



Finding Fraser

By kc dyer

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I met Jamie Fraser when I was nineteen years old. He was tall, red-headed, and at our first meeting at least, a virgin. I fell in love hard, fast and completely. He knew how to ride a horse, wield a sword and stitch a wound. He was, in fact, the perfect man.

That he was fictional hardly entered into it.

At 29, Emma Sheridan's life is a disaster and she's tired of waiting for the perfect boyfriend to step from the pages of her favorite book. There's only one place to look, and it means selling everything and leaving her world behind. With an unexpected collection of allies along the way, can Emma face down a naked fishmonger, a randy gnome, a perfidious thief, and even her own abdominal muscles on the journey to find her Fraser?

What people are saying about FINDING FRASER...

"Jamie Fraser would be Deeply Grati-fied at having inspired such a charmingly funny, poignant story--and so am I."

-Diana Gabaldon, author of the New York Times Bestselling OUTLANDER series

"I loved this book. It transported me to a Scotland I wished I'd grown up in. Everything about it is a delight, and it's all authentic—the environment, the characters, the dialogue and the sheer enjoyment of it all."

- Jack Whyte, best-selling author of, most recently, THE GUARDIANS OF SCOTLAND series

"FINDING FRASER is for everyone who ever fell in love with a fictional character. Dyer blends humor, a love of Scotland, and romance into a page turner that will keep readers cheering on the main character and turning pages."

-Eileen Cook, Author of REMEMBER, and other books for teens and adults

"FINDING FRASER is an absolute must-read for any Outlander fan. The story is both hilarious and romantic, as well as guaranteed to have readers turning the pages until the wee hours to discover if the heroine finds her very own Jamie Fraser."

- Laura Bradbury, author of the best-selling MY GRAPE ESCAPE series

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Editorial Review

Review

“A must-read for *Outlander* fans eagerly awaiting their next Jamie fix.”—Bustle

“A humorous yet relatable self-discovery tale.”—*Us Weekly*

“I loved this book. It transported me to a Scotland I wished I’d grown up in. Everything about it is a delight, and it’s all authentic—the environment, the characters, the dialogue and the sheer enjoyment of it all.”—Jack Whyte, bestselling author of the Guardians of Scotland series

“For everyone who ever fell in love with a fictional character. Dyer blends humor, a love of Scotland, and romance into a page turner that will keep readers cheering on the main character and turning pages.”—Eileen Cook, author of *Remember*

“An absolute must-read for any *Outlander* fan. The story is both hilarious and romantic, as well as guaranteed to have readers turning the pages until the wee hours to discover if the heroine finds her very own Jamie Fraser.”—Laura Bradbury, bestselling author of the My Grape Escape series

About the Author

kc dyer resides in the wilds of British Columbia in the company of a wide assortment of mammals, some of them human. She likes to walk in the woods and write books.

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Facing the Future . . .

11:30 p.m., February 15

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Well.

My first blog post.

I have to admit to being a little nervous. About the writing, I mean. Actually, I’m nervous about the whole thing—this whole adventure. But the writing . . . I don’t know. I’ve never been trendy, so maybe that’s why this is working for me now. Now that the rest of the world has moved on to Twitter and Pinterest and Tumblr, it’ll just be me and my travel blog. Yeah, that’s right. It’s a travel blog. Until yesterday, I was night manager at the Hitchhiker’s Coffee Bar in midtown Chicago.

Today, everything has changed.

I've decided to go on a quest. A quest to find a living, breathing, twenty-first-century warrior, who will fight off every villain life can throw at us, to remain stalwart by my side. And since I don't have anyone able—or willing—to travel with me, this is the next best thing. To share with you, my readers, all my adventures.

Let's see what happens, shall we?

—Emma Sheridan

Comments: 0

I closed the lid of my laptop. One post and I was sick of my online persona already. Who was this falsely cheery person? She sounded like she knew what she was doing.

Let's see what happens? More like "Let's document the debacle." Or . . . "Let's have some kind of a record so that the police know where to look when I disappear on this ill-fated potential disaster."

My birthday is February 14. Which, this year, was yesterday. Now, when I was a kid, it was kind of a double-win. Cake, presents, and valentine chocolate all in one day? Total bonus.

But something changed as I got older. The first year of middle school, I was excited. I brought the usual bag filled with paper valentines to class, only to find some invisible force—one that I could not hope to tap into—had declared them uncool. High school was worse; and by the time I made it to my twenties, I began to face the day with something like dread. If I had a boyfriend at the time, it was usually fine. Still, out of the nine birthdays I have lived through in my twenties, I've had a boyfriend for only two of them. I also had a husband for one, but that birthday was the worst of all.

