

{heartlines}

Based on a true story

Penguin
Random House
Verlagsgruppe

Penguin Random House launches new "True Fiction Publisher" {heartlines}

PRH Germany is launching **{heartlines}**, a new new-adult imprint, in January 2025. **{heartlines}** publishes true fiction: novels based on true stories. Inspiring novels are created from the true experiences of young storytellers, written by well-known authors. This close collaboration results in true-to-life stories with a high potential for identification. New true fiction novels are published monthly by **{heartlines}**.

The diversity of topics and perspectives at **{heartlines}** are created in dialogue with the community and are important to the publisher. Learn more of our authors and storytellers [here](#).

In addition to the authors and storytellers, the social media community is an important part of **{heartlines}**. With its preferences and reading needs, they played a decisive role in shaping the list right from the conception stage and will be involved in future projects, especially via the Instagram channel [@penguinlovestories](#).

IT'S A MATCH



{heartlines}
Based on a true story.



writes a New Adult novel based on Alexa's true story...

Leonie Lastella

author



© Susanne Baaske

"Just like Alexa, whose true story inspired me to write this novel, Alea is a woman who doesn't want to change for anyone. She sets boundaries where they are needed. And yet she is not immune to offence. Because no one is. Words hurt. They have power."

genuine & relatable



Inspiration for the main character Alea



© privat

Alexa
storyteller



"Real bodies are what we need. In literature, films, on social media. And not as a supporting character, but as the important main character!"



#BodyPositivity

What was it like for you to write this book?

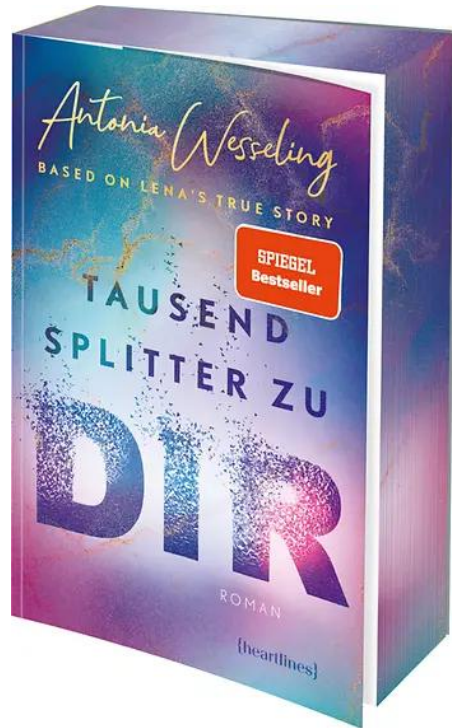
"It was a great journey, in which I also contributed my own experiences with body shaming and which definitely changed me, my view of the topic and my attitude towards my body."



What message would you like to pass on?

„Let's be nicer to each other. Just let other people's bodies be bodies, don't comment on them - whether fat or thin. Because nobody should care about your body except yourself.“

Penguin
Random House
Verlagsgruppe



Antonia Wesseling
A Thousand Pieces of You
Based on Lena's True Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
400 pages, February 2025

Story: Nothing is more important to journalist Ellie than justice. She dares to speak the truth, even when it's uncomfortable. Yet no one suspects the true reason she fights so passionately for those who have no voice. Or why she avoids relationships. Or why she broke up so suddenly with Louis, her first true love. Being sexually abused as a child shattered Ellie's heart into a thousand pieces, and each day that she walks her own path means putting one more piece back in place. When Ellie is assigned to cover an explosive story about abuse of power, her investigation takes her to none other than Louis. Soon, she finds herself caught between the truth and her deepening feelings...

Tropes: Second Chances, First Love, He falls first

Topics: sexual abuse, mental health

Protagonists: **Ellie (25)** was abused as a child. Today she is an investigative journalist. She has a professional life, but hasn't had a relationship since Louis. **Louis (25)** Ellie's great love from the past. He works for a company that is the target of Ellie's research. He still has great feelings for her, but is also afraid of losing his job and asks her to keep quiet.

