

A Perfect Match

Based on a True Story

By T.L. Rose

***Dedicated to my loving
husband Chris for our 10-year
wedding anniversary. Thank
you for sticking by my side
through all the ups and downs.
I love you.***

***Also dedicated to my friends
and family who have supported
us over the years and who have
supported me in writing this.***

Chapter One

I sit here staring at the screen on my laptop wondering if I really want to do this. I have never used a dating website before but after having my heart broken one too many times maybe it was time for someone or *something* else to tell me who I would be compatible with. “Here goes nothing,” I say to myself. Taking in a deep breath I tap on the “done” button with my laptop pad and close my eyes.

I take a minute and reflect: one year out of college, a decent job offering in Virginia at a museum for a Curator position and the hunt for an apartment has begun. I hug myself for all that I have achieved. I was never the “Straight A” student and was told by bullies in school that I would never amount to anything because of my “wild child” days. If only I could walk right up to them

and shove my History degree in their faces along with my job offer and see the looks on every one of their faces! That would sure show them! I shake my head to get rid of that silly idea and remind myself that I am an adult.

“Kelsey, Dinner!” My thoughts are interrupted, and I open my eyes to the sound of my mother’s voice.

My mother and I have always been so close. I will miss her hovering, big heart, and carefree spirit. I walk out to the kitchen and I smell my mother’s homemade halupki. My mother moved here from Germany after meeting my father while he was on a business trip in Berlin. I can still hear my father tell me the story of when they first met:

“It was love at first sight when I saw her at a local market looking over some different produce. She was wearing a beautiful navy blue swiss polka dot dress that had spaghetti straps that hugged her at her waist and flowed down to her knees. Her blonde hair hung just over her shoulders and was curled a little at the ends. She wore a pearl necklace with matching pearl earrings that belonged to her mother. Her green eyes sparkled with wonder as she looked over the apples carefully selecting the best ones. I had to talk to her. I just had to! So, I bravely asked her what places she could recommend for me to eat at. A few choices were listed, and we started talking about food and other things. She told me that this conversation was beginning to make

her hungry and I asked her if she would like to join me for lunch and she immediately said yes. We have been in love ever since.”

I have always enjoyed hearing that story because it always gave me hope that my soulmate was still waiting for me out there.

My father was born and raised in Buffalo, NY from a Polish and Irish background. He moved to Syracuse, NY after taking an exceptionally good position as a financial consultant. He has his rules but does not hover and I find that to be a fair enough exchange.

Later that evening I retreat to my bedroom and climb into bed. Pulling the covers up over my head I close my eyes and drift into a deep slumber.

I wake up the next morning to the sun shining its late spring rays on my face and stretch my arms up over my head. I swing my legs out of bed and head to the bathroom for a quick shower. Letting the warm water hit my face I wonder if I have any notifications telling me I have a match even though it has only been one day. After showering I dry myself off, dress myself and head to the kitchen for some breakfast. It is Saturday and I help myself to some bacon, scrambled eggs and coffee and seat myself between my parents at our dining room table.

I take a bite of scrambled eggs as my father puts the newspaper down and looks at me with his brown

eyes twinkling with so much love and affection behind his glasses. He smiles at me with pride.

“So, Kelsey, last week of work coming up at Allen’s Antique Shop. Are you excited to go look at some apartments down in Virginia next week?” My father asks.

“Absolutely! I have been doing my research and I have found a few that I would really be interested in looking at first. They won’t be too far from where I will be working either.” I answer.

My mother sighs. “I still can’t believe my little girl is all grown up and ready to start the next chapter in her life.”

I smile at my mother and take a sip of coffee. I will miss these mornings with my family.

I finish my breakfast, brush my teeth and head back to my room to get ready for work. I do not have to be at work until 10AM so I fire up the laptop and check my email. There are several emails waiting for me to open their messages: apartments, other job interests and a reminder to pay on my student loan but so far, no emails alerting me of any compatible matches. Disappointed, I close my laptop and head to work.

It is a slow day at work. But then again once we get near summer it usually is. Our busy season tends to be more towards the holidays in December when

customers come in to browse for “that one unique gift.” I keep myself occupied and I polish some old furniture and sweep the wooden floors. My boss Margarine has finished balancing everything out for the day and we close.

“Kelsey you are one of the hardest workers I have employed. I sure will miss you.” Margarine says.

Margarine has been my boss for about six years at this store. I started working for her when I was nearing the end of my senior year in high school and would work for her when I would come home over holiday breaks. She kind of became like family to me and we became close. She taught me everything I needed to know and even taught me how to balance everything at night just in case she ever needed help doing that. She was in her early sixties and usually wore a long floral skirt that almost touched the ground along with a white or multi colored button-down blouse. Her greying hair was usually tied back into a tight bun and she wore half moon spectacles with a chain attached to them that hung like a necklace.

“Thank you. It has been a pleasure working for you. I will miss you as well.” I reply.

Smiling she turns the key to lock the door and we head our separate ways. I climb into my blue Kia Forte that I named “Roxy” and turn the key in the ignition. The engine roars to life and I ease out of the parking lot and

head home. I absolutely love this car. She was my graduation present from my parents. I have had others that meant a lot to me as memories were made but this one that I have named “Roxy” has won my heart over. I look forward to the memories we will make.

When I get home, I get ready for bed and decide to ignore my laptop for the night as I am too tired to even bother looking to see if I have any emails. Lying in bed I close my eyes and drift off into a deep slumber. I dream of my days at the State University of New York at Cortland where I originally was going to major in English and become a teacher. Fate brought me to history however when I started to enjoy the history of the authors and different time periods and my love for visiting different museums thus changing my career path.

I wake up the next morning and I have a day off. I get ready for the day, eat some breakfast with my parents and then head back to my bedroom to fire up the good old laptop. I open my email and as usual there are the same emails but this time, I discover an email from a Chad Hazelton. I open the email and see that it was someone who found me on the dating website! It read:

“I found you on the dating website. I understand you plan on moving to Virginia and I live in Williamsburg. I enjoyed reading your profile and I am intrigued to learn more about you. Email me back with an answer.”

Wow, I thought. This man appears to be very forward. That could possibly be a good thing as he might not be the type to play games and knows what he wants. Taking a deep breath, I hit reply.

“Thank you for emailing me. Yes. I will be moving to Williamsburg as I took a position as a Curator at a local museum. My father and I are heading down next week to look at apartments and get a feel for the area. What do you do for a living and do you have a picture of yourself?”

I hit send. Then I immediately get a response.

“I am a high school physical education teacher and I also give golf lessons in my free time. I have attached a picture of myself. If I am not being too forward, I must say you are beautiful. What are your interests?”

Hmmm, a high school physical education teacher and he gives golf lessons in his free time. So far, so good, I think to myself. I look at the bottom of the email and sure enough there is an attachment. I open the attachment and a tall, very handsome, dirty blonde hair and blue-eyed man is staring back at me. He looked to be about in his late twenties. He wore a pair of khaki shorts and a blue striped collar shirt.

“Oh my.” I say aloud to myself. He almost appeared too good to be true. Skepticism begins to get the best of me, and I wonder if I should just hit delete

and cancel my membership. I contemplate this in my mind for awhile but then decide to be a risk taker and hit reply:

“So far as you know I really enjoy history. I really enjoy traveling, learning about other cultures, golfing (although maybe I could use a few lessons from you), hiking and kayaking. Traveling is probably my biggest enjoyment as it allows me to step into a different world, even if it is just to a different state or town. I get to see what the area has to offer and how people go about their everyday lives. I find it fascinating!”

I hit send. This time there is no sudden reply and while I wait for a response I check some emails confirming some appointments to look at some apartments. There is still no reply. “Oh well,” I sigh. I am just about to close my laptop when I hear a “ping” alerting me that I have a new email. There is another email from Chad.

“It sounds like you have quite the cultural taste! Because I teach golf lessons in my spare time, I am sure it is obvious that I really enjoy golf. I do however also enjoy traveling and hiking just like you. I have been to most of the Continental U.S. and I have a desire to visit Hawaii and most of Europe. I would mostly like to see Scotland and visit St. Andrews and with your love of history and the fact that you also like to golf I am sure you could guess why.”

I hit reply.

“The birthplace of golf. That wasn’t hard to guess! I can see why you would like to go there and so would I. Well, I have to go but I do hope to learn more about you. Who knows? Maybe one day we’ll be wearing kilts, golfing at St. Andrews and drinking beers in pubs someday! Ha ha! I look forward to your next email and if I can be bold, you have me smiling as I read your messages.”

I hit send and tend to my chores for the day.

The week feels like it is dragging, and Chad and I have emailed each other a few more times and exchanged some more pictures. I know some people might think that I am crazy for talking to a man online, but I also feel that sometimes you just have to take a chance.

It is finally Saturday and my last day at Allen’s Antique Shop. As a last day of work treat Margarine brings me a nice lunch of some Southwestern Chicken wraps over rice. She knows I love Southwestern food and it is delicious! I thank her for the nice surprise and she also gives me a gift of different scented candles and a VISA gift card. I was not expecting any of this and I give her a big hug and thank her again.

“Promise me that you will come back and visit whenever you are in town.” She pleads with me.

“I promise I will,” I reply.

I hand her my key to the store and after wiping some tears away after we close, we head our separate ways. For the final time as an employee in this parking lot I open the door to “Roxy” and climb inside. I close my eyes and grip the steering wheel before I start her up. I reflect back to the first day I started here. I was only eighteen and I was a mixture of being a nervous mess but excited to make my own money. Margarine was not a typical boss. She had her rules of course but was more lenient and allowed me a considerable amount of time to learn everything. She was very forgiving if I made a mistake and she never raised her voice. Her attitude was that people can not properly learn if they are frightened by someone and that patience was key to having a successful employee. My memories suddenly flash through a time machine inside my head and when I open my eyes I am transported back to reality as I sit here in my car. Taking in a deep cleansing breath I start up “Roxy” and go home.

The next morning comes and I am already packed for my trip with my father. My father decides that he wants to let my mother sleep in this morning so after a quick shower I gather my duffle bag containing my clothes, beauty supplies and toiletries and walk into my parent’s bedroom to kiss my mother goodbye. She is sound asleep still under a quilt with roses on it that her aunt made for her and my father as an anniversary

gift one year. I lean over and kiss her forehead and she stirs a little and opens her eyes.

“Be safe my love and make sure you really look everything over. Please contact me when you make it to Williamsburg.” She says sleepily.

“I will Mamma. I love you.”

“I love you too.”

I leave the bedroom and my father stands down in the entry hall waiting for me.

“Ready to go kiddo?” He asks.

“As ready as I’ll ever be.” I answer.

We put our luggage into the trunk of “Roxy” and climb into the car. My father sets up his Garmin GPS system and puts in the location of the first apartment complex we are set to look at. I slowly back out of the driveway as we start to make our journey down the long haul of I-81 South.