Until now.

Yesterday, I turned twenty-nine. No valentine chocolate. Three cards: a birthday card from my sister, one from my friend, Jazmin—and a valentine from my bank. Apparently they'd "love" to send me a new credit card at a reduced rate . . . 'specially for me.

As of yesterday, I also had a boss, who went ballistic when he found out I was adding free shots of chocolate to people's mochas in honor of the day.

I guess I should say . . . ex-boss.

Look, I know there must be other people in the same situation. Valentine's Day is a particularly lonely day to turn twenty-nine. It shouldn't be worse than having a birthday on Christmas, right? Statistically, at least 1/365th (which my calculator tells me is 0.00274 percent) of the world's population must at least have a chance of sharing my birthday. But it doesn't feel like it's the case at all.

What it feels like . . . is something has to change. Something big. I'm not sure what this is going to look like. I'm scared.

But I'm going.

Fond Farewells . . .

7:45 p.m., February 16

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Saying good-bye is hard. My parents live down south, but I have siblings in the city. A sibling, anyway. But farewells are just part of a new adventure, right?

Right?

—Emma S.

Comments: 0

My sister loves me. I'm sure she does. But we come from practical stock: good, solid English grandparents, sensible and organized parents. She's true to her roots. My more—ah—unique ideas have never met with her approval.

The conversation we had earlier today did not go well.

“Emma, you are completely, entirely, without-a-doubt, bat-shit crazy.”

“I'm not crazy. I just—I just need to do this, Soph. I'm not asking for your approval.”

“You wouldn't get it if you were.” She held up a finger. “In the first place, you've hardly been anywhere, and never on your own.”

“Then it's high time I tried it, right?”

She glanced over her shoulder, pushed her chair back, and closed her office door. Behind the glass walls, sensible people buzzed by, doing sensible, salary-earning work, and living sensible lives. With Sophia that worked up, I was relieved I hadn't mentioned the whole searching-for-Jamie blog thing when I said I was leaving. No need to stir the pot even further.

Luckily, my sister is not an Internet time-waster. There are not, in her words, enough hours in the day to “squander a single minute reading the uneducated drivel produced by people with too much time on their hands.” All the better.

But I digress.

My sister is a broker. (Funny, really, considering I've always been the broker one . . .) Sophia's position as CFO of Angst & Argot was hard-won, and as a rule, she doesn't tolerate interruptions in her day. But when I'd emailed her with my plans, she'd called me immediately and insisted I stop by her office.

“Look,” she continued, perching on the corner of her desk in her Ann Taylor suit. “I know you've been struggling at work. And . . . I'm sorry the thing with Egon didn't work out.”

I raised my eyebrows. “You’re sorry? You were against my relationship with Egon from the start. ‘He’s a graphic artist, Emma. He drinks lattes, for Christ’s sake. And what kind of name is Egon, anyway? It’s the name of a flake. He’s nothing but a latte-drinking hipster-artist flake.’”

She shrugged and directed her gaze out at the thirty-eighth-floor vista. The Chicago skyline had the dark and lowering look it often has in February, reminding us resident mortals that winter isn’t even half done with us yet. My sister blinked at me. “All I’m saying is that no matter how bad things are at home, it’ll get better.”

That made me snort. “I’m not struggling with my sexuality here, Sophia. I’m not suicidal.”

“Egon was all wrong for you, Em. You just need to find the right man. If it’s about a guy, why not try Internet dating again? Didn’t you meet Egon online? You can find someone without leaving the country.”

“This is not about a man,” I said, waving my hand as dismissively as I could manage. “I’m just going to leave town for a while.”

“On a fool’s errand. A journey to nowhere.”

“Scotland is not nowhere. It’s a viable tourist destination.”

It was her turn to make a disgusting nasal sound.

“Maybe in July. Take a look out there, Emma. It’s the dead of winter, and we’re in a civilized country. In Scotland, it’ll be sleet and snow and no sun for six more months at least. If you’re going to run away, why not head for the Caribbean? Maybe you’ll meet a rich guy who’ll make you forget all about Egon and his penchant for teenagers.”

That was hard to take sitting down, so I stood up.

It was hard to take standing up, too, but by that time, I’d at least thought of a response.

“Tiffany’s twenty, and he’s welcome to her,” I retorted. “Anyway, the whole thing with Egon was over almost a year ago. And I don’t want to go to the Caribbean for a fling. I’m almost thirty. I’m embracing my agency as a woman. I need to see if I can have an actual life experience.”

