INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

Someone I Loved

Anna Gavalda

Author of I Wish Someone Were Waiting for Me Somewhere

Also by Anna Gavalda

I WISH SOMEONE WERE WAITING FOR ME SOMEWHERE $\mbox{Ensemble, C'EST TOUT}$

Anna Gavalda

Someone I Loved

Translated from the French by Catherine Evans

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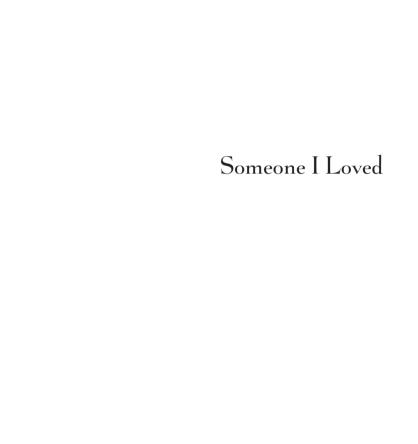
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"What did you say?"

"I said I'm going to take them. It will do them good to get away for a while."

"But when?" my mother-in-law asked.

"Now."

"Now? You're not thinking . . ."

"Yes, I am."

"What are you talking about? It's nearly eleven! Pierre, you—"

"Suzanne, I'm talking to Chloé. Chloé, listen to me. I've got a notion to take you away from here. What do you say?"

I say nothing.

"Do you think it's a bad idea?"

"I don't know."

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"Go get your things. We'll leave when you get back."

"I don't want to go to my place."

"Then don't. We'll sort everything out when we get there."

"But you don't-"

"Chloé, Chloé, please. Trust me."

My mother-in-law continued to protest:

"But—! You're not really going to wake up the children! The house isn't even heated, and there's nothing to eat! Nothing for the girls! They—"

He stood up.

• • •

Marion is sleeping in her car seat, her thumb next to her lips. Lucie is beside her, rolled in a ball.

I look at my father-in-law. He sits upright. His hands grip the steering wheel. He hasn't said a word since we left. I see his profile when we enter the headlights of oncoming cars. I think that he is as unhappy as I am. That he's tired. Disappointed.

He feels my gaze:

"Why don't you get some sleep? You should get some

rest, you know-lean your seat back and drift off. We've got a long way to go . . ."

"I can't," I tell him. "I'm watching over you."

He smiles at me. It's barely a smile.

"No . . . it's the other way around."

We return to our private thoughts. I cry behind my hands.

We're parked at a service station. I take advantage of his absence to check my cell phone.

No messages.

Of course.

What a fool I am.

What a fool . . .

I turn the radio on, then off.

He returns.

"Do you want to go in? Do you want something?"

I give in.

I press the wrong button; my cup fills with a nauseating liquid that I throw away at once.