



Thoughts on Life

To my friend Jessi, who is always there when I need her.
And to my mom, who has never let me down.

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Chapter 1- Friends

Jamie sat down with her three best friends, Jessica, Tiffany, and Scottie, at their favorite place to hang out. The bookstore on the corner was the perfect meeting place, not too far from anyone's house and easy to get to when you were in need of some serious friend time. They came here almost every afternoon...

"So what's up, Jess?" Scottie asked.

"Well, my life is sucky right now, my mom and dad are getting a divorce. They've been arguing for a while now, but I never thought it would be this bad." Scottie got up and hugged Jessica.

"Oh Jess! How horrible. Well what can we do? I mean I would love it if you could move in with me or something but we all know that's not happening" Jamie said. Everyone knew how strict Jessica's dad could be, especially about spending the night at people's houses.

"Well how's this, I'm free this weekend so why don't you all come over to my house so we can hang out and comfort you?" Tiffany asked.

"I'll talk to my mom tonight and see if I can." Scottie said. "I would love to help you get better; we can do some yoga and some relaxation things." Scottie was good at yoga, and most of the time, making people forget they were upset, but she knew that wasn't going to happen this time.

"I'm pretty sure my mom will let me, I'll ask her when I get home." Jamie wanted to do whatever she could to help Jessica.

Jessica got up, wiping her eyes. "Thanks, you guys. You always know how to make me feel better." Jessica smiled. "But I have to go, or my coach will kill me." If Jessica didn't get to her house right then, she was sure that her coach wouldn't let her play in there upcoming game. She wasn't sure if she would be able to play, anyways. She barely made it out before bursting into tears.

Soccer had been easy but when she got back to her house it was a war zone. Her dad had literally set up a tent in the yard and was watching football on a little T.V. She walked into the house after saying hello to her dad, and found her mom watching Alton Brown, on Food Network, trying to cook pecan pie.

"Mom, what are you doing?" There was flour everywhere; her mother had it in her hair, on her clothes and all over the kitchen. She looked like a very skinny snowman.

"I'm baking a pecan pie, honey, I need you to go pick up your brother from band practice and your sister from art, and you can take the car."

Her mom and dad hadn't talked in weeks, so they sent her to go do the things they needed done so neither of them would wonder who picked up the kids. It would just give them another excuse to argue.

Jessica grabbed the keys of the counter and went out to the garage. Their car was a big blue van and everyone fit in it. Her brother and sister were twins, and their practice ended at the same time.

Jessica got in the car, turned on the music, and called her friend Stacy. Stacy lived in Alabama. She used to be friends with everyone but when she moved away everyone kind of lost touch.

"Hey, you've reached my inbox, leave a message, you know what to do and stuff."

“Hey Stacey, it’s me, Jessica, I was calling to talk and see when you were coming to visit. I miss you.” she hung up the phone.

Picking her siblings up were a breeze and when they got home there was food already waiting on the table.

“Hey Mom, I was wondering if tomorrow, seeing as it’s Friday, I was hoping I could go spend the night with Tiffany and the other girls?” Jessica asked as they sat down. “It’s just, all you guys’ arguing is kind of driving me nuts, so I was thinking maybe I could go and hang out?”

“Well I guess, but you’re going to have to get some work around the house done first.”

“Thank you Mom, thank you!” Jessica was excited about going over to her friend’s house, because she knew they would all help her stop worrying so much.

Chapter 2- Spend the night

A couple of days later Jessica was sitting in history class. *Oh my gosh! Will this ever end!* Thought Jessica. The bell rang. *I guess it will.* Jessica ran out of the classroom. She had been waiting for the end of school, and there you go, the end of school.

She was going over to Tiffany's house today with Scottie and Jamie and she couldn't wait. She rushed out of history class, ran straight down the hall and right into Tiffany.

"Whoa, whoa, slow down there, Jess. So you have your bag right? And your swimsuit?"

"Yes I have everything, don't worry." They walked outside to Tiffany's car where Scottie and Jamie were waiting.

I took them fifteen minutes to get to Tiffany's house. "You can put your stuff up in my room," Tiffany said, as they walked into the house.

Jessica, Scottie, and Jamie rushed upstairs to put their stuff away. They ran back down the stairs.

"I'm in here!" Tiffany called from the kitchen. "I'm making popcorn. I thought we could go upstairs to my room and watch movies."

They ran upstairs to Tiffany's room. It was giant. Her room was black with neon green bubbles all over it, her bed was upholstered in black and neon green, her dresser and bedside table were black, her desk was neon green, and to top it all off, it was about half the size of a normal sized house.

"I still can't get over how big your room is, Tiff." Jessica said. "I mean, I know that I've been coming here since I was seven but, still, you have a walk in closet and your bathroom's almost as big as it."