Sophia slammed her fist down on the desk. It looked like a gesture a CFO would make. I think maybe she’d been practicing. “I knew it! This idea has midlife crisis written all over it. Listen, Emma, what you should be doing right now is finding a decent job and solidifying your financial portfolio. You’re halfway to retirement age. You can’t start ticking things off your bucket list when you don’t even own a bucket.”

She was, of course, depressingly correct. Halfway to retirement, and I’ve never even held a job that offered benefits. But I was disinclined to remind her of that fact; and anyway, there was no arguing with my sister when she was on a roll. That she’s two years younger than I am didn’t help, either.

So I began to nod—and back away, slowly. “Okay, Soph. I’ll think about it, I swear.”

Her phone rang, and she held up a hand. “Wait a sec, I’ll just put this on hold. Sophia Sheridan, here—”

But as soon as she picked up the phone, I waved back, smiled apologetically, gave her the universal finger-thumb gesture that I would call her—and bolted.

She didn’t need to know that I hadn’t exactly quit my job. Or that I was in the process of selling everything I

owned.

Feeling Fine . . .

1:00 a.m., February 17

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Warm family good-byes are behind me, and preparations for the trip are well under way. Scotland, here I come!

—ES

Comments: 0

Feeling fine? Feeling freaked, more like. I'd wakened in the morning after a night spent alternately panicking between "Oh my god! What have I done?" and trying to remember how to attain Savasana. Since I'd attended my last yoga class when I was twenty-three, mostly the panic won.

In the end, I decided the best way to combat panic was action, so I dragged myself out of bed and headed downtown to have business cards printed up. Nothing says "Take Me Seriously" like a business card, right? By the time I got downtown, I'd decided on a design in my head and everything, but I spent a long time looking at the various fonts and so on to make sure it was perfect. When I placed the order, it seemed insane to have more than about twenty done, but the printers had a special deal for a hundred and fifty at half price, so I went for it.

FINDINGFRASER.COM

a blog

by EMMA SHERIDAN

A couple of hours later, when I picked them up, I realized I had forgotten to specify any contact information on the cards. They were beautiful, all right. A creamy off-white with raised print and a serious-feeling heft to them. But no number. No email address.

This wasn't such a bad thing. My cell phone plan was ending in a week or so, anyway, and I wanted people to reach me through the blog. But—looking at those cards—god, things suddenly seemed so real.

So serious.

I hurried home before panic had me raving in the streets.

By noon I was lying on my back on my apartment floor, breathing into a fishy-smelling paper bag rescued from an old lunch I'd somehow forgotten in the back of the fridge. Which had never happened to me before. I cannot recall missing a meal for any reason since I had my tonsils removed when I was seven. It clearly speaks to the unsettled nature of my mind. Or maybe the fact it was tuna on rye. I really hate tuna.

I would have tried elevating my feet on the couch, but the guys from Goodwill had come and taken it away. The removal of the couch made it seem like everything was happening so fast, and the paper bag just wasn't cutting it; so I thought, Fuck it, and drank the last of the Chablis in the fridge. It was early, I knew, but I'd have to clean out the fridge at some point, right? Good enough reason on its own. Besides, the wine was in a box. Juice comes in a box, and people drink juice at two in the afternoon all the time.

Right?

The paper bag smelled like tuna, okay? And there's a reason I hate tuna. All fish, really.

I haven't always hated fish. Barbecued salmon. Golden-fried halibut. Even oysters in the half-shell. Used to love 'em all.

Not anymore. I lay on the floor beside the empty Chablis box and remembered . . .

The old clock by the front door had chimed eight that night as I set the shrimp cocktail on the table. It was our first anniversary and I was determined to do it right. A veritable feast was lined up, ready to serve after the shrimp: creamy clam chowder to start, pan-fried trout for the main course, and an enormous chocolate torte for dessert.

Egon showed up at eight fifteen with a pink posy in one hand—and his assistant, Tiffany, in the other. “Tiff’s fridge broke down today,” he said, setting the wilted flower in the center of the table.

Tiffany wriggled between Egon and the table. “Oh, Emma, you are so kind to include me,” she gushed. “I swore I wouldn’t disturb your special night with Egon, but he insisted you’d put on an enormous spread and I wouldn’t be in the way.”

That girl sucked those shrimp back like a Dyson. Egon had smiled indulgently and pushed the plate closer to her.

In retrospect, perhaps I should have taken the three of us eating our anniversary dinner as a sign. Because within six months, Tiffany was serving all-you-can-eat lobster dinners for two in my old apartment, and I haven't eaten seafood since.

Strangely, though, the break-up dinner didn't affect my feelings for chocolate tortes.

