnolia?”

The Magnolia Bakery is this place in our neighborhood that has the most amazing cupcakes ever. The thing about these cupcakes is they have icing in all these sweet pastel colors and old-school sprinkles. My favorite combination is pink icing with blue flower sprinkles. Serendipity determines if you’ll get the icing-sprinkle combo you want.

“I think this party is enough excitement for one night,” I tell him. Another thing about Magnolia is that it’s open really late

on weekends. The line at midnight is outrageous. “How about tomorrow?”

“You’re on.”

“You guys having a good time?” Keith butts in. He holds out a beer for me. As if I’m interested in drinking something that tastes like Drano.

“I don’t drink.”

“Oh.” Keith nods, acting all serious. “And doesn’t that make you thirsty?” Then he laughs like that was the funniest thing anyone’s ever said in the entire history of the world.

“I mean I don’t ingest toxic substances.”

“Well, then I guess I didn’t have to hide the rat poison after all.” Keith laughs hysterically again. “Yo!” he gasps. “I crack myself up!”

We stare at him.

“Anyway,” Keith continues smoothly, as if we all have a sense of humor in common. “That sucks about you and Steve, but . . . if you ever feel like hanging out . . .”

“Um.” I can’t believe he’s actually asking me out like this. I glance at James.

“Oh,” Keith goes. “Are you two . . . ?”

“No!” I say. “We’re just friends.”

“That’s what I thought.” Keith inspects me. He actually does that sleazy guy thing where they slowly rake their eyes up and down your body.

Gross.

Then Keith’s like, “Well . . . you know where to find me.” And he slithers away like the snake that he is.

James mumbles something.

“What?”