

# EXCERPT, DISCUSSION GUIDE, AND RESOURCES INCLUDED





Grace wants out. Out of her house, where her stepfather wields fear like a weapon and her mother makes her scrub imaginary dirt off the floors. Out of her California town, too small to contain her big city dreams. Out of her life, and into the role of Parisian artist, New York director—anything but scared and alone.

Enter Gavin: charming, talented, adored. Controlling. Dangerous. When Grace and Gavin fall in love, Grace is sure it's too good to be true. She has no idea their relationship will become a prison she's unable to escape.

Deeply affecting and unflinchingly honest, this is a story about spiraling into darkness—and emerging into the light again.

Publication Date: 06-13-17 | ISBN13: 9781627797726



Henry Holt Books For Young Readers



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

When I was sixteen I fell in love. Hard. For the next two and a half years I would stay in my bad romance, desperate to get out of it. It wasn't until I'd graduated high school that I got the guts to break up with my boyfriend. It can seem pretty crazy that anyone would stay in such an abusive relationship for so long, but when you're in it, breaking up seems impossible.

One in three teens is affected by teen dating violence. I wrote *Bad Romance* for all the teens out there who are going through the same hell I, and my main character Grace, did. I wrote the book I wish I'd had in the hopes that it will empower these girls (and guys) to get out of their bad romances, to know their worth, and to own their story. But writing the book isn't enough for me. After reliving the worst part of my life to get my story out, I realized I wanted to do more—I wanted to actually get in the room with these kids and tell them my story, hear theirs, and share with them the truths I've learned—and how they can get help and protect themselves. I also wanted to support teachers, school counselors, librarians, and community organizers to do the same. Please reach out to me if you'd like help planning a lesson, or would like me to come in to talk to your teens—I'm happy to go anywhere. I'm also available for Skype visits.

This packet has tons of resources about teen dating violence, a little more info about the book, and a Teacher's Guide. I've also created a website for teens and anyone else affected by dating violence to share our experiences and to get encouragement and inspiration.

Blogs, art, music, and lots of love, updated regularly:  
[badromancebook.tumblr.com](http://badromancebook.tumblr.com).

- Heather

A dried botanical specimen, possibly a branch with small red flowers and green leaves, is positioned at the top left of the page.

EXCERPT

# *Bad Romance*

*I want your ugly  
I want your disease  
I want your everything  
As long as it's free  
I want your love*

—LADY GAGA

## ONE

**F**ive hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes. That's how long it takes me to start falling out of love with you. One year. Our own season of love. You do know which musical I'm referring to, right, Gavin? Because there's no way you can be my boyfriend and not know that of course, *of course*, I would bring *Rent* into this. Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes of your lips on mine and whispering in the dark and you picking me up and spinning me around and taking my virginity and fucking with my head and telling me I'm worthless, worthless, worthless.

If I were writing a musical about us, I wouldn't start where we're at right now, at the end. I would want the audience to really get how I was able to fall for you hook, line, and sinker. Girls don't fall in love with manipulative assholes who treat them like shit and make them seriously question their life choices. They fall in love with manipulative assholes (who treat them like shit and make them seriously question their life choices) who they *think* are knights in shining armor. You rode in on your fucking white horse, aka 1969 Mustang, and I was all like, *My hero!* But I am so tired of being a damsel in distress. In my





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next life, I'm going to be an ass-kicking ninja warrior queen. And I will hunt shits like you *down*. Throw your ass in a dungeon and drop the key in my moat and my lady knights will be all, *Huzzah!* and I will sit on my throne like, *Yes*.

But I can't daydream too much about my next life because I have to deal with you in *this* life. Before I break up with you, I want to reflect. I want to go back through us piece by piece. I want to remember why I was so ooey-gooley crazy in love with you. I want to know why it's taken me this long to figure out that you're poison.

