


HEART SHAPED GLASSES

A JULIET PUBLICATION



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Juliet



At Juliet, our belief is that to build brands people love, you have to love people like crazy.

That means getting out there and listening to people from all walks of life. With open eyes and open hearts – we want to hear what people have to say and get into a judgment-free zone of understanding.

This isn't about a client ask. No brief. There is no "so what?" for brands at the end of this story.

Heart Shaped Glasses is about the power of looking at the world with our hearts and seeing what appears before us.



“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

-Little Prince
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



ISSUE 01: TO HAVE LOVED AND LOST



We interviewed four people who have re-entered the dating world after the loss of a significant other. They were introduced to us through mutual friends, the r/Widowers subreddit, and #widowtok. Through hours of heartfelt Zoom meetings, phone calls, and DMs, we listened to their experiences.

A common refrain we heard from those we interviewed was that others couldn't understand the depth of this kind of grief.

In an effort to let their words and experiences shine, and to tap into a humanity's collective experience with grief, we plugged quotes from those we spoke with directly into Midjourney – allowing their words to come to life.

**THE FOLLOWING QUOTES AND
STORIES ARE THEIR WORDS.**

Our respondents had all talked to their partners about death before. They pictured nursing homes and old age. Nothing could have ever prepared them for a sudden passing.