Chapter Two

We pull into a Cracker Barrel when we reach Binghamton just North of Pennsylvania. I am famished from the long drive already and I park “Roxy” close by. We get out of the car and walk past the outdoor rocking chairs with patrons rocking in them chatting about the simple things in life such as the weather and plans for the summer. We open the double wooden doors and step inside immediately to the gift shop. There are customers browsing around either waiting for their name to be called for a table or buying old fashioned candy

and country style décor. We walk up to the hostess at the podium and she is wearing her Cracker Barrel apron over a white button-down shirt and black pants. She looks up from her podium and smiles at us. She has long brown hair pulled back into a ponytail and warm brown eyes and is wearing a deep shade of red lipstick.

“Welcome! How many for breakfast?” She asks.

“Just us two.” My father responds.

“Right this way.”

She pulls out two breakfast menus and walks us into the dining area. There is a stone fireplace to the right with an old rifle hanging on the wall above it. The other walls are of a deep brown wooden décor with old signs past advertisements such as creamsicles and flour for sale. There are also several old drawings and photographs that look like they were of country men and women from the late 1800s or early 1900s. We hear the clinking of silverware as customers dive into their food and some laughter and small chit chat. The waiters and waitresses are busy with their hustle and bustle taking orders and bringing food from the kitchen to all their customers. She sits us down at a table with four wooden chairs and hands us our menus.

“The specials today are homemade buttermilk pancakes with a homemade blueberry syrup or a large egg omelet with bacon. Your waitress will be right with you.”

Looking over the menu I note different options I may like but decide on a coffee, a large orange juice and the special with the homemade buttermilk pancakes sounded appetizing to me.

“Know what you want kiddo?” My father asks.

“Yes. Do you?”

My father is about to answer me when our waitress appears at our table.

Her name is Meagan according to the name on her apron. She has long blonde hair pulled back into a ponytail, light blue eyes and is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a pair of black slacks and a light shade of pink lip gloss.

“Good morning, my name is Meagan, and I will be your waitress. Can I start you two off with some drinks?” She asks.

“Yes, and we actually know what we would like to order too.” My father replies.

“Excellent. What can I get you Sir?”

“I will have the homestyle breakfast, eggs scrambled and a coffee please.”

“Very good. And for you Miss?”

“I will have the homemade buttermilk pancake special please along with a tall orange juice and coffee.”

“Good. Is that all?”

“Yes.” We say in unison.

“Okay I will be back with your orders.”

Meagan leaves us and a few minutes later returns to us with our drinks. I take a sip of my orange juice and pour in a little creamer with some sugar to my coffee. My father looks around and admires the décor of the restaurant. After about ten minutes of waiting our food comes out. We devour our food and then head back to the podium to pay for breakfast.

“Thank you for breakfast Dad. It was delicious!”

“You’re welcome Kelsey. I’m glad you enjoyed it.”

After what has felt like an exceedingly long drive, we finally make it to Williamsburg, Virginia. We arrive at a tall brick building that is three stories tall around the downtown area and park the car in a Visitor parking spot. We head to the main door and enter through the main hall. The carpet is grey and like the type you would see in a hotel room and the walls are white with pictures on the walls of flowers and other historical buildings including the famous Mt. Vernon where President Washington resided. We walk to the main

area and there is a large round white marble table with a vase of yellow peonies and pamphlets showing what is around the area. There is a large desk with two employees standing behind it. They are wearing black shirts and shuffling through some paperwork. To the right there is a glass door with “Mary Shrier. Landlord” painted on the door. The door opens and a woman about in her late fifties steps out to greet us. She is wearing a long pleated black skirt that hangs down just past her knees and a quarter length shirt with leopard print and small gold hoops in her ears.

“Kelsey Waleko? I’m Mary Shrier. I am the landlord of this apartment building. It is a pleasure to meet you. How was your drive?”

“It is a pleasure to meet you as well. It was a long drive but good. Thank you for asking. This is my father Timothy Waleko.” I answer her.

“Wonderful. Are you ready for your tour?” She asks.

I nod and we follow her over to the elevator. I start to wonder if this used to be a hotel that was turned into apartments given the setup and décor. Mary presses the up button, and we step inside. She then presses “two” and the doors close. We feel a slight jerk and are moved up one level. We hear the “ding” of the elevator alerting us that we have reached our destination and step out into the hall. The hallway on

level two is painted a pale yellow with a small table just off the elevator nook with another vase holding red tulips. Along the walls are more paintings of flowers from tulips to peonies and wildflowers. I notice that each of the apartment doors has the ghost of some old numbers from where they must have been at one time. Mary stops outside of what looked like it used to be room 223 and now has a new number on the door that reads 23B.

Mary unlocks the door and we immediately step into the kitchen of the studio apartment. There is a tall black refrigerator, a black oven, and a beige marble countertop with beige cupboards and a light brown wooden floor. To the right is an area for a bed and then a living room for some furniture. I go to look at the bathroom and there is a white bath, toilet, and sink with a big mirror above it and a vanity to store some bath supplies. I walk over to the window by the living area and see that it overlooks a retention pond and that there are a few walkways that lead to a playground and more that lead out to some walking areas that head into the woods. I wonder if they lead to a nature trail of some sort.

“That trail leads to our rail trail. There used to be an old functioning railway back there.” Mary tells me as she joins me by the window.

She tells me more about the room and then instructs us to follow her so she can show us more

around. We follow her out of the studio apartment, and she locks the door. We head back to the elevator to go back to the first floor. We step off the elevator and walk towards the right and make our way down.

Mary again suddenly stops and shows us the laundry room. There are about six washing machines and six driers. We exit through the side door and head out back. Along the walking path I spy the retention pond with a sprinkler moving back and forth. As we move closer, I notice some Koi fish swimming around. A little further down I notice the playground and there are a few kids playing on the monkey bars as their mother sits near on a bench keeping an eye on them. She sees us and gives us a little smile. I smile back at her.

As we walk around the paths, she lets us know a little history of this place as this was a hotel at one point. The owners of the hotel have decided to move and sold their locally owned hotel to move to Aspen, Colorado when they heard of a ski lodge opportunity.

“I thought this would be a great opportunity to turn this place into apartments as more people seem to want to move here lately.” Mary informs us.

As we look around more, I start to think about Chad and wonder how many times he has driven past this place. I really like what I see so far, and it would only be a ten-minute drive to the museum. I also wonder if I have any emails from him. As I think more

about him, I feel butterflies flutter in my stomach at the thought of our conversations we have had so far. *How can someone make me smile so much over a few emails?* I then remember we have some other apartments to look at.

“Mary, I do like what I see here, and I am interested but I do have some other appointments still.” I inform her.

“Oh, okay. Well, here is my business card and if you do decide on this one please call me so we can fill out some paperwork for you. I do have to tell you I do not know how long that apartment will be available.”

“Okay thank you.”

She hands me her business card and my father, and I make our way back to my car.

“So, Kelsey what did you think of that apartment?” My father asks me.

“I liked it a lot but let’s see what these other two have to offer.”

We make our way to another apartment that is more of a duplex in the suburb development. The duplex is two stories high and has white siding with a navy-blue trim. There are two French doors that lead inside. There is a white picket fence that leads to a backyard and a community garden next door. The

duplex is stunning and has a nautical feel to it. The landlord is a man who is tall and thin with long black hair pulled back into a low ponytail and wears glasses. His green eyes sparkle in the sun behind his glasses. His name is Steven and he shows us the left side of the duplex that is for rent. There are wooden refurbished floors and beautiful windows with white walls.

“And you can paint the walls any color you like as long as you paint them back to white if you ever move out.” He informs us and waves his hand about gesturing around the living room as we make our way through.

He shows us the backyard and there is a patio for entertaining along with a grill one could use. The other side of the yard is separated by another white picket fence that cut the whole yard in half. It is a beautiful duplex but once all the numbers are given it is unfortunately way out of my price range as to what I could afford.

My father and I drive to our last appointment. We meet with a woman named Sally at an apartment complex right in the center of downtown. There are two apartment buildings with brown siding that face each other. When we walk inside, we are led down a few steps to the first floor and she unlocks the door. Stepping inside I look at my father to see if he has the same reaction as I do. Sure enough my father's lips are pressed into a hard line and he has a worrisome look on

his face. My intuition was correct. He looks very displeased at the place just like I did. There is an old brown carpet with stains and tears and an incredibly old green kitchen with a gas stove and old cupboards that seriously needed to be replaced. The bathroom is of a rose-colored pink and small spots are shown on the ceiling that might have looked like mold. I then also notice a suspicious black movement jetting out of the tub and there is a disgusting cockroach that comes out to greet us. I scream and run out of the apartment as fast as I can with my father chasing after me. Fumbling for my keys I quickly unlock “Roxy” and climb in. My father catches up quickly to me and climbs in as well.

“What a DUMP!” I shout and I drive off quickly.

“Kelsey, I think your best bet was the first apartment that used to be a hotel for the price and condition. Plus, you will be close to work.” My father says to me.

I nod my head in agreement and I have my father dial in Mary’s number from her business card so I may talk to her from the car phone.

“Mary Shrier how may I help you?” She answers.

“Hello Mary, it’s Kelsey Waleko. I am interested in the apartment if it is still available. It is? Excellent! My father and I will come back right away to fill out the necessary paperwork.” I hang up and start to relax.

We arrive back at the apartment complex and go straight to Mary's office to fill out the necessary paperwork. I give her all my information she needs, and everything passes. Relieved, I take a deep breath and sink back in my chair.

"Okay Kelsey, here is your key to your apartment and a key for your mailbox. Welcome home!" Mary says with excitement.

My father and I then head to The Holiday Inn Express where we check in and spend the night. As I lay in bed, I cannot help but think of Chad. I take a quick peek at my phone to check my email as my father brushes his teeth. I open my email and see one email from him. As the butterflies awake in my stomach again, I open it:

"My dearest Kelsey, I hope you made it safely to Williamsburg. Good luck with the apartment hunt. I hope you find one with little to no troubles. Thinking of you.

-Chad"

I reply quickly as my father is almost done.

"Chad,

Yes, I found one only ten minutes away from where I will be working! I am excited to move in. When

I get back to Syracuse, I will have to tell you more about my trip. I am thinking of you as well =).

-Kelsey.”

My father comes out and climbs into the other double bed and shuts off the light.

“Goodnight kiddo. I am so happy you found a place...and quickly too!”

“Goodnight Dad. Me too!”

I close my eyes and drift off to dreamland.

The next morning comes and after each of us takes a quick shower and gets ready, we head down to the free breakfast included with our stay. The breakfast attendant is busying himself with refilling supplies and after having a quick breakfast we grab our stuff out of our room and check out. The young woman dressed in a black uniform hands us our receipt. We then take our stuff to the car and journey back home.

When we get back home, I am greeted by my mother with a big warm hug and tears of joy.

