

PRAISE FOR *ONLY MOSTLY DEVASTATED*

‘A delight! This heartfelt, queer update on *Grease*...
illustrates a timeless truth: love is love is love’
Jenn Bennett, author of *Alex, Approximately*

‘Irresistibly cute and hilariously sweet,
this book warmed my heart with its characters
and love story’

Mason Deaver, author of the bestseller
I Wish You All the Best

‘There can never be enough queer stories about
romance – and when they are told with this
much heart, humor and a swoon-worthy story line,
you never want them to end’

Angelo Surmelis,
author of *The Dangerous Art of Blending In*

‘*Only Mostly Devastated* is the kind of book I wish
existed when my kids were younger – a charming,
funny, laugh-out-loud teen romance that reminds
all readers love comes in a multitude of flavors,
and they are ALL sweet’

Jodi Picoult, *New York Times*–bestselling author of
Small Great Things and *A Spark of Light*

‘A delightful, heartwarming, heartrending story about family, love, friendship, and living your most authentic life. I couldn't put it down’

Sandhya Menon, *New York Times*–bestselling author of *When Dimple Met Rishi*

‘Funny and sweet and super gay, fans of *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* are going to be all over *Only Mostly Devastated!*’

Cale Dietrich, author of *The Love Interest*

‘Wry but earnest, sweet but irreverent, heartbreaking but hopeful. You’ll be rooting for Ollie and his messy, wonderful friends from the first page to the last’

Hannah Capin, author of *The Dead Queens Club* and *Foul Is Fair*

‘With razor-sharp wit, masterful comedic timing, and heaps of heart, these hilarious, lovable, heartbreakingly real characters make *Only Mostly Devastated* an instant hit and Sophie Gonzales one YA author to watch’

Julia Lynn Rubin, author of *Borro Hills*

ONLY
MOSTLY
DEVASTATED

SOPHIE GONZALES

HODDER

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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*To everyone who, in their quest to be cared for
by another, forgot to care for themselves.
Your needs matter, too.*



1

It was late afternoon, on the very last Wednesday of August, when I realized Disney had been lying to me for quite some time about Happily Ever Afters.

Because, you see, I was four days into mine, and my prince was nowhere to be found.

Gone. Vanished.

“I’ll definitely never forget you,” he’d said.

“I don’t think I’ve ever been this happy,” he’d said.

“Please don’t lose contact. I need to see you again one day,” he’d said.

So why was I here, sitting at the kitchen counter and banging my head against a metaphorical wall, weighing up the pros and cons of sending *yet another* message to him?

Like, okay. Yes, if I sent another it’d be three in a row. *Yes* that was semi-stalker level. But I could rationalize this. The first message he’d ignored was in response to his own text on Saturday night. He’d said good night, and I’d said

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good night. End of conversation. He wasn't required to respond. So I could barely even count that.

Then the second message I'd sent didn't exactly *demand* a reply.

Sunday, 11:59 AM

Totally failed at sneaking home. Mom killed me.
#worthit. Please don't judge me for using a hashtag. I'm too cool to abide by your mundane social expectations.

Read Sunday, 2:13 PM

I mean, he could've glanced at that on his drive home and smiled, and not realized he was meant to text back, right? There wasn't strictly a question there, so it was possible. Or maybe he'd seen it, gotten halfway through a reply, and been distracted by something.

Like a house fire. Or an alien abduction.

For four days.

Really, if you thought about it, I had to message him again. In a cool, casual, not desperate kinda way obviously. But with a question this time. So if he saw it and didn't reply, then I'd know *for sure* he was ignoring me.

Okay. I could do this. This wasn't a big deal. It was just a guy texting another guy. A guy who knew all my biggest secrets, had spent the better part of seven weeks making out with me, and had *Seen. Me. Naked*TM.

A guy who'd convinced me he really, really liked me.

A guy who'd *better* have been abducted by goddamn aliens.

So maybe a little bit of clinginess from me was justified. As long as it didn't *come across* as clingy, of course.

Simple. Okay. Go.

Hey Will! So I

Nope. Backspace. Too planned looking.

Dude, you'd never guess what I

What I *what?* There was no way to complete that sentence.

So, I'm assuming you've probably been abducted by aliens, but on the off chance you haven't been

"Ollie. Do you have a second?"

I jumped so hard I almost pressed Send. And let's be honest, if I'd done that, I might as well have thrown myself in the lake. I tried not to seem too flustered as Mom sat on the wooden stool next to me. For good measure, I backspaced the message-in-progress. Just in case. "Uh, sure. What's up?"