So, I'm gonna *Sound of Music* this shit: *Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start . . .*

There I am, downstage right, finishing my breakfast at the dining room table. It's my junior year. Winter. A Tuesday, which is better than Monday but not nearly as good as Wednesday. We aren't together yet, Gav, but, as my lusciously crass best friend Alyssa says, I am *so hard for you*. I've just finished my peanut butter toast and I'm thinking about how yesterday I saw you eating a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup and wanted to lick the chocolate off your lips. Because that would be the most amazing kiss—Gavin Davis tasting like Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. YES. You are my super happy place and I am there, la la la, trying to ignore my stepfather (who shall hereafter be known as The Giant). He's pounding around in the kitchen and muttering under his breath, and I know he wants me to be all, *What's wrong?*, but I'm not going to because he is an absolute fuck nut (that's an Alyssa expression, too—she's very linguistically creative) and nobody should have to deal with absolute fuck nuts without caffeine.

The Giant is displeased.

"Where the hell's my lunch?" he growls, louder now, as he paws through the refrigerator.

Today is the day that will change my life. But I don't know that, of course. I have no idea what's in store for me. What *you*, Gavin, have in

store for me. All I know is that The Giant is ruining my Gavin day-dreaming buzz and I really want some of that coffee in the pot, but I'm not allowed because they said so. Everything is *Because we said so*.

The Giant slams his lunch pail on the counter and opens it. It is only then that I remember what I'd forgotten to do last night before I went to bed.

I close my eyes and wish I had a Greek chorus to shake their fists at the sky for me (*Oh, woe! Woe!*) because this slight infraction could result in me losing my whole weekend.

"I'm sorry," I murmur. "I forgot to make it."

My head hangs in shame. I am the picture of Contrite and Subservient Female because this is what The Giant needs to see at all times. But that's on the outside.

On the inside, which The Giant can't get to no matter how hard he tries: *screw you, make your own damn lunch, and while you're at it, clean your own car and do your own laundry, especially your boxers, and can I please stop having to clean your bathroom, because your stray pubic hairs make me nauseous?*

I play this role of the beaten-down, cowed girl because I'm scared. Terrified, really. What little freedom I have is like a delicate piece of blown glass. The slightest push can make it shatter into a thousand million pieces. It wasn't always like this. Before my mom married The Giant, there was laughter in our house, random dance parties, adventures. Not anymore. I live in a kingdom ruled by a tyrant bent on my destruction.

The Giant curses under his breath and I want to be like, *It won't kill you to make your own fucking sandwich*. Seriously. Bread, turkey, mustard, Swiss: *boom*—you have a sandwich. Christ.

I hear a door open down the hall and then Mom is coming in with her own version of Contrite and Subservient Female on her face. My mom thinks invisible dirt is real, that disasters are around every corner.



She thinks the Grim Reaper hides in the cracks between tiles, on top of baseboards, in the toilet bowl. She is unwell.

“What’s going on?” she asks, looking from me to The Giant. Her lips pull down as she glances at me, like I’m already a disappointment and it’s not even eight in the morning.

“Your daughter didn’t make my lunch *again* and so I’ll have to waste money today on getting lunch out *again*, *that’s* what’s going on.” He looks at me and I can almost hear the thought in his head: *You aren’t my child—I wish you would get the hell out of my house forever.*

“You better not be expecting to go to the movies on Friday with Natalie and Alyssa,” he adds.

Big surprise. Let me guess: babysitting.

Don’t get me wrong: even though Sam is half Giant, I love him to death. It’s pretty hard to hate on a three-year-old. It’s not his fault The Giant’s his dad just as much as it’s not my fault my dad is a former/possibly current cokehead who lives in another state and forgets my birthday every year.

Mom shoots me an irritated glare and brushes past me into the kitchen without another word. She pats The Giant on the arm, then pulls down a mug for coffee. It says *#1 Mom* on it, which is ten kinds of ironic. I want mug makers to start keeping it real. Like, why aren’t there mugs that say *Once Pretty Okay Mom Who Got Remarried and Stopped Caring About Her Kids?* I mean, that’s a lot of words, but if you use twelve-point font, you could totally rock that on a mug.

