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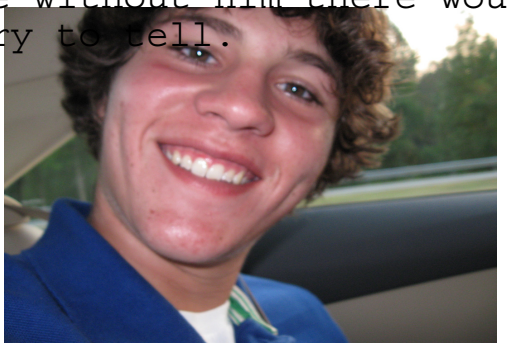
This book is dedicated to
Matthew Thomas White
because without him there would be
no story to tell.



Preface

Love at first sight. Two people, preferably strangers, catch sight of each other and something Heavenly occurs. It is another subject this society has yet to grasp, let alone have faith in. Let me set the stage for you. You fall in and out of love many times. Yet,

something every time is missing. Little does anyone know that the one thing that is destitute of the numerous past relationships is love itself. We weave ourselves in and out of what we may perceive as our only future, but as soon as you put yourself into a completely convinced and subconscious perspective, it abruptly ends. This is when we find ourselves on our knees praying to God that someday the Prince Charming in our very own story will come with the glass slipper holding our most treasured desires. It is at this point of total desperate cries that we find ourselves facing a mountain. This mountain is quite big and very overwhelming for such an incapacitated being as one who has experienced a disappointing relationship. Yet, we must remember that God himself is on the top of this towering mountain, and only He can see the other side as He watches us climb past the fears within us. It is then, and only then, do we clear the clouds of the trials past and reach the pinnacle of this hike. The words, “Well done , my child,” linger in our minds as we stand at the top with the Lord and spot the sunny horizon ahead. As we lower ourselves back down to reality and to

the other side of the mountain, he stands there waiting for you. You then immediately have a wholesome and complete understanding within your heart of what love is because it is there in front of you, staring you right in the eyes, revealing the purpose of all broken hearts and mending yours as you say a sweet, “Thank you,” to the one above you know is responsible. So, my friend, do not give up. For if you are facing this fearsome mountain, begin your hike now. It may be scary, but not impossible. God sees both sides and is waiting for you to accomplish what is set in front of you. Your hike up the mountain is well worth the prize on the other side. And do not give up on having faith in God and His plan for you., Your faith in Him is the foundation in the love you seek. This is my story of what happened when I climbed and reached the other side.

Life before Falling Stars and Glass Slippers

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12:10

My journey starts with the two people who gracefully brought me into this world to fulfill my perfect fairytale. My blond-haired, hardworking mother, Valerie Ann, has such a pliable, yet determined personality that heredity has also blessed me with. At the time of their first

acquaintance, my mother held the responsibility of my older sister, Mallerie, from a previous relationship, and was living in an apartment in Dunwoody, oblivious to the rampant, wildly curly-haired, over grown child who would sooner than later become my humorous and well-loved father, John Todd.

I assume it would only be fair if I appreciated the chaotic efforts of the first "Morgan" girl, Malerie. According to my Dad's stories of how they met, her persistent and childish annoyances are now profoundly dictated as the start of it all. Unsurprisingly, my dad claims to have washed his truck often and without any audience. Unafraid of the stranger before her eyes, Malerie began her infamous roll.

"Hi. I'm Mallerie. What are you *doing*?"

Surprised by the absence of shyness by this five-year-old young girl, he would nonchalantly reply, "Just washing my truck."

"*Why?"*

"Well, because…"

"SWING ME, SWING ME!!!!"

And so there it was. An unavoidable future set by a free-spirited kindergartener and a southern-hearted bachelor. Yet the certain way of how my parents' gaze first met the other's in not yet known to me, I DO know that the creation of their first child together was not too far off in the future being made right before their eyes.

Sooner-than-later came on March 10th, 1993 at the Gwinnett Medical Hospital in Lawrenceville, Georgia. "Valerie…John…congratulations! It's a girl!"

