

A man and a woman are running through a field of tall grass at night. The man is in the foreground, wearing a dark shirt, and the woman is slightly behind him, wearing a light-colored dress. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, a large, bright full moon hangs in a dark sky with some clouds. The overall mood is romantic and dreamlike.

I Loved You Before I Met You

DREAMS CAN COME TRUE

Bucky Colwell Cameron



Florida college freshman Abby Caldwell awakes from a prophetic dream. She discovers that "He" is real and living in Minnesota. She meets Steve Campbell within the year. "The Dream" unfolds into reality. Believing Steve is her karmic partner, Abby never loses her faith in "The Dream" sent from God. As their odyssey through the coming years will reveal to Steve and Abby, sometimes ordinary lives can become extraordinary adventures. They just have to be lived!

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Chapter 1-Meet Abby

Her eyes popped open. It was early, before eight. Abby looked at the high ceilings of the circa 1900 dormitory room with her myopic vision, still marveling at how oddly different it all seemed from the 1950's Florida house where she had grown up. She did not miss her old bedroom, not for a minute. She had waited a long time to escape to college. Finally!

It had been easy for her to pack up the bright red Samsonite luggage that her parents had delighted in giving her for being in the first graduating class of Forest High School. It wasn't a new school, just an old building given a new name. Ocala High was to be no longer. Forced integration made the sleepy little village of Ocala construct a second high school on the north side of town, Vanguard High. Then they had closed the black school, Howard High, putting everyone together in the other two. But the Christmas parade would never be the same ... frankly not worth going to, without the Howard High marching band.

Those were strange times to be a liberal thinker, open to other races. Abby was always too mature for her age group. She actually thrived with her oldest sister Mary's friends who were eight years older. She had first noticed this when she was fifteen and spending the summer in Lynchburg, Virginia, with Mary who was attending graduate school. Abby often bit her tongue to avoid misunderstandings with kids her own age. She had been the president of a popular girls' club and had brought two black girls into the organization despite the objections of some of the members. It was 1971; sometimes it wasn't easy to be white either. She had longed to leave the narrow minded town.

Unlike other students heading off to college for the first time, Abby required no parental assistance. She packed her 1967 lime green fastback Mustang by herself and drove alone to her future, without a tear or fear. The drive through the Ocala National Forest never seemed as bright as on that fine day in early September. She knew the drive

through the forest well, for it was the way to Daytona Beach. After countless weekend and summer days across that stretch of state road, she almost had it memorized. Even before her sixteenth birthday and getting a car, she had ridden to the beach many times with her sister Liz who was five years her senior. However, on the day she drove to college, the forest trees never seemed so green and the sky so blue. She had just turned eighteen, and the world was just waiting for her.

She envisioned the university would be filled with mature individuals more apt to comprehend her complexities, of which she felt she had many. It's not that she didn't have friends at home, she did, quite a number of them in fact, she was well-liked, but few people really knew her. Her open mindedness towards race was just one issue that many did not understand about her. She also believed despite her own heterosexual orientation that whatever a person preferred sexually as long as it was consensual was okay. This was an outlandish notion for most of her peers. She was also reading some odd books on spirituality and Edgar Cayce. Reincarnation was beginning to take shape in her mind as a logical thing. She simply did not talk about these things except to her sister Mary. Her small town did not permit, nor would it tolerant much deviation from what it considered normal, AKA white Anglo-Saxon Baptist.

There was something else unique about Abby that not too many people knew. She had already come to terms, more or less, with the fact that she had been given the "gift" of precognitive sight. Sometimes the "knowing" would be shown to her in just thoughts while she was awake. Always knowing who was calling on the phone. Always unsurprised when someone popped in because she knew they were coming.

She would have strong feelings when something really good or really bad was going to happen and it always did! That's why her Sweet Sixteen birthday party that was truly a surprise was such a delight to her! She had no idea on that one; it was a shocker and great fun when a dozen friends surprised her for a pool party.

More often things would be revealed to her in the forms of pre-event dreams. These were so common to her that she rarely discussed them with anyone. They usually involved just daily events in her life,

nothing earth shaking. It was like living out a pre-rehearsed take in a movie. Life was like being an actor playing a part in a script in which you already knew everyone's roles and lines.

