



Karen KINGSBURY



SUMMER



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Summer

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FOREVER IN FICTION



A SPECIAL THANKS to Marla Selby-Stone, who won the Forever in Fiction item at the Kings Way Christian school auction. Marla chose to honor her daughter, Tatum Renee Selby, by having a character in this book named after her.

Tatum is eight years old and is proud to have Jesus in her heart. She cherishes her friendships, enjoys trying new foods and places, and loves a happy ending. Tatum is involved in gymnastics, and she also enjoys singing and dancing. She is a good friend to many and is known for her compassion and discernment. She is the oldest of three siblings and is part of a very close extended family. She and her mother and siblings live next door to her maternal grandparents. Tatum's favorite vacation spot is Hawaii—maybe the only place where she couldn't take her precious poodle, Princess. Tatum has long blonde hair and blue eyes and makes frequent visits to Bulgaria, her mother's homeland.

In *Summer*, I chose to make Tatum a special friend of Brooke and Peter's daughter Maddie. She is also the first girl Cole Blake gets a crush on—something that makes his mother, Ashley, feel how quickly her son is growing up.

Marla, I pray that Tatum will be honored by your decision to name her Forever in Fiction, and I hope that whenever you read this book, you'll see your daughter as part of the story.

In addition, a special thanks to Amy McDaniel, thirty-seven, who

won the Forever in Fiction item at the Northshore Christian Academy in Everett, Washington. Amy wanted to be a character in one of my books, and I chose to make her an obstetrician in *Summer*. In real life, Amy's life revolves around her love for family. She has five kids—Kobe, Kaden, Kalvyn, Kami Rose, and Karson. She is married to Brad, the man of her dreams, and together they own a hardware store, where they enjoy chatting it up with the regulars.

Amy has been a teacher and a bungee jumper. She's good at water sports and helping her friends decorate their houses. She loves snow skiing, scrapbooking, and Hawaii. More than anything, Amy loves Jesus, and she loves being a wife and a mother, but she still misses her younger brother and her father. Amy lost her brother when she was a senior in high school, and her grief led her to a relationship with Christ. Her father succumbed to cancer shortly after he had the privilege of walking Amy down the aisle at her wedding. These losses have made Amy compassionate and understanding, the way Dr. Amy McDaniel is in this novel.

Amy, I pray you will see a glimpse of yourself and your passion for family as you read *Summer* and that you will always be glad for the chance to be Forever in Fiction.

For those of you who are not familiar with Forever in Fiction, it is my way of placing you, the readers, into my stories while raising money for charities. To date this item has raised more than \$100,000 at charity auctions across the country. If you are interested in having a Forever in Fiction package donated to your auction, contact my executive assistant, Tricia Kingsbury, at Kingsburydesk@aol.com. Please write *Forever in Fiction* in the subject line. Please note that I am able to donate only a limited number of these each year. For that reason I have set a fairly high minimum bid on this package. That way the maximum funds are raised for charities.



CHAPTER ONE

FOR KATY HART Matthews, all her life—every successive year of her adolescence, every season of pain or joy, all the lonely days and weeks and months without love—had only been the path that led her to the here and now, her honeymoon with Dayne Matthews.

With every breath she was convinced that this brilliant moment in time would shine forever like the brightest star in the night sky of her memory, a time that would always make her certain that this—this man and this time and this shared faith—was the reason she'd been born.

Dayne had surprised her with a two-week trip to the Bahamas. They'd spent the first week in a secluded beachfront bungalow not far from the well-known Atlantis resort and this second one on a private island a thirty-minute ferry ride from Nassau.

Wilma Waters, the wedding coordinator, had handled the details so Katy and Dayne had a personal staff complete with a chef, a cleaning crew, and a recreation coordinator in charge of providing scuba gear, Jet Skis, and whatever else the couple might need.

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Only Wilma and Dayne's agent knew the phone number at the bungalow, and both had promised that, short of an emergency, they wouldn't call.