Author: For Antonia Wesseling, born in 1999, writing is a major part of life. She started coming up with stories when she was little, then went on to write YA books, and is now the author of bestselling new-adult novels. She talks about writing, mental health and other topics close to her heart on YouTube (@tonipure), TikTok and Instagram (@antoniawesseling).

Storyteller: Lena (@lenajensn) is a survivor of sexual violence, a speaker, a Miss Germany runner-up, an entrepreneur and a mother. She campaigns for child abuse awareness and equal parenting rights. She lives in northern Germany with her husband and child.

Antonia
Wesseling



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Lena



© Lena Lach
Fotografie



Cassidy Cane

Searching For Sunshine

Based on Kevin's True Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
512 pages, March 2025

Story: Emilian is a real nice guy. Everyone thinks so. Except his supervisor Vienna, who seems immune to his charms and constantly makes snide comments. Unfortunately, now the two of them are supposed to trial a new dating app for a new marketing client... The more closely they work together, the hotter their chats get, and the more they confide in each other. For the first time, Emilian feels like he can really open up to someone else, including about his painful childhood. And Vienna, too, is relieved to finally be herself again around a guy. But just as their secret office affair is about to turn more serious, Emilian's stepdad shows up and threatens to ruin his life. Emilian has to make a difficult decision, which will affect not only him and Vienna, but Vienna's young son too...

Tropes: Grumpy x Sunshine, Office Romance, Found Family

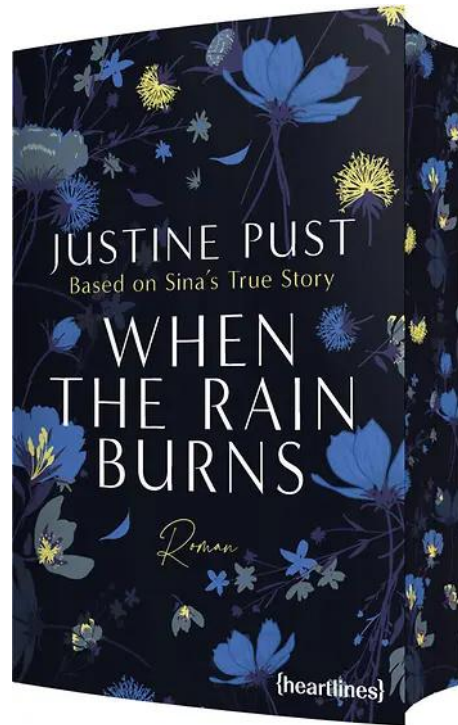
Topics: emotional blackmail, emancipation, liberation

Protagonists: **Emilian (21)** was left with his violent, gambling-addicted stepfather after the death of his mother. As an adult, he avoids serious relationships for fear of adopting his stepfather's narcissistic behaviour. **Vienna (22)** is a single mother of a young son. She is focused on her career as men have always disappointed her.

Author: Cassidy Cane, born in 1993, started out penning fan fiction and hasn't stopped writing since. Now a novelist in her own right, she takes her characters through all of life's highs and lows. She describes herself as 'selective but intense' in terms of her passions: she is a F1 fanatic and film buff, wears a different baseball cap every day (she's the proud owner of at least twenty!), and on her 'reading days' loves immersing herself heart and soul in romance and fantasy novels. Assuming, that is, her cat Coco and Bichon Frisé Poet stop competing for her attention!

Storyteller: Kevin, born in 1992, is a marketing manager and lives in southern Germany with his wife and two daughters. He left home at a young age, and for a long time was triggered by the topic of his family. However, he finally managed to draw a line under it – and when he fell in love with a colleague, it gave him a chance at a fresh start. Kevin has always been drawn to writing and the stage, and he now turns his experiences into poems he performs at slam poetry events. He firmly believes that 'If you're good, life's good.'





