

Nicholas Sparks'
A Walk to Remember:
A Discussion Guide

David Bruce

**DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO
JOSEPHINE SATURDAY BRUCE**

Copyright 2013 by Bruce D. Bruce

Educate Yourself

Read Like A Wolf Eats

Feel Free to Give This Book to Anyone Free of Charge

Be Excellent to Each Other

Books Then, Books Now, Books Forever

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Preface | 1 |
| Prologue | 3 |
| Chapter 1 | 4 |
| Chapter 2 | 11 |
| Chapter 3 | 15 |
| Chapter 4 | 19 |
| Chapter 5 | 23 |
| Chapter 6 | 26 |
| Chapter 7 | 30 |
| Chapter 8 | 35 |
| Chapter 9 | 37 |
| Chapter 10 | 40 |
| Chapter 11 | 43 |
| Chapter 12 | 48 |
| Chapter 13 | 53 |
| Appendix A: Bibliography | 57 |
| Appendix B: Paper Topics | 58 |
| Appendix C: Inconsistencies in <i>A Walk to Remember</i> | 59 |
| Appendix D: Short Reaction Memos | 63 |
| Appendix E: About the Author | 72 |
| Appendix F: Some Books by David Bruce | 73 |
| Appendix G: About Brenda Kennedy (Romance Writer) | 81 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Appendix H: An Excerpt from <i>Shattered Dreams</i> | 84 |
| by Brenda Kennedy | |
| Appendix I: An Excerpt from <i>A New Beginning</i> | 94 |
| by Brenda Kennedy | |
| Appendix J: An Excerpt from <i>A Life Worth Fighting</i> | 104 |
| by Brenda Kennedy | |
| Appendix K: An Excerpt from <i>Forever Country</i> | 109 |
| by Brenda Kennedy | |
| Appendix L: An Excerpt from <i>Forgetting the Past</i> | 120 |
| by Brenda Kennedy | |

Preface

The purpose of this book is educational. I enjoy reading Nicholas Sparks' *A Walk to Remember*, and I believe that it is an excellent book for young adults (and for middle-aged adults such as myself) to read.

This book contains many questions about Nicholas Sparks' *A Walk to Remember* and their answers. I hope that teachers of young adults will find it useful as a guide for discussions. It can also be used for short writing assignments. Students can answer selected questions from this little guide orally or in one or more paragraphs.

I hope to encourage teachers to teach Nicholas Sparks' *A Walk to Remember*, and I hope to lessen the time needed for teachers to prepare to teach this book.

Nicholas Sparks has written many best-selling novels, and I say more power to him. Obviously, he has his finger on the pulse of much of the book-reading public, and this may mean that this book may be successfully used in a class filled with students who are normally non-readers.

This book uses many short quotations from Nicholas Sparks' *A Walk to Remember*. This use is consistent with fair use:

§ 107. Limitations on exclusive rights: Fair use

Release date: 2004-04-30

Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 106 and 106A, the fair use of a copyrighted work, including such use by reproduction in copies or phonorecords or by any other means specified by that section, for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research, is not an infringement of copyright. In determining whether

the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use the factors to be considered shall include —

- (1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- (2) the nature of the copyrighted work;
- (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
- (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

The fact that a work is unpublished shall not itself bar a finding of fair use if such finding is made upon consideration of all the above factors.

Source of Fair Use information:

<<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/17/107>>.

This is a royalty-free book, and I will let anyone download it for free.

Prologue

What do we learn about the narrator in the prologue?

- The narrator's name is Landon Carter.
- He is 57 years old at the time of telling this story.
- He is writing about a year that was important to him. The year began when he was 17 years old.
- He lives in North Carolina, which he calls "one of the most beautiful places in the world" (xii).
- The story he is telling has both joy and sadness.
- When he tells the story, it is the year before the millennium — 1999. Specifically, it is April 12, 1999 — it is spring and "the dogwoods and azaleas are blooming" (xii).
- North Carolina 40 years ago was somewhat different — it was more rural, with dirt roads, at least in the area where the narrator lived.
- Chances are, the narrator is a Baptist, since the young Landon stands outside a Baptist church.

Chapter 1

What kind of a town was Beaufort, North Carolina, in 1958?

- We have already learned that it is rural, with dirt roads.
- The 1950s is the time of Joe McCarthy and fear of Communists, something that is mentioned in this chapter, but which plays little role in this novel.
- The Civil Rights movement has not started. Black people play little or no role in this novel.
- Religion — especially the Baptist religion — plays a big role in the life of the town.
- There doesn't seem to be much entertainment or much to do in the town. There is the annual Christmas play. The high school has a theatrical group — and no doubt sports. Boys and girls date (no birth control yet, but some boys do have cars). A baseball game is briefly mentioned. People can volunteer at the orphanage. People go fishing and crabbing. There are slumber parties, and kids go to Cecil's Diner.
- The year is 1958. The town is Beaufort, North Carolina. We learn that Beaufort is located on the coast. In the summer, it is really, really humid.
- Blackbeard the pirate lived there, and his pirate ship — *Queen Anne's Revenge* — supposedly sank off the coast there.

What do we learn about Hegbert Sullivan in this chapter?

- Hegbert is a Southern Baptist preacher.
- Hegbert is deeply religious. He is against fornication.

- Hegbert has principles. He used to work for Landon's unscrupulous grandfather, but he quit when he discovered how unscrupulous Landon's grandfather was.
- Hegbert is very good at discovering where the little boys who mock him hide. When little Landon calls out, "Hegbert is a fornicator!" (4), Hegbert is able to find him with his eyes.
- Hegbert is a writer. He dislikes *A Christmas Carol*, so he rewrites the ending, which upsets some folks. He then writes his own Christmas play, which is about his family.
- Hegbert's revised ending of *A Christmas Carol* has Scrooge becoming a preacher and going to Jerusalem.
- Hegbert wrote *A Christmas Angel*. It's about a man who is religious but has a crisis of faith when his wife dies in childbirth. He has a daughter who wants a music box that has a picture of an angel on its top. On Christmas Eve, the man is looking through stores trying to find the music box, but he can't find it. He meets a mysterious woman who says she will help him find the music box. First they help a homeless person, visit an orphanage and see some kids, then visit an old woman who wants company. Then the mysterious woman asks Hegbert what HE wants for Christmas. He answers that he wants his wife. The mysterious woman has him look into the city water fountain and tells him that he will find what he wants there. He sees his daughter. He starts crying, and the mysterious woman disappears. He goes home to see his daughter. On Christmas, the music box is under the Christmas tree and the angel drawn on top of the music box looks just like the mysterious woman.
- Hegbert dislikes ghosts — unless God sends them.
- Hegbert has translucent skin and white hair.

- Hegbert married late in life: He married at age 43. He had his daughter, Jamie, at 55. His wife, who was 20 years younger than he, died in childbirth.

What do we learn about Landon Carter's father in this chapter?

- His father is a Congressman.
- His father searches for facts when rooting out Communists. That makes him a good man.
- His father is a politician and can get along with people and come up with a compliment when needed.
- His father lives in Washington, D.C., and is separated from his family for most of the year; because of his work, he is gone for nine months of the year.
- His father does not do with Landon what most boys' fathers do with their sons. Landon says that his father wasn't there for him when he was growing up.
- His father and Hegbert don't get along — possibly because of Landon's grandfather but also because the Congressman looks for facts in rooting out Communists.

What was the Joe McCarthy witch-hunt of the 1950s?

Joseph McCarthy was a Republican Senator from Wisconsin who became famous in February of 1950 when he claimed in a speech that he made in Wheeling, West Virginia, that Communists had infiltrated the State Department. This led to many, many people being falsely accused of being Communist or of having Communist sympathies, and it ruined many lives. Millard Tydings led a Senate investigating committee that investigated the State Department and found no evidence of Communist infiltration. In December of 1954, the Senate voted to censure (reprimand) Joseph McCarthy. His influence

immediately diminished, and he died in 1957. Today, “McCarthyism” is a term that refers to sensationalistic attacks made without evidence.

What do we learn about Landon Carter’s grandfather in this chapter?

- Basically, we learn that Landon Carter’s grandfather is an SOB.
- He started out as a bootlegger during Prohibition, which shows that he started to make his fortune by breaking the law.
- Later, he opened the Carter Banking and Loan. Mysteriously, the competition burned down. No one ever voiced their suspicions because other buildings had mysteriously burned down, too.
- His bank charged high interest rates and acquired much, much property when borrowers defaulted on their loans. He hired these borrowers to take care of the land (as sharecroppers) and promised to sell it back to them, but he never did.
- He did die, but only after a long and apparently happy life. He outlived two wives and his only son (15-16) — so Landon would seem to be fatherless. Apparently, this is an error on Nicholas Sparks’ part since Landon’s father’s father is the unscrupulous grandfather and since Landon’s father is apparently alive in Chapter 2. He (Landon Carter’s grandfather) died on his yacht while he was vacationing off the Cayman Islands with his mistress.
- Landon believes that his grandfather’s life shows that life is not fair.

What do we learn about Jamie Sullivan in this chapter?

- Jamie is very religious. She reads the Bible during her lunch period.
- Jamie is a nonconformist. She doesn't do the things that other kids do. She doesn't care about being popular.
- Jamie wears the same brown cardigan sweater day after day. She also wears a plaid skirt and a white blouse.
- Jamie's hair is in a tight bun, and she never wears makeup.
- Jamie is interested in performing in her father's play. She will play the angel.
- Jamie is a senior in high school just like Landon.
- Jamie is developing into a young woman. She has a couple of bumps on her chest now that weren't there previously, and Landon thinks that she is almost pretty.
- It's a small town, so the children have pretty much grown up together. Landon and Jamie have known each other forever, but they have never been close.
- Jamie does good deeds. She volunteers at the orphanage, and she takes care of hurt animals. Often, she will appear at the local vet's place of business with a hurt animal.
- Jamie believes that God has a plan for everything.
- Jamie is consistently happy — she is always cheerful.
- People like Jamie — at least older people like Jamie. She will be going down the street, and people will give her a glass of lemonade or a piece of pumpkin bread.
- Jamie is glad that Landon is in the drama class.
- Jamie is thin, and she has honey-blond hair and blue eyes.

What do we learn about Landon Carter (the narrator) in this chapter?

- Landon has a reputation as a rebel at this time, although he doesn't do much other than soap a few windows or eat boiled peanuts in the graveyard.
- Landon is starting to notice Jamie.
- Landon is observant.
- Landon is much more of a typical teenager than Jamie is. He was also more of a typical kid, apparently, given that he thought it was funny to yell at Hegbert, "Hegbert is a fornicator!" (4).
- Landon decides to take the Drama class because the only alternative is Chemistry II. He is happy that mainly girls are in the class.

What do we learn about Miss Garber in this chapter?

- Miss Garber is the drama teacher.
- She is overweight (250 pounds) and enthusiastic. She is also tall (6 feet 2).
- Miss Garber has flaming red hair.
- She has freckles and is pale.
- She is very much into self-actualization, self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-fulfillment.
- Miss Garber claps for Jamie.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 1?

The chapter ends like this:

... well, almost pretty. Of course, I dismissed that thought right away, but as she looked around the

room, she stopped and smiled right at me, obviously glad to see that I was in the class. It wasn't until later that I would learn the reason why. (26)

This ending leaves us (the readers) with a question: Why is Jamie glad that Landon is in the drama class? It is not a cliffhanger, but it is a reason to keep on reading.

Chapter 2

Why does Landon run for class president?

- Basically, having class president on your college application looks good. Landon wants to go to college, but he can't go to Yale or Harvard because his grades aren't good enough.
- Apparently, Landon is one of the richest kids in school — his grandfather made the fortune and his father is a U.S. Congressman — but without the grades, he has to forget about Ivy League schools.
- Landon's father is a bit pushy, and he wants Landon to go to college. Because of that, he wants Landon to become senior class president.

What do we learn about Landon's father in this chapter?

- As stated above, Landon's father is a bit pushy, and he wants Landon to go to college. Because of that, he wants Landon to become senior class president.
- Landon is afraid that his father is trying to make him into his own image. We already know that Landon resents his father because his father is away from home for nine months of the year on account of having to be in Washington, D.C. His father and mother want Landon to be raised the same way as his father was raised, so Landon and his mother stay in North Carolina all year.

What do we learn about Eric Hunter in this chapter?

- Landon may be the richest kid in the school, but he is not the most popular. Eric Hunter is the most popular. For one thing, Eric Hunter has a cool name and he is a jock. He is the star quarterback of a team that has won back-to-back state titles. This is a big deal.

- Eric is Landon's best friend, but he doesn't mind teasing Landon a little, such as asking if he has a date for the homecoming dance when he knows that Landon does not have a date.
- Eric gets Landon the jock vote, and so Landon is elected senior class president.

How does Landon win the senior class president election?

- Eric gets Landon the jock vote, and so Landon is elected senior class president. In addition, he gets Landon the vote of the jocks' girlfriends.
- Of course, the election is a popularity contest. It's not like the senior class president does anything important.
- The other contestants are poor candidates in a popularity contest. Maggie Brown is smart, a student politician (student council for three years and the junior class president); unfortunately, she is not pretty and she has gained 20 pounds over the summer, so guys are not going to vote for her. John Foreman is simply annoying — a know-it-all — and no one will vote for him.

What do we learn about Hegbert Sullivan in this chapter?

- He does set rules for his daughter. When Landon arrives to ask Jamie to go to the homecoming dance, he finds out that Hegbert does not allow boys in the house when he is gone. Apparently, he is afraid of fornicators.
- Jamie does respect the rule. She and Landon sit out on the porch.

What do we learn about Jamie Sullivan in this chapter?

- She doesn't seem overly concerned about dating. She had not made plans to go to the homecoming dance, apparently assuming that no one would ask her.
- She does agree to go to the dance with Landon, although she seems to be surprised that he asked her.
- We learn that she and her father had been to a doctor and so she had missed school that day. Landon asks if her father is OK. She smiles as she says that he is healthy.
- We learn that she tells Landon that he must not fall in love with her, although Landon assumes that she is joking. (She laughs when she tells him that.)

What do we learn about Landon Carter (the narrator) in this chapter?

- Landon is a typical teen in many ways. He worries about getting a date to the homecoming date, and he worries about being rejected — and about being rejected in public.
- Landon does have resentments — in some ways, he resents his father.
- Landon is aware that some kids are not popular in school.
- Landon is scared that he may have to go to the homecoming dance alone — or with his mother as his date.

Why does Landon ask Jamie for a date?

- Landon had a girlfriend who dumped him right before the homecoming dance; otherwise, he would have gone with her. Angela Clark dumps him for a mechanic who apparently imitates James Dean.
- All of the other girls are taken, although Landon tries, even asking a few girls who have graduated from high school.

Basically, Jamie is the only somewhat pretty girl left for Landon to ask to the dance.

- It's either ask Jamie or go to the dance with his mother. He may end up talking to an unpopular guy or passing out punch the whole time or cleaning up vomit if Jamie won't go to the homecoming dance with him.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 2?

- It's a good ending. Readers will keep reading. Jamie says that she would love to go to the dance with Landon, then makes him promise that he won't fall in love with her:

“I'd love to,” she finally said, “on one condition.”

I steadied myself, hoping it wasn't something too awful.

“Yes?”

“You have to promise that you won't fall in love with me.”

I knew she was kidding by the way she laughed, and I couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. Sometimes, I had to admit, Jamie had a pretty good sense of humor.

I smiled and gave her my word. (44)

Chapter 3

What do we learn about Hegbert Sullivan in this chapter?

