

It's Called a Break-up Because It's Broken

The Smart Girl's Break-up Buddy

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Extract

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GREG'S INTRO



Long, long ago in a sad galaxy far far away, I was dating this stone-cold Superfox. And when I say dating, what I really mean to say is that I was sick in love with her, while she thought I was a “really good guy.” Needless to say, things fell apart. We had one of those awkward breakups where you’re living together and sleeping in the same bed but you’re not going out anymore. “Excuse me, I know you’re seeing someone else, but can I have some of that pillow?” Ouch. Who does that? Me, as it turns out. I was so smitten (read: in love with not getting what I want) with this girl that I was sure that if I was just near her, taking any crumb thrown my way and drinking myself to sleep every night, she’d find me attractive again and want my sad ass back. Well, it wasn’t long before she decided to bail. So off she went to New York to pursue her career, and, more important, her new man.

Now, you’d think that after someone leaves you for another per-

son and moves to another city across the country you would get that it's over, because it is. But I didn't. I was in love with the romantic and ill-conceived idea that I could get her back. And how would I do that? Drunken late-night phone calls rife with begging and tears. Bravo! How hot is that? Sooooo not hot, and not the least bit effective, either. Not only was I dragging my heart through the muck, but also my dignity. I had managed to degrade myself even further—from someone she wasn't in love with anymore to someone she pitied and avoided. Now, to be fair, this particular girl was patient and tolerant with me, but I was making life miserable for her. I began to alienate my good friends with my obsession, my work began to suffer, and I looked like shit. Even worse, I was drinking like it was the day before Prohibition.

Well, one night after too many tequila shots I figured I would blow in a call to Ms. New York City just to see if there had been any change in her insistence that she was not the girl for me. (Here's where the story gets good.) She was living in the New York Paramount Hotel at the time, waiting for her apartment to open up. With the number committed to memory, I drunk-dialed . . . "Paramount Hotel," said the fellow on the other end. Now realize this: It's probably 2:30 A.M. Los Angeles time, making it 5:30 A.M. in New York. I don't know the exact time because numbers weren't making sense. Good start. So the desk clerk answers, "Paramount Hotel. How may I direct your call?" Well, I was so smashed that I couldn't even pronounce my lady's name. Seriously, I'd have made more sense if I'd just barked like a dog. The desk clerk said, "I'm sorry, sir, can you say that again?" I tried again, unsuccessfully. "Sir, perhaps you'd like to spell it?" (Oh my God, man! Have some self-respect. Put down the phone,

Greg!) But I didn't. I took a stab at spelling it. Finally, he understood whom it was that I was trying to reach. But right before he was about to put me through to her room he said the most amazing thing. He said, "Are you sure you want to make this call, sir?" What? I thought. Are you kidding me? Out of the drunken blackness came this anonymous voice of concern. "Am I sure I want to make this call?" And I had a moment. No, I thought, I don't want to make this call. I've made this call before. This call never works out. This call always makes it worse. This call takes me further and further away from the place I want to be. Which is a place that is dignified and cool. "No," I said. "I don't want to make this call. Thanks." And I hung up and passed out, fully clothed, the last shreds of my dignity still intact.

The next day, hungover and sad, I remembered the voice on the other end of the line. The voice that had said, "Are you sure you want to make this call?" I thought, Wouldn't it be great if you had that voice in your head all the time? Your own personal breakup buddy, someone there to make sure you don't make the bad phone call, the ill-advised drive-by, the decision to dress up in their clothes and pretend you're them as a way of getting inside their thoughts? That's why we've come up with this book. This book is that voice. We are the friends who care enough about you to make sure you do this thing right. Breakups hurt like a motherf*#ker, but they are not the end of the world. The pain is temporary, and if handled properly, they can even be life-changing. Our goal is to help you turn your breakup into the event that changes your life for the better. After all . . . you are a Superfox.

