

Things Every Good Woman Should Know

Volume 2

Dear God,
Did My Boaz Get Hit by a Bus?



Inspirational Short Stories About Dating & Relationships

Does Boaz Still Exist?

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Jae Henderson

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Bus?**

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FOREWORD

Many women of Christian faith have begun referring to the perfect man as “Boaz.” Boaz, the kinsman redeemer, is found in the Bible in the book of Ruth. It contains a beautiful love story indeed, but I don’t think women are doing themselves any justice by comparing him to men of today. Yes, he has several admirable attributes that we can all appreciate, but when I describe my future husband, I personally prefer the term “Mr. Righteous.” He’s Mr. Right, but he loves the Lord and acts like it. He pays his tithes, is active in church, never misses the opportunity to give an encouraging word, and uses his talents to further his career and the kingdom. Yes, he is attractive, but he only has to be attractive to me, since I am ultimately the one who has to wake up to him every morning. He also has money. That is because he understands that faith without works is dead, and he works his behind off to be able to provide for himself and the people he loves. Yet, I have one question, Lord . . . When the heck is he gonna get here? Was he hit by a bus?

No matter whether we call him Boaz or Mr. Righteous, there are plenty of women asking the same question. I don’t have an answer for myself or you, but what I do have are some great—and not so great—stories about what I and others have gone through while he rides his bike to get to me. Yes, he must be on a bicycle or on foot or swimming across the ocean because if he wasn’t, he would be here already. Lord, please put him on a jet . . . please, please, please.

Within this book you will find a selection of short stories I created to help single women stay encouraged. It's also important that we examine ourselves to make sure we are being the type of woman someone would want to be in a relationship with. Please feel free to laugh, cry, and love with these characters who have found themselves in some interesting situations. Some of them you may find familiar.

I have no idea when my Mr. Righteous will arrive. You probably don't know when yours will arrive either, but I refuse to sit around and be miserable simply because I'm single. I plan to enjoy single life to the fullest and praise my Lord for what He's already done and what He's going to do. Because no matter what happens, I'm going to be all right. Can I get an amen?

The Ex-Files

As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly.

— Proverbs 26:11

“Excuse me. May I borrow a pencil?”

That one question ignited a love affair that I will treasure for the rest of my life. I remember it like it was yesterday. I was in the library, sitting at the information desk and looking down at my precalculus book, trying to figure out the square root of x when I heard it. I raised my head to find myself gazing into one of the handsomest faces I had ever seen, and it belonged to Ryan Willis. He was a dark-skinned dream! I swear that boy was the color of midnight, and his body contained enough muscles to build another man. His chiseled chest and six-pack abs had girls spending their afternoons sweating in the hot sun to see him with his shirt off during football practice. I had seen him around campus several times but never had the courage to speak to him. I never had a reason to. Until then.

“Uh . . . yeah,” I said and handed him the one I was using. I really didn’t have another pencil but looking into those hazel eyes, Ryan could have asked for my left kidney, and I would have torn a hole in my pelvis with my bare hands and handed it to him on a silver platter.

“Great. I promise I’ll bring it back when I’m finished,” he said and smiled. As he took the pencil, Ryan’s hand gently touched mine, and I swear that I heard violins accompanied by exploding fireworks, and my heart started

beating a mile a minute. It was love at first sight. At least, that's what it felt like for me. I think he was like, "She's kind of cute."

Ryan was the kind of man fantasies consisted of. I, on the other hand, was 100 percent nerd. My best attribute was my brain, not my beauty. It was rare that anyone who wasn't on the debate team or chess club even looked at me unless he needed the answer to a test question, or in this case, a pencil.

Ryan took my pencil and headed back over to the jocks study table where they sat with their tutors. The university couldn't have their star players becoming ineligible because of grades, so they made sure that they were equipped to pass their classes. When he brought my pencil back, he told me he was heading over to the cafeteria before they closed for the day and invited me to come. I jumped at the chance. I even left the library information desk unattended. I worked there as a requirement for my scholarship and could have gotten in so much trouble if my supervisor found out I left, but it was a chance I was willing to take. Ryan Willis asked me to have dinner with him! That was evidence that God was still in the blessing business. I was not about to pass up on a blessing.

