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Bad Romance



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Through Grace's lively, engaging voice, readers gain a vivid picture of the way a smart, self-assured girl can fall into an abusive relationship Demetrios' well-drawn characters are tremendously appealing, and Grace's discovery of the power of her own strength will make readers cheer." *Booklist* Praise for *I'll Meet You There*: "Part coming-of-age, part romance, and part war story, Demetrios' latest is remarkable." *Booklist*, starred review "Demetrios' latest will have a huge impact not only on YA fans, but also on booklovers of all ages. Her writing exudes raw feelings, and the characters all have strong, distinct personalities. . . . The balance between giggles and tears will keep your pulse racing till the finish." *RT Book Reviews* "A heady, page-flipping romance." *Kirkus Reviews* Praise for *Something Real*: "Chilling satire . . . Thought-provoking ideas wrapped in an engaging plot."

Heather Demetrios is the author of several critically acclaimed novels including *Something Real* and *I'll Meet You There*. She is a recipient of the PEN New England Susan P. Bloom Discovery Award and has an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. When she isn't traipsing around the world or spending time in imaginary places, she lives with her husband in New York City. Originally from Los Angeles, she now calls the East Coast home.

While *Bad Romance* was not as heavy as I originally anticipated, it was not without moments of justified and necessary discomfort. Demetrios has accomplished something of great value. She has taken a challenging and relevant topic and served it up in a digestible manner without sacrificing the significance and importance of her message. A credible protagonist and familiar setting offer an honest and raw glimpse of abuse and how it can unexpectedly surface. Ingeniously narrated in 2nd person, Graces paints a vivid and insightful picture as she speaks directly to Gavin (you, the reader) about the experience of their relationship and the impact it had on her life. This perspective is not only highly effective but powerful. Each page resonates with the author's own personal attachment to the topic. I also want to give extra acknowledgement to the fact that the author has included invaluable resources for those who might find themselves in need of assistance by providing a list of organizations and where to seek help. This includes breakthecycle.org, where you can find additional information and resources if you or someone you know is a victim of abuse within a relationship. Recommending this read to all young adults and teenagers or anyone who has ever directly or indirectly experienced an unhealthy relationship. *Bad Romance will contain triggers for some readers. This was definitely a welcomed and important addition to my shelves.

I think *Bad Romance* has changed me forever. What does that even mean? I'm not sure, but I know that it's true. I DON'T like contemporary novels. I DON'T like books that make me experience sad or hard events. Actually, I have a policy of avoiding books like *Bad Romance* as if they carried the plague...but I'm a big fan of Heather Demetrios and I trusted her. And even though this book moved me, even though my heart hurts after reading it, I'm so glad that I did. This story means something to me and I'm still in the process of figuring out what that is. One of the most beautiful things about *Bad Romance* is the main character, Grace Carter. Grace is real. Not real as in honest, but real as in a REAL person. I feel like she's someone I knew in high school. Her voice was so strong, so unique, so special. Grace and I have almost nothing in common and we wouldn't have been friends

in high school. I was a jock/book nerd and she was in theater... but I could still SEE myself in her pain. How freaking incredible is that?! I still can't even wrap my mind around how skillfully this was written. And of course, I must mention Gavin. The abuser. The jerk. Before ever picking up this book, I knew he was the bad guy. I knew he would be the cause of so much pain and anger and fear, and yet, I still found myself falling for him. He was tortured, sexy, romantic, generous, and loving....until he wasn't anymore. It caught me off guard as much as it did Grace. For me, the things that happened in Grace's home-life hurt me the most. That's probably because while I never had my own bad romance, I definitely had a bad dad-mance (just go with it people). Instead of having a "Conrite and Subservient Mother" as an example, I had the "Never Back Down Mother". Just like with Grace and her mom, I picked up on my mother's behaviors (and probably some of my father's) and absolutely carried them into my other relationships. Instead of finding myself at the end of another abusive relationship, I was the abuser. I was so adamant that no one would ever treat me the way my father had, that I'd never let another man walk all over me, that I became so quick to anger, so quick to initiate confrontation. It took me a very long time to see this in myself and begin the process of unlearning this behavior. Kudos to Grace and to her amazing friends for addressing this sooner. I will be recommending this book far and wide. Bad Romance brings up some beautifully painful truths with relationships, family, love, responsibility, and even mental health, that we should all be talking about. Thank you, Heather.

This was a mesmerizing read. She really nailed the slow, intricate relationship of a teenaged girl and her unhinged, pathological boyfriend.

Y'know when you're reading a TOUGH book? The books about abuse, abortion, pregnancy, cheating, etc. and you can feel your insides twisting and you want to die even though, once you're done, whatever you're reading turns out to be one of the best books you've read all year because it's so rewarding? BAD ROMANCE by Heather Demetrios manages to be one of those TOUGH books (trigger warnings for suicide + emotional and minor physical abuse from significant others and parental figures) that sticks with you and makes you feel the feels but doesn't make your insides cringe so hard you can't read more than 30 pages at a time. In fact, if I didn't have to go to work, I probably would have read this book all in one sitting. This probably has to do with the fact that, even though BAD ROMANCE manages to sensitively unpack Grace's experience (how trapped she feels, her perceived worthlessness, etc.) and explain how a funny, charismatic girl with close friends and big dreams could end up in such a horrible relationship, Grace is still ultimately a

funny, charismatic girl with close friends and big dreams. With theater references packed throughout, incredible, strong female friendships, and peripheral male characters who are kind and are placed strategically to remind the reader that healthy relationships are attainable, Heather Demetrios never lets you feel like this book is a black hole of despair. And that's probably what kept me turning the pages until way past my bedtime. The other super notable thing about this book is the story structure. First of all, **BAD ROMANCE** is voicey AF. Second, it starts at the end of the relationship, after it's all over. Grace spends the book speaking to Gavin (the abusive boyfriend) and explaining to him (using second person 'you') how everything went so wrong for her. The book is written almost as a letter to Gavin, a cathartic release that helps Grace move forward, which means hindsight plays a part and that Grace is very aware (and even comments) as she gets to certain points in the story that something is very wrong in the relationship. Bottom line: **BAD ROMANCE** is a sensitive, honest, emotional look into one of the worst kinds of relationships that will make you feel the feels, probably teach you something new, but not totally wreck you in the worst way possible. Unless you consider listening to the *Rent* soundtrack on endless repeat a totally wrecking situation. (I don't.) (My favorite song is still ALL OF THEM. HOW DO YOU PICK A FAVORITE?)

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