



Broken Heart Syndrome

Susie Tate

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Shy, reclusive Frankie and her best friend Lou obsess over Thomas G. Longley, as they reverently refer to him, for their entire first two years of medical school. So when he publically humiliates her at the student bar she is devastated.

Ten years later, Frankie has to work in the testosterone driven environment of Cardiology before she can start her palliative care training and, to her dismay, Tom is her boss.

Thankfully the subject of her long-term crush doesn't seem to remember her and, given her ability to blend into the background, she's not really surprised. What does surprise her is how cruel he is. Sure he squished her self esteem like a bug at Uni, but the Tom she spent many a pointless lunch break or library session covertly watching seemed easy going and quick to smile; not an uptight, overly critical bully.

Between passing out whilst assisting in theatre, struggling to force the team to see their bed blockers, and being covered head to foot in the bloody vomit of 'Scary Glenda' (A&E's most frequent, frequent flyer), she can't wait to get through the six months.

Although she's too timid to tell Tom to jog on when she is his only target, when it's her patients that he starts trampling she decides to grow a backbone, and Tom begins to see that she is not the cold, aloof woman he once thought.

As the misunderstandings of the past come to light, Tom realizes that the 'complete-bastard' routine he has been clinging to out of hurt pride might not have been his most stellar idea. He has a fight on his hands to win Frankie over and, unfortunately, it's not just his past behaviour he's fighting against. You see, Frankie knows all about being pushed around. She's dealt with enough verbal and even physical abuse before to last a lifetime and she's not going to be fooled into thinking that this ruthless alpha male has turned over a new leaf.

Even if he could convince her that he's not really the bully he projected before, her low self-esteem would never allow her to believe that a man like Tom could really be into a boring, bland, nondescript girl like her.

Luckily for Frankie, Tom is used to getting what he wants. He's determined to make her see herself clearly for the first time in her life and he's just arrogant enough to believe that he can break through her defenses.

But Frankie's past is not ready to let her go quite yet. There's a reason that she spends next to no money but is always skint: a reason that she keeps her flat door open: a reason that she holds herself back from him.

Maybe he won't manage to convince her and he'll allow her to push him away. Or maybe (as Lou rightly puts it) he should 'stop being a pussy and man up already.'

Broken Heart Syndrome Details

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A says

I absolutely adore Susie Tate's writing style :) I gave this story 4 stars because I wanted to see more of a change in Frankie within the pages of the book, but I still really enjoyed it and can recommend it :) more thoughts and feelings in my full review, to come soon-ish ;)

edited to add my full review :)

I voluntarily reviewed a free copy of this book :) this is the debut novel from Susie Tate, but it wasn't my first book of hers that I read... I started with her newer novels, and after really loving them, decided to go back and check out some of her other work :) this is the first book in a series, but each story focuses on a different couple and is a complete novel, so don't worry about cliffhangers or anything... this one even had a lovely little epilogue... :) before I go into all my thoughts and feelings about this book, let me tell you more about our main couple :)

I feel like the first thing I should tell you is that the synopsis is a bit... misleading... not a lot, but I had a bit different expectations when I started this book... so let me tell you more about Frankie and Tom so you will have a better understanding of the situation... they were both in med school together... but the whole he-humiliated-her situation is... without any spoilers whatsoever... definitely not as horrible as I thought it would be... honestly, I expected a lot worse... very soon after that we move forward about ten years, when they meet again... that whole situation and how Tom treats her is also a bit different than I thought based on the synopsis... basically, I expected more... drama, I guess... trust me, there's still plenty of stuff happening with Tom and Frankie and their whole situation, but it's definitely not as intense as I expected... Frankie was, and still is, very shy and doesn't see herself like other people do... she has huge problems believing her friends when they say how amazing, smart and beautiful she is... Tom seems like a... well, a jerk at times... :) but he does have very redeeming qualities :) theirs is definitely a bumpy road to a happy ending, but more about it in the next paragraph of my review :)

