

THE ADVENTURES
OF A WILD WOMAN
On The Camino De Santiago



Life Rewards The Brave
SAMANTHA WILSON

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The names and identifying details of certain individuals have been changed to protect their privacy.

The events, places, and conversations in this memoir have been recreated from memory. The chronology of some events has been compressed. When necessary, the names and identifying characteristics of individuals and places have been changed to maintain anonymity.

This memoir is a truthful recollection of actual events in the author's life. Some conversations have been recreated and/or supplemented. The names and details of some individuals have been changed to respect their privacy.

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Summary I Am A Woman Born To Roam, Wild & Free

Chapter 1

I Am Ruined

(North Of England June 2011)

“If one more thing happens, that’s it! I am done!”

As I shifted through the gears of my two-seater sports car while navigating the winding rural road through the green, rolling hills of the Pennines of Northern England, the roof down and my wild hair blowing in the wind, it’s fair to say that enough was finally enough.

“If one more thing happens, that’s it! I am done!” I’d had a workday from hell. A typical 12 hour day at the grind with nothing but grief, grief and more grief.

I was so sick and tired of feeling sick and tired. Each day, I waited for a sign. I was waiting for permission to stop.

And they just kept on coming. Sign after sign. Day after day. The wrecking ball of life was paying me a visit in the guise of hard situations and circumstance, intent on destroying my life as I knew it or so it felt. I’d never felt so out of control in my life.

I shifted down two gears to take a tight corner on a blindspot. Muttering to myself, "If one more thing happens, that's it," the words died in my throat as I met the eyes of an oncoming cyclist and hit him head-on.

I know, my friend. It's shocking. The memory still haunts me to this day.

Sitting there, that day, with a man on my bonnet, cussing me through the windscreen, that was the moment. That was the moment when I'd strayed so far off my path that life stepped in to shake me awake.

You see, I was a 33-year-old woman who, on the surface had it all. I was a lawyer with all the trappings that came with the title. I lived a beautiful home with a sports car on the drive. My wardrobes were full of designer clothes and I had a disposable income that would make some turn a pale shade of green. I was a typical example of a career woman. Independent was my middle name.

That's just half of the "trappings" of the job. I could sum myself up in one word. Workaholic. I had been a workaholic for years. No social life. No partner. No time. Always at the grind. Miserable as sin and trapped in a cycle of burnout. I couldn't find my way out.

I'd played burnout like a game for years, as I was constantly living on a knife-edge. It was the culture, you see. How far can you push yourself before you totally f*ck up? Well, I'd f*cked up this time. Good and proper. My day of reckoning had finally arrived.

As I stared back at the cyclist through my window, I let out the words, "Oh my God, you are my sign." Pointing my finger at him, I practically shouted, "You are my sign!"

I opened the door, swung my feet down onto the ground, and vomited in great, big heaves of release. Wiping the sick from my chin, I tried to pull myself out of my seat only to swing from the door and land in a heap on the floor, as my legs buckled underneath me. Oh, what an absolute mess I was. I still cringe at the memory.

As the cyclist pulled himself off my bonnet, remarkably unscathed, he said, "It's all right, love. Nothing's broken. Come on, now. Let's get you up." Typical northerner, as I like to say. Salt of the earth and all that.

After exchanging our details, he stayed with me and listened to my rambled explanation of a life gone so badly wrong peppered with so many apologies. Tears streamed down my face mixed in with snot, as I sobbed and choked on my words until I reached the end of my story. Once I'd calmed down, as I found my feet, he said, "Samantha, perhaps it's time to stop."

"I think so, too," I whined in reply while slipping back into the driving seat of my car. "Thank you. I think you've just saved me from myself." I waved goodbye and drove off at the pace of a snail, my knees knocking all the way home.

Let's face it. There's a big difference between being a danger to myself and becoming a danger to somebody else. I'd crossed that line, that day. My workaholic ways could have killed someone. It was the wake-up call that I needed.

Later at home, as I sat in the dark with Sally, my dog, on the sofa with her head in my lap, I looked down at her and said, "I am ruined, Sally. I am absolutely ruined." I meant every word. I had no choice but to stop.

As the cold, hard reality of who I was and what I'd become slapped me across the face, I was appalled at the way I had treated myself. I hadn't taken care of myself for years. I'd sold my soul to the devil and was out of control.

The wrecking ball of life had finished the job it had started weeks before. I had no choice but to get out while I still could.

I'd hit rock bottom. Finally. There was only one place I could go, and that was up.

Chapter 2

Life Rewards The Brave

(The French Way August 2016)

“I haven’t felt this awake in years. Too busy drying my tears. To feel the sun was shining on my skin.”

“What a tune,” I said to myself, as I finished tying the laces of my walking boots, straightened up while I cranked up the volume on my phone so that the music pumped full blast through my headphones.

“Locked up in my own cage. Filled up with bitter rage. Couldn’t see the prison I was in.”

“This is the perfect song,” I muttered under my breath, as I picked up my rucksack and shifted my gaze forward to the barren land under the never-ending deep, blue skies of the Mesata in Spain.

“I walked across the line, alone. To find a truth I’ve never ever known.”

“This song is for me!” I shouted out to the heavens above, as I put one foot in front of the other and carried on along the trail that would take me a total of 700 kilometres across Northern Spain.

“The truth has been here all this time. The only one who couldn't see it was me”

“Oooh, good Lord!” I said as I sang along with James Morisson’s [“The Awakening”](#) under the burning sun as I walked the way alone.

“I’ve been waiting for this awakening for so long, so long!”

“This is my Camino de Santiago song! This is it!” I laughed out loud as joy overcame me.

“To get a little love inside”

“Oh, yes, now we are talking!” This was the legendary Camino spirit I’d heard so much about. Ain’t no stopping me now!

Yes, my friend. Life rewards the brave. I was walking the Camino de Santiago Frances and I’d hit the sweet spot, the golden hour of the Camino. I was on top of the world.

Just over five years had passed since that fateful day when enough was finally enough.

The truth is, I’d burnout out soooooo badly because of my workaholic ways, that I’d ended up knocking a man off his bike on my way home from work.

The scariest part of the whole saga is just how long I took to admit to myself that I wasn't okay. I’d been a danger to myself for years. My burnout meant that I'd become a danger to others.

The day that I finally admitted I wasn't okay was the day that I took back control of my life.

Why didn’t I act before?

I was afraid of what people would think if I didn’t keep the “I’m okay” mask on.

We live in a world that expects us to keep a mask on, to pretend we are fine with the status quo in our lives, yet we all deserve to be the best we can be, and live a life that we are more than okay with!

Looking back, I can see it's all about self-love and honesty. If I couldn't be honest, help, and love myself, then how could I be honest with others, seek the help that I needed, and make the changes to my life that I wanted to make?

Overnight, I walked away from my 15-year career as a lawyer and all the security that came with it. I left behind my homeland of England to begin again in Andalucia, Southern Spain.

My f*ck it moment had paid off. Once I acknowledged to myself that I couldn't carry on, that my life was in ruin, there was only one thing left to do. Go after the life of my dreams.

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