We walked to the cafeteria, he ordered a chef salad, and I had pizza. That was the best pizza I ever tasted. I still remember that it was a pepperoni with onions and peppers. We ate and talked and even after we finished eating, we just sat and talked some more. Ryan was definitely not a dumb jock. We talked about school, movies, music, politics, racism, and a bunch of other topics I can't remember. It was hard for me to focus while staring into his handsome face, but I managed. I wasn't about to ruin this moment by acting like some spaced-out jock groupie.

Ryan and I stayed so late that the cafeteria staff cleaned up around us and then politely asked us to leave when it was time for them to lock up. He asked for my number, but I never expected to hear from him again. I figured that night was too good to be true. He had some of the most beautiful girls on campus after him. Why would he waste time on me?

I was wrong. The next day Ryan called me after practice, and we talked until the wee hours of the morning. That weekend he asked me out on a date. I guess you could call it a date. We went to watch a movie at one of his friends' houses who always had bootlegs of the latest releases. His girlfriend was there, and the guy's parents were nice enough to grill us some burgers. After watching the movie, we all sat on the patio and talked and laughed for hours. Afterward, when Ryan took me back to my dorm, we kissed. This time I didn't just hear violins but an entire symphony, and the explosions were replaced by massive butterflies taking flight! The following days, we hung out on campus in between classes and before and after his practices, and pretty soon, we were a couple. He was my first love. We didn't have sex, though. He said he respected my virginity and my desire to remain chaste until marriage. It wasn't easy for us to remain abstinent, but I'm proud to say we did it. I was head over heels crazy about that man. I would do almost anything for him. Sometimes, I think I did a little too much. I wrote several of Ryan's papers for him and even took the LSAT for him. We could have both been kicked out of school if we'd been caught. I know I shouldn't have, but I wanted him to do well, and sometimes between his regular assignments, practice, and games, Ryan got behind. As his girlfriend, I felt it was my duty to help him catch up. We dated our entire senior year.

Graduation was a happy time, but a sad one as well. I had been accepted to grad school at NYU, and he was headed off to Southern University for law school. We were both smart enough to know that our relationship could not survive the distance. We were broke students. Who was going to pay for the flights?

I hated to leave him, but I knew I had to. If it was meant to be, we'd find each other again. I was sure of it. I can't tell you how many nights I cried myself to sleep because the pain of missing him was so great. I had my rigorous NYU studies to thank for helping me get through it. Then there was Aaron, my ex-husband. He was most definitely a pleasant distraction from any lingering memories of Ryan I may have had. Once again, I fell head over heels for a man, but this one asked me to be his lawfully wedded wife. I was married at 24, and divorced by 28. I don't think either of us was ready for marriage, but we were so in love. We couldn't imagine one without the other, but once we began living under the same roof, our incompatibilities became too much. We realized that we really didn't know each other, and we didn't have much in common. We were always fighting and two weeks before our third anniversary, Aaron moved out and filed for divorce.

After my divorce, I heard, through mutual friends, that Ryan had dropped out of law school and was working as a coach in Greenville, Mississippi for some program for disadvantaged youth. That didn't surprise me because Ryan had always been good with kids. In college, we volunteered at the local YMCA sometimes, and he was always leading them in some kind of physical activity and encouraging them to do well in school. He would have the biggest smile on his face, like he loved every minute of it. I

still thought about him from time to time, but I didn't try to contact him. There really was no need. We had both moved on. I was a successful human resources professional, and he was wherever, doing whatever. It was a beautiful college romance, but it was very much over.

Next week is my 30th birthday, and I recently moved to Cincinnati after accepting a position as the head of HR with a major IT company. My new job is challenging, but I enjoy it, and I love Cincinnati. It's a nice medium between the Southern life in Mississippi, where I grew up, and the bright lights, fast pace, and expensive cost of New York. I haven't started dating anyone yet, but my job is so demanding, it's hard to find time to go out. After work, all I want to do is go home and get some sleep. If I had a boyfriend, his name would be Pillow or Serta because sleep is the only thing I do in my free time.

