

Will You Love me Again?



Emily Craig

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by

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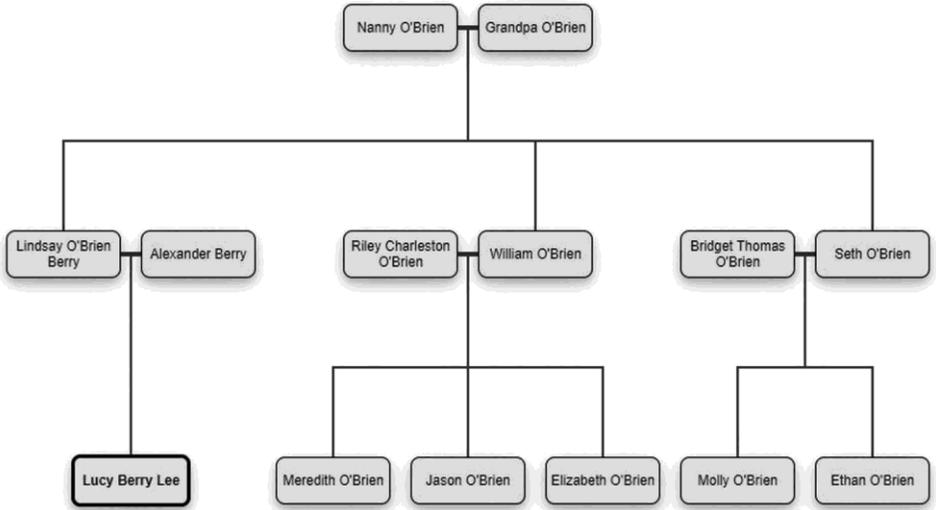
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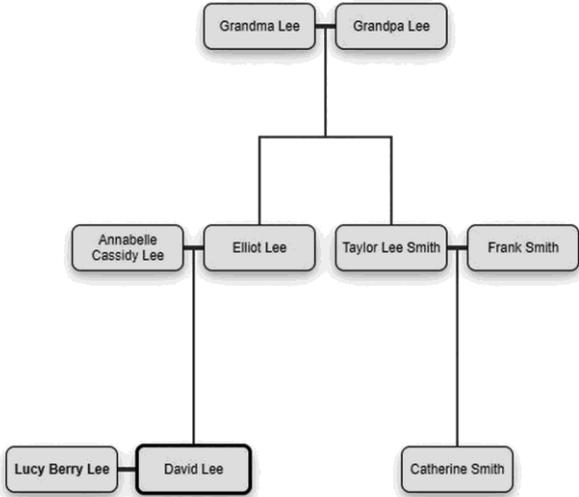
*To the aspiring authors: Never give up on your writing dreams.
Everyone starts somewhere.*

*To my support system: Thanks for encouraging me to follow
my dreams, no matter how difficult the journey becomes.*

Lucy's Family



David's Family



Prologue

June 2, 2020

I throw our prom pictures across the room one by one and briefly see the glass shatter against the wall into a million pieces. Our hardwood takes a hit as I see the frames crash with a thump.

“All these pictures. All happy and in love! Was it ever real?”

My husband doesn't meet my eyes as he spins his wedding band. He stops mid-spin and I catch his cautious eyes blankly staring back at me. He doesn't speak. I pick up our wedding picture, our 'I do' moment, and hurl the scarred memory at him. The corner of the frame barely misses his head and bounces off the wall to the side of him.

“Baby, sweetie. You know I love you.”

“No, you don't. You lied.”

“Lucy, darling. Please believe me.”

“I can't even stand the sight of you. You make me sick. David, I love you. I wish I didn't.”

“We can get through this. We've had issues before. I believe in us.” He inches towards me.

“This is bigger than moving away for college. This is too real, too hard. You knew what damage it would cause; you should have known.” I glance at the multiple college pictures. The ones where we'd always come back to

the town where we met for date nights. I only let one tear escape my eye as I try to look back at the man standing in front of me. High school sweet- hearts, college sweethearts, and finally husband and wife. The love these years hold and some great struggles, but nothing compares to the past few months of marriage.

“Lucy? We can work through this. She meant nothing to me. You’re my sweetheart.” He reaches for my hand, but I pull away.

CHAPTER 1

Two Years Earlier June 5, 2018

I walk over to the mirror and stare at my wedding dress. I take in the elegant view of a girl about to marry her one true love. I run my fingers down my sides as I admire the sweetheart neckline and jewels covering the bodice. I can't help but smile as the nerves bubble in my stomach.