Tiffany smiled. "Ah yes, it's called being rich. Usually never seeing your parents and living in a mansion." Tiffany stopped smiling. "The only thing I don't like is the whole not getting to see my parental units. I know how you feel, at least a little, Jess." They were silent for a minute. "Okay, so I have 10 Things I Hate About You, How to Deal, and Bend it Like Beckham three of your favorites, Jess. Tonight were focusing on you, and tomorrow were going to do a spa like thing and then were going to swim!" It was summer and they were all waiting for the time when Tiffany would throw her grade-wide pool party.

"For you, Jessica," she said tossing her a box of Hot Tamales. "For Tiff, M&M's" she said tossing over the bag. "For Jamie, we have Snow Caps, and for me, we have Skittles." She sat down with a thump on another beanbag.

"Let the movie marathon begin!" Tiffany said hitting the play button.

They were watching 10 Things I Hate About You when Scottie said. "I love Heath Ledger. He was so beautiful; those muscles, and that Australian accent. I still can't believe that he died. I cried about that."

Jamie sniffled. "It was sad, but I like Trent Ford better. Heath Ledger's cute and all, but Trent is cuter."

"Oh no, you didn't, Nick Zano from What I Like About you is sooo much cuter," Jessica said. "but only in that show."

"I really don't care. Be quiet, this is the best part." Jamie said, smiling as Heath Ledger leaned in to kiss Julia Stiles. She sighed.

"You and your romance, Jamie." Tiffany said.

"I know it." Jamie smiled.

“Well, I think that was a great movie,” Jessica said as the credits rolled. “Let’s watch Bend it like Beckham now.” She got up and put it in.

“You and your soccer.” Jamie said.

“Oh I know, I’m hopeless.” She smiled. They watched that one without speaking they knew Jessica would kill them if they tried to talk during the end. . After that ,they watched How to Deal in silence. Jamie fell asleep half-way through, and by the end Jessica was the only one left awake. She got up and turned the T.V. off. She lay down and fell asleep right when her head hit the pillow.

Jessica woke up with the smell of bacon, pancakes, and eggs around her. She went downstairs and found Tiffany, Scottie, and Jamie making breakfast. Jessica sat down at the bar.

“Why didn’t you guys wake me up? I would have helped you.” Jessica asked. She knew her friends were trying to help but she didn’t really think she needed it. Her parents were getting a divorce, and there was nothing she could do about it.

“You were sleeping so well we decided not to wake you up.” Tiffany explained as she sat the bacon down on the table. Scottie followed suit with the chocolate chip pancakes, and Jamie brought over the eggs.

“We made you favorites.” Scottie said. They sat down at the table and started to eat.

“So, I was thinking, maybe your mom will let you stay till after supper, I know your dad’s not big on sleepovers, but face it, you need us.” Jamie said.

“Well my plan is this, we go swimming for a while, then we come back inside and take showers. After that we have a spa-type thing where we get face masks, do our toenails and our fingernails, and go shopping for new clothes. I know you didn’t bring money with you Jessica, but I have some. Don’t worry about it.” Tiffany said.

After lunch, they went shopping. They all got in Tiffany’s car and went to the mall.

The first store they went into was Hot Topic, Jessica’s favorite. Now you might not think that Jessica is the type of person who would get punk clothes like that, but she loved them.

She got a purple Jack Skeleton shirt, a Twilight shirt that said “Stupid lamb”, a yoga fairy shirt (courtesy of Scottie), A Nightmare before Christmas blanket, A Twilight “James” shirt, and Skelanimlas pajamas. Jessica knew they were trying to get her mind off of the divorce, and she did, for about two minutes. It was taking up most of her mind right now though. After that they stopped in at Wet Seal for Scottie, Jamie, and Tiffany. That was their favorite store.

Scottie got a Grouch t-shirt, a faux leather bomber jacket, and a pair of purple arm warmers. Jamie got a hello kitty shirt, a purple hoodie, and red and black striped arm warmers. Tiffany got black and purple checkered arm warmers, a splattered paint t-shirt, an “I promise you I’m one of a kind t-shirt”, an “I love rock” t-shirt, and a milk and cookie “teamwork” t-shirt.

They got back home with all their purchases and it was time for Jessica to go. Her mom came to pick her up. She thanked them, hugged them, and promised she would be okay.

When she got home it was okay. She went upstairs, got ready for bed, brushed her teeth and went to bed.

Chapter 3- Changes

Jessica sat in class; she was sitting in social studies waiting for the bell to ring. She was bored. Usually she enjoyed social studies but she had had a horrible night last night. Here's what happened.