It was the third day of the second week, and Katy woke next to Dayne, amazed as she had been every morning since the wedding that this was her life, that she and Dayne were forever going to wake up this way.

Sunshine streamed through the sheer curtains and shone across the white, downy comforter. Katy drew a long, slow breath and looked at her husband . . . her *husband*. The word still made her feel like they were pretending. The idea had felt impossible for so long; through every brief visit and every long good-bye, while they fled the paparazzi and while Dayne recovered from his car accident, they'd agreed time and again that love could never work for the two of them. *Would* never work.

But somehow here they were on a brilliant blue day, sharing a bed and a brand-new marriage and a love that simply could not be denied. Not for any reason.

Katy rolled onto her side and studied the man beside her, the gentle rise and fall of his chest. Whatever his past, it was behind him.

"Fifty years from now, I'll look back on this time," he'd told her during one of their walks on the secluded sandy shoreline, "and I'll know that my life didn't really begin until now. With you."

Dayne didn't spout pithy lines or tired phrases. So when he told her his life only really started on their wedding day, he meant it. Every word.

Since their first night together, each whisper and quiet conversation over a candlelit dinner had been marked by words that crossed his lips the moment he thought them, words that seemed to take even him by surprise in their depth and intensity. When he took her in his arms and kissed her, when their bodies came together in a show of love Katy hadn't known possible, she was convinced she was meant for this, to find her way to Dayne Matthews. And

so the honeymoon was more than Katy could've imagined because she had never known love like this. Overnight her ability to feel seemed magnified a thousand times over. That's what loving Dayne had done to her. She could only imagine what love would become as they shared the months and years, as they journeyed through the seasons of life together.

Dayne stirred and took a deep breath. He rolled onto his side, facing her, and slowly opened his eyes. "Mmmm . . ." A slow smile filled his face even before he was fully awake. "Good." He reached for her hand. "It's not a dream."

Katy was about to tell him that no, it wasn't and that she'd had to remind herself of the same thing when she first woke up, but before she could say a word, the phone on Dayne's bedside table rang. The sound of the ring was foreign after so many days without an interruption from the outside world.

Dayne frowned and sat halfway up. "This better be big." He picked up the receiver, and as he pressed it to his ear, he slid closer to Katy, erasing the inches that separated them. "Hello?" He paused, his expression serious. "That's okay. What's up?"

Katy watched him, waiting for his reaction. Since Wilma and Dayne's agent had been instructed to call only in case of an emergency, she felt her breath catch in her throat. It could be her parents or one of the Flanigans or the Baxters . . . almost anything.

"And he needs to know in an hour?" Dayne raked his fingers through his hair and rolled onto his back again.

Katy breathed out and felt herself relax. Whatever the news, it wasn't tragic. Based on Dayne's reaction, it was probably business.

After throwing on a robe, she climbed out of bed, slid the curtains over, and opened the window. She drew in a long breath of ocean air and gazed at the sandy stretch outside their room. The beach looked like something from a calendar, so beautiful that no camera could ever really do it justice. Behind her she could hear Dayne wrapping up the call.

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“Right. I’ve seen the show.” Dayne didn’t sound short, but he wasn’t happy either. “I don’t know. . . . I mean, do we need that sort of publicity?” He sighed, and for a while he said nothing. “Okay . . . I get it. I’ll talk it over with her and get back to you.”

Katy turned and dropped into a chair near the bed. “Your agent?”

“Yes.” Tension was written across Dayne’s brow, a tension that hadn’t been there since their wedding day. He sounded tired and uncertain. “Word leaked out that you took the part in *But Then Again No*. I’m sorry, Katy.”

“It’s not your fault. They would’ve found out.”

“This is a little different.” He hesitated, almost as if he didn’t want to finish his thought. “*For Real* wants to feature us in a twelve-episode segment. It’d run once a week when our movie opens.”