- Hegbert definitely loves his daughter.
- Hegbert questions Landon, apparently to make sure he won't mess with his daughter, Jamie. Hegbert seems worried that Landon has planned a cruel joke of some kind, perhaps like the joke played on Carrie in Stephen King's novel *Carrie*.
- We would expect a preacher to talk to a boy about to take his daughter out for the first time.
- Landon definitely thinks that Hegbert doesn't like him.
- Hegbert thinks that Landon is irresponsible.
- Hegbert has a curfew for Jamie. She has to be home by 11 p.m. The dance ends at midnight.

Is Landon's and Jamie's date successful?

- It could have been worse. Jamie dressed nicely, but she was not dressed nearly as well as the other girls.
- Landon was afraid of being teased, but Jamie doesn't have many friends, and his friends stayed away from them, so he and Jamie were alone for most of the evening.
- Jamie definitely had a good time. She thought everything was wonderful and complimented Landon on the decorations. (As senior class president, he had to help with the decorations.)
- Jamie is still Jamie. She talks about religion. She wants Landon to help with the decorations at a church function someday. (Landon is unenthusiastic.)

- As it turns out, Jamie can dance.

What happened when Angela and Landon first French-kissed?

- They knocked their teeth together so hard that Landon saw stars and had to take an aspirin when he returned home.

How does Jamie keep Landon from being beat up by Lew?

- Lew wants to pick a fight with Landon because he was looking at Angela. (Angela is Landon's old girlfriend and Lew's new girlfriend.)
- Jamie interferes by being cheerful and talking to Lew. As it happens, she was in his grandmother's house. His grandmother needed help in bringing in the groceries. Jamie helped her, and she saw Lew's photograph on the mantel.
- This confuses Lew. Should he pick a fight with the date of a girl who helped his grandmother bring in her groceries?
- Lew ends up leaving Landon alone. Later, he ends up leaving Angela when she gets drunk and starts vomiting. Classy guy, that Lew.
- Lew, by the way, is the person who spiked the punch that got Angela drunk.
- Landon, by the way, is not a fighter. Usually, his best friend, Eric Hunter, is around, so everyone leaves Landon alone. In the third grade, Landon was supposed to be in a fight, but he started crying before the other guy hit him.
- Jamie invites Lew to sit down and talk. Lew is amazed and leaves.

What good deed do Jamie and Landon do for Landon's old girlfriend?

- After Lew abandons Angela because she is so drunk, Jamie and Landon take care of her. Angela vomits in the girls' restroom, and Jamie and Landon clean it up. This is ironic. Landon had asked Jamie to go to the homecoming dance so that he wouldn't be cleaning up vomit, and here he and his date clean up the vomit.
- Angela is very good at vomiting. She even vomits on the ceiling. In fact, she vomits everywhere but into the toilet. Angela even vomits in Landon's car. (The stink is so bad that Landon and Jamie roll the windows down.) Landon and Jamie take Angela home to her mother.
- Jamie and Landon help Angela in part because getting drunk is a big offence and Angela could get in big trouble. Of course, Jamie helps because she is a nice person.
- Jamie and Landon end up covered in vomit.
- Angela's mother takes care of her daughter, but doesn't thank Jamie and Angela — apparently, she is too busy and too embarrassed to do that.

How does Landon and Jamie's relationship advance in this chapter?

- Basically, the date is at least a partial success. Jamie, at least, had a good time.
- They do not share a good-night kiss, but Jamie does thank Landon for a good time, even though she is covered in vomit.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 3?

- Nicholas Sparks knows how to end chapters. We read:

Here she was, covered in puke, actually thanking me for the evening. Jamie Sullivan could really drive a guy crazy sometimes. (62)

- Speaking for myself, I want to know what happens next. Will there be a second date?

Chapter 4

Why does Landon hang out in the graveyard?

- Basically, it's fun.
- Landon and his friends hang out, talk, and eat boiled peanuts.
- One of the things they do is to talk about the family whose tombstones they sit on — the tombstones are actually rather comfortable. The father, Henry Preston, was a one-armed lumberjack — as they find out from a visit to the library — and he was reputed to be able to chop down a tree as quickly as a lumberjack with two arms.
- Of course, the boys talk about girls. There's a lot of teasing going on. On p. 112, we find out that some of the talk is racy.
- No doubt, it's a mild form of teenage rebellion.

What do we learn about Eric, Landon's friend, in this chapter?

- Eric outweighs Landon by 30 pounds.
- Eric bruises Landon occasionally — often with a slap on the back or a punch to the arm. This is not mean; Eric is simply a little rough in his male camaraderie.

Landon is known as a bit of a juvenile delinquent. Is that reputation justified?

- No, it is not.
- We can think of lots worse things than hanging out in a graveyard at night and eating boiled peanuts with a bunch of male friends. As teenage rebellion goes, this is very mild.

Jamie is “not that kind of girl” (65). What kind of girl is she?

- Eric teases Landon by asking if he kissed Jamie after they cleaned up the bathroom.
- Landon replies eventually that Jamie is “not that kind of girl” (65). Because this sounds like a defense of Jamie, Eric continues to tease Landon.
- We do see that Landon is quick witted in the scene with Eric. Eric teases him about liking Jamie, but Landon uses humor to deflect the teasing. He says that he was using Jamie to make Margaret jealous — and it worked because Margaret has been sending him lots of love notes. Margaret is a hot babe — but not a smart babe — and the image of Landon and Margaret together is funny to Eric. In the next chapter, we read that Margaret’s stupidity can make her as annoying as Jamie but that her legs tend to make up for her stupidity.
- Jamie is a good girl with strong Christian values. She respects her father, and she obeys his rules. For example, when her father is not at home, she and Landon sit on the porch. Jamie is not allowed to have boys inside the house when Hegbert (Jamie’s father) is not at home.

Why does Landon agree to star in the play with Jamie?

- Although Landon thinks that drama class is very boring, he does get to star in the Christmas play with Jamie, although he doesn’t want to.
- One reason is that the boy who was going to star in the play is unsuited for the role. Eddie Jones is skinny and pimply — he is hardly leading-man material. He also stutters — a major problem for a would-be actor.
- A second reason is that Eddie Jones is having second thoughts about starring in the play even though he

volunteered for the role. He knows that other students will make fun of him — and of Jamie. In fact, Landon himself has been calling the two leading actors “the dynamic duo” (76).

- A third reason is that there is a shortage of other boys available to play the role. Hegbert has decreed that only seniors can play the leading roles. The number of seniors at the school is small. Half of the senior boys are on the football team, and another quarter of the boys are in band. Among the boys remaining are a few who could have played the leading male role but because of circumstances cannot. For example, Darren Woods broke his arm when he slipped on a boat and Jeff Bangert has to work in the family store because his father is ill.

- A fourth reason is that Jamie has asked him for a favor, and Jamie never asks anyone for a favor. It is important to Jamie that the play this year be a success because she is starring in the play and she wants it to be a success for her father.

- Landon agrees to star in the play because it seems that no one else who is suitable can do it.

How does Landon and Jamie’s relationship advance in this chapter?

- Jamie calls Landon to ask for a favor.
- Landon does Jamie a favor by agreeing to star in the play.
- Because the two are going to be starring in the play together, they will spend a lot of time during the next month together as they rehearse and act in the play.
- However, Landon is not in love with Jamie at this point. Following their date together, he has not spoken to her much and he has not felt like taking her to Cecil’s Diner for a basket of hush puppies and an RC Cola.

- Note that Nicholas Sparks, the author, is careful to keep the setting Southern. Hush puppies are gobs of fried corn meal. They are good, and they are a Southern treat (like grits). Boiled peanuts are another Southern treat.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 4?

- I think that the reader will keep reading to find out the answers to a few questions:

- What will happen when Landon and Jamie spend a lot of time together?
- Will the play be a success?

Chapter 5

What do we learn about Toby Bush, the handyman?

- Toby Bush made the props for the play. Unfortunately, he is a bad handyman, so after a while, the props started to fall apart. Hegbert has done his best to mend them, but he is not a good handyman, either, so the props have nails sticking out of them. The Playhouse stage is where the play will be performed, but management isn't happy about the props being knocked over and the sticking-out nails making marks on the stage floor, so the play has been rehearsed elsewhere to work out the bugs so the cast and crew don't knock over the props so often.
- Toby Bush is an alcoholic. He drinks beer all day, and he is "flying" (79) by 2 p.m.
- Toby Bush hits his fingers with his hammer when he gets drunk. At least once per working day, he hits his fingers. All of his knuckles are the size of walnuts from all the times that they have been hit throughout the years.
- In addition to being a drinker, Toby Bush is a swearer. Whenever he hits his fingers, he drops his hammer and swears. Of course, Hegbert doesn't go in for either drinking or swearing, so Toby Bush is unhappy to be working for Hegbert.
- Toby Bush is a bad handyman — he can't find a permanent job.

How do rehearsals for the play go?

- Eddie doesn't mind giving up the lead role — in fact, he is relieved that he doesn't have to play it. As a reward, Miss Garber allows him to play the mute role of a bum.

- Landon doesn't put much effort into rehearsals. He isn't trying to learn his lines, and he doesn't look at the script when he isn't at rehearsal.
- Jamie, of course, knows her lines perfectly — and everyone else's lines, too.
- Landon at first felt “noble” (82) for agreeing to play the lead in the play, but that feeling wore off quickly.
- Landon occasionally cracks a joke during rehearsal, and everyone except Miss Garber and Jamie laughs.

How do Landon's friends treat him when they learn that he is going to star in the play with Jamie?

- Landon's friends engage in some major teasing.
- Sally talks of Landon and Jamie becoming engaged. Margaret hears about this, and like Sally she teases Landon about his “fiancée.”
- Landon doesn't tell his friends that he volunteered to play the lead male role; instead, he says that Miss Garber forced him to play it.

What do we learn about Eric, Landon's friend, in this chapter?

- Eric is a football star. We learn that Landon's high school (Beaufort) has won its third state championship in a row.
- Eric takes lots of remedial classes.
- Eric is shrewd; he can tease Landon very well.
- When Jamie comes looking for Landon at 9 p.m. — which is late for her (and of course she is carrying a Bible) — Eric is able to persuade her that the orphans she cares about would love to see the play, so they ought to schedule a performance

for the orphans as a kind of dress rehearsal before the real production.

- Jamie agrees happily to this idea, and Landon spends 14 hours the next day memorizing his lines (and cursing his friends). (Landon does not want to look bad in front of the orphans.)
- Because of Jamie's conversation, Landon's friends get some new ammunition to tease him with:
 - Landon volunteered for the role; he wasn't forced into it by Miss Garber.
 - Landon had sat with Jamie on her front porch once before, and Jamie has invited him to do so again (to help him learn his lines).

How does Landon and Jamie's relationship advance in this chapter?

- The two keep meeting each other and spending time together.
- Now they will have to spend more time together because of the play performance before the orphans.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 5?

- I think that the reader will keep reading to find out the answers to a few questions:
 - What will happen when Landon and Jamie spend a lot of time together?
 - Will the play in front of the orphans be a success?

Chapter 6

What is Miss Garber's opinion of the idea of performing the play in front of the orphans?

- She thinks that it is marvelous — that is her favorite word, by the way. She uses it a zillion times after finding out that Landon has suddenly learned his lines.
- A bug crawls up Eddie's nose, he sneezes, and the bug lands near Norma Jean's leg. She is grossed out, and there is pandemonium. Miss Garber takes the pandemonium as a positive reaction to performing the play in front of the orphans and says, "Marvelous" (92).

Compare and contrast Landon's home with Jamie's home.

- Jamie lives across town and across the railroad tracks (71).
- Landon's father is a Washington, D.C., politician, and his home is fabulous.
- Landon's home has a den and a library.
- Landon's home has many paintings of ancestors.
- Landon's home has 20-year-old furniture that looks almost new. The furniture is made from cherry and mahogany and was specially designed for each room.
- Jamie visits Landon's house because Landon is going to the orphanage with her, and he wants to be well dressed when he meets the director of the orphanage.
- Jamie is very impressed; she has never seen a house that nice before.
- Landon lives in a very good part of town where there are many large and nice houses.

- Jamie's house is poverty stricken in contrast. Of course, we know that it is clean and a good home.

What is Landon's mother like?

- Landon's mother is a nice lady.
- Like all other adults, Landon's mother loves Jamie. It's true that Hegbert's sermons are often directed at Landon's family, but Landon's mother doesn't hold that against Jamie.
- Landon's mother drinks mint juleps.
- Landon's mother knows Landon well. She is amazed when Jamie tells her that it was Landon's idea to perform the play in front of the orphans. (It was Eric's idea, but Eric teased Landon by telling Jamie that it was Landon's idea.) Landon's mother knows that something lies behind this story (Landon would not be willing to volunteer such an idea), but she doesn't know what.

Does Landon know what he wants to do in the future?

- Not really. When Jamie asks him, he says that he would like to be a one-armed lumberjack after he goes to college at UNC. Jamie doesn't laugh.
- Jamie thinks that Landon would be a good minister because he is good with people and they would listen to him.

What does Jamie want to do in the future?

- Jamie wants a wedding with her father walking her down the aisle of a church filled to bursting.
- Landon says that she will get married; however, he doesn't mention the part about the church being filled to bursting. He doesn't think that Jamie and Hegbert are popular enough for that to happen.

Why can't Landon and Jamie perform the play for the orphans?

- Mr. Jenkins, the head of the orphanage, doesn't think that it is a good idea.
- The play is about a father learning to love and value his daughter, and Christmas is hard enough for the orphans without being reminded that they don't have the love of a father or any other parent.
- Jamie immediately realizes that Mr. Jenkins is right — so does Landon.

What is the orphanage like?

- Depressing.
- The rec room is large and has few and very old toys.
- The rec room has a small TV and around 30 chairs in front of it. Pretty much the only children with a good view are the children in the front row.
- There is a Ping-Pong table, but it doesn't have a net. The top is cracked. Styrofoam cups are on its dusty top. Landon realizes that no one has used the Ping-Pong table to play Ping-Pong for months or years.
- The orphans don't have coloring books, so they color newspaper pages instead.
- The orphans do have stuffed animals that they are allowed to keep in their rooms.
- Jamie still wants to do something special for the orphans, but she doesn't know what since the idea about the Christmas play didn't work out.
- The orphans know Jamie; most are happy to see her.

- Jamie enjoys being with the orphans. She enjoys their smiles when she brings them books from the library or a new game to play.

How does Landon and Jamie's relationship advance in this chapter?

- They are spending time together and learning about each other.
- Jamie learns how nice Landon's home is.
- Landon learns how much Jamie cares about the orphans and what the orphanage is like.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 6?

- The reader will wonder this: What special thing will Jamie find to do for the orphans?

Chapter 7

What kind of criminal activity exists in Beaufort?

- Very, very little, although Miss Garber does ask Landon to walk Jamie home one evening early in December when rehearsal runs late and it is dark outside.
- By the way, we learn that Jamie's home is on the way home from Landon's house although previously we read that Jamie's house was on the other side of town and across the railroad tracks (71).
- The biggest crime was a murder by stabbing committed outside Maurice's Tavern six years ago. The murder occurred because someone welshed on a bet, and the murderer later walked into the police station and gave himself up, saying that a bar fight had gotten out of hand. The perpetrator spent six years in the penitentiary.
- According to Landon, the Beaufort police have the most boring jobs in the world because of a severe lack of crime. (What can you expect when the juvenile delinquents do nothing worse than hang out in graveyards and eat boiled peanuts?)

How does Jamie spend her leisure time?

