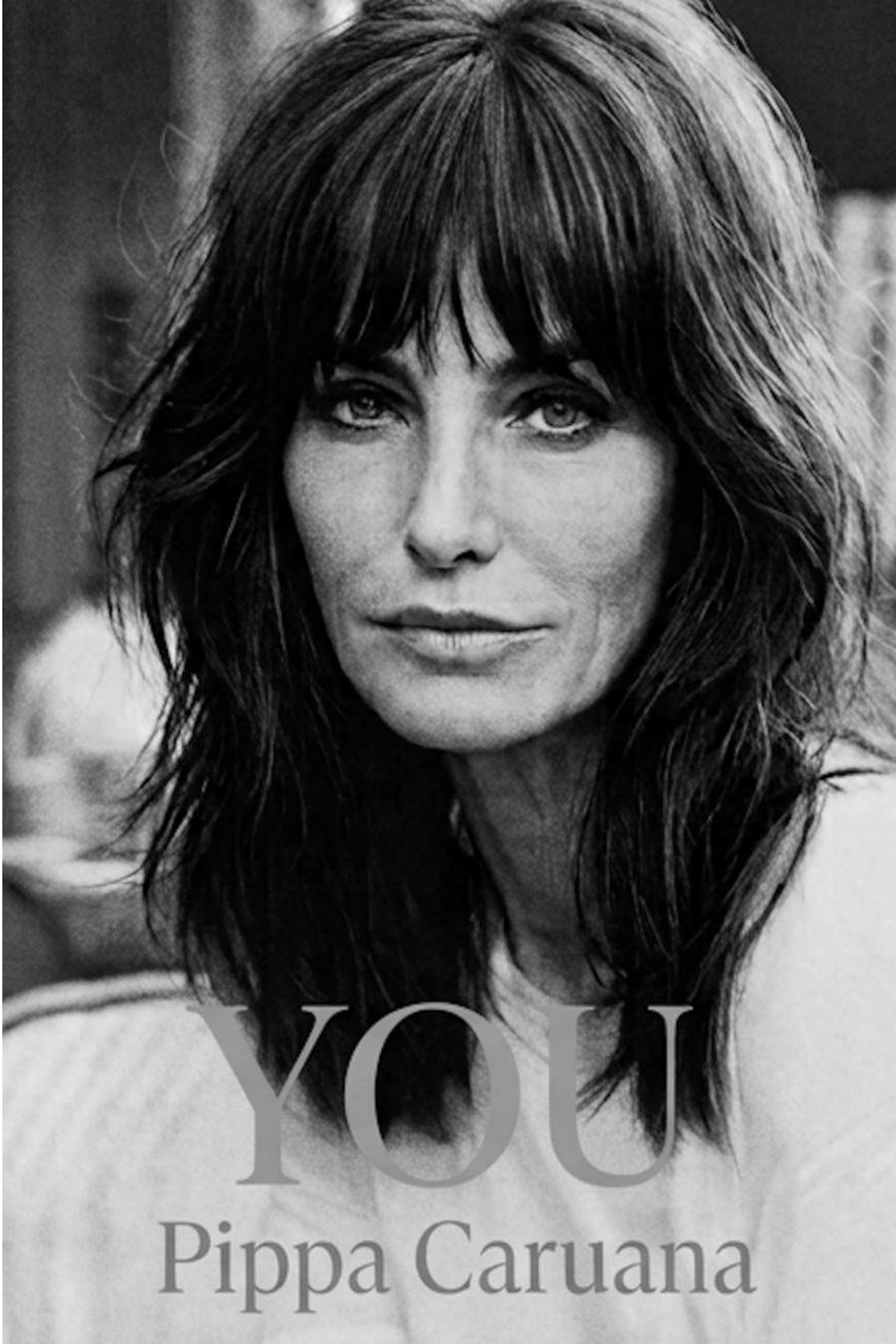

YOU
Pippa Caruana

YOU

Pippa Caruana

YOU

Pippa Caruana

Art Cover by The Little French eBooks

Published by The Little French eBooks

Revised Edition

Copyright 2026 Anne Marie Shutt

License Notes

This Book is licensed for your enjoyment only. This Book may not be resold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each person you share it with. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then please return to smashwords.com and purchase your copy. Thank you for respecting the hard work of this.

Before YOU...

You came into my life because I spoke about death. I wasn't looking for you or wanting you or dreaming of you. I was preoccupied, focused and content with my full-time gardening job, loving my freedom and independence and thinking of nothing but my weekend walks in the hills with my flask, my backpack, and a map. Studying for my part time college course and devouring one book after another whenever I wanted a break from thinking.

You weren't in my mind. You didn't exist in my life. You were just some hot shot photographer on Instagram that lived 3,524 miles away in a country that sat geographically on top of my birth country. I followed you because I fell in love with your uncanny ability to capture the mundane behind the lens.

And then it all changed. Do people call that fate? When you meet a person, and you have no idea why until you've lost them? You privately messaged me after I had posted a video of myself in the herb garden during the winter months as I spoke about my love for winter's death touch and the beauty of decay and the anticipation of new life. We discussed my views and yours and that was it.

It wasn't your flattery that plucked at my heartstrings or your profile picture or your great photography. It was your choice of words...the fact that you used good grammar and in that one paragraph I sensed a mind that I could connect to.

