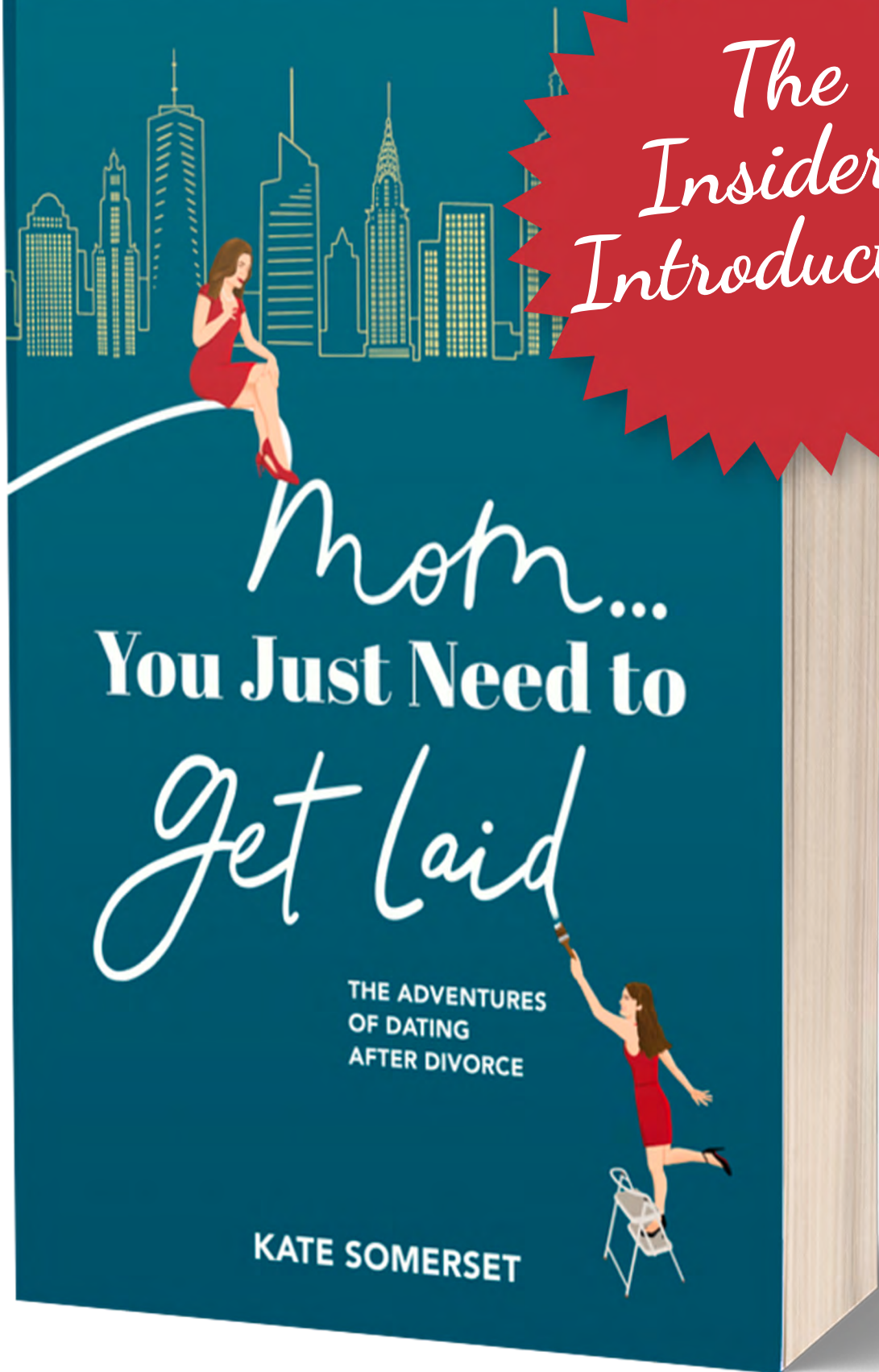


*The  
Insider's  
Introduction*

*Mom...*  
**You Just Need to**  
*Get Laid*

THE ADVENTURES  
OF DATING  
AFTER DIVORCE

KATE SOMERSET





# *Insider's Introduction*

## **THE BACK STORY OF THE BOOK TITLE**

It was 12:30 AM on a summer Saturday night in Texas. The crowd in my kitchen was predictably noisy—my 18-year-old daughter Ella and her girlfriends had returned home.

