

How to Be Your Own Sassy Heroine
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Introduction

Are you reeling from a devastating break up or divorce? Are you wondering if you're ever going to feel better? Are you on the verge of downloading the newest dating app so you can quickly find someone else? But what if being single again just takes a little imagination? Could you see yourself as the star of your own story? Just like heroines in romantic comedies, how could you start pushing through the "dark phase" to finally end up as a sassy and smiling heroine?

Think of a female character you love from one of your favorite movies or books. As her story opens, you see her stumbling, muttering under her breath, and second-guessing herself. As her story continues, you see how she begins to resolve some of her problems. She is making positive changes one step at a time. By the end of the story, you see her transform into a smiling and sassy heroine. By sassy, I mean, she is someone who is strong and sure of herself. She is striding with confidence into a new life. She knows who she is, what she wants, and where she's going.

What did you love about her journey? Did she learn some snappy dialogue? Does she have a new hair-flipping, carefree attitude? Is it the way she learned to stand up for herself? Did she start asking a simple question like: What do I want?

True story!

I binged-read countless romantic comedies when I was first divorced. I could easily find myself lost in three books a night. On weekends, I binged on an endless supply of light-hearted Netflix movies. I escaped into a world of romance and happy-ever-after endings.

I'm sure there are those who would say I could have coped in a better way. To those people I say, I also could have coped in a worse way.

Reading books and watching movies gave me comfort. I started reading stories faster and faster just to get to the end. I began fast-forwarding movies from the opening scenes, then to the pivotal life-changing scenes, and finally to the satisfying end. Story after story, I needed to know how the central character solved her problems and changed her life.

One day I realized I wanted to be the heroine at the end of the story. I wanted to be my own sassy heroine. But after almost a decade sharing my life with another, I had no idea how to put him behind me and move on. I didn't know what I liked or what I wanted. Was there a script I could follow? I started by slowing down and studying the stories I read and watched.

Next, I let my imagination soar. How did I want my life to go? What was I doing? How was I doing it? How did I look? What was I saying?

Little by little, I not only started to see myself as my own heroine, I started acting like one.

Your turn!

Do you think you can become your own sassy heroine? I think so! Pretend you are stepping into a sassy heroine's role for a day. How would you decorate your place? How would you dress? What would you be driving? What fun things would you do? What would you say to people? Who are the good friends or family members you want beside you?

Imagine you now see yourself in this new role for a couple weeks. Before you know it, a couple months have gone by. Finally, you wake up one day and you really are a sassy heroine.

Let's get you there!

How to Decorate Like a Sassy Heroine

Think of all the romantic comedies you've seen. Have you ever noticed the sets? Perhaps the walls are painted a pale blue with white trim. How could you describe the furniture? Modern, vintage, or cottage-cozy, come to mind. I sometimes notice that kitchen counters may be sparse, except for possibly, an Italian espresso maker. At the other extreme, I've seen kitchens that are eclectically messy. When the main character steps into her home, however, you sense that the set was inspired by everything she loves.

Take a look around your bedroom, living room, kitchen, or bathroom. Have you always wanted to decorate in a special way? Do the decorations or color scheme match your personality? Or does every room look like a boring, beige compromise?

Now imagine an HGTV reality-TV film crew has arrived on your doorstep. Are you ready to invite them in? Would you ask them to come back so you could make a few changes first? What changes would you make?

True story!

One of the best pieces of advice I got from a friend shortly after my divorce was that I could decorate however I wanted. I would never need to worry about someone else's opinion.

"What do you want?"

I looked at her with a quizzical expression. I couldn't remember the last time someone asked me what I wanted.

"What...do...I...want?" I said slowly like when I was learning the first words of the French language. "Well...I..."

My friend nodded her head encouragingly like one of my old French teachers and waited for my answer.

"I mean....I...well..." I stumbled.

As if speaking my first words of a foreign language, I began. "I want..." I looked around my bedroom. The bedding was an uninspiring navy blue. But I didn't know what I wanted. I couldn't answer this question. I didn't know.

I finally shouted in exasperation. "Je ne sais pas."

"What did you say," my friend laughed.

"I don't know!" I yelled. "I don't know what I want, but I know I hate this bedding."

"Well then," she said. "Start there. Go out and get new sheets."

I got out of bed, finally, and discovered the magic of a bed-in-a-bag. In one easy sheet change, my bedroom went from boring navy blue to shabby chic. My bed was decorated in pink roses. I wouldn't have been able to sneak in a fake flower when I was married.

The only male who might have minded was my black-and-white tuxedo cat, and I knew he only cared for comfy pillows. For a brief moment, I wanted nothing more than to get right back into bed. I knew I couldn't because I had a little more to do.