All this scary psychic business first started in her early teens. She remembered feeling great sadness one Christmas when she was between the ages of twelve and thirteen. Her sorrow stemmed from knowing that her family would not be the same the next Christmas that someone close to her would die that coming year. It was so profound she cried herself to sleep that night. In August, her dearest Uncle Ed passed away with a sudden heart attack. On his funeral day, despite the overwhelming sorrow of the day including seeing her cherished father cry for the first time in her life, she was struck with the sheer loveliness of the weather on that August 14th in St. Joseph, Missouri. It was like God giving the humans a beautiful gift in exchange for the beautiful gift He/She had claimed by calling her uncle to the other side. She felt his spirit very near and through this event came to know first hand that a person's passing is merely the changing of one's energy. Abby's intense spiritual journey that would grow and evolve into a belief in reincarnation began on that profoundly sad, yet amazingly beautiful day.

The following Christmas the sadness returned but not with the intensity of the previous year. Two more uncles died in January. Abby was not personally close to either of them, so she was not so deeply affected. Yet it did change the family as a whole, deeply touching her mother who had now lost three brothers within a year.

These events marked the beginning of insights that Abby sometimes thought of more as a curse than a gift, especially when mere strangers in a crowd would dramatically affect her well being and there was nothing she could do about it. She was just picking up on their negative energy. Abby's life from her teen years forward would cycle between periods of intense psychic awareness and relative normalcy. In her eighteenth year, she was wide open to the phenomenon.

So here she was at Stetson University, a Baptist run college located in Deland, Florida, only ninety miles from her home. She had dreamed of encountering unique and special people. And she did, on that very first day! Shannon and Eva would remain her lifelong friends, while the

rest would be left behind. This is the way of life, Abby learned this lesson time and again through the many moves her life would endure.

Her roommate, Shannon was from Newnan, Georgia, but had graduated from a high school in the big city of Atlanta. The girls had corresponded via the mail during the summer thanks to the school's early roommate assignment notification program. To Abby, Shannon was incredible. She had it all, including a serious boyfriend who thought the moon and sun revolved around her. Sometimes Abby wasn't sure it didn't.

Smart, witty, knockdown beautiful blonde, five feet six, a figure lean from gymnastics, sparkling blue eyes, Shannon knew how to work men. She had something going on. That something Abby never ever figured out.

The difference might have been in their family arrangements. Shannon had three brothers, two older, one younger. She grew up with all kinds of guys in her house and life. Abby, the baby of three daughters, was the only one left at home by age thirteen. Men were a mystery, the oddest creatures. *Dirt that made noise is a great description for boys*, she thought.

No wonder it was pure admiration Abby held for Shannon's ability to be so confident and skilled with the handling of the opposite sex. Abby observed even older men, like her father's friends, would find themselves caught under Shannon's spell; Shannon was simply being herself, and men of all ages would swoon.

Shannon loved to analyze everything. That quality clearly came from her mother; Abby could see that once she met Mrs. Rita Goforth. Abby loved figuring things out and soon enjoyed the activity as well, so the two girls would spend hours scrutinizing everything. What fun it was! They both were biology majors and their analytical preoccupation would really prove to pay off in that field of study. Abby adored Shannon.

Their suite mate, living just on the other side of the bathroom, was another beautiful blonde, Eva. As worldly as Shannon was, Eva was naive, innocent, precious and pure as new driven snow. Tall, standing five feet eleven inches, golden tan from the beach of her family's second home in Naples, Eva was a Swedish bombshell with the heart of

Mary Poppins! She originated from a small, or as Eva would say in her Scandinavian accent, “wee town” of Thief River Falls, Minnesota. TRF, as the locals called it, was fifty some miles due east of Grand Forks, North Dakota. She, too, had a serious boyfriend back home.

Her sing-song Swedish Northern Minnesotan accent had such a charm that one could listen for hours to Eva’s stories of her two older brother’s escapades of rescuing snow trapped individuals on their snowmobiles. The Arctic Cat snow machines were made right there in TRF. Eva could take the most mundane story and make it sound cute and interesting. Maybe it was the sound of her voice but, she just seemed adorable.

Then she would talk of the boys’ hunting trips, of the subsequent delicious venison dinners, and Abby would ask her to curtail the narrative, for such an animal lover she was, Abby could never imagine shooting one. Eva did not understand that for she had been raised where hunting was a natural part of the culture. In Abby’s eyes, hunting was something uneducated rednecks did for sport to make themselves feel like men and she saw it as totally barbaric. It reminded her of the gross little boy who lived next door when she was growing up who would kill frogs to make himself feel powerful and to gross Abby out. To Abby it was a sad commentary on man’s need to kill things.