“You found a place? That’s excellent honey!” My mother says. She then gives my father a kiss and we go inside. I tell my mother all about my new apartment and she smiles with excitement for me. I then head to

my room to unpack and open my laptop up to email Chad.

“Chad,

You should have seen these other two apartments: One was a duplex, and it was so beautiful and perfect, but it was too much money. The other one was a nightmare. A cockroach scared me right out of the apartment! I am happy with the one I chose though. It used to be a hotel! I just wanted to let you know I am back home safely and hope to hear from you soon. I would also like to start talking on the phone with you as well so I can hear your voice if that is okay. Here is my number: 555-555-5622.

-Your Kelsey.”

Twenty minutes go by as I lay in my room and my cell phone rings with an unknown number, but I recognize the area code being from Williamsburg. I go to answer it assuming it was probably one of the other places I looked at.

“Hello?” I answer.

“Hi. This is Chad. Is this really Kelsey? I need to know if I have been dupped or not. You never know with meeting someone online.”

Oh, my goodness it is him!

Giggling I answer “Yes Chad it’s me Kelsey. I am so happy you called! How are you?”

“I am happy I called too, and I am doing simply fine. I will not lie though I was a little nervous to call. You have a lovely voice.”

“Thank you”

He was nervous too! We talk on the phone for about an hour and I tell him more about my trip.

“So, when do you move in?” He asks.

“I move in next Friday and I start my job on Monday.”

“Ah, well good luck. Is it okay if I call you again tomorrow?”

“Absolutely!”

“Okay! Well, sorry this had to be so brief but I gotta go. Until then beautiful.”

We hang up with each other and I am overcome with so much joy. A job, an apartment, and may be a new boyfriend? I cannot contain this excitement and quickly call one of my girlfriends Laura from home that moved to Ithaca to become a massage therapist.

“Wow Kelsey he sounds perfect! Just be careful. You never know with these men...especially online.” She informs me over the phone.

I miss Laura. We used to go to yoga classes together and hold tea parties at each other's houses. But the Finger Lakes called her to Ithaca, and she was always interested in aromatherapy and massage. I am incredibly happy for her that she followed her dream and made it come true.

The week goes by quicker than I thought as I spend time with my family packing and preparing for my big move and talking to Chad. Before I know it, it is Friday morning, and both of my parents decide to come with me to help me move. My father has my bed disassembled in the back of his truck along with my desk and my mother must ride with him as my car is jam packed with all my belongings. We stop for a quick lunch at a Chick-Fil-A when we reach Virginia and finally reach Williamsburg once more.

This is it! I am home. My new home. A new chapter in my life is finally about to start. I wonder what else is about to lay ahead and I suddenly feel nervous: incredibly nervous. Little do I know what is about to lay ahead.

Chapter Three

After moving in and saying farewell to my parents I call Chad to let him know I have arrived safely in Williamsburg and that I am all moved in. He asks me if I would like to have dinner with him at a Mexican restaurant called “Sombremos” after I settle in. Without thinking twice about it I tell him yes and pray the restaurant is in a very public place and that I would meet him there rather than him pick me up...just to be safe.

I decide on what I want to wear, shower, and get dressed. I have picked out a navy-blue spaghetti strap dress with swiss polka dots on it with three little buttons on top that hangs down just past my knees. I also put on some strappy wedges that also have navy blue and white swiss polka dots on them and wear my silver cross and diamond studs. I curl my hair in the beach wave style so that it hangs a little over my shoulders and apply my make up to give me a nice summer night glow. I grab my purse and make sure I have my wallet, phone, keys, and everything else a typical woman in her twenties would need. I then lock my door and head out down to my car.

I put directions into my GPS and head to “Sombreros.” As I drive down the road, I notice the nice colonial buildings with shops and cafes as people walk up and down the streets under the evening sky. It is only 6PM so the sun is still out but you can feel the evening air and the sun is slowly starting to descend in its beautiful azure sky.

I finally reach “Sombreros” and pull into the parking lot. It is a typical Mexican style restaurant with yellow siding and a giant sombrero lit up in neon lights on the roof. I see a man sitting on a bench outside by the doors looking nervous as he keeps checking his phone every few minutes. He is wearing a pair of khaki pants and a blue collared polo. I wonder if it is Chad. I get out of my car and as I walk towards him, he looks up

and sure enough I recognize the man from the photos that were emailed to me: it is Chad.

“Kelsey?” He looks at me with wide blue eyes and stands up from the bench to greet me.

“Yes. Hello Chad. It’s so nice to finally meet you in person!” I respond.

“Wow! You look stunning! I must be honest. I was not sure if you were really going to meet me or not but so far, I am glad that you did! Come, let us get something to eat.” He takes my hand and leads me to the front and opens the brown double doors for me.

We enter the restaurant and there is a mariachi band playing wearing sombreros and in black suits on a raised stage. There are paintings all over the walls of flamingo dancers and roses. The tables have crisp white linens and wooden chairs with red padding. Chad tells the hostess “two” and we are led to a table against the wall on the opposite side of the mariachi band. As much as I am enjoying their music, I am also happy that I will be able to hear him a little better. The hostess tells us about some specials and then asks us what we would like to drink. Chad and I both order Cokes. We then take a minute to look over the menu.

“Do you know what you want?” He asks.

“Hmmm, yes the overstuffed soft shell sounds delicious.” I answer.

He smiles and tells me he is going to go for the three hard shell special and puts his menu down.

“So, are you excited to start your new job?” He asks me.

My job! That is right I am starting my new job tomorrow. “Yes, but I am nervous as well.” I answer.

“I am sure a smart cookie like you will do just fine. If you would like after dinner, I can show you around and show you where the museum is.”

“I already know how to get there but as long as this goes well, I wouldn’t mind you showing me around a little.”

“Deal.” He leans forward and gazes into my eyes as he rests his chin on his hands and I feel a little lump forming in my throat. The butterflies become more intense and I quickly take a sip of my Coke.

The waiter then comes to take our orders and Chad tells him what we would both like and hands him our menus. About ten minutes later our food is placed in front of us and although I am hungry, I am a little nervous to eat.

I take one bite of my food and it is delicious. My stomach overrules my nerves and I end up devouring my dinner. Chad and I talk about his job and golf lessons and he asks me more questions about what my

responsibilities will be as a curator. We talk and eat and really start to feel more comfortable around each other. After we finish, he waves the waiter over to settle the bill and we exit the restaurant.

“We can leave our cars here and walk if you’d like.” He suggests.

“Okay. How can I trust you won’t kidnap me?” I jokingly ask.

“You don’t but I guess that’s just a risk you’ll have to take.” He winks at me and I giggle.

We walk hand in hand and get to know each other more. I am informed that he has one older brother who married and moved to North Carolina with his wife and works in the airline industry and I inform him that I too have an older sibling but that I have a sister who is a schoolteacher and has moved to Buffalo which happens to be where my father is from. We find out that both of our siblings are three years older than us. I ask him what has inspired him to teach and he tells me that he loves sports and wanted to share that passion with kids. He asks me what has inspired me to be a curator over being a teacher. I tell him that I did not think I would be able to handle a classroom full of kids and he laughs. I notice that it is starting to get late and I do have to start my job tomorrow. We start to head back to our cars. When we get back, he walks me over to my car and I do not know what overcomes me. My inner goddess

inspires me to grab him and kiss him. I suddenly push him up against my car and kiss him immediately. He closes his eyes and wraps his arms around me and kisses me back. My heart is no longer beating but now pounding rapidly and I wonder if this could possibly be love at first sight. I then let go and breathing heavily he looks at me with wide eyes.

“Whoa. I must have done something right tonight. Where did that come from?” He asks startled but grinning.

“You did a lot of things right and I don’t know. I just felt like I really had to kiss you. I had to do that.” I ask and then start to panic hoping I will not send him running for the hills.

“Well, I am sure glad you did, but that’s not fair because I wanted to kiss you, but you beat me to it.” He teases.

Giggling like a little schoolgirl and feeling a bit ridiculous now I blush and look down at my feet in embarrassment. He cups my chin with his hand and tilts my face up and kisses me. I feel so connected to this man and I have just met him. How is this even possible?

“I have to go. I have to work in the morning.” I tell him.

“Of course. I do hope we can see each other again. What are you doing at the end of the week? If you are free, I would love to take you to show you where I teach golf lessons.”

“I should be free. I have to work a bit in the morning on Saturday to help with an auction as we are making room for a new exhibit.”

“Oh? Okay. Well just let me know when you are done, and I will enjoy talking to you throughout the week.”

I get in my car and head back to my apartment.

When I get in my apartment, I lay out what I would like to wear for my first day of work and get ready for bed. As I am brushing my teeth, I hear a “ping” on my laptop. I go to check it and see there is an email from Chad.

“My dearest Kelsey,

Tonight was amazing. It was only the first date and I already have not experienced the feelings I was having before. You are an incredible woman. I already cannot wait to see you again. I will be going to bed and hope to dream of that kiss.

-Chad.”

Oh my goodness! Skipping back to my bathroom I finish brushing my teeth and before I climb into bed I reply to Chad.

“My Dearest Chad,

Yes! Tonight was amazing. I have never experienced these feelings before either and I must confess that I had butterflies so strong and I cannot wait to see you again! Should I bring my golf clubs so you can give me a lesson?

-Your Dearest Kelsey”

I then close my laptop, so I am not distracted and climb into bed.

Morning comes and I see on my phone that my mother has sent me a text letting me know they made it back home safely and that she wishes me luck in my new job. I roll out of bed and head to the bathroom for a shower. I clean up and step into my grey pencil skirt and purple blouse and fasten my hair up into a neat bun. I slide into my purple pumps and go to the kitchen to cut open a grapefruit for breakfast and turn on my Keurig for a cup of coffee. As I am eating my grapefruit, I hear my cell phone “beep” and there is a text from Chad wishing me luck in my new job as well with a heart emoji and a kiss emoji. I reply a thank you back along with a heart and kiss emoji then grab my purse and head out for my first day on the job.

I drive down the street and around the corner and pull in the museum's employee parking lot. I made sure to bring all my documents that I know they will need for W2s and other information for employment. I walk into the white building and there are four columns in the front of the building. I walk in through the employee entrance where a guard is standing. He asks for my name and ID and I hand him over my driver's license and tell him I am here to start work. He checks his paperwork and phones through his mic that is hanging on a wire connected to an earpiece that I am here. He unhooks the rope and I enter through the large white door. The floors are of a white marble as well as the walls and there are purple velvet ropes everywhere to keep people away from the exhibits. As I enter through the door, I am led into an office with six desks separated by cubicles and there is an office where the head curator must work. Everyone is hard at work preparing material and paperwork and books are stacked at a table nearby with two women going over some material. No one bothers to even look up at me. They are too busy with their work.

"Hello Kelsey, I am Maria, the head curator. Benjamin is out of town, so I am taking over his duties and overseeing the museum for him until he returns. I am sorry you will not be able to meet him yet. Come, I have some paperwork for you to fill out."