So there I was. Madison Lenzie Morgan. The first daughter of John and Valerie Morgan, and the predestined successor of a future full of dreams, expectations, and surprises.

Two years pass and my environment is all too familiar to my family. It is a short period of time before Christmas Day, and I am admitted to the hospital with pneumonia infecting both of my lungs. This was a burden on my family much more than for me because the only memory I have of it is the sight of the television in my prayer-filled hospital room playing, “The Lion King”. However, looking back on this little bump along the way, I see something majestic revealed to me. I believe with my whole heart that this one certain incident was the first of many miracles that God himself was planning throughout my lifetime. At this point in time, my older sister Mallerie, my father, and my expecting mother all lived in a small duplex in

Lawrenceville along with our beloved miniature schnauzer, Buddy. Sadly, Buddy's curiosity in the bustling town behind the house cost him his life on the day of the new baby's baby shower.

I was five years old when the youngest of the Morgan girls, Macay Rose, was brought into this world. I had spent the day with my Aunt Rhonda and her Kindergarten class, and, because of my oblivious childish mind, I did not fathom the significance of this day of new life. I was now a "big sister" and would come to love this new addition to the Morgan family as my own child.

With the new baby, my dad decides to build his dream home. He finds the perfect lot of land and starts on his new project. Sooner than we knew it, we were living in our spacious new home on a quiet dirt road in Suwannee, Georgia. This house was truly amazing and completed with

high ceilings, hard wood floors, and an all stone fireplace. However, troublesome time soon hit the household with a reverberating “bang” that resemble many of the obstacles any human may have to face. The oldest, Mallerie, was hit by the usual temptations of the modern American teenager. My parents’ marriage also took a hard hit, and they soon found themselves trying to work out a tough divorce. Sadly, neither of the now single parents of mine could afford the “yellow house” alone, and at the end of the divorce struggle, my mother moved into a decent apartment with me and Macay. As things settled, Macay and I got to visit with our dad every Wednesday night for dinner and every other weekend. He would pick us up on his way home from work on Wednesdays, usually around six o’clock, with that excited smile on his face, and we would all three go to Ryan’s to continue our new little tradition.

With sporadic flare-ups at home, every other weekend turned into every weekend , which placed no unwanted burden on my dad.

~

I was turning thirteen when I experienced yet another little miracle from God. I was having a pageant dress-up birthday party and went to answer the door once more to a fellow friend, Katie Turner. Her mother was with her, and I soon realized that Katie was wearing the same dress as I was, but in red instead of pink. Our moms quickly found themselves lost in conversation, as most mothers do, when Mrs. Turner suddenly realized something rather amazing.

"You said your last name was 'Morgan'?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Is your father John Morgan?"

"Yes, ma'am, why?"

It was at that moment that I realized that I was looking at the family who had bought our beloved house, my best friend Katie, being the one who was staying in my old room. It was so amazing to me how after her family had bought the "yellow house", Katie and I became the best of friends without any prior knowledge of their purchase of the house. Call it what you will-coincidence, luck- but I call it an act of God.

After the move to the apartments, I had to switch schools to the brand new Parson's Elementary for only a year as the first graduating 5th grade class ever to walk through their halls. Macay was just starting her school life as a cute little Kindergartener as I got to be the "big bad fifth grader" who walked her to her classroom every morning while her tiny friends stared with childish astonishment and flooding curiosity. That year I failed

math, fell in love with music, became captain of the safety patrol, went to Parson's first Monster Mash Bash, and, finally, got to walk down the hallways on the last day of school with the rest of the fifth graders as the entire school came out of their productive classrooms to applaud us all, including my little Macay who was now complete with her first year in "big girl school".

The following year I continued the cycle of rigorous routines and went on to be a sixth grader at Richard Hull Middle School, only a block down from where I had just escaped from. I joined the orchestra, and met on outstanding friend, Ana Costescu. Unfortunately, turmoil between my mother and I had already sprung up at this time, so in order to have a good friendship and for her to understand my tears, I would have to explain to her my mother's problem.

