

# Summer at Rainbow Square

By Collateral Changes

*The abridged journal entries of a woman overworked; her year of self-discovery and transformation.*

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*12<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

This is Nicole Sommer with my first therapist-prescribed journal entry. Apparently I need to slow down and take some time to reflect on things in order to reduce my stress levels. You know what would really help lower my stress levels... some fucking Xanax.

*13<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

These are such a waste of time, I should be finishing that report I started. Maybe I can get in early tomorrow and put it on Bob's desk before he gets in. There's just no way I'm getting passed over for another promotion. After all this time I deserve a title without the word 'junior' in it. Fingers crossed for my review on Tuesday.

*19<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

I can't believe Bob did it to me again! God, I am such an idiot for expecting anything more from that ungrateful miser. Three years of bare minimum pay rises and no promotion. I gave my LIFE to this company and in return he promotes Greg; his douchebag son-in-law whose only skill is taking credit for everyone else's hard work. Well I've had it, I'm sick of being trodden on!

*20<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

My heart is still racing, I still can't believe I actually did it, I finally quit that dreadful job. The look on Bob's face was priceless! Goodluck getting Greg to do half his own job, let alone mine. Kinda relieved I left *after* payday; can't imagine my little rant was very well received. So, as much as I like getting on top of things, I'm going to take a well-earned break over the next month or two. Besides, even if I wanted to, no one's hiring over the holidays anyway.

*4<sup>th</sup> January 2018*

You won't believe what I found at my parent's place over Christmas; my old paints and brushes from college! I almost forgot I ever dropped visual arts for commerce. It gave me a fantastic idea: I've got years of marketing experience and I'm handy with a brush. Why not take advantage of that and start my own business. I mean, what have I got to lose? I have enough capital, and if it doesn't work out I can always fall back to marketing.

*12<sup>th</sup> January 2018*

I think things are finally starting to look up. I've already managed to put together three finished pieces! There's just something calming about it all, gliding my brush over a fresh canvas feels so amazing. I just need to get them out to the public somehow.

*19<sup>th</sup> January 2018*

Hey, it's Nicole. I managed to talk my way into getting a stand at the 'Rainbow Square' market. I'm so excited. Maybe the slideshows and charts were a little overkill and *maybe* the pantsuit was a little intimidating, but it worked! I have a small spot next to Gavin the kombucha guy. I might have to turn

things down a notch if I want to fit in. No one wants to buy paintings from the woman who looks like their tax accountant.

*4<sup>th</sup> February 2018*

I'm starting to think that maybe there's some merit to the starving artist trope. I'm not selling near enough for this to be sustainable. My savings can take a hit for now, but I've got to turn this around soon. Gav's offered to get my name around town a bit, which was really sweet of him. Honestly, the people here are so much more friendly than expected. I can have a bad hair day, be too lazy to put on makeup and no one stares or makes even the slightest sarcastic remark.

*8<sup>th</sup> February 2018*

Had to cancel my gym membership today. I'm going to have to cut back if I'm going to make this budget work. It's no big deal, I've been getting some fantastic yoga lessons with Sarah from Rainbow Square. Sure, she's a bit too into healing stones but she can also touch the back of her head with her feet.

*11<sup>th</sup> February 2018*

I got my first commission! I tried all sorts of social media campaigns, ads, flyers, anything I could think of, but in the end it was Gav's spruiking that saved the day! The client paid cash in full, for an oddly specific (and explicit) piece. I'm not really in the business of being prudish, I'm in the business of staying in business. I'm just a little disappointed that eight years of corporate branding experience seem to have amounted to nothing. On the other hand, I couldn't be more grateful, so I've offered Gav a referral fee if he finds me more clients.

