The background of the book cover is a photograph of a dirt path that curves through a green, grassy field. A low stone wall runs along the right side of the path. The sky above is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, yellow, and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise scene.

CALL OF THE CAMINO

a novel

SUZANNE
REDFEARN

Bestselling Author of *In an Instant*

CALL
OF THE
CAMINO

OTHER TITLES BY SUZANNE REDFEARN

Where Butterflies Wander

Moment in Time

Hadley and Grace

In an Instant

No Ordinary Life

Hush Little Baby

CALL
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CAMINO

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REDFEARN

LAKE UNION
PUBLISHING

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, organizations, places, events, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

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Published by Lake Union Publishing, Seattle
www.apub.com

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EU product safety contact:
Amazon Media EU S. à r.l.
38, avenue John F. Kennedy, L-1855 Luxembourg
amazonpublishing-gpsr@amazon.com

ISBN-13: 9781662530203 (paperback)
ISBN-13: 9781662530210 (digital)

Cover design by Kathleen Lynch/Black Kat Design
Cover image: © Vicenfoto, © Svetlana Sarapultseva / Getty



*For all those whose footsteps I followed, and for all those
yet to come.*

CONTENTS

[EPIGRAPH](#)

[MAP](#)

[1: ISABELLE](#)

[2: REINA](#)

[3: ISABELLE](#)

[4: REINA](#)

[5: ISABELLE](#)

[6: REINA](#)

[7: ISABELLE](#)

[8: REINA](#)

[9: ISABELLE](#)

[10: REINA](#)

[11: ISABELLE](#)

[12: REINA](#)

[13: ISABELLE](#)

[14: REINA](#)

[15: ISABELLE](#)

[16: REINA](#)

[17: ISABELLE](#)

[18: REINA](#)

[19: ISABELLE](#)

[20: REINA](#)

[21: ISABELLE](#)

[22: REINA](#)

[23: ISABELLE](#)

24: REINA
25: ISABELLE
26: REINA
27: ISABELLE
28: REINA
29: ISABELLE
30: REINA
31: ISABELLE
32: REINA
33: ISABELLE
34: REINA
35: ISABELLE
36: REINA
37: ISABELLE
38: REINA
39: ISABELLE
40: REINA
41: ISABELLE
42: REINA
43: ISABELLE
44: REINA
45: ISABELLE
46: REINA
47: ISABELLE
48: REINA
49: ISABELLE
50: REINA
51: ISABELLE

52: REINA

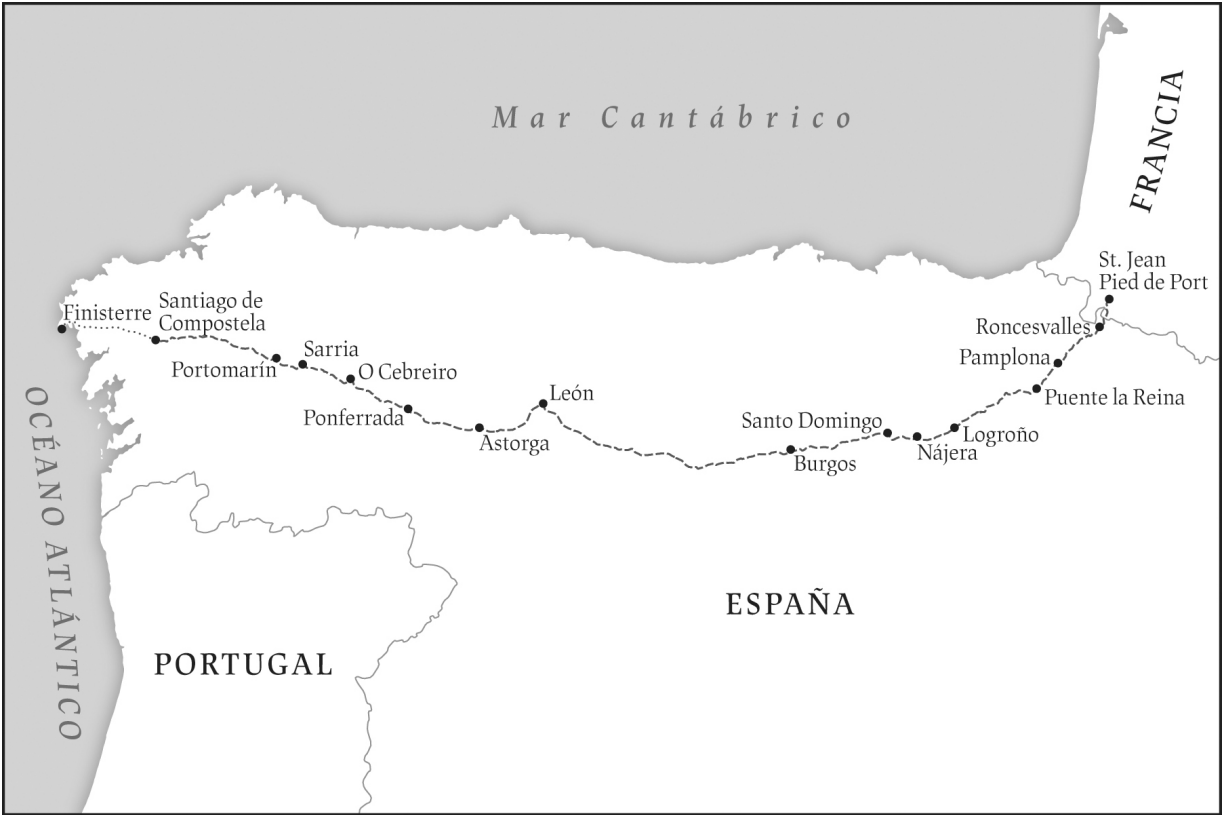
AUTHOR'S NOTE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yesterday is history.
Tomorrow is a mystery
But today is a gift
That is why it is called the present.
—Bil Keane