- She helps wounded critters, works with the orphans, and reads the Bible.
- She studies for classes; her gpa is very high and she may even become valedictorian at her high school when she graduates.
- She plays gin rummy and spends time with her father.
- She says that her father has a good sense of humor — something that greatly surprised Landon.
- She doesn't have many friends to hang out with.

- She says that she isn't planning to go to college next year.

Compare and contrast Landon's father with Jamie's father.

Landon's father

Politician

Rich

Has a son

Not around much

Son sneaks out at night

Jamie's father

Minister

Financially poor

Has a daughter

Around all the time

Strict with his daughter

Reads the Bible

Jamie says he has a good sense of humor

How important is Jamie's Bible to her? Why?

- The Bible belonged to Jamie's mother.
- The Bible is rather tattered.
- After Jamie's mother died in the hospital giving birth to Jamie, Hegbert carried both the Bible and Jamie out of the hospital.
- Jamie's mother read the Bible at night.

- The Bible was a wedding present, but Jamie's mother claimed it before Hegbert did.

What was Jamie's mother like?

- Jamie's mother read the Bible a lot and especially during times of trouble — Landon remembers that Jamie's mother suffered through miscarriages before having Jamie.
- Jamie missed her mother the way that Landon sometimes misses his father, who is not around much.

What do we learn about Eric and Margaret in this chapter?

- Apparently, Eric and Margaret are dating, since they are out riding in Eric's car. Also, we find out that they are heading to Cecil's Diner, which is a hot date spot in Beaufort.
- Eric crashes occasionally, but he can come up with a good explanation — even if it isn't very plausible.
- For example, he once told his mother that he crashed because a cow came out of nowhere, darting quickly in front of him. This is a bad explanation because cows move slowly — they don't dart. The explanation would have been plausible if he had said that a deer — not a cow — had darted in front of him.
- Eric's mother believed him. She used to be a head cheerleader, so I think that we are meant to believe that head cheerleaders are dumb. (Perhaps Margaret is a head cheerleader.)
- Landon knows that the kids will be gossiping about him and Jamie at Cecil's Diner in a few moments and at school later, and he isn't pleased about it.

How does Landon and Jamie's relationship advance (or not advance) in this chapter?

- The day after Eric and Margaret see Landon and Jamie, they have a kind of argument. Actually, Jamie doesn't argue, but Landon is in a bad mood because of the teasing of Eric and the other kids and because of getting his fingers banged while moving props with the clumsy Eddie.
- Because of all the teasing, Landon spends his lunch period in the library to get away from the teasing.
- Landon goes through the motions of reciting his lines without doing any acting. Miss Garber is not pleased.
- Jamie requests that Landon walk her home. Because the Playhouse is in the middle of town, this means that Landon will have to go far out of his way, so he tells no. However, Miss Garber overhears Jamie's request, and she makes Landon walk her home. (Miss Garber is hoping that Jamie can get Landon's acting back on track.)
- Landon is in a foul mood. (For one thing, because of all the work on the play, including moving props and rehearsing, he hasn't eaten for a long time.)
- Landon walks in front of Jamie, his hands in his pockets, not looking to see if Jamie is following him.
- Landon raises his voice to Jamie for the first time, and he tells her that they are not friends, although she acts as if they are.
- Jamie is still Jamie. She thanks Landon for walking her home, making him hate himself because he knows that he is in the wrong.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 7?

- Once again, we wonder what will happen. Landon has said that they are not friends, and we wonder how their relationship will develop.
- In romantic comedy, this kind of thing happens as a matter of cliché. True love never did run smooth, and here we find a kind of disagreement between Landon and Jamie.

Chapter 8

How does Landon apologize to Jamie?

- Landon is a good kid. He knows that he was mean to Jamie the night before, so he wants to apologize to her now. He doesn't have a chance to apologize to her at school, so he apologizes to her right before the play, asking to speak to her alone and taking her a little way away from Hegbert and Miss Garber.
- When Jamie asks Landon if he meant what he had said to her the night before (that they weren't friends), Landon doesn't answer her question, saying instead that he was in a bad mood. He then promises, however, to make it up to her.

What does Eric think Landon is going to do in the play?

- Eric thinks that Landon will deliberately mess up the play, perhaps by knocking over the props or flubbing his lines.
- When Landon tells Eric that he is going to play his role straight and not mess up the play, Eric tells him that he is growing up. From Eric, that may not be a compliment, but Landon knows that he is right.
- By the way, Eric gives Eddie a wedgie at least once a week. Eric is a bully.

What does Landon learn about Jamie in this chapter?

- Mainly, Landon learns that Jamie is beautiful. Before dressing for her role as an angel, Jamie wore the same old sweater and had her hair up the same old way, but when Landon sees her on stage as the angel, he thinks that Jamie is beautiful.
- Jamie's hair is down and is much longer than Landon had expected. She has glitter in her hair, and she is dressed in

white. Landon thinks, “She looked exactly like an angel” (134).

- The first line that Landon speaks to Jamie in the play is, “You’re beautiful” (135). It sets the tone of the play. Landon has never nailed the line in rehearsal, mainly because he has never thought that Jamie was beautiful, but he nails the line now because he believes it.

How does Landon and Jamie’s relationship advance in this chapter?

It advances because Landon now realizes that Jamie is — or can be — beautiful.

No doubt, however, Jamie will go back to wearing her hair up and wearing the same old sweater.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 8?

Interesting. Now that Landon knows that Jamie can be beautiful, we wonder what will happen next.

Chapter 9

How successful is the play?

- Absolutely successful. It is a “smashing success” — and more (136).
- Even Eric congratulates Landon: “The two of you did good. [...] I’m proud of you, buddy” (137).
- Miss Garber is saying, “Marvelous!” (137), and Hegbert has tears in his eyes.
- Jamie, of course, is happy. Landon realizes that her father will drive her home, and for once he realizes that he wishes he could walk her home.

Does the success of the play change Jamie?

- Absolutely not. The next school day, she is the same old Jamie. Her hair is up in a bun, and she is wearing the same brown cardigan and plaid skirt she normally wears.
- The kids treat her nicely, but Landon is afraid that it won’t last. She is a local celebrity for now, but not for much longer.

Where does the extra money for the orphanage come from?

- Jamie wants Landon to make up to her the mean things he said the last time he walked her home. (He agrees, although he thought that he had made it up to her with his performance in the school play.) She wants Landon to collect the cans for money for the orphanage Christmas party that she had on the counters of local businesses all year.
- Landon collects the cans, although it takes him longer than he thought it would. (Beaufort is a small town, so he has to talk to every proprietor.)

- Landon counts the money, and he is shocked by how little it is. (Perhaps he shouldn't be shocked because he and his friends used to put slugs — pieces of metal — and paper clips in the cans.
- The money comes to \$55.73. Since there are 30 orphans, this is not much money — even in 1958.
- However, he tells Jamie that since it is her project that he and she will count the money later. When they count the money — although Landon knows exactly how much it is — it comes to almost \$247. (Of course, the extra money comes from Landon.) Jamie had wanted this Christmas to be special for the orphans, and that amount of money will make it special.

How successful is the Christmas party for the orphans?

- The Christmas party is successful and special indeed.
- Jamie knows the children, so she picked out the toys.
- Landon goes to the Christmas on Christmas Eve.
- Landon thinks, “It was even better than I'd imagined” (147).
- There is a very nicely decorated Christmas tree and presents and goodies.
- This time, Jamie wears a red V-neck sweater, so she has dressed up for the occasion. Also, her hair is down.
- The children seem to have gotten more than they expected, since they keep “thanking Jamie over and over” (150).

What is your opinion of the Christmas presents that Landon and Jamie give each other?

- Landon's present is another sweater — it is brown like Jamie's other sweater. This is a good Christmas present, but Jamie's present to Landon is better.
- Jamie gives her mother's Bible to Landon. This present seems to be excessive, in my opinion, but Jamie says that she wants Landon to have the Bible. This almost certainly shows that Jamie is in love with Landon.

How does Landon and Jamie's relationship advance in this chapter?

- It advances very much in this chapter.
- Jamie gives Landon a present with loads of sentimental value, and Landon realizes that he has fallen in love with Jamie.
- Landon has also done a very impressive good deed in giving his own money to the orphans.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 9?

Landon realizes that he has fallen in love with Jamie:

[...] I smiled at her and all I could do was wonder how I'd ever fallen in love with a girl like Jamie Sullivan. (154)

Obviously, we want to know what will happen next.

Chapter 10

Does Jamie know what Landon did for the orphans?

- Yes, she does. She once told Landon that she wasn't a dimwit, and she shows it by knowing that he donated his own money to the orphans.
- Landon worries that she may have figured out why he invited her to the Homecoming Dance — there was no one left to ask.

What happens during the ride back from the orphanage?

- The big important event is that Jamie lets Landon hold her hand.

In what ways is Hegbert acting oddly?

- His sermons are shorter.
- During sermons, he sometimes stops and he seems as though he is thinking of something else as he gets a strange look on his face.
- When Jamie exclaimed earlier about how much money had been collected for the orphans, Hegbert comes into the room and tells her that he is proud of her and that he loves her. He doesn't even seem to know that Landon is present.

What is Landon's opinion of God's plan?

- Jamie is wondering, "Why do things have to turn out the way they do?" (158).
- Jamie has a secret, but Landon doesn't find out what it is until later.
- Landon's opinion about God's plan is one that he considers to be good. He tells Jamie,

I don't think that we're meant to understand it all the time. I think that sometimes we just have to have faith. (158)

- Jamie agrees with Landon's opinion.

What do we learn about Landon's house and home?

- Landon invites Jamie over for Christmas dinner, which is the evening meal. (As is traditional in the South, Jamie asks what she can bring, but Landon tells her not to bring anything.) Hegbert allows Jamie to go, and Landon's mother kisses Jamie before Landon has ever kissed her.
- We learn that Landon's mother is a poor housekeeper. She can make sandwiches, but mustard stains on her fingernails can upset her for days.
- The house, of course, is fabulous. They have a maid and a cook because Landon's mother is bad at doing both. Jamie, of course, is very impressed by the house.
- The house also has a garden.
- The house was owned by a signer of the Declaration of Independence: Richard Dodds.
- The house is listed in the *National Historic Register*.

What do Landon and Jamie talk about in the garden?

- Jamie asks about Landon's grandfather — the SOB who made the family rich. Landon says that what Jamie had heard is true, and Jamie asks if he would give the money back. This is something that Landon has not thought of before, and he is unenthusiastic about the idea.
- Landon asks if Hegbert likes him. Jamie replies that Hegbert worries about her and about him — for the same reason that Jamie does. Once again, Jamie has a secret but

we don't know what it is. Jamie does say that Hegbert likes Landon.

What is your opinion of 1950s hanging out together?

- It's quite a bit different from today, I think. The 1950s kids in the novel have Christmas dinner together, and they eat hush puppies and drink RC Colas at Cecil's Diner. They do, however, have cars to drive around in.

How successful is Landon's Christmas dinner with Jamie?

- Very successful. They have another chance to get to know each other, and Landon's mother likes Jamie.

How does Landon and Jamie's relationship advance in this chapter?

- It advances quite a bit. Landon has wanted to kiss Jamie, and it finally happens when the two are alone together on Hegbert's porch. (Hegbert isn't home, so of course Landon can't go inside with Jamie.)

- Landon describes their kiss in this way:

It wasn't that long, and it certainly wasn't the kind of kiss you see in movies these days, but it was wonderful in its own way, and all I can remember about the moment is that when our lips first touched, I knew the memory would last forever. (171)

What do you think of the ending of chapter 10?

- The relationship advances, and we want to know what will happen next.

Chapter 11

Has Landon been in love before?

- Landon tells Jamie that she is “a great kisser” (173).
- Jamie admits to Landon that he is the first boy he has ever kissed; Landon of course has kissed at least one other girl: his former girlfriend Angela.
- Landon says to Jamie that he has been in love before, but the true answer is probably no.
- Landon may have thought he was in love with Angela, but he realizes this:

[...] looking back, I'd realized that what I'd felt for Angela was totally different from what I was feeling now. (174)

What do we learn about Landon's mother in this chapter?

- Being a woman, Landon's mother knows something about girls.
- It is Landon's mother's idea for Landon to take Jamie out on a real date rather than simply to go over to her house and spend time with her every day.
- Landon, of course, is worried about money, but he admits that he had donated the money in his bank account to the orphans, and his mother says that the money for the real date shall be found.
- Landon's mother calls the fancy restaurant after Landon is rejected when he asked for a reservation. Because of the Carter family reputation, a reservation is made right away. Either Landon's father will be asked for a favor soon, or the restaurant owner is worried about Landon's evil grandfather,

who we are told is still alive (175) although earlier (15) we learned that he is dead.

- Landon's mother thought that Landon should buy Jamie perfume, but Hegbert won't allow her to wear makeup (except for the Christmas play) and so she is unlikely to be allowed to wear perfume.

- Jamie's mother does make a few good comments about girls:

“[...] young girls, even Jamie, like to be made to feel special.” (176)

“Going to her house is a nice thing to do, but it's not the most romantic thing there is. You should do something that will really let her know how you feel about her.” (176)

Does Landon go about asking for the date in the right way?

- I think that he does.

- Landon goes to the church to speak to Hegbert in his office about letting Jamie go on a date. Landon is dressed nicely in a jacket and tie.

- Landon calls Hegbert “sir” (179).

- When Landon says that his parents will not be along on the date (no chaperones), Hegbert says no, but he does thank Landon for asking for permission first.

- A few moments later Landon apologizes for the things he used to do to Hegbert when he (Landon) was a kid, and he tells Hegbert, “I love her” (180). Hegbert replies that he knows that Landon loves Jamie, and he tells him to have Jamie home by 10 p.m.

- When Landon looks back, Hegbert’s face is in his hands and he looks as if he is crying. Jamie later explains it away by saying that Hegbert is realizing that his daughter is growing up.

How successful is Landon and Jamie’s date?

- The date is very successful.
- The restaurant is on the waterfront, and it is New Year’s Eve, so everyone is enjoying themselves.
- Jamie says about the restaurant, “It’s beautiful here” (182).
- They talk about the homecoming dance, and Landon admits why he asked her to the dance. Jamie laughs — she had already figured out why.
- They eat sea bass and salads, then dance.
- This is Jamie’s first real date.
- The other, older people watch them dance and remember when they were young.

What is your opinion of 1950s hanging out together?

- This real date is probably like many real dates today, and the hanging out together back then is somewhat like hanging out together today. However, today young people have more options, and often alcohol is involved today.
- Landon and Jamie go down to the river and throw stones in it.
- They kiss sometimes, and Landon doesn’t even think about second base — touching Jamie’s breasts.
- They hang out at Cecil’s Diner once. Landon wants other people to know that he and Jamie are together; unfortunately, no one else is at the diner.

What do other people think of Jamie?

- Landon doesn't want to tell her, and he lies at first, but then he promises to tell the truth, and eventually he does.
- The truth is that other people think that Jamie is "strange" (187). Landon admits it, although it hurts him.
- Landon, of course, knows different:

There was something nice when I kissed her, something gentle and right, and that was enough for me. The more I did it, the more I realized that Jamie had been misunderstood her entire life, not only by me, but by everyone.

Jamie wasn't simply the minister's daughter, someone who read the Bible and did her best to help others. Jamie was also a seventeen-year-old girl with the same hopes and doubts that I had. At least, that's what I assumed, until she finally told me. (184-185)

"You're a wonderful person, Jamie. You're beautiful, you're kind, you're gentle ... you're everything that I'd like to be. If people don't like you, or they think you're strange, then that's their problem" (188).