Adrenaline shot into Katy’s veins, and her heart skipped a beat. She blinked and stared at the tile floor. *For Real* was one of the most watched reality shows on TV. “You mean like . . . follow us home and camp in our living room?” Reality shows had done that with other celebrities, usually with terrible results.

“No.” Dayne sat up and leaned against the headboard. “They’d stick to the set.” Doubt flashed in his eyes. “My agent thinks it might make the whole movie thing easier for us.”

Katy gripped the arms of the chair. She couldn’t shake a sudden surge of fear. “Having us the subject of a reality show?” The idea was enough to make her change her mind about the part.

Over the next few minutes, Dayne explained the offer. The camera crews would document Katy and Dayne working together, giving the country what it would so desperately want anyway—an inside look at Dayne Matthews and his new bride.

“Sort of like my idea.” Katy was starting to understand. “Smile for the cameras rather than run from them.”

“Right. Only on a much bigger level.” The fine lines around Dayne’s eyes were proof he didn’t like the idea, but his tone said

he understood where his agent was coming from. "Make the story more available and because of that less desirable."

Katy stood. A reality show? About the two of them? She turned and walked out onto the balcony. Behind her, she could hear Dayne climb out of bed, hear him slipping on his shorts. The touch of his arm as he came out and stood beside her sent chills down her. For a while neither of them said anything. Then Katy rested her elbows on the railing and met Dayne's eyes. "Think it'll work? Take the heat off?"

Dayne looked at her, and the weight of their decision colored his expression. "My agent thinks so."

"What about you?"

"Maybe." A warm breeze drifted up off the gentle surf. "The producers want a commitment from us in an hour. They need to put together a package and present it to the network execs."

Katy didn't want to make the decision. Too much rested on how it went. "If we do it, what's the worst thing that could happen?"

"The press could get more interested." He narrowed his eyes, concentrating. "But I've only seen that when the crews follow celebrities 24-7."

A fine layer of salt lay on the railing, and Katy dusted off a section with her fingertips. "It isn't a long commitment, I guess."

Again they were quiet, and Dayne slid his bare foot next to hers. He breathed out long and hard and stared into the clear, blue sky. "We don't really have a choice. They'll follow us one way or another."

"It'd be good publicity for the movie." Katy still felt slightly sick at the thought, but Dayne was right. If they turned down the offer, they would be dodging paparazzi every hour of the day. At least with a reality show, there was a good chance the story would feel overplayed. The press might find another, more secretive, celebrity to focus on.

"Exactly." Dayne allowed the hint of a smile, his first one since the phone call. "That's what my studio's saying. Obviously."

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In the end, they prayed together, and when neither of them had a sense of peace over the proposition, Dayne tried to call his friend Bob Asher, who worked as a missionary in Mexico. Bob always seemed to have the right answer for Dayne, but this time Dayne couldn't get ahold of him.

His last attempt was a call to John Baxter, his dad. The call didn't last long, and afterwards Dayne sat in the chair near the phone, his expression more confused than ever. "He said the idea worried him."

"It worries me." Katy went to him and put her hand on his shoulder. "So what should we do?"

He stood and eased his arms around her. His eyes searched hers. "We have no choice about the scrutiny. They'll take pictures with or without our permission."

At the end of a restless hour, Dayne and Katy agreed. Letting the paparazzi have full access to them during the filming of the movie was the lesser of two undesirable situations. They would have nearly one month to savor their privacy, to return home from their honeymoon and help Katy move into their lake house. They would have quiet mornings overlooking Lake Monroe and dinners with the Baxters, and come early May, they would fly back to Los Angeles, roll up their sleeves, and get to work.

Dayne made the call. His voice still held some of the doubt from earlier. "We'll do it." He gave Katy a wary look. "The cameras can only be on the set, and it will only be for twelve episodes."

After the phone call, Dayne and Katy tried to put the news behind them, tried to find their way back to the easy laughter of the past few days. But they compared notes several times that morning. All they could think about was the reality show and whether agreeing to it had been the right decision.