Greg

AMIIRA'S INTRO



It's past two in the morning. You're on your third glass of wine. You're wearing his sweater because it still smells like him (and quite frankly, he never really smelled that great, but I'm going to give it to you because I've been there). I've been the saddest girl in the world, with a mangled heart and the certainty that getting over him was impossible. I've been the girl so in love with a person incapable of giving me what I needed out of a relationship that I not only married him but gladly gave away every last shred of my self-esteem to keep him. I've been the girl who not only suffers through an unhealthy, demoralizing relationship but then goes back to it in hopes that time spent apart has inspired him to love me enough to change . . . or even try. And guess what? It didn't. I've been consumed with despair, confusion, anger—truly devastated by the end of a relationship that I thought was going to last forever. I've cried into glass after glass of pinot grigio, smoked packs of cigarettes, lost my appetite, my ability to

sleep, and my ability to function. I've obsessed, rebounded, been pissed, sought professional help, leaned on my friends, moved across the country, got dogs, made new friends, shopped excessively, and even had other boyfriends who did love me despite the fact that I was still so hung up on the past that I was completely incapable of giving *them* what they needed from me. Truth be told, I rode that horse long after it had up and died and married someone else. On the outside, I wore the illusion that I was over it and that the end of the marriage was best for us both. But that charade was all smoke and mirrors and empty words. Being brokenhearted is like having broken ribs. On the outside it looks like nothing's wrong, but every breath hurts. Let's just say my ribs were broken for a long time.

Now, it may surprise you to hear that in all other areas of my life I was confident and successful. It's true. I had a kick-ass job, made good money, had lots of friends, a great apartment, cool clothes, excellent taste in music, etc. . . . But for whatever reason, getting over this guy took forever. He was my kryptonite. And like Superman, I was powerless in his wake. But if you've seen the movies, you know that Superman always figures out a way to overcome kryptonite. And thankfully, I did too.

Now, defeating kryptonite and getting over a broken heart is incredibly tough. It's also wildly empowering. But the even bigger victory is finally living your own life again without the constant presence of heartache. That's the goal, and we're here to help you get there. I've stood where you're standing now, broken to the point that I couldn't get past the idea that my life wasn't turning out the way I'd planned. But guess what? Once I got through it and started living my life differently, making bet-

ter decisions and demanding more from myself and for myself, I got a windfall that I never imagined. Today, my life is even better than I ever dreamed or planned. I have a husband whom I adore and whose love and devotion for me blows my mind every day. I have two beautiful daughters who are the funniest and most delightful people I've ever had the joy of knowing. And I have the very best friends and family in the world, whom I am grateful for every day. I would have missed it all if I'd wasted my life trailing after my ex and staying stuck in my grief. It's like my Granny always said: "Even with all the mayonnaise in the world, you can't make chicken salad out of chicken shit." Feel free to apply that wisdom to your bad relationship.

*Love,
Amiira*

WHAT LIES AHEAD



So how is it that a Superfox like you finds herself holding the winning ticket in the pain lottery? A seemingly endless jackpot of sorrow that you won't be splitting with anyone else. That doesn't mean you're alone. In fact, as our stories show, everyone goes through it. But here's the thing that you need to know right now: **YOU ARE GOING TO GET THROUGH THIS.** And like every lottery winner, you can either take it in one lump sum and figure out what you're going to do with it, **OR** you can spread it out in yearly installments and really make it last. We prefer option one. Sure, it's less pain than if you drag it out for years, but if you take it all now, you get to decide what you're going to do with it. How to invest it, spend it, roll around in it—or get rid of it.

Breakups are among the most excruciating things that can happen to a person invited to the concert called life. We acknowledge this and in no way want to belittle your heartbreak.

But we've purposefully made the tone of this book humorous in an effort to distract you from the very real and overwhelming feelings that you're having. We intend to give you genuine advice and practical suggestions for not only dealing with this insufferable situation but also redecorating your living room. "What?" you ask. Believe it or not, it's all part of the process.