Why doesn't Jamie want Landon to be in love with her?

- Landon tells Jamie that he loves her, but it doesn't have the effect he wanted.
- Landon says,

"I love you, Jamie. [...] You're the best thing that's ever happened to me." (188)
- Jamie replies,

“You can’t be in love with me, Landon,” she said through red and swollen eyes. “We can be friends, we can see each other ... but you *can’t* love me.” (190)

- Landon then learns that Jamie is very ill, and she is dying.

How does Landon and Jamie’s relationship advance in this chapter?

- Landon tells Jamie he loves her.
- Landon learns that Jamie is dying.
- Certainly the two learn more about each other in this chapter.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 11?

- The reader will want to know the answer to these questions and will definitely keep reading this novel:
 - Why is Jamie dying?
 - What will Landon and Jamie do?

Chapter 12

Why is Jamie dying? How long has she known that she is dying?

- Jamie has leukemia.
- She has known since last summer.
- This means that during the entire time that Landon has really gotten to know and love her, she has been dying.
- Seven months ago, she was told that she had a year left to live, maybe less.

What is foreshadowing, and what kinds of foreshadowing have we had in this novel?

- Foreshadowing occurs when an author subtly suggests or hints at something that will occur later in the literary work.
- Of course, plays also contain foreshadowing. According to the playwright Anton Chekhov, “If there is a gun hanging on the wall in the first act, it must fire in the last.”
- We have had hints that Jamie has a secret, and of course we have wanted to know what that was. Now we know.
- Foreshadowing: Jamie wanted Landon to do the play — to make it special for her father.
- Foreshadowing: Hegbert called her his angel after the play.
- Foreshadowing: Hegbert looks tired all the time.
- Foreshadowing: Hegbert fretted when Landon came by the house so often.
- Foreshadowing: During sermons, Hegbert sometimes stops and he seems as though he is thinking of something else as he gets a strange look on his face.

- Foreshadowing: Hegbert sometimes seems to be crying.
- Foreshadowing: Jamie wanted Christmas for the orphans to be special.
- Foreshadowing: Jamie often gets tired.
- Foreshadowing: Jamie told Landon not to fall in love with her.

How do people react to Jamie's illness?

- Landon hopes that some mistake has been made.
- Jamie and Landon and lots of other people cry, as when Hegbert learns that Landon knows and when Landon and Jamie tell Landon's mother.
- Hegbert makes the announcement to his congregation the following Sunday, and everyone is shocked. A wailing begins.
- On Monday teachers tell all the students, most of whom already know. Girls cry, and people talk about Jamie as if she is already dead.

Why doesn't Jamie return to school?

- Jamie wants to spend more time in the mornings with her father before he goes to work.
- In addition, she is growing weaker.
- In addition, she thinks students will regard and treat her oddly.
- Jamie will not receive a diploma; she has dropped out.

Why does Landon start reading the Bible?

- Landon is in a way hoping for a miracle. He thinks about faith healing, which he has seen work.

- Old man Sweeney was deaf in one ear, a result of the Great War, but a faith healer healed him.
- Miracles are in the Bible, so Landon reads the Bible.
- Landon does read a passage that he believes Jamie underlined just for him:

I cry to you, my Lord, my rock! Do not be deaf to me, for if you are silent, I shall go down to the pit like the rest. Hear my voice raised in petition as I cry to you for help, as I raise my hands, my Lord, toward your holy of holies. (202-203)

How do Landon and Jamie interact together?

- Fairly well. Both are scared, but Jamie does not act scared. Jamie knows that Landon is scared.
- Landon talks — once — as if Jamie will return to school soon.
- Jamie gets sicker and sicker.
- They read and talk about the Bible together.
- Once, Landon brings Jamie to his house for dinner.
- Landon tells Jamie that he loves her, and she says, “I love you, too” (209).

What good deed does Eric do?

- Eric and Margaret visit.
- Jamie has changed other people for the better.
- Eric has collected — on his own — over \$400 for the orphans.
- Eric and Margaret both cry.

How does Landon feel about Jamie? How does he tell Jamie how he feels about her?

- Landon shows Jamie a sunset and a moonrise on the coast of eastern North Carolina. He then kisses her cheeks and her lips and says, “That [...] is exactly how I feel about you” (217).

When Jamie prayed for Landon, what was she praying for?

- She was praying for Landon to become hers.

What good deed do Landon’s parents do for Jamie?

- Jamie’s pain increases, and the higher dosage of medication for pain makes her dizzy. Eventually, she has a choice to make: the pain or the dizziness. She chooses the dizziness.
- Jamie’s wish, expressed to her doctors, is “I want to die at home” (217).
- Eventually, it seems that Jamie will have to go to the hospital, but Landon’s father and mother make it possible for her to die at home. We read:

All I know is that Jamie was soon surrounded by expensive equipment, was supplied with all the medicine she needed, and was watched by two full-time nurses while a doctor peeked in on her several times a day. (219-220)

- As a result, Landon cries on his father’s shoulder.

Which possessions are close to Jamie’s heart?

- These are the items:
 - Photographs of her as a young girl together with her father.

- A collection of cards sent by children in the orphanage.
- A newspaper clipping about the play that contained the only photograph of her and Landon.

Is marriage a good idea in this case?

- Landon thinks that it is. He thinks that God told him what to do.
- Possibly, it is not. Hegbert and Landon's parents try to convince him not to marry Jamie (ch. 13).
- Landon and Jamie are only 17; they have not yet graduated from high school.
- They marry on March 12, 1959.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 12?

- Again, it is an interesting ending:
 “Will you marry me?” (232)
- The reader will want to know what happens next.

Chapter 13

What do you think has happened to Landon in the years since 1959?

- He married Jamie, and then possibly she died. Nicholas Sparks has written about the end of this novel:

As to whether she *actually* lived or died, it's ambiguous and purposely meant to be that way. If you wanted Jamie to live, she lived. If you knew that Jamie would die, she died.

As for me, (and I'm not the final say — I wrote the characters, but readers know them just as well as I do), I thought there was a good chance that Jamie lived.

At least, I hoped so.

Source:

<http://www.nicholassparks.com/Novels/AWalkToRemember/FAQ.html>

- Landon is apparently still in Beaufort.
- Apparently, he has never remarried. He still wears his wedding ring.
- Possibly, if Jamie died soon after the wedding, the wedding was never consummated.

What is the “walk to remember”?

- The walk to remember is Jamie's walk down the wedding aisle. For Jamie, it is difficult, and she has to rest halfway, leaning on her father.
- Apparently, it is the wedding she has always wanted — over 200 guests are inside and more than that are outside.

- Jamie was using a wheelchair, but she walked up the aisle nevertheless.

What did Jamie teach Landon?

- Landon grows up a lot. He doesn't mess up the play. He goes against the teasing of his friends to be with Jamie. He decides to marry her.
- Landon is reconciled with his father, who is proud of him.

Who is the greater nonconformist, or are Landon and Jamie both conformists?

- Probably Jamie is the greater nonconformist. She seems to go her own way, even if it means that she is unpopular.
- Landon seems to worry a lot about what his friends think of him, but he learns to go his own way, too.

What do you think of the ending of chapter 13?

- Landon says that he now believes that “miracles can happen” (240).
- This is basically a positive ending. The miracle may not be the recovery of Jamie's health; perhaps it may be that Landon grows up.
- Nicholas Sparks has written this about the last sentence of the novel:

Either the miracle was that Jamie lived (if that was the ending you imagined) or that Landon had experienced the miracle of first love and it had redeemed him (if you imagined that Jamie died).

Source:

<http://www.nicholassparks.com/Novels/AWalkToRemember/FAQ.html>

Is this novel good or bad? Does this novel suffer from sentimentality?

- The novel is good, but not great.
- An (at least seeming) error involves Landon's grandfather, who is sometimes described as being still alive and sometimes described as being dead.
- At least once, Landon's father is described as being dead (when Mr. Sparks writes that the evil grandfather outlived his only son).
- Something strange is the location of Jamie's house. Sometimes Landon can walk Jamie home because it is on his way. Sometimes Jamie's house is on the other side of town.
- The character of Jamie is very interesting. I like this novel because of the nonconformity of Jamie and because this novel has a religious viewpoint.
- A critic may argue that this novel is sentimental. However, readers can argue that some sentimentality is not a bad thing.
- Here is a rather negative definition of sentimentality:

sentimentality

“The effort to induce an emotional response disproportionate to the situation, and thus to substitute heightened and generally unthinking feeling for normal ethical and intellectual judgment.”

Source: Harmon & Holman, 475.

Website:

<http://www.notesinthemargin.org/glossary.html#s>

Date Downloaded: 7 June 2004

- *The American Heritage Dictionary* (fourth edition, 2000) defines “sentimentality” in this way:

1a) Characterized or swayed by sentiment. b) Affectedly or extravagantly emotional. 2) Resulting from or colored by emotion rather than reason or realism. 3) Appealing to the sentiments, especially to romantic feelings: *sentimental music*.

Perhaps definition number 3 is most appropriate for this novel.

Appendix A: Bibliography

Sparks, Nicholas. *A Walk to Remember*. New York: Warner Books, 2001. Print.

Sparks, Nicholas. "Frequently Asked Questions About *A Walk to Remember*."

<<http://www.nicholassparks.com/Novels/AWalkToRemember/FAQ.html>>. Web.

Appendix B: Paper Topics

- Using the techniques found in this novel, including the use of description and dialogue, write an autobiographical essay. Do not feel that you have to be 100 percent truthful. If a little exaggeration will make a good story better, exaggerate. Also, no one expects you to remember exactly what you or anyone else said in real life, so feel free to create your own dialogue and make yourself wittier — or dumber — than you are in real life.
- Write an essay about the themes of religion and/or nonconformity in the novel.
- Watch the movie *A Walk to Remember*. In your opinion, is the novel or the movie better, and why? What advantages and disadvantages do novels have compared to movies? What advantages and disadvantages do movies have compared to novels?
- Write about the inconsistencies in *A Walk to Remember*.

Appendix C: Inconsistencies in *A Walk to Remember*

- An (at least seeming) error involves Landon's grandfather, who is sometimes described as being still alive and sometimes described as being dead.

Grandfather is Dead

He [evil grandfather] died at a ripe-old age while sleeping with his mistress on his yacht off the Cayman Islands. He'd outlived both his wives and his only son. (15-16)

Grandfather is Alive

There was a pianist and a singer, too, not every night or even every weekend, but on holidays when they thought the place would be full. I had to make reservations, and the first time I called they said they were filled, but I had my mom call them, and the next thing you knew, something had opened up. I guess the owner needed a favor from my father or something, or maybe he just didn't want to make him angry, knowing that my grandfather was still alive and all. (175)

- At least once, Landon's father is described as being dead (when Mr. Sparks writes that the evil grandfather outlived his only son).

Landon's Father's Father is Evil Grandfather

Hegbert was about twenty years older than my father, and back before he was a minister, he used to work for my father's father. My grandfather — even though her spent lots of time with my father — was a true bastard if there ever was one. He was the one, by the way, who made the family fortune [...] (14)

Father is Dead

He died at a ripe-old age while sleeping with his mistress on his yacht off the Cayman Islands. He'd outlived both his wives and his only son. (15-16)

Father is Alive

So my father, Mr. Congressman, was a big-wig, and everyone but everyone knew it, including old man Hegbert. Now, the two of them didn't get along, not at all, despite the fact that my father went to Hegbert's church whenever he was in town, which to be frank wasn't all that often. (10)

After high school I planned to go to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. My father wanted me to go to Harvard or Princeton like some of the sons of other congressmen did, but with my grades it wasn't possible. Not that I was a bad student. I just didn't focus on my studies, and my grades weren't exactly up to snuff for the Ivy Leagues. By my senior year it was pretty much touch and go whether I'd even get accepted at UNC, and this was my father's alma mater, a place where he could pull some strings. During one of his few weekends home, my father came up with the plan to put me over the top. I'd just finished my first week of school. (27)

- Something strange is the location of Jamie's house. Sometimes Landon can walk Jamie home because it is on his way. Sometimes Jamie's house is on the other side of town.

Jamie Lives on Other Side of Town

We arranged to meet at five o'clock, and the rest of the afternoon ticked by slowly, like the drips from Chinese water torture. I left my house twenty minutes early, so I'd have plenty of time to get there.

My house was located near the waterfront in the historic part of town, just a few doors down from where Blackbeard used to live, overlooking the Intracoastal Waterway. Jamie lived on the other side of town, across the railroad tracks, so it would take me about that long to get there. (71)

Jamie's House is in Between the Playhouse and Landon's House

Note: Rehearsals are apparently being held at the Playhouse in Ch. 7; earlier they were held at the school — see p. 79 and p. 81. But since the play will be performed soon — “that Saturday and Sunday”(109), the rehearsals must be held at the Playhouse.

But Jamie's house was on the way to mine, and I couldn't say no without hurting her feelings. It wasn't that I liked her or anything, don't get the wrong idea, but when you've had to spend a few hours a day with someone, and you're going to continue doing that for at least another week, you don't want to do anything that might make the next day miserable for either of you. (109)

Jamie's House is Not in Between the Playhouse and Landon's House

I ran through my lines without even thinking about them, and Miss Garber didn't say the word *marvelous* all night long. She had this concerned look in her eyes afterward, but Jamie simply smiled and told her not to worry, that everything was going to be all right. I knew Jamie was just trying to make things better for me, but when she asked me to walk her home, I told her no. The Playhouse was in the middle of town, and to walk her home, I'd have to

walk a good distance out of my way. Besides, I didn't want to be seen again doing it. But Miss Garber had overheard Jamie's request and she said, very firmly, that I'd be glad to do it. "You two can talk about the play," she said. "Maybe you can work out the kinks." By kinks, of course, she meant me specifically. (123)

Appendix D: Short Reaction Memos

The questions in this short guide to Nicholas Sparks' *A Walk to Remember* can be used in discussions; however, they can also be used for short reaction memos. For example, I do this at Ohio University. See below for the assignment and sample short reaction memos.

How Do I Complete the Reaction Memo Assignments?

You will have to write a series of short memos in which you write about the readings you have been assigned.

Each memo should be at least 250 words, not counting long quotations from the work of literature. Include a word count for each memo, although that is not normally part of the memo format.

Following the memo heading (To, From, Re, Date, Words), write the question you are answering and the part of the book that the question applies to.

You may answer one question or more than one question. I will supply you with a list of questions that you may answer.

Note that a Works Cited list is needed if you use quotations.

For examples from my Great Books courses at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, see the following pages.

To: David Bruce

From: Jane Student

Re: *Odyssey*, Book 12 Reaction Memo

Date: Put Today's Date Here

Words: 323

***Odyssey*, Book 12: Is Odysseus a bad leader?**

This is an important question in the *Odyssey*. After all, Odysseus leads 12 ships and many men to Troy, but the ships are all destroyed and all of his men die and he returns home to Ithaca alone. Who is responsible for the deaths of Odysseus' men? Is Odysseus responsible for their deaths, or do the men bear some responsibility for their own deaths? Many readers prefer Odysseus, the great individualist, to Aeneas, the man who founds the Roman people, but then they realize that all of Odysseus' men died, while Aeneas succeeded in bringing many Trojans to Italy. When readers think of that, they begin to have a greater respect for Aeneas.