It was always wise not to bring up the Vietnam War. Abby was lucky in never having anyone close to her killed in that conflict. She did have some friends serve in the war. She baked cookies and mailed them oversea, along with some letters and cards. She hoped in some way that it would help, but the gravity of that war never really thudded into her conscientious until some years later when she read Jim Webb’s *Field’s of Fire*. She cried countless times reading that book, remembering the chocolate chip cookies she had so lovingly mailed to Jim back in the day, now realizing how clueless she was as to the hell he had endured. “And it’s one, two, three, what are we fighting for? Don’t ask me, I don’t give a damn. Next stop is Vietnam.” Death was hard for Abby to deal with despite the reason for it.

To Abby’s thinking growing up in the 1960’s was living through one big irony. Who could make sense of the stupidity of prejudice and bigotry especially when it was the social norm? It was watching the

nightly newscaster report the daily death toll of the war in the hundreds as if it was a weather report not a body count. It was seeing a major city burn during a race riot, as sometimes innocent people were shot by the police. It was a time of great intolerance of anyone who thought, looked or acted out of the box, and it was a small box, a very small box. But out of the ashes came peace, love, great pot, and some really good music. This generation was just trying to make sense of it all. The concept of yin-yang was born straight into the American conscious.

For those children trying to grow up through it all, it was a time to question. Abby had found many answers not by looking out, but by looking within. Years later the saying “Be Quiet, Look Within, and Know that I am God” became popular and Abby felt she had written it decades earlier. Abby in many ways was like the times, a paradox. One moment she might be in pensive meditation pondering the deepest of concepts, the next carelessly joking about the most trivial of topics.

Wise spiritually, but not in dealing with the dating scene, Abby was a cute girl, some would even say pretty. She wore her shiny chestnut brown hair long with no bangs. Her blue eyes had their near-sighted vision corrected with even bluer tinted contact lens; accented by a usually present twinkle. Her pug nose gave her an innocent, baby face that made her look younger than she was. She did learn to use that to her advantage. Her lips were full, too large she felt, so she never used lipstick to accent them. Freckles, though not totally obvious, covered her face, so she never used foundation makeup either. She had delicate little ears that her sister Liz relished in teasing her about. (It was Liz that had Abby convinced for several years of her young life that she was adopted from Cuba! Aren’t sibling rivalries simply marvelous?) She tanned to a medium golden-brown in the summer as she enjoyed the family pool as much as she could between work and social engagements with friends. Being 5’4” and 135 pounds, Abby had a well balanced hourglass figure. But these were the days of Twiggy, so Abby always thought of herself as fat.

Her sense of humor was dry, sharp, and keen. This trait was well learned from the master of fun himself, her father. In fact in high school, she was a bit of a party girl, having thrown some serious blasts at her house when her parents were out of town. She was fine with

groups, but when it came to attracting boys, she was clueless as to how to play the game. Abby wondered if she was too honest, often verbalizing her heart and feelings. That didn't seem to go over well with adolescent males.

To sum up her dating experiences, the teen years had been less than gratifying. Her father had warned her that boys wanted only one thing, and Daddy did know best. Prom night, Abby stayed home, but so did a lot of the nice girls. There were two kinds of girls in high school, the ones who "put out" and the nice girls. Abby did not put out. She was saving herself ... well, not necessarily for marriage, but at least for a man she loved.

High School was finally done. She had escaped the black hole of Ocala. She was now liberated to the freedom of college. She had been living for this moment. Everything would be different here. Every morning would be the dawning of a new adventure.

The course work at college was proving to be significantly harder than high school, and Abby was struggling with English. Sentence fragments were her best friend and spelling had always been a nightmare. She had never been taught phonics, so when someone would say "sound it out" to spell a word, it was a big 'huh' in Abby's brain. She literally memorized every word she knew, so if she had never seen it written out, chances were she couldn't spell it. And even if she had seen it, if she hadn't committed it to memory, she still would not be able to spell it. She also had a mild form of dyslexia. Of course, that diagnosis did not exist in 1971! Dyslexic students were considered slow or stupid.

Despite her learning challenges, Abby was bright. Being auditory by nature, once she heard a professor's lecture, she pretty much knew it. Her freshman year would demand some new study habits and hard work, but she was a spirited and determined young lady. Failure was simply not an option. The bigger the challenge, the harder she would apply herself and work.

