

The Someday list - Sanne Thijs

Chapter one:

The doorbell rings. Susan wakes up with a startle and almost topples off the couch. Rubbing her eyes all disorientated, she suddenly realises where she is. She looks around and observes the havoc in her normally neat living room. It's as if a tornado passed through; the floor is covered with tissues and papers. White wads are interchanged with candy wrappers, empty bags of crisps and other comfort food waste. Crooky, her cat, is gnawing at yesterday's leftover pizza crusts that were left on the coffee table, along with three different glasses containing as many different drinks. The television is still on, projecting the "are you still there?" message. She must've fallen asleep while watching some feel good show on Netflix. She grabs for her smartphone which is somewhere beside her. Steven's smiling eyes greet her from the screen. She instantly gets a lump in her throat, but suppresses it and shifts her focus on the little clock. "It's already 4pm?!" she exclaims in her head with widespread eyes. "Did I sleep that long?" She tries to remember what time she actually fell asleep. It must've been late, or rather early, as she remembers her room turning brighter. She hadn't been able to sleep for the umpteenth night in a row. She dreaded going to sleep in an empty bed. Every time she tried, her thoughts were directed towards Steven. With an emotional hangover, she takes a deep breath in an attempt to encourage herself to start the day. She lifts herself off the couch and accidentally kicks an empty soda bottle under the coffee table. The horrible sound of plastic on the living room tiles makes her sigh a groan of discomfort.

Susan stumbles through the hall and catches a glimpse of a disheveled image in the mirror next to the coat rack. She doesn't recognize the 27 year old staring back at her, with blue-gray eyes that are still red and puffy from all the crying. She's always had a love-hate relationship with mirrors, not being able to find herself in

them, but today was worse. Her unwashed dark blonde hair was tied together in a messy ponytail. But what she despised the most was her round, fat belly tucked away in her comfortable, yet unflattering size 22 pyjama pants. Looking at the outline of her stomach, tears well up and she can hear Stevens poisonous words from last week. "I don't find you attractive!"

The doorbell rings again, this time it sounds very impatient. Susans opens the door to Catherine carrying a bottle of red wine. "Alcohol won't solve your problems, but it will help you get through the day." She hands Susan the Toscan wine and marches past her to the living room while continuously talking. "You're so much better off without him! I've always thought so. But Suzy, this self pity has gone on long enough! I get you're a bit down in the dumps, but cancelling our biweekly girls night in these trying times, is just not done! Especially not because of a prick like Steven. And that's why I'm here. Talk to me, babe!"

Susan has always looked up to Catherine. They've been friends ever since they both got detention in highschool on Wednesday afternoon, carrying out the most horrible punishment imaginable: removing gum from under chairs and tables.

Susan had been late again because she travelled by bus and often missed her connection. Catherine, on the other hand, found herself in detention for (yet again) mouthing off to her French teacher Mr Nysen, also known as "'Mr Bologna'. He was an old man, known for starting the day with a countdown to his retirement. But that wasn't even his worst trait, no, he was a firm believer in women only being suited to raise children and take care of the house. Mr Nysen was unappreciative of Catherines progressive, feministic speech and rewarded her with two weeks worth of detention.

Susan never really understood their friendship. She often wondered how they found each other and always seemed to find their way back to one another. You couldn't imagine two more opposite women and

assume they'd be friends. Susan is short and fat, wearing clothes that enable her to hide her curves and avoid the spotlight. Catherine, the complete opposite, is a slender colourful phenomenon. She always wears bright dresses, emphasising her curves in the most sexual way possible. Susan is quiet and creative, while Catherine is outspoken and firm. It's really no wonder she became a successful lawyer, while Susan has a pathetic job in a call center she actually despises. But all these differences have somehow never affected their friendship.

Catherine is standing in the living room as if she only just noticed the havoc, formally known as my living room. She turns around to face Susan. "Susan, what in the world happened here?" She asks in an almost whispering way and tears well up in Susan's eyes. "I don't want to go on without him!" she exclaims, bursting into tears.

Exactly one week ago Susan and Steven had an enormous fight. It started with her asking him yet again, to not leave wet towels on the floor as it left them damp, unpleasant and filthy. What happened next took her completely by surprise. The argument they usually had somehow turned into a sudden explosion. A lot of hurtful things were said and she had never experienced him so vicious. It was as if all those years together suddenly ceased to exist, there was no love or respect. She knew then and there that it would be their last fight as a couple. She tried to side with him, saying wet towels on the bathroom and even bedroom floor weren't the end of the world, jokingly adding that she drew the line at the kitchen floor. She begged him not to go, but there was no use. She could see he had made up his mind. After the last hurtful words had been said, he retreated to the bedroom and proceeded to put all his clothes in Ikea bags. He gathered some last minute things and shut the door behind him, without saying another word. She assumed he'd be with his brother, even though she never heard him again. No text, no call. She had tried to contact him numerous times. Whatsapp, Instagram, Messenger, she tried them

all, but soon realised he blocked her on every platform. She could no longer deny the truth; their 6 year relationship evolved into a break up and not the proposal she had been hoping for.

Catherine looks at her full of pity and compassion, the kind of look that hurts to be on the receiving end of. She walks towards Susan and embraces her. Which, of course, makes Susan cry even more.

"Susan, listen, I'm not going to lie. The coming weeks will be really hard. You'll debate what you could've done differently or better, but you have to understand that there's no point to it. There's absolutely nothing you could've done. You're an amazing woman and whether you believe it or not, you are so much better off without him. I am 100% certain that your Prince Charming is still out there, as is mine. His GPS is not working, he's lost and too stubborn to ask for directions." Susan chuckles in between the silent tears.

"See! You already manage to smile, which means you're starting to feel better." Catherine sighs with relief. "You know what we'll do? You're going to take a shower and afterwards you're going to put on your most sexy outfit, while I start cleaning up this mess. And when you're ready we'll go out for a walk and end up in our favourite coffee shop in Ghent. How does that sound?"

Susan takes a deep breath, holds it for a minute and exhales loudly. She straightens up her back, wipes the tears from her eyes and cheeks and says "Sounds like a plan." Putting thoughts into action, she walks into the bathroom to take off the pyjamas she'd been wearing for the past four days. She turns on the shower and without waiting for the water to heat up, walks in. After the initial shock, accompanied by a tiny scream, she starts to enjoy the pulse soaring through her body.

Catherine, in the meantime, opens up the big window in Susan's appartement, letting in the sounds of people on the terraces of the *Vrijdagsmarkt*, along with a warm summer breeze. She grabs the kitchen garbage can and starts collecting the wards of tissue, along

with the garbage that had been spread out on the floor. She collects the dirty dishes and loads up the dishwasher. She gnaws at a tiny piece of leftover pizza crust, before throwing the box into the bin. She fluffs the pillows on the couch, collects and organises the papers on Susans desk when something catches her eye. Among the papers on the desk she notices a corner of a remarkable looking paper. Katherine turns her head towards the bathroom to listen for the sound of the shower running so she can further satisfy her curiosity. She pulls the corner of the paper, revealing a firm yellow sheet. Susan has written on it in her neat handwriting, with all different colour pens. It's instantly clear that this piece of paper is important to Susan. It looks old, full of wrinkles that have been ironed out. On top of the paper are tiny holes, indicating the position of thumb tacks. At the top of the page, in big underlined letters is written "The someday list". Underneath, in red it says "Everything I want to do when I'm thin."