

Transcript

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You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 250. Welcome to the My Simplified Life podcast, a place where you will learn that your past and even your present don't define your future. Regardless of what stage of life you're in, I want you to feel inspired and encouraged to pursue your dreams, simplify your life, and start taking action. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac.

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author of How to Get on Podcasts, the podcast matchmaker, and CEO and founder of the MLG Collective. I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you while taking you on my own journey. This is my simplified life.

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Hey friends, welcome back to another episode and it's episode 250. It is so many, I can't believe we have gotten here. And today I have the pleasure of interviewing Raz Tal Schenirer and talking about her book Where Love Lies. And it is a heavy book as well as a light book. It's a mixture.

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And you're going to hear all of the reasons why I describe it in this way. And Roz shares what about her life has been a part of this book. And it's truly amazing. She was born in Israel and moved to the United States at the age of three, and at the age of 17 and a half, moved back to Israel and then served in the Israeli military for two years. That's all included in the book. And

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I was amazed. She's also been in beauty pageants. And to me, it felt like the two didn't mix. And I wanted to get to know her and to get to know more about the elements of this book that she created. And she shares how real life plays a role in writing a novel, what comes to life, what parts are embellished and so much more. So I know that you're going to enjoy getting to know Roz.

02:07

and hearing more about her experience and her incredible book, *Where Love Lies*. Hello, Raz. Hi. I'm so excited to talk to you. I've just finished *Where Love Lies*, and I cannot wait to hear about you as it pertains to this book because, wow. Can you introduce yourself to everyone, please? Of course. Hi, everyone. First of all, Michelle, thank you for having me. I'm so excited. I can't wait to chat with you.

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My print said wonderful things. I am Raz Tal Schenirer and I am the author of *Where Love Lies*, which is my debut novel. We can both hold it up. Here we are. This is my baby. And I'm just so excited to talk today and to just dive in and spill some juice, but not spoilers. I love it. And let's start off with the fact that you're a mom of three under three. Right. Yeah.

03:05

Yeah. Three under three. You are insane. I am. I really am. My husband too. It's not just me. I mean, two to tango, right? Right. Yes. And it's lucky that the husbands understand that. When I got pregnant with our second and it was so quickly, I apologized and he's like, you didn't do it alone.

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You apologized. Oh my gosh. I did. Yeah. I was like, oh my gosh. Yeah, it took a long time for the first, so we thought the second would be the same way. I know. Everyone seems to have that same thing with us, you know? But it's a blessing, right? It is, especially now that they're getting older, they're best friends. It's much easier. I think that what you're going through now, I don't even remember. You just do it. You wake up, you do it, and you don't even think about, oh, this is...

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completely nuts. And- Oh, exactly. It's like one long day, but actually like the writing and the reading that I've been doing is my sort of escape. So that's why a lot of people are like, how did you have time to write this book? And how do you have time to read other books? Because I'm

a pretty avid reader. And it's just like, if I didn't have that, I think my head would be underwater. This is my sort of my safety and my escape. And so thank God for that. And they nap.

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I think people forget that at this age, they still nap, so you still get some time versus now it's like they come home after school and it's go, go, go, go, go and homework and sports and all of these other things. I almost feel like it gets crazier as time goes on. No, don't tell me that. Everyone says it gets easier. Don't even. No, no, no. It does. It gets easier in the sense that they can take care of themselves. They can feed themselves. They can do all those things themselves.

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but then they get social lives and you have homework that you're now helping them with and it's just different. It's different. Yeah, I mean, in Israel, I don't know if there's also an expression here, but it's bigger children, bigger problems and smaller children, smaller problems. And so I think once they get a social life, yeah, you're kind of getting worried about other things. So here our play dates are.

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everyone's together. I'm like, okay, this is my play date too. I'm talking to moms that I like, you know, would probably never befriend or totally different. But all of a sudden we like found this connection with our kids and it's actually pretty nice. Take me back to what did you do before you wrote this book? Before there were children, what were you doing? Because I know you have, I don't want to say a pass. That sounds so

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We all have a past and journey. Yes, but your journey. Take me through your journey. Okay, absolutely. So I've always loved to write. I've always been really, really good at writing and really bad at math. So it's always been a sort of, like an escape for me to journal and write even as like a young girl. And then I ended up deciding to get an MFA at Columbia for writing.