It seemed so quick after that. The messages that passed between us, the photos shared and the way you made me laugh. You woke my body up in ways that I hadn't felt in a long time. I found I could pick up a pen again and that was the best gift you have given me. I liked you too quickly, but it happened that way, regardless of whether I wanted to or not. You brushed away thoughts of college homework and gardening tasks and going to sleep easily. You replaced these thoughts with **YOU**. Beckoning me to your bed, laying your hands on my wretchedly needy body and unlocking my secret fantasies, visions and desires that I have kept secret forever, until now.

You sent me a photo of you, and your morning grey stubble made me feel all feminine inside. I traced the line of your lips on my phone screen with my finger and zoomed in to see the true colour of your eyes. They were blue. Steely blue and I held my breath for a second and unconsciously touched my finger

to my lips, your gaze direct and piercing my own. There was something there that I found hard to explain, as though at that moment of eye-to-eye contact, you reached out through the screen and tucked a lock of my hair behind my ear, trailed your fingers along the back of my earlobe and down my neck, hesitant on my collar bone and then quietly withdrawing.

I remember my mouth going dry and needing to lick my lips as my knickers went damp for wanting you. You became a complete distraction after that, one that flustered and frustrated me because you made me feel weak and exposed and I have always felt strong and independent. I didn't like the way you made me feel needy for you. My body deceives me, physically feeling deficit and bereft without you and when I tried to fill these needs myself, although the initial pleasure was there, I would still feel lacking and dissatisfied. You did this - unknowingly to me, and I can never admit this to you, cannot ever admit to feeling so anaemic without you.

You aren't even my type. Aquarians and Taureans aren't supposed to get along. You are so.... American. It turns out I loved your 6'1 frame and feeling like a

mouse beside you and your blue eyes and the sexy streaks of grey in your hair, and I didn't even mind the baseball cap that you wore religiously on every outing or the fact that you're more of a cat person then a dog person or that you didn't drink coffee. I let my eyes travel along your cheekbones, along your jawbone and up the contours of your face to the spot just behind your ears. I wanted to touch the softness of them and the delicate way your hair curled around your neck. I caught the cocky and mischievous glint in your gaze, and I should have taken that as a warning. I've always been attracted to men capable of breaking my heart, but you had me within seconds...milliseconds...with butterflies in my stomach and new-found heat between my legs and happiness under my skin. I so wanted to touch you and see what you felt like and how you made me feel, imagining what it would be like with you for real.

You made me write about us without making me, and then I couldn't stop writing about us and wanting you. You took me by surprise, tilted the ground beneath my feet, unbalanced my balanced life as though finding myself in a fun house, totally unprepared and blinkered.

February

I can't believe how quickly you've turned my head. I find myself looking at my phone and waiting for that specific ping to go off, announcing your presence and whatever it is that you have to say or show me. You have no idea how that single sound affects my body. I can't help the chemical reactions that flare up and I find it unnerving and at the same time exhilarating, as though discovering a new footpath and not knowing where it leads too, enticing me around each bend, over each hill and through each gate. I just felt...drawn to you somehow.

I hear that 'ping' and I feel happiness; a sun-beaming corny happiness that starts in my chest and travels through my body so that I am unconsciously smiling before I even pick up the phone. I feel electric under my skin and frustrated at the same time because I want so much to be sitting beside you, watching you watch me, making the corners of your mouth twitch with humour when I say something funny or just wanting you to touch me.

When you 'ping', I get butterflies in my stomach, big ones that go thumping around

my insides and awakening my adrenaline. I am suddenly aware of my sex; the blood rush between my legs and that crazy instantaneous need for you to be touching me there...fingers or lips or tongue... and waiting for you to reply or start a conversation or just to say "hi".

You are so many hours behind me, and I want to stay up for you just in case you are able to catch a few moments in your day to chat. How you've flipped my world around. How you've stolen my time. How you're slowly scratching at my heartstrings, tapping at my bedroom door, and tattooing yourself to me.

February

How many first times there are for me! I have daydreams of seeing you for real, whilst I strum the grass or weed the bed or sip my cup of soup on my lunch break, huddled by the miniature heater and blowing my hands in the garden shed. Sometimes it scares me that you may not react the way I want you to react, but you are perfect and eager and hungry for me in my fantasies.

I don't ever need to find you. I just have to look up and you are there, your head and shoulders above all others. It is your broad and mischievous grin that makes my heart flutter and the blood rush to my cheeks. You are the same age as me, yet the light in your eyes and your smile hasn't changed since you were 18. Still boyish and deliciously attractive and full of strawberries and cotton candy.

When I see you, I want to break into a run, all proprietary gone, nerves flung aside and blown away by the very air that whooshes out of me when I take off, like dandelion seeds in a strong breeze. When you catch me I feel your arms and hands move against the fabric of my dress and through its perfectness as though fitting the final piece in a 1000-piece puzzle with me locked against you, my legs firm and wrapped hard around your waist and I want to stay there, pressed up against you, my face buried into your neck as though I live there.

I fantasize about hearing you say my name for the first time; low and hot against my throat and I can't imagine the way that would make me feel. I CAN imagine being naked with you and the sex and what our conversations will be like and the games we would play and the food we would share and the photographs we would