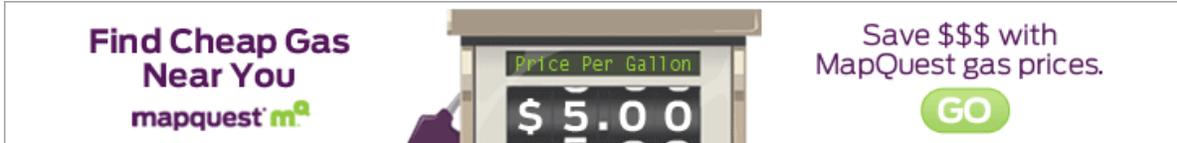


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[Rebecca Serle](#)

Author, *When You Were Mine*

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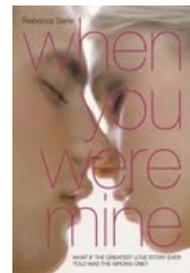
[Romeo And Juliet](#), [Writing a Novel](#), [When You Were Mine](#), [Books News](#)

My first novel, [When You Were Mine](#), comes out next week. Just writing that requires a moment.

I took one. Let's move on.

I should probably tell you that my book is a modern re-telling of *Romeo and Juliet* from the perspective of Rosaline -- the girl Romeo was supposed to love. That's part shameless plug, and part key info. You see, *When You Were Mine* asks the question "What if the greatest love story ever told was the wrong one?" And in my own life, three years ago, I was asking myself the same thing.

I had just been dumped, or left, or forgotten -- all three work the same. I was heartbroken, and miserable. I had been walking a fine line between broke and hopeful for awhile, but this really tipped the scales in the former direction. I was broke on money, on love, on purpose. For the first time in my life it felt like not everything I thought was going to happen (wanted to happen) would. For the first time I believed that something I needed to be happy -- that my happiness was dependent on -- was totally and completely outside my grasp. I was lucky to have made it to 23 before my world fell apart, but when it did, I had no idea how to survive.



It was a rough year. I cried, a lot. I complained, a lot. I also wrote -- a lot. To say this book is the realization of a life-long dream is true in the sense that I've always been a writer -- and publishing novels was the first, and most important, professional goal I ever had. But it doesn't begin to touch on what this book meant, and will always mean, in the context of my life.

When You Were Mine is about heartbreak. Rosaline is the girl who got left behind, the one banished to the shadows while Romeo and Juliet shine. She isn't remembered as having a great love affair. She isn't really remembered in the context of the play at all. She's left out of her own love story.

We've all been there, haven't we? The relationship, job, apartment we thought we were meant to have, we don't end up getting. It feels like the universe is conspiring against us. Our destiny has been betrayed... what went wrong?

The thing I didn't realize when I began this book, though, is that *Romeo and Juliet* isn't her story. It wasn't mine, either. It was only through writing, through walking this path hand in hand with Rosaline, that I started to look at my fate differently. To see where it wanted to take me, and to slowly begin to follow. Word by word, page by page, chapter by chapter. We journeyed on.

Now, of course, far on the other side, I see the whole thing clearly. Why it didn't work out. Why it couldn't have. Why I wouldn't have wanted it to. Some days I think about going back to that girl and telling my younger self that this will be hard, true, but it's also going to be the best thing that has ever happened to you.

It wouldn't matter, though. She wouldn't believe me.

That's the funny thing about time. It is only in looking back that it's easy to connect the dots. To see exactly why everything needed to happen the way that it did. How point A led to point B and all the way down to W: When. You. Were. Mine.

I keep coming back to that tagline: *What if the greatest love story ever told was the wrong one?* Three years later I feel I can safely answer that question: it wasn't. No love story ever is. No love story ends or begins out of accordance with how it needs to go. Without this heartbreak I'd never have this book, this life. It might take years but sooner or later you look up from the page, the subway, the dinner table, and you understand why every single thing that happened did. It was all to get me here -- this place where I can share with you. Where I can say, unequivocally: This is exactly how it was supposed to go.

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