Uh-oh. She had that *look* on her face.

My first thought was that it'd happened. Aunt Linda had passed away. I held my breath. As in literally. Like if I was caught breathing it'd make it true, and our family would fall right off its precarious perch on the edge of a cliff called cancer.

That was the reason we'd come to North Carolina in the first place, after all, when Aunt Linda's health took a turn for the worse and she'd needed some time away, to chill out and see family and actually enjoy herself for once. Obviously, my family wanted to see her, so we met her here at the lake, the farthest she could safely go for a holiday. It was the biggest trip I'd taken from California in years, so I'd been more than up for it. I'd been appointed the unofficial, unpaid, uncomplaining—but only because

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they're so damn cute—nanny to her kids, and we'd rented side-by-side lake houses. Things had been good. Great, even. Best summer of my life I'd have said.

But now it was almost over, and it couldn't be ending like this. It *couldn't* be.

"Well, sweetie . . ." Mom started.

Dead. Dead. Dead.

"Aunt Linda is—"

Dead.

"—well, you know, she's not doing great. You've been such a help over the summer, but before that Uncle Roy was run thin trying to care for the kids and Linda, and they can't afford child care with the hospital bills. Not to mention all the extra things they could use a hand with at the moment. She's my sister. I want to make sure I'm here for her."

Wait. So Aunt Linda *hadn't* passed away? The relief hit me so hard I almost missed Mom's next words, too dizzy with happiness to focus.

"Your father and I have decided to put the house up for rent for a while. Maybe for a year or so. We have a place we can stay in Collinswood. Only a few streets away from Roy and Linda, actually. We'll go back to San Jose next week to grab our stuff and say good-bye to everyone for now. You'll be back here in time to start the school year."

Wait, what? What, what, and what, exactly?

"Stay . . . here? Move here, you mean? To North Carolina?"

But we were supposed to be going home next week. How could we *come back*?

Mom shrugged. Her blue, deep-set eyes had heavy bags underneath them, and her lightweight black cardigan was inside out. The tag, poking meekly out of the side seam,

rustled as she dropped her arms by her sides. “Ollie, we don’t have a choice.”

“But . . . do you . . . could I stay at home, and you guys can stay here?” Hey, the more I thought about it, the more sense it made. Just because I had fun playing babysitter for the summer didn’t mean I wanted to drop everything and make it a permanent role. “Yeah, actually, that could work. I can take care of the house, and I can drive myself around. I can pay the bills myself. I’ll pick up a few extra shifts at the store. I can come up later, if it looks like you’ll be here for a while, but . . . I mean, Mom, the band. And the guys. I can’t . . .”

Mom rested her elbows on the counter and buried her forehead in her palms. “Ollie. Please. Don’t make this any more difficult.”

I slumped back, staring at my phone. What was I supposed to say here? It’s not that I was a brat or anything, but this was a lot to take in. My mind raced as it tried to process the enormity of it all. Senior year without any of my friends? At a totally unfamiliar school, with teachers who didn’t know me, right when grades actually started to matter? I’d have to quit my job, and my band, and I’d miss homecoming . . .

Then I peeked back at Mom, and I only had to take one look at the expression on her face to realize this was non-negotiable. Reluctantly, I shoved all the reasons why this would ruin everything to the back of my mind. I’d come to terms with it all later. In my room. After finding an appropriately melancholy playlist on Spotify.

But—but—but, a part of me piped up. It’s not all melancholy. Now you live in the same state as Will. Seeing him again might actually be plausible now.

My stomach flipped at the thought. You had silver linings,

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and you had platinum linings. This lining was firmly of the platinum variety. “Okay. Well, it’s . . . sudden. But okay. We’ll make it work.”

Mom brightened, and pulled me into a hug. “That was easier than I expected.”

My voice came out muffled against her chest. “I reserve the right to complain constantly moving forward. I’d sound like a monster if I said no and you know it. Not that I had a choice, did I?”

As Mom let me go, she gave a brief laugh. “No, God no, but I appreciate the cooperation all the same.”

“At least you’re honest.” I forced a smile, and Mom hopped off the stool to start lunch preparations.

“We *will* make it work, I promise,” she said as she clattered around in the crisper to retrieve some tomatoes and lettuce. “Sometimes we have to make sacrifices for the people we love, right? It might not be ideal, but we may as well do it with a grin.”

I nodded absentmindedly and went back to my phone. At least the first problem was solved. This totally counted as a good enough reason to send multiple text messages.

Now he’d have to reply, right?