

HAPPINESS EQUALS JOSH

Written by

Trevian Leigh

INT. JAZZ RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A classy restaurant, smooth jazz plays in the background.

Tre, 22, Black, quiet and reserved, enters the restaurant. He yanks off his beanie and removes his headphones.

HOSTESS, 20, beautiful, wipes down menus at her station.

HOSTESS

Hi, welcome to Jazz.

TRE

Hey, there. Table for four, please.

She grabs four menus.

HOSTESS

Right this way.

Tre follows behind her. She sits him at a round table in the center of the restaurant.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)

Here you go.

TRE

Thanks.

She places the menus in the center of the table. Tre removes his jacket and puts it on the back of his chair.

HOSTESS

Your server will be with you.

She exits.

TRE

Thanks.

He reads over the menu.

EMILEE, 23, Hispanic, foxy, and lively, walks to the table.

EMILEE

Hey, boo.

TRE

Hello, beautiful.

Tre stands up. He hugs her. Emilee takes off her coat and places it on the back of the chair.

EMILEE
Where's Richie and Chris?

TRE
I think they're on the way.

Emilee picks up a menu.

EMILEE
How was your show?

TRE
It was okay. One of our understudies played Marvin.

EMILEE
Was he cute?

TRE
He was...he was okay, I guess.

EMILEE
Was he a good kisser?

TRE
He was. He did a great job.

Emilee rolls her eyes.

TRE (CONT'D)
What about you?

EMILEE
It was good. I gotta get faster during the quick changes.

TRE
You'll get it. You're new to the show, they should give you some grace.

The front door swings open.

CHRISTIAN, White, the boy next door type, and RICHIE, Hispanic, a giant teddy bear, both 24, enter.

RICHIE
Wassup, my Broadway people!

Emilee and Tre get up to hug the boys.

Christian and Emilee share a quick kiss.

CHRISTIAN

It's so cold. I'm not used to
winters. This island boy's not used
to temperatures below eighty.

He takes his jacket off and sits in his chair.

RICHIE

Whatcha order? I'm starved.

TRE

Nothing. We waited on you two--

EMILEE

As always.

TRE

Our waiter hasn't gotten here yet.

CHRISTIAN

(sarcastic)

They don't know who we are?

Tre slugs Christian in the arm.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

What, it's a joke.

Christian rubs his arm.

EMILEE

Anything new with your shows?

RICHIE

Um. No.

Richie shrugs.

CHRISTIAN

Um. No. Nothing major.

EMILEE

(to Christian)

What about you, babe?

CHRISTIAN

Nothing new. My show's a well-oiled
machine. No time for mishaps. No
time for mistakes. No time for
hesitation. No mercy.

Christian balls his fist.

TRE
You're so dramatic.

JOSH, 23, Black, handsome and built, walks to Tre's table.

JOSH
Welcome to Jazz. I'm Josh, and I'll
be taking care--

Josh tilts his head.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Tre...Tre Covington?

Tre looks up from his menu. His eyes widen.

TRE
Josh?

JOSH
Hey.

TRE
Hi...

Tears build in Tre's eyes.

JOSH
How're you?

Tre nods his head.

TRE
(hoarse)
What're you doin' here?

Tre wipes his tears.

JOSH
I work here.

Josh raises his apron to show the restaurant's logo.

Emilee, Richie, and Christian all share a look of confusion.

TRE
Cool.

Tre bites his bottom lip and scratches his head.

TRE (CONT'D)
Can we get four glasses of water?

JOSH

Sure.

He exits.

Tre covers his face with the menu.

EMILEE

What the hell was that?

CHRISTIAN

You good, man?

Tre raises the menu higher over his face.

EMILEE

Tre?

Josh returns with four glasses of water.

He hands Emilee, Richie, and Christian three glasses of water and places the last one in front of Tre.

Tre turns away from Josh.

JOSH

Do you guys need more time, or are you guys ready?