Justine Pust

When the Rain Burns
Based on Sina's True Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
368 pages, April 2025

Story: Following a tragic shooting at her school that ended in the death of her best friend, Lina wants nothing more than to get out of town and forget the past. She leaves everything behind – including Liam, who was there for her during the bad times. Years later, when she meets Tom and falls in love, Lina finally starts feeling safe again. But what starts as a blissful relationship soon turns into a nightmare: Tom is controlling, and humiliates and gaslights her. It takes a long time for Lina to pluck up the courage to leave him and go back to the people who were there for her last time. To her surprise, she discovers that Liam is still there too... and the mess in her head seems to quieten down whenever he's around. But can two broken hearts help each other heal?

Tropes: Second Chance, Broken Heros, Childhood Lovers, Friends to Lovers

Topics: trauma, healing, mental health

Protagonists: **Lina (25)** was 16 when she survived a school shooting, and started having panic attacks; she works as an trained educator. **Liam (25)**, is Lina's ex-boyfriend and former classmate; Lina broke up with him even though she was in love with him

Author: Justine Pust lives in Rostock and has blue hair. She is a real seaside girl, known far and wide for her @justinepust Instagram account, where she shares her passion for writing and reading. For Justine, life is unimaginable without books. She is also a social worker, with a deep interest in people's life stories – as evidenced by her new novel for {heartlines}, *When the Rain Burns*.

Storyteller: Sina is an educator with an MA in social education. In 2009, a former fellow student went on a shooting spree at her school, an event which left her deeply traumatised and suffering from panic attacks. She sought refuge in a relationship with a man who promised her love, but in fact abused her both physically and emotionally. She eventually managed to escape; a stay at a clinic and trauma therapy helped her to recover. Sina has now moved back to her home town – and finally found the love of her life.

**Justine
Pust**

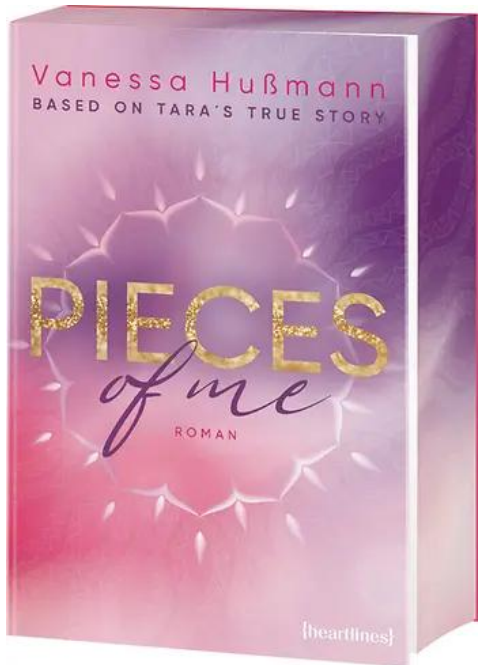


© Sandra Gebhard

Sina



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Vanessa Hussmann
Pieces of me
Based on Tara's True Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
496 pages, May 2025

Story: Tara has everything she's ever dreamed of. She is a promising law student and has a wonderful boyfriend, and loves her adoptive parents. She's never had much interest in her Nepalese roots, and usually ignores anything to do with the country. But on her birthday, a stranger called Kiran gets in touch claiming he's her brother. Tara is shocked and has a thousand questions – and in the hope of finding some answers, she flies to Kathmandu. There, she meets the family she never knew. She also meets Ravi, and starts developing feelings for him. But the more Tara settles into the country of her birth, the more alienated she feels from her old self. Where – and to whom – does she really belong?

Tropes: Slow Burn, Finding Yourself, New Beginnings

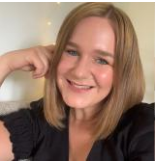
Topics: Where do I belong? And to whom?

Protagonists: **Tara (25)**, was adopted when she was a baby; **Ravi (26)**, Nepalese and Tara's brother Kiran's best friend.