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So in order to apply, you have to sort of come up with an idea for a thesis or a book. And this was my idea. And then I ended up turning it into a novel. So before this whole thing started, I was at Columbia writing the typical New York girl in the New York apartment going out to the New York restaurants and bars. And

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And then I just ended up coming up with this idea, which also has some of my real life in it, obviously. I think there's a very fine line between fiction and nonfiction, and also nonfiction and fiction, like both. And so a lot of the stories in this book are from my own experience, but obviously like dramatized because my life wasn't as interesting. I wanted to make it more interesting, obviously. More dramatic, for sure. More dramatic, yeah.

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And I know because I've talked to people that you were all see, I mean, you were in beauty pageants. I have to give away what I know, right? Oh, totally. I'm so down. I'm so down to talk about it. My actually my mom signed me up for the Miss Israel Beauty Pageant as soon as we moved to Israel in an effort to sort of get me to make friends.

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because I was very lonely, didn't really know anybody, and so she signed me up for that. And actually, I made a lot of really great friends that are still my best friends today, so at least I got something good out of it. But yeah, I was in the beauty pageant, we had to audition in bikinis, and it was degrading and terrible. But still, I think I learned a lot from that experience. And overall, I probably wouldn't sign my daughters up for it, but I am really...

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happy and thankful that I was in the pageant because you learn a lot about yourself. I learned that I don't want to be the star and the center of attention. Everyone looked at me, I just don't like it. If I could just write books and just be quiet afterwards, that would be wonderful. That's not how it works, is it? That's not how it works. That's not how it works. I'm getting used to it. How old were you? But I did also win the speech contest. I was 21. When you moved back to Israel?

08:28

Okay, yeah, no, I moved back to Israel. All right, so let me tell you. So I was born in Israel. And then when I was three, my parents and I moved to Connecticut. Actually to Philadelphia for a little bit and then to Connecticut, where I lived for most of my life for my daughter, for my father's work as a physician at Yale. And from there, when I was 17 and a half, he decided that we were going to move to.

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to Israel and it really, and the whole, I mean, I don't wanna give away what happens in the book, but something anti-Semitic did happen with our family and that was the trigger that sort of led us back to Israel. It was six months after that happened, my dad was like, we're moving to Israel. And I was like, no, we're not really gonna move. He's just saying that. And we were on a plane six months later, the whole family. And so.

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That's when we moved back to Israel and I was 17 and a half. And then you had to enter the military. Right. Which is, I mean, reading the book, I'm like, she must have done this because I don't know that you could write about it without having had that experience. So right away I was captivated. I was like, this is amazing. And it's something that you have to do because you were born there, right?

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Right. So in Israel, there's a mandatory military law. Now, before I moved there, my dad promised us or me promised my mom and I that I wouldn't have to go to the army. He said that I would be there for a year and then off to college. So I would do my senior year in Israel and then I would be off to college following that year. But because I was born in Israel, there's a mandatory law for both men and women. Men is three years, women is two where you have to go to the army. So.

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I got a little envelope in the mail and it said, see you at the vacuum. The vacuum is where you, where as a soldier you go and you sign up and you get on the bus and you go to the base and you wear your uniform. I really felt like I was Cadet Kelly. I don't know if you've seen that movie. Cadet Kelly, it's Hilary Duff. She stars in this movie about being in the army.

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Hilary Duff is my number one favorite ever. So I know all her movies. But that's kind of what I felt like. Imagine yourself, Michelle, like imagine you at 18 going from like high school prom to the Israeli army. I can't fathom. So I mean, you're in a different country, first of all.

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What would have happened if you had not moved back? Would you still have had to serve or would you have been able to get out of it? So had I not moved back, I could have gotten out of it. Even having been there at 18, if I wanted to go to like the, you can get out of the army if you go to like a psychologist and you say that you can't do it. But I really wasn't even aware of all of these things at the time. It all sort of just like sprung up on me and being like...