From the beginning of the *Odyssey*, this has been an issue. The bard says that the men perished because of the "recklessness of their own ways" (1.8). However, we notice that Odysseus is asleep at odd times. In Book 10, Aeolus gives Odysseus a bag in which the contrary winds have been tied up. This allows Odysseus to sail to Ithaca safely. However, they reach the island and see smoke rising from the fires, Odysseus goes to sleep and his men open the bag, letting the contrary winds escape, and the ship is blown back to King Aeolus' island. Similarly, in Book 12, on the island of the Sun-god, Odysseus is asleep when his men sacrifice the Sun-god's cattle.

It does seem that Odysseus does not bear the blame for his men's death. In many cases, they do perish through their own

stupidity. In other cases, of course, they die during war or during adventures, but in those times, Odysseus was with them, and he could have died, too.

One other thing to think about is that Odysseus is telling his own story. Could he be lying? After all, some of the adventures he relates are pretty incredible. (Probably not. The gods vouch for some of what he says.)

Works Cited

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin Books, 1996. Print.

To: David Bruce

From: Jane Student

Re: *Inferno*, Canto 1 Reaction Memo

Date: Put Today's Date Here

Words: 263

***Inferno*, Canto 1**

• What do you need to be a member of the Afterlife in Dante's *Inferno*?

To be a member of the afterlife in Hell, you must meet a number of criteria:

- 1) You must be dead.
- 2) You must be an unrepentant sinner.
- 3) You must be a dead, unrepentant sinner by 1300.

Of course, only dead people — with a few exceptions such as Dante the Pilgrim — can be found in the *Inferno*.

Only unrepentant sinners can be found in the *Inferno*. Everyone has sinned, but sinners who repented their sins are found in Purgatory or Paradise, not in the *Inferno*.

Dante set his *Divine Comedy* in 1300, so the characters who appear in it are dead in 1300.

***Inferno*, Canto 1**

• What does it mean to repent?

A sinner who repents regrets having committed the sin. The repentant sinner vows not to commit the sin again, and he or she does his or her best not to commit the sin again.

Inferno, Canto 1**• What is the geography of Hell? In *The Divine Comedy*, where is Hell located?**

Hell is located straight down. We will find out later that when Lucifer was thrown out of Paradise, he fell to the Earth, ending up at the center of the Earth. The center of the Earth is the lowest part of Hell. Lucifer created the Mountain of Purgatory when he hit the Earth.

To: David Bruce

From: Jane Student

Re: *Candide*, Ch. 26-30

Date: Today's Date

Words: 368

Ch. 30: Write a brief character analysis of the old man and his family.

When Candide and his friends meet the old man, the old man is “sitting in front of his door beneath an arbor of orange trees, enjoying the fresh air” (119). The old man basically ignores politics that he cannot influence. Some people have recently been killed in Constantinople, and the old man does not even know their names. However, the old man does enjoy some material things, including good food, and he enjoys hospitality.

The old man invites Candide and his friends to enjoy some refreshments inside his house. They are served with “several kinds of fruit-flavored drinks” and “boiled cream with pieces of candied citron in it, oranges, lemons, limes, pineapples, pistachio nuts, and mocha coffee” (119). The old man and his family have an abundance of food, but although Candide wonders if the old man has an enormous farm, the old man tells him, “I have only twenty acres of land, which my children and I cultivate. Our work keeps us free of three great evils: boredom, vice, and poverty” (119).

From this brief encounter, we learn several things:

- The old man and his family are content — even happy.
- The old man and his family ignore the wars and murders and crimes that happen elsewhere.

- The old man and his family have enough. They work hard on their little farm, and they have plenty of food and good things to eat.
- The old man and his family have only 20 acres, but 20 acres are enough.

Candide and his friends decide to emulate the old man and his family. Each of them begins to work hard on their little farm. Cunegonde learns to make pastry, Paquette begins to embroider, and the old woman does the laundry and repairs the linen. Brother Giroflée becomes a carpenter, and Candide and the others grow “abundant crops” (120). At the end of the short novel, the group of friends seem to have come the closest they can to happiness in a world filled with evil, but it does take an effort on their part. As Candide says in the short novel’s last words, “... we must cultivate our garden” (120).

Works Cited

Voltaire. *Candide*. Trans. Lowell Bair. New York: Bantam Books, 1981. Print.

To: David Bruce

From: Jane Student

Re: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Ch. 1-4 Reaction Memo

Date: Put Today's Date Here

Words: 286

CH. 3: "KNIGHTS OF THE TABLE ROUND"

• What hints do we have of the relationship between Queen Guenever and Sir Launcelot?

Some hanky-panky is going on between Sir Launcelot and King Arthur's wife, Queen Guenever. Some six or eight prisoners address her, and they tell her that they have been captured by Sir Kay the Seneschal. Immediately, surprise and astonishment are felt by everybody present. The queen looks disappointed because she had hoped that the prisoners were captured by Sir Launcelot.

As it turns out, they were. Sir Launcelot first rescued Sir Kay from some attackers, then he took Sir Kay's armor and horse and captured more knights. All of these prisoners were actually captured by Sir Launcelot, not by Sir Kay at all.

Two passages let us know that something is going on between Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenever:

1. The first is subtle; she looks disappointed when Sir Kay says that he captured the knights: "Surprise and astonishment flashed from face to face all over the house; the queen's gratified smile faded out at the name of Sir Kay, and she looked disappointed ..." (503).

2. The other is much more overt and occurs after Guenever learns that the knight who really captured the prisoners was Sir Launcelot: "Well, it was touching to see the queen blush

and smile, and look embarrassed and happy, and fling furtive glances at Sir Launcelot that would have got him shot in Arkansas, to a dead certainty” (503).

Works Cited

Twain, Mark. *Four Complete Novels*. New York: Gramercy Books, 1982. Print.

Appendix E: About the Author

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine’s brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka “The Joker,” decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn’t been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don’t often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for “sounds like” and “two words,” then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn’t let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor’s degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a Master of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Dance*, *Homer’s Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare’s Othello: A Retelling in Prose*.

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

Appendix F: Some Books by David Bruce

Discussion Guides Series

Dante's Inferno: A Discussion Guide

Dante's Paradise: A Discussion Guide

Dante's Purgatory: A Discussion Guide

Forrest Carter's The Education of Little Tree: A Discussion Guide

Homer's Iliad: A Discussion Guide

Homer's Odyssey: A Discussion Guide

Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: A Discussion Guide

Jerry Spinelli's Maniac Magee: A Discussion Guide

Jerry Spinelli's Stargirl: A Discussion Guide

Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal": A Discussion Guide

Lloyd Alexander's The Black Cauldron: A Discussion Guide

Lloyd Alexander's The Book of Three: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's The Prince and the Pauper: A Discussion Guide

Nancy Garden's Annie on My Mind: A Discussion Guide

Nicholas Sparks' A Walk to Remember: A Discussion Guide

Virgil's Aeneid: A Discussion Guide

Virgil's "The Fall of Troy": A Discussion Guide

Voltaire's Candide: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Discussion Guide

William Sleator's Oddballs: A Discussion Guide

(*Oddballs* is an excellent source for teaching how to write autobiographical essays/personal narratives.)

Philosophy for the Masses Series

Philosophy for the Masses: Ethics

Philosophy for the Masses: Metaphysics and More

Philosophy for the Masses: Religion

Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature

Ben Jonson's The Alchemist: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's The Case is Altered: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Catiline's Conspiracy: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's The Devil is an Ass: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Epicene: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humor: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's The New Inn: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Sejanus: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's The Staple of News: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: Retellings

Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text

Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: A Retelling

- Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: A Retelling*
- Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: A Retelling*
- Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: Retellings*
- Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose*
- Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose*
- Dante's Purgatory: A Retelling in Prose*
- Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose*
- The Famous Victories of Henry V: A Retelling*
- From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica*
- George Peele: Five Plays Retold in Modern English*
- George Peele's The Arraignment of Paris: A Retelling*
- George Peele's The Battle of Alcazar: A Retelling*
- George's Peele's David and Bathsheba, and the Tragedy of Absalom: A Retelling*
- George Peele's Edward I: A Retelling*
- George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale: A Retelling*
- George-A-Greene, The Pinner of Wakefield: A Retelling*
- The History of King Leir: A Retelling*
- Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*
- Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose*
- Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica*
- The Jests of George Peele: A Retelling*
- John Ford: Eight Plays Translated into Modern English*
- John Ford's The Broken Heart: A Retelling*
- John Ford's The Fancies, Chaste and Noble: A Retelling*

- John Ford's The Lady's Trial: A Retelling*
- John Ford's The Lover's Melancholy: A Retelling*
- John Ford's Love's Sacrifice: A Retelling*
- John Ford's Perkin Warbeck: A Retelling*
- John Ford's The Queen: A Retelling*
- John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Retelling*
- John Webster's The White Devil: A Retelling*
- King Edward III: A Retelling*
- The Merry Devil of Edmonton: A Retelling*
- Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: A Retelling*
- The Taming of a Shrew: A Retelling*
- Tarlton's Jests: A Retelling*
- The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Ancient Epic Poems*
- Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's 5 Late Romances: Retellings in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's 10 Histories: Retellings in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's 11 Tragedies: Retellings in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's 12 Comedies: Retellings in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's 38 Plays: Retellings in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose*

William Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 3: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's As You Like It: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Coriolanus: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Cymbeline: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Henry V: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Henry VIII: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's King John: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Richard II: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Richard III: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Timon of Athens: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale: A Retelling in Prose

Children's Biography

Nadia Comaneci: Perfect Ten

Personal Finance

How to Manage Your Money: A Guide for the Non-Rich

Anecdote Collections

250 Anecdotes About Opera

250 Anecdotes About Religion

250 Anecdotes About Religion: Volume 2

250 Music Anecdotes

Be a Work of Art: 250 Anecdotes and Stories

Boredom is Anti-Life: 250 Anecdotes and Stories

The Coolest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in the Arts: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes

Create, Then Take a Break: 250 Anecdotes

Don't Fear the Reaper: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Dance: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 4: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 5: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 6: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Neighborhoods: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Relationships: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Sports, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Television and Radio: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Theater: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 1: 250 Anecdotes

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

Maximum Cool: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Religion: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

Reality is Fabulous: 250 Anecdotes and Stories

Resist Psychic Death: 250 Anecdotes

**Appendix G: About Brenda Kennedy (Romance
Writer)**

You may follow Brenda Kennedy on:

FB author page: <http://on.fb.me/1ywRwml>

**BookBub Author's Page:
<https://www.bookbub.com/authors/brenda-kennedy>**

GoodReads: <http://bit.ly/1szWiw5>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BrendaKennedy>

Webpage: <http://brendakennedyauthor.com>

The Forgotten Trilogy

Book One: *Forgetting the Past* (Free)

Book Two: *Living for Today*

Book Three: *Seeking the Future*

The Learning to Live Trilogy

Book One: *Learning to Live* (Free)

Book Two: *Learning to Trust*

Book Three: *Learning to Love*

The Starting Over Trilogy

Book One: *A New Beginning* (Free)

Book Two: *Saving Angel*

Book Three: *Destined to Love*

The Freedom Trilogy

Book One: *Shattered Dreams* (Free)

Book Two: *Broken Lives*

Book Three: *Mending Hearts*

The Fighting to Survive Trilogy

Round One: *A Life Worth Fighting* (Free)

Round Two: *Against the Odds*

Round Three: *One Last Fight*

The Rose Farm Trilogy

Book One: *Forever Country* (Free)

Book Two: *Country Life*

Book Three: *Country Love*

Books in the Seashell Island Stand-alone Series

Book One: *Home on Seashell Island* (Free)

Book Two: *Christmas on Seashell Island*

Book Three: *Living on Seashell Island*

Book Four: *Moving to Seashell Island*

Book Five: *Returning to Seashell Island*

Books in the Montgomery Wine Stand-alone Series

Book One: *A Place to Call Home*

Stand-alone books in the “Pineapple Grove Cozy Murder Mystery Series” written by Brenda and her son, Kayden Keaton

Book One: *Murder Behind the Coffeehouse*

Stand-alone books in the “Another Round of Laughter Series” written by Brenda and some of her siblings:

**Carla Evans, Martha Farmer, Rosa Jones, and David
Bruce**

Cupcakes Are Not a Diet Food (Free)

Kids Are Not Always Angels

Aging Is Not for Sissies

**Appendix H: An Excerpt from *Shattered Dreams* by
Brenda Kennedy**

(A Permanently Free Romance eBook with a Cliffhanger)

Emma

“Push, Emma, I can see him!” Max says excitedly, as he stands at the head of the hospital bed, holding my hand.

“Emma, one more big push should do it. When I tell you, I want you to give it all you have,” the doctor says as he looks at me.

I only nod; I am exhausted. I don’t know how I am going to push any more. I have been in labor for nearly 19 hours.

“Ok, Emma, here we go. Take a deep breath, tuck your chin into your chest, and on the count of three... push,” the doctor says.

Max whispers into my ear. “Come on, Em, in just a few minutes we get to meet our son. I love you and I am so proud of you.” Max lightly touches my earlobe and I open my eyes. I look into his piercing blue eyes. I can see his smile in his eyes.

Max lifts my head for me and I tuck my chin into my chest, as I have done many times before. I take a deep breath, close my eyes, and push with all the strength I have left in me. Max bends down and counts softly into my ear. When he says ten, I open my eyes.

“Em, look in the mirror. Do you see him? That’s our boy, Em, our son: mine and yours.” Max says sweetly without raising up and away from me. He lowers my head back down to the bed. He wipes the tear away from the corner of my eye before it trickles down.

“Emma, you’re doing great. Rest until the next contraction and then I want you to push just like you did this time.”

“I can’t,” I whisper, so only Max can hear me.

Max rubs his thumb back and forth over my earlobe. He has done that since our first date in high school. He kisses me and says, “Em, I know you can do it once more. Our son is right there waiting to meet us.” He kisses me again.

“This is it, Emma,” the doctor says, scooting his stool closer to me.

Max lifts my head and I don’t open my eyes. “On the count of three.” I wait for Max to count before taking a deep breath. I push then I feel a tug. “Open your eyes, Em, you’re going to miss it.”

I open my eyes and the doctor is suctioning the nose and mouth of a blond-haired baby. I smile and watch. Max leans in closer and whispers into my ear. “God, he’s beautiful. He looks just like you.”

We watch intently as the doctor gently pulls our baby the rest of the way out. I think I hold my breath until our son fills his lungs with air and cries. I turn my head towards Max; he is also crying.

“God, Em, I swear I didn’t think I could love you anymore, but I was wrong.” I smile and he kisses me. “Thank you, thank you so much for giving me my son, a family.”

Max takes the camera and snaps several pictures of our son.

The doctor places our crying son on my belly and asks Max if he wants to cut the umbilical cord. Max stands tall and proud, then nods. I watch as the nurse hands him a pair of medical scissors and Max cuts in the area she instructs.

My eyes fill with tears. Max is still wearing his Army fatigues, boots, and a camouflage shirt. He was in the field for a training day when I went into labor. I am three weeks early so none of our parents is here. Just Max, me, and our military family.

Once the umbilical cord is cut, the nurse removes our son from my belly and carries him over to another table on the other side of the room. I keep my eyes focused on our baby. The nurse is rubbing him vigorously with a towel and he continues to cry.

“Just a few more minutes, Emma, and I’ll be done here,” the doctor says.

I begin to shiver and someone covers me with a warm blanket. Max leans down next to me and kisses me. “I think we need a name for our little soldier.”

I turn my head and smile, “I want to name him Maxwell James Greyson Jr.” Max and I have already had this talk and Max doesn’t think he is worthy enough to have his son named after him. He said he didn’t want his son walking in his shadow.

“Em, look at him. He’s strong and beautiful, a true soldier. He deserves to be named after a hero.”