Author: Vanessa Hußmann, born in 1992, loves getting to know unfamiliar worlds – be they books or fascinating countries and cultures. Her favourite way to immerse herself in a novel is surrounded by fairy lights and scented candles. She constantly longs to visit faraway countries, and has spent a year in the US and travelled around Thailand and Vietnam. She got to know Kathmandu thanks to Tara, who mentally guided her through the city's alleyways and temples. Vanessa found its mystical atmosphere and welcoming people inspiring: '*Pieces of Me* is like a journey to Nepal, and I hope you'll fall in love with it, as I did – and perhaps with Ravi, too.'

Storyteller: 'Tara' is the pen name of the woman whose story is told in *Pieces of Me*. Born in 1999, she was adopted by a German couple at the age of three. Tara's adoptive parents told her early on about her background, but she never found out why her biological mother gave her up, or what happened to her other family. However, one day, at the age of seventeen, she received an unexpected message from Nepal that prompted her to make her first ever trip to her native country. Although Tara doesn't really enjoy being in the limelight, she hopes her story will inspire others who have had similar experiences, and anyone who sometimes simply feels lost.

Vanessa
Hussmann

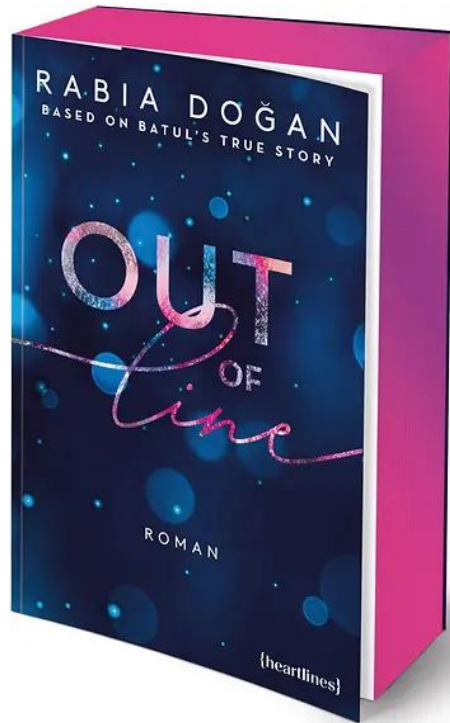


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Batul and
Rabia Doğan



© {heartlines}



Rabia Doğan

Out of Line

Based on Batul's True Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
368 pages, June 2025

Story: Leyla is still little when her family leaves Lebanon for Germany. But her mother never gets over having to leave her homeland, and commits suicide. In her grief, Leyla finds solace in dancing. She and her brother Said are close, but when she moves to Berlin to start up her own studio their relationship becomes strained. One day, Leyla bumps into Emir, Said's best friend. Emir used to take her to her dance lessons every evening, and always believed that dreams can come true. He also once kissed her on a cold November night – even though kissing your mate's sister is against the rules. As Leyla and Emir grow closer, they can't resist recalling those old feelings. But Said isn't too happy about it: the reason he sent Emir to Berlin in the first place was to sabotage Leyla's dream...

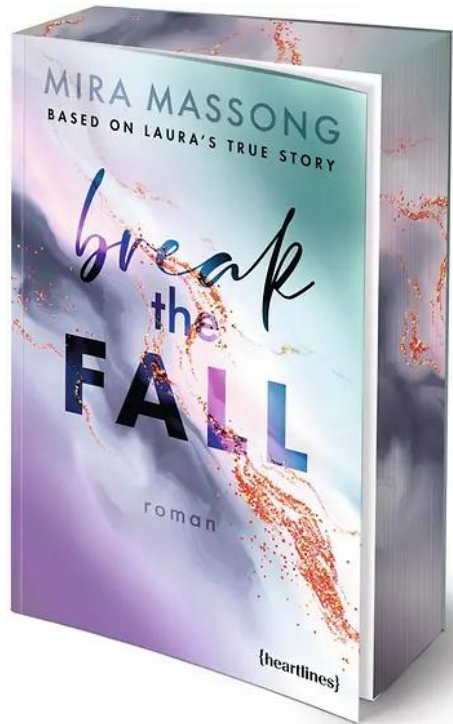
Tropes: forbidden love, brother's best friend

Topics: false pretences, losing someone's trust, traditional family, cultural differences

Protagonists: **Leyla (23)** her greatest passion is dancing, her biggest dream is to have her own dance studio. **Emir (25)** studies physics in Berlin and was once her brother's best friend.