[Map 1 extended description.](#)

ISABELLE

1997

Gemma is laughing. And I would join in her merriment if not for the fact that I'm the one who will be getting the switch if we don't get this situation under control.

"I'm glad you're so amused," I say as I continue to wave my arms up and down, hoping the stupid cow will take the hint and move her half-ton body from the mud pool she's contentedly bathing in.

The sewer swamp formed overnight from a break in a pipe near the road, a puddle one foot deep and twenty feet wide with long blades of grass sticking up through the sludge. The rank smell probably attracted the old girl, and the coolness of the water is what's keeping her there.

"She looks happy," Gemma says, lips still curled in amusement.

"Hay-yah! Hay-yah!" I hoot like an American cowboy in an old Western and wave my arms faster.

If my pa could see me, he'd throw his head back and laugh. Of course, if he were here, he would simply stomp into the mud and swat the heifer on her rear to move her along. Then, after the cows were in the barn, he'd walk to the house and kick his muddy boots on the stoop for my ma to clean. But I'm two hundred miles from home and wearing sneakers along with my favorite jeans, and the only one getting swatted if I walk in the mud is me. Mother Superior would like nothing more than a reason to pull out her lethal steel ruler and let me know, once again, how much she disapproves of me.

"Dang it, cow, move!" I yell in frustration.

The cow's marble eye rolls toward me, letting me know she heard me and is plainly choosing to ignore me. Blithely, she bends her head, yanks off

a hunk of grass, and chews, her long lashes hooded as if happy to stay in the mud forever.

“Mooooooo-ve!” Gemma bellows, causing me to smirk.

Gemma still wears her school uniform—starched white collared shirt, green-and-navy pleated plaid skirt, knee-high white socks, and her signature clunky Doc Marten Mary Janes. The only addition to what she had on in class is a floppy sun hat, neon pink with bright-yellow sunflowers to protect her fair, freckle-prone skin.

Though we’re both on herding duty, I’m the one who mostly deals with the cows. When we started secondary school, Gemma asked to be reassigned from her job in the library so we’d have an excuse to spend time together. Gemma is like royalty, the only child of a senior French minister and notable jewelry designer, while I’m the lowly daughter of an untitled Andorran cattleman. Which meant, after primary school, we were no longer in the same dorm or classes. After our graduation in three weeks, Gemma will be off to university to pursue a career in international law, while I will be returning to Dur to help my family.

Gemma’s parents were appalled at the idea of their daughter traipsing through manure-ridden pastures, chasing after cows. But what Gemma wants, Gemma usually gets, and what she wanted was time with her best friend. So for four years, every afternoon, floppy sun hat in place, she has provided the comic relief while I deal with the beef.

My eyes latch onto hers, and knowing my thoughts, she grins wide, and together we lift our faces to the sky and howl, “Mooooooooooooo-ve!”

When our air runs out, we look down to see the cow chewing her cud, completely unimpressed.

“I’ll go grab some apples,” Gemma says. “Maybe we can bribe her out of there.”

Gemma walks toward a row of crab apple trees near the road, and I turn to the stubborn, stupid animal. “Listen here,” I say, fists on my hips, “enough is enough. You’ve had your fun, and now it’s time to get out. If you don’t, we’re both going to be late and will miss our dinners.”

The cow rolls her marble eye, then, mocking me, yanks off another bite of disgusting grass.

“Ugh!”

“Iz.”

I turn to see Gemma walking back, her hands empty.

“Where are the apples?” I ask before noticing her expression, her brow furrowed and her mouth tight.

She flicks her head toward the stone ruins beside the road. I squint against the glare of the late-afternoon sun to see a thick silhouette in the shadows that I instantly recognize, and my throat closes tight.

“I’ll take in the others,” Gemma says, “and tell the sisters you’re trying to get this one out of the mud.”

She takes the herding stick from my hand and steps toward the cluster of cows huddled in the shade of a tree a hundred meters away. Now that the herd is clumped together, it’s no big deal to encourage them to the corral and the feed they know is waiting.

Reconsidering, she turns back and flings her arms around me. “I love you, Iz.”

I stand numb, eyes still on the shadow of my brother in the ruins.