

Learning To Love Again

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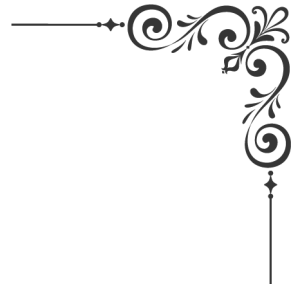
LEARNING TO LOVE AGAIN

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Chapter 1

Willow rolled over in bed, hand smashing against the alarm clock to stop its blaring noise waking her up in the morning. She looked at the time and groaned, stretching her arm to grab for her phone. Scrolling social media for a bit and then getting up to get ready for the day.

Over the summer after completing her student teaching program, she applied to be a substitute teacher, wanting to get experience to add to her resume to get a teaching job eventually.

Willow knew that it would take a couple weeks before there would be any openings for subbing, since she was warned about that and that income would not be coming until the following month. So her routine would be to check the database every morning for job openings while also applying for teaching jobs if there were any in the area.

She got out of bed, taking her phone with her, as she set it on the counter of her small kitchen preparing the coffee maker, while grabbing a cup from the cupboard. All the while tapping her fingers against the counter and scrolling through her phone on social media listening to the sounds of the drip coffeemaker percolate and the smell of coffee permeate the air.

Filling up the coffee cup, she thought about starting teaching, and wondering just how long it would take for openings to come up where she could get some money coming in. Since she had to help her roommate foot the bill. Amanda was understanding about Willow starting this new job and having to wait for opportunities to open up. But it still

made Willow guilty enough that she already knew that she was going to pull from her savings to help make up her end of the monthly rent.

Willow's phone dinged, as she put her cup of coffee on the counter, clicking her phone and thinking it was a job notification, but saw that it was an instagram post notification of one of the artists that you followed. She smiled at the posting and liked it. It was a post of a piece that he had been showing the process of a piece that he had been working on for awhile.

Willow scrolled through the different photos, and smiling wider at a picture that was in the collection of him wearing coveralls while working on the piece. She had followed him years ago at his start and found that she liked to look at him just as much as his social media posts.

Just as she put her phone down her phone dinged again, this time it was a job posting that made her fumble with her phone, almost dropping it on the floor. Taking a firmer grasp on her phone she clicked the notification, thinking that a teacher was calling out before taking a trip or an appointment in a couple weeks from now. But she looked at it and saw that it was for tomorrow.

Who misses days in the first week of school? She thought as she shrugged her shoulders, and accepted the assignment, smiling to herself because it actually was at the same school that she completed her student teaching at over the last year. Seeing some familiar faces again would be nice.



WILLOW WALKED INTO the front office, signing in for her first assignment, and then went to the classroom that she would be in for the day to drop off her stuff. Then walked to the staff lounge to get some coffee before the day started.

Immediately enveloped in a hug that took her by surprise, she had to move back to see who it was.

“What are you doing here Willow? Thought you got your teaching credential?” The woman asked, as she smiled at Willow. Willow smiled back, knowing that accepting today’s job was a good transition into teaching on her own, after being hugged by her former Master Teacher that she spent the year with, Julie.

“Oh well I’m subbing while I look for teaching jobs. And someone put in for not coming in today.”

“Funny, since it’s the second day of the first week. Who is it?” Julie asked, as she led Willow to one of the seats, as Willow fumbled for her phone and checked the notification email that she got.

“Greg’s class of course.” Willow said with a laugh, as she saw Julie’s eyes roll at that.

“Of course, he probably planned on partying after the first day back and had too many.” Julie commented, as another teacher went to sit with them.

“You’re filling in for Greg, well you have a doozy.” he said, as Willow looked at him, as anxiety started sparking within her, feeling her head starting to pound.

“Why is that?”

“Oh you haven’t heard? We have a celebrity amongst us. Or at least that’s what the principal told us. In the strictest of confidence to not post anything.” Rob said as Willow narrowed her eyes at him.

“Who is this celebrity? Or a kid of a celebrity?” She questioned, wanting to know if she knew who it was to be able to be mentally prepared for some pompous kid that she would have for over an hour or more today.

“Kid of a celebrity. Wanted to keep it on the downlow so the kid could have a normal middle school experience at least I guess. It’s some artist’s kid. Michael Something or rather.” Rob said as he rolled his eyes, as Willow clicked on her phone.

“You think it’s Micheal Stanley? Unless you didn’t see him but...” Willow trailed off as she swiped into Instagram and put up the photo that he uploaded that morning.

“Oh yeah uh huh that’s him alright.” Rob confirmed, as he smiled at Willow.

“I take it you’re a fan?” he questioned, as Willow saw Julie smile as she went to take a sip of her coffee.

“A fan, more like superfan. While she was my student teacher last year she wouldn’t shut up about him.” Julie said, as Willow felt her face heat up at the admission from her previous Master Teacher.

“I just like his work and want to tell more people about it. That’s all.” Willow said, as she set her eyes on Julie, as Julie smiled, elbowing Willow into the side.

“Yeah, you just like his artwork, not the man himself. Which I must say he’s something to look at. Maybe you could take a chance if you see him.” Julie said with a smile as Willow shook her head.

“Yeah no I’m not going to be hitting on a married man while he’s either dropping off or picking up his kid from school.” Willow said as Rob and Julie looked at each other.

“That’s more surprising than if you are such a huge fan to not know that he’s divorced now.” Rob said as he looked at Willow, wiggling his eyebrows, as Julie rolled her eyes at him, shoving him in his seat.

“Life happens Rob. Although, that would be the cutest meet-cute ever if you did end up having a spark with each other while he was here though.” Julie added with a smile, as the bell rang for the passing period to start.

Thank god, literally saved by the bell. Willow thought, feeling butterflies in her stomach at knowing that she was going to possibly see Micheal Stanley at the school at some point, and also teaching his son, even just for one class period.



WILLOW STOOD OUTSIDE the door, watching student after student come into the classroom. Looking at the seating chart for the first period and saw that a certain student's chair was empty.

Starting the first part of the period was a review from information that they learned the previous year. Giving Willow a chance to ring the front office.

"Hi this is Willow. I'm subbing for Mr. Crews today and I just was doing attendance and..." she started to say as the door to the classroom opened, as a hooded figure walked through, sitting down at an unoccupied seat in the back.

"Nevermind, he just walked in. thank you." she said as she set the phone back on the receiver, as she went to close the door, seeing a figure wearing all black starting to walk away from the classroom.

"I was just calling up to the front office to see where he was. I'm glad that he came to class."

"It's my fault, not his. Didn't set the alarm for this morning and slept a bit late." he explained, as Willow felt her face heat up at the thought of being face to face with one of her idols.

Her eyes traveled up and down him, taking him in. And noticing his attire. Black on black. Black shirt, black jeans and black shoes, all pristine. As well as his shoulder length brown hair, and his eyes that were covered with sunglasses.

"Well if Mr. Crews is out more, I hope you're the substitute teacher." he said with a smile, as he tilted his head to the side at her, feeling his eyes travel up and down her form. As she felt the butterflies start knowing he was checking her out.

"I won't keep you. But i promise that he won't be late again." he said with a smile, that made Willow have to lean against the door to the classroom as he walked away in the direction of the middle school parking lot.

Oh I hope to god I don't see him again at the end of school, I don't know if I could handle seeing him that close in person two times in one day, She

thought, as she fanned herself before going back inside the classroom. Having to keep her head straight for the rest of the day.

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