The Giant doesn’t walk past me on his way out the door, he *pushes* past me, shouldering like a linebacker so that I’m forced into the entryway, my spine colliding with a corner of the wall. Pain shoots up my back. He doesn’t notice. Or maybe he does. Bastard. As soon as he slams the door behind him, Mom turns on me.

“What have I told you about finishing your chores?” she says. “I’m getting tired of this, Grace. First it’s not properly rinsing the dishes,



then it's Roy's lunch or Sam's toys." She raises a finger in the threatening way of dictators everywhere: "You better get it together, young lady. You're walking on thin ice."

She doesn't have to tell me what happens if that ice breaks beneath my feet. My dad promised to help me pay for drama camp this summer at Interlochen, this amazing program in Michigan. I've been saving for it like crazy, working doubles on the weekends at the Honey Pot so that I can help my dad scrape together the hundreds of dollars it costs to be free of suburban hell for a few weeks.

I hang my head even lower this time and become Beaten-Down Daughter. She's the cousin of Contrite and Subservient Female, but more tired. If this were a musical, Beaten-Down Daughter would turn to the audience and sing something like "I Dreamed a Dream" from *Les Mis*. There wouldn't be a dry eye in the house.

"I'm sorry," I say again, my voice soft.

It is an act of will not to let the frustration building inside me slip into my voice, my mouth, my hands. In order to stay Beaten-Down Daughter I keep my eyes on my baby-pink Doc Martens because lowering your eyes broadcasts your worthlessness and makes the other person feel better about themselves and increases the possibility of them being magnanimous. You asked me the story of my boots once and I told you about how I found them in a thrift store on Sunset Boulevard and that I was pretty sure the girl who wore them before me did stuff like write poetry and dance to the Ramones because when I wear them, I totally feel more artistic. *Betty and Beatrice are my shoe soul mates*, I said, and you asked me if I named all my shoes and I said, *No, just these*, and you said, *Rock on*, and then the bell rang and I lived off of that two-second conversation for the rest of the day. So even though my mom's being heinous this morning, my shoes manage to cheer me up a little. I mean, everything is going to be okay as long as there are pink combat boots in the world. Someday I will tell you just that and

you will pull me against you and say, *I fucking love you so much*, and I will feel like five million bucks.

"Sorry." Mom snorts. "If I had a nickel for every time you said that . . ." She glances at the clock. "Go or you'll be late."

I grab my bag and a sweater, which is all you really need in Cali winter. I consider slamming the door on my way out, but that won't end well for me, so I quietly shut it and then rush down the walkway before Mom can think of some other reason to be mad at me.

I need to go to my happy place. Now. I can't let this be my day. I have to shake it off, Taylor Swift style.

Roosevelt High is less than a ten-minute walk away, and I spend that time with my earbuds shoved in, listening to the *Rent* soundtrack, probably the best thing to come out of the nineties. It takes me to New York City, to a group of bohemian friends, to my future. Some people run or meditate when they're stressed, but I go to the Village. I picture myself walking along the streets of the city, past overflowing trash bins and scurrying rats and cool boutiques and coffeehouses. People everywhere. I'm surrounded by brick buildings with fire escapes and I jump on the subway and I'm flowing under the city, on my way to the Nederlander Theater, where I'll be directing a play or musical. Maybe even a Broadway revival of *Rent*. By the time I get to school, the music is thrumming through me (*Viva la vie Bobème!*). My mom and The Giant and home splinter and fall away, replaced by my real family, the cast of *Rent*: Mark, Roger, Mimi, Maureen, Angel, Collins, Joanne. I'm okay. For now.

I keep my eye out for you the moment I'm on campus. You'd be hard to miss.