~

Alcoholism is a disease, but also a choice. Sadly, at the time my mom didn't realize she was so much stronger than the reoccurring problem she couldn't shake off. After many words and actions against my sister and me, I had reached the breaking point.

"Write whatever you wish to write about. The winner will have his/her work published." explained Mrs. Humphreys, my seventh grade teacher, as she gave us the paper to write on and said, "Go!" My thoughts strolled around through my memories when out of nowhere I got the perfect topic to write on. I figured it was my perfect opportunity to really make alcoholic parents to think twice about what they're doing. So I wrote down a description of my typical morning with an alcoholic parent. Unlike my hopes of getting it published, the paper stopped at the

teacher and went straight to the counselor's office where he decided it was necessary to call in a good friend of ours—DFCS. My dad had told the counselor to not let my mom know at all that I anything to do with DFCS coming to visit and absolutely nothing about the paper that had caused all of this. He knew that if my mom had found out that I would have hell to pay every time I stepped into her house. Yet, I chose to change that one morning when things were already getting out of hand before I even had the chance to get me and my sister out to the bus. I was sick of the nonsense she was screaming at me so I grabbed the paper I had written and slammed it on the kitchen counter. She read it and things finally got quiet and scary around the house for quite awhile.

The summer after the paper incident my mom went to visit some people in Hilton Head, South Carolina. Macay

and I spent the summer with my dad's side of the family, like most summers since the divorce. Two weeks before our Gwinnett County Schools were going to start, mom comes home with her boyfriend with the news that she has decided to move up there with her "boyfriend". It took me a whole twenty four hours to figure out what that meant.

"Mom, so does this mean that you're giving us to our dad?"

Her answer to me was an obvious "yes" and things in the kitchen within my reach went flying. I was officially mad as hell. I was still screaming things at her when I ran into my room and slammed my door. I quickly called Sarah, Michael, and Chris who were my closest friends at the time, to tell them the new improvement to my life. They were shocked at the sudden change just like I was, yet were

pleased to know that things would now be able to be more peaceful for me and Macay with my dad.

I then made the call to my dad to tell HIM the news, and braced myself for the anger that would be followed by relief. The next day on his way home from work my dad came to pick Macay and me up, along with whatever we could pack into a few boxes and containers, which were mostly clothes and school supplies. Because of the differences in the Barrow county schools compared to our now “old schools”, we had only two days to register and get ready for school. Luckily we had a LOT of help from my cousin Brittany, my Nana and Papa, and of course my dad, so the move went as smooth as it could have been on such a short notice. However, I had no idea what this one move would change forever in my life.

The Cookout

“Steve I’m sure we passed the turn.”

“It’s okay, tiggers; I think I know what I’m doing.” I was still laughing at my Aunt Vicki, Uncle Steve, and Grandma Shirley all argue about how to find this family’s house. Grandma Shirley, who previously had lived in Alpharetta, had just moved to Winder to be closer to Macay and I, and Aunt Vicki and Uncle Steve were in town to help her move her things around. Some of Aunt Vicki’s high school and college friends had invited us all to a cookout at their house in order to visit their old friend. So here we sat in the cramped full car for at least an hour and a half trying to find this place.

~

Things between me and Kyle were just not going well at all. He liked to mess around with other girls right in front of me just to be a total jerk, so I had decided again in my life to let someone know that enough is enough. I broke up with him, and had relief spread through my veins like a river. I was so

anxious to move on with my life and prayed every night this simple little prayer:

"Lord, please help me have trust and faith in you that you'll bring that someone special into my life on your time. Help me to have the patience to wait for you to do so. Amen."

Weeks passed and...