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the eldest daughter and like a very goody two shoes. I was like, my parents, you know, said that this is what we have to do and that's just what I had to do. Like I didn't look into it too much. And I think like my father really wanted me to go. He wanted me to be like, he wanted our family to live in Israel. So in order to really like connect to the people socially in Israel.

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having gone to the army gives you like that sort of push, like you're part of everyone, because everyone does that. It's like a rite of way, it's like a rite of passage. So yeah, I think I could have gotten out of it, but I just didn't. So in the book, this all happens to the main character, and then there's an instance where she meets someone, and then he is her commanding officer. Did this really happen?

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Okay, so that's a really good question. Not exactly. I think a lot of young women and men in the army, like it seems like it's the army and it's like, combat, no. The army in Israel, especially if you're not like a combat soldier, is kind of like a social life. So it's kind of like before college. So everyone's just like looking around, he's cute, she's cute.

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But what you never do is you never date an officer. You have to date people that are like your rank and it's really illegal to date someone that is giving you orders. Kind of like in a job, like you wouldn't really date your boss, like you can, but it's just like, yeah, it's just not cool. And in the army, it's like, you cannot, like you will go to jail and it's like a huge thing. So yeah, I wasn't dating my officer.

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but I was dating an officer. See, this is what I love about that. I love reading a book and going, okay, so what parts are true? It's like this is juicy stuff. It is. It is juicy. I think Michelle, you're so right about how like when you're writing these things, I think you as like a reader, you can get a sense of like, what might be a little more true, what might be a little more dramatized. Um, but again, like a lot of.

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really great books are based on experiences, maybe not the author's experience, but some of the scenes in this book are, you know, things that happened to my best friends. Like I obviously won't mention any names, but word for word, what happened to them. And that's how I can write, you know, so meticulously and like detailed, because it's really hard to come up with things from like your imagination. Yeah. Yeah, for sure. And it's, I think it's interesting. It depends on, you know, how much an author anybody puts out there of themselves.

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for you to be able to pick these things out of a book. Because I interviewed another author last week and I went, oh, I just read your bio on your website and I can pick out every piece that is you and knowing a little bit about you already, I can see what's in the book. But then there's others who I had another one, I'm like, you got nothing out there on you. Your bio just says, I write. I have no idea what you've put in this book that's you. And there's...

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It makes you feel less connected, I think, to the author. So I think it's, like I said, it's like, there's this juicy part to it that you're like, oh, what part of Ross is in this? Let me know, you know, this is, because it's a completely wild ride that you take us through.

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Yeah, give us, why don't you give a little synopsis of the book as much as you want to give because otherwise I'll give spoilers. I know. Okay. No, absolutely. And feel free. You know, like a lot of the time we read books and we know a little bit more about them, also like trailers and movies. And that's kind of what hooks us to pick them up in the first place. So don't worry about, you know, spoiling too much. It's okay. But basically, *Where Love Lies* is a book about a young woman who falls in love with a guy and she realizes that he's not actually the

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Prince Charming that she thought he was. And it's all set against the backdrop of the army. And then the second part is New York City. So I think a lot of young women can relate maybe not to like the army, but it's really cool to dive into this world that you've never seen. And then they can relate to this part too, which is New York City. And a lot of my girlfriends have read the book are like, Oh my God, you're making me want Ralph's coffee. Or I miss New York so much because of like all of these details.

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So that's the book. And I think the underlying message here in this book, I think everyone's going to take something out of it. But basically that toxic love can be emotional and not only physical. And I think a lot of the time, like even me as like a young woman, it's really easy to recognize like physical toxicity or like abuse because it's just like right there.

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you know, stay or whatever, but things that we don't learn. And I feel like I'm such like, you know, well read, like normal educated young woman and still, and a lot of my friends too, and still we get tied into these relationships that are like emotionally toxic and you can't put your finger on why, because we don't learn enough about like the signs of like emotional abuse. And that's why like writing this book and I,

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I also dedicated it to my daughters, to Alma and Romy, because the real, like the main reason that I even wrote it was because like I don't want young women to ever go through a toxic and

like an emotionally abusive relationship. And I think in this book, you get a lot of like small signs that maybe other young women will say, oh wait, like why does my boyfriend act like that? Like that's not okay. So.