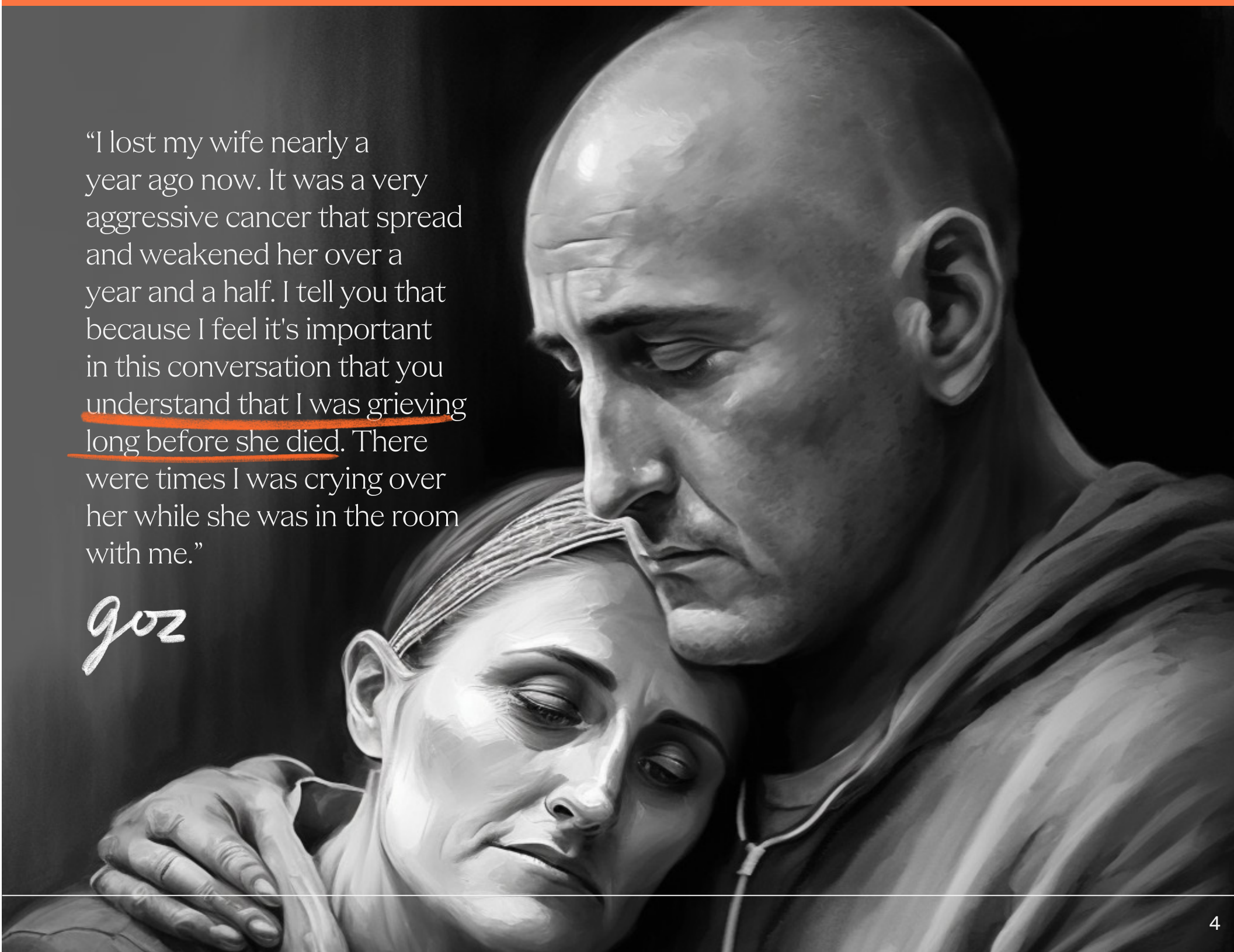


“I think that innately as humans, we believe that we’re above tragedy and we’re above loss just because until it happens to us, we have no reason to think that it ever would.”

Brianna

“I lost my wife nearly a year ago now. It was a very aggressive cancer that spread and weakened her over a year and a half. I tell you that because I feel it’s important in this conversation that you understand that I was grieving long before she died. There were times I was crying over her while she was in the room with me.”

Goz



COPING WITH THEIR CHANGED WORLD

They had to do some soul-searching. And while it didn't happen overnight, they eventually pieced together what they wanted their lives to look like moving forward.



“The world out there is super shit, but I'm gonna live within my memories of how good it was. But you don't wanna do that too much because that's how you get stuck behind and that's not healthy, right?”

Shea-lea



“I'm still working on figuring out other new hobbies and things to keep me occupied. The one sure thing is that the person I was doesn't quite exist anymore. He died with my wife.”

goz

IT FEELS LIKE NO ONE UNDERSTANDS

“I just had to carry a 30 pound bag of dog food up three flights of stairs, he fucking left me to do that. My friends don't understand.”

Shea-lea



“I want someone who understands me on some level. Someone who knows when I'm hurting and wants to help.”

gorz

SUPPORT WAS HARD TO FIND FROM THOSE IN THE SAME BOAT

Other widows and widowers know exactly what they're going through. But oftentimes, it's too much. It's too difficult to build a relationship from the ashes of another.



"I spent so long knowing what 'we' liked that it's hard figuring out what 'I' like."

goz



"Others would understand that there are certain things that you're going through, but maybe that also scares people because it could be like, Wow, not only do I have to deal with it, I gotta deal with their shit at the same time too."

Snea
-lea

RE-ENTERING A VERY DIFFERENT DATING CLIMATE

They met their partners in all sorts of ways. Through mutual friends, at bars, or typical meet cutes. Now for some, the most common place to meet people has been online.



“I tried a couple different dating apps and found them incredibly shallow and didn’t think I would have the slightest bit of luck on them so that didn’t last very long”

goz



“Now I’m left in a situation that I didn’t ask for. I had what I wanted and I was happy. Now I’m in this situation where I’ve gotta go out in the dating world and the dating world sucks.”

Snea-lea

The loss of a partner is profound enough to create a before and after.

Life gets divided into before and after the loss for some people.



“No one had looked at me with that sheer love on their face like that since the last time I ever saw my wife smile at me.”

goz



“The idea of being in a full on relationship with someone is a little bit scary. How is that gonna feel? I’m gonna be with a new person. This is weird. I feel like I’m cheating on him. What am I gonna do?”

Snea-lea

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU'RE READY?

There is no exact "right time" to get back out there. Some of our respondents felt that they'd never be ready. But when you know, you know.



"I made sure that I've taken care of myself. I don't want to put that on another person."

Shea-lea

A woman with her hair in an updo is looking down at her hands. She is wearing a dark, high-collared dress with a brooch. The background is dimly lit with a candle and a window with a lattice pattern.

"I don't know when you know you're ready. I took off his ring like maybe a year after he died. It wasn't like a big decision for me. I was just living every day, just surviving. And when the opportunity presented itself, I went for it."

Natalie



“This other incredible person came into my life in a timeline that didn’t fit. I had this preconceived notion of it. And I was like, ‘Oh, no, no, no, no, you’re wrecking my plans. I had this whole thing planned out about how I was gonna be this good widow and I was gonna be sad for a long time, and then I was gonna have this Hallmark Cinderella story and you’re just messing it all up.’”

Brianna



“There’s this societally accepted notion that you have to wait, you know, a year or two years or whatever before you start dating again. I’d really like to just, you know, squash that. I kind of had it in the back of my mind that I was gonna wait, you know, a year or two or whatever.”