I was more than a little surprised when, one day, my administrative assistant left me a note that Ryan called. I planned to return the call later that evening when I got home from work. I shared my "great news" when my best friend and former college roommate Mariah called to check on me. She was less than thrilled. She never really did like Ryan, though. She swore he only used me for my brains. She was always trying to tell me about some girl she saw him with, but I wouldn't listen. I knew my man wouldn't cheat on me. She was just jealous. Her man lived in another area code, and she only saw him when she went home for the holidays.

"Girl, I heard he wasn't doing too good," said Mariah. "He has at least three kids by three different women, and he works at a gas station. I heard he might even be gay. Trust me, Keitha, you dodged a bullet with that one," she said.

“Ryan . . . gay? Girl, you’re trippin’. He loved women. There’s no way he’s gay.”

“I’m just telling you what I heard from Stacey, whose cousin Jacob went to school with us, and he said he saw Ryan coming out of some bar that’s popular with the gay locals with his arm draped around some man’s waist. When he saw Jacob staring at him, he tried to slide his hand from around the dude.”

I laughed. “Jacob with the lazy eye?”

“Yep. That’s him.”

“That boy was always looking in two directions at the same time. It probably wasn’t even Ryan he saw.”

Mariah tried to act offended. “For your information, he had corrective surgery on that eye and you are going to hell if you don’t stop talking about the visually impaired.”

“I never said he couldn’t see. I said he couldn’t see *straight*. Thanks for the heads-up, but I think I’ll take my chances. What harm could it be to catch up with an old friend? It’s just a phone call.”

“Suit yourself, but I say an ex is an ex for a reason, and the past has no reason to be invited into your present.”

“Duly noted. Bye, Mariah.”

“Bye, Keitha. Don’t you let that man ask you to write a paper or take a test for him.”

Leave it to Mariah to make me laugh while making me feel foolish. “Shut up,” I said and hung the phone up in her face.

I returned Ryan’s call that evening, and it was really nice to hear his voice. He said he looked me up online because he planned to be in town the following week and wanted to know if he could see me. I didn’t see a problem with that. I thought my birthday was going to be boring since I didn’t have any friends in the area yet, but I might

have a happy birthday after all. He started asking me about hotels in the area. I told him not only could he see me but he could save the hotel money and crash at my place.

On the day of his arrival, I left work early and prepared a wonderful home cooked meal. I had baked salmon with rice pilaf and sautéed spinach. If he was still the same Ryan I remembered, he would love it because he was a pretty healthy eater. We could have gone out, but I wanted to be able to talk to him without the distraction of other people. We hadn't really talked in almost six years. I figured afterward we could go out for dessert.

When I opened the door, I thought the cousin of the angel Gabriel was standing on my doorstep. Ryan had this beckoning ethereal glow around him, and I wanted to take him in my arms and smother him in kisses. He looked better than he did in college. He was a boy then, but standing in front of me was a fully mature man. He had a few extra pounds here and there, but that was to be expected. It was obvious he still worked out regularly. I had gained a few pounds myself, but they were all in the right places. I had been trying to practice abstinence for the last year for religious reasons, but I didn't know if I was going to make it through this weekend. I would let fate decide. If it happened, it happened, but I wouldn't be the one to prevent it from happening. I'd try hard not to initiate it.

I knew Ryan had to be famished from his drive from Mississippi, so I showed him to my spare room and told him to wash up for dinner. We had a pleasant conversation during our meal. We talked about old times and new times. He told me that he couldn't afford law school, and that's why he had to drop out. He did inform me that he had three children, but they were all by the same woman. He met her while he was coaching football at a local junior

high. The two of them never married, though. He was currently working as a substitute teacher and at an afterschool program for children with behavioral problems. He liked working with children, but he couldn't teach because he wasn't certified. It didn't sound like he made much money, but it was rewarding work.

Ryan raved about how good the food was, and the man ate like he hadn't eaten in years. When he picked up the plate and licked the last bit of juice from the salmon and spinach, all I could do was laugh and shake my head. Somebody needed to teach him some dining etiquette. However, I must admit the way he licked that plate *did* turn me on. After dinner, I told him to get dressed because I was taking him out. I went to the bathroom to freshen up a little bit when I heard my phone chime. I checked to see who it was, and it was Ryan.

WE DON'T HAVE TO GO OUT TONIGHT. I'M TOTALLY OKAY IF YOU WANT TO STAY IN.