Author: Rabia Doğan has an MA in psychology and lives in Berlin, where she is training to be a psychotherapist. Rabia has been writing ever since she realised how much other people and their stories fascinate her. She shares two things with Batul: both are from an immigrant background, and both are proud of their roots.

Storyteller: Batul's family is from Lebanon and moved to Germany when she was four. After Batul's mother committed suicide, her older brother became her guardian. He encouraged her passion for dance, and Batul – who is in her mid-twenties – now runs her own dance studio in Chemnitz.



Mira Massong
Break the Fall
Based on Laura's True Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
368 pages, July 2025

Story: It's been hell, but Nora has finally won the battle against alcohol. She is relieved to finally be discharged from the rehab centre, and looking forward to making a fresh start and returning to uni. At the same time, she knows that she's as yet a former alcoholic on probation. When she sees former fellow student Tim again, he seems to be exactly what she needs. Despite everything she's been through, she trusts him. But Tim isn't as strong as he thinks, and unlike Nora keeps his worries to himself. Torn between love and doubt, each has to ultimately face up to their past.

Tropes: Broken Hero, Slow Burn

Topics: alcoholism, withdrawal, therapy

Protagonists: **Nora (26)** To get her panic attacks under control, she drank. Now she is sober. She is studying German and is currently writing her master's thesis. **Tim (26)** is in great financial difficulties and his parents have broken off contact with him.

Author: Mira Massong, born in 1996, lives in Cologne with her husband, daughter and two cats. She has a degree in German and psychology, and is a freelance editor. Mira started writing stories when she was just seven, and since 2016 has devoted herself mainly to the romance genre. Her new {heartlines} book *Break the Fall*, written together with Laura, is an authentic, accessible new-adult novel about a former alcoholic called Nora, inspired by Laura's own true story..

Storyteller: Laura graduated from high school, got her degree and started her first job, all while under the influence. She drank her first beer at the age of 16, and was quickly drawn into a vicious circle of binge- and secret drinking. She has been dry for three years now, and knows that only total abstinence will keep her from relapsing. Laura writes openly about life after alcohol on Instagram (@laurassoberlife), and hopes to raise greater awareness of the topic via her videos and this new {heartlines} novel.

Mira
Massong

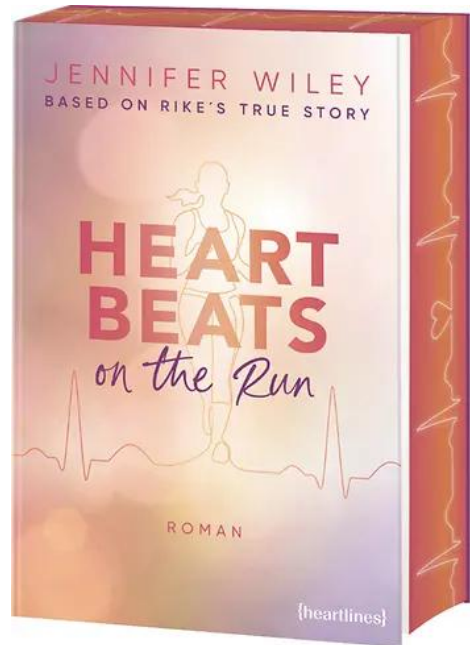


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Laura



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Jennifer Wiley
Pounding Hearts
Based on Rike's True Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
368 pages, October 2025

Story: To escape her brother's unpredictable fits of rage, Maya moves to Cologne to finish her studies. She soon settles in and makes friends with her housemates, and when she meets Linus she might even have a chance at true love. But Maya is still battling the effects of the past. Years of being paralysed by fear of her brother's violent outbursts has taken its toll. The only way she can find release is by exercising. At first, she doesn't notice how her workouts are taking over her life, but eventually she can't get through the day without exercising for several hours. On a weekend away with Linus, she's forced to make a choice – and chooses exercise. She distances herself from Linus, and pushes her own body to such limits that, soon, her life is in danger...