An hour after breakfast, they walked out to the sandy shore and toward the supply box stationed near a pair of beach chairs. They'd arranged to snorkel today, and even with so much on their minds, Katy couldn't wait to hit the water.

Positioned at either end of their private beach were lifeguards with radios. Their first role was one of safety and protection, but they were also available if Katy and Dayne needed anything from a box lunch to towels or additional gear.

Dayne held Katy's hand, their legs brushing against each other as they walked. When they reached the wooden box, he stopped and turned to Katy. A breeze blew in from the ocean and swirled around them. "For the next few hours, there's no thinking about movies or reality shows or paparazzi." He crooked his finger and placed it gently beneath her chin. He seemed to find a deeper place in her heart. "Too soon we'll be headed home." He leaned close and touched his lips to hers. "We didn't come here to talk about business."

She felt the corners of her lips lift. "Okay." She shifted her gaze to the white, sugary sand and the blue-green water beyond it. Honeymoons came once in a lifetime, and a honeymoon like the one she was sharing with Dayne Matthews was beyond anything she had ever dreamed. She kissed him again and grinned. "The gear's in the box?"

"Let's see." Dayne released her hand and lifted the lid. The hinges creaked, and as he opened it all the way, a pair of moths fluttered free and drifted toward a bright pink hibiscus. He reached inside and pulled out a snorkel, a mask, and a pair of fins. He handed them to Katy and took out another set for himself. "All we need is a little water."

Her laugh mingled with the sound of the surf. The ocean spread out as far as she could see. "I don't think that's going to be a problem."

They slipped on their gear and moved into knee-deep water. Dayne pointed toward an area fifty feet out. "There's a small reef that way."

Then without saying another word, they eased into the water and started swimming. The water was clear and warm and silky against Katy's skin. Neither of them was in a hurry. Even before they

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reached the reef, they spotted schools of fish, some of them as large as Frisbees with orange and black and white stripes.

Dayne took Katy's hand, and the feel of his body moving through the water beside her did what nothing else had been able to since the phone call from Dayne's agent. It made her forget about the reality show.

They spent most of the next two hours along the shallow reef, marveling at the coral and stopping to study brightly colored exotic fish. A ways off, they spotted a four-foot shark moving slowly along the reef. Their personal guide had told them that the sharks in this part of the ocean were small and had plenty of food. Even so, Katy felt her heart skip a beat. She reached for Dayne's hand, and he gave hers a couple of reassuring squeezes.

Before they finished for the day, a trio of dolphins swam past them and jumped out of the water in unison. The moment took Katy's breath, and she and Dayne hovered at the surface, watching the threesome swim in playful circles, breaking the surface a number of times before they left the area.

Not until they were back on the beach eating lunch did Katy even remember the phone call and the commitment they'd made.

"You're quiet again." Dayne set his fork down and studied her.

"Thinking about the show." She took a long breath. The air tasted faintly of seawater. "I can't decide if we made the right decision."

They talked again about the pros and cons, about giving the press what they wanted and avoiding the sort of situation that had led to Dayne's car accident. And they talked about privacy and how they wouldn't have any with a reality show following them around the set. They agreed that since the interest was limited to the filming of the movie, maybe it wasn't a bad choice.

The conversation faded, and they stretched out on their beach chairs along a shady section of sand beneath a cluster of palm trees. Katy thought about what lay ahead. Other couples had broken up after being the subject of a reality show or dropped out before the

full run of episodes in an effort to salvage what remained of their relationships.

By the time they sat down to prime rib that night, Katy had warmed a little more to the idea. It wasn't as though they were committing to a twenty-six-week season, after all. And it would certainly give the press what they wanted without a chase. Which made the show a good choice all on its own. Anything to keep Dayne and her from always running.

Along the way they might even have the chance to share their faith, the beliefs that now drove both of them. God would use the next season in their lives, because while Katy and Dayne might be newly married, they weren't like other Hollywood couples. They would grow closer through the experience. A reality show wouldn't hurt their relationship; it would make them stronger.

Katy was sure.