This was a 4 stars book for me... maybe even closer to 3,75, but I rounded it up :) I am still a huge fan of Susie Tate's writing style, but I feel like she definitely got better with her later books... :) this one still has her blend of engaging and flawed characters, but I think she perfected it a bit over the course of her later stories :) I really liked Frankie, at least at the beginning... but the more I got into the book, the more I wanted to see some character development from her... and don't get me wrong, I understand being shy and everything that accompanies it... from personal experience... but I felt like Frankie was really stuck in her ways... for a very long time... and I really wanted to see that change in her a bit sooner... and I don't mean like suddenly she should become this crazy party person talking to strangers without hesitation, but... she just really focused on the negative things completely disregarding the positive ones that people said about her... not to mention that you really should work on basing your self worth on yourself and not on what other people think about you... but that's a topic for a whole different discussion :) also, I think that Tom's pursuit of her was... relentless... and I don't mean that in a good way for parts of it... I feel like he was being pushy after getting "ok" from Frankie's best friend, who knew she liked him... which also made me angry for a bit... it's one thing to be supportive and try to pull someone out of their shell and comfort zone a bit, but... sometimes it grated on my nerves... maybe because I see some similarities between me and Frankie and I am really not a fan of that behaviour... when someone thinks they know better what's good for you and try to force certain outcome... it makes me want to go in the opposite direction straight away :) as you can see my personal preferences and experiences definitely coloured my opinions of this story :) so don't get me wrong, because the fact that I had

some issues with the story that didn't work out for me shouldn't be a sign that you can't read the book :) there were a lot of great things about it :) I loved the secondary characters, the writing style in general... I connected to the characters and as you can see have some very formed opinions about them, which is always a good sign... ;) so if this story sounds like something you might enjoy, definitely give it a try... although I definitely prefer her later books, "Limits" being my favourite at the moment, this was a solid debut novel :)

XOXO

A

for more book-ish stuff visit:

my blog -> <https://bookworm8619.blogspot.com/>

my facebook page -> <https://www.facebook.com/bookworm8619/>

Aarann says

3.5 stars

This was a sweet little read about an insecure girl named Frankie, who fell in lust with Tom back in college and never quite managed to fall back out. When they are thrown together ten years later as she trains to be a hospice doctor (more on that in a second), Tom's curt behavior is discovered to be because he likes her (the adult equivalent of tugging on her pigtails on the playground). Hijinks ensue.

The Good

One thing this author did that I *really* dug was to make Tom seem like a real person. Romance authors have gotten pretty good at fleshing out the heroines, making them seem real, but when you look at the alpha heroes, 95% of them are all pretty much cut from the same-old-same-old mold. Tom, on the other hand, was sloppy, messy, a bit of a mama's boy, and yeah, maybe a bit of a spoiled prat (particularly at the end), but he was also thoroughly alpha male, totally sweet, attractive, and thoughtful. He does some pretty asshat things during the course of the book, especially toward the end when he's hurting, but he always seemed like he could be a real person to me, which is pretty rare for the male half of a romance novel relationship. In fact, with the exception of him having very few close relationships that we actually witness in the book, he seemed like a real guy you might meet on the street, as opposed to, say, a billionaire businessman CEO who Businessing Business with the Business all the time when he's not sitting in his office brooding like Michael Keaton in "Batman Returns" waiting for the bat-signal in his spare time, until he meets the heroine who waves her magic wand and turns him into a real boy.

For all my complaints about Frankie (I'll get to them in a minute), she also seemed like a real person. Who isn't insecure and willfully blind? Maybe not to her extent, but as frustrating as she was, she managed to be sweet, loyal, intelligent, and hard-working. Yes, she bordered on Mary Sue territory at times given the extent of *how* sweet, loyal, intelligent, and hard-working she was, but I'm willing to let it pass.

And let me just say: I. Loved. Lou. Particularly toward the end when the author quotes one of my favorite lines from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in regards to her: *Though she be little, she be fierce*. I'm really hoping she keeps up the awesomeness in her own book and we don't see a completely different version of the character. I've already got that one waiting on my Kindle.

The Not-so-good

I did have a few issues with this one. First and foremost, Frankie is training to be a hospice doctor... part-time... while baking cakes on the side (WTF?). Who goes to medical school so they can be a part-time doctor? I know the education system works differently in England, but wouldn't she have loans to pay? I just got the feeling that the author wanted Frankie to be a baker, not a doctor (do they call them something else in the UK? I noticed a lot of characters I would have thought of as "Dr." were referred to as "Mr." and I have to admit I don't know much about how their medical and/or collegiate systems operate so maybe I'm totally off-base on this complaint), but couldn't figure out a way to make that happen while still forcing her and Tom together for the first half of the book. This may not be a fair thing to complain about since I only know how these things work in my part of the world, so I'm not really going to judge the book harshly for this.

My other issue with her was Frankie's insecurities. I get that parents and cold-hearted **bastards shitheads** *children* on the playground can do a number on you during childhood (hoo boy do I get it), but to not even tell Tom the whys and wherefores of her history (view spoiler) seemed really pointless, like it was just there to create drama.