I take deep breaths while slipping on my favorite Yellow Box white wedges and exit my dressing room. I glide down the hall towards the sanctuary and turn the last corner while taking in one more calming breath. My dad immediately turns to me; I can see tears brimming at the edges of his eyes as we stand hugging in front of the double doors.

With heels on, I am the perfect height to rest my head on my dad's shoulder. He is a short, stocky man with black shaggy hair (nicely combed today), and square-framed glasses that sit on the bridge of his nose. I feel the slightly scratchy fabric of his worn black jacket against my cheek. I glance down and notice he remembered to wear his shiny dancing shoes. As he pulls me out of our embrace, his blue tie catches my eye. I remember him wanting to match my "something blue" and he is. I smile as I touch my "something blue," my flower barrette.

"Are you ready?" he says.

"The question is, are you ready, Dad?" I joke.

“Your whole future awaits you at the end of the aisle. It won’t always be glamorous but worth it.”

“Dad, you’re going to make me cry. I love you.”

“I love you, too, sweetheart.” *Here comes the bride* starts to play. Two people open the doors. I see David’s face light up and his hands cover his mouth.

My eyes stay on David as my dad walks me down the aisle. My mind drifts back to the first time I met David at age 15 with his button-up shirt and khaki shorts. I always admired his dashing good looks with his shaggy brown hair swept away from his baby blue eyes. I snap back as my dad squeezes my hand and I take in the sight of my sweet David. He is still that dashing handsome boy I fell in love with so many years ago. His brown hair is a bit untidy and I can tell he has been running his fingers through it all morning. He slightly rocks back and forth on the heels of his black dress shoes with one hand in his pocket and the other still covering his mouth.

“Do you give this woman away to this man,” the pastor says to my dad as he stands in-between me and David.

“Yes, I do.” He gives us each a hug. Placing our hands in each other’s, he goes and sits with my mother.

David and I face each other with tears shining on our faces.

“I was told that these two have prepared vows,” the pastor says. I nod my head. My Maid of Honor, Jenny Thompson, hands a slip of folded paper to me. David’s Best Man, Aaron Morgan, hands him a slip of folded paper.

After unfolding our papers, David whispers, “You go first, Luce.”

Nodding my head in agreement, I say, “David, my love. You have been my whole world. I remember seeing you freshman year in high school on our first day. I told Jenny, that guy is cute.” I smile. “We had English together and I got to know you. I fell hard. Who knew you were falling for me, too. I can’t wait for many more years of love with you.” Folding the paper in half, I look up at David.

“Lucy, my everything. These years with you have been a blast. Never a dull moment because you keep the days fun. You have been there for me since my first day in a new town and I am grateful to have found you.”

We each hand our papers back, “If anyone wishes these two not to be together, say something or forever hold your peace,” the pastor says. “David, do you take Lucy to be your wife? Do you promise to love, honor, and cherish her in sickness and health, in adversity and prosperity, and to be true and loyal to her so as long as you both shall live?”

“I do.” He places the ring on my finger.

“Lucy, do you take David to be your husband? Do you promise to love, honor, and cherish him in sickness and health, in adversity and prosperity, and to be true and loyal to him so as long as you both shall live?”

“I do.” I place the ring on his finger as my hands shake.

“I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may now kiss the bride.” David lovingly dips me, like we are on a date, brings me back up, and kisses me.

“I now, for the first time, present to you, Mr. and Mrs. David Lee.”

We hold hands and walk down the aisle – finally married!



The reception feels like a dream, one that I had only made up in my head. It is all coming to life in front of me.

Jenny taps a spoon against her wine glass while everyone sits down. She moves her wavy brunette hair out of her face and clears her throat, “I have something to share. A speech to my best friends, David and Lucy.” She picks up a piece of paper from the table and begins to speak, “First, I’ll start with Lucy. She is one of my life-long best friends and I am so thankful for her. Years before we first met David, we were thick as thieves.” Her green eyes shine with tears, “None of that changed when the two became four. The guys, David and Aaron, added to our craziness and laughter. Today, two of the four commit to each other and become one. I am in awe. I am filled with so much joy and happiness because of the love that radiates from both of you. I wish you both love and happiness. I hope David remains his funny

self and plays car games with Lucy like they are a couple of graduates. I hope you remain lovebirds forever. I love you both.”

She raises her glass, “To David and Lucy, may you have a long and loving marriage.”