Why was he texting me, and we're in the same house? It sounded like someone wanted to start the birthday celebration early, but I wasn't going out like that. He was going to have to work a little bit harder to get this pudding cup. I prepared dinner; the least he could do was take a sister out for dessert. I waited until I was done getting ready to give him a reply.

I walked out wearing the tightest dress I owned. His gorgeous hazel eyes widened when I made my entrance, but he didn't say anything. It was obvious he liked what he saw, and I was expecting some sort of compliment but didn't get one. "Why in the world would you want to come to a city you've never been to and stay in? You're only here for one night. No, sir, we're going out. Get your jacket," I said. Ryan followed directions and got his jacket.

I took him to The Cheesecake Factory. We ate dessert and gazed into each other's eyes. It was nice being close to him again. It felt right, like it was meant to be. After a couple of hours, I was perfectly okay with returning to my house for some adult fun time. I hinted that I was ready to go, and Ryan waved the server over. I noticed that he hesitated and looked at me before giving him his debit card, but I didn't think much of it because surely he didn't expect me to pay.

The server returned a few minutes later and said, "Sir, your card was declined."

"I thought this might happen. K, baby, can you get this? I used my teacher's credit union card, and I don't think it works outside of the state."

Did he *really* just say that? I shot him a dirty look and pulled out my credit card. Who goes out of town with no money? My mother always taught me that broke people should stay home. I decided not to let that ruin our evening, though. It was only twenty-two bucks. I suggested we take a short stroll before we headed to the car. It was nice outside. The temperature was in the low 80's, and a slight breeze made it absolutely perfect. There was a full moon above that set the perfect mood for a romantic reconnection of two lovebirds who had been away from each other for way too long. I bought some sexy lingerie that I knew he was going to love because it was his favorite color, blue. I was ready to put it to good use. I looped my small arm around his strong, massive one and squeezed. It was all muscle. That moment reminded me of when we used to take late-night strolls across campus. The stars were twinkling in the sky, and it was as if the moon was our own personal spotlight. It was just me and my first love, and it felt like everything was as it should be.

“You look really good tonight, K,” said Ryan. I had finally gotten my compliment. *Yes!* “You didn’t have all that booty in college.”

I laughed. “Yeah, it seems like getting older agrees me. Thank you. You look really good too. I was surprised to hear from you after all this time. I thought you had forgotten about me. I’m glad you called.”

“Me, forget about you? You never forget your first love.”

“I guess you’re right,” I said in my best seductive voice. I pushed my face closer to his, closed my eyes and waited for him to kiss me. I knew it was going to be as magical as it was all those years ago on campus. Nothing happened. I opened my eyes to find Ryan looking in another direction like he didn’t realized that I wanted a kiss. That was awkward. I suggested we make our way back to the car.

“Good idea,” he said.

We made insignificant small talk during the drive. Once we returned to my place, I checked to see if he had plenty of towels in the guest bathroom and retired to my room. The night hadn’t gone like I hoped, but he would be there tomorrow. Maybe he wanted to take things slow. I lay down on my king-sized bed and turned on the TV. After flipping through several channels, I determined that nothing good was on. I heard a soft knock at my door, and Ryan pushed his handsome head in.

“You asleep?”

“Nope. Come on in.” I scooted over in the bed and motioned for him to join me. Instead of sitting on the bed next to me, he sat down in the armchair close by.

“There’s something I should tell you, and it’s probably best I say it now rather than later.” He took a deep breath before continuing. “I’m engaged.”

“What? Then why are you here in my house with me? I know your fiancée didn’t tell you it was okay to come spend time with your ex.”

“Not exactly, but there’s more. I’m engaged to a man.”

I wanted to scream, but I didn’t. I was trained to remain calm during intense situations. I simply said, “Ryan, help me understand why you are here.”

“To be honest, I have a job interview tomorrow, and I didn’t have enough money for a hotel. Things have been rough for me lately. I have three kids and their child support takes a huge chunk out of my check. I don’t make much. If I don’t pay it, my baby momma has no problem putting my behind in jail.”

My heart dropped. After all these years, he was *still* using me, and I was *still* his willing fool. BBD said never trust a big butt and a smile in their song “Poison.” I needed to write a remix that said never trust a six-pack and a smile. “You found me so you could have a free room and meals during your trip? That’s low, Ryan.”