After a night out, they were bringing the party inside. Carrying bags of In-N-Out burgers and fries, they landed in the kitchen, command central in my house.

A hub of food preparation and consumption, the sprawling space was always where everyone wanted to be. The white floor, white tile backsplashes, white appliances, white cabinets, and tall, deep-set bay windows with their beveled glass panes were inviting. The views to a big lawn in the front and a red brick multilevel patio in the back situated the room for all-day and all-night activity, without missing out on anything that was happening outside.

And for me, the kitchen was also an office. My computer workstation, files, phone, notepads and “to do” lists were neatly arranged on the non-food side, which gave me a seamless transition from dining to doing. Except for dressing and sleeping, I hardly ever left the room when I was home.

That night Ella and Company commandeered the long kitchen island to consume their midnight snack. Regaling each other with jokes and stories from the evening, they used code words to keep me from fully understanding their meanings.

The giggles and snorts of laughter coming from Ella’s crowd at the island were hard to ignore, even though I was across the room, absorbed in my latest email composition. Half of me was thrilled they were having so much fun. The other half of me was irritated by being disrupted during a time I needed to complete an important work project.

But all of me was glad that Ella was at our house with her friends. That meant I knew her whereabouts, not always a guarantee on weekends. It had been a challenging year for her... and for me.

After 24 years, I was going through a significant transition—a divorce that I had seen coming for years, a definite move from the house where I had lived my whole married life and raised Ella, and a likely shift in my career and work, a lot of those details unknown.

Several months before, my ex-husband had moved out. No matter that Ella and I could now finally breathe different air, the removal of one other adult from the environment meant Ella’s life just wasn’t the same.

Having a mom working at all hours AND adding on all the responsibilities that come with divorce preparations gave Ella a lot of unsupervised freedom. And in her most vulnerable years. Even though she was an older teen, Ella's need for an active and present parent was still essential. I wasn't always physically there for observation and course correction.

And so, she and her friends sometimes tested me, often in ways that made me laugh. Why didn't I see THAT one coming? I would wonder.

Ella's teenage friendships had been predictable in some ways, and not in others. She moved easily in and out of her age-appropriate social groups, which included some friends who lived life in the fast lane. Ella could be a risk taker. And she believed in speaking the truth and thinking about the fallout later.

At times more of an "old soul" than a teenager, Ella often surprised me with her adult insights. And with a spot-on directness, she never minced words when tackling difficult or even verboten subjects.

It was Ella who first suggested the idea of divorce to my husband and me. Saying out loud the sentiments he and I had both felt but never spoken, she boldly crossed a parent/child 'forbidden topic' line, and never looked back.

Cornering us together over the previous Thanksgiving weekend, she challenged us:

"You two are miserable. Why are you still together?"

That zinger of a question sparked the most honest conversation of at least a decade. And the upshot was that Ella had it exactly right. My quarter of a century marriage had run its course, and I needed to end it.

The three-way talk between Ella, my husband, and me happened almost a year before the In-N-Out hamburger feast in the kitchen.

By that night, divorce papers had been filed. And I was dealing with lawyers, accountants, and movers, while silently beginning to hatch a formulated plan for the new me.

And for the first time, I was sensing Ella regarded me as a person, separating from my old life and taking control of my future.

Anxious to see who we both would be once the divorce was completed, Ella repeatedly asked why the process took so long. Since I had only estimates of time, but no guaranteed end date, I could give her no satisfactory answer.

That frustrated her.

Toggling between complaining like a teenager or adopting a more adult perspective, Ella kept me off balance with her verbal poking and prodding.

This night was no different.