I obediently follow her and start filling out the necessary paperwork. When I am finished, she shows

me to my desk to put my things down. She then walks me around and introduces me to everyone. One woman named Sarah quickly glances up, gives me a quick half forced smile and then just goes back to work.

Oh my, I think. I already can tell she might not be one of the world's friendliest.

Maria then brings me back to where I will be working and explains about the project they are working on and what we need to do to prepare for the auction. She has me work with another woman named Diane and we dive into work. Diane explains to me that we are going to auction off some pieces of furniture from the 1800's to make room for some new pieces they received from another museum that was shutting down. I help her look through some books and, on the internet, to look up information on the crawl foot tub that we would be receiving as Diane tries to find information on how much this old wicker rocker should be started off as a bid.

Lunch time comes quicker than expected and Diane asks me if I would like to have lunch with her. I tell her yes as it would be nice to get to know my coworkers better and even possibly make a new friend. we head to a Chick-Fil-A around the corner. We go inside, order our food, and sit down at a booth. Diane tells me a little bit about herself and how she wanted to go into museum work. Our food comes and I dive into my waffle fries as I am starving.

“You probably noticed that Sarah tends to keep to herself. She can be nice and helpful when needed but she also does not like her time wasted. Maria and Benjamin are excellent to work for and every Friday they buy us lunch so do not bother bringing yours! Other than that, we all get along pretty well.” Diane informs me.

We finish our lunch and go back to work.

The end of the day comes, and I am thankful for Diane. She was so friendly and helpful! I head back to my apartment and I call my parents to tell them about my first day at work. I am not comfortable mentioning Chad yet as I know they would freak out and I did not want to worry them about meeting a guy online and already going out with him. Feeling it is better to wait to make sure things go smoothly I leave them in the dark. After I get off the phone with them, I call Chad. He asks me about my day, and I tell him about my day.

“That sounds wonderful! Oh man, just hearing your voice makes me smile Kelsey.” Chad tells me.

“You make me smile as well.” I tell him back.

We tell each other goodnight and I get ready for bed.

Chapter Four

As the week goes on, I start to settle more and more into my new job, and I become more comfortable with all the responsibilities that are bestowed upon me. It is finally Saturday morning and I wake up to the sound of a slight drizzle outside. I prepare myself a quick breakfast of two sunny side up eggs and a little bacon, pour myself a glass of orange juice and a cup of coffee, and turn the TV on to watch “Good Morning America” as I enjoy my breakfast and have a little time to waste in the morning as the auction is not until later this afternoon. After finishing I hop in the shower and get ready. I must be there by 11AM to help set everything up and I decide on my little black dress and wrap a beautiful pink scarf that Laura got me for my birthday last year. I twist my hair up and secure it with a big gold hair clip and put my pearl necklace and earrings on that

my mother gave to me. I look at myself in the mirror and I barely recognize the woman that is staring back at me.

“Look at you looking all professional!” I say aloud to myself.

I quickly grab my cell phone and take a selfie to send to my parents. One minute later my mother sends me a text telling me how beautiful I look. Smiling back at my mother’s text I thank her and tell her that I will call her later when I get a break and grab my keys and small clutch purse and head to the museum.

The parking lot is all set up with cones to direct patrons where to park. I pull into my usual spot in the employee parking area. I see Max the security guard at his usual post once I buzz my ID along the security box to let me in. I smile and wave to him as I walk into the employee area downstairs and he smiles and politely nods back.

“Kelsey, I love that dress on you! You look sharp!” Diane says enthusiastically as she walks towards me.

“Thank you. I am a little nervous about today but mostly excited because tonight I am seeing this guy I met.” I reply to her.

Sarah looks over to the both of us and rolls her eyes and scuffs a little.

“You met a guy already? You’ve been living here for only one week. How did that happen so fast?” Sarah laughs at me.

“I do believe that is my business and my business alone and if I care to make it your business then I will let you know.” I scold back at her.

“Whatever.” She rolls her eyes at me again and walks away. Thank heavens.

“So, tell me about this guy Kelsey.” Diane urges as she watches Sarah walking away.

I feel comfortable telling Diane as she has been so wonderful to me all week and I feel I can trust her to keep a secret.

“Okay Diane but promise not to laugh or think I am ridiculous. When I was still living back in Syracuse, I signed up for a dating website called “A Perfect Match” and it was not too long before I started talking with this wonderful guy named Chad. He saw that I was moving here to Williamsburg and he liked what my profile had to offer and wanted to get to know me better. We talked through emails first, then on the phone and we already had our first date. We really hit it off and I really like him. He gives me these strong butterflies that I have never felt with anyone else.”

She blinks at me a few times with her mouth open and pushes her glasses up the bridge of her nose.

Oh no. She probably thinks I am a lunatic now.

“Kelsey that’s wonderful you already met someone but please do be careful. You met him online, but you did tell me you have already been out with him once and who knows? Maybe you two will end up falling in love. What does he do for a living if you don’t mind me asking?” She questions me.

“He is a physical education teacher, and he teaches golf lessons.” I answer.

I then see it. Her face pales and her eyes widen with nervousness.

“Does this Chad’s last name happen to be Hazelton?” She asks me.

Uh oh. Does this guy have a bad reputation or something?

Nervously I whisper out “yes, why?”

“Kelsey, just so you are aware. That is Sarah’s ex-boyfriend. She broke up with him when he refused to be someone, she wanted him to be and it was a very nasty break up. But she never really moved on and she is the jealous type so I would keep it on the down low around here okay?” She warns me.

“Oh, okay. Well thank you for warning me. You won’t tell her, will you?”

“My lips are sealed.”

“Thank you.”

We then head up to the auditorium as it is time for the auction to begin.

As I peak out from behind the curtain, I see men and women dressed in sharp suits and beautiful floral dresses and they look as if they stepped out of this past Spring’s Dolce and Gabbana catalog.

The auction begins and the highest bid was \$50,000 on a beautiful marble table with doves engraved into it. As Diane and I collect the paperwork from the bidders I realize it is only five minutes to our break and a quick lunch. I tell Diane that I plan on eating by myself today so that I can call my mother as I promised her.

“ Okay. Are you going to tell her about Chad?”
She asks me winking.

“No, not yet. I do not need a lecture that will make me late back here.” I laugh.

She gives me a smile and then heads out to lunch. I head back downstairs to grab my packed lunch and exit through the door outside to the picnic area as it has stopped raining and due to the heat, everything has dried quickly. I pull out my ham and cheese sandwich

and pull out my phone from my little clutch bag and call my mother.

“Kelsey sweetie it is so good to hear from you!”
My mother exclaims.

“It’s good to hear from you too Mom!”

“How are things going for you down there? Make any new friends? Meet anyone special?” She asks.

“Things are going pretty well, and I sort of made friends with an employee I work with. Her name is Diane. She has been extremely helpful.” I answer.

“That’s wonderful! Listen, your father and I plan on taking a cruise this late summer and I was wondering if you wouldn’t mind us coming down to visit or you could come up here before we go.”

“I would love for you to come down and visit! I am still settling in and getting used to my new job and area so how does a few weeks sound from now?”

“Let me check the calendar.....yes that would work for me..... let me just ask your father if that works for him as well okay?”

“Okay, I have to go. I love you Mom!”

“I love you too baby girl.”

I hang up and feel a little sharp pain in my heart and a little prick of a tear form in the corners of my eyes and I quickly wipe them away. I never thought I could miss my mother so much. It was one thing to miss my family when I was away at college but this.....this is different. I quickly scarf down my lunch and then head back into the auditorium.

The auction goes on and finally ends. As I head out to "Roxy" I notice Chad is standing by my car smiling. I thought he was teaching golf lessons until 5PM I think to myself.

Smiling from ear to ear he holds out his arms for an embrace. He is wearing a pair of golf slacks and a puma collared golf shirt. Once I reach him, he pulls me into a deep embrace and kisses me without a care in the world. I blush and grin back at him.

"Hello beautiful. How was the auction?" He asks.

"It went well thank you. I thought you were teaching golf lessons until 5?"

"I had to cancel my last few lessons as there was a family emergency with one of the employees. Thought I would swing by and surprise you....no pun intended." He winks as he swings his arms as if hitting a golf ball with a club. I giggle.

"Okay so would you like to come by my apartment then and have dinner?" I ask him.

“You know I do baby.” He answers with that sexy grin he likes to show off and I can feel my body tighten and the world fade away again. Damn! How does he do that to me?

I give him a kiss and he walks back to his car to meet me at my apartment.

Once we get to my apartment and we head to the elevators I notice one of the caretakers staring at Chad. *Do you mind wiping the drool from your chin lady? He is here with me.*

I then press the call button and we step into the elevator. Once we step in and the doors close my breathing increases slightly and he grabs my hand. Once we hear the ding alerting us that we have reached our destination we step off the elevator hand in hand and I practically pull him towards my apartment. I unlock the door and let him in.

He looks around and says, “nice place.”

“ Thank you I’m just going to get out of this dress and into a pair of shorts and a top I’ll be right back.” I grab a pair of jean shorts and a yellow tank top and head into the bathroom to change. Once I am changed, I notice he is sitting on my couch twiddling his thumbs. I give him the remote to the TV and tell him to watch whatever he wants.

I pull out the Wok and some vegetables and beef strips and begin to slice the peppers and onions while I let the beef start to cook and the water boil for the rice. Chad is watching a golf match but gets up off the couch and walks over to me to see if I need any help. I politely decline and he walks back over to watch more of the golf. I finish cooking and scoop some stir fry onto two plates and pour two glasses of iced tea and announce that dinner is ready.

“Mmmmm this smells delicious!” Chad says as he walks into the kitchen. He closes his eyes and smells his plate in appreciation.

“Thank you. I hope it tastes as good as it looks.” I reply.

We walk back into the living room and continue to watch “The Open” and they are playing at my favorite place that I desire to visit someday: St. Andrews in Scotland.

“Maybe someday we will be playing there in kilts.” Chad playfully nudges me with a smirk on his face and I giggle.

We devour our meal and everything is delicious and mouthwatering. When I look at Chad his plate is empty, and he closes his eyes and rubs his stomach in appreciation.

“You are one good cook woman!” Chad compliments..

“Thank you. I try.” I laugh back at him.

We snuggle on the couch and I talk a little more about places we’d like to go. I tell him about how Hawaii is actually my dream vacation.

“I would love to go to Europe too but I want to go to Hawaii first.” I inform him.

“Well, maybe someday you will get there.” Chad gazes into my eyes and kisses me.

I think back to our emails and I am quite sure we both already confessed this to each other. To think; I have this handsome, intelligent, and funny man that gives me oh so strong butterflies and it all started with an email from a dating website he found me on.

After a few hours I look out the window and notice it is becoming dusk. Chad grabs my hand and kisses it and looks me in the eyes.