If you're reading our book right now, it's probably because you've been dumped, you're brokenhearted, you're still stuck on your ex, or even all of the above. Perhaps you were the dumper and are having second thoughts—we'll deal with you soon enough, but we're pretty sure you made the right decision. Whether you delivered or received the "It's Not You, It's Me" speech, as hard as it is to hear right now, your relationship wasn't a match. We know you wanted it to be and are hoping that we're going to tell you that this isn't real. That he or she will be knocking down your door tomorrow, begging to be taken back, and all your pain and heartache will be erased. That there's a simple way to fix all the problems, and if you just try a little bit harder you can still have the happily ever after that you envisioned. You want us to tell you that people *can* change—but the truth of the matter is that *it's called a breakup because it's broken*. Even if you can't see it right now, if you've broken up, at least one person in your relationship knows it deep down. And if he ended it, that means he doesn't want to try to fix it either.

The hard truth is that breakups are sink-or-swim. Some people spend their whole life in an emotional downward spiral because they can't get over lost love. Others, most notably you, use it as a turning point to reevaluate, rebuild, and possibly redeco-

orate (we weren't kidding about the living room). Bottom line: This can be a breakup or a breakover. It's up to you.

"Who are you to give me advice?" you shout, disrupting the other customers in the bookstore. "Why should I listen to you guys or even read any further, for that matter?" Keep it down, Crazypants, everyone's looking at you now. Here's who we are. We're two people who have both experienced truly self-esteem-crushing, spirit-breaking, gut-wrenchingly painful breakups of which we were on the receiving end. Let's just say they were stinky and they also sucked and they made us want to lie in bed for the rest of our lives. Thank God we didn't make that choice. (Just think of the bedsores and long, curling fingernails we'd have by now.) Those breakups led to what we like to think of as our happy marriage. (Don't worry—you won't be hearing about our marriage every ten pages. There is nothing worse than self-satisfied married people telling you how it is. We just think it's significant that our worst experiences led to what we ultimately think of as our best. 'Nuff said?)

This is a different book from *He's Just Not That Into You*. That book was designed specifically to help you figure out when your relationship was going nowhere or whether your boyfriend was, well, into you. But we know that even when you realize he's just not that into you, the hardest part can still be getting up the courage to end the relationship and move on. Breaking up is scary, painful, disruptive, and traumatic—even if you know on some level that it's the right thing to do—so *It's Called a Breakup Because It's Broken* is designed to help you *not only* get out of an unsatisfying relationship but also get over it so that you can be

ready for the better things in life that are coming your way. At the end of the day, it's about whether YOU like yourself enough to face the reality that your romance wasn't working, to recognize that it wasn't giving you what you needed and deserved, and to pull yourself out of the dumps and seize the opportunity before you. Because as messed up as everything seems right now, this could be the single best thing that's ever happened to you.

That's right—even better than when you got your first apartment, found those Gucci stilettos on sale, won the Oscar for best actress, or whatever appears on your own personal highlight reel. Think about it this way: When you and your ex got into this relationship, you were two brand-new sports cars driving side by side. You were sleek, desirable, sexy, and confident, and the ride was exhilarating. After a while you zigged when he zagged, you weren't driving the same speed anymore, one of you was always trying to catch up, and eventually you crashed and totaled the cars. When the insurance paid out, one of you decided to buy a new car instead of fixing the totaled one. For those of you who don't own cars, the translation of this metaphor is that you and your ex (or soon-to-be ex) no longer share the belief that the relationship is worth fixing. One of you wants a new car altogether. And besides, who wants a relationship that despite attempted repairs always stalls when you try to shift gears? Not you.

It's called a breakup because it's broken, and in the pages ahead you will come to learn that that's actually a good thing. So read on, breakup warrior! From adversity comes greatness. Life's biggest rewards come from the biggest challenges, or something like that. Many of us have found the road to a better life and a truer love in the face of some serious heartbreak. Some of us even

happened to have pens handy to write down catchy proverbs to help inspire or annoy you in your time of need. So let's dive in already, because there's nothing more annoying than a self-help book full of nothing but proverbs! We've done our best to make this book so much more.

The format includes a question-and-answer section, workbook exercises, firsthand stories from our own breakups, and a little thing we like to call the Psycho Confessional, which is where you can turn when you need an "At least I'm not doing that bad" boost to your self-esteem. The questions and examples in this book have come not only from our own experiences, but also from those of our friends and our extensive breakup survey, where well over 500 people shared the gory details of their sad but true breakups with us. You'll be glad they did. And now let's turn the page and start the process of finding our way back to an even more rocking you.