Emilee kicks Tre under the table.

TRE

(whispers)

Ouch.

He kicks her back.

EMILEE

Ouch.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, we need more time.

JOSH

Okay?

Josh exits.

RICHIE

What're you doing?

TRE

Plotting a murder.

CHRISTIAN

Whose?

TRE

Mine.

RICHIE

Wouldn't that be suicide, then?

CHRISTIAN

Jesus, Rich.

EMILEE

Do you know him?

Tre doesn't answer. He puts his menu down.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Did you fuck him?

Tre kicks her under the table.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Ouch! Stop kicking me.

TRE

Stop provoking me, and no, I didn't sleep with him.

CHRISTIAN

Well, you're acting like you did.

Christian gasps.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Did you give him an STD? Did he give you an STD?

Richie slugs Christian in the arm.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Ow.

TRE

Again, I didn't sleep with him.

EMILEE

We need the backstory. What's really going on?

TRE

He's...He's...He's Josh.

RICHIE

We know.

TRE

He's Josh. That Josh.

CHRISTIAN

What?

EMILEE

No. Seriously.

RICHIE

I'm lost.

TRE

He broke my heart.

RICHIE

Do you want me to ask the hostess
for another server?

TRE

No. It's fine...

Tre looks to his left.

TRE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

He's coming back.

He picks up his menu to cover his face.

JOSH

Y'all ready to order?

EMILEE

Yeah. Can I get the shrimp and
chicken Caesar salad? Can I get
extra feta on that?

Josh scribbles on his notepad.

JOSH

What about you, blue shirt?

Christian looks down at his shirt.

CHRISTIAN

Oh me. Can I get the veggie pasta
but no red bell peppers in that?

Josh writes on his notepad.

RICHIE

I want the loaded mac and cheese.

Josh writes on the notepad.

JOSH
All right. What about you, Tre?

Tre remains silent.

RICHIE
Tre, order.

TRE
(muffled)
I would like the veggie pasta.

Josh inches closer.

EMILEE
Tre, speak up.

TRE
I want the veggie pasta.

Josh takes his pen to push down the menu.

JOSH
I can't hear you.

Tre points to Christian.

CHRISTIAN
He wants what I want.

Tre nods.

Josh writes on his notepad.

JOSH
I'll take your menus and put your
order in.

Josh exits.

RICHIE AND EMILEE CHRISTIAN
The fuck is wrong with you? Stand up. Stand the fuck up.

TRE
I'm sorry for being weird. It's
just...it's just--

EMILEE
You're heartbroken. You were caught
off guard. You needa get your
bearings. But stop being weird.

TRE
I don't think I can. Is anyone else
hot? No, just me.

Tre sips his water. Then, he fans himself with his beanie.

RICHIE
I'm so lost. What happened?

TRE
Josh and I went to middle school
together. We met in the eighth
grade. And I was instantly and
hopelessly devoted to him.

Christian snorts.

CHRISTIAN
Hopelessly devoted. Like from
Grease. That was a good one.

Everyone rolls their eyes.

TRE
I fell hard. I fell fast; sadly, He
wasn't there to catch me.

His voice cracks.

TRE (CONT'D)
I didn't want him. I needed him.

CHRISTIAN
Act cool...he's coming.

Josh enters. He carries a tray of food. He hands everyone
their respective meals.

JOSH
Enjoy y'all.

CHRISTIAN
Thank you.

He exits.

INT. JAZZ RESTAURANT - NIGHT - LATER

The group enjoys their meals. They smile and laugh.

Josh watches the group from other tables and smiles.

RICHIE
It's getting late, and I'm not
trying to miss the train home.

Josh places three checkbooks at the center of the table.

Josh hands Tre his bill.

Tre opens the checkbook.

Everyone places their cards inside the checkbooks.

Josh picks up the checkbooks and walks to the bar.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
Are you gonna pay him? I mean, I
know you like him and all, but...
you still need to pay the guy.