Max takes even more photos of our son.

“Max, you are a hero, you’re my hero.”

They wrap our baby up and the nurse carries him over to us. I sit up and the nurse hands him to me. He is swaddled in a light blue blanket and a white cap that covers his hair. He is awake and looking at me. Max sits closely and lightly touches our son’s face with the backs of his fingers. “God, Em, he’s beautiful.”

“He’s handsome like his daddy.” I look over my shoulder so I can see Max.

“Dad. I’m a dad. I’m going to be the best dad I can be. I’m going to make you and him proud of me,” Max says seriously.

“Max, I am already proud of you and I love you so much.”

Max looks away from the baby and looks at me with a sad smile. “There isn’t anything I wouldn’t do for you and him. You know that, right?”

I nod. My nose begins to tingle; this is a clear sign that I’m about to cry. Max lightly touches my earlobe and I smile. I lean my head into his hand and close my eye. He leans into me and kisses my forehead. The baby fusses and Max laughs. “He’s already starting to interfere with my alone time with you.”

Max stands up and takes the baby from my arms. He holds him with confidence and pride. Max cuddles him before removing his hat. “Blond hair like his mother,” he says, smiling. “What can we name him other than Maxwell? He deserves something strong, powerful, and authoritative.”

“Max, if you won’t agree with Maxwell James, let’s name him James Maxwell. He won’t be a Jr., but he’ll still be named after you.”

Max looks at his son, “James Maxwell Greyson. No Jimmy, or Jimbo or Jim?”

“No, we’ll call him James.”

“James Maxwell Greyson, your mother is very persistent.” Max looks over at me with a smile.

“Is that a yes? We can name him after you?” I ask, hopefully.

Max kisses his son and smiles. “I think James suits him, James Greyson. Yes, Emma, I think it’s a perfect name for our little soldier.”

“I’m sorry, Sergeant. But, there is a waiting room full of unruly soldiers waiting to hear some news about the mom and baby. Would you mind going out there and telling them something?” the nurse asks, smiling.

“Oh, yeah, I should do that. Most of them have been out there since your labor started.” Max kisses the baby and hands him to me. “I’ll be right back, I love you both so much.”

“We love you, too. Go tell them to go home and please thank them for me.”

“They are going to want to see you and the baby, you know.”

“I know, just tell them we’ll see them once we get home. It’s been a long several hours of labor. They’ll understand.” I am suddenly feeling exhausted.

“I will.” Max kisses me, then the baby, and heads for the door.

“Oh, Max?”

He turns around to look at me, “Yes, Em?”

“Don’t come in here smelling of cheap cigars. I know how you and your boys are.”

“Wouldn’t think of it; be right back.”

Max

I walk out into the waiting room, which is full of our military family. I stand at the doorway bearing an all-American smile. Looking around the room, I see my platoon standing around waiting for an update. Wilson, Lanford, Wagner,

Snider, Jamison, Poland, and even Mahoney are here with their wives. They have been a part of our family for the past year, ever since we have been stationed in Fort Drum, New York. I clear my throat and everyone looks up. “We have a beautiful, healthy, baby boy,” I announce proudly.

The room erupts with cheers. I take a step further into the room and close the door securely behind me, to mute the noise from the room.

“Sarg, please tells us he looks like Emma?” Mahoney shouts from across the room. His wife, who is standing beside him, nudges him in his ribs, and smiles.

“Yeah, Mahoney, thank the good lord, he looks just like Em.”

Lanford and his wife walk towards me. “Does the little soldier have a name?”

“He does, we decided to name him James Maxwell,” I beam. I clear my throat. “James, no shortening it, no nicknames, just James.”

Wilson’s wife walks up to me and hugs me. “I think James is a wonderful name, Max. How is Emma doing?”

“She’s great. I am so proud of her and the baby is perfect.” I raise my voice a little louder so everyone can hear. “Em and I want to thank you all for being here with us and for sharing in the birth of our son.” I clear my throat again. “It really means a lot to us both.”

“Does this mean we can light up these cigars now?” Wilson says, as he passes them out to each of the guys. The girls crinkle up their noses and I laugh.

“Party on, but I need to get back in there. But, seriously, thank you all.”

I open the door and turn to leave before someone calls me by name. “Greyson?” I turn around and Snyder walks up to me with an envelope and a package in his hands. “Here, it isn’t much, but we wanted to get the newest member of our squad something. Tell Emma we are proud of her and can’t wait to see her and the baby.”

I take the gift and the envelope from Snider. “Thank you, this means a lot to Emma and me.” I turn and walk out the room.

I walk into Em’s room and she and James are fast asleep. She is holding him to her chest and has her hand resting on his back. The room is dim and no one else is in there. I quietly walk over and stand at the edge of the bed. Emma wakes up and smiles. “Hi.”

“Hi, I didn’t mean to wake you. You look so beautiful, I couldn’t help but stare.”

Emma scoots over and lifts the blanket up for me to get under. “You can stare at me all day long, if you want.”

I sit on the edge of the bed and kiss her head. “The guys got us something,” I say, raising the gift for her to see.

“They didn’t have to do that.”

“They know that, but they wanted to.”

“Go ahead and open it.” She repositions James in her arms so she can get a better look.

I open the card and see a picture of a little boy playing with a train set. Inside are two crisp \$100 bills. The card reads, *A little something to help with his first train set. Love, Uncle Mahoney, Poland, Snider, Wilson, Jamison, Lanford, and Wagner.* I smile and look up at Emma.

“A train set?”

“Yeah, it’s a guy thing,” I say, laughing.

She laughs, too. “Boys and their toys.”

I open up the gift and hold it up for Emma to see. It’s a camouflage onesie and matching pants. “Well, I guess I know what he’ll be coming home in,” she says, picking up the small outfit.

“Like father, like son,” I beam.

I pick up the baby and hold him. “Thank God, he looks like you. The guys also send their love and they said they’ll see you soon. I thought some of the guys would have left, but they all stayed. Even their wives were out there waiting on the news of the birth.”

“We are very blessed to be stationed here with such wonderful people.”

“I think so, too, Em. It makes it a lot easier being away from our home and family. Some great people are stationed here with us.”

The nurse walks in, and I stand up from the bed with James. The nurse checks Emma and pushes on her belly and checks her vital signs. Emma grimaces and I move over to stand near her. She reaches her hand up to me and I take it in mine. She squeezes my hand and I know she is in pain. Once the nurse is done examining Emma, she asks, “Do you want to try to feed your son?”

Emma looks at me and smiles. “I would love to,” she says, sitting up in the bed. The nurse walks over and gets an extra pillow from the linen closet. I kiss the baby and hand him to Emma. I don’t walk away from the bed; instead, I sit on the edge so I can be a part of his first feeding. The nurse assists Emma from the other side of the bed, and I watch my son nurse for the first time. Reaching over I lightly touch James’

forehead. He has the softest skin I have ever felt. Emma looks over at me and smiles.

I say, "I love you so much. You do know that I am the happiest man on the earth right now?" I raise my hand and touch Emma's earlobe. She leans her head into my hand and I cup my hand over her cheek.

"Max, I love you so much. Thank you for giving him to me. It's hard to believe how much I love him, already." Emma looks down at James as he eats, and touches his small cheek.

"He's beautiful. Today is right up there with one of the best days of my life."

"One of them?" she asks, surprised.

"Yes, marrying you is one and James' birth is another. I feel complete. Everything I have ever wanted is right here. I am the luckiest guy on the planet Earth."

Once James is finished eating and Emma swaddles him. I lay him down in his crib. I look over at Emma; she is sitting up in bed with her eyes closed. I lower the head of her hospital bed and cover her with the blankets up to her chin, the way I know she likes them. She tells me she loves me, but she doesn't open her eyes. There is a recliner in the room I make into a bed for me for the night. I know that she will want me to go home, but I have no intentions of leaving my family in the hospital alone. I kiss her goodnight before I kiss James goodnight. I look on the nightstand; a children's book is lying on the stand. I open it and see that it is a gift from Emma's mom and dad.

For our firstborn grandson. We loved you even before we met you. We love you so much, Grandma and Pap.

I smile at the thought of how much my son is already loved. He is only a few hours old and so many people already love

him. The more people who love him, the better off he will be as a child *and* a man. The book is called *The Grandchild*. I pull up a chair and begin to read the book to James before going to bed.

AMAZON

http://www.amazon.com/Brenda-Kennedy/e/B00JJAICYK/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1420675580&sr=1-1

SMASHWORDS

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/smoothie2003>

BARNES AND NOBLE

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/c/brenda-kennedy>

KOBO

<http://store.kobobooks.com/en-us/Search/Query?q=%22Brenda+Kennedy%22&t=none&f=author&p=1&s=none&g=both>

GOOD READS

http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/8113676.Brenda_Kennedy

**Appendix I: An Excerpt from *A New Beginning* by
Brenda Kennedy**

(A Permanently Free Romance eBook with a Cliffhanger)

Mason

Do I really want to be here? No, not so much. I came to be social and to catch up with my friends. I have to be at the E.R. in a couple of hours for what I'm sure will be another crazy Saturday night. I can do this. Smile and be polite, I keep telling myself. Vincent called earlier, wanting us to get together. He said he had something to share with Donovan and me.

Donovan Martin is an attorney at a major law firm in Sarasota and Vincent Salvatore owns his own construction company in the Sarasota/Bradenton area. We have been friends for as long as I can remember. Living in the same neighborhood as children and going to the same schools until college, we have gotten and stayed very close.

I remember Vincent's birthday one summer. His parents threw him a costume birthday party. Everyone had to dress up as pirates, even the adults. He had a pirate ship birthday cake, too. It was the coolest cake I have ever seen. The party was held in his backyard. Earlier that summer, his Dad had built him a huge pirate ship out of wood. Most kids in the neighborhood had wooden jungle gyms or wooden swing sets in their backyard, but not Vincent; he had a life-sized wooden pirate ship. Vincent's Dad owned a construction company and built the ship by hand for his son. It had a Jolly Pirate flag, flying high on the flagpole, three different level decks, one deck had a cannon, and it even had a plank to walk on. Underneath the plank was a thick pile of mulch so you could jump off the plank and land in the mulch without getting hurt. Vincent and his Dad named the ship *Vin-Ma-Don, the 3 Buccaneers*, after us three boys — Vincent, me,

and Donovan. I don't think any other childhood memory I have tops that one. We were close then and we are still close to this day. They are like my brothers.

Ever since Julia and I broke up, my clubbing days are long behind me. I really don't want to run into her and her beau any time soon. I guess I still hold some resentment towards her for the way things ended. Yeah, walking in on her and another man will do that to a person. That she is still dating the same man she cheated on me with still stings. What a bitch! Ok, so I still hold a lot of resentment towards her. I know she will do the same thing to him as she did to me, and damn if I don't want to be there to see that go down. Yeah, I hope she gets what she deserves.

I walk inside the already too hot club and make my way to the bar. I can see Donovan and Vincent tossing back a shot. Weaving through the dance floor, I finally reach my destination. God, how I hate the club scene. Donovan sees me first as he nods his head in my direction and then Vincent turns to look at me and smiles.

"Been here long?" I ask.

"No, man, just got here maybe 15 minutes ago. Glad you could make it," Vincent says, cupping his hand on my shoulder.

"The club's hopping — sure you don't want to call in sick?" Donovan asks

"As appealing as that sounds, I really can't. One of us three has to work."

Laughing, Donovan tells me he went ahead and ordered me a club soda with lime.

"Thanks, man," I say, reaching for my drink and taking a generous gulp of it.

“We still on for tomorrow?” Vincent asks.

“What’s going on tomorrow?”

“You know damn good and well what’s going on Sunday. We’re taking the boat out, and Sara and Brea are fixing you up with the new girl in the office. Ring a bell now, smart ass?”

“Oh, yeah, about that, I’ve been meaning to cancel on that. I’m not really in the mood to be fixed up. I have a lot going on at work with getting my own practice started and the renovations being done at the beach house.”

“Still bitter after all that shit Julia pulled, I see. You need to start dating again. It’s been five months,” Donovan says.

“Easier said than done. I’m trying to move on, but it’s still pretty fresh in my mind. I don’t really want to spend the day on the water with someone that I may or may not connect with. It’s gonna be a long day if we don’t click.”

“There’s no way Brea and Sara are going to let you out of this, so you better suck it up now. You still have until tomorrow to get your mind ready for it. It’s gonna be fun. I searched using Google for a new reef for us to check out. Scuba diving always calms your nerves,” Vincent says.

Yeah, he’s right. We haven’t gone diving in months. Spending the day on the water has never been a bad time. Food, drinks, and friends — that’s what life’s about. “Ok, you’re right. It’s just a few hours with a woman I know absolutely nothing about. I’m gonna warn you now, if this is anything less than a great time for me, I will make you fucking miserable right along with me.”

“Fair enough,” Vincent says, before finishing off the last of his beer and ordering another round.

Trying desperately to change the subject, I ask Vincent what's the news he has to share, before taking another drink of my club soda.

With a shit-eating grin, he says, "I'm gonna ask Brea to marry me."

I spew my drink everywhere and look at Donovan who's looking at me and looks just as shocked as I am. We both look back to Vincent like he just grew horns.

"Wh-wh-what did you just say?"

"You heard me. I am crazy about her and don't want to live without her."

"It seems a little fast to me. You've known her what ... two minutes?" Donovan says seriously.

"Funny, it's been just over a year ... I have never felt this way about anyone and I know she is the one. Dude, I can't get enough of her."

"Wow, I had no idea it was that serious. I knew you guys were crazy about each other, but marriage! Well then, if that's what you want, you have my blessings. She is a great girl and you are one lucky son of a bitch," I say with a smile that matches Vincent's.

Donovan nods in agreement and tips his beer to his mouth and then waves at a guy on the other end of the bar.

Vincent turns back to the bar with a huge stupid-as-fuck grin on his face, grabs our drinks off the bar, and passes them out to us.

The club is jam-packed. Standing room only at the bar, people are dancing, groups of people are huddled together chatting. Lights are flashing and the music is blaring.

Looking around the club, I nod to a group of people I know and then turn my attention back to the guys.

We are standing at the bar when someone bumps into me, spilling my club soda everywhere. I look behind me to see a tall, thin, beautiful brunette straightening her dress. She looks at me sheepishly. She is stunning. Long legs, big beautiful brown eyes, full red lips.

“I am so sorry,” she says, jarring me from my thoughts.

Grabbing a few napkins from the bar to wipe the club soda from my hands, I tell her, smiling, “No problem.”

She smiles a perfect bright white smile and turns to the bar and orders a glass of white wine. I take this opportunity to check her out. Long straight brown hair, gold hoop earrings, red form-fitting dress cut low enough to show off her beautiful full cleavage, red painted nails, gold bracelet, curvy hips, long tan legs, a sexy gold anklet and black fuck-me heels with red bows on the backs of them. My eyes travel back up her gorgeous body, admiring her curves when our eyes meet.

She smiles again, looking over her shoulder, and says with a raised eyebrow, “See something you like?”

Laughing from being caught ogling her, I say, “Nice shoes.”

She laughs back and says, “Nice tat.”

With my brows furrowed, I look down at the sleeves of my shirt covering my arms, look back up at her and say, “I don’t have any tats.”

She laughs with a wink and says, “Mmmm, just checking.”

With her wine glass in hand, she saunters off towards the dance floor. Looking back over her shoulder, she winks, and says, “See ya around, Handsome.”

Now that you can count on.

When I turn back around to where Donovan and Vincent are, they are both laughing at me.