*15<sup>th</sup> February 2018*

I can't believe I just threw away an entire week's profit on dinner and drinks with the girls. It didn't help that Katie kept asking whether I was going to get a 'real' job again. I kind of want to double down just to show her. My yoga guru Sarah is throwing a houseparty on Saturday. I am so over this week, honestly it could not come sooner. She said it's nothing fancy, should I bring wine?

*18<sup>th</sup> February 2018*

Nicky here! I had a great time at the party, the wine was well received and I even made a few new friends (and potential clients!) Everyone was pretty relaxed, there was a fire going and when the crowd died down, a few of the housemates started passing around a joint. I didn't partake, but the aroma that wafted around was kinda pleasant. Sarah called this afternoon to tell me I'd left my sandals behind. I must have forgotten them and stumbled home barefoot - hey I was pretty buzzed okay.

*2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018*

Went shopping with Katie today. Things were going great until she started poking fun at me for going up a dress size or two. I laughed it off the first couple of times, but she just wouldn't let it go. It was as if she *wanted* me to feel bad about myself. No matter what I said she couldn't understand how I could ever be satisfied with my body the way it was. We kind of left on a sour note after I told her I wasn't going to go back to skipping meals and starving myself, just to satisfy her own insecurities.

*8<sup>th</sup> May 2018*

I bumped into an old colleague yesterday, he almost didn't recognise me at first. He kept giving me this weird look for some reason and he got really squirmy when I went in to hug him. It was really

awkward. It wasn't until he left that I realised he was staring at my underarms the entire time. I guess it's been more than a few weeks since I've shaved, and he was always weirdly overdoing it with the hand sanitiser back then. I couldn't stop laughing.

*14<sup>th</sup> May 2018*

The commissions Gav has been finding me are getting weirder every week, but at least they pay well. I'm just going to have to face it; there's just no market for still life and unicorns in this neck of the woods. People only ever want the smut. I've started channelling my inner Georgia O'Keeffe recently, and made sure to add a few explicit pieces towards the back of the stall. Here's hoping sex sells as much as they say it does.

*1<sup>st</sup> June 2018*

Hey it's Nicky, can't wait for the big move tomorrow! I've been so excited ever since Sarah offered me the room a few weeks ago. I loved my little apartment, but I just can't cover the rent on this budget. Besides, I already spend every other weekend at Sarah's anyway, I couldn't think of any other place I'd rather live.

*13<sup>th</sup> July 2018*

Best household ever. There never seems to be a dull moment here. Best of all, no one cares if I walk around nude, so long as I put down a towel; clothes are overrated anyway. I'm not sure how it started, but I've earned the nickname 'Summer.' I've been told it's on account of my surname and my sunny personality. I like it.

*1<sup>st</sup> August 2018*

Had a lovely birthday yesterday surrounded by a dozen or two of my closest friends. Katie and the girls made it, although they kinda stuck to their own group. I tried to spend some time with them when I could but their eyes just sort of glazed over whenever I turned the topic away from celebrity goss and fashion. Hate to say it, but I was kind of glad when they left early to be honest. It felt like I could let my hair down and just be myself again.

*4<sup>th</sup> November 2018*

Sarah and I have been spending a lot of time together. I've really enjoyed hanging out in her room together. Just listening to records and sharing a joint, while she worked away at rolling my new dreads. I know, I know, there are boundaries when it comes to housemates, but I can't change the way she makes me feel.

*12<sup>th</sup> November 2018*

So, Sarah and I finally took the leap this morning; it was intense to say the least. I haven't been intimate with another woman since that one time in college. But none of it mattered because she was so considerate and generous. It was lovely. Neither of us wants anything too serious, which is great, because as tacky as it sounds, I see myself as more of a free spirit these days.

*11<sup>th</sup> December 2018*

All packed for the big trip tomorrow. Just me, Sarah, Gav and the rest of the Rainbow Square crew surrounded by nature and not much else for a week of pure bliss. I can't believe how much things have changed for me since last year. I'm so glad I never got that promotion; I deserved better. Peace and love, Summer.