So, yeah, I'd sworn to Sophia my plan wasn't about a man. Egon had cured me of Internet dating for life, but that didn't mean I didn't have a few good memories. Still, by three, the crying jag brought on by the old Chablis and the pictures of Egon on the mantle that I'd drunkenly begun to pack was over.

The crying was over, and so were the pictures.

Over the balcony railing, as a matter of fact.

That shattering noise glass makes on pavement?

Extremely satisfying.

I finished sweeping the entire parking lot free of glass by five thirty. My building's Super is small, but she has great deductive reasoning—and she carries a big stick. (Literally. It's her son's old baseball bat. This neighborhood can be rough at night.)

She also had my security-deposit check in her pocket, which she threatened to tear up if I didn't get my ass downstairs to clean up the mess I'd made.

When I dumped the last of my shattered memories into the bin, she nodded stiffly. "Men are dicks," she said. "They can't help it."

It was the closest thing to sympathy I'd received all week. I burst into tears, but she brandished the bat at me when I leaned in for a hug.

I figured I could live with that, seeing as she did give me the check.

Figure Four . . .

8:45 p.m., February 18

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Less than a week before my plane leaves. I'm actually flying out of JFK in New York, so I'm going to have to get myself across four states in that time. I haven't quite sorted this out, as yet. But it is all coming together.

I'm really confident—and excited!

—ES

Comments: 1

SexxyGrrl:

I very pleased follow love. Good to follow love.

Buy Gold watches here: watcherini.nairobi.com

It was not all coming together.

And with every day, the blog seemed to be rapidly morphing from true-life travelogue to creative nonfiction.

I decided I was okay with that. Reality TV notwithstanding, public humiliation is not all it's cracked up to be. Let the world see my best self, right?

And I had managed to find myself a killer deal on the plane ticket, even with the cost of the bus trip to New York tacked on.

My sister had left six messages on my cell phone, alternately haranguing me about shirking my family duties and reminding me to call our mother, so maybe she could talk some sense into me.

I did not call our mother.

Instead, I sold the last of my furniture. The worst was saying good-bye to my Xbox. No more dragon slaying in my future. It's like—well, it's kind of like saying good-bye to my youth. I mean, I didn't even have to give up the Xbox when I got married, for god's sake. And it's not like I've been playing Dragon Age anywhere near as much as I was two years ago.

But still. It hurts.

On the other hand, the Super's son paid thirty bucks for my old bed. I didn't tell him it was the same double bed I'd had since I was seventeen. Kinda sorry to see it go, but really? It's time. Everything has to go for this trip to even happen. And for it to mean anything at all? I need to make a complete break from the old Emma.

By afternoon, I found myself waiting at the passport office. I got there on time for my appointment, but they seemed to be running late and I ended up sitting in the waiting area, roasting in my coat and boots. My number was B48, and with only two officers on duty, the numbers crawled by painfully slowly.

A woman seated in a chair just in front of me was reading her Kindle, and I mentally kicked myself for

forgetting to bring a book or a newspaper. With nothing else to do, I began killing time making notes for my next blog post. I was jotting a list of things I'd rather do than wait with fifty strangers for a passport when, out of the blue, the woman made a little involuntary sound.

I recognized that sound. Half gasp, half sigh. I had made it myself.

Over her shoulder I saw a single word, and I knew in an instant what she was reading.

One of the interview windows opened up, and the red digital number on the wall pinged as it changed. B47. No one moved. I gathered my papers together, hoping they'd just go to the next number, when the woman in front of me suddenly jumped up. Her handbag and papers cascaded off her lap onto the floor.

"That's me," she said loudly, pointing at the number on the wall, and scrambling to pick up her papers.

I knelt down and handed her two of the pages that had fallen near my feet.

"Thank you," she said, jamming the Kindle into her handbag.

I grinned at her. "Outlander?" I said.

The smile on her face turned to puzzlement. "Voyager," she replied.

I nodded knowingly. "Oh, right. Must be the post-reunion scene?"

She stared at me suspiciously. "Have you been reading over my shoulder?"

I winced. "Not—not really. Claire's name just jumped out at me."

She raised a skeptical eyebrow and hurried off to the open window.

When my turn finally came, I paid the fee and picked up my passport. My photo looked like the face of someone who could drive a splintery wooden stake through a newborn puppy's heart.

So, just about like usual. A bit better than my driver's license, actually.

As I stepped into the elevator, mentally calculating if the money I got from the bed would justify a stay in a New York hotel instead of a hostel, someone touched my shoulder.

It was the woman with the Kindle.

"Are you a writer?" she blurted, looking pointedly at my notebook. She had one hand buried deep in her handbag.

I started to shake my head, and then rethought it. "Well—I blog a bit," I said.