Abby was happy. New friends, new challenges, life was exciting, life was good. She had pledged Zeta Tau Alpha. She had been elected president of the freshmen pledge group. Her sorority did not have a house so she would continue to reside in Chaudoin Hall with her new

found friends. To this day it remains an all girl dormitory. In 1971, no males were allowed past the main lobby. There were visitor hours until nine p.m. A gentleman caller would have the young lady of his interest paged to the hall phone. The joke was of course, "Who in the hall do you want?"

There were no gentlemen callers for Abby. The ones that liked her, she wasn't attracted to them. The ones that caught her eye, and they were few and far between, would not give her the time of day. That's the way it was. *No biggie*. Abby thought. She was not concerned about boys or men at this point in her life. Her focus was on school. She was hoping to attend medical school and that was going to require her 100% attention. If some fabulous man crossed her path, great. If not, that would be fine, too. She was happy with her friends and busy with her studies.

Chapter 2 -The Dream

She awoke with her heart beating out of her chest. At least it felt that way to Abby. As she looked around the room, she focused on her red felt Peanuts poster that hung beside her bed. Lucy stood behind her homemade lemon-aid stand. A hand-lettered sign above the stand read, “ Psychiatrist Help 5 cents-The Doctor Is In.” Abby was staring at the poster, but not seeing it. Her mind was replaying The Dream. Her heart was relentless in its palpitations and her breathing was short and shallow. She had never felt these feelings. She was basking in them as one does in the sun’s rays the first day at the beach. She didn’t want the feelings to pass. She would have been content to have died at that very moment, for it was bliss that had captured her soul. *Let me stay right here forever*, her very being was begging her.

She was conscious. *Let me go through this again in my mind, step by step. Let me memorize his face so I will know him when we meet.* She was talking to herself in her mind, reviewing every frame of the movie that her brain had shown her just seconds before awakening. “Remember everything, Abby,” she softly whispered to herself.

She sat up in the twin bed that she was slowly becoming accustomed to, after having slept for years in a double. She looked at the clock. *Good! I’ve got three hours before class. I’ve got to see if Eva is up and tell her about this!* (Shannon was always gone in the morning before Abby awoke. She had eight a.m. classes and liked getting up at six, going for coffee and breakfast at the cafeteria. Shannon was a morning person. Abby was not.)

Abby slipped across the bathroom, knocked softly on the adjoining door. “Eva, are you up? It’s Abby.”

Eva responded in her lyrical voice, “Sure, Abby, come on in!” Eva could tell from the expression on her friend’s face that something very extraordinary had occurred. “What’s on your mind, Abby?” Eva gestured for Abby to have a seat on the foot of her bed. Eva had pillows

propped up on the wall at the head of the bed. She was writing her boyfriend William a letter.

At that instant Abby felt foolish. It was only a dream. But she was about to explode or maybe implode if she didn't share this with someone! She especially wanted to share it with her Minnesota suite mate because Eva was in it! "I had a dream. Well, not just an ordinary dream. And I guess I should tell you ... I have dreams that come true!"

Eva flashed a look that she was thinking a cross between *yeah, right* and *where are some cloves of garlic to keep this scary person away from me?* Abby sensed Eva's apprehension and said, "It's okay, really, no one gets hurt or anything like that. In fact, in this dream it's all so wonderful!" Eva seemed to relax a bit, but still seemed unsettled. Abby decided to just get on with it.

"Okay, I'm walking in the moonlight with this man...boy...man, our age. He's, well ..." Abby stood up and signaled to Eva to stand as well... "He's taller than you, so he's six feet, one or two inches." The two girls resumed their seats on Eva's bed. Eva loved a good story, so this was starting to get her interest. "It is a dirt, no, gravel, road we are walking on... I guess we were walking. I think I was floating. I was so in love... I think so anyway. I've never been in love, but it felt like heaven, Eva, pure bliss! We are holding hands, walking along, talking, and laughing. It was so amazing, the most incredible feeling! I really can't convey to you how happy I felt! Then at the end of the road, you are there, Eva!"

Eva looked bewildered and asked, "What did he look like?"

Abby gasped and giggled, "He was gorgeous! Where do I start? His hair was brown, the color of mine. He wore it long to his shoulders or a little longer, thick, shiny, gorgeous. His eyes were big and beautiful and robin's egg blue and when he looked at me, it seemed he could see straight into my soul. He listened to me talk, he made me feel as if I were the only person alive. He had what I would call a roman nose, but it was not unattractive, a strong masculine jaw line with mutton chop sideburns, average size lips, sexy, with beautiful white teeth, and a smile that warmed my heart like the sun warms your skin at the beach. Did I mention we were walking through wheat fields?"