“Ok. Ok. It is my turn to talk to my number one buddy, David,” Aaron says as he unwinds and rewinds his hands as his blue eyes light up as he talks, “I’ve known Lucy since kindergarten. It was always Lucy, Jenny, and me – three best friends. In ninth grade, I happened to be the one to show David around on his first day. Of course, not the same time as Lucy and Jenny first saw him but earlier that day. David was pretty cool and super smart.” David gives Aaron a look. He runs his fingers through his shaggy dark brown hair and laughs, “Dude, you were. Yet, he immediately got Lucy’s attention. I heard all about David that day after school, our usual hangout time. Lucy told me I should invite you to hang out with us and that is when we all became friends. David, buddy, thanks for moving to our small town. It’d be a little less exciting without you! To a happy and long marriage!”

Everyone claps and the guys fist bump.



As the music begins to play, David and I walk to the center of the dance floor, our first dance as husband and wife. My heart is pounding out of my chest. The perfect dress and the best date, just like prom. How’d I get so lucky? I hold David close as we slow dance to our favorite song, “Fireflies.”

“I love you,” he whispers in my ear. I feel his cool breath on my skin. “Here’s to the next chapter of our lives.”

“I love you, too,” I whisper back. “With you, I know it will be the best chapter yet.”

CHAPTER 2

First Year of Marriage

A few weeks after our June wedding, David and I are settling into our new home - a small two-story structure with white panels and a green door. Our freshly cut lawn, cut just a week before our move-in date, looks beautiful. A small sidewalk leads to the brick steps onto the front porch.

David hands me the last couple of boxes. Yesterday, we had Jenny and Aaron helping us move the furniture in the house, and today, we add the final touches. July is here, and for once it isn't terribly hot. After putting up the final touches to make this home ours, we sit outside on the porch in the rocking chairs my mom and dad gave to us as a wedding gift.

I scroll through my Spotify music library on my Android to find my Everything playlist. Finally, my finger lands on it; I click play and immediately our wedding song, "Fireflies," starts streaming out my speaker.

"If only we could see millions of fireflies at night. I love this song," I muse.

"You will never forget the lyrics to that song, will you?" David says while he smiles at me.

"Forever. It will always be our song. I love throwback songs that still mean something." I lay my head back and hum.



A few months later, things are going okay, but I feel something in the pit of my stomach. I brush the bad vibes away and go to see what David is grilling for supper.

“Hamburgers or hot dogs, babe?”

“Hamburgers! They’re almost done, and my stomach is growling.”

“Okay, I’ll go get the fixings.”

David is busy finishing up the burgers and transferring them onto a plate. His phone rings.

“Lucy, can you get my phone? It is by the door.”

“Yeah, of course.” I walk to the back door and grab David’s phone. The screen is lit up with two text messages, Cindy (Work).

“Babe, it is Cindy from work. She needs you to call her when you get a chance.”

“Tell her I will after I finish eating supper,” he says as he puts the last patty on the plate, turning off the grill, and closing the lid.

I click the message and reply with, after supper I’ll call.

Even with the bad feeling in my stomach, I put his phone on the table without a second thought.



By the time December rolls around, I notice more and more “work” texts coming from Cindy. I tell myself that it is legit work talk, but I read so many things about failed marriages that I feel paranoid. I love David so much. He is a total catch. I find myself thinking, any woman would be lucky to have him. What if there is another woman? No, no. I am just looking for all the negative. Focus on the positive.

The click of the front door closing causes me to stop worrying. David

walks around the corner and sits down beside me. I kiss him as if it has been more than three days since I have seen him.

Coming up for air, "Babe, it was only a three-day work trip. We talked every day." He kisses me hard.

"It was so lonely here. I missed your touch, kisses, and presence. Every sound was amplified while you were away."

"I missed you, too, babe. No monsters bothered you while I was gone. Just noises?" he asked as he kisses my neck.

"No. Just a loud noise every now and then. I could have fought the monsters, you would have been impressed," I say giggling.

"You are so funny when you are writing out scenarios in your head."

"It is fun to dream."

"You're my dream," he says as he picks me up and carries me to our bedroom. Stepping over the threshold like we are newlyweds again, we make our big entrance.

He lays me on our king-size bed and slowly kisses me. Starting at the base of my neck and stopping at the top of my head. I start to let loose and brush all the bad feelings away as I enjoy every kiss. I slowly reach my hands up and unbutton his blue dress shirt, it is soft in my hands. He pulls me up as I am unbuttoning the last small white button and gracefully slips my t-shirt over my head. Before I can comprehend what he is doing, he eases up and takes my yoga pants off. Goosebumps spread across my body as he slowly balances his ab tight body over me. My hands find his six-pack as he plants kisses on my shoulder blades.