Brianna



RELEARNING SOMEONE IS A MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB

Entering a new relationship has held up a mirror to their past. They've learned to accept that their former lovers weren't perfect.



“What scares me is getting to know someone, getting to know everything again... Getting to know someone sounds fun in your twenties, but getting to know someone like that all over again doesn't sound so fun in your thirties.”

Natalie



“I'm starting to learn how to acknowledge the negatives so I can learn what I need from new relationships without feeling like I'm betraying her. That's been a hard lesson to learn.”

Goz



“There were certain negative aspects that I would hope that I don’t come across again. Some of our arguing and some of the issues that we had in our relationship. I really hope I don’t come across that again.”


Shea-lea

CAN TWO LOVES CO-EXIST?



“Just because he’s gone, that love is still there. It just really doesn’t have anywhere to go. And it, for me, it’s been difficult trying to figure out how do I allow two people to coexist in my heart at the same time.”

Brianna



“He [my current husband] knows that I love them both. He’s not stupid. He accepts that I love them both.”

Natalie

WILL YOU BE ABLE TO FIND THAT SAME LOVE AGAIN?



"It took 20 years devoted to one person to build up to what we had, so I have my doubts, but I do have hope. Will I ever find the SAME love again? Not a chance. What we had was as unique as the two people involved."

goz

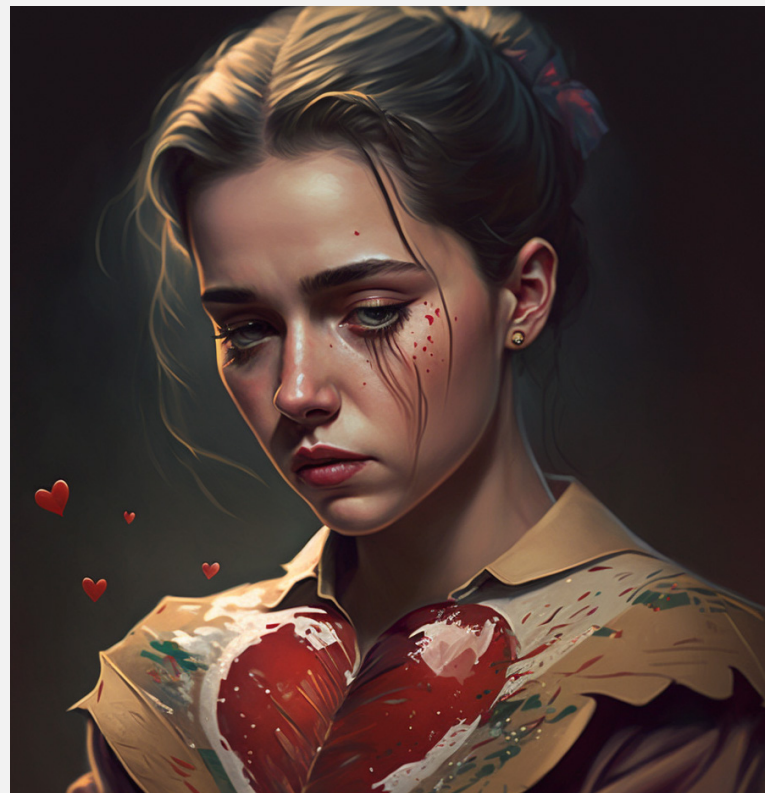


"I wanna feel that love again. It doesn't have to look the same, but feel the same. I wanna feel that again. I wanna be excited about stuff. I wanna have a plus one. I want someone to share my fucking life duties with."

Snea-lea

FEAR OF TRAGEDY HAUNTS THE PURSUIT OF LOVE

This fear of another loss sits in the back of their mind. They worry that the unthinkable could happen again.



“Having lost somebody so young, whenever you choose to open yourself up to love again, life can still happen. So there’s also, there’s always that risk that, God forbid something could happen to him. I could lose somebody that I love very much, again.”