“What is so funny?”

“Just you and your public display of appreciation.”

“That obvious?”

“Oh, yeah.”

“You can’t fault me for that.”

Drinking the rest of my drink, I lean forward to place the empty glass on the bar, and finish wiping the rest of the spilled club soda off my hands, I toss the used, wet bar napkins beside the empty glass.

I ask Vincent, “So when are you proposing?”

“Soon, not sure yet.”

Donovan says, “You know it’s all about the ring, right? You don’t get the ring right, you can kiss the whole wedding goodbye.”

Donovan, having three sisters and having been raised by a single mother, would know. In fact, Donovan knows more about girl shit than any other guy I know. It must have sucked for him growing up with all women in the house.

Vincent nods nervously and says, “That’s what I hear. That’s why I’m meeting Sara at Tiffany’s on Wednesday to help me pick out the ring.”

Donovan damn nears chokes on his beer and says, “Sara — you mean my Sara?”

“Yes, your Sara. She is Brea’s best friend, so it only makes sense to ask for her help picking out the ring, since she knows exactly what Brea would like.”

“Let me get this right? You want to take my Sara out with you to look at engagement rings? You couldn’t have asked one of Brea’s sisters from Ohio to go with you?”

“What’s the big deal about Sara going to Tiffany’s to look at engagement rings with me?”

With that statement made, it finally clicks with Vincent what Donovan is worried about. Donovan is worried that Sara’s going to get the wedding/baby fever, or whatever it is girls get whenever there’s a wedding, an engagement, or a new baby.

“Oh, shit, I get it. I didn’t think about that. Too late now, I already asked her to help me. Sorry, man.”

“I like the way things are going between the two of us. I don’t need Sara coming home and dropping hints about rings, weddings, and preschools.”

Donovan runs his hands through his hair, looking completely defeated, and says, “I think I need something stronger to drink.”

Looking at Vincent, he says, “You better pray this goes better than I am imagining or this friendship —” waving his hands between the two of them “— is over.”

Laughing, Vincent lifts his hands up in surrender and says, “Ok, bro, it’ll be all right. Let me get you another shot.”

“Or six,” I butt in. “By the look on Donovan’s face, you better pray Sara doesn’t get wedding/baby fever after spending the day with you in a jewelry store.”

Seconds later, someone wraps their arms around my waist. I turn around and see Sara smiling brightly at me.

“Mason, I didn’t know you were meeting us here tonight,” she says.

She leans up on her tiptoes to kiss me on the cheek as Brea pats my arm as she walks past me to be beside Vincent, who is smiling like a lunatic at her. He leans down to kiss her sweetly on her lips as she snakes her arms around his waist. They really do make a great couple.

“Can’t stay. I have to work tonight,” I say. “I just came out for a minute to see everyone. How have you been?”

Moving to be next to Donovan, who is already reaching his hands out for her, Sara says, “I’m good. Work is really busy, so that’s a plus.”

Donovan leans down and kisses her on the top of her head when she nestles in front of him. Her back is to his chest.

It’s times like these when I realize how much I miss being in a relationship. Damn Julia! That’s two years of my life I’ll never get back.

While Donovan, Vincent, and I were born and raised in Florida. Sara and Brea are transplants. They moved down from Zanesville, a town in Ohio, a couple years ago to start up an insurance company together. R.K. Insurance over on Stickney Point is a thriving business, and the girls seem to be doing very well for themselves. R.K. Insurance is named after the girls’ last names, Sara Roberts and Brea Kinsley.

Vincent orders shots for everyone, with beer chasers for Donovan and him, and a pitcher of margaritas for the girls. I decline another drink. I really need to get going before they start talking about the blind date they have arranged for me tomorrow.

“Don’t forget about the boating trip we have planned for Sunday. We have a hot date set up for you.” Brea says.

Shit, too late.

“The weather is supposed to be beautiful,” Sara says and talks about how much fun we are going to have and about the mystery woman being excited.

Vincent owns a 26-foot Catamaran boat that he leaves docked at Marina Jacks.

“Looking forward to it,” I say through gritted teeth. They all laugh, but I don’t see what’s so funny.

“I hate to cut the party short, but I need to get to the hospital,” I say. “My shift starts in an hour.”

I say my goodbyes with hugs for the girls and handshakes for the guys.

“I’ll see you guys tomorrow.”

Sara shouts out, “Twelve noon at the marina. We’ll meet you there.”

I wave in acknowledgement and head towards the dance floor.

Weaving through the drunks, and the dancers, I spot Miss Red Dress, from the bar earlier. She is on the dance floor, swaying her hips to the music and holding her wine glass up so no one will bump into it. We make eye contact and I can’t look away. She is staring at me and she is smoking hot. I raise my chin and wink at her as my goodbye and she raises her glass towards me with a smile and winks in acknowledgement. Now that is definitely someone I want to get to know.

I head out into the crisp night air, inhaling deeply. Collecting my car from the valet, I make my way to Sarasota Memorial Hospital to start my shift.

AMAZON

http://www.amazon.com/Brenda-Kennedy/e/B00JJAICYK/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1420675580&sr=1-1

SMASHWORDS

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/smoothie2003>

BARNES AND NOBLE

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/c/brenda-kennedy>

KOBO

<http://store.kobobooks.com/en-us/Search/Query?q=%22Brenda+Kennedy%22&t=none&f=author&p=1&s=none&g=both>

GOOD READS

http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/8113676.Brenda_Kennedy

**Appendix J: An Excerpt from *A Life Worth Fighting* by
Brenda Kennedy**

(A Permanently Free Romance eBook with a Cliffhanger)

Robert

I kiss my wife Leah goodbye before I head out for my morning run. I'm currently training for my first boxing match in almost two years. Life interfered with my dreams, wreaking havoc on everything I once held near and dear.

I dress in gray sweats and a gray hoodie. Before I head out the door for my roadwork exercise, I secure my iPod to my arm. Sure, running builds endurance, but I also do it to clear the thoughts from my head. I double-check the time on my watch, lock up the house, and I'm off. The song "The Eye of the Tiger" is set on repeat on my iPod and pounds in my ear through the earbuds. I know it's cliché, but what can I say? I'm a Rocky Balboa fan. When I hear that song, I feel like I can take on the world.

I let my feet pound into the pavement and let the music set my running pace. It's a 15-mile run, and I have the time down to a science. Midway through my run, I stop at the local florist, as I do once a week.

"Good morning, Bobby."

"Hello, Mrs. Ford." Mrs. Ford is the elderly woman who owns and runs the floral shop.

"It's a beautiful day today."

"Yes, ma'am, it is. May I have a dozen pink roses, please?"

"I have them all ready for you."

I pay for my purchase, thank her, and head towards the door.

"Bobby, will I see you next week?"

“Yes, Mrs. Ford. Thank you and have a nice day.”

“You, too, dear.”

I run the short distance to the cemetery and kneel in front of the black and gold tear shaped tombstone with the name “Jamie Sue Grether.” I place today’s fresh roses down and remove the flowers from last week. Deep breaths help me to keep my anger under control as I wipe the tombstone off with the clean cloth I carry in my hoodie pocket just for this purpose. I kiss my index and middle fingers and press them gently to her name that is engraved in gold.

I turn to leave, and I swear another piece of my heart stays there with Jamie. I turn up the music on my iPod and pound my feet into the cement in time with the music until I reach home.

“How was your run?”

I look up and see that my wife, Leah, is in the kitchen having a cup of coffee. She is standing at the stove wearing a white blouse, a gray pencil skirt, and gray heels. I smile as soon as I see her. I look at my watch, and I am pleasantly surprised that I shaved off another minute from my running time.

“It was good. I made better time today.”

“Did you make all your stops today?” Leah is referring to the stops at the florist and to see Jamie.

“I did. Let me shower, then we’ll have breakfast together before you leave.”

“Sounds good.”

I walk over and kiss her before I disappear into the basement. When we bought the house, Leah and I turned a room in the back of the house into a training room for me. It has everything I need to train, plus a shower. It was Leah’s idea;

she didn't want me stinking up the house with my sweaty clothes.

Leah and I dated in high school. She went on to college, where she took business courses while I trained to be a pro-boxer. It was my dream, even as a small child. I honestly believe I would have reached my goal of being world champion by now if life hadn't interfered in the cruelest way.

After my shower, I return upstairs, and Leah is just finishing making breakfast. We eat together in the eat-in kitchen and talk over a breakfast of oatmeal, whole-wheat toast, and fresh strawberries. Leah knows that while she works I'll spend the majority of my day training.

"What are your plans today?" I ask.

"I thought I would go to work, then stop by the store on my way home. I need to get a few things."

"I can go to the store after my workout if you want."

"Good, I need an ovulation kit and some tampons." She smiles, and I know she is laughing on the inside.

I smile, too. *I'm not going to the store for that kind of stuff.*

"Is there anything else you want me to do today?"

"After you go to the store?" she asks.

"Instead of," I correct.

"Don't want to go to the store?" she asks.

"No."

"I didn't think so. I have a shipment of books and supplies coming in today. Do you want to come over and help me put those away?"

“I can do that,” I say as I finish off my orange juice.

“Good, it’s going to be a significant delivery.” Leah stands and takes our empty bowls into the kitchen. I stand and follow behind her with the juice glass and empty coffee cups.

Leah turns around and hugs me. “I need to go before I’m late. I’ll see you around 6:00 p.m.?”

“Six it is. I love you, Sweets. Have a good day at work.”

“Have a good day at home.” She giggles. “I love you, Robert.”

Leah and our parents are the only people who call me Robert; everyone else calls me Bobby. I kiss her one last time, inhaling her scent of buttercream and vanilla. Since she owns a bakery, coffee shop, and bookstore combined, her scent is unique to her. “Be careful, Sweets, and I’ll see you at 6:00,” I say as I hold the door open for her.

“Sure you don’t want to pick up my tampons and ovulation kit for me?” she teases.

“Positive.” I watch as she gets into the Tahoe, buckles up, and pulls out of the driveway.

My phone rings and I’m surprised to see it’s from my trainer, Gus.

“Hey, Gus, what’s up?”

“I have some news.”

“Did Kennedy accept my challenge?” Abel Kennedy is the heavyweight champion.

Note: The above is an excerpt from Brenda Kennedy’s romance book *A Life Worth Fighting*. Free. (It ends in a cliffhanger, as does the second book of the trilogy.)

AMAZON

http://www.amazon.com/Brenda-Kennedy/e/B00JJAIKYK/ref=sr_tc_2_0?qid=1438780902&sr=1-2-ent

APPLE

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/artist/brenda-kennedy/id313471946?mt=11>

BARNES AND NOBLE

http://www.barnesandnoble.com/s/%22Brenda%20Kennedy%22?Ns=P_Sales_Rank&Ntk=P_key_Contributor_List&Ntx=mode%20matchall

KOBO

<https://store.kobobooks.com/en-us/search?query=brenda%20kennedy&fcsearchfield=author>

SMASHWORDS

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/smoothie2003>

**Appendix K: An Excerpt from *Forever Country* by
Brenda Kennedy**

(A Permanently Free Romance eBook with a Cliffhanger)

Abel Kennedy

It's been six months since I lost the Heavyweight Boxing Championship fight to Bobby Grether. Although I'm disappointed, I know that he won fair and square. Even I can admit that.

After the fight, I stayed hidden in my suite at the Bellagio Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. I was waiting for the swelling and bruising to go down on my face before being seen in public. I looked bad. In fact, I looked as bad as I felt. I was never one for public humiliation. I was the fighting champion, and then suddenly I wasn't. It hurt. It hurt almost as bad as the injuries.

I talked to Momma and Pops every day. Pops said he saw the fight on television, and he knew the condition I was in. He said Momma busied herself in the kitchen, makin' fried chicken and peach cobbler so she had an excuse not to watch the fight. I invited them to all of my fights, but they didn't attend any of them. Pops is busy on the farm and Momma, well, she doesn't want to see anyone hittin' her baby. "Baby" is her word, not mine. I'm 31 years old, so I'm hardly a baby. But I'll always be her baby, no matter how old I am.

My managers, Tony and Mack, stayed with me during my recuperation time after the fight. They were disappointed when I lost the championship belt, but I think they were more disappointed when I told them I was retiring. Well, maybe I'll semi-retire; I haven't decided yet. I do know this body needs a long rest.

I decided to return to my country roots in Rose Farm, Ohio for the holidays. My parents are getting old and when my

brother called and asked if I could come home and help on the farm, I couldn't say no.

I fly into Columbus, Ohio, rent a pickup truck, and drive myself to Rose Farm. Pops calls the farm "The Kennedy Mule Hill Farm," but I'm not sure why. As I travel the old country roads, I see not much has changed. I left the rural area right out of high school and returned home only a few times over the years.

I didn't want to be a farmer, and I didn't want this life for me. I've stepped in manure way too many times. I like music, and I know that the Mississippi Sheiks' Walter Vinson, who used to work as a field hand, had a very good reason for quitting and taking off with his guitar to play the country blues I love so much: "I'm not going to spend the rest of my life behind a mule that's farting." Of course, that was back in the days when mules pulled plows.

Pops works hard, and he's a proud man, but I wanted more for me, and for them. I thought if I made a lot of money, I would move my family away from the farm and into the city. I would be able to provide for them, and their life would be better, happier, and easier.

I was wrong. They never left the farm, and they never cashed most of the checks I sent home for them. I sent them more than enough to pay off the farm, the farming equipment, and a sufficient amount to retire on and hire a farmhand. Those checks are stored away in a box in a closet. I will never understand why they chose to struggle the way they do. Pops did call me once and asked if he could cash one of the checks. He said Momma was getting' mighty tired of holdin' an umbrella over her head while hearin' the gospel. I think that translates into "the church roof leaks."

Most people call their farms ranches, but not in this neck of the woods. They're just farms. There's nothing fancy about a farmhouse, country land, or country living.

I drive through Crooksville, and nothing has changed. The old Crooksville Bank, now called "The Community Bank," is still there and Peaches Place, a family restaurant, is just up the street. I watch the people as they mosey down the road stopping to talk to their neighbors. Wrangler jeans, cowboy boots, Carhartt workwear, flannel shirts, and camouflage anything is still the dress code for these parts. I look around and I don't see anyone I recognize. *I wonder if I would even know anyone if I saw them. Probably not.*

I consider stopping at Peaches Place for some homemade apple pie but decide against it. I wonder if my sister-in-law, Mia, is working today. I'm not the same person I was when I left here, and I already feel out of place. I look down at my black slacks and white button-up shirt, and I definitely don't fit in. I have cowboy boots, a guitar in the back of the pickup, and a cowboy hat. Maybe I fit in more than I want to admit. I also have a brand-new harmonica I'd like to learn to play. Fortunately, a harmonica doesn't take up much space.

I stop at the only country bar between Crooksville and Rose Farm. The County Line Bar is a popular bar that was open when I lived here. It used to be called The Jolly Bar. It looks like the only place in town to grab a cold one. I put on my cowboy hat and make my way into the bar.

It's early on a Wednesday night and there's already a small crowd gathering inside. *Is it Ladies Night?* I get I.D.'d and pay the \$5.00 cover charge at the door. I'm a little surprised to have to pay a fee in this area.

"When did you start charging a cover charge?" I ask the bouncer at the door.

“Since the Max Bleu band started playin’ here.” He nods to the stage in front of the bar and I can see the band setting up. *Max Bleu Band. I kind of remember in high school a few guys getting a band together. Max was one guy’s first name, and Bleu was another guy’s last name. For the life of me, I can’t remember their whole names.*

I make my way to the bar. After I order a Bud Light, I take the only seat left at the bar. It’s beside a girl with long brown hair. I don’t complain.