After she and her friends finished inhaling their drive-through feast, Ella plopped into my desktop computer chair at the other end of the kitchen. I had gotten up for just a moment when she seized the opportunity, her friends circling around her.

"Honey, you guys can't use the computer now," I said to her, as they began a Facebook search on a guy they had run across earlier that evening.

"Why not?" Ella shot back.

"Because I have work to do, and besides it's late, and time to bring an end to this party."

"Oh, Mom," Ella argued. "You are so controlling. Why are you so bossy and always telling me what to do?"

"Thirty more minutes before everyone has to go," I said to the group. "But take it to your room in the meantime," I directed Ella.

Her friends parted to either side of the computer chair. Ella slid out, rose to her feet, and looked straight at me with a funny little smile.

"I wish you could calm down and have some fun," she said.

And as she walked away with her friends in tow, Ella looked back over her shoulder at me. With an arch in her eyebrows, she announced matter-of-factly:

"Mom, You Just Need to Get Laid!"

Completely taken by surprise, I could only gasp:

"What?!"

"Yes, you heard me," Ella stood her ground. "You need a boyfriend. Then maybe you'd be human."

"You know that's not going to happen," I retorted. Her friends were laughing hard, trying not to look at me.

"I'm separated and not divorced. And besides, if I had a boyfriend, your dad would have me with a millstone around my neck in a pond somewhere!"

"Are you EVER going to date," she queried?

"I can't see it at all right now," I answered. "I don't think it's in the cards for me," I said honestly.

"Seriously, Mom, why?" Ella wouldn't let it go. "You should get out there and enjoy your life before you get too old. Honestly, you deserve to find someone who loves you. So, promise me you will date, AND that you won't forget about the OTHER thing I said. It will make you a new woman! In fact, I'm not leaving this kitchen until you tell me you agree."

By now, I was laughing. And I couldn't stop. And neither could Ella's friends. The more I laughed, the more Ella pressed.

"Mom, you just REALLY need to get laid!" she repeated, doing a little dance around the island.

To bring an end to the madness, and, in a moment of weakness, I offered her a compromise:

"Alright, honey. I'll make a deal with you. You're 18 now. By the time you're 21, I'll get that done!"

Ella came running towards me, poised to give me a high five. "I'm holding you to it!" Our hands slapped together. I couldn't believe what I had just agreed to.

In truth, I couldn't imagine any of it. I had endured breast cancer surgery, treatment, and the aftermath. I had been in a marriage where I was a housemate for fourteen years. I hadn't flirted with men, or even thought about dating, in almost thirty years. I was in the middle of a complicated divorce. Meeting men was not even on my radar.

## **MY EPIPHANY**

My divorce was almost finished, and I was quietly contemplating leaving my old life and moving somewhere new. And then an odd thing happened. I noticed that men were engaging me. In a bookstore, a coffee shop, the airport or even a gas station, I was getting looks, and conversations were starting to happen.

For 24 years of marriage, I had never encountered this. Under challenging circumstances, I was proud that I had been loyal, and the best spouse I knew how to be. Even though it was impossible to continue staying married, I was leaving, sure that I had given it my all.

I hadn't been looking at men, and they hadn't been looking at me. So when it started occurring, I asked my therapist. "What could be different?"

"It's simple," he said. "The universe brings to you what you are open to receiving. You give off signals that let others know you are available. Availability can simply mean that you're willing to have a conversation. It can mean that you smile back. It can mean that you don't look away. It's subtle. And you may not even notice the shift in yourself. But it is happening. Remain open to the possibilities. And let your heart go there too. You have a lot of love to give. Enjoy the ride."

I left his office that day, thinking about what those possibilities might be. Six months later, I moved from Texas to New York. It was the hardest, scariest, riskiest, loneliest and BEST decision I have ever made. In a nanosecond, my entire life flipped.

Not only did I have new work, I also had a new place to live, a completely different routine, and a fierce need to build a community for myself.

## **WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK**

At first, I resisted the idea of dating, especially going online to meet potential suitors. But within a couple of months of living in a completely new environment, it began to sound like fun.