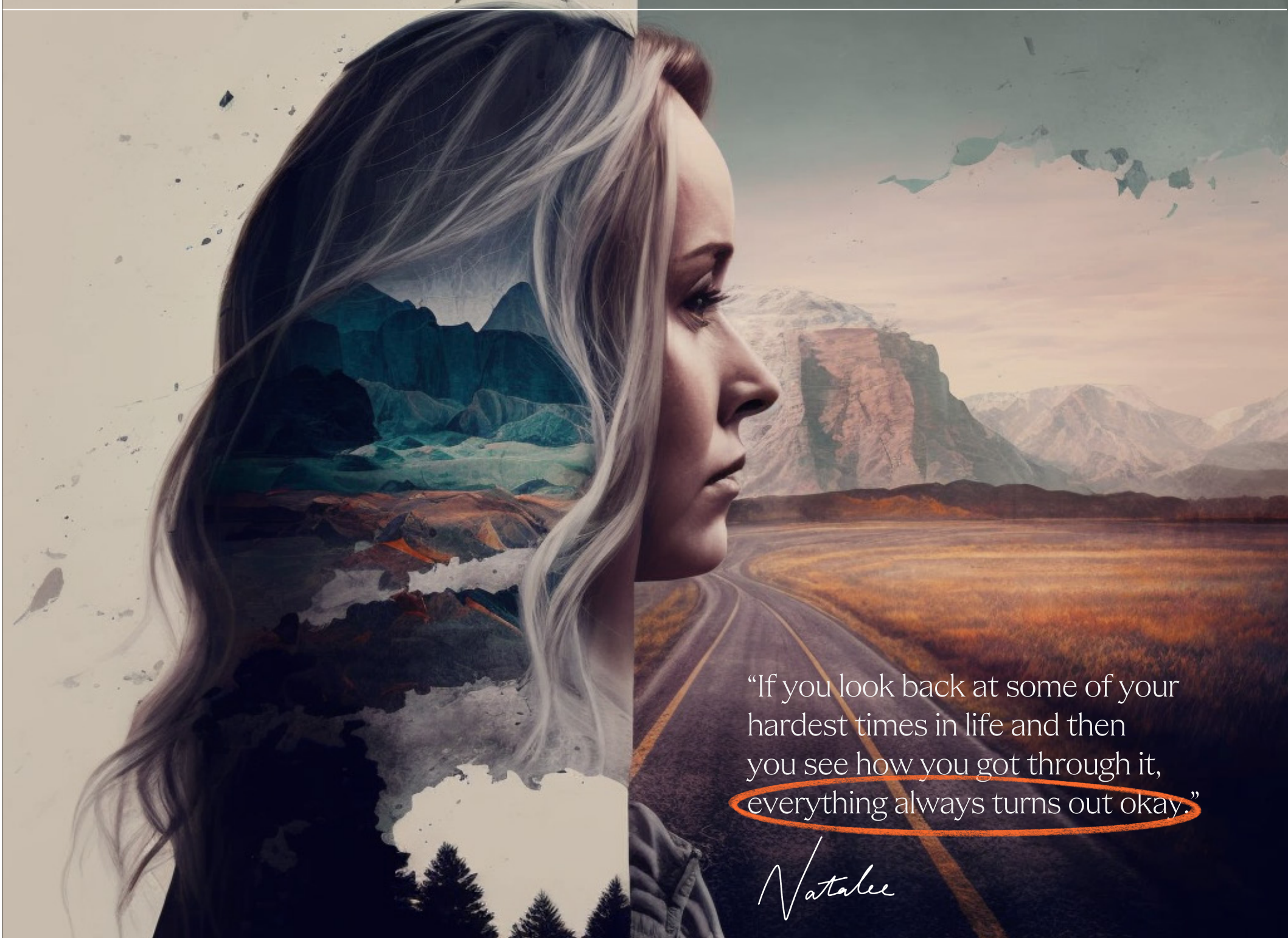
Brianna

“I’m scared that something tragic is gonna happen and I’m gonna go back to my old ways.”

Natalie



**DESPITE ALL
THE HARDSHIPS
THEY'VE BEEN
THROUGH,
THEY ARE STILL
HOPEFUL FOR
WHAT IS
TO COME.**



“If you look back at some of your hardest times in life and then you see how you got through it, everything always turns out okay.”

Natalie



“I tend to believe that if you’re open and honest about where you’re at in life and what you need you’ll find it eventually. As much shit as I’ve been through, I still tend to be an optimist.”

Goz

We set out to look at the world with our heart. A few things appeared before us.

There's no roadmap for navigating the grief that comes with losing a significant other.

Everyone experiences grief differently. It morphs and evolves, ebbs and flows. It's unruly and unpredictable.

And while you can't put a timeline on when you're ready to tiptoe into love again, you also can't predict when a special someone falls into your life.

By cherishing the lives they currently have and embracing the joyous moments shared with the newfound loves in their lives, they're honoring the lives that came before.

- Juliet

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