Tropes: strangers to lovers, I have a secret, emotional scars, golden retriever boyfriend

Topics: Information about developmental trauma, demarginalisation of sports addiction

Author: Jennifer Wiley, born in 1988, lives near Cologne. She has a degree in social work and spent many years helping families through difficult situations, before devoting herself full-time to writing deeply emotional romances. She loves hiking and exploring nature on horseback, and recharges her batteries on the banks of a small fishing lake that reminds her of times spent with her father. She describes herself as both bubbly and a daydreamer, and watching a new series always well and truly brings out the fangirl in her.

Storyteller: Rike, born in 1995, is a psychologist and lives in Cologne. She is a mental health activist, has already coached people and educated them on topics related to mental health in her own podcast. As a result of developmental trauma, Rike became addicted to sports, but was able to free herself from this addiction through trauma therapy. Rike still loves sports – in moderation – as well as photography and painting. She wants to raise awareness of the connection between trauma and mental disorders and share her message with those affected

Jenny Wiley

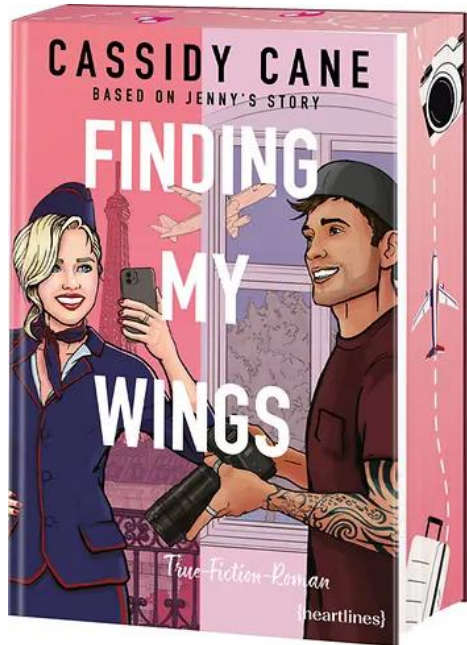


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Rike



© private



Cassidy Cane
Finding My Wings
Based on Jenny's True Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
368 pages, November 2025

Story: Following the tragic loss of her mother, **Melly (22)** does everything for her father and brother. She puts her own life plans on hold, and decides to forget about her long-held dream of becoming a flight attendant and seeing the world. Instead, she looks after their home and organises their lives. Henrik is the only one who manages to convince Melly to consider her own needs too. Half-persuaded and half-reluctantly, Melly starts training as a flight attendant, and finally starts flourishing – not least thanks to Henrik's continuous support. But while she jets around the world living her dream, he longs to turn their long-distance connection into something more. How can he convince Melly to stay with him for longer than a quick stopover?

Tropes: he falls first and harder, right person, wrong time, friends to lovers, long distance relationship, emotional scars, hidden secret

Topics: Follow your dream, self-care, between duty and self-fulfilment, death of a parent, travel, wanderlust

Author: Cassidy Cane, born in 1993, started out penning fan fiction and hasn't stopped writing since. Now a novelist in her own right, she takes her characters through all of life's highs and lows. She describes herself as 'selective but intense' in terms of her passions: she is a F1 fanatic and film buff, wears a different baseball cap every day (she's the proud owner of at least twenty!), and on her 'reading days' loves immersing herself heart and soul in romance and fantasy novels. Assuming, that is, her cat Coco and Bichon Frisé Poet stop competing for her attention!