I look around the bar and drink my beer. When the band begins to play, I turn and face the stage. They introduce the band members and then themselves. I quickly recognize them as the guys from high school.

The brunette sitting beside me orders a Pepsi and I’m a little surprised. *Who comes to a bar and drinks pop?* Someone bumps into her and she almost falls off of the barstool. I quickly reach for her to prevent her from falling onto the floor. The drunken guy looks at her and stumbles away.

“Asshat,” she yells after him, and scoots back onto the stool. She turns around and looks at me and says, “Thank you. You can’t even have a drink without some drunk bumpin’ into you.”

I remove my hands from around her waist. “You’re welcome. You’re only drinking Pepsi?” I ask.

“My boyfriend’s the drummer. It’s still too early to drink. If I started drinkin’ now, I’d be like that asshat,” she says, nodding to the drunk guy staggering across the room.

I smile to keep from laughing. “I don’t think I ever heard a girl say ‘asshat.’” before.

When I say that, her smile matches my smile. “Sorry, that’s not too ladylike, is it?”

“It’s fine. It’s just not a word I hear everyday.”

“And I’m not like any other girl.” She laughs. “Hi, I’m Megan Rose.” She reaches her hand out for mine.

I shake her hand and say, “I’m Abel Kennedy.”

“I know that name.” I watch as her brows furrow together. “Abel Kennedy... how do I know that name?”

I watch her take a drink of her Pepsi from the can. I don’t answer her, I just smile. The room starts filling up and it’s now standing room only. Onlookers now block the view we had of the band. I watch as she leans forward to try to get a better view of her boyfriend.

The drunken guy reappears and stands beside her to order another drink. “Hey, baby,” he slurs.

She leans back away from him and says, “I’m not your baby.”

I watch him, and he watches her as he orders a double shot of Jack Daniels from the bartender. “Not yet, you’re not, but I was thinking we could hook up later.” His licks his lips and it’s disgusting. I watch as she stiffens. He takes his double shot and downs the entire drink. I watch as he wipes his mouth off with the back of his hand and says, “You ready to suck me off?”

I stand and put my hand on Megan Rose’s shoulder. I look down at him and say, “Don’t talk to my sister like that.”

She stiffens more but doesn’t say anything. I don’t know if it’s because I’m touching her, or because I just called her my sister. Probably both. His smile now fades and he stutters. “Sorry, man. I didn’t know she was your sister.”

“Well, now you do.” I look down at Megan Rose and say, “Sis, why don’t you go and get us a table closer to the band?”

She doesn't say anything, and she doesn't look at him or me. She stands and quickly walks away.

"You stay away from her, got it?"

"It's just a misunderstandin'," he slurs. He raises both hands and stumbles away. I watch as he makes his way through the crowd to the exit.

I finish my beer and pay my check *and* Megan Rose's Pepsi bill. As I make my way out the door, I see Megan Rose sitting at a table closer to the band. She's sitting with other girls who I assume are the band members' girlfriends or wives. She sees me and I tilt my cowboy hat and leave.

As I make my way to my truck, I see the drunken guy getting into a car with a girl. Just as I open my door, someone yells, "Abel."

I turn around and see Megan Rose running towards me. The air is cold and she wraps her arms across her mid-section for warmth. "I wanted to thank you for what you did for me in there," she says out of breath. I look behind her and I see a guy standing at the doorway watching us. I recognize him as the drummer in the band.

I watch her and say, "You're welcome, but I really didn't do anything."

She laughs. "You did do something, and I appreciate it. Most people just keep to themselves; they don't want to get involved. I can tell that you aren't from around here."

"I'm just visiting." She doesn't need to know that I am from around here. I'll be leaving soon and chances are I'll never see her again.

"I told Nick what happened and we both appreciate it. Thank you."

I look behind her, and I assume Nick is her boyfriend. He nods and I return the gesture. “You’re welcome, Megan Rose. You should get inside because it’s cold out here.”

“Okay, be careful, and I owe you a drink the next time I see you,” she yells and walks towards the bar.

I watch as she makes her way towards Nick. They both wave and I watch as he holds the door open for her and walks in last. I get in the truck and head home.

I’m stalling and I don’t know why. It’s home; I’m home. I arrive in Rose Farm, which is only a few miles from Crooksville, and see that the old school is still standing. It’s been condemned: Windows are busted out, and pieces of graffiti are written all over the brick building. I have to wonder why the eyesore of a building is still standing. Why wouldn’t they tear it down? Memories flood my head with the stories of the old schoolhouse that I heard when I was a child. I was too young to attend there before they closed it. I look further into the field behind the school, and thankfully, the outhouses — there used to be one for the boys, and one for the girls — are no longer there. This was a three-room schoolhouse, and each teacher taught two grades: 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6.

We still need to fight the War on Poverty, but we may never win it because in Mark 14:7 Jesus said that “ye have the poor with you always.” Even if we never completely win the war, we need to fight it. Let all of us remember Proverbs 28:27: “Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.”

When President Lyndon Johnson declared his War on Poverty, the Rose Farm School was shut down, and students were bused to York Elementary School in Deavertown, which was just a few miles away. Federal money flowed into York Elementary, which started a library. Boxes of

paperback books arrived frequently at the school, and the students did the work of setting up the library. The school also got one of the first videotape machines, which was used to show students such things as anti-smoking documentaries.

The school also occasionally put on special programs. A few days or weeks before he died in the late 1960s, an elderly world-famous violinist — was it Mischa Elman? — performed a concert there. The students were excited because he owned a Stradivarius, which they had heard was worth \$100,000. However, the students were disappointed when a string broke on the Stradivarius and the violinist disappeared behind a curtain and brought out and played a different violin. The best part of the concert was when he played a medley of classical music that was used in famous movies and TV shows. For example, he played the theme from *Hitchcock Presents*: Charles Gounod’s “Funeral March of a Marionette.” The principal, Gerald Clutter, told me.

This is a place where people sometimes say “George Warshington,” “warsh rag,” “drownded,” and “Crooksville swimming pull” — not “Crooksville swimming pool” — and lots of people don’t pronounce the ‘g’ in -ing words, but culture still comes here occasionally. Of course, now, with the World Wide Web and other modern technology, culture is available anywhere modern technology is available.

Clarence’s small store is no longer at the bottom of my parents’ driveway. In its place is a parking lot for the only church in Rose Farm. The village is too small for a McDonald’s, but of course it has a church. I look up the snowy rocky path and thank the good Lord that I rented a Chevy truck. Otherwise, I would have to park at the bottom and walk up the one-mile long driveway that leads to my parents’ farm. I check my cell phone and of course, I don’t have any messages. I shut it off and tuck it into my jacket pocket before driving up the steep driveway.

The road is dark and rocky. On one side of the one-lane road is a dirt wall, and on the other side is a cliff-sized hill. It would have been nice — and safe — if my parents had used some of the money I sent them over the years to install a guardrail running the length of the driveway. It's a dangerous drive up the hill although no one has ever had an accident on it. Not that I know about anyway. In my younger years, Pops always warned me about the blind spot right around the sharp bend. *Blind spot? Is he crazy? The entire driveway is a blind spot.*

When I reach the top of the lane, the red barn comes into view first. I look at the barn before I look past it into the open pasture. The sun is setting and I'm not sure what I expected, but the field is empty. The large oak trees that offer shade for the horses and cows are now bare of their leaves. I see no signs of farm life anywhere.

I park the rented truck and grab my duffle bags and guitar case before heading towards the white farmhouse with tattered black shutters. The screen door bursts open, revealing Momma in her white apron and black dress. She wears a smile only a mother would have for her child. I could be a drug dealer, and she would still love me. Behind her is Pops. He smiles as he follows close behind her.

“There he is — my boy's finally home.” Momma throws up both hands and makes her way down the four steps leading from the large wrap-around porch.

I place the duffle bags and guitar case down on the gravel lot and hug her tightly. Her hug is warm and welcoming. Sadly, it's been awhile since I've been home. I hug Momma and wonder if she's always been this small. I definitely get my height from my Pops.

“I missed you, Momma,” I say, honestly.

“You’re home and I couldn’t be happier.” She backs away and places her small hands on my face. She searches my face for what? Scars? Bruising? Battle wounds? Honesty and happiness? I can’t be sure. I hunch over so she can see my face and smile to let her know I’m okay. “I’m happier than a pig in waller,” she says seriously.

Do people really say that? Happier than a pig in waller.
“Huh?”

“Oh, never mind. Are you hungry?” she finally asks.

“I am.”

Momma is the best cook around. Pops always said she was an excellent cook — her food wasn’t always pretty, but it was always delicious. I have to agree. My mouth waters at the thought of her fried chicken and homemade biscuits.

“Good, dinner’s almost done. Get warshed up and I’ll finish up supper. Your brother, Levi, and his wife, Mia, are on their way.”

Note: The above is an excerpt from Brenda Kennedy’s romance book *Forever Country*. Free. (It ends in a cliffhanger, as does the second book of the trilogy.)

AMAZON

<https://www.amazon.com/Forever-Country-Rose-Farm-Trilogy-ebook/dp/B017OMNPZS#nav-subnav>

APPLE

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/forever-country/id1057092938?mt=11>

BARNES AND NOBLE

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/forever-country-brenda-kennedy/1122923333>

SMASHWORDS

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/591247>

KOBO

<https://store.kobobooks.com/en-us/ebook/forever-country>

**Appendix L: An Excerpt from *Forgetting the Past* by
Brenda Kennedy**

(A Permanently Free Romance eBook with a Cliffhanger)

Prologue

Ava

“Ava, do you take Connor to be your husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death do you part?”

With a shaky voice I say, “I do.” Connor stands tall and confidently in front of our many friends and family. He smiles and winks at me. I smile back as I slide the wide platinum, diamond infinity wedding band onto his finger.

“Connor, do you take Ava to be your wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death do you part?”

I watch as he slides the diamond infinity platinum wedding band onto my ring finger. “I do,” he says clearly and without reservation. I blink through thick lashes and watch as the flawless diamonds reflect the light from the unity candle. It’s stunning.

“From the powers vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife.” I look up at my now husband who takes a small step towards me. “You may now kiss your bride.” Connor smiles and licks his lips before he bends down to kiss me. I stand on tiptoes to return his soft kiss.

After the kiss I look out into the crowd at our friends and family. We had over one hundred guests on our wedding list and every single person came to witness Connor and me

exchange our wedding vows. I am sure that most of them came because of Connor's success and prestige.

"I would like to introduce you to Mr. and Mrs. Connor Brantley Emerson III."

Our friends, family, and colleagues clap and shout with cheers.

During the reception, we listen to the speech from his best man, Chase, and my best friend, Skylar. Chase is an attorney at the same law firm Connor works at, and we have been great friends ever since. Skylar is my best friend from high school. We are both R.N.'s at a local hospital. I'm blessed that the four of us all get along. Chase and Skylar are both single and vow to stay that way, forever. I would like nothing more than for the two of them to date each other.

"Could I have one last dance with my stunning wife?"

I take Connor's hand and stand from the white linen table. He escorts me to the dance floor where he leads me to the song "Mad" by Ne-Yo. Connor is graceful, handsome, and powerful. My father introduced us and he was thrilled when we announced our engagement two years ago. As we dance, I stare out onto the dance floor at the many couples dancing with their spouse or significant other. No children are in attendance at our wedding. Connor and I argued about this. Some of our friends and family have children, and I wanted our wedding to be open to families, not just a guest plus one. He didn't want children to be present at such an elegant gala. I thought it was odd that he would call our wedding a gala. He said that kids would be disruptive and his father agreed, so we didn't invite children. We didn't even have a flower girl or a ring bearer in the wedding party.

"You look stunning this evening."

"Thank you."

With one arm around my waist, he holds my hand in his and says, “I was thinking that after this song, I could carry my bride to our room and help her out of her wedding dress.”

“I think your bride would like that.”

“Good, I was hoping she would.”

After the dance I walk in the direction of Chase and Skylar, who are still sitting at the table. I just want to say my goodbyes while they’re sitting there together. The music is getting louder and the reception is kicking off in full gear. Several people stand and rush to the dance floor when a fast-paced song comes on. Someone grabs my arm and it’s painful. Spinning around, I’m surprised to see Connor standing there.

“Where are you going?”

He’s never touched me like this before. I jerk my arm away and say, “Ouch! You’re hurting me.”

“I’m sorry.” He tries to smile, but there’s something in his eyes that I’ve never seen before. “Where are you going?” he asks in a much softer tone.

“I’m going to say goodbye to Skylar and Chase.” I turn to leave and he grabs me again.

He leans down and whispers into my ear. “I don’t want you to talk to him again. Let’s go.”

Wait? What? Chase is his best man; he’s our friend and Connor’s business associate. He can’t be serious. I smile and start to walk away reaching for his hand to come with me. “Come on, Connor. Let’s say our goodbyes first, and then we’ll leave. We can’t be rude.”

“Ava?” he says sternly. “Did you hear me? I said, let’s go!”

Two Years Later

Claire Richards (Ava's mother)

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Richards, but there was a horrible accident. Your son-in-law, Connor, is dead, and your daughter, Ava, is currently in a coma."

I hold onto my husband's arm for support. This can't be happening. Slowly, I sit in a chair in the hospital emergency room. I just spoke to my daughter earlier today. It was her and Connor's second wedding anniversary, and she was shopping for a dress to wear to dinner. *How can this be?* Tears stream down my face, blurring my vision. I can't lose Ava. She is my only daughter, my only child. "Is she going to die?"

"I'm sorry, but it's too early to tell. We're doing everything we can for her."

"What kind of accident was it?" my husband, Marshall, asks. *I assumed it was a car accident. I never would have asked.*

"The report we got when the call came in said it was a one-car accident over on Oak Marsh Road just before eight p.m. A passerby spotted the overturned vehicle and called 911."

The doctor speaks clearly and calmly, but his eyes reveal that he is tired and weary.

Marshall remains standing and says, "That's a straightaway. I don't recall any sharp turns or dangerous intersections on that road."

"That's right. I believe the officers are still out there investigating the cause of the accident."

"When can we see our daughter? I need to be with her," I say.

“You can see her now. She’s in I.C.U. in a coma.” The doctor stops talking before he adds, “You’ll need to be prepared for her injuries. She has a broken left wrist, some brain and facial swelling, and some lacerations to her face, and to her body. You may not recognize her. She’s in pretty bad shape.” He looks from Marshall and then back to me. We won’t know how bad it is for a few days. The swelling needs to come down and she still needs to wake from her coma. The next few days will be critical. She’s also on a ventilator to help her body rest.”

I can’t speak and I can’t see through the tears. I stand on shaky legs holding onto Marshall for support. “I need to see her.”

“Of course, follow me.”

Note: The above is an excerpt from Brenda Kennedy’s romance book *Forgetting the Past*. Free. (It ends in a cliffhanger, as does the second book of the trilogy.)

AMAZON

[https://www.amazon.com/Forgetting-Past-Forgotten-Trilogy-Book-ebook/dp/B01GOELEY/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8#nav-subnav](https://www.amazon.com/Forgetting-Past-Forgotten-Trilogy-Book-ebook/dp/B01GOELEY/ie=UTF8#nav-subnav)

APPLE

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/forgetting-the-past/id1121942332?mt=11>

BARNES AND NOBLE

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/forgetting-the-past-brenda-kennedy/1123892388>

SMASHWORDS

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/641664>

KOBO

<https://store.kobobooks.com/en-us/ebook/forgetting-the-past>