TRE
He paid for it.

EMILEE
If that's not flirting, then I
don't know what is.

TRE
He's not flirting.

Everyone rolls their eyes.

TRE (CONT'D)
I think it's a mistake.

CHRISTIAN
Ask him.

TRE
I will.

Tre walks over to Josh at the bar. Josh talks to a customer.

He looks back at the group. They give Tre a thumbs up.

He taps Josh on the shoulder.

TRE (CONT'D)
Hey.

Josh turns around.

JOSH
Hey.

Tre smiles.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Is everything okay?

TRE
I think there's something wrong
with my bill.

Josh laughs as he places his arm on Tre's shoulder.

JOSH
There's nothing wrong with it. I
paid the bill.

TRE
Why?

JOSH
Cause I know you.

TRE
C'mon, you know a lot of people.

JOSH
You're right, but when I realized
who you are—not the actor or
writer, but the guy I once knew in
middle school...I felt like I had
to. Y'know.

Tre wipes the tears from his eyes.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You gotta stop crying.

TRE
I can't.

He places his hand on Tre's shoulder.

JOSH
I'll see you around "Whizzer."

Josh grabs a bottle from the bar. He takes it to another
table.

JOSH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Here's your bottle of wine.

Tre watches Josh walk off.

INT. SUBWAY STATION PLATFORM - NIGHT

Tre intensely stares at the subway tracks.

EMILEE

You've had a long day.

Tre nods.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

When we get home, I can make some
hot chocolate for us.

Tre nods again.

The A-train pulls up in front of the group. The doors open.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

All of them step inside and take a seat. Tre looks out the window. He smiles as the Manhattan Skyline glistens.

CHRISTIAN

(whispers)

Is he broken?

RICHIE

(whispers)

I think so.

Richie takes another bite of his leftovers.

Tre reaches into his pocket to pull out his receipt. He admires Josh's signature.

He looks back out the window.

The train stops. The doors open. They exit the train.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - NIGHT

CHRISTIAN

Let's make this quick, people. It's
less than thirty degrees. I don't
like seeing my breath.

EMILEE

You wanted to live here.

CHRISTIAN

Only to be close to you...and my
dream career.

Tre and the others walk from the platform to their apartment.

RICHIE

Remind me, why do we live in
Brooklyn?

EMILEE

It's cheaper.

EXT. APARTMENT - FRONT STEPS - NIGHT

Tre stares at the forever bright and beautiful Manhattan.

Christian opens the front door. Everyone but Tre enters.

CHRISTIAN

Tre?

Tre continues to admire Manhattan.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Tre?

Christian walks down the stairs to stand next to Tre.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Let's go. It's thirty degrees out
here. I know you're in shock, but
you're acting weird.

Tre looks at his friend.

TRE

I thought I was over him. It took
me almost ten years, but I thought
I finally got over it.

He returns his attention to the Manhattan skyline.

CHRISTIAN

I know he was your first love. But
you have to move forward. You've
got a lot going for you. Don't let
dinner mess that up.

Tre nods.

TRE

You're right.

They both walk up the steps. Tre stares at the skyline one
more time before he shuts the door.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)
Tre, go to bed!

INT. APARTMENT - TRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

He lies in bed and stares at the ceiling. Then, he gets up and walks to his window to admire Manhattan.

He sighs.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)
That's a lot of sighing in there.

He looks back out the window.

EMILEE (O.S.)
Jesus, Chris...

Tre shakes his head in disappointment.

Emilee knocks on his bedroom door.

EMILEE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hey. Can I come in?

TRE
Sure.

She enters the room. Tre continues to stare out the window.

EMILEE
Are you okay?

TRE
Yeah.

EMILEE
Tre, don't lie to me.

TRE
I'm serious.

EMILEE
No, you're not.

Tre wipes the tears from his eyes.

TRE
Emilee, I'm fine.