“What are you doing tomorrow?” He asks.

“I have no plans, why?” I answer.

“ If you are up for it, I have a surprise for you.”

“Oh? What sort of surprise?”

Chad just stares at me with a big grin on his face.

“If I gave you any kind of clue you would figure it out.” He smirks.

“Okay, I won’t try to guess.” I tell him reassuringly.

“It’s getting late, I should probably head out and you will need your rest for where I’m taking you tomorrow.”

“Okay.” I smile sweetly at him.

I walk him to the door and give him a hug and a kiss goodnight. I get ready for bed and before I fall asleep, I toss and turn wondering what my surprise is going to be.

Chapter Five

I open my eyes to the sound of birds chirping out my window and a cerulean blue sky. It is a beautiful day and the high will be 85 degrees Fahrenheit. I know Chad mentioned I would need rest so I am guessing there might be a lot of walking involved. I hop in the shower and get ready and decide on a navy-blue V neck t shirt and a pair of khaki shorts along with my Saucony tennis shoes. I pull my hair up into a ponytail and apply sunscreen and go for a natural look with just a little bit of eyeliner and mascara. I hear a knock on my door and open it to see Chad holding a McDonald's bag and an iced coffee.

“If I remember correctly, before you go to any kind of big place your excitement kicks in and you usually opt for an egg McMuffin and a caramel macchiato iced coffee.” He says to me while placing the brown paper bag on my kitchen counter.

“You remembered! Thank you!” I give him a kiss and dig into the bag to pull out my egg McMuffin. My mind really starts to wander as to where he could possibly be taking me. I take a bite of my sandwich and a sip of my coffee. It is delicious and just what I need to start my day off right. He takes a bite out of the sausage McMuffin he bought for himself.

“So, are you excited for today?” He asks.

“Absolutely! I tossed and turned a bit last night wondering where we are going!” I answer.

He snorts and shakes his head and smiles at me while he continues to eat his sandwich. We finish our breakfast and after I grab my purse we head out of the apartment.

We walk to his car and he opens the passenger side door for me. I climb in and buckle up and I am excited to see where we are going. He looks at me with a big boyish grin on his face and starts the engine.

“Would you like to listen to some music?” He asks me.

“Yes please.” I answer.

He turns on the radio and the latest hits from today’s music fills the speakers in the car. “Good Life” by OneRepublic begins to play.

“Oh, I love this song!” I tell him.

He turns the volume up a little for me and I start singing along to it. He laughs and reaches over with his right hand and gives my left hand a little squeeze.

“So, do you have any idea as to where you think I am taking you?” He asks.

“Not the slightest.” I tell him.

He chuckles and we cruise down the highway. I start seeing signs for “Busch Gardens” and “Water Country USA” and I feel excitement flow through my veins. We turn off the exit and pull into the entrance to the theme park.

“We’re going to Busch Gardens?!” I shout, not being able to keep even keeled and shout it at the top of my lungs.

Chad laughs as we pull into the parking lot. I cannot contain my excitement and my inner goddess starts doing backflip after backflip and cartwheels. We park the car and head towards the entrance.

“This way, I have the tickets right here.” He waves the tickets in front of my face. I follow him like a little girl in a candy store. We make our way in and he asks me what I would like to do first. I tell him I would like to grab a park map to see the area and which each section has to offer. We grab a park map and open it

up. There are keys to show rides, restaurants, quick eats, shows, exhibits, restrooms, information centers and shops. The park is European themed so there are different rides and eateries named in relation to that specific country. I think I look most forward to the areas themed after the countries of Italy and Germany. We make a game plan, and he folds up the map and tucks it into his back pocket in his cargo shorts.

We start walking toward the UK area first and make our way through Ireland and into Scotland towards the Lochness Monster roller coaster. We walk right up to the queue line and are able to immediately place our belongings in a locker and climb into the rollercoaster. I pull the safety restraint down over my head and click the seat belt together. The employees quickly inspect everyone's safety harness and I hear the employee that is working the operation system over the dispatch.

"Welcome to the Lochness Monster. Please always keep all hands and feet inside the ride. You will reach a staggering 60 MPH as you coast through on the monster. Enjoy your ride!" Dispatch announces.

The employees give a thumbs up and we are on our way out of the loading station. We make our way up the first hill and down through a loop and into a tunnel and I cannot stop laughing as I feel the wind blow through my hair and we are being moved so quickly through twists and turns. The coaster comes back to the loading station and once the ride stops, we are free

to go. We collect our belongings and head through the exit.

“That was exhilarating!” I exclaim to Chad.

“Indeed, it was! What would you like to do next?”
He asks.

“Let’s just make our way through the park and see what there is to do. Maybe we can catch a show or two?”

“Okay. And we will have lunch in Germany at the Festhaus.”

“Okay.” I smile at him and he grabs my hand, so we walk hand in hand around the park.

We go on a few more rides and see one show with animals doing tricks. By the time we reach the Festhaus in Germany I am famished. We enter one of the lines and we start to load our trays. Chad tells me to get whatever I want, and I cannot deny a delicious looking piece of chocolate cake with a maraschino cherry on top of it. I also get a plate of sausage and sauerkraut and a side salad with ranch dressing. He pays for our meals and we go to have a seat. There are dancers that come out onto the stage and perform a traditional German dance wearing traditional German clothes. It is beautiful and exciting to watch as I devour into my food.

After lunch we go on more rides, walk through Italy and we have finished one full loop around the park. We then go back to do some more rides again, catch another show and by the time we have dinner the sun begins to set. We decide that we have had enough and head back to the car. As we reach the car, I give Chad a kiss and I thank him for today. He kisses me back with a smile.

“You’re welcome Kelsey. I loved seeing you so carefree and your face light up with excitement. It was worth every penny.” Chad tells me.

He looks incredibly nervous suddenly as if he wants to get something off his chest and burrows his eyebrows together and looks down at the ground.

“Kelsey, there’s something I want to tell you and I really hope it’s not too soon.”

“What is it?” I ask.

He looks up from the ground and into my eyes. His blue eyes pierce into my hazel eyes and I feel my body tingle with anticipation as to what he has to say.

He summons up all his courage and gets ready to announce his confession.

“Kelsey, I think I’m falling in love with you.” He eyes me carefully not knowing what my reaction will be.

My eyes grow wide and my mouth drops open. *He thinks he is falling in love with me!* There is something about him and I start to realize that may be, just maybe, these strong butterflies are trying to tell me that I am falling for him as well.

“Well Chad, it just so happens that I think I’m falling for you as well.”

He smiles and picks me up and spins me around and puts me back down then kisses me.

Chad drives me back to my apartment and walks me to my door and kisses me goodnight. When I get into my apartment, I am skipping for joy over to my dresser to pull out my pajamas and get ready for bed. Thankfully, I am exhausted from all the walking around otherwise I do not know how I would sleep tonight. I close my eyes and memories of today flash through my mind as I drift off into a deep slumber.

I awake to the sounds of some birds chirping right outside my window and the bright sun is shining down on my face. It is Monday morning again and I must go to work. I groan as I do not want to leave the comfort of my bed but force myself out of it and go to the bathroom to take a shower. Once I am finished, I go to the kitchen to make myself some breakfast and I hear my phone ding. I go to check it. I have a text from Chad.

“This was one of the best weekends of my life. Thank you for a wonderful time and I cannot wait to see you again. I love you. Have a great day at work.”

I quickly reply.

“No thank YOU for a wonderful weekend! I enjoyed it as well. I look forward to seeing you again and I love you too.”

I then finish my breakfast and head out of the door and drive to work.

Once I am at work, we are busy finalizing everything from the auction and prepping for the new artifacts at the museum. The day is going by quickly and soon it is time for lunch. Diane and I head to our Chick Fil A and sit in our usual seat and I tell her about my weekend.

“He took you to Busch Gardens? Wow! That must have been so much fun!” Diane says.

“Yes, and he told me that he loves me!” I tell her.

“What? That is fantastic! When you know you know, huh?”

“Yes. I have never felt like this with any of my previous boyfriends. You have not told anyone at work, right? I would hate for Sarah to find out. I mean, I know

she probably eventually will, but I'd prefer she didn't right now as I just started here."

"No, I haven't told anyone."

"Thank you."

We finish our lunch and head back to work. I excuse myself to head to the restroom and I think I am by myself when suddenly the door flies open, and Sarah stares me down narrowing her eyes and locks the door.

"I would like to talk to you." She hisses through her teeth.

All the color drains from my face and I stand stock still and shocked.

"Okay." I barely whisper. Wow. I feel so small right now.

"I saw you leave Saturday with Chad. Just so you know, I still love him. And I am quite sure he still loves me; he is just too stubborn to know what is good for him and I highly doubt it is you! So why don't you do the both of us a favor and end it."

My mouth drops open and I am wide eyed. Just who does this hussy think she is? I do not care that I am new here. No woman is going to tell me who I can and cannot date! I summon up all my courage and make myself stand taller.

“Chad told me that he loves me, and I love him too. No woman is going to tell me who I can or cannot date and love! And if you ever harass me like this again, I will go straight to HR! Now if you will excuse me, I have better things to do than to waste my time with you!” I growl back at her.

“You’re making a big mistake!” She threatens. She unlocks the door and leaves.

I stand in the bathroom for a few minutes and stare at myself in the mirror. I need to catch my breath after that interaction. I straighten myself up and walk back out to my desk. The rest of the day goes by as Sarah then ignores me but continues to glare at me for the rest of the day. *Oh boy, this is going to be interesting until she learns to get over my man. That is right. He is MY man! Get over it Sarah you had your chance.*

Chapter Six

A few weeks go by and Chad and I are more in love than ever. It is also the day my parents come to visit me, and I am excited to introduce them to Chad. I am also a little nervous as I have never mentioned him. I get ready for the day and I hear a knock at my door. I open it and Chad is standing in the doorway wearing that big, beautiful smile and is holding a bouquet of wildflowers and a bottle of Sonoma red wine. I let him in.

“You look beautiful Kelsey.” He tells me and twirls me around in my little yellow dress that I have decided to wear.

“Thank you.” I give him a kiss and he wraps his arms around me pulling me closer to him and deepens our kiss.

“What time are your parents due here?” He asks.

I am about to answer when I hear my phone ring. I go to answer it and see it is my mother calling. I answer it.

“Hi Mom!”

“Hello darling! I just wanted to let you know we have arrived here in Williamsburg and we were able to get an early check in at the hotel. Would you like to come have lunch with us?” She asks.

“I would however, I have something to tell you and Dad and was hoping you could come by my apartment first.”

“Uh oh, is this good news or bad news?”

“Well, hopefully good. I um.... I met someone.”

“What?! You met someone and you didn’t call to tell me?”

Uh oh. I think to myself. I probably should have done that.

“I’m sorry Mom. I was so wrapped up in work and stuff that yes, I should have called and told you. But I really want you and Dad to meet him.”