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And I think also the perspective of having parents who want to step in, who want better for you, but there's something about when you're in your 20s, you're like, no, I know better. I know what's going on. I don't need to listen to you. And then it's only in your 30s and 40s that you're like, oh, yeah, maybe so. If only, yeah, I would have listened or, you know, your life experience changes all of that. And I was glad that there were certain parts that towards the end.

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Yes. Okay, finally. Finally. You're like, as the reader, you're seeing these things play out. And, you know, it's like watching the movie where you're like, stop it. Don't you see it? Why can't you see it? Totally. And like, I was really debating, like in the writing, during the writing process, if I should put a couple more scenes earlier on where Ella realizes that she might be in a relationship that isn't healthy.

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and not maybe save it towards the end. But I really wanted to make it authentic to what a lot of other young women go through. And it's like this annoying, this visceral reaction as a reader of just wanting to scream at her and tell her to wake up. And in real life, it's the same way. In real life, a lot of, one of my best friends was going through just a relationship with this just terrible guy who was a million levels below her in terms of,

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kindness and education and just like in general, just like, and I just wanted to scream at her but she was so blind and I really wanted to capture that like blindness in the novel. So I decided against it and I decided to just kind of like let the reader get annoyed until something changes. And you build up beautifully to it because even from the first scene with in the bar, you're kind of like...

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Well, that was a cringe question you just asked, buddy. So you know that there's going to be something more. It's not just love at first sight and that's it. Everything's all roses and it goes on. Right, right. So it's set up nicely. I tried to hint. Yeah. I tried to hint. Like an under point. Let's also talk about how Ella is, I almost want to use the word prissy. She totally is.

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And in some cases, I read some of the reviews and I was like, oh, come on, like, how far fetched is it that somebody comes, you know, to military service and has their silk pajamas and there's, you know, all of the perfume and all of these other things and yet I'm sure somebody is. Oh, absolutely. And like, I didn't have the perfume, but I definitely had the silk satin sheets. Like these are things that happened. And a lot of my writing was also...

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related to like I was thinking a lot about Elle Woods in Legally Blonde and how you know, she is unapologetically bratty and prissy but deep down she's kind and just wants to be loved and wants to give love. So, you know, during the writing process as I was writing I was you know trying to think of ways to maybe make Elle a little bit more likeable to readers. But then I realized that like she's real. This is a person and like

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A lot of the time, a lot of books that I've been reading lately are very like politically correct and very like woke. And I like both woke books and also non-woke in the sense where like, it's just real and not everything that Ella does is politically correct and not everything that Ella does is correct in general. Like a lot of the time she acts like a bratty princess because she is one, but nobody's perfect, you know?

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Yeah, it makes it fun. It's funny because, you know, the diary or the steps, the rules of dating and how all of the other women are like, oh, tell me.

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And when you read through them, you're like, no, these are no good. Exactly. You're like, wait, why do you want her to be teaching you this? Like, she doesn't really know either. Because obviously she's found herself in this terrible position because she's following these rules. So just to sort of sum up, there are goddess rules in the book. They're called the goddess rules. And Ella and her best friend, Julia, throughout high school and just throughout their lives in general, they sort of pick up all these different rules.

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about dating. So some of them are like, you know, be skinny, but still have enough to grab on to, be like beautiful, but not childlike, all these like little rules that they've heard in supermarkets and all over. And these are rules that she reads to the other young soldiers in their unit in her unit. And that's how she sort of connects with them. But her following these rules leads

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Ella following these rules leads her down a terrible spiral. So the rules are very ironic because they're not actually helping her. Yeah. They don't. It's the do this, but don't do this, but kind of be like this and kind of don't be like this. And they don't make sense. This is why they're so comical because they're not, yeah, they're made up by 17 year olds who, of course, think that they know what the dating rules should be.