My last problem with the book was down to editing. Honestly, there weren't a plethora of errors -- I've certainly read books with a lot more than this one had -- but they stood out. Repeatedly referring to a singular "woman" as "women", for example, or missing words. I spotted a couple of "it's" used in the possessive form -- that sort of thing. I didn't take off a star for it because it really could have been so much worse, but it was a little distracting.

Conclusion

This book was pretty adorable and for \$.99, a good read. I got a lot of fun angsty drama from it and even though I had some issues with Frankie, overall I'm walking away fully intending to read the next book. I will *tentatively* say that the author reminds me of a British Kristen Ashley. (Not totally. Hear me out.) Yes, she uses full sentences and you don't get the weird syntax that is so peculiar to Ashley's work, but once the hero decided that the heroine was his, he went after her. I particularly thought of Tate a few times from Ashley's "Sweet Dreams" in that Tom wasn't perfect and was kind of an asshat at times and said some really horrible things when he was angry, but he had a good heart underneath -- even if Tom was a nicer guy on the surface than Tate was. Plus, I got some of the yummy angst that I got during the early Ashley novels. It's not a perfect comparison (and really, I wouldn't want it to be), I'm just trying to give a feel for the book.

One thing that should be noted (and this is where I drop the Ashley comparison) is that while the main characters do have sex during this book, it's not terribly detailed and there is only one scene. I wouldn't call it totally clean, but it is a far cry from erotica. The book definitely focuses more on the emotional build-up than the physical and it kind of worked for the world and the characters. Personally, I didn't feel like I was missing out on anything because I wasn't hearing the details about their bedroom acrobatics. It worked with the tone of the book, so no complaints one way or the other about that.

I can definitely see me re-reading this down the line, although I doubt it will be a favorite. I ordered it at the same time I ordered Lou's book, and while I think I'm going to take a bit of a breather before I start on Lou's, I am looking forward to seeing Lou take man-whore Dylan down a few pegs.

UPDATE

I just got the below rather lovely message from the author, clearing up some of my questions. Since I had

questions, I thought maybe others who read this might as well. Ms. Tate agreed to let me post it on my review, so please see below.

I just wanted to message to say thank you so much for your review and help clear up any confusion about the medical stuff. I really appreciate all the feedback I get and it helps the books loads. To be honest they have only just taken off worldwide in the last month, so I'm still very much starting out. I have to admit that I didn't realise how quickly the books could go viral and I apologise for the errors but I have now sent them off to be copy edited.

I'm so glad that you liked Lou - she is actually based on one of my best friends and if you can believe it I had to tone her language down for the book! Another one of my best friends is cardiologist called Tom who I went to Uni with and played rugby with my husband (Tom likes to think that the hero is based on him, especially as his wife to be is a palliative care trainee like Frankie). One of my other friends gave up medicine completely to bake and that was where the idea for Frankie came from - although I still wanted Frankie keep working in medicine as well and palliative care seemed to suit the character. When we went to medical school (I qualified in 2003) it was free, so I think the debt accrued was a lot less for us than in America, although this has changed over the last few years.

The Mr thing is confusing - in the UK when you are training to be a surgeon and pass all your postgraduate exams you become a Mr again. I know, totally nuts, but is something to do with the fact that all surgeons were originally barbers or some such nonsense.

As you can see I steal a lot of the stuff in the books from real life - I promise you that some of the cardiologists and surgeons I know really can be that arrogant! I hope you enjoy the next one and that Lou lives up to your expectations. Thanks so much for reading and for taking the time to review.

Susie x

Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says

1 extra foo foo star for the h, for not being interested in taking up her profession full time. For not being the usual 'serious specialties only' trooper and for not killing her feet, butt and herself in saving every last human from the scourges of disease, disability and infirmity.

I so get her plans of doing palliative care part time along with her true calling –the cake baking business. Serious envy! So goes for me!

What else worked for me?

Good interesting cases and the medical jargon. The whole Brit medical system. Hail NHS!

All those Welshisms and Criticisms! Very cwtch and absolutely the bee's knees!

The h/H and their obvious smitten-ness with each other and being such blind idiots about it.

What didn't?

The h's never-ending propensity to down grade/demean her looks n attractiveness. Okay maybe she has some self-esteem issues but really? She almost goes into neurosis with her denials and she is supposedly beautiful, not just pretty. She is one of those who go all offended and grudging on getting compliments,

which in itself is so unattractive and rude. Not cool!

Ginette says

Really wanted to like this one. The story itself was ok, I just couldn't connect with the characters.