~

We pulled into a driveway and the houses in this neighborhood were castles compared to the little old country homes we were used to. Macay and I jumped out of the car so excited to stretch our legs only to find that Vicki and Steve were telling us to quickly jump back into the car. Apparently we had the wrong address. But we finally reached the RIGHT address and didn't know what to expect other than some little kids and friends of Vicki's. We walked inside the foreboding house together and were greeted by sweet "hellos" and a LOT of hugs. The grownups all told us to make ourselves at home

and we then were led to the biggest basement I will probably ever see in my lifetime. They had food in a little mini kitchen all set up for the party, an entire living room fit with reclining chairs (Grandma Shirley's favorite sitting place for the evening), a gigantic pool table, a game room with arcade games and a ping-pong table, and a complete movie theatre room (a present to their twin sons for their eighteenth birthday).

We played ping-pong (tried to at least), ate some food, and then the man who owned the house came to get me and Macay. I'm guessing he could clearly see that Macay and I were obviously bored with each other because he insisted to teach us how to play pool, especially after we both said we had no earthly idea how to play. We were getting into the game when I suddenly heard a commotion of "Oh my God!" and saw that half of the people, the women in particular, were up and hugging a group of people who had just come down the stairs.

When the crowd around them cleared, I saw him. He was wearing white shorts, a green and white striped shirt and an orange Clemson hat. Yet, there was girl standing right next to him. I contemplated how absolutely breathtaking he really looked and immediately figured what every girl guesses when they find someone that good-looking—he obviously was taken.

He had his Ipod in his ears and looked at me and well... that was it. I knew I could not meet his gaze if I wanted to not melt around all these people. A short while passed, and I and Macay had left our game of pool when he walked over to play a game. I was way too nervous to even stand in the same room as him, yet alone make a fool of myself trying to make it seem like I actually knew what I was doing. I was just getting to know the various people around me and starting to open up and start conversations. I saw her sitting at the bar at the little kitchen so I walked over and sat in the empty seat next to her.

“Hi, I don’t think I’ve met you yet. I’m Madison. What’s your name?”

“Oh, Hi! I’m Megan. Have you met my brother Matthew yet?”

She pointed over to the same guy I had been drooling over the ENTIRE time. YES!!!!! HE’S NOT TAKEN!!!!!!!!!!

“Um, no I haven’t. Well, it was nice meeting you!” I said as I tried to over come the shock.

By now I was being followed by Macay and her new little friend. They both decided to gang up on me in a heated game of Foosball, and so I took on the challenge with the hopes of the “mystery boy” not being able to see my immature side. I was getting beat pretty badly when I saw him out of the corner of my eye. OH JESUS!!!! HE’S WATCHING ME!!!!

The game finished and HE WAS STILL STANDING THERE!!

“Great,” I thought, “the most gorgeous guy you probably have ever seen just watched two eight year olds kick your butt in Foosball.”

I couldn’t give up this one chance.

“Hi, I’m Madison. I don’t think I know you yet.”

“Hey, I’m Matthew.”

And then we touched for the first time. Okay, it was only a prolonged hand shake as we first got to look in each other’s eyes, but it was the first moment of true love I had experienced in my life at the time.

As soon as it was there, it was gone thanks to the lovely eight year olds that were tugging and pulling on my arm for me to go watch a movie with them in the movie theatre. So, of course, he followed us in there.

The movie selection was made on Cars. I was sitting in the front with my sister and her friend who were both fighting to see who would get to sit with me, when “Mater” was about

to say his most famous line. So right at the perfect time I blurted it out just so he would somehow notice me.

"I'm Mater. You know...Towmater without the 'Tow'."

And then it worked!!!! He looked at me!!!!

"How did you know that?"

"I've seen this before."

Okay, so he noticed me. THANK GOD!!!

The movie goes on and so do the intense butterflies. And then I hear it. It sounds just like water droplets. I decide that it HAS to be him doing that. So I politely ask, "Are you making that sound?"

"What sound?"

I look back to the movie and begin watching it again, waiting for that sound to come again so that I have an excuse to talk to him. There it is again.

"It IS you!"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Yes you do! You're making that noise."

And then Macay and her friend decide to intervene, Macay steals his hat, and smacks him right in the face with it as she throws it at him. HOLY CRAP!!!THAT'S GREAT. THIS GUY IS GOING TO THINK I'M WEIRD JUST LIKE MY ANNOYING SISTER!