You're like Maureen from *Rent*: *Ever since puberty, everybody stares at me—boys, girls. I can't help it, baby.*

You've got this halo of cool that makes people want to bow at your feet, light a candle. Saint Gavin. You leave stars in your wake. Whenever





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you walk by, I swear sparks fly off you. The air crackles. Sizzles. You steal all the oxygen so that I'm left gasping for breath, panting. In heat.

I want to steal the leather notebook you carry around all the time. Songs are in there and poetry and maybe sketches. All in your handwriting, which I've never seen but imagine as surprisingly neat. If I could, I'd crawl into your vintage Mustang, your bad-boy car, and curl up in the backseat, waiting for you to maybe ravage me or at least sing me a song. I can't get enough of that sexy, shuffling gait, the way your black hair is perfectly mussed up. The faded Nirvana shirt and the low-slung jeans, the black fedora that I've never seen you without. You have these eyes that are positively arctic, so blue I keep expecting to see waves or maybe glaciers in them. Then there's that impenetrable look, like you have a million secrets locked inside you. I want the key.

I like you best when you're playing guitar, leaning your weight forward, left foot slightly in front of the right, muscled hands strumming magic into the air, intent on the music that bleeds from those long, thin fingers. And your voice: gravel and honey mixed together, a little Jack White, a little Thom Yorke. The songs you write are poetry. You close your eyes and open your mouth and something starts spinning in me, faster and faster, and I would do anything if you asked me. When you sing, I imagine my lips against yours, your tongue in my mouth, your hands everywhere.

You are the most exotic thing in our crappy excuse for a town. A rock god abandoned by cruel fate to an outpost of suburbia, where it's at least twenty degrees hotter than hell. I like to think that as an LA girl forced to move here I could somehow understand you more than the others. I know what it's like to hear car horns and helicopters and music all hours of the night. I know what it feels like to zip down neon freeways and find street art in the most unlikely places. I know what it's like to feel alive. You want all that, I can tell. You look at everything around us the same way I do: with quiet desperation.

Birch Grove has a newness that only towns in Cali can manage—shopping centers popping up like mushrooms, schools and housing developments where once there'd only been a strawberry patch or cornfield. Even though we have a Target and a Starbucks and all that, it's the kind of place that has an annual rodeo. There is only one vintage store and the mall is the opposite of Disneyland: the Saddest Place on Earth. The worst part is that everything here is the same—the houses, the people, the cars. There's no grit. No wild abandon.

I hate Birch Grove with a passion.

One of the few things I *do* like about it, though, is our school: the drama program, the dance program, my French teacher, who's half Egyptian and smokes long, thin cigarettes behind the gym. And I actually like the school itself, like, the buildings. It has a certain coziness to it, a human scale that makes it feel like a second home. I love how the open-air campus is drenched in sunshine, the huge grassy lawn in its center, the outdoor arena with its covered cement stage that looks like the Hollywood Bowl in miniature. It's an idyllic California school, although sometimes I wish I were at an East Coast boarding school with bricks covered in ivy. If I were, I'd wear a sweater set and have a boyfriend named Henry, who plays lacrosse and whose father is a world-renowned physician. That's a pumpkin spice latte kind of world I'll never be in, though.

When Miss B chose me to be her stage manager and chose you to be her lead for *The Importance of Being Earnest*, I ran home and had a dance party in my room. I wanted to cling to you just like the girls in the play and say, *Earnest, my own!* That's how happy I was to be just a few feet away from you every day after school for six weeks. It was too much, those feet. I wanted them to be inches. Millimeters. You gave me a hug once, laughed at one of my rare attempts at a joke. You accepted pieces of gum I offered you. Smiled at me in the halls. Do you know



you are the bestower of the perfect half smile: part smirk, all enigma? Of course you do.

I asked you once why a rock god at night is a drama guy by day and you told me you auditioned for *Singin' in the Rain* (that was way back in my freshman year) on a dare and then you got the lead and your mom made you take the part. And you loved it. I wonder if rock stars are all secretly mama's boys who like to tap-dance.