EMILEE
I've known you since you were fifteen.

(MORE)

EMILEE (CONT'D)

I know when you're upset, I know when you're scared. I know everything about you, but you're not okay. I know Josh hurt you. I know what he did fucked you up.

Tre turns to her.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

But maybe this is a sign--

TRE

From who? The devil.

EMILEE

I dunno. Maybe God, the universe, or the giant floating turtle in the sky. Someone wants you to have the closure you deserve.

She steps closer to him.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

Y'know you deserve peace and happiness, right?

Tre nods. Emilee sits next to Tre on the window sill.

EMILEE (CONT'D)

I love you...if that counts as anything.

TRE

Thank you. I love you, too.

They hug.

EMILEE

Wanna know a secret.

TRE

Sure.

EMILEE

I've always prayed for someone to love me the way Christian does. Once I realized I deserved happiness and a true companion. He entered my life.

TRE

You're welcome, by the way.

EMILEE

Everything is about timing.
Christian entered my life at the
perfect time, and Josh reentered
yours for a reason.

They hug again.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)

I love you too, babe!

EMILEE

Love you more!

RICHIE (O.S.)

Shut up! I'm trying to sleep!

EMILEE & TRE

Sorry!

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)

Sorry!

EMILEE

Get some sleep. I'll talk to you in
the morning.

She exits his bedroom.

EXT. BROADWAY THEATRE - DAY

Tre listens to music as he walks to his theatre. He admires
the artwork that depicts him as his character.

He smiles at it.

JOSH (O.S.)

Tre!

Tre turns around.

TRE

Josh?

Josh stands in front of Tre.

JOSH

Hey.

TRE

Hey.

JOSH

How're you?

TRE

Cold.

JOSH

Me too. I'm glad I found you.

TRE

How'd you find me--

JOSH

Spot the yellow.

TRE (CONT'D)

Yellow.

They both laugh.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Yellow looks perfect on you.

TRE

Thank you.

JOSH

It was good seeing you.

TRE

Likewise.

Josh scoffs.

JOSH

Did you just likewise me?

TRE

Yeah--

JOSH

You know me. Loosen up. Smile.

TRE

It's hard to smile.

JOSH

You're alive, aren't you?

Tre nods.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Then you've got something to smile about.

TRE

Yeah. But...why're you here?

JOSH

I came to see you.

TRE

Did you want a job at the theatre?

Josh laughs.

JOSH

You still have that same dry humor.

TRE

I was being serious.

JOSH

I know...it was good seeing you last night.

TRE

It was great seeing you, too.

JOSH

I missed you.

TRE

You did?

Josh nods.

JOSH

Do you remember when you told me you loved me in the eighth-grade stairwell?

Tre nods. He wipes his tears.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Well, I realized you were the only person to love me throughout the last ten years.

Tre scoffs.

JOSH (CONT'D)

It's true.

TRE

Josh...please.

JOSH

I mean it.

Josh steps closer. Tre steps back.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You did everything for me in Ms. Parker's class.

Tre smiles.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Do you remember when you punched
Javon Mince?

TRE
Yeah. I'll never forget that day.

JOSH TRE (CONT'D)
You broke his nose. I broke his nose.

JOSH (CONT'D)
It was awesome.

TRE
(hesitant)
I've gotta go.

Tre walks past Josh. He grabs Tre's arm.

JOSH
Don't walk away from me.

TRE
You did.

JOSH
I know, and I regret it.

TRE
Sure you do.

JOSH
Why don't you believe me?

Josh lets go of Tre's arm.

TRE
I just can't.

JOSH
Please, just hear me out.

TRE
I gotta go.

Tre puts his headphones in. He walks into the theatre. He looks back at Josh.

JOSH
Tre, wait.

Josh watches Tre enter the theatre.