“Well honey, this is quite a surprise and I really do wish you would’ve called but okay. You sound happy and if you’re happy then we are happy.”

“Thanks Mom, I love you.”

“I love you too honey, see you soon.”

I take a deep breath as we hang up and I look at Chad.

“You didn’t tell them about me?” He asks and runs a hand through his hair. I can tell he is not happy.

“Well, I did now. But I should have sooner.”

“Yes, you should have.”

“I’m sorry. Can we please not argue about this right now?” I plead.

He takes a deep breath and nods.

Twenty minutes later I hear a knock on my door. I go to open it and my parents give me a big hug.

“Kelsey you are glowing!” My mother exclaims.

“ Mom, Dad, this is Chad.” I introduce them.

“How do you do Chad?” My father walks over and shakes his hand.

“Good Sir, this is for you.” Chad hands him the red wine.

“Thank you, Sonoma eh? Good choice!” My father gives him a smile.

“It’s nice to meet you Chad.” My mother walks over and gives him a hug.

“As well as you Mrs. Waleko. These are for you.” He gives her the flowers.

She takes a whiff of the flowers and smiles in appreciation.

“Thank you, Chad, they’re beautiful.” She smiles at him and winks at me.

We sit and chat for a little bit and my father seems to be impressed with his knowledge of sports and my mother seems to be impressed with his manners and sense of humor.

“Well, we were going to take Kelsey to lunch. Would you like to join us?” My father asks.

“That sounds great as long as I’m not intruding.” He answers.

“No not at all. Do you know of any good places to eat around here?” My father asks.

“Absolutely. I know of a good café right down here on Main Street and seeing it’s such a nice day we can even walk there from here if you’d like.” He tells them.

We leave my apartment and make our way on one of the paths towards Main Street and walk down the street where we stop outside of a Café called “Luna’s.” Through the glass window I see cute little tables with

iron chairs and customers chit chatting while they dig into their food. We walk through the door and a tall young woman with black hair and brown eyes tells us to sit where we would like. We choose a table in the far corner by the window and our waitress hands us some menus.

“My name is Becca, and I will be taking care of you today. We have a fish and chips special for \$5.99 today. May I get you started off with something to drink?”

My father and mother order an iced tea, and Chad and I both order a Sprite. She tells us she will give us time to look over the menu and leaves to get our drinks. I scan over the menu and decide on a Club Sandwich with a side order of French fries. She comes back with our drinks and takes our orders. My father orders the BLT, my mother orders the fish and chips special, Chad orders a chicken salad sandwich and I order the Club sandwich. She jots down our orders and heads to the back.

As we are waiting for our food, we make small talk and my parents ask us how we met. I feel nervous about what my response should be but decide on just being brave and telling them the truth.

“Well, back home when I was still living in Syracuse with you, I signed up for a dating website and he found me. We talked through emails first, then moved to phone conversations then one day we decided

to meet in person in a very public place and he took me to a Mexican restaurant called “Sombreros.” After that we started dating and he even took me to Busch Gardens!”

My father tightens his mouth, and I can feel myself tighten up and suddenly I feel like I am going to yack. To my surprise he sits back in his chair and relaxes himself and shrugs his shoulders.

“Well Chad, you appear to make my daughter incredibly happy. I do not think I have ever seen her this happy and in such a short amount of time. Just take good care of her okay?” He tells him.

My mother gives the both of us a reassuring smile and I feel like I can relax. Oh thank goodness, they like him!

The food arrives and I pick up my Club sandwich and take a bite. It is delicious as the different meats and cheese melt in my mouth. After we finish Chad pulls out his wallet and offers to pay. My father waves his hand and tells him no and pays for our lunch.

“Thank you very much Mr. Waleko.” Chad says.

“Yes, thank you Dad!” I say as well.

“Thank you for lunch dear.” My mother tells him and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

“You’re welcome, it was my pleasure.” My father answers all of us.

Chad puts his arms around me as we stroll down the street.

As we walk around Chad informs them of all the shops and then they talk a little more about the area. Next I know I am walking by my mother’s side and Chad is walking next to my father. The two of them are discussing golf and my mother and I are discussing my work and how things are going. We head into some stores to do some shopping and agree to go out for dinner tonight. Chad insists on buying this time. My dad puts his hands up in defeat and tells him okay. We walk back to my apartment and my parents want to go back to the hotel to rest a bit before dinner. They leave Chad and I to ourselves.

“I think my parents like you.” I tell him. I walk over to him and put my arms around him.

“I think they do too. I can be quite the charmer can’t I?” He teases and he pulls me close to him and kisses me.

Chapter Seven

I am relieved that my parents like Chad. As I hug them goodbye my eyes fill up with tears as I know I will miss them. Everything has been going so smoothly. Monday strolls around again and when I arrive at work I called into the office.

There is a man standing in Maria's office wearing grey slacks with a blue pinned striped button down shirt. He has short white hair and is wearing glasses. I remember Benjamin was supposed to come back today. This must be him. He has a stern look on his face and Maria looks rather disturbed. I sense something is wrong.

"Kelsey, do you mind telling us what happened to the paperwork the attendee from the auction filled out for the wicker rocker? We can't properly give it to him without that paperwork!" Maria says exasperated.

I look at both in horror and I have no idea what they are talking about.

"I had all of the paperwork for that item right on my desk in a folder." I tell them. I then remember Sarah's threat to me and our standoff in the bathroom.

“Well, you had better find it because we need that and it will be a good sale that becomes lost! We cannot collect the money without that paperwork!”

I nod and I am dismissed. As I exit, I see Sarah glare at me and then a faint smile creeps across her face. I cannot help but wonder if she had something to do with this.

I roll my eyes and walk over to my desk and start rummaging through my folders and stacks of papers. My heart starts pounding faster and faster and I cannot find the paperwork! Panic starts to engulf me as I then hear one of my coworkers yell at the shredder.

“Ugh! Not another paper jam!” My coworker shouts. I walk over and it is Diane opening it to fix it. She is shredding paperwork from items that did not sell. I help her out and take the folder from her and help her. Once we get it fixed, she opens the folder to shred the next bunch of paperwork but stops in her tracks.

“Uh, Kelsey, don’t you need this?” She asks and she hands me some paperwork. I look at it and she has just given me the paperwork for the wicker rocker. Relief washes over me.

“Oh my goodness, thank you Diane! I was just called into the office about this!” I run

back to the office with the paperwork and hand it over to them.

They take the paperwork from me, but they can see I have a look of worry on my face.

“Kelsey what’s wrong?” Maria asks.

“I’m sorry. I don’t remember misplacing that paperwork. I am usually highly organized.” I tell her.

“Well, it’s been pretty crazy around here just try not to let it happen again.” She gives me a reassuring smile and I know I am in her good graces again. There is a knock on the door and Sarah is standing there. She looks at me and gives a fake smile.

“Oh, I’m sorry Maria I didn’t know Kelsey was still in here. I’ll come back when she’s finished.” She purrs at us.

I can’t help but feel annoyed. I leave Maria’s office and walk back to my desk to get back to work. The end of the day finally comes, and Diane pulls me to the side.

“Kelsey, it’s not like you to mix up paperwork like that. Is everything okay?” She asks.

“Yes, but I don’t remember doing that at all! I do have something to tell you. Sarah cornered me in the bathroom a few weeks ago and told me that I’m making a big mistake if I don’t break it off with Chad.”

“Really? Are you going to tell Maria about her little threat?”

“No, but if something weird at work happens again, I am going to confront Sarah on it because I have a feeling she is the one trying to get me into trouble.”

Diane gives me a quick hug and we make our way to our cars.

When I get home, I fire up the old laptop to check my emails. There are a few emails beckoning me to open them and pull out my wallet for online sales and a reminder to pay my student loan. I then happen to see one from Chad. The subject line is titled “A Love Poem for The Love of My Life.” Smiling, I open it:

“Love Sonnet 18

‘Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?

Thou art more lovely and more
temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds
of May,

And summer's lease hath all short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven
shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;

And every fair from fair sometime
declines;

By chance or nature's changing course
untrimm'd;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade

Nor lose possession of that fair thou
owest;

Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in
his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou
growest;

So long as men can breathe or eyes can
see,

So long lives this and gives life to thee.'

-William Shakespeare

Every word is true babe. I love you so much.

Love, Chad."

I close my eyes and relish in every word written by Shakespeare and breathe in the fact that Chad took time to find and type out a love poem to me. I open my eyes and quickly type back a response:

"Chad,

Are we now starting to recite love poems? I do love a good poem; especially when it is to express how one feels about another. Thank you. I think I will print this one out to keep forever.

Love, Kelsey."

I hit send and walk to my refrigerator to see what I should make for dinner. I open my fridge to see what I should make. I still have some lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, carrots, and some chicken strips so I settle on a chicken salad. I tear some lettuce off the head, slice some tomatoes and carrots and grate some cheese. I pop some chicken strips into the microwave to warm them up and top everything off with a bit of ranch dressing. I walk over to my couch and sit down to turn on the television. As I flip through and dig into my salad, I settle on watching “Love It or List It” on HGTV. I have always been a fan of this show to get ideas of what I may want when I own a house someday. I briefly wonder what Chad might be up to, but I know he is busy with a few extra golf lessons after school as a few new students signed up. I do not want to bother him, so I decide on letting him call me when he gets a chance.

My phone rings around 7PM and I wonder if it is Chad calling to see how I am. I answer my phone and it is Diane.

“Hi Diane! I am surprised to hear from you around this time. How are you?”

“I’m doing well Kelsey. I had an idea and I’m going to call a few other people but seeing we are only working a half day Friday as they need to do some renovations, I was going to see if you’d like to go out for drinks Friday evening?”

“I have no plans and yes I would love to join you!” I am so excited! I have been wanting to hang out with Diane outside of work and I finally have a chance!

“Excellent! I thought we could go to a place called ‘Club 757.’ Do you think Chad would want to come out too?”

“I’m sure he would love to, but he has been teaching golf to a few new students, so he probably won’t be able to make it.”

“Ah, well it will probably just be a few of us from work anyways. See you tomorrow!”

“See you tomorrow Diane!”

I hang up and wander over to my closet to see what I might want to wear out Friday after work. *Decisions, decisions!*

I wake up to the sound of rain pounding on my window and hear thunder rumbling outside. I pour myself a bowl of Special K and a cup of coffee to start my day off right. We are

going to be terribly busy today with doing some research on some new items that are being transported to our museum. I know I will be looking very forward to my usual Deluxe Chicken Sandwich Combo from Chick-Fil-A with Diane today. Plus, we will be able to talk about Friday and a few other things. I wonder why I have not heard from Chad last night, so I check my phone and there is a text from him.

“Hey babe, I’m sorry I didn’t get to call you last night. My golf lesson ran a little late and I had some stuff to do when I got home. I thought you might be getting ready for bed, so I did not want to wake you. I love you and I will call you when I get home later. Have a great day!”

