

One Beautiful Winter

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Chapter 1 – The Day-Dream
Rainbows. Shelly saw everything good in the world and regularly found herself day-dreaming. Suddenly the bell rang – it was time for the next lecture. ‘Can I borrow your notes please Stacey?’ Stacey chuckled, ‘were you day dreaming again Shelly? How on Earth are you going to pass this degree huni?’. Shelly beamed a confident smile knowing she would pass. Although she was a day dreamer, she had the ability to focus and work hard when needed. For the majority of her life she had been spoon-fed having everything relatively easy. There was a lot for Shelly to be grateful for, in particular to her supportive parents who had been there for her every step of the way and took care of her every need. It was fair to say they brought her up with much love, care, and protection. Shelly knew that even if she spent all her life saying thank you and helping them out, it would still not be enough to express the gratitude she had for her parents nor enough to repay them for their kindness. To say that they were ‘truly amazing’ would be an understatement as without doubt they were the best parents anyone could ever wish for. Through thick and thin they were there for her and she likewise would never leave their side – they could always count on her. Shelly was nearly 20. Admittedly she didn’t have a clue about life, nor about the ways of the world. She was risk-averse, trusting, naïve, gullible and as described by one of her tutors - innocent. Shelly found it baffling to say the least as to why some of her friends thought she was gullible, when she was clearly very smart – a fact reflected by her academic progress. With flying colours did Shelly pass every year so far of her Undergraduate degree and although she wasn’t ambitious, her lecturer believed she would excel in her career. In fact he told Shelly to see him in 5 years’ time as he truly believed she was an asset to the legal profession and was destined for great success. Admittedly Shelly projected confidence through her very vocal, outspoken and forthright persona. So not surprisingly she had unintentionally shaped Professor Barnsley’s opinion that she would be one of the nation’s next top Barristers. ‘Gullible. A strange term to describe the nations next top Barrister!’ thought Shelly to herself. One day, when Professor Barnsley’s predictions materialise her friends would realise their error, thought Shelly to herself smiling. I mean, handing your car keys to a total stranger who offered to help move your car out of a tight spot when he saw you struggling was an act of intelligence, wasn’t it? At the time Shelly attempted to justify her decision by reassuring herself that there was nothing wrong with this as she wasn’t sitting in the car when the helpful gentleman offered to move her car. However