When she got home, her house was a mess. Apparently her dad had decided to move out, but wanted to bring all his stuff with him to the hotel. Everything was everywhere! Jessica wanted to scream. Her mom and dad had been arguing again she could tell because her mom was lying on the stairs sobbing, her favorite place to cry. Apparently it reminded her of that scene in Cinderella. The one where she's crying on the bench.

Jessica walked around the mess and sat down next to her mom. "Mom, what happened?" Jessica wasn't happy; in fact she was tired of all her parents' crap. *Why did they have to do this? It wasn't fair! Why did they have to destroy our lives,* she thought.

"Your dad went to stay at the hotel he talked about, he'll be back in a week to get the rest of his stuff. He's going to find a nice house in Alabama or Georgia. he wants to move farther away from Florida, but he wants to be able to see you and your siblings." Her mom got up and walked into the kitchen. "Your brother and sister are cleaning up in the dining room, the den, their rooms, and the living room; I think you should help me clean in the kitchen.

Jessica followed her mom into the kitchen and helped her pick up all of the things her mom hadn't already picked up earlier that day. She walked around the kitchen thinking. *All this was my life, this is still part of my life but my life will never be the same, my dad's gone, my brother and sister have each other, who do I have?* The answer came to her almost instantly- *my friends.*

She told her mom she needed to think and she walked upstairs to her room. She grabbed her old time friend, Dog (she named it when she was four), and lay down on her bed. She cried for a little bit and finally fell asleep.

Jessica woke up to insistent knocking on the door; she rolled out of bed and looked at her clock. 6:30. Dang! She had slept for two hours and no one had woken her up. She put Dog down and walked over to her door, it was her brother and sister. She opened the door all the way to let them come in. David sat on her bean bag in the floor and Samantha sat on the bed. They looked a lot alike.

David had long shaggy blonde hair that fell into his extremely blue eyes; he was very skinny and always wore what Jessica called "Emo-kid tight jeans".

Samantha had long blonde hair always braided down her back but she had shaggy bangs that fell into her (blue) eyes as well. They were both well tanned and skinny as rakes; just like Jessica, they had very long legs.

"What is it?" Jessica asked sitting down at her desk. She curled her legs underneath her, and accepted the strawberry smoothie handed to her by Samantha.

"Well the thing is...well, how do I say this...?" Samantha tried.

"Dad wants us to move in with us. He says he's probably moving to Alabama and it won't be that far for us to fly back on vacations. He wants you to come to." David said, not bothering to beat around the bush.

Jessica was silent for what seemed like hours. Finally, she said, "There is *no* way that I am moving all the way to Alabama. Yes, I do know Stacy is there, that's probably why dad chose Alabama. I am not going to go all the way to Alabama, my

friends are here.” Jessica finished, out of breath. There was absolutely **no way** she was moving away from her friends, she would have to talk to them later.

“Well, we are. We want to leave Florida. Mom is always uptight and we can’t stand it. We’ll come down for all the holidays, epically summer.” Samantha said. Samantha was concerned for her sister. She wasn’t sure how she would take it, but she seemed to have taken it well.

“I hope you guys like it, and I promise that I’ll visit sometimes. I can go see Stacy and her friends, it’ll be okay.” she smiled.

Her siblings’ choice was just that, their choice, but she was glad that her dad would have someone there with him.

“Should I do it, Stacy? I want to be able to see you but you know how hard it would be to move away from Tiffany, Jamie, and Scottie, they’re my friends. What do you think?” Jessica was talking to Stacy over the phone. She was going to have to make some decisions, and whatever happened she would have to accept it.

“Well you know that I would vouch for you coming to live close to me, but I know how hard it’ll be for you if you do. I think you’re happy right where you are. I think you shouldn’t leave.”

Stacy had a way of explaining things so that people understood. She also had a way of convincing people, so Jessica knew that if she had decided not to try to persuade her to come live with Stacy, then Stacy must really have meant what she said.

“Thanks Stacy, you always know how to make me feel better. Well, I have to go. My mom is trying to make a Barefoot Contessa recipe and I’m afraid she’ll burn the whole house down!”

Jessica hung up the phone and ran downstairs. Sure enough, her mom had already managed to burn whatever she was trying to cook on the stove.

“Mom, why not try something easier, like making a sandwich.”

Jessica’s mom had become a little over obsessed with trying to cook. She wanted to get everything right. She wanted to make sure her children had the best. Her children would be happy with just a P.B. and J sandwich.

She thought, *my family is crazy, but I’ve got them and I’m stuck with them, so I mine as well make the best of it.*

Chapter 4- Life, it bites

See the thing about life is that, when you think you have everything under control, life comes up and nips you in the butt, just to remind you that there are still things that people haven't figured out about it. Well, that's just what happened to Jessica.

Jessica thought that she had everything under control, it had been two months since her dad moved away and she was doing just fine. But life had different plans. Life didn't want her mother anymore, but Jessica wasn't going to let that happen.