Valerie says

Phew, I feel so, so good right now, like a starved dog whose tummy was just filled with yummy scraps of old, greasy bacon! I hadn't picked a book in one WHOLE week! That's 7 days, or 168 hours, which felt like three lifetimes, no exaggeration. That's what happens when you have to juggle work with a 5 mo needy human being, two dogs and the boring though very necessary household chores: life. Life that gets in the way of your passion. Sheesh! Where's the fun in being a grownup if you can't even get one full minute to yourself to do one of the things you crave most in life?

I digress. Now onto the book: this was my first book from this author. I'm going to preface this review with this tidbit of information: i didn't actually read the WHOLE blurb. I read about a quarter of it then decided I must buy this book. I guess you could say that's a testament to my undying love of stories in which one of the MCs (emotionally) hurts the other, then usually has to grovel to get back into the former's good graces. Turns out the book isn't even about that, ha!

Still, this was a good book. Oooo-kay, so maybe the very first sentence of this book starts with the heroine addressing the readers directly. And maybe I really hate that. And maybe my first thought was that I thought I made a major mistake with this book. But I was so starved that I kept reading past that teeny tiny indiscretion. And I am SO stinking glad I did because I adored the humour, liked the heroine and enough, felt the chemistry between her and the hero, and really enjoyed the read.

I'm not gonna lie, the heroine was a little daft at times (grouping every good looking man together and declaring nothing good happens when dating one of them), and her cluelessness about Tom's feelings and her own appearance annoyed me to no end. The hero gets downright nasty sometimes as well (I don't care what your reasons are, you suck when you talk down to the woman you love like that). The ending really could be improved, too. But most of the book is fun and captivating, and I will definitely look for others from this author!

Kamila says

Susie Tate is one of my new favorite authors!

'Broken Heart Syndrome' is a fantastic debut.

If you thought that you can't die of a broken heart, you were wrong!

It's true that there is a condition called 'broken heart syndrome', it may be caused by the heart's reaction to a surge of stress hormones. The condition may also be called takotsubo cardiomyopathy.

Why is that the title of the book? Simple reason, Tom and Frankie are both doctors, well Tom is, Frankie needs a bit more experience before she starts being her own boss. Until then she has to endure working under grumpy and hateful man that she's secretly swooning over(not that she thinks he would ever look at her THAT way).

She has few unpleasant(to say mildly) memories of Tom from Uni, the more time she spends with him in the hospital the more sure she is that he's not the person she thought he was.

He might even care more about her than she firstly assumed...

I loved the characters!

Frankie, shy and quiet(but not a doormat), Tom, brilliant and handsome(there's more to him than you see), Lou(crazy and loud but with a big heart), Dylan(Welsh and a slut;) but a good friend).

I loved the storyline, it was funny at moments, really sad at times, but a good banter altogether.

Solid 4*

Lisa Pate says

It will make you laugh and cry and come up smiling

As I read this story I could literally feel the pain Frankie was living with as a result of her severe shyness and people misjudgment her or making false statements about her. Tom being one of the people made to believe that she was the opposite of what she was. Then the truth came out on the night they dubbed as "Frankie's scary drunk night". Then the rollercoaster of a ride of their relationship start, with slowly winning Frankie's confidence, meeting Tom's funny sister and the rest of his family. It was sad though the length Frankie went to, to keep one thing secret from Tom, and amazing how he and his family handled it all. It is a wonderful story. I strongly suggest a box of tissues for both the sad cry and happy ones.

Jane says

Actual rating 2.5 stars. The following review was originally posted on my book blog The Book Challengers.

It's been a while since I read British chick lit and while the beginning was quite promising with this one, it grew rather tedious and repetitive after a while for me.

I first thought that the heroine was quite likeable and I thought that I could maybe even grow to love her.. But alas, it was not to happen as Frankie grew to be quite obnoxious instead with her insecurities about her looks and herself in general. She was ready to stand up for others, but never for herself. She thought that she wasn't good enough for practically anyone and honestly it felt a lot more like a pity party rather than a normal almost 30-year-old woman to me. It's impossible for someone to ignore so many good comments

about herself for YEARS and take the negative ones to heart the moment she hears them.

And what was up with her studying medicine for a decade and then deciding that she doesn't even want to work in the field and prefers to open her cake business instead? What is it with chick lit heroines wanting to bake all the bloody time?? It does not make sense to me and I'm definitely in the camp of liking to bake stuff as well!

I also wish that there were more than a couple of chapters from the hero - Tom's point of view as he seemed to be an almost decent man. Though I have a hard time believing that even he can put up with Frankie putting herself down for so bloody long. He last saw her ten years ago and apparently he's still interested, but the man doesn't take no for an answer. But truth be told, I wish that he had backed off sooner as his interest in her didn't make sense and in my opinion all good men should be able to back off once the recipient of their feelings says "no".

