

## I Know a Little Something About Being Single . . .

As a young divorced mom, I dated for eight years—on apps, online, and in the produce aisle of the fancy grocery store and it was never easy. Case in point, I met:

- a date who gave me homemade trail mix in a ziplock bag (which, to this day, I am pretty sure contained both raisins and roofies)
- a date who used a fake name, because his real last name was shared by his very pregnant wife
- a boyfriend who proposed marriage, and the very next month, pestered a woman for a drunken hookup

And those are just the highlights, people. There's so much more. A friend of mine took her partner home for Christmas, only to have the police pull him over for speeding and arrest him for an outstanding warrant—with his kids in the back seat. What I'm saying is, dating can be rough. We all know it. And there was a time in my life when I swore off love.

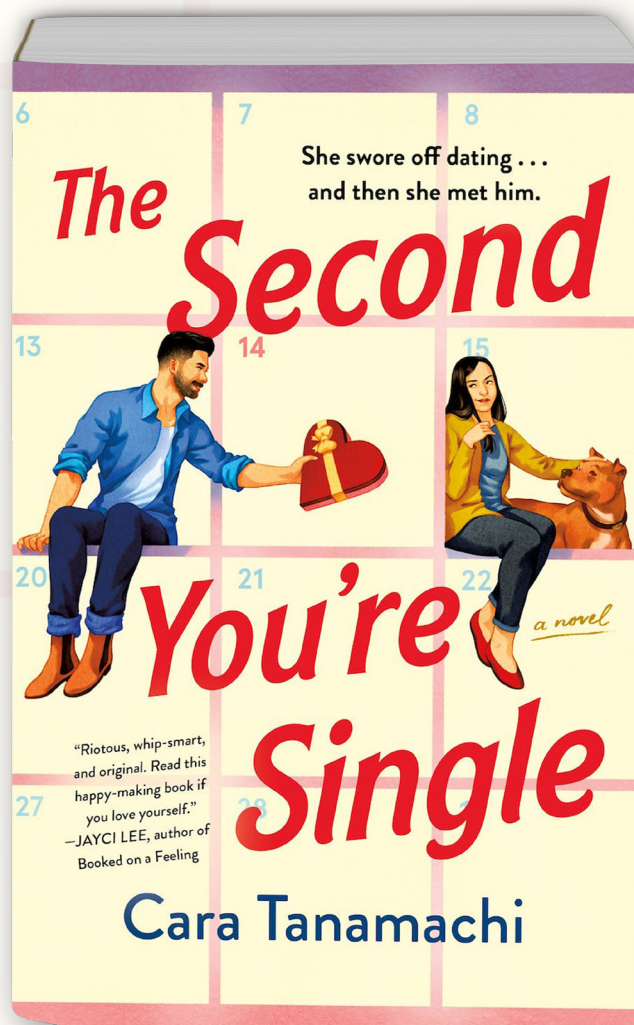
But what I discovered during my own time #GoingSolo, is that I can't expect anyone to love me well if I don't love myself first.

That's the story of Jack and Sora. Sora is done with dating, and who can blame her? Her boyfriend lied about everything, and she's struggling with a heartbreak that haunts her. It's easy to tell yourself you're done with love. But what I hope *The Second You're Single* shows us is that love isn't done with us.

Just when you think you can't hope again, or love again, or trust again, someone like Jack might show up in your life. My Jack is my husband, PJ. I swiped right on him on Bumble, and . . . after running a full background check (Fool me once with a fake name . . . and I'm definitely paying for a BeenVerified subscription), I discovered he was the real deal. He had an unflagging



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ST. MARTIN'S GRIFFIN

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optimism about love, like Jack, and possessed this dogged determination to prove that Valentine's Day isn't actually a commercial dumpster fire.

Like Jack persuaded Sora, he convinced me to give love—and Valentine's Day—another chance. Because I'd been doing the hard work of learning to love and respect myself, I was in the position to take a second look at love. I'm so glad I did. We flew to Honolulu on Valentine's Day in 2018 and got married on the beach with our closest friends and family two days later.