I love you, Gavin. And maybe it's in the most superficial way, like how I can't stand it when you take off your fedora and run your fingers through your hair. Or how you keep those hands shoved into your front pockets when you're walking to class. I wonder, if you took them out and placed them on my bare skin, would I feel the calluses from all those hours of you alone in your room, playing guitar? Would your fingers be warm or cool? I want to know what it feels like to have your palm against mine, like Romeo and Juliet: *Palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss*.

I still can't believe that when you see me in the halls you say hi. You think it's cool that I want to be a director, so I never had to endure that separation between cast and crew that normally happens. It helped that my best friends were in the show, too. We talk about movies and who my favorite directors are (Julie Taymor and Mike Nichols). We talk about music and who your favorite bands are (Nirvana and Muse). I breathe you in like you're air.

I don't see you on the way to first-period French, which I take because how am I going to speak to my future French lover otherwise (François, Jacques?). Natalie and Alyssa think I'm a weirdo. My best friends are taking Spanish, which, as The Giant says, could be used in the real world (as if France is not part of the real world). I have a bit of trouble concentrating on what Madame Lewis is saying, though, because it's Valentine's Day and even though I dressed up in my *Je t'aime*

shirt, pink poodle skirt, and red tights, I have no valentine and am thus depressed as hell.

“Bonjour, Grace,” Madame says to me. “*Ça va?*”

“What? Oh, um. *Oui, ça va.*”

You should probably know that I’ve never had a boyfriend on Valentine’s Day. Either I break up with them before or get together with them after. And by *them* I mean the one boyfriend I have ever had, which was Matt Sanchez freshman year. It’s becoming more of a problem now than it used to be, this not having a boyfriend on V Day. Before high school, it was enough to pig out on heart-shaped stuff with my friends and watch *Shakespeare in Love* for the millionth time, but Natalie is getting over that guy she met at her church camp last summer and anything lovey makes her super depressed so she’s abstaining from the holiday this year. Alyssa refuses to participate in my celebrations because she says Valentine’s Day is a capitalist ploy invented by soul-killing corporations that prey on women who subscribe to the romantic ideal.

Whatever.

If you were my boyfriend, I bet you’d write me a song or, I don’t know, maybe do something homemade. You don’t seem like a flowers-and-chocolate kind of guy. You’d make cookies that are burned but I still love, or maybe write a ten-page letter filled with all the reasons you adore me. These are both totally acceptable, by the way.

I’m sort of dying to know what you got Summer. What she got you. You’ve been together for a year, so I bet it’s something special. She’s a senior like you, a va-va-voom redhead who somehow makes being in choir sexy. I’d like to believe that if things were different, you might pick me, but all it takes is one look at Summer and I’m quickly disabused of the notion. Mom says I have an interesting face, which is just a nice way of saying I’m not pretty. *Sorry*, she says, *you take after your dad’s side of the family.*



The bell rings and I'm off to second period—AP Comp with Mr. Jackson. The halls are packed as students bleed out of their classrooms. I walk on my tiptoes, looking for your fedora even as I tell myself I'm not really stalking you. Usually I'm guaranteed a Gavin sighting on my walk to Comp because you're in the classroom across from mine, but nope, you are nowhere to be found.

I sink into my chair just as the final bell rings, resigned. You are likely with Summer, ditching and in love. I am stuck in English, trying not to think about you ditching and in love.

Mr. Jackson turns off the lights so that we can watch the conclusion of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*, which we started a couple days ago. It's a pretty badass version, with a young Leonardo DiCaprio who could seriously give you a run for your money in the hotness department. You win, though, hands down.

By the time the credits are rolling, half the class is pretending not to cry as Romeo and Juliet lie dead. It's like, we *knew* it was going to end badly but, even so, it guts us to watch it happen.