Storyteller: Jenny, born in 1993, had never before told anyone about her past. But she knew she could open up to Cassidy – the two are friends from high school. After her mother's sudden death, Jenny spent years looking after her brother and father, and had to relearn to consider her own needs. She loves travelling, dancing, listening to loud music, and her job as a flight attendant, which takes her all over the world. She hopes that the readers of "Finding My Wings" will feel inspired, and realise that, in her words, "You're stronger than you think. You can do it!"

**Jenny and
Cassidy Cane**



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Sofia Kus



© private



Sofia Kus

Chasing Our Forever

Based on Roxy's & Abdul's Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
448 pages, January 2026

Story: Riley and Zayn are only casual acquaintances when they strike up a conversation one evening that lasts all night. Their deepening feelings for each other change not only their friendship, but their entire lives. As a Pakistani Muslim, Zayn respects his family's traditions and knows that the rules of Western-educated Riley contradict everything he has been taught. Although Riley struggles with shadows that are sometimes bigger than herself, she is strong, sees straight into Zayn's heart and believes in a future together. Until she learns about Zayn's secret, which he wanted to keep to himself at all costs.

Tropes: Forbidden Love, Secret Relationship, Friends to lovers, From different worlds, Opposite attracts, Mental Health, Slow burn, Dual PoV's

Topics: arranged marriage, muslim culture

Author: As a commercial lawyer, her everyday life is shaped by predetermined laws, which is why Sofia Kus likes to escape into her fantasy world. As a successful self-publisher, she has published more than 20 novels. She has both German and North African roots and, as a Muslim, can empathise with Abdul's world. At the same time, she empathises when Roxy recounts the ups and downs of this unusual love. Sofia is keen to transport readers into the world of both cultures.

Storyteller: Roxanne is a successful influencer and podcast host. Reading is her passion, but she also enjoys writing herself as a way of processing her thoughts and experiences. Abdul was born in Germany to Muslim Pakistani parents. He is passionate about sports and fashion and works in marketing, with a special focus on e-commerce. When the two fall in love, they realise that they must treat Abdul's family traditions with respect. However, having to keep their relationship secret for years puts them to the test many times. Today, they are married and expecting their first child soon.

Ali Kassemlyar



© Lea Rudolph



Ali Kassemlyar

Where the Storm Finds Us
Based on René's Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
384 pages, February 2026

Story: After rehab and a prison sentence for drug trafficking, **Finn** wants to leave his criminal past behind him once and for all and turn his life around. And indeed, he finally gets lucky: in Hamburg, he meets the successful writer Lena, who sees more in him and offers him a job as her assistant. Working together brings them closer and closer, and it doesn't take long for feelings to develop between them. But in order not to jeopardise his new start with Lena, Finn keeps his dark past under wraps. He doesn't tell her that old business partners are pressuring him and that he is fighting the constant temptation to fall back into his self-destructive patterns. When a former client pressures him to make one last deal, his secrets put not only their relationship but also Lena's life in danger...

Tropes: Strangers to Lovers, Broken Hero, Emotional Scars, Boss Romance, From Different Worlds, Romantic Suspense

Topics: drug abuse, imprisonment

Author: Ali Kassemlyar, born in 2001, studies law and, alongside his studies, devotes himself to writing. He loves good music, books and evenings where he can play sports to clear his head for new stories.

Storyteller: René, born in 1995, lives in Cologne. As a teenager, René fell into a vortex of drugs, crime and gambling addiction until he managed to make a radical turnaround. Today, he helps people recognise the true causes behind addiction, inner emptiness and psychological stress – and find their way back to a self-determined life, step by step. René gives prevention talks and fights against the stigmatisation of people with criminal pasts and addiction problems. His message to all those who face mental health challenges is: 'It's never too late to write yourself a new future.'



