

## Braver Than You Believe: True Stories of Losing Love and Finding Self

Sue Mangum



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Braver Than You Believe: True Stories of Losing Love and Finding Self Sue Mangum Loss...A small word with such a huge meaning. In BRAVER THAN YOU BELIEVE: TRUE STORIES OF LOSING LOVE AND FINDING SELF, six newly single moms write about the worst event of their lives. After losing their spouses to sudden death or divorce, Sam (the main author Sue Mangum), Tessa, Kathryn, Phoebe, Nattie, and Catrina create a safe space to grieve. Calling themselves 'Single Moms After Loss: Talking Advising Healing Laughing Crying' or SMAL TAHLC pronounced "small talk," their conversations are anything but. Over email, they ask questions they can't ask anyone else, like: "Will I ever have sex again?" "I thought I was religious, but is there really a God?" "When should I tell my children that I'm dating?" And finally, "Wow...I'm happy...is that allowed?" Channeling the candid, hilarious, and heartfelt qualities of Becky Aikman's Saturday Night Widows, this work of narrative non-fiction is also based on the true stories of six suddenly single women. This story of actual emails unfolds in real time, as each woman faces her most intimate fears and enters the exhilarating, nerve-wracking, and sometimes hilarious world of dating as a single parent. The book also shows the surprising similarities between death and divorce and grapples with the big questions of single parenting, faith, and learning to trust in self and others. Sam lost her husband to a genetic heart defect and is left with three children to raise. Gentle Tessa, a self-described pleaser, fixer, and friend to all, couldn't save her marriage from infidelity and is awaiting a divorce any day. No-nonsense and quick-witted Kathryn is "celebrating" the one-year anniversary of filing for divorce from a man she nicknames Juicebox, a more polite form of Douchebag. Nattie, the group's wild child and warmhearted mother of three young girls, lost her husband of 18 years to a tragic accident. Stoic Phoebe, the quietest and most introspective, is estranged from her unfaithful husband, though he still lives in her guest room until she can find a job and move out. And finally, there's chatty, boy-crazy Catrina, whose beloved husband of 13 years died right after they had sex. Though loss is the common immediate bond between these different women, each one longs to push through her pain and fear to become a whole, happy person again. And through a year of emails from January to December, the women learn that, with each other and an open, honest space to share the most painful truths, just about anything is possible. Even finding happiness after loss.

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