# STATISTICS

## THE REAL DEAL: STATISTICS AND SIGNS OF ABUSE

Dating violence affects 1 in 3 teens. (Loveisrespect.org)

Though overall rates of violence against women have decreased since 1993, **young women ages 16 to 24 still experience the highest rates of rape and sexual assault, and people ages 18 and 19 experience the highest rates of stalking.**

- 1 in 10 teens have been physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the last year alone.
- Over 11% of high school girls report having been physically forced to have sexual intercourse.
- Dating violence is a pattern of physical, sexual, verbal and/or emotional abuse in a dating relationship.

## WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

### Warning signs of an abuser:

- Controlling behavior
- Excessive or threatening contact through text messages, phone calls or other forms of communication
  - Obsessive jealousy
- Physical violence such as hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, etc.
  - Put downs and name-calling
  - Sexual pressure

### Warning signs of someone being abused:

- Making excuses for a partner's bad behavior
  - Fear of a dating partner
  - Isolation from family and friends
- Loss of interest in activities and hobbies that were once enjoyable
- Noticeable changes in eating or sleeping patterns, or alcohol or drug use
  - Loss of self-confidence
  - Depression

Take this quiz to find out if you're in a healthy relationship:  
<http://www.loveisrespect.org/for-someone-else/is-my-relationship-healthy-quiz/>

SOME GUYS ARE GRENADES. ~Grace, *Bad Romance*





# DISCUSSION

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM AND BOOK CLUBS

1. Make a list of the top ten things you want in a romantic partner. What things are non-negotiable for you?
2. What makes a romantic relationship good—what makes it work so that both people are happy?
3. What are some things that make a romantic relationship take a turn for the worse?
4. Have you ever been in a relationship where you felt like you weren't treated right? What happened?
5. When you're having problems with your partner, how do you address them?
6. Grace tries—and fails—to break up with Gavin more than once and is always conflicted about whether or not they should stay together. What do you think is keeping her from ending the relationship?
7. Gavin is a pro at getting Grace to give him second chances. In what ways could his behavior be considered manipulative? What role does his jealousy play in their relationship?
8. How does Grace's home life affect her ability to have a healthy relationship with Gavin?
9. Grace's friendships with Nat, Lys, and Gideon all play a major role in her life and cause problems with Gavin. Why is it so hard for her to take their good advice? Why do you think she pushes Gideon away?
10. What is it that gets Grace to finally have the courage to break up with Gavin? Do you understand why it took her so long, or do you feel she could have gotten out sooner?

You can find a digital copy of the resource and discussion guide on the Bad Romance website: [badromancebook.tumblr.com](http://badromancebook.tumblr.com).

If you're not reading the book as a group, the activity below is a great way to bring up the topic of teen dating abuse.

### SHORT STORY READING:

Have students read the short story *Three Imaginary Conversations With You* by Heather Demetrios in the anthology *I See Reality*. This is the story that kick-started *Bad Romance*. Please email Heather for a PDF of the story, to be used for classroom purposes only ([heatherdemetrios@gmail.com](mailto:heatherdemetrios@gmail.com)).

This could open up some great discussion on boundaries and safety in relationships. Keep in mind that there is some language and content in the story that is mature and might be considered offensive.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *THREE IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS WITH YOU*

Many of these questions can be easily adapted to discuss the novel itself.

1. Do you think Jessa is going to break up with Gavin?
2. Do you think this is a “healthy” relationship?
3. In what ways is Gavin a good boyfriend?
4. In what ways is he emotionally or physically abusive?
5. Have you ever rehearsed a conversation in your head beforehand?
6. Why do you think Jessa stays with Gavin?
7. Compare Adam and Gavin.
8. If you were Jessa’s friend, what advice would you give her?
9. What song would you have her listen to before the break-up talk?
10. Do you know anyone like Jessa or Gavin?