EXT. BROADWAY THEATRE - STAGE DOOR - NIGHT

FANS, 15-60's, stand in a line behind a metal barricade. Tre and some of his CO-WORKERS, 25-35, sign merch and playbills or pose for photos.

Tre poses for a picture with a FAMILY, 11-40's.

TRE

Thank you.

Tre slides down to the next fan. He signs their playbill and poses for a picture.

TRE (CONT'D)

Thanks for coming.

The process continues.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - LATER

Tre walks down the street. He listens to music. He admires the New York scenery.

EXT. JAZZ RESTAURANT - NIGHT

He stands outside the large windows. He admires the table he once sat at.

Josh sneaks up behind Tre.

JOSH (O.S.)

Hey...

He taps Tre on the shoulder.

TRE

Hi.

Tre takes his headphones out.

JOSH

You were great tonight. You made me laugh a lot.

TRE

Thanks. You saw the show?

JOSH

I did. You're still funny, just like in the eighth grade.

TRE
Oh please. I had braces and a
terrible haircut. Looked like...

JOSH
Lil Bill. Lil Bill. TRE (CONT'D)

TRE (CONT'D)
Haha. Very funny.

JOSH
What? You said it, too. Even when
you're serious, you still find a
way to crack a joke.

TRE
Because I can crack jokes about
myself. You can't.

JOSH
Then where's the fun in that?

They both smile. Tre looks away.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Whatcha listening to?

Tre looks down at his phone.

TRE
Imaginary by Sky.

JOSH
Nice.

TRE
Yeah, it's a great song.

JOSH
Cool. I'll have to check it out.

An awkward silence falls upon the two.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You were great. I knew you were
gonna be on Broadway. I just knew.

TRE
How did you know? You've never seen
me perform.

JOSH

I didn't have to. To believe in you. And tonight, you made me a believer.

Tre smiles.

TRE

Thanks. Years of training and reading all of these acting books and college really paid off.

JOSH

I remember you used to carry this blue and brown acting book everywhere you went. You were always reading and marking it up.

TRE

You paid attention to that?

JOSH

You have to pay attention to the guy who listens to musicals and broke a kid's nose...all on the same day.

Josh laughs.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Do you still have that book?

TRE

No. I wish, but it fell apart my junior year of high school.

JOSH

Damn really? I knew how much you loved that book.

TRE

I'm just really shocked that you paid attention to that.

Tre locks eyes with Josh.

JOSH

I did.

TRE

What can I say? I was too busy paying attention to you.

Josh inches closer to Tre.

JOSH
I know, and I wanted to--

RICHIE (O.S.)
Tre!

They both look in Richie's direction.

An excited Richie enters.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
You're not gonna believe this, but
Stephanie J. Block is having an
impromptu performance at 54 Below.
We gotta get there before all the
good seats are taken. Em and Chris
are waiting for us.

Richie shifts his attention to Josh.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
You can come if you want.

Josh looks at Tre.

Tre looks away.

JOSH
Aww, thanks, but I can't...maybe
next time.

RICHIE
Your loss. Now let's go!

Richie takes Tre by the arm and drags him away. Tre looks
back at Josh.

RICHIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Do you know that guy? I feel like
I've seen him before.

TRE (O.S.)
(whispers)
Yes, but lower your voice.

Josh turns around to look at Tre. He smiles and then pulls
out his phone. He types quickly.

INSERT: IMAGINARY BY SKY.

He puts his headphones in and walks away. He looks back at
Tre one more time. He smiles.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh lies on his bed. He listens to the song on repeat. He flips through the playbill.

INSERT: TRE'S HEADSHOT.

JOSH
What do I have to do to show you
I'm being serious?

INT. JAZZ RESTAURANT - NEXT DAY

Josh, in his uniform, places two wine glasses on the table.

JOSH
Here you go...

CUSTOMER ONE, 40's, and CUSTOMER TWO, 40's, blankly stare at Josh.

CUSTOMER ONE
We didn't order these.

JOSH
Are you sure?