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and how you should act. And yet, as we all know, at 17, you don't have the true experience. No, you don't. Or the quote unquote rules. Right. Or the rules. Exactly. But I do think that although they're 17 and they make up these rules, I think that the message that I was trying to portray through writing them was that even as young women or even as older women, or just as women in general, we get all of these different rules thrown at us and trying to put them together. You have opposites.

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be skinny, no, be curvy, no, be smart, no, be, you know, feminine. Like we have all of these different people and places telling us who to be and what to be that it becomes this just like crazy zigzags of, of, of rules. And that's what Ella and Julia, um, came up with. What do you hope people walk away with after reading this? That's a great question. First of all, I want them to

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enjoy the book and to turn the last page and say, I had this was fun. Like I enjoyed reading it. But like I said, I really want women and men to read this book and to recognize the signs of emotional abuse because they're there and we don't talk about them enough because they're so subtle. But subtle subtlety like

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little things turn into big things turn into unhealthy relationships. So, yeah. And what do we do to help those who are in those situations, like the parents who want to step in, or the classmate who senses that something's going on and wants to step in, but how close and you know, because they're not best friends.

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there's arms distance, what do we do to help them in that situation? So I think don't give up. Don't be too pushy with these people. But the whole point of the partner, like the partner wants to isolate this person in order to be able to better like control them.

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So even in my experience, so I wasn't in like this horribly abusive relationship, but I think a lot of young women, 18 to 25, are in unhealthy relationships. And I was always really, I always felt like isolated. And so these people just shouldn't stop. Like even if this person sort of takes a step back, don't be too pushy, but still show that you're there.

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Like even recently I was at a coffee shop here in Miami, I'm in Miami, and I saw a young woman who had like a big bruise on her eye. And I was sitting there with my two daughters and it was so crazy, you know, they were running around. One is two and a half, one is one and a half. And this woman was our server. She was like serving us the coffee.

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And she wouldn't really look me in the eye. She would like look down and I saw that underneath her chin. She also had like a couple bruises, like as if someone held her chin. And I was just like, I literally didn't even wanna eat my food. Like I was just like, ugh, I felt so bad. And then on the way to the bathroom when I was done, I saw her, she was just leaving. And I had one daughter on my arm, another one like on my leg.

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And I said, I'm not leaving here until I ask this woman if she's okay. Like, I don't care. And so as we walked by, I looked her in the eye. I was like, hey, like, are you OK? And she looked at me and she was so taken aback. And she said, you know what? I've had this for two weeks. You're the first person that asked me if I'm OK. And she started like tearing up. She had like tears. I'm tearing up. She's talking about it. And she said that she's OK and that she's

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gotten away from these people that have done this to her and that she's going to visit her mom. Anyway, I felt a lot better and that she was fine. And I was like, you know what, I'm so happy that I asked her because I wasn't sure if I should. I was like, am I being like, who am I? Who even am I? I'm just some girl with these two babies. And I really think she appreciated that I had asked her.

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A week later, a week and a half later, I was there again and I saw her again and she looked so much better. And I brought her a book and I signed it. And I was like, this book is for you. Like, you know, and she, I didn't even tell her why. And I hope that when she reads it, she'll understand why. But I just gave it to her as like a gift. And I said to myself, like, this is why I wrote this book for people like her and for people like me and for people like us. Yes.

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And to show that we care, I think that's what is missing so much in our world today. We don't talk enough. We don't compliment enough. We're in this comfort zone. And just like you said, like, who am I to say something to you? And yet all you said was, are you okay? And it showed that you cared. And obviously you were the first person in two weeks to show that care. And that can make such a difference because you don't know what was going on in her mind of...

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you know, nobody does care and it's visible that there's something going on and something is wrong, but nobody is saying anything. And so, good on you for speaking up and showing that you care and you have no idea what that might have just done for her entire life and then to show back up again and say, here's a book that, you know, because I think the lesson of you can get out of it.