## WRITING ACTIVITY:

For Students:

*Bad Romance* and *Three Imaginary Conversations With You* are written in the second-person, as a letter from Grace to her abusive boyfriend Gavin. Think about someone in your life who is hurting you, or has hurt you—it doesn't have to be romantic heartbreak—any kind of hurt will do. Write a letter to them. Afterwards, keep it, burn it, toss it in the trash, or stick it in your journal. Feeling especially brave? Hand-deliver the letter to the person you want to read it.

Prep:

Explain the second-person POV.

Have students take a look at Emily Trunko's *Dear My Blank* Tumblr ([www.dearmyblank.tumblr.com](http://www.dearmyblank.tumblr.com)), which is a collection of anonymous letters sent by teens to her blog that they have no intention of ever delivering. Powerful and raw, these are great examples of the catharsis that is possible in writing such a letter. (Fun fact: Emily is a TEEN and her blog became so popular that she got not one, but two book deals. You can find the books anywhere books are sold).

You can have a short discussion on whether anyone in the class has written a letter, text, or email they didn't send. Ask them why they didn't send it, how it felt to write it, and whether or not they felt better and were able to gain clarity from the situation.

# tumblr.

[www.badromancebook.tumblr.com](http://www.badromancebook.tumblr.com)  
[www.dearmyblank.tumblr.com](http://www.dearmyblank.tumblr.com)

# PRAISE

One of Barnes and Noble's Most Anticipated Contemporary YAs for 2017

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

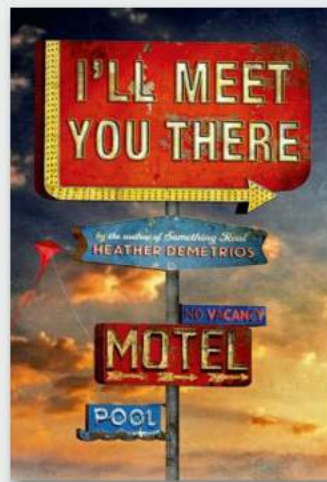
"BAD ROMANCE is a raw, honest, unrelenting novel. Demetrios writes with heartbreaking clarity about the way first love can turn from safe to dangerous, from beautiful to ugly.

Brave, bold, and deeply felt, this book gets it in a profound way. I didn't know I was waiting for a book like this, but it turns out, I've needed it for a long time." - **Corey Ann Haydu, *OCD Love Story***

"A pressing tale of the complicated ways love can go wrong. Like *Speak*, it is one of those rare books that can have a real, lasting impact on readers, and can start important conversations." - **Adi Alsaid, *Let's Get Lost***

"Demetrios has an absolutely killer record with excellent contemps that cut unexpectedly deep and pull no punches when talking about the tougher side of adolescent life, so this one is absolutely at the top of my to-read list." - **Dahlia Adler, *Barnes and Noble Teen Blog***

## PRAISE FOR I'LL MEET YOU THERE



A YALSA 2016 Best Fiction For Young Adults Selection  
A Bank Street Best Children's Book  
A Goodreads Choice Award Nominee  
A Barnes and Noble Best book of 2015





# PRAISE

**Booklist says: \*\*\*Starred Review\*\*\***

"Part coming-of-age, part romance, and part war story, Demetrios' latest is remarkable."

**Chicago Tribune says:**

"By book's end, readers might find themselves weak in the knees, and not just from all those descriptions of the California sun."

**Justine Magazine says:**

"An unforgettable heart-stealer...This unconventional, gritty, and realistic love story takes on complicated issues...And Josh's battle with his wounds (both visible and invisible) will bring tears to your eyes. A powerful read."

**RT Book Reviews says: \*4 stars\***

"Demetrios' latest will have a huge impact not only on YA fans, but also on booklovers of all ages. Her writing exudes raw feelings...this powerfully real story...will keep your pulse racing till the finish."