She narrowed her eyes and shot a look at my abdomen. "Mommy blogger?"

"I'm not pregnant," I said. "I just ate Indian food for lunch."

She shrugged, but didn't apologize. "So—book blogger, then?"

"No. It's more of a personal journal. About a trip I'm taking. A—a travel blog."

The doors opened. “Oh. Never mind, then.” She turned on her heel and sped off toward the entranceway.

I hurried after her. “Wait a sec,” I called, as she descended the marble steps. “Why did you think—I mean, how did you know I’m a writer?”

She stopped on the stair below me. “Only a blogger,” she corrected, and then paused for a minute, staring up at me.

“You were scribbling in that notebook, is all,” she said, at last. “And since you knew the books, well—I thought you might be interested in this convention.”

She dug deep into her handbag, and then thrust a flyer into my hands. It was heavily creased, and in the time I took to unfold it, she had her hand on the front door.

“What is it?” I cried out, unable to read and catch up at the same time.

I could feel the rush of cold wind as she opened the door below me. I heard her voice, borne on a wave of city traffic noise. “Love Is in the Air!” she yelled, the slam of the door cutting off her last word.

I was left standing in the entranceway, clutching my passport and a crumpled piece of hot-pink paper.

Feet Forward . . .

4:30 p.m., February 19

Somewhere past Cleveland on the I-90, USA

I’m on the road, at last. The journey begins with a bus ride. First stop: Philadelphia. Heading east, toward adventure. Forward!

—ES

Comments: 2

SexxyGrrl:

I heart adventure. Adventure good to love. Buy Gold watches here: watcherini.nairobi.com

JohnHarrison, Houston, USA:

God’s Love Pays. Earn 25 000 000. Learn MORE: watcherini.nairobi.com

Philadelphia. The city of brotherly love.

Why Philadelphia? Why not straight to New York?

All because of one little pink flyer containing one significant piece of information. Something that could change the whole nature of this journey.

Someone.

I closed the lid to my laptop. The truth was, adventure was less exhilarating than it was actually nauseating. The original plan—admittedly made in the heat of the just-been-fired-on-my-birthday moment—had been to grab the cheapest flight I could find. That it meant a bus trip across four states (five, if you count Illinois) didn't even faze me. Part of the adventure, right?

And then Kindle Lady had come along and handed me a flyer that essentially said, "Yes, Emma—this is the right decision. Follow your heart and you'll find your Fraser."

Amazing how reality can slide down your neck like a trickle of winter sleet.

My stomach was in knots. An hour earlier, when I'd stepped off the slushy street and onto the bus, I'd remembered Sophia's jab. She was right, too. This trip would be the first time I had traveled completely solo in my whole life. Pathetic for someone teetering on the scary precipice of thirty years old, but true. Then the bus had pulled out and it was too late to turn back. I was on the road.

To commemorate the event, I posted to my blog using Wi-Fi on a moving vehicle for the first time ever.

That was kind of nauseating, too, come to think of it.

The only good part was that I hadn't stopped to call anyone. Not my mother, not my sister, not even my friend, Jazmin. I texted them all, instead. To say I was on my way. To say I loved them.

To say I was terrified.

I hadn't actually typed out the last bit. Sophia would have had the police searching for me if I had. As it was, I got a cheery "Have a great time, check in when you can!" back from my mother. Sophia's text held lower hopes for me. "Don't expect me to rescue you if you get into trouble." And Jazmin didn't reply at all.

That was okay, though, because before I'd left, I'd told her about the blog. She was a huge Jamie fan, too, and she'd sworn she would have come with me if she'd had the courage. She'd even promised to follow the blog. Now, I love my Jazzy-girl, but she doesn't know an RSS feed from her grass seed. (She's a landscape architect. Really good, too.) But since she is too much of a Luddite to even return a text, I have a plan. Once I get off this rocking bus and into Philadelphia, I'll find me some free Wi-Fi at a coffee shop and link the blog to my Facebook page. Jazmin will be able to manage that, at least. She loves Facebook.

So, yeah. As I sat on the bus rocketing past the brown slush-guttered suburbs of Chicago, my laptop and the sum total of everything else I brought were stowed in my backpack. I don't think I've owned so little property in—well, in my whole life. Growing up, I had all the comforts a middle-class home could offer. Even as a freshman, I lived in a college dorm packed with stuff: books, clothes, and everything else. My hair products alone filled an entire closet. In those long-ago days, my life would have ended if anyone even suspected I had curly hair. What would the younger version of me have thought if she knew I'd actually sold my flat iron to help finance a trip to Scotland?

This was different. It felt real. It felt really . . . scary.

I leaned forward on the seat, clutched my stomach, and closed my eyes. I tried talking myself through it.

Okay, Sheridan, focus. Selling everything means a fresh start. It means you can spend two full months looking for your Fraser. And anyway, it's only Philadelphia—you're not leaving the good old US of A just yet.

Deep breath. Deep breath.

Where was that damn tuna-smelling sandwich bag when I needed it?

The bus began slowing down, so I made a snap decision to just step out a minute and get a breath of air. Real, clean, not-very-far-from-Chicago air.

It had taken a few minutes, but in the immortal words my sister, Sophia, stole from a far better cause, things got better.

Really.

It had been a bit of a close one, though. I'd never had a full-blown panic attack on a public vehicle before. Once the screaming stopped, of course, things definitely improved.

That moment, when the bus was slowing down? Well, it turned out the bus had only been gearing down to take a curve, and the driver had no intention of pausing to let one worried passenger out to breathe a bit of fresh air.

And to clarify? It wasn't me screaming.

My jaws were locked together in terror, just as tightly as my hands were clamped around the exit door, which apparently affected the driver's ability to control the vehicle, somehow. And maybe the radio to his dispatcher transmitted his screaming? At any rate, in the end, the police were able to slow the bus down by maneuvering their cars in front of it.

The driver got the rest of the night off, so no need to feel too bad for him. And afterward, when everyone had calmed down a bit, I had a nice chat with a very personable police officer, who told me he'd had panic attacks in his twenties, too.

"Twenty-nine was the worst," he said. "I freaked out one night and beat the shit out of this teenage kid. Thought I was going to lose my job. But, the kid turned out to be Muslim, so you know, in the end all I got was sensitivity training and a transfer, and here I am today, helping talk you down."

Strangely disconcerting and comforting at the same time. Nothing like a cuddly racist to make a person feel better about herself.

The racist cop sent the first bus on its way once they'd dragged me off in Pittsburgh, and left me with his

partner to wait for the next bus. The bus station where we were sitting smelled of urine and old socks, but it was pretty late and I was sitting with a cop, so I tried not to think about it.

“So, why Philadelphia?” she said, over our second cup of coffee.

I fished around in my pack and pulled out the flyer.

“Love Is in the Air, huh?” she said, glancing at the headline. “So, you’re a writer, then. Well, that explains a lot.”

“Blogger, actually,” I said. “I’m on a bit of a travel adventure. This is kind of a side trip. There’s—well, there’s someone at this event I really need to meet.”

The officer returned to reading the flyer, and when she got to the bottom, her eyes snapped up to meet mine. “Jeesely H Roosevelt Christ,” she said, and her voice filled with a sudden reverence. “Do you see who’s the guest of honor?”

I nodded slowly. “So—you’ve read the books?”

“Are you freaking kidding me? My husband gave them to me the year we got married. I lost a whole summer to, well . . . to mmphm.”

“Your husband? Whoa.” I was impressed. “My ex wouldn’t read a book to save his life. Only had eyes for the Blackhawks, that man. And his girlfriend, of course.”

She nodded at me sympathetically. “Divorced, huh? Aw, you’re probably better off without the bum.”

“It only lasted a year,” I mumbled.

She leaned across the table and pointed her spoon at me. “Well, in our case, that book is the recipe for a happy marriage, I tell ya. A man who aspires to be like Jamie Fraser is one in a million. My guy? Well, let’s just say that the year *An Echo in the Bone* came out, he didn’t watch a single playoff game. And the Penguins were going for the cup that season.”

The things you learn from cops in bus stations.

She was one hundred percent right. I should have known Egon was wrong for me the minute he said he didn’t read romances.

A. Historical fiction is not romance.

B. What the hell is wrong with reading romance, anyway?

And C.? He didn’t read anything at all, really.

I should have known.

When my bus pulled up a few minutes later, the cop hugged me warmly and tucked an Ativan out of her own stash into my pocket to ward off any relapses.

“You’ll love Philadelphia,” she said. “But watch out for the ladies who are putting on your shindig. There’s a romance writing group near here in Erie, and let me just say—we’ve been called out to a few of their parties.

Some of those chicks are decently hard core.”

I waved through the window until she was just a teeny blue dot in the distance. Nice to know that even a cop could see the value of following a dream.

Fortuitous Fate . . .

3:30 p.m., February 20

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

The most important news for today is that I have mastered the comment anti-spam function. Because there may not be many actual readers out there, but holy crow—is my blog being followed by a lot of bots.

Okay, I’m lying.

Because the most important news is that I have actually made it into a special mini-convention, sponsored by an organization for writers of romantic fiction. Yes, the very convention advertised on a certain hot-pink flyer handed to me in Chicago.

Fate smiled on me that day.

Apparently, the convention has been planned to celebrate Something Special. (Also? I note that the flyer tended to Randomly Capitalize Important Items. Jane Austen, your influence has now extended into its third century . . .)

This particular Something Special is an industry award. And that it is an award given to someone who has never claimed to be a romance writer (nor an Overuser of Excessive Capitalization) is what makes it all the more interesting.

Yes. It’s true. I have signed up to attend a convention where the guest speaker is the creator of the man I seek.

Herself.

Should I have skipped this event and gone straight through to New York City? What would you have done?

—ES

Comments: 0

So, yeah—it turned out the commenters on my blog had all been bots. When I checked back, there wasn't a single voice of support for my adventure. Nor a single vote of dissent, if you come right down to it.

But that's okay. I don't need external validation. Something—something larger than me is guiding this journey. Otherwise, how do you explain the presence of Herself in the very city I've ended up in?

Fine, so technically I didn't need to travel to Philadelphia in order to make my cheap New York flight. But it was pretty much on the way. I had to get to New York somehow. And the very thought of meeting Herself in the flesh made my hands start to shake. She was the woman who created Jamie Fraser, who built him up from clay—or from ink and paper, at least. She has gone on to beat him, wound him, torture him in every possible way, and still nurture his unending love for Claire over the course of the entire series.

The questions I had? Beyond number. The chance to meet Her, to talk with Her about Jamie, to ask Her where I should best seek out a real flesh-and-blood version of him? It was just too good to pass up.

When I'd finally made it into Philadelphia (with the help of the cop's Ativan), I discovered the station happened to be fewer than three blocks from the hotel where the event was being held.

It was meant to be.

The hike from the bus station had given me a chance to stretch my legs and allow the icy Philadelphia wind to blow away the last of the anxiety. I'd made it. I was still on American soil, but the journey was truly under way. And as I stepped up to the hotel doors, a doorman in a top hat swept forward and held it open for me.

An open door held by a handsome man felt like an omen.

There was a small registration booth set up in the foyer. The special hotel rate offered to convention-goers was just about triple what I had budgeted to spend, but a hotel stay was not mandatory.

"We have loads of locals coming in," the lady behind the desk said. "In fact, the Belles are upstairs right now, planning a celebration for after the signing tomorrow."

I didn't know what bells she meant but nodded anyway, mentally calculating the distance from the hotel venue to the nearest hostel. A mere fifteen blocks away. Nothing more than a quick and easy cab ride.

I was, however, required to join the romance writing group.

"Members-only event," chirped the ever-helpful lady behind the desk. "Are you a published writer?"

I thought about the little message that popped up every time I entered a blog post. Please wait—post publishing . . .

"Oh, yes," I assured her. "That is—if published writers get a discount . . . ?"

They did indeed.

I handed over the thirty-five bucks for membership and decided a city bus would do just as well as a taxi in the morning.

". . . And as a member, you only have to pay twenty-five dollars to attend the convention!" she said, exuding charm and delight from every pore.

I've heard Philadelphia is a lovely city to walk through. Guess I'm going to find out soon enough.

Forever Fan . . .

Noon, February 21

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Seventeen blocks through downtown Philadelphia in February. NOT for the faint of heart or the unscarved of face. And yeah, it was seventeen. Seems I miscounted on the local map yesterday. But I'm here at last. I have my lanyard declaring me a writer in good standing. I have my dog-eared copy of *Outlander*, for Herself to sign. (Glory!) AND I have access to the hotel's free Wi-Fi on the main floor, which is where I am sitting as I type this. Literally. On the floor. Because the lineup for the signing was already three hundred people long when I got here at 9 a.m.

There are other convention events throughout the day, but the author, it turns out, will not be speaking here. She'll sign books, accept the award, and be spirited away by some time this evening.

Clearly, the gods of time travel shine on me today. Claire Elizabeth Beauchamp Randall Fraser might have been a somewhat unwilling interdimensional wanderer, but I am not. I plan to sit here on the floor and trace out Claire's journey on the map inside the cover of my copy of the book. It will be the blueprint for my journey. I shall walk in her footsteps.

For that reason, I will not be attending the panel on the Value of Vivid Verbs, nor the likely very instructive talk on Whipping Up Sex Scenes by Adding Leather.

I am in line for a chance to meet the author of the man of my dreams.

The organizers here tell me I may only have time for one question.

The agony . . .

—ES

Comments: 0

Full Failure . . .

11:15 p.m., February 21

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Totally, totally blew it.

Complete and utter failure.

I don't deserve to live . . .