He pulls me back up and I wrap my hands around his neck. Running my hands through his hair, I kiss him hard on the lips as he lifts me off the bed. David turns around and pushes me up against the wall as our kisses intensify. Releasing one hand from his hair, I undo his jeans and push them down. He steps out of them and we are back on the bed, on top of the covers.



The next morning, I wake up in my underwear and look over to David's side, which is empty except for a handwritten note.

Lucy,

I love you. I am so happy to be home. Rest up, I am taking you out to dinner tonight for our six-month anniversary.

XOXO, David

CHAPTER 3

Six Month Anniversary

December 5, 2018

Five o'clock rolls around and David comes home to pick me up for our anniversary date night.

"We're going to UMI, your favorite restaurant. Are you ready for some sushi?" he says as he backs the SUV out of the driveway.

"You know the way to my heart, David! Let's jam out to music while we drive. Next stop, Florence for some sushi." I turn up the radio. Athens to Florence is a 45-minute drive, and I still have worries about our marriage. Music helps everything.

The car ride feels like our drive to the beach for our senior trip four years ago. We were so in love. I hope it never fades. He was my first real love. And after last night, I know I am his everything, forever, I assure myself. He was so gentle and loving. I just need to enjoy our marriage and stop worrying so much.

Halfway to UMI, David and I belt out the lyrics to "Hurricane" by Luke Combs. By the time we notice the song has stopped, we are at the last stoplight before Florence's city limits.

"I guess we got really into the music. It swept us up like a hurricane." David and his puns.

Between laughs, I say, "I guess it did. Couple more stoplights, then it is sushi time."

Drifting back into the radio, Keith Urban's "Raining on Sunday" streams through the speakers. By the last line, *Let it rain*, we are turning into the small parking lot of UMI Japanese Steakhouse.

The entrance is decorated with Polaroid photos from the main doors to the hostess' stand. "Table for two?"

"Yes," I reply within seconds. My excitement is getting the best of me. "Is a booth, okay?" We both nod our heads in agreement.

I sit on the right side as David slides in across from me, "Your waitress will be right with you."

"Thank you," David says as she walks away. As we are waiting, we flip through our menus, even though we both know we each want a Rainbow Roll. David knew I wouldn't share eight pieces of sushi. He learned that the hard way when he left hungry after one of our first dates. But he loves that I wasn't afraid to be myself with him, and I ate as much as I pleased.

"You know what you want?" I say, looking over the top of my menu at him. I am in my black dress, glasses pushed up to the brim of my nose, and my brunette locks rest on my shoulders in beautiful curls. This is the longest my curls have stayed intact, the trick is tons and tons of hairspray.

"Yeah, of course. You look beautiful, darling." That makes me blush and I take in David's casual work look. He has his glasses on, and his hair is a tad messy but handsome. I love his hair messy.

The waitress, Joyce, comes up to the table with pad and pencil in hand, "Are you ready to order?"

"Yes. Lucy?"

"Okay. I want the Rainbow Roll, and can I get that with the soup and salad?"

"Yes, but the salad will be bigger than the normal side."

"That is perfect. And I would like water with lemon, too. Okay, David."

He clears his throat, "Make that two, except with a sweet tea with lemon." Joyce takes our menus and she is off.

David scoots out of the booth, "I'm gonna go to the restroom. I'll be right back."



I poke my head out of the booth when I hear David's name as I see him walking towards me.

"David!" a woman's voice says from his left. I see him spin his head to the hostess desk area, and I can't see who he is talking to, then I hear him speak.

"Evening, Cindy. Is this your husband?"

My ears perk up as I listen closely to their conversation.

"Yes. David, this is Tom."

"It is nice to meet you. I work with Cindy over in Athens."

"Nice to meet you, David," the deeper voice says; I assume it belongs to Tom.

"Where is your wife?" Cindy asks David.

"She is over this way at our booth. Would y'all like to meet her while you wait to be seated?" I see them heading my way and I quickly slip my head back into the booth. Our booth is by the window. "Lucy, darling, this is Cindy and her husband, Tom. You know, Cindy from work," he tells me after seeing the confused expression on my face.

"Ah, yes. Good evening. Are y'all having a date night, too?"

Cindy and Tom look at each other, Cindy replies, "Yes, our one-year anniversary was this week."

"It's our sixth month anniversary today," I tell them. "The work trip ended just in time to celebrate."

"Jennings, party of two." We turn to look towards the hostess stand.