WHAT IF YOU'RE STILL TOGETHER?



Just because you know that your relationship is no good doesn't make the process of ending it any easier. Even if you have reached the realization that he's just not that into you, you're just not that into him, or you're mutually not that into each other, that doesn't mean that you've been successful at pulling the trigger. We know that, and in fact have both been guilty of letting dead-end relationships linger on way past their shelf life because the task of ending them was just too difficult. It's hard to have the courage to walk away from the comfort of a relationship, even a bad one, and be alone for what may be a while. What's more, it's easy to find reasons not to end it: I don't want to have to look for another apartment, I don't have the money to be on my own, I won't have a date to my cousin's wedding, I can't stand the thought of him being with anyone else.

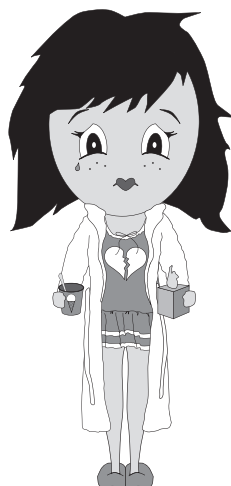
But here's the thing to remember: Wasting time in a relationship that blows is just that—wasted time. Time that could

be spent looking for and meeting the person who's destined to be your perfect match. Ultimately, there's no benefit to hanging on—you're merely procrastinating and delaying the inevitable. Staying in a relationship that's on life support isn't going to bring it back to life. "But how will I get over it?" We'll help you get over it—that's what this book is all about. So do the *both* of you a favor and end it. Pick up the phone right now and tell him you need to talk. Pull the plug already and come with us on the road to the bigger, brighter future that awaits.

* *Part 1*

THE BREAKUP

(Or: How the Hell Did a
Kick-Ass Lady Like Myself End up
in This Agonizing Nightmare?)



INT. HIS APARTMENT-NIGHT

An attractive couple, late twenties, sit on the couch in front of a burning fire. The setting is romantic. He gets up and paces nervously, taking a swig from his bottle of beer.

HIM

There's something I've been meaning to talk to you about.

She expectantly puts down her wineglass and checks that her lips are appropriately glossed for the big moment.

YOU

We can talk about anything. That's why we're so perfect together.

He paces in front of her, searching for the right words.

HIM

It's just that . . . we've been together for a while now. And I always have a great time with you . . .

YOU

I know, it's like we were made for each other!

HIM

You're a really special person, and someday you'll make the perfect wife . . .

YOU

(excitedly) Yes???

He squats down in front of her and grabs both her hands. She can hardly believe it's about to happen . . .

HIM

. . . Just not for me. I think we should see other people . . .

She clearly didn't hear him, as she interrupts him . . .

YOU

I'd love to! (realizing) Wait--what did you just ask me?

HIM

(relieved) Really? That's great! I thought you were going to get really upset. I've been trying to figure out how to tell you that for weeks.

She gets up and walks to the kitchen and starts pulling open all the drawers.

HIM

What are you looking for?

YOU

Something to hit you with.



Chapter One

IT'S CALLED A BREAKUP BECAUSE IT'S BROKEN



A AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAHHHHHHHH! F*#k, it hurts. It's rocking
the very core of your being. You never saw it coming. You knew this was going to happen. You were going to do it first. You only broke it off with him before he broke it off with you. You guys were supposed to be together forever. You never liked him that much anyway. He was such a great kisser. The sex wasn't that great. You really liked his family. He hated your friends. You hated his shoes. You miss him soooooo much. There's no doubt about it—breakups suck. And now here you are holding this stupid “Breakup Book” because, quite honestly, you'd do anything not to feel like this and maybe this book will shed some light on what you're going through. Maybe you'll get some sleep tonight. Or stop sleeping all the time.