1 When the world beats us up, and when people break our hearts, the logical thing to do, the easy thing to do, is to build walls and close ourselves off from the rest of the world. Risking disappointment and heartbreak again is scary, but true love demands that we be brave.

Love works on its own schedule, but when it (finally) does show up, sometimes it's exactly when we need it the most.

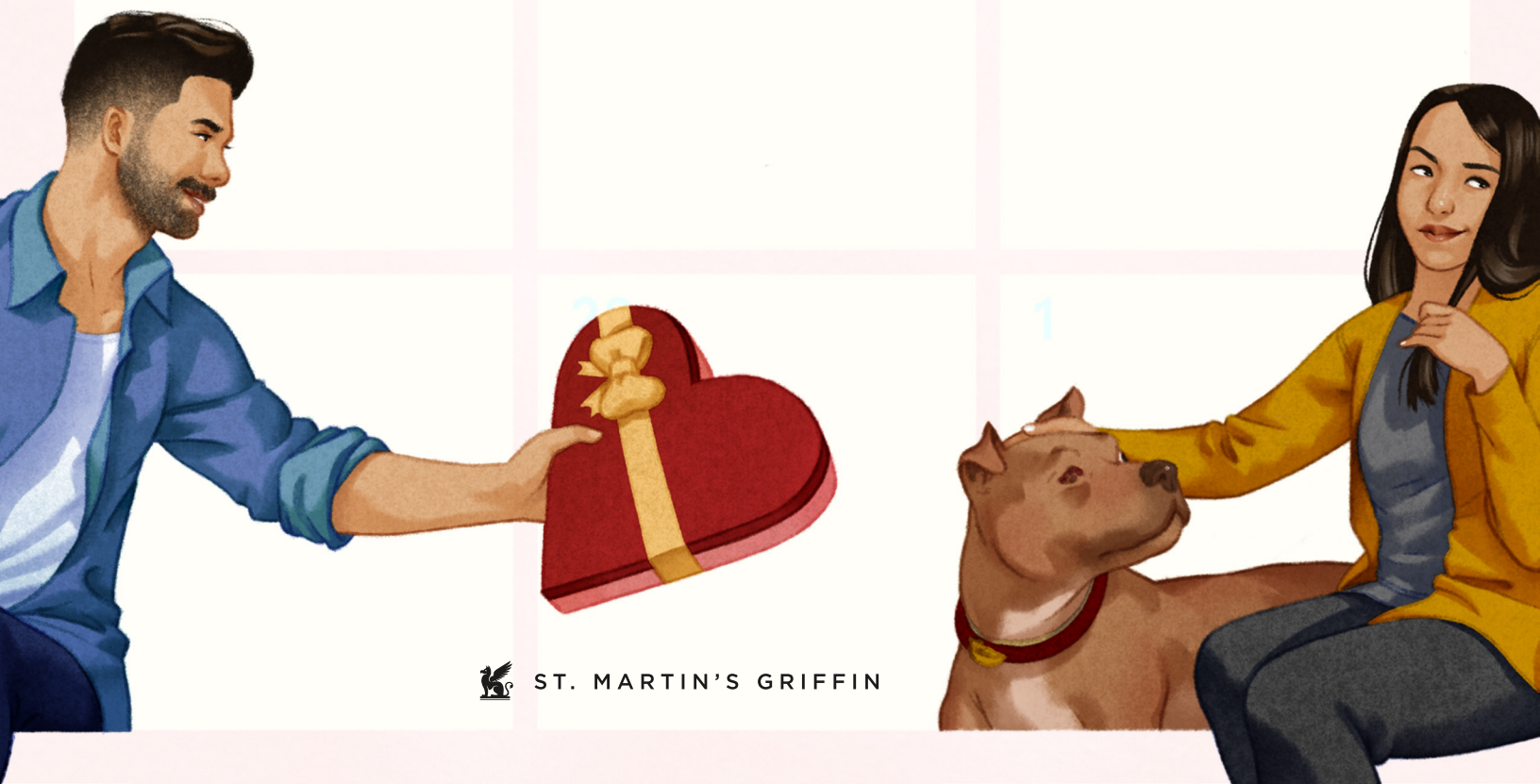
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