"That's us. See you at work, David. Hope to see you again, Lucy," Cindy says.

"Same to y'all," David and I say in unison.

Once Cindy and Tom are out of earshot, I build up the nerve to bring up my worries to David. "So, that's Cindy. She is pretty. Do y'all work well together?"

“Yeah, everyone in the office says we do. So, I guess we do. I’ve never really noticed.”

“Oh, okay, that’s great, babe.”

“Is something wrong?”

“No. No. Just wondered if y’all were close work friends. She seems nice.”

“I guess we are. We’ve just always been paired up with work assignments. From business trips, to editing assignments, it’s just how it’s been

since I started at The Athens Editing Company.”

“Well, that’s good. Nothing to worry about, right?”

“Never. You’re my sweetheart. Besides, she has eyes for her husband.”

“I love you. I am glad I got to meet her.”

“I love you, too. I am glad, too. It was long overdue.”

I still feel that pull in my stomach, that something is going on. But now I am not sure it is with Cindy. What is it, with these bad feelings? David and I are happy. He has always had eyes for me, I assure myself as we wait for our food.



“I see our food,” I say with a smile.

“Finally, I’m starving!”

Joyce sits down the plates of food in front of us, “Do you need more water and sweet tea?”

“Yes,” David says for both of us as I nod in agreement.

“I’ll be right back with those.”

“Thank you!” We immediately start eating.

I pick up the sushi. “Yummy, that hits the spot!” I say between bites and I catch David smiling at me.

The night was perfect. Eating at our favorite restaurant to singing in the car like we were a couple of teenagers. No more reading articles titled, *50 Ways You Know He Is Cheating or Three Reasons Why He Doesn’t*

Love You Like He Use To, and the worse of all, Just Accept Your Marriage Could End Terribly. I promise to stop thinking so negatively and believing everything I read on the internet and just trust my husband, the one man that I love.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I couldn't have completed this project alone, and I am grateful for the support I have around me. Through rough patches, writer's block, writing assignments piling up, and struggling with the plot – I managed to come out the other side. As a writer, I learn from my surroundings and the people that walk in or out of my life. I have learned more than I bargained for, but that's why these characters feel so real to me – why this novel means so much to me. Throughout this project, I got to share some of my own life experiences, the people I've loved, and the future I want – but those wouldn't have been possible without what I have gone through since starting this novel. In saying that, I thought I knew where this story would end up when I started two years ago, little did I know that my writing would blossom into what it is now.

To my patient editors: Although I am not the most patient writer, this novel is my baby, thank you for taking care of it for me. I love you both very much. You two are my hardest critics because I want you both to enjoy my writing, but I am glad you try to remind me that no matter what, you will always support me.

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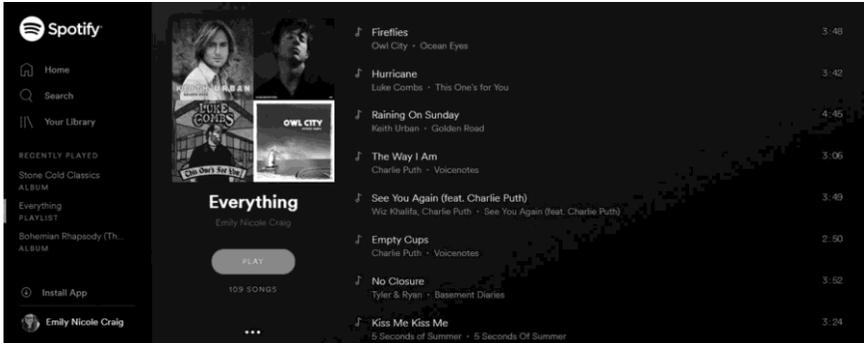
To my guy best friend: Thank you for inspiring Michael. I don't know where I would be without you or where Lucy would be without Michael. I have enjoyed creating your character, and I hope you love him just as much as I do. I love you.

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LUCY'S SPOTIFY PLAYLIST



Screenshots: Spotify Novel Playlist



AUTHOR INFORMATION

Other Publications:

Pieces of My Heart & Loving Myself Poetry Collections

Several poems on Marias at Sampaguitas Instagram/Website

Memories on Brave Voices Magazine Blog

Two Poems on Royal Rose Instagram

A Gentle Nudge on Royal Rose Website

Nightmare Central on Nightingale & Sparrow Instagram

Baggio, Artist article on Poromo Records

Revival in Nightingale & Sparrow Issue 2

Connect with Emily Craig
through her website and socials:

