

A CHANCE AT LOVE

BY:

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*Dedicated to my loving wife.
For all the years she has put up with me
And many more to come.*

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PROLOGUE

Love isn't difficult to find in a world full of people that love themselves. What is difficult to find is true love, a love not only worth fighting for, but worth all the pain and heartache that comes along with it.

When I met the love of my life, I knew there was something different about her. She was able to invoke something within me that I hadn't felt before. While I was quite young at the time and much of what I was experiencing had to do with hormones, I knew deep down that she'd be special to me forever.

With over two hundred billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy and over a hundred billion total planets, I didn't care about anything other than being with her, no matter what.

When I fell in love with her, I was already beginning to fall in love with the Lord. My name is Kyle Reynolds, and this is my story.

CHAPTER 1

The smell of pizza baking in the oven filled the air as I leaned against the counter at Pilo's Pizza Parlor on the corner of Monroe and 7th. I watched as my manager, Jessica, pulled a pizza from the oven. She moved gracefully as she twirled from the oven and over to the counter. The pizza slid off the pan and onto the cutting board. As she began to slice, I contemplated my life. Was I destined to deliver pizzas? Then she picked up the cutting board and slid the slices into the box and went back over to the oven to grab another pie. While she seemed to love the work, I loathed it.

The phone on the wall near the map of Spokane rang, breaking me from my thoughts. Reaching an arm over, I lifted it and answered.

"Pilo's Pizza Parlor, pizza pies piled sky high. This is Kyle."

Being a pizza delivery guy wasn't exactly how I envisioned my life, but it was a job that put cash in my pocket while I searched for my purpose in the universe. My parents, Frank and Lucy, told me last summer after I graduated high school that I could take a year to figure out what I was going to do. They were a lot nicer than my buddy, Jake's, parents, who told him to move out the day after we graduated.

"Order up," Jessica said, stacking the boxes on one another as she glared at me. I tried not to make eye contact with her as I closed out of the order I had just input into the computer and hung up the phone.

Walking over to the pizzas she had boxed, I grabbed one of the delivery bags off the nearby counter and began loading them. I tried to be quick, but I wasn't fast enough. She came over.

"Try to be more careful with the pizza this time, Kyle. I know it's really hard to do your job," Jessica spewed as she walked by. She might have been an artist with pizza, but her heart wasn't bigger than a bristle on a paintbrush.

Closing up the delivery bag, I rested my arm on it and watched her walk by. “The dog tripped me, and I don’t think it had anything to do with my not being *careful* enough.”

She ignored me and placed a ball of dough down onto a pan and began working the new order that had just come in. Setting the bag of pizzas down on the counter, I walked over to her.

“Why do you insist on being so rude?”

She paused and looked over at me with a surprised look on her face. “Why do you insist on not doing your job? Some of us *need* to work and don’t just live at home with parents who take care of everything for us.” She returned to making the pizza, grabbing the Italian sausage as she went further down the line.

Withholding the desire to say more, I stepped away and grabbed my delivery bag. Heading over to the map on the wall, I checked the address for the order. “A church?” I said out loud as the back door opened.

“You think Christians can’t eat pizza?” Mike said as he stomped the snow off of his boots. He was a delivery guy like me, just older—way older. Mike, in a non-threatening kind of way, terrified me. He had been slinging pepperonis and fighting back dogs on doorsteps for twenty years now. I didn’t want to become that. I had to figure something out for my life.

“I think they can eat pizza,” I replied. “Churches just make me feel like . . . I don’t know. Confused. It’s *God’s* house, right?”

He nodded.

“So, like, it’s strange for me to think that God could be hanging out in there.” I laughed. “I don’t know.” Turning my eyes back to the map on the wall, I mentally mapped out the route I’d take and then started walking toward the back door.

Mike’s icy hand patted my shoulder as I walked by him. Looking over, he flashed a smile, that same big, ridiculous smile he always carried with him.

“Be careful on those roads, little man,” he said. “They’re slicking up real good now that the sun is down. Saw two wrecks on the way back from my delivery.”

“Thanks for the heads up, Mike.” I tipped him a nod and left.



Getting up to the church doors, I gave them a firm knock and took a step back. As I waited for someone to arrive, I took a look around the parking lot and pondered what they could be doing at church in the middle of the week.

The doors opened.

A man with a confused look stood in the doorway staring at me. “They weren’t locked, were they?”

“I . . . I didn’t know,” I replied, forcing a half-smile. I held the bag in one arm as I pulled the pizzas out and handed them over.

“Those roads pretty treacherous out there?” he asked as he handed me the money.

I nodded. I began to pull bills out to give him his change.

“Keep it,” he said, putting his hand out to stop me from breaking the hundred-dollar bill.

I shook my head. “That’s a hundred-dollar bill, sir. I’ll get your change.”

As my head was down, the doors of the church shut and the man was gone. Pausing for a moment, I thought to myself as I looked at the change in my hand. What on earth? Why would he give me a hundred for a twenty-five-dollar order?

Following after him, I went inside and came into a lobby-type area and looked around for the guy. My eyes fell onto a large bay window that led into a sanctuary. Walking over, I peered in and saw that he was already down the aisle and in the front pew.

I went through one of the doors, but I stopped for a moment when I saw a pretty girl about my age up on the stage. She looked toward me for a second and I could feel my heart’s flame of desire flicker. Maybe this was truly God’s house, because I was pretty sure she was an angel. She had curly brunette hair that shone and shimmered in the lights that were shining down onto the stage. Her lips were a soft pink color, and she had an

innocence about her that made the frostbite that was nipping at my toes and fingers melt away.

The guy saw her looking at me, and while I stood stupefied by her beauty, he hollered across the sanctuary. “Pizza boy, what are you still doing here?”

Snapping out of it, I hurried down the rest of the aisle and came over to him. “Here’s your change, dude.”

“I said to keep that. Why would you bring it to me?”

“I don’t need charity. You’re crazy.”

“It’s a tip. It ain’t crazy.”

“I know what it is. It’s just *too much* of a tip. I don’t like that.”

The girl up on stage started giggling a little and cupping her mouth as she turned her back toward us. I smiled in her direction for a moment. *She thought I was funny*, I thought to myself. Turning back to the crazy man, I set the money down beside the boxes of pizza on the pew since he wouldn’t take it.

“There’s your change. I took a five for the tip.”

Turning, I headed out of the sanctuary and to my car.



Getting home that night, I found both of my parents still burning the night away with their friends that they had over for their annual Christmas party. My sister, Joanie, and I weren’t allowed to hang out in the living room during those occasions. Banishment to the basement to entertain the toddlers and other children that came along with their parents was standard protocol. It was usually my job, but luckily I had to work that night so the responsibility fell on Joanie.

Walking down the stairs, I immediately laughed at the sight of Joanie. She was covered in clown make-up and her hair was up in a jumbled mess.

“Thank goodness you’re here,” she said, standing up in the midst of the dozen or so kids.

“But Jooooannnieeee,” one of the little girls said while she tugged at my sister’s shirt.

The other kids were pleading for her to stay. “You’re our queen!” they chanted. I laughed as I came over and said with an excited tone, “Who wants to build a fort?”

All the kids abandoned their queen at my words and rushed over to me as I stood at the base of the stairs. As I walked farther into the room, Joanie slipped away and up the stairs to make her escape.

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