Purging

The good thing about the guy leaving is that you get to keep the majority of the "things" like bedding, ornaments, and kitchenware. At the same time, the bad thing about the guy vanishing from your life one day is that you still have all that stuff...except...it feels oppressive!

Don't get me wrong. There was a time when every birthday and Christmas wish list was filled with gifts for the domestic couple. I probably wanted the simple navy decor in the bedroom at one time.

Believe it or not, I didn't go out and redecorate my entire place all at once. I had fun purging first. It's amazing how many items of domestic bliss I'd accumulated.

I'd never baked a cake in all the years I was married, yet I had a Bundt cake pan and a covered cake plate. Did I buy them at the same time? Which one came first? Did I fall in love with the cake plate and thought I'd want to bake? Was it the other way around? Did I buy the Bundt pan first and put off baking, until I had the perfect cake plate?

Next up on my list to purge: bins of Christmas ornaments, bowmakers, ribbons, along with glue guns and glue sticks of different sizes. Clearly, I had spent years mimicking Martha Stewart? I was single again. Did I want to keep it all? Hell no! I was starting over!

Deciding on My Town

One of my pet peeves about romantic comedies is that they are mostly set in New York. Have you noticed that? Ok, well, Seattle or San Francisco get a nod every now and then. I wondered if I should move. I only ended up in Phoenix because of an opportunity for my ex-husband.

Did I want to move across the country to start a new life? Sassy heroines can live anywhere, right? Did I want to give up the sun and warm weather? Hell no! I was staying.

My Own Special Place

It wasn't until a couple years later when I bought a tiny condo and decorated it my way from scratch. Decorating wasn't about going out and buying whatever I saw advertised. It became more about asking myself: Is this what I want? Is this the picture I want in the bedroom? Is this the white shower curtain I want, or do I really want the shower curtain trimmed with faux fur?

I bought pictures of shoes; pictures of women in haute couture standing in Paris; and pictures and ornaments of the Eiffel Tower. I hadn't realized how much I loved the color pink, until I bought a six-foot tall pink Christmas tree one year.

In fact, it stands in the middle of the living room all year round. Instead of a star or angel for a tree topper, I have a silver-and-pink tiara. I really don't see the point in taking the tree down. It's my home, my place. I smile whenever I see it. "So there!" In fact, do you know who I only ever rely on for decorating advice? Take a guess. Me!

I encourage people who visit to see if they can count the number of Eiffel towers throughout my place. I've lost count myself, actually.

One of my newest decorations is a three-foot lighted Eiffel tower painted a glittery gold. I was window shopping at the mall (yes...at an actual mall) with my mother when I saw it standing amid a collection of international Christmas ornaments. I walked straight toward it in a trance as though the mother ship was calling me.

"I need this," I told myself. This would be the piece de resistance of my decorating.

"I thought you were trying to downsize," my mother asked. "Do you need another Eiffel Tower?"

Yes, as a matter of fact, I did need another one.

As if I needed encouragement, the salesperson wandered over smiling, "Gorgeous, isn't it? There's an extra 15 percent off today."

"I'll find room," I said definitively.

"Well, it's your place," my mother said. "You can do what you want."

"That's right," I said.

It took two people to wrap my "objet d'art." One held the base steady, while the other slid a plastic bag over the pointed top and down the layers of the Eiffel tower, as if he were throwing a gown over a Parisienne model.

I carefully took hold of the base of the tower. It was a little awkward to carry. I thought I might stumble. Then I remembered that I was the heroine of my own story. This is the scene where I stood taller with shoulders back, flipped my hair, and made a graceful exit with my golden trophy.

Your turn!

Are you ready to open your doors to a reality-TV film crew now? If you're wondering how to decorate like a set designer, watch one of your favorite romantic comedies. What color are the walls painted? What details jump out? Are faux-fur pillows piled high on the sofa, for example?

How would you describe the set of your home starring yourself as your own sassy heroine? Is it mismatched and cozy? Designer-inspired? Swedish-modern? The next time you're shopping, ask these questions: Do I really want this? Is this me? Here's an even better question: Is this the new me?

We know real, sassy women live everywhere, right? Can you be a sassy heroine in your hometown? How would you describe the city where you live? How can you compare it to a movie setting? What do the buildings look like? Brick? Glass? A mixture of old and new, maybe? Is there a popular tourist attraction or summer festival you love? If so, what's special about it?

What makes your city great? What stereotypes would you like to banish about your hometown? Take a moment to remember what you love. If you could see your town in a movie (with you as the star), what locations would you pick? Why?

On the other hand, you're the heroine of your story. If you want to move, you can. Do you want to live in a bustling downtown? In the country? At the beach? In the mountains?