CUSTOMER ONE
Positive. We just sat down.

JOSH
Oh...I apologize.

He flips through his server's book.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You guys aren't table nine?

CUSTOMER TWO
I'm not sure...but we would like a
new waiter.

INT. JAZZ RESTAURANT - NIGHT - LATER

Josh stands by the bar. He rolls silverware into napkins. He listens to Imaginary one more time and smiles.

Hostess walks to Josh.

HOSTESS
Hey, I just sat you three in your
section.

JOSH
Can you give them to someone else?

HOSTESS
What? Josh Johnson is passing up a table. Is everything okay?

JOSH
Yeah. I'm just not in the mood.

HOSTESS
Why, what's going on?

He sighs.

JOSH
I hurt someone.

Hostess steps back.

JOSH (CONT'D)
No! No. Not like that. I mean emotionally.

HOSTESS
Whew. Okay, because you scared me.

JOSH
I hurt someone who loved me.

HOSTESS
Have you talked to her?

JOSH
A few times. But I get turned down.

HOSTESS
Oh no. Did you try coming from the heart?

JOSH
Numerous times and still turned down.

HOSTESS
Well, fuck her, then...

She scoots closer to him.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)
Y'know what they say: To get over someone, you need to get under someone else...or behind.

She grabs his tie. She teases at it.

JOSH

No! What? No! He was kind to me. He did everything for me, and I shitted on him.

HOSTESS

He?

JOSH

Yes, he!

HOSTESS

You're gay?

A BEAT.

JOSH

Yeah. Yeah, I am.

He throws the silverware down and walks off. He grabs his jacket and walks out of the restaurant.

EXT. BROADWAY THEATRE - STAGE DOOR - NIGHT

Snow lightly falls from the sky. Josh admires the snow.

Josh stands by the door. He sips from his coffee cup.

Tre walks out of the stage door.

TRE

Josh?

JOSH

Hey.

TRE

Hey...

JOSH

Hi.

Josh smiles.

TRE

Hi.

Tre smiles as he takes his headphones out.

TRE (CONT'D)

What're you doing here? Are you stalking me?

JOSH

Oh God, no. I just like seeing you.

TRE

I wouldn't be upset if you were.

Josh smirks.

JOSH

There you go again, being a flirt.

Tre smiles.

TRE

(flirtatious)

Have I?

JOSH

Do you remember when you told me you loved me in the eighth-grade stairwell?

TRE

You said this already.

JOSH

I know. I've been practicing this for a while.

Tears quickly form in Tre's eyes. He looks away from Josh.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Well, I realized that throughout the last ten-eleven years. You were the only one who meant it. The only person to love me.

TRE

How can I trust you?

JOSH

Tre, I'm so serious. I'm so sorry. I regret that day, everything about that day, leading you on, taking that cake, and lying to you.

TRE

Really?

JOSH

Of course. Seeing you cry broke me. I was in such denial that I was willing to hurt you to protect myself. I don't know how many times I can say how sorry I am.

TRE

Josh, I loved you. I love you. I'm not sure anymore, but what you did in that stairwell broke me.

JOSH

I know. I'm beyond sorry. Please forgive me. Please.

Josh sheds a tear.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Please, I love--

Tre looks at Josh and kisses him.

Josh pulls away from the kiss.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Wow...

TRE

You were saying.

JOSH

Wow...

He wraps his arms around Tre's waist.

JOSH (CONT'D)

(to the tune of *Imaginary*)
I've been thinking about you all the time. Can't get you out of my mind.

They both smile.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I've been wanting to do that since the restaurant.

TRE

I've wanted to do that since the eighth grade.

They kiss again.

The snow gently falls on them.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Ten years late, but it was totally worth it.

Tre smiles. He rests his head on Josh's shoulder.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Hey, Siri, play Imaginary by Sky.

Imaginary by Sky plays.

They sway with the music.

THE END

Review