Justine Pust

13 Polaroids of Us
Based on Tascha's Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
416 pages, March 2026

Story: When Tara is commissioned to photograph the wedding of an influencer couple, she hopes it will boost her career. Everything goes well until she meets Finn at the first appointment. Finn, who broke her heart seven years ago. And now she's supposed to enter into a fake relationship with him to get the job?

Confronted with old feelings from her school days, Tara has to face all the memories she would rather run away from. The bullying she endured because of her curved back caused by scoliosis and the fear that her heart might not be strong enough.

Despite everything, Tara agrees to the deal. Without suspecting what really lies behind Finn's disappearance seven years ago...

Tropes: Second Chance, all the hidden truths, all the things i love about you, fake engagement

Topics: bullying at school, empower yourself, depression, social anxiety

Author: Justine Pust is a real seaside girl, known far and wide for her @justinepust Instagram account, where she shares her passion for writing and reading. For Justine, life is unimaginable without books. She is also a social worker, with a deep interest in people's life stories – as evidenced by her new novel for {heartlines}, "When the Rain Burns".

Storyteller: Natascha is born with a heart defect and is later diagnosed with scoliosis. She cannot undergo the complicated surgery until she is a teenager, and until then she is bullied at school for years. This resulted in anxiety and panic attacks until she fought her way through as a young adult with the support of friends and family. She works as a hospital case manager and is a wedding and couple photographer in her spare time. She loves peonies, books and could eat pasta every day.

Justine Pust



© Sandra Gebhard

Natascha

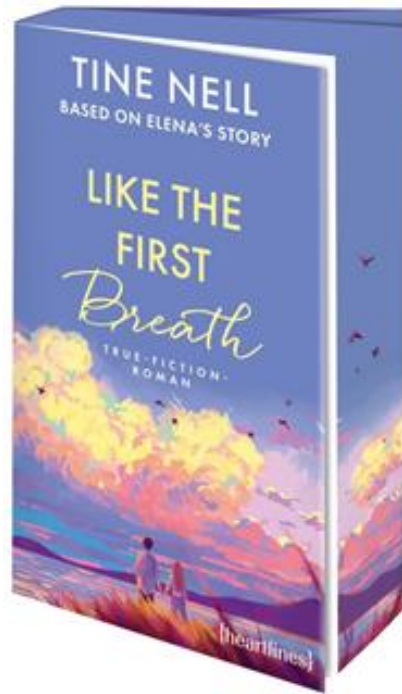


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Justine Pust



© Sandra Gebhard



Justine Pust

13 Polaroids of Us
Based on Elena's Story

{heartlines}, New Adult,
368 pages, April 2026

Story: Hanna is living in temporary freedom: she is only allowed to leave the religious community she grew up in for the duration of her studies. But with each day on campus, she becomes more aware of the cage she was forced into. Now she wears jeans instead of the long skirts she detests, goes dancing with her flatmate and experiences for the first time what a life without shackles means. And she meets Noah, whose thirst for adventure awakens unknown – forbidden – feelings in her. He admires Hanna for her inner strength and encourages her to make her own decisions. But Hanna knows only obedient submission and hears this dark voice in her head: it threatens her with serious consequences for her and her family if she does not abide by the rules of the community. What would happen if she never returned?

Tropes: he falls first, found family, insta love, all these changes, weightless heart, if you fly too far, if you stay too long

Topics: leaving the cult, empowerment, right now with you, right here with you, healing fiction

Author: Tine Nell lives with her family and mixed-breed dog Malo near Siegen. Even though her sense of direction in real life sometimes leaves something to be desired, the characters in her stories always find their way. She prefers to devote herself to strong characters and big emotions. Whether she is writing or reading, only a book makes Tine's day perfect.

Storyteller: Elena grew up in a community with cult-like characteristics. When she realised that her thirst for knowledge and zest for life would be suppressed forever, she left the community against all opposition from her family, friends and social circle. Today, she makes her own decisions in life and consciously chooses who she allows to influence her life.