So, I created a dating profile. As with everything I do, I like to go big. And dating was going to be no exception. So, I joined five dating sites, and the journey began.

In two years, I have gone out with twice the number of men as the number of years I was married. Most I connected with online, but some I met in person.

Each date was unique, as was every man. As I began to accumulate stories, I told my girlfriends what was happening in my life. Their encouragement to share my dating adventures got me thinking.

How could I motivate others to step out there? How could I demonstrate that life should be taken less seriously? How could I be a role model for adventure and reinvention? How could I capture for others to enjoy some of the craziest, as well as some of the best escapades that have ever happened to me?

I'll write them down, I decided. And the result is this book. I did it for me, yes, but also for you.

This book contains fifteen stories about fifteen men. I've chosen this group because they are alternately the most compelling, unique, or unusual of my experiences.

Names have been changed, but not descriptions or circumstances. Each text and conversation are word-for-word (including egregious typos and bad grammar in one chapter in particular!). On occasion, I have slightly tailored events to compress timelines.

A number of these men continue to be good friends (read my Closing Reflections at the end!) and know their stories are included in this book. One said: "Please write anything you want about me! It will make me look so much better!"

Each chapter is a self-contained story.

Sometimes it's the tale of a single date. Sometimes the chapter describes a more extended connection. In every case, my goal is to accurately portray the men I have had the pleasure of meeting.

From funny to strange, to complicated to romantic, each date I have been on has made me stronger and more confident. I am grateful and appreciative that men of all different stripes and types have been interested in me.

And in every case, I remain interested in them and their lives. What have they lived through to make them who they are? What are their challenges, hopes, and dreams? How might I learn from their experiences, and they learn from mine?

From the first date to all the subsequent ones, I employ my style of connecting to better my dating experiences. I have always believed that we take responsibility for the quality of our relationships by the attitude that we bring towards them. If we are genuinely thoughtful about how we interact, from not being afraid to initiate a conversation, to remembering details about another person, to authentically caring about them, our lives will be enriched.

I wrote this book to encourage you to view your circumstances in the bravest, boldest way you can. You'll discover MY version of brave and bold in these pages:

- Competing with a dog for a man's attention.
- Taking a friend as a chaperone on a date.
- Recovering after sending the wrong text message to the wrong man.
- Flying across the ocean to meet a man I had only known a week.
- Holding a man accountable for breaking an agreed upon plan.

We all face challenges in building and maintaining relationships. The best results happen when we put the best energy into them, consistently and with a genuine spirit.

Enjoy my experiences, and may you find joy in your own. Be open to the laughter, the surprises, and especially the possibilities. They are there if you look. I promise.

## **WHO IS KATE SOMERSET?**

I wrote this book under a pen name. Kate Somerset IS me—in my move from Texas to New York, in my varied and unpredictable dating experiences, and in my belief in taking a risk and seizing the opportunities in life.

I lived thirty years of adulthood in Texas before hitting the New York City scene three years ago. I couldn't have written these stories if I hadn't made the move.

This book is born from my desire to encourage anyone who thinks they can't or shouldn't put themselves out there. My writing under a pen name allows you, the reader, to believe that you can be Kate Somerset too.

We can all have a sense of adventure and curiosity. We can all enjoy life through the prism of friendship, kindness, and empathy. We can all see people for who they are, appreciating their amazing uniqueness. We can all have fun, in ways both big and small.

Believe that you can be Kate. She lives in all of us.

## HOW TO READ THE BOOK

The fifteen men portrayed here are real people with real lives. My life intersected with theirs over a two-year period.

Chapters are not chronological. But read them in order to get the greatest enjoyment. You'll find clues to a timeline in a few. But you'll have to use your imagination to figure out the details. The song titles and illustrations are hints to what the chapters contain.

I hope you are amused, entertained, and touched. Share this book with friends who are dating, or thinking about it. The common experiences we all have help us know we are not alone.

A final note: This book was completed just as the pandemic began. The stories recounted here happened before our world changed. But I believe the universal desire for connection and finding meaning in relationships—no matter how or when we pursue them—will stand the test of time.

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