“Not exactly. Keitha, I wanted to see you. People have told me several times how good you’re doing, and I wanted to see for myself. I mean, I still care about you. Look at this huge house. It’s obvious that you are doing it, and doing it well. I want to be just like you when I grow up.” He laughed, but I failed to see any humor in the situation.

“But seriously, I’ve been working nothing but dead-end jobs for five years. I can’t seem to catch a break. I even applied to be a sanitation worker, and they told me I

was overqualified because I have a degree. My fiancé put me out last week after I didn't have enough money to cover the utilities. He told me that I lacked ambition, and he had serious doubts about my ability to take care of him. If I can land this job, I'd show him that I do, and maybe he'll take me back. I'd be making more than him, so I know he would have no problem moving out here with me. Please don't be mad at me, but I was afraid if I told you the truth you wouldn't let me stay."

Was God punishing me for wanting to get my freak on? My ex-boyfriend is sitting here in my home telling me about how he was trying to provide for another dude. Did I look like Dr. Phil, Oprah, or Iyanla? This was too much!

"Ryan, look at me. Do I look like I just wanted to talk tonight? I was hoping to get laid."

His eyes traveled from my face all the way down to my feet. "How was I supposed to know that after all these years you would still be attracted to me? I figured you would have had plenty of men since me. College was a long time ago. We didn't even have sex."

How could I have been so stupid? I should have put him out right then, but I needed answers. "How long have you known you were gay?"

"I was always slightly attracted to men, but I was much more attracted to women. At first it was just a desire to be in the company of attractive men. So I would make them my friends. Being around them seemed to be enough. I never wanted to kiss them or anything like that. I enjoyed their company and looking at them, I guess."

I thought back to college. All of Ryan's friends were fine, and most of them were athletes. The girls on campus used to call them The Bomb Squad and The Moist Makers. He always had five or six guys with him that were

every bit as sexy and handsome as him or more. Girls would flock to them wherever they were.

“When I was in law school I had a roommate who was openly gay but still very masculine, and he was attracted to masculine-looking men. One night, I shared with him what I was feeling, and when I woke up the next morning, he was in my bed. I started to protest, but he said, ‘Just go with it and see if you like it.’ He laid in bed with me talking and cuddling for hours, and it didn’t feel weird or wrong. We did small things like that, and then one day, he kissed me and things went a lot further.”

I didn’t need to hear anymore. “You can spare me the details. Sounds like you got turned out,” I said.

“I guess you could say that. When I left law school, I tried to fight those feelings. That’s how I ended up with the kids, but later, I met a guy I had an amazing connection with and gave in. Baxter is wonderful, and I don’t want to lose him.”

It was time to change the subject. I had no desire to hear all about Baxter. “What time is your interview?”

“At 3 p.m. I’m really nervous.”

“Get up. Show me what you’re wearing, and then I’ll help you prepare. I know almost every interview tip and trick there is.”

“Really? Thank you, K. You’re the best. I’ll never forget you.”

“Oh yes, you will. After you leave don’t ever contact me again, and you better not ever tell anyone that you came here to visit me and tried to use my home as a bed and breakfast. Do you understand me?” I had my “I mean business” face on, and I meant every word I said.

“Don’t you think you’re taking this a bit too far? I mean, we were college sweethearts. Can’t we remain friends?”

“The key word there is *were*. As you reminded me, college was a long time ago. At least, in college, you were a little more creative when you were broke. You’d tie me up all night kissing on me so we would stay in.”

“You knew?”

“Of course, I knew that’s what you were trying to do. But why would I complain about you being affectionate? I liked having you all to myself anyway. Whenever we went out, it seemed like your friends always found us. I didn’t want to hang with those people anyway. The only reason all the popular students were even nice to me was because I was dating you. Now, get out of my room.”

Ryan didn’t budge. “You know, people used to ask me what I saw in you. I always told them you had a great personality and an amazing heart, and if they took the time to get to know you, they’d see it too. I always thought you were cute in an intelligent Velma on *Scooby-Doo* kind of way. I may have changed, but I’m happy to see that you haven’t. You’ve still got an amazing heart. You’ve also blossomed into a gorgeous woman.”

That was sweet but all wasn’t forgiven. “Yeah, whatever. You and my education were the only good things that came from me attending that school. And I said get out of my room.”