And now, she's gone for good. I saw the whole entourage group pack up and leave over an hour ago. There was no sadness in her wake, however. All night this bar has been filled with cheery women bubbling with joy over their encounters with her. How sweet she is. How considerate. Great sense of humor—joking about her writer's cramp after five hundred signatures—imagine!

My only hope is that the river of eager faces demanding signatures obliterates her memory of the encounter with me forever.

I wonder if anyone has ever managed to actually drown in a martini?

—ES

Comments: 0

“Well, that's a long face. Howie, I swear that's the longest face we've seen tonight, wouldn't you say?” The woman leered cheerfully at me as she balanced two beers in one hand and slapped her companion on the shoulder with the other.

I smiled guiltily, swiveled my stool in the other direction, and slid my laptop into my bag. The woman was not put off by my chilliness. In fact, she appeared to take it as a challenge.

“I'm guessing you got here too late for the autograph line. Am I right? AMIRIGHT?” She nudged me with an elbow, which had the effect of spinning me back into her presence.

I swirled the olive around in my glass, but there was no escape. The woman downed her beer in a single gulp and beamed at me.

I took a shaky breath. “No—no. She signed my book. She was lovely.”

The woman slapped the empty mug onto the bar, and, using only that same right elbow, slid the other beer to the man known as Howie, with impressive agility. She was a bear of a woman, six feet tall in her stockinged feet—which I can entirely attest to, since for some reason she was not actually wearing shoes—with a halo of gray wiry hair that reminded me somewhat endearingly of a dead dandelion. She wore an enormous cross between a caftan and a housedress in an eye-searing combination of green-purple-and-pink plaid.

Her companion was a tidy little man perhaps half a foot shorter, with four or five strands of hair neatly pasted across the crown of his head. He stood out not for his height or his shiny baldness, but simply for his gender. Apart from the busboy, he was the only male I could discern in the vicinity.

“Then why so glum?” the woman shouted, easily drowning out the vaguely Celtic Muzak that had begun emanating from somewhere in the ceiling. She slapped her hand on the bar. “Give this lady another martini,” she demanded. The bartender had a new glass in my hand before my ears stopped ringing from the command.

I fished around in my bag for my wallet, but a large hand came down on my own before I could pull it out. “It’s on me, honey,” she said, using her talented right elbow to lever Howie off the stool he’d been sitting on.

“Sharan Stone,” she bellowed, and held out her giant hand for me to shake. “Not the movie star,” she clarified, and guffawed loudly. “Though Howie thinks I am, dontcha, How?”

The little man crinkled his eyes at her and nodded, burying his moustache in his beer.

“I’d better be going,” I said, standing up. “Thanks for the drink.”

“Aw, honey, the party’s just starting,” Sharan Stone said. “And you shore look like you could use some cheering up. But never fear—you’re with the Belles, now, and whatever’s got you down is gonna be history fer sure. Check this out.”

She stood up so forcefully the stool she’d usurped from Howie flew backward and took out the busboy.

I was standing by this point, too, but one of those big hands clapped onto my shoulder and my knees gave out. I collapsed back down onto my stool, shocked into sobriety by sheer terror.

Sharan Stone put a finger and thumb into her mouth and blew the most piercing whistle I’d heard since grade school. The bar fell instantly silent.

“Belles!” she cried, and a cheer went up around me. I began to feel that I’d fallen into some bizarro-dream scenario, so I took a big gulp of the martini.

“Belles,” repeated Sharan Stone, “I do believe we’ve waited long enough.”

Her voice, which likely had some decent staying power even at regular conversational levels, rose to a crescendo. “It’s time for Ja-a-a-a-A-A-A-A-MIE!”

I clapped my hands over my ears as everyone around me took up the chant.

“Jaaa-MIE, Jaaa-MIE, JAAA-MIE!!!”

I say everyone, but in the sea of women chanting Jamie’s name, Howie sat placidly, still sipping his beer with a gentle smile on his face.

“Jaaa-MIE, Jaaa-MIE, JAAA-MIE!!!” the crowd roared.

And in he came.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Enoch Dutton:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? Yeah, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or read a book eligible Finding Fraser? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have different opinion?

Patrick Pierce:

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Delores Villarreal:

Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book particularly book entitled Finding Fraser your head will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely will end up your mind friends. Imaging just about every word written in a reserve then become one application form conclusion and explanation which maybe you never get previous to. The Finding Fraser giving you an additional experience more than blown away your head but also giving you useful info for your better life in this era. So now let us teach you the relaxing pattern at this point is your body and mind is going to be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a sport. Do you want to try this extraordinary spending spare time activity?

Lucia Stevenson:

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