That did it; Eva's mouth had fallen open at this point. Her eyes had that I can't believe it look, and she was staring at Abby. Perhaps at this juncture, she really was pondering where some cloves of garlic might be located. After a few seconds, Eva managed to stumble out the words, "That's Steve Campbell!" Eva jumped up and rushed over to a neatly lined bookcase. She extracted her 1971 Lincoln High School yearbook. She returned to sit back down at the head of the bed. Eva nervously thumbed through the pages until she located the graduating seniors. Locating Steve's picture, she turned the book around to Abby. "That's him," pointing to Steve's picture.

Abby's heart, which had beaten so hard all morning, at that instant stopped! She looked up at Eva. "His hair is shorter in this picture, but Eva that's him!" For what seemed like forever the girls' eyes locked, staring at one another in total disbelief.

What had just transpired in this little dorm room in Deland, Florida, was mind blowing to them both. "Wow," was all either could say for several minutes! They were trying to comprehend the whole thing.

"What does this mean, Eva?" Abby finally shyly asked her new friend.

Eva's nervously replied, "I guess you two should meet."

"Tell me everything you know about him!" Abby pumped Eva for information on her dream man.

Eva responded, "Well, he's not like the rest of the boys. He doesn't like sports...no football, no hockey, doesn't even snowmobile in the winter, none of it. Steve has a great build and tan from farming. It's the family business."

Abby thought to herself, of course, the stroll along the gravel road through the wheat field. She asked Eva, "What do they farm?" Eva thought for a moment and answered, "Mainly wheat and barley, I think. Some farmers do sunflowers as well. I'm not sure if they are into that or not."

Abby thought how interesting this all was. "Do they have any animals?" Abby loved all animals, with the exclusion of snakes.

"None that I know of. I don't remember Steve talking about any animals."

Eva continued, "Steve is really popular for not being a jock. He's really nice, for a guy. That's why all the girls like him...well, that and he's a hunk too!" The two girls laughed so hard. Eva resumed, "Seriously though, he really didn't date much, some, but no one steady. We all just sort of hung out together, like going to the Dairy Queen or down to the beach."

Abby interrupted her here, "The beach, Eva, you're in the middle of the country! What beach?"

Eva giggled that adorable little laugh of hers, "Well, it has sand, though it's really grayish in color. It's by the Thief River. It's the best we can do for a beach up there, anyways. There's a really big park down by the river. It's a great hangout place for us kids to go when the weather is good."

"Like I was saying," Eva continued. "Steve was into the drama class, always doing plays. He played Lancelot in Camelot. Oh my gosh, Abby! You should have seen it! And that boy can sing too!"

Abby thought to herself, *Did he sing to me in the dream? Yes, I remember now he did.*

Eva was on a roll, "He had all the girls going after that one. Yes, he did. I'm not sure Steve knew how to handle all the attention though. He's kind of modest like that. There's a sweetness about him."

Abby was smitten. This sounded like her dream man in more ways than one. Just her luck he was two thousand miles away. But on the bright side, he did exist!

At that moment Abby recalled another part of the dream she had forgotten. It was when they were walking under the moonlight, with what seemed like a million stars filling the sky. They stopped, and Steve took her face into his hands. He bent down and gently kissed her lips once, then twice. Then he kissed her, full and hard. Her breathing shallowed as her mind flashed to this sudden memory.

Eva grabbed her arm and asked, "Abby, are you all right?"

Abby murmured, "I've never been better." She looked up at Eva and explained what had just occurred in her mind.

Eva responded, "That's so romantic and under the moonlight, too." Eva started to fan herself with her right hand.

I Loved You Before I Met You

Trying to recover the former conversation, Abby asked, “Is Steve going to college or continuing on the farm now?”

Eva thought for a second, “I think he’s in school, but still working on the farm. Since farming is done mainly in the summer, I guess he can do both. Really, I’m not sure what his plans are, Abby.”

Eva smiled and tilted her head, reminding Abby of how cute puppies look when they do that. “The more I think about it,” Eva mused, “You two would make a perfect couple.”

Abby laughed softly and sighed. She knew God had sent her the dream. Of course she could not share that information with anyone at this point, it sounded insane. But she knew. Now she knew HE was there. His name was Steve Campbell. He would be her love. He was the other glove. He would be the male yin to her female yang. *The Love of my Life, he is there. Be quiet, listen, your soul person does exist and you will meet him. Have patience, little one. Faith.*



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