Ryan left to lay his clothes out. I told him I would be there shortly to check out what he had. I needed a minute to myself. I was hurt, disappointed, and a little mad. I wanted to tell him to leave, but I knew he had no place to go. He’d probably sleep in his car all night. Our history wouldn’t let me treat him like that. I was a nerdy nobody

until he noticed me in the library. In a matter of weeks, my position on campus shot up to dime status. His friend's girlfriends gave me a makeover. They showed me how to pick out clothes that were trendy and complemented my body type. They helped me do my hair and makeup. I knew it was so I wouldn't embarrass them when we all hung out together, but I didn't care. It was nice being popular, but there was one perk I enjoyed the most. Ryan treated me like a queen, and he boosted my confidence to a place it had never been before. He told me I was pretty when I thought I wasn't. I never thought I could have a man like him, let alone get him to fall in love with me. He showed me what the love of a good man could do for a woman, and for that, I would be eternally grateful. Girls were all in his face when I wasn't around, but I wasn't worried. He told me repeatedly that I was the only woman for him. He also never let anyone disrespect me in his presence. When people tried to make snide remarks about us being together or other girls tried to flirt with him, he made sure they knew that would not be tolerated. I wouldn't have applied to NYU if it wasn't for him. In my small-mindedness, I didn't see what a country girl like me was going to do in the big city. It was Ryan who told me that I could do anything and go anywhere if I put my mind to it. He even downloaded the application and brought it to me to complete. I was going to do this for him to say thank you. Afterward, I never wanted to see him again.

As I got up and walked down the hallway, the words of Mariah came back to me. "You dodged a bullet with that one." I had to admit that she was right. Baxter could have him.

Ryan didn't know one thing about dressing to impress, but he had worn sweat suits and basketball shorts most of his life. I helped him coordinate his suit, shirt, and shoes. I even gave him a pair of unisex trouser socks I picked up recently that really set off the shirt he was wearing. Since the interview was for a midlevel position with a sports management company, I decided he could forgo the tie. I even ironed and starched his shirt and shined his shoes before I went to bed.

The next morning, I called in to work to take the day off. After he cooked breakfast, I coached Ryan on how to behave and the proper way to answer interview questions. We practiced all morning. By noon, we were both confident that he was prepared to present himself as an impressive candidate for the position. Ryan got dressed, and I gave him a good look from head to toe. I had to admit that he cleaned up nicely. If the interviewer was a woman, he had nothing to worry about. He looked impressive in his navy suit with his Periwinkle shirt. He loaded his things up in his car before he left for the interview. I made it clear that he would not be returning to my home. EVER.

He seemed kind of sad as he said his good-bye, but I didn't care. I didn't need a gay, manipulative, ex-boyfriend in my life. "I'm really sorry we have to part like this. I apologize for not being honest about my intentions. I wish you would reconsider," he said.

My mind was made up. "No, after the stunt you pulled, I'd prefer to keep my distance. Good luck on your interview. Do what I told you and you should be fine. I wish you a glorious future, but I want no part of it," I said.

He leaned over and kissed me on the cheek. "There's a guy somewhere looking for a good woman like you."

“Sure. If you meet him, give him my address. Maybe he’ll find me if he doesn’t fall in love with a man first. Now, go knock’em dead, Romeo.”

He smiled at hearing the nickname I gave him in college. “That’s cold, K,” said Ryan before exiting my home and my life for good. After he left, I took a nap. He hadn’t been in town a full 24 hours, and I was emotionally drained. I decided not to tell anyone what happened, not even Mariah. Some things were better left between you, the other person, and the four walls.

A couple of days later while sitting at my desk at work, I got a text from Ryan.

I GOT CALLED BACK FOR A SECOND INTERVIEW. THANK YOU SO MUCH. DO YOU MIND IF I CRASH AT YOUR PLACE AGAIN? ☺

I sent him a picture of a middle finger. I’m sure he got the point.

To read more stories from “Things Every Good Woman Should Know Volume 2: Dear God, Did My Boaz Get Hit by a Bus?” by Jae Henderson. Purchase on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or [Barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com). Check out her other books as well.

Someday

Someday, Too

Forever and a Day

Husband Wanted

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