**Kirkus says:**

"Demetrios again focuses on timely issues, interspersing Skylar's account with short chapters in Josh's anguished voice that relive his painful wartime memories...A heady page-flipping romance."

**HuffPost Books says:**

"Raw and beautiful...*I'll Meet You There* is a book to treasure and hold in your heart."



# RESOURCES

Below are a few fantastic organizations that are working hard to protect vulnerable teens.

**Love Is Respect** ([loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)): This site is amazing. It has quizzes you can take to see if you're in a healthy or unhealthy relationship, tons of resources on what you can do to get help, and how to stay safe. If you are in an abusive relationship, this should be your first stop for online help. Peer advocates are available 24/7 to talk. Text "love is" to 22522 or call 1-866-331-9474.

**Day One** ([dayoneny.org](http://dayoneny.org)): If you are—or think you might be—in an abusive relationship, go here to find out more. You can also call their confidential hotline at (800) 214- 4150 or text (646) 535- DAY1 (3291). For those of you that live in NYC, they provide free counseling and more.

**Break The Cycle** ([breakthecycle.org](http://breakthecycle.org)): This site has tons of info about dating violence. You can find out what the signs are and what you can do about it.

**No More** ([nomore.org](http://nomore.org)): This organization is great and also has information if you are the friend or family member of someone who is being abused. They need you more than ever. For some tips on how to help them, check out [nomore .org/how- to- help/what- to- say/](http://nomore.org/how-to-help/what-to-say/).

**Girls Health** ([girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)): This site has all the phone numbers you need, a great Q and A section, quizzes, stats, and more.

## HOTLINES

These hotlines are free, private, and open 24 hours a day.

- **National Sexual Assault Hotline** 1-800-656-HOPE (1-800-656-4673)
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline** 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233)
- At the National Dating Abuse Hotline, trained peer advocates can talk you through your situation and direct you toward appropriate resources. **You can reach the Dating Abuse Helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by phone call (1-866-331-9474), text (text "loveis" to 22522) or online chat.**

## #CHOOSE YOU

"The only reason you should stay with someone is because you make each other happy. Any other reason is bullshit." ~ Beth, *Bad Romance*





# CONTACT & BIO

## CONTACT

Heather loves meeting with teens to tell her story and raise awareness about teen dating violence. Her dynamic workshops and presentations are inspirational and informative, using humor, real-talk, and truth-telling to empower participants to seek healthy relationships that enrich their lives. She gets into it all: shame, abuse (physical, verbal, emotional), what sexual assault is, manipulation, jealousy, depression, family struggles, how to get help—you name it. Contact Heather directly to schedule an event at your school, library, book club, or other gathering.

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Twitter: @HDemetrios #chooseyou

“I don’t know it now, but there will be a garden inside me. And it will grow thorns.”  
~ Grace, *Bad Romance*



**Heather Demetrios is a critically acclaimed author, writing coach, and certified meditation teacher based in Saint Paul, Minnesota.** she has an MFA in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts and is a recipient of the PEN America Susan P. Bloom Discovery Award for her debut novel, *Something Real*. Her novels include *Little Universes*, *I'll Meet You There*, *Bad Romance*, as well as the *Dark Caravan* fantasy series: *Exquisite Captive*, *Blood Passage*, and *Freedom's Slave*. Her non-fiction includes the Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection *Code Name Badass: The True Story of Virginia Hall*, and she is the editor of *Dear Heartbreak: YA Authors and Teens on the Dark Side of Love*. Her honors include books that have been named Bank Street Best Children's Books, YALSA Best Fiction For Young Adults selections, a Goodreads Choice Nominee, a Kirkus Best Book, and a Barnes and Noble Best Book. Her work has appeared in *LA Review of Books*, *Bustle*, *School Library Journal*, and other fine outlets. Find out more about Heather and her books at [heatherdemetrios.com](http://heatherdemetrios.com).

“I wish I could put a warning label on you.” ~Grace, *Bad Romance*