"How's Mom?" Samantha asked. They had just gotten settled in Alabama when they had to come back. Their mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. The doctors said they weren't sure how long she would live, but they didn't think it would be much longer.

Jessica was silent.

"She might pull out of it, you know." David said. David usually hated hospitals, but when he heard the news you couldn't separate him from the car unless you had a crowbar. He was ready to go the minute Jessica called.

"I don't think that's going to happen. Mom said it was her time. Scottie, Tiffany, and Jamie will be here in about ten minutes. Scottie wants to see what she can do and Tiffany and Jamie want to say goodbye."

Just then Scottie, Jamie, and Tiffany rushed in. They were prepared. Tiffany had a box of my mom's favorite chocolates. Jamie had the first season of my moms favorite show, Friends, under her arm. And Scottie had her yoga mat, her tarot cards, her herbal medicines, and some relaxing music with her.

"Thanks for coming, guys." Jessica said. She hoped that her mom would pull out of this, but she was very doubtful.

"Where is she? Let me see her." Scottie said. She was ready. They walked down to Jessica's mom's room.

"Hello Mrs. White. How are you?" Scottie asked. Jamie handed her the series and Tiffany handed her the box of chocolates.

"Thank you, girls. I'm doing fine, Scottie; the doctors said they can probably remove the cancer. They're going to try the procedure tomorrow. I think I'll be just fine." A doctor came in to check on Mrs. White and said she needed to have a few examinations done so they were going to have to leave.

"I love you, Mom. Remember that." Jessica said before leaving.

They left. Everyone was hungry so they went downstairs to the cafeteria. Pretty much the only thing that looked good was the Chick-Fil-A, so they went there. After they ate they went back upstairs, but Mrs. White was asleep.

"How 'bout we go back to your house and clean. We'll get ready for your mom's arrival back home. Does that sound good?" Tiffany asked. Tiffany hated cleaning so it was a very big gesture.

"That would be amazing, guys, thanks. Sometimes I wonder whether I really deserve you guys as friends or not."

They had done an excellent job cleaning, but now everyone had to go home. Tiffany, Jamie, and Scottie wished Jessica luck and said they would come over tomorrow.

Samantha, David, and Jessica were sitting in their living room, watching T.V., eating, and reading when the phone rang. Jessica looked at it. It was the hospital. She picked it up.

“Hello.”

“Hello. Are you Jessica White?”

“Yes I am.”

“We have some news. Your mother didn’t make it. I’m sorry. She went in her sleep an-“

Jessica let the phone fall out of her hand. She felt like her whole world was crashing down. Her mother was gone. No more smell of burning every time she tried to cook, no more mall trips just the two of them, no more walking in the morning together. She was gone. Jessica picked up the phone.

“Thank you for informing me, I have to go but we’ll be there in an hour.” She hung up the phone. She walked over to her brother and sister who were sitting on the sofa, apparently they had guessed what happened because they were crying.

“You know, huh.” Jessica asked. It wasn’t a question. They nodded their heads.

“We’ll call Dad. He’ll come back for the funeral, and then we’ll all move back here. There’s no way I’m living anywhere but this house now.” Samantha said. She had tears streaming down her face.

David was silent. Just like usual, he suffered his pain in silence. He got up and went to his old room. Neither of them followed. From upstairs, you could very faintly hear crashing sounds. Soon he would run out of soft things to throw at the walls, and then Jessica and Samantha would have to go stop him.

“I’ll call Dad.” Samantha said through her tears. Jessica just nodded and sat there. She wasn’t moving. She was glued. She would never again do anything, anything, fun. Her life was over. She loved her mom more than life itself and if she could she would have, without a doubt, died in her moms place. She was devastated. There was nothing she could do, no magic wand to wave to turn back the time. She knew that her mom had lived life to its fullest, and that every minute Jessica had spent with her mom, Jessica was happy. When her mom was first diagnosed, she thought about how horrible and heart wrenching it would be to lose her, but she had never fully experienced it till now.

She knew that her friends were on her side, but right now she hated the whole world. How could it do this to her? How could it take her mother away from her? Her mother was an amazing woman and she loved her children. Jessica was sure that her heart would burst if she loved another person when she was little, but now she knew that her mom had a heart as big as the world itself.

Jessica was interrupted from her thoughts because she heard a loud crash. She didn’t want to move but she made herself. She went up the stairs to her brother’s room and just barely dodged a flying baseball trophy. She went over to her brother, grabbed him, sat down on the bed with him, held him, and rocked him back and forth. He was thirteen and weighed enough that it hurt, but she didn’t care, he was still small enough to lay in her lap. They were going to be okay. They would get through this. They just needed to stay together, but they **would** get through this.