In these first few hours or days or weeks of your breakup,

there's one all-important truth that you need to recognize: Some things can't and shouldn't be fixed, especially that loser who dumped you or forced you to dump him. It's over for a reason, and even if you're in denial about it, deep down inside you probably know what that reason is. Even if you feel baffled by his decision to end it, it boils down to the same thing every time: Your relationship, despite its promise, has ceased to be right for one or both of you. It is, in effect, broken. That doesn't make the breakup any easier to handle or change the overwhelming nature of the sadness that you feel. But that sadness, in turn, doesn't make it less broken. If you've reached this point, where one or both of you feel that walking away is the best course of action, the cracks are there. And starting today, you're not the kind of woman who settles for broken or hangs on to damaged goods, be it a radio, a pair of shoes, or a relationship. Your life is not a yard sale. It's time to get rid of all the broken stuff that you've been lugging around for days, months, and maybe even years, and make the bold decision to start looking for stuff that works. The bright, clean, simple, easy, runs-so-smoothly-I-don't-even-have-to-think-about-it kind of works. Being the first one to recognize that a relationship isn't a match doesn't win you any great prize—just the guilt of having to hurt someone's feelings. So even though you are clearly wounded, getting out of this broken relationship is the best thing possible, even if you didn't know it was broken until now.

“But some things *can* be fixed,” you say. True, but can your relationship be fixed? Anything is possible, but we'd say probably not. Generally, if one person thinks that the breakup is the right move, they're probably right even if it feels so wrong. Because unless

there are two people putting on the coveralls and getting down in the trenches with some duct tape and superglue and a fierce determination, it isn't going to happen. Need more convincing? How about this: The person you loved took a good long look at the awesomeness that is you, evaluated your relationship together, and said, "No, thanks. I'll try my luck elsewhere." Or you said it to him. Either way, that alone should make you realize that it wasn't a match made in heaven and they're not worth donning coveralls for. Anyone who assesses you or your relationship as disposable is not worthy of your time or tears.

Right now, your mind is probably working overtime to come up with all the reasons that you should still be together. Your heart is hurting and your mind wants to find a way to undo the pain. Just remember, though, that any reasons you come up with are ultimately irrelevant. The harsh reality is that even if you have everything else in common, the one thing you don't have in common is the belief that this relationship can work. That, my friend, trumps your shared love of puppies, The Dave Matthews Band, and Mexican food.

It's hard not to rack your brain, searching for reasons why the two of you couldn't make it work, but sometimes the only real answer is the simplest one: People come together and move apart. It's the age-old ebb and flow of relationships. Some are shorter journeys, and others were meant for a lifetime. That goes for friendships as well. We become attached to what's familiar and sometimes we hold on to things that are safe and predictable even if they're bad for us. A lot of the pain you are experiencing right now is actually fear. Fear of things being different than how you liked them, fear of never finding another love, fear of being alone,

fear of having to fill your time differently. We're afraid of the unknown. The answer to all the questions swirling in your head—What will I do on weekends? Will I meet someone else?—is “You won't know until you get there.” That's hard, and it's scary. But for the moment, you need to concentrate on what you do know—that you and he no longer share the belief that your relationship has a future. It's broken, and the longer you stay stuck in a dead-end relationship or spend your days mourning one, the less time you get on this planet to experience a great one.

So take a deep breath, steel yourself, and realize that this is going to hurt for a while. There is no quick remedy for the powerful sting of heartbreak, though we're going to try to make it easier for you throughout the book. You're going to feel like crap head to toe and run the gamut of emotions. Edgy, moody, angry, depressed, nauseated—you name it. In fact, the amount of time it takes for you to start feeling great about yourself again is directly proportional to how much it sucks right now—especially if you weren't the one who broke it off. Because at the end of the day, someone you loved, trusted, and valued has rejected you, and that really smarts. It's hard to not take it personally. But—and here's the important part—the fact of the matter is, they're wrong about you. Just because your relationship is broken doesn't mean you are! No matter what happened between you, no matter what you may or may not have done wrong, you are still a kick-ass person. And even though you might not believe it right now, this breakup is the first step toward finding someone truly worthy of your greatness.