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and you can find support and there is light at the end of the tunnel is the message that she probably needs to hear. And that's the message I got from your book that, you know, there can be a brighter side at the end. We won't tell everybody what the end is, but .. Absolutely. You know what? I'm so happy that that's what you got out of it, Michelle, because yeah, talking about it now, like that's, that is what I want people to get out of it.

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exactly what I want people to get out of it. No matter how hard it is, in the end, there's a light and everything's going to be okay. I'm glad that we're bringing out the fun prissy, I'm putting in quotes, and that aspect along with how heavy it is. Because when I did post about reading it, somebody reached out to me and said, oh, it's so good, but it is heavy. Get ready. Right. Right. And you don't quite get that it's going to be that heavy right in the beginning.

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And yet it is. It's the combo of the two that's going to pull you emotionally both sides, for sure. Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. So I appreciated that someone was like, hey, heads up. Totally. And you know what? I think that the book is a reflection of this kind of relationship too where it starts off super, super fun and charismatic and sexy.

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and interesting and light. And then without even realizing it, all of a sudden you get into this deeper, deeper issues. So that's definitely important. Yeah. I think there's a lot of high brow, low brow in this book, which is sort of who Ella is generally as a character. She's both. Yeah. I love

it. It's terrific. Everyone needs to read it. It's going to teach you something while entertaining you. Thank you.

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And you're just, you're incredible. I love it. I think you are. You are. No. No, you are. Really. It's just so fun and nice to talk about things other than children. I know. We love them, but I know. Yes. No, of course. They're blessings. It's a blessing. What are you working on next? Okay. Thank you for asking that, Michelle. So I am so ready to write. When I was writing this book, I said...

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I don't want to write another book for a really long time because it's just hard to write a book. It really is. I was writing eight to two every single day. I had like a nanny just for those hours and I was writing only during that time. And then all of a sudden when this book came out, I was like, when is the next one? So I have an idea for another novel. I'm not going to share too much about it, but it's really, really exciting. It also has to do with relationships and dating.

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Basically, the premise is that a young girl needs to find a man to marry by the time she's 30 in order to inherit this really huge amount of money. Then we'll see where it goes from there. Which reminds me, we didn't even talk about your dating advice and all of that other part of your career.

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Yes, that's right. Smartgirlknows.com. Blunt dating advice for young women. Definitely not politically correct. Lots of people don't agree with it, but many, many do. I'll just tell you that it's worked for me and for my girlfriends. I stand by the advice for sure. Luckily, I haven't had to do any of that for almost two decades.

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You're lucky. I don't want to even have to deal with that anymore. Yeah, no thanks. Wow. Oh my gosh. We have enough on our plate. Where can everybody find you besides the two websites

and where can they buy the book? Okay, perfect. So you can find me on Instagram at Ros Cheneurer, S-C-H-E-N-I-R-E-R, my last name. We can buy the book on Amazon.

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probably easiest and there's Bars and Oval and you know your local indie bookstores. Yeah. Perfect. Thank you so much. It was so fun to get to know you and to hear about what parts of you were in the book. Thank you, Michelle. Your questions were absolutely wonderful and I had the best time. Thank you. It was so great. Friends, I hope that you read *Where Love Lies* and

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find the lessons in it that I did, to get a different viewpoint, a different glance into a relationship, to see what it's like to serve in the Israeli military, and to also understand and see and witness that there's still anti-Semitism that goes on in our world today, very much so here in the United States.

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read about what happened to Roz and her family and to know that that is a fact. It's not a portion of the book that's been made up. I think it's a very important aspect that needs to be looked at and acknowledged because we don't touch on it too much in this interview, but it is a very real thing. I'm so grateful that Roz has shared her experience with us and that she came on the show to share more about herself as well.

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I encourage you to go pick up *Where Love Lies* and to read it. Know that it will be heavy, know that you're going to take away a lot, and you're going to learn a lot. I love that about every book that I read, every author that I interview. It gives us the opportunity to learn and to hear from other people and their stories. So definitely go pick up a copy of *Where Love Lies* and go follow Roz.

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that you heard her interview and that you've read her book and all of the amazing things. Thank you so much for listening to episode 250. Here's to 250 more.

