



It's You Every Time

By Charlene Thomas

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BY CHARLENE THOMAS

The Story

Fate had other plans for Sydney on September 24.

When she literally runs into Marcus in the middle of New York City, it's too hard for her to say goodbye.

After spending a magical day together, it seems like Marcus is just as grateful to have found her as she is to have found him, and Sydney is almost willing to believe that maybe—just maybe—after years of loss and heartache, she's finally reached the good part.

While they linger in a crosswalk as nighttime falls, Sydney wishes the day didn't have to end. But then, there's the sound of screeching tires, blinding headlights, and a moment of searing pain. When Sydney opens her eyes, she's back in her bed—on September 24th again . . . and again, and again.

Sydney knows that what she has with Marcus is special—the kind of special that deserves to exist forever. But what does forever mean when you're stuck in a world that's stopped spinning?

Reading Group Questions

1. What do Sydney and Marcus want at the beginning of the story? How does that change by the end?
2. From your point of view, what were the central themes of the book? How well do you think the author did at exploring them?
3. Did the story change the way you feel about fate/destiny? If so, how did it reshape your views?
4. What do you imagine happens to Sydney and Marcus after the book ends? How does their story go from here?

About the Author



Photo © Charlene Thomas

Charlene Thomas is a big dreamer and believes a lot in people and what all of us are capable of, and maybe that's why she loves creating big characters who are steadfastly determined to change their own little parts of the world. She attended undergrad at NC State University, earned her MBA from Emory University, and has her Certificate in Teaching Creative Writing from the University of Cambridge. She currently lives in Montgomery County, MD, and when she isn't writing, she spends time as a marketer.

Author Q&A

Do you believe in fate and destiny? Why or why not?

I *absolutely* believe in fate and destiny. I never could have written a book like this if I didn't! There are too many perfect things that happen—the friends who feel like family, being in the right place at the right time, falling in love—for me to believe that life is all about luck and chance. I believe there are things we are meant for, *moments* we are meant for, and that's why it feels like magic when we stumble upon them. If nothing else, and I talk about this a little bit in *It's You Every Time*, I think we all need hope in this life, and believing in something bigger than ourselves—be it fate or destiny or a higher power—can grant us the strength we need to keep going, even when things are incredibly hard.

What was the hardest part of the story to write?

The hardest part of this book to write was probably the subway scene where Marcus is sitting on the steps, crying all alone. It's such a lonely feeling—to be in the middle of so many people yet go unseen. I think we all know what that can be like, and to add grief on top of that is next-level gut-wrenching, because grief is already one of the loneliest feelings there is. So, that was really hard for me to write, but it was also so nice to grant him a bit of healing by the end of that moment. I really think that's the only way to heal: bit by bit.

What do you hope readers will take away from this story?

I hope anyone who reads this story realizes how much they matter in the world, and the massive impact we all have on each other's lives, even if we never realize it. And, in knowing this, I hope that's enough to help them keep putting one foot in front of the other, even on the hardest days.

If this book were a song, what song would it be? Why?

Well, funnily enough, this song has a playlist included in the final pages—so, those songs were definitely chosen intentionally, and all have a special way of evoking the mood of the story at a given point in time. But, when it comes to a song that represents the entirety of the book, I would have to say “Love You Still” by Tyler Shaw. I was listening to it the other day and it suddenly hit me how perfect that song is for *It's You Every Time*. Everything from the lyrics to the melody are so dreamy, and heartfelt, and pure—not a bunch of showy gestures but just the truth. I love it! And I think it's a perfect representation of this book overall.

Do you have any recommendations for readers who loved this book, what should they check out next?

Yes! Firstly, if you're looking for another full-of-feels love story, I absolutely recommend *I Hope This Doesn't Find You* by Ann Liang, who was kind enough to blurb this book. Also, if you haven't seen it, I recommend checking out *The Map of Tiny Perfect Things*, which starts out as a fun time loop story but ends up as a truly powerful story of love and loss. Lastly, with grief as a major theme of this story, I'd be remiss not to offer some of my most-valued grief resources, which include *All There Is*—a podcast hosted by Anderson Cooper—and The Dinner Party—an organization that helps match younger people (21–45) who have experienced significant loss with peers who have as well. Oh—and if you're just interested in reading more of *my* stories, check out *Seton Girls* and *Streetlight People*!