Jeez, His lessons are usually just from 6-7PM. I wonder what kept him. I shrug it off and grab my umbrella and head out the door to my car “Roxy.”

Things are crazy at work and Diane and I are working our butts off setting up some new displays in the exhibit. We also have a few tours to help with today and some students are visiting from the local high school that Chad also teaches at. When lunch time arrives Diane and I grab our umbrellas and jet out of there to Chick-Fil-A.

Once we reach Chick-Fil-A we place our orders and sit in our usual spot. I look across the street at Wendy's and I am sure glad we are not there as I see two of the school buses there. The students must have stopped there for lunch. I cannot even imagine how crazy the employees are going in there and I have a little sympathy for them.

"So, are you excited to finally hang out *outside* of work?" Diane asks me bringing me back to our conversation.

"Absolutely! Chad didn't call me last night which I found odd, but I did receive a text message from him this morning explaining why."

"Well, he usually calls you doesn't he? I would not worry about it just yet. I'm sure he was just truly terribly busy."

"You're probably right." I decide to let the matter go and polish off my waffle fries.

The day goes by quickly and sure enough Chad does call me when he gets a chance. We talk about our days and I tell him I am going out Friday with some coworkers. I tell him he is invited but that I thought he might be too busy with his extra golf lessons. He tells me that I am right and that he would not be able to go but that he hopes I have a lot of fun. We tell each other

goodnight and hang up. I get ready for bed and drift off hoping that he will not be so busy soon.

Chapter Eight

Friday finally comes. I am so excited to go out that I find myself singing in the shower. I know exactly what I am going to wear tonight: a cute black romper with a black belt and gold buckle that has rhinestones in it. *Ugh why do we even have to work today? Oh well, it will make time go by faster.* I have a grapefruit for breakfast along with some coffee and head to work.

When I get to work, I notice that there are police cars sitting outside of the museum. *What happened?! I wonder.*

I park my car and run into the museum. I notice there is a police officer, Mary and Benjamin standing around one of the displays that held some old jewelry from the 1700's that Diane and I worked on. Mary notices me and walks very quickly with a sullen look on her face.

"Kelsey, I believe you and Diane have worked on this piece. Do you know what happened to the jewelry that was in this case? I have already talked to Diane and she does not know. We reviewed the tapes, but we see only you handling them. No one else seems to have handled them and then around midnight the

security footage went black.” Mary looks at me quizzically.

“I have no idea. But they were on display last time I even touched them.” I remember Sarah’s threat and summon up my courage praying I will not be digging a hole.

“Mary, I do have to talk to you about Sarah though.”

“Oh?” She looks at me with an eyebrow raised.

“She found out that I happen to be dating her ex-boyfriend Chad and a few weeks ago she cornered me in the bathroom and told me that I will regret it if I don’t break it off with him. Then there was the case with the paperwork for the wicker rocking chair that went missing and Diane found it in a pile of paperwork to be shred and now this?” I wave my hand in the direction where the jewelry is missing.

“I see. Well, we take these accusations very seriously Kelsey. But if you are certain on this...” She looks at me and I feel myself shrink under her stare.

“I’m not, but I just thought you might want to keep a close eye on her, that’s all.” I inform her.

“Okay, we will Kelsey. However, Sarah is one of our best employees and I know she might seem a bit rough around the edges, but it does not seem like her

style to do something like this. As a matter of fact, these occurrences only started to happen when you started.”

I feel tears start to prick the corners of my eyes as I do not know what will happen next.

“As we have no firm evidence pointing in your direction of the matter, you may be excused and head to your workstation. And Kelsey?”

“Yes Mary?” I ask feeling like I should have just kept my mouth shut.

“Next time before you accuse a coworker make sure you have evidence.” She then turns and walks back over to Benjamin and the police officer.

I run into the bathroom and lock the door. Tears start to stream down my face, and I slink down along the door and have a good cry. I just need to get it out and collect myself before I get to work. Thankfully, it will be a short day anyways, but I just need to get it out. After about five minutes of having a good cry I gather myself together, straighten my skirt and blouse, walk over to the mirror and fix my makeup and hair. I pin a piece of hair that has fallen out of my bun and unlock the door. I head back over to my workstation.

“You could be avoiding all of this if you’d just break up with Chad.” I hear a whisper and look up and Sarah is staring back down at me.

“I knew it was you all along Sarah. I am NOT breaking up with Chad. Not now, not ever!” I growl back at her through my teeth.

“Yeah? You knew it was me? You have no evidence other than what I just said, and it would be your word against mine.”

“Yeah, well keep pushing your luck Sarah because you will eventually get caught. I already dropped a hint to Mary.”

She gapes at me and then chuckles.

“Please. I am Mary’s favorite. Like she would ever believe you.” Sarah then turns and walks away.

That woman is going to drive me insane! I stick my tongue out at her knowing that she cannot see me and get to work.

After we have lunch, I notice Sarah packing up her desk. I am then called into Mary’s office.

“Kelsey, please have a seat.” Mary points to the empty chair. I pull up the chair and sit down.

She taps her fingers against her lips and gives me a shy smile.

“Kelsey, I owe you an apology. We reviewed the footage again and we noticed Sarah’s car parked

outside of the museum and we found the jewelry inside her car. She didn't know we would be searching everyone's cars and I was also informed by your coworker Nicole that she thought she saw Sarah rummaging through some paperwork on your desk but was too afraid to come forward as she felt Sarah was going to make her life a living hell here."

I feel my eyes widen and I feel a sense of relief knowing that Sarah will no longer be messing with my work.

"Sarah has been fired and is being escorted off the property immediately, never being allowed back here. Because she returned everything and has agreed to some community service, we decided not to press charges against her for stealing the jewelry." Mary informs me.

"Oh okay. Well, I am glad the jewelry is back. I can put them back for you if you'd like." I offer.

"That would be wonderful. Thank you dear." She then waves her hand to dismiss me from her office and I go to place the jewelry back where they belong.

Later that evening I get ready for my night out. I shower up to refresh myself and curl my hair into some loose curls in my long dirty blonde hair. I decide on a smokey look with my make up and fetch my medium size hoop earrings and my black strappy sandals. I do not recognize myself when I look in the mirror! I look hot!

I grab my little black clutch and send Chad a quick text letting him know I am going out and that I love him and take a quick selfie and send it to him. I get a text message back telling me that I look hot and that “other men better keep their paws off me.” I giggle and text him back that I will slap any “paws” away from me that try anything. I lock my apartment door and get in my car and head to the club.

“Club 757” is a modern bar with a dance floor. Diane has managed to get Nicole, April, and Justin out to join us. We are sitting at one of the tables off to the side from the dance floor and I am on my second cranberry vodka. Diane raises her margarita and declares a toast.

“To Kelsey for helping us finally get rid of Sarah!” She exclaims.

I look at her a little shocked but laugh and clink my drink with hers and Nicole, April and Justin clink their beers with us and laugh and hoot in agreement.

“I thought you all got along.” I say suspiciously.

“Well, we did but it wasn’t without some force.” April informs me.

“Yeah, when I found out about the paperwork, I saw a perfect opportunity to come forward.” Nicole informs me.

“Thank goodness she’s gone!” Justin exclaims and we all raise our drinks up again and take a drink. My cranberry vodka is delicious, and I feel a slight burn from the vodka. We are also working on some cheese fries and nachos to help soak up some of the alcohol.

A very upbeat tune starts to play, and Nicole jumps up from her chair.

“Oh I love this song! Come on let us dance!” She grabs my hand and pulls me out of my chair, and I join her laughing and we start dancing on the dance floor. Diane and April grab Justin as he rolls his eyes but soon we are all dancing together. I let go and close my eyes feeling the music make me move my body and I am laughing and forgetting about all my troubles; especially knowing that Sarah is now out of my life! The night continues and we have been having the time of our lives. Soon we start to disperse one by one and seeing none of us can drive we decide to share a cab and leave our cars parked to get the next day.

I am the first one to be dropped off and I thank my new friends for a wonderful time out. They all give me a hug and tell me they will see me on Monday. I dance my way to the elevator not caring that other people are watching me and then dance my way to my apartment door unlocking it and fetching my phone out of my clutch. I shoot Chad a quick text.

“Hi honey I am back home. I had a wonderful time and do not worry, no paws attempted to come near this girl. I love you!”

I hit send and immediately get a reply.

“Hi babe. I am glad you had fun. I have a lesson tomorrow afternoon but maybe we can have lunch together after? I love you too!”

Smiling, I hit reply.

“Okay! I will ‘swing’ by tomorrow at 1PM. Sound good?” I hit send.

I get another reply.

“Sounds perfect and nice pun! Get some sleep, beautiful.”

I kiss my phone and get ready for bed.

I wake to sunlight shining on my face and the sound of birds chirping outside my window. I finally get to see Chad again! I am beyond excited and hop out of bed and shower up. I decide on a white ankle length skirt with blue diagonal lines and a baby blue short sleeved shirt with a lace trim. I grab my tan-colored wedges and after breakfast I decide on getting some groceries before I meet Chad later for lunch. I head to the nearest Whole Food Markets and get some groceries for the week.

After I get everything put away, I note that I must meet Chad at where he teaches his golf lessons. I drive to the Colonial Driving Range where he teaches and pull into an empty spot. When I climb out of “Roxy” I freeze in my tracks when I look over to him. There standing by him and batting her lashes at him is Sarah. I see her try to take a swing and then laugh and playfully push Chad’s arm. My heart sinks and all the color drains from my face. She turns to look at me and a wicked grin spreads across her face. Chad turns to see who she is looking at and his eyes go wide. I immediately climb back in “Roxy” and speed off back home.

When I get back to my apartment, I kick off my wedges and jump on my bed and bury my head into my pillow.

“How can he do this?” I scream out loud. How can he give her lessons after everything I told him? I feel the waterworks begin and I sob uncontrollably into my pillow.

I am suddenly interrupted by a knock on my door.

“Kelsey? I know you are in there. I see your car parked. I can also hear you crying. Baby, please let me in. I am sorry. I should have told you I was teaching her lessons. Please. It’s not what you think.” I hear Chad on the other side of the door, but I do not want to look at him. I just want to be alone.

“Go away!” I shout.

“Baby, please let me in!”

“No! Go away! I want to be alone!” I scream. I then hear him shuffle away from the door. Good. Let him know how angry I am.

A few hours go by and I finally calm myself down. Maybe he does have an explanation. I feel I am ready to talk and I call him.

“Hi.” He answers carefully.

“Hi. I was terribly upset seeing you teach Sarah golf lessons. You do realize she could have gotten me fired from my job.” I tell him.

“Yes, I know, and I am sorry. But Kelsey, I love you. You should have let me explain. She is paying me double what I normally charge and will actually be moving to Arizona as she was offered a job out there.”

Oh!

“Oh, I didn’t know that. How long will you be teaching the devil woman?” I ask annoyed.

“Devil woman? Wow, I never thought I would hear that come out of your mouth.” He laughs.

“I will only be teaching her for a week and then she’s gone.”

“Okay, I think I can live with that.” I reluctantly tell him.

I think I can hear a smile on the other side of the phone.

“Okay good. So, seeing we missed lunch I am heading over to my parents and I would very much like you to meet them.”

His parents!

“Okay. I believe I can do that.”

“Okay I will pick you up at 4.”

“Sounds good. I’ll see you then.”

“I love you Kelsey.”

“I love you too Chad.” I hang up and feel a bit relieved knowing that there is nothing going on between them and that Sarah will be moving.

Chapter Nine

4PM comes and Chad is at my door ready to take me to meet his parents. He is wearing a pair of jeans and a red collared shirt with a Nike logo on it. I decide to stay in what I was wearing earlier but grab my jean jacket as we are having dinner on his parents back deck and a fire after.

We arrive at his parent's brick ranch and his father is busy manning the chicken on the grill while his mother is busy getting the corn on the cob ready as well as the pasta salad.

We walk through the front door and his father joins his mother in the kitchen to grab a plate for the chicken.

“Mom. Dad. This is Kelsey.” Chad introduces me to them.

“Kelsey! It is so wonderful to finally meet you!” His mother walks over and gives me a small hug and then holds me at arm’s length with a wide warm smile and her blue eyes glow with warmth and love.

“Kelsey, we have heard so much about you! I must say we have never heard Chad talk about any girl the way he talks about you! You must be incredibly special to him!” His father teases and shakes my hand.

I glance at Chad and he rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

“Thanks Dad.” Chad rebukes at him.

“I’m just keeping her real son.” His father rebukes back.

We walk over to the back door that leads out to the back deck. The back deck is huge. There is a picnic table set up with a red and white checkered tablecloth that drapes over the sides and on it there is a freshly made salad, a pasta salad, some corn on the cob, a plate of the BBQ chicken and a pitcher of freshly made lemonade. Everything looks delicious. We walk

over to sit down and start to help ourselves to some food.

“So Chad tells us you two first started talking through a dating website?” Chad’s father asks.

“Yes, we did. He emailed me and mentioned that he liked what I wrote in my profile and wanted to get to know me better.” I answer.

Chad’s mother gives me a “thank-you-for-responding-to-him” smile and I smile back at her. I must admit that I was nervous meeting his parents, but they seem nice and so far, we are getting along simply fine.

We finish our dinner and I offer to help clean up but am told to just enjoy myself and relax. Chad leads me down the back steps and into the backyard. He brings out a football and we throw it back and forth. I notice the fire pit off to the left.

“I hope you like s’mores.” He smirks.

“It’s one of my favorite childhood treats!” I grin back at him.

Later that evening when the bright blue sky starts to turn to a hue of orange, red and purple Chad and his father start to get the fire ready while I help his mother bring out the ingredients to make s’mores.

I am on my third s'more and my hands are completely sticky. Chad laughs and grabs my hands to clean each of them for me with a washcloth. As he cleans and wipes each finger I stare into my boyfriend's eyes and he stares back into mine. Blue meets hazel and I can feel that connection again. That spark of electricity. The butterflies are on ecstasy and I know right then and there just how deeply I have fallen in love with Chad. There will never be another man that can make me feel this way. I adore him. I cherish him. I love him. I truly, truly, love him.

We say our goodbyes and as Chad drives me back to my apartment, I can tell he is feeling quite nervous.

"My parents have really taken a liking to you." Chad watches me intently as I unlock my apartment door.

"They seem genuinely nice. I had a wonderful time. Thank you. Would you like to come in for a while?" I ask.

"I was hoping you would ask me that." He smiles shyly. *Why is he being so weird?*

We walk into my apartment and I remove my jean jacket and set my purse down. I walk over to the kitchen and ask him if he would like something to drink. He shakes his head and I retrieve one glass and pour

myself a glass of water. Those s'mores made me thirsty!

I glance over at Chad and he is pacing back and forth very nervously in my living room. I walk over to him and grab his arms and begin dancing with him although there is no music. He kisses the top of my head and tells me he has something to ask me.

“Kelsey, can you please have a seat? I have something important to tell you and then ask you.” He looks over at my couch.

I walk over to my couch and take a seat wondering what is going on.

Chad takes a seat next to me and takes a deep breath. He grabs my hand and kisses it and gazes into my eyes.

“Kelsey. I have been offered an assisted coaching position for the Florida Gators football team down in Gainesville. It would pay double what I am making now, and I do not know if I could pass up this opportunity. However, I have fallen madly and deeply in love with you. I know you have just started your dream job here and I could not ask you to give that up. I am going to Florida though. I want to ask you to come with me, but I am scared. I don't want to lose you and I don't want to be selfish....”

“Shhhh.” I put a finger over his lips. “I have fallen madly and deeply in love with you as well. I do not want to lose you either and I am barely making it with the job I have now. I have heard that they are looking for help in their history department and I can always apply for a job there. If you are asking me to come with you then my answer is yes.”

Chad inhales sharply as if he cannot believe what I had just said and that anyone could love him this much to completely change their life for him. Suddenly, he drops to one knee.

“Now that I know you feel this way and said yes to that. I am hoping you will say yes to this.”

He puts his hand in his pocket and presents me with a black box. He slowly opens it and shining before my eyes is a diamond ring. It is a one carat sized circular diamond on a beautiful white gold band. I look at the ring, then to Chad’s eyes, then back to the ring again with my mouth wide open and my hazel eyes as wide as they could go.

“Kelsey, I will never find another woman like you and you have made me so happy. I love you more than anything in this world. Make me the happiest man alive and marry me.”

Tears start to prick my eyes.

“Yes! Yes, yes, yes I will marry you!” I throw my arms around his neck and kiss him hard. I then start to wonder what people would say with it being so soon and me leaving Virginia to move to Florida.

We call our parents and little did I know Chad had called my father in advance to ask for his blessing and permission. Apparently, my father told him that after my record of past boyfriends that we better strike while the iron is hot. I roll my eyes and giggle though I know it is true as well. Once we hang up, I run into Chad’s arms again and I know I am about to get my happily ever after. I did not think it would happen to me, but it did. I never thought I could find true love, but I did. And to think, it all came back to a dating website and taking a chance. Maybe I can believe in true love at first sight after all.

Epilogue

The palm trees are swaying in the Hawaiian breeze and Chad and I are relaxing on the warm sand beach in Waikiki. I take a sip of my pina colada as I watch the purest blue waves crash onto shore. I look down at my wedding band and look over at my husband who is laying on his back in his navy-blue swim trunks and both hands behind his head staring up at the sky behind his Oakley sunglasses.

“Admiring the view Mrs. Hazelton?” He asks with an arched eyebrow.

“I sure am husband.” I grin back and lean over to give him a kiss.

It is the last day of our honeymoon. We had a wonderful wedding. It was a beach wedding right on Daytona Beach a week after we moved to Gainesville. We were married next to the ocean and everyone wore

Hawaiian shirts with lays. I wore a simple beach style wedding dress with my hair down and curled and a bright pink hibiscus flower in my hair. The weather was extremely hot, but the ocean breeze took pity on us and presented us with some relief. I smile as I reflect on that day and wonder what I did to deserve all this happiness. Maybe Cupid finally took pity on me.

A month goes by when we get home and I realize I am late for my menstrual cycle. I also start to feel nauseous and sit down a minute. *Uh oh. Could I be.....?*

I get in “Roxy” and drive her to the nearest Walgreens. The sliding glass doors open, and I am blasted with the air conditioning as I walk in. I walk down the Family Planning aisle and pick up a couple of pregnancy tests. I nervously head to the cashier and she smiles at me as I pay for them.

When I get home, I head straight for the bathroom. Thankfully, I have a full bladder to be able to do a couple of them. Each minute feels like an eternity and time is up. I bought three of them and decided to test all three to be sure. I look at each one and sure enough.....I am pregnant.

I call my physician and we set up an appointment for the following day. Chad is out of town but will be back in two days.

Two days go by and Chad and I are out to dinner at a restaurant called “Sparky’s on the Lake.” We are toasting to a victory of the Gators beating the Bulldogs with a tight score. College football is huge down here and they take it more seriously than the NFL.

The waitress comes by and Chad wants to order some wine to celebrate.

“If you want to drink some wine that’s fine Chad but I will only be drinking water tonight.” I assure him.

“Okay a glass of Glenora Chardonnay, a water and we will get some cocktail shrimp for an appetizer.” Chad requests.

“And a small side salad too please.” I add.

“Okay and a small side salad too.” Chad looks at me intently.

“Okay I will be back with that and give you a few minutes to look over your menu.” Our waitress walks away to grab our drinks and appetizers.

When she returns, we put in our orders. Chad places an order of crab legs and fries and I place an order of grilled chicken with a side of steamed vegetables. Chad offers me a shrimp and I politely decline. He looks at me suspiciously as he knows I would never pass up on a glass of Glenora Chardonnay

and cocktail shrimp. I look at him and look back down at my salad.

“Okay Kelsey you are acting strange. Would you like to tell me what’s going on?” He looks at me suspiciously.

Should I tell him right now? I wanted to make it extra special, but he is going to ask me all night if I do not just tell him now and it is romantic sitting on the deck watching the sunset over the lake. I look up at him and he is helping himself to another shrimp.

Here goes nothing. “I’m pregnant.”

He completely stops what he is doing.

“You’re pregnant? Are you sure?” He gapes at me.

“Yes. I was just at the doctor’s yesterday and they confirmed it. I wanted the moment to be more special, but this is romantic too I guess.” I wave my hand around the general area.

Chad gets up from his seat and walks over to my side and kisses me.

There is a live band playing and when they are done playing a song, Chad quickly walks over and asks if he can make an announcement. The lead singer nods

and I stare at Chad wondering what he is up to. Suddenly I see him about to speak.

“Testing one....two....Ladies and gentlemen. If I can please have a moment of your time. This beautiful young lady first made me the happiest man alive when she agreed to marry me and now, she has made me even happier. She has just announced to me that we are expecting!”

Chad takes a bow as the restaurant roars to life with applause and whistles. He then walks back over, leans me back and kisses me hard. Everyone hoots and hollers even louder.

I blush in embarrassment as he sits back down. He looks at me with the most loving smile on his face.

“I love you.” He tells me.

“I love you more.” I tell him back.

“I love you most.”



T.L. Rose

A Message From The Author:

I was born and raised in the Southern Tier part of New York. While attending both SUNY Broome Community College and The State University of New York at Buffalo I have found a love for hearing, reading and writing stories. It was due to my vivid imagination and love for my husband that I finally wrote my very first book "A Perfect Match: Based On A True Story" in dedication to our ten year wedding anniversary. I hope you will enjoy this book as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

T.L. Rose