So yeah... it worked as a story to pass the time, but nothing special for me unfortunately.

Cc says

I use Susie Tate novels for book slumps, lol. I've loved everyone of them the first time around and by the third time I think my iPad has dog ears around the edges when I pull one up on kindle. ;-). I love that her settings are medical but really I think it's just the descriptive way she writes, I can truly picture the scene in my head. I read to get away from my real world for a bit, to relax and recharge, and her writing allows me to do that. If you haven't tried one of her books, you should. Who knows, you might find a book slump "shatterer" too!

Molly says

I really, really enjoyed this! I like to mix it up, setting-wise, with my books. This was perfect, because how many romance novels are out there about medical residents in Wales? As far as I know, not too many.

Frankie's lack of self-esteem was well explained (none of this shallow "no one likes me because I think I'm ugly" nonsense), and the mix-up of feelings between her and Thomas G. Longely was believable and just a little bit heart-breaking.

This was more of a slow burn with little to no steam, and I absolutely adored it, even if it was kept pretty PG. The secondary characters were great, and I'll definitely be reading the next in this series.

What a charming book!

Becky Hyland says

I really liked this book by an author I have not read before! It was refreshing to read a book based in a hospital setting, that actually got it right and I believed what I was reading. I was a big fan of Tom and Frankie and willing them to find each other all the way through - I also liked the side characters especially

Lou .. Great book and I am going straight into Lou and Dylan's story now!

Emmy says

For some reason characters explaining their struggles with self esteem or bullying or the like always manage to hit me right in the gut. Some people might find Frankie's struggle to believe anyone could want her would get annoying, but I found it completely relatable. If you've struggled with self confidence your whole life, it can take a lot of time to convince you that something is true.

Other than those emotional parts, I loved the pacing of this romance and that it wasn't too heavy on the sex (and I don't just mean the sexy times, but also the narration. Don't get me wrong, I like a good sexy time as much as the next person, but I wanted a slow burn romance and a good slow burn shouldn't have people thinking about or having sex constantly throughout the entire book. The sex stuff should be light or limited to the very end IMHO).

My one complaint would be that I could have used more explanation of the medical stuff in the beginning. 1. I don't know too much about medicine and how hospitals work and 2. I know even less about this stuff in the UK. So I struggled a bit with some acronyms and terminology. Not so much that it took a way from the book, but enough that I noted it.

Anyway, I will definitely be continuing with this series and author!

Debbie "Buried in Her TBR Pile" says

Enjoyed reading this one - I ended up with a smile on my face. The characters are likeable, the story interesting, and the writing is funny. Lou is hysterical. Frankie and Tom are cute together and neither annoyed me at all. I can't wait to read other books by this author. Solid 4 stars.

KatieV says

I really enjoyed this. The character interactions were fun. There was a true sense of the bond people form when they work together under stressful situations. I really enjoy the author's sense of humor too.

I thought the hero, Tom, was hot. He was a jerk at times, but there were several misunderstandings. He was mistakenly informed that Frankie was interested in his specialty (cardiology) and irritated when she was obviously just biding her time during her rotation with him. Also, he had a faulty view of the heroine thanks to her shyness and another person's meddling.

Frankie's insecurities did get a bit old toward the end, but it is entirely possible for a person to see themselves in a totally different way than others do. Your background sticks with you even when it seems no longer relevant to the rest of the world. I also identified with her being misjudged as cold/haughty. If I had a dollar for every time someone told me they were surprised how much they liked me due to the fact they hated me at first because they thought I was stuck on myself. I'm just reserved and I have to be around someone a while before I feel comfortable - jeez! They "hated me" because I wasn't hugging and kissing and gushing all over

people I'd known for five fricking minutes?! People can be really harsh in their first impressions.

Some have complained about the editing mistakes. There were some, but they didn't bother me because I was caught up in the flow. I also enjoyed the English and Welsh terms/slang. The characters were in the UK, they shouldn't have to stop and explain everything in American. I got the gist and if there was any slang I was curious about, I just googled.

Tami says

Nice read. I didn't like Frankie as much as Lou, as she had this "no, I am not beautiful, all those people must be wrong" thing going. It was believably done with her back-ground, but still annoying.

I liked Tom.

I didn't understand why he involved his family so early on in his relationship and the whole wrap up was too fast for me.

Even if Frankie was soooo great, that everybody just HAD to love her, it might make some sense to date for at least a few months before deciding on the long run.