We continue to just watch the movie, but I do something very daring. I get up, move, and sit almost right next to him. He notices this, I think, and I almost am convinced that I see a grin appear on his face out of the corner of my eye. After awhile we somehow manage to sneak out without all of the little ones following us. We go to get something to eat. Matt gets a plate full of the tacos and different Mexican dishes they have to choose from, while I go straight for the fudge brownies. We walk around the game rooms and start to talk, when the brownie I was eating got stuck to my roof of my mouth and I begin talking like some kind of mentally impaired

person. Matthew just laughs at me, but its okay because his smile is making me smile and I find myself falling even further for him.

We go back into the movie theatre, and this time we make sure to go all the way in the back and sit RIGHT next to each other. The little kids leave the movie, and we're FINALLY alone. He gently takes my hand and holds it for the first time. OKAY THAT WAS IT!! IF NO ONE WALKS THROUGH THOSE DOORS IN THE NEXT FEW MINUTES THEN I AM MOST DEFINITELY KISSING HIM!!!

And then my lovely Aunt Vicki and her friends all walk in and take a seat in the row of seats right in front of us.

Time passes too fast, and my sister comes in to tell me that my Grandma said it was time to leave. We get up and head out of the room where our futures just started, and soon find

that my grandma, as well as Vicki and Steve are all lost in conversations, so we take a run for it.

"We are heading upstairs," is the excuse he so brilliantly draws up, which, thankfully, worked.

So we run upstairs and run out to the driveway. At one point he grabs me at the waist and is sooooooooo close to kissing me, but doesn't. He's going crazy out here and keeps saying how much he would love to have my number.

"Well, if I had a pen and something to write it on I would give it to you."

"I'll just memorize it. What is it?"

So I tell him it and he repeats it out loud over and over again, while I'm thinking that there is no way that this absolutely GORGEOUS guy is going memorize MY number. Things like that just don't happen to academically- obsessed nerds like me.

I’m standing on the sidewalk and he reaches behind him on the ground. He hands me a flower from the little garden right behind him.

“Awwwwwww. This is so sweet. Where in the world did you ever find this?” I said sarcastically, trying not to let my inner nerd shine too bright.

Luckily, he just goes along with it, and doesn’t look at me like I’m a total idiot.

“I have no idea,” he says as he tries to hide the garden with his body.

Our little time of bliss abruptly ends when everyone decides that they are REALLY ready to leave this time, and they all come out to the driveway to leave. He gets into his family’s minivan as I climb into my grandma’s little white car. We exchange glances that last me the ENTIRE way home, and the butterflies spend the night in my stomach as I think of the most amazing night in the history of true love.

~

The sun starts to wake me up by shining into my room. I try to decide if I just dreamt the whole previous evening up or if I really did most likely meet the guy that was in my head. One thing was for certain. The smile on face was going nowhere. After a while, the phone rings, and I run to it.

"Hello, this is Matthew. May I speak to Madison?"

NO WAY!!!!! IT'S HIM!!!!!!!!!

The dream suspicion was immediately ruled out as I tried to compose myself in order to talk like a normal human being. We talk for quite some time, and it comes to an end when my Nana arrives at my house to pick Macay and I up to go to her house for the day. We say our goodbyes, I am flying. I couldn't believe it. He actually had remembered my number and CALLED! I then ran to my calendar in my room and find "April 23rd,2008" and mark it as the day that I met Matthew

Thomas White. I will never forget this day. It was the first day to the rest of our lives.

~Love is a particular thing. It grabs you by the horns and throws you every which way. However, women should always remember this. When you fall in love, and things do not work out, the very fact that it DOES exist and love is found wherever the heart is willing to be open is a piece of evidence that

where one door is closed, another is opened up to you. Me and Matthew's story is touching, yes. However, things have changed and so have people. It is just part of life that I have accepted. This was part of my journey to finding my one true love, and without this part of my history, Jerad Poff would not be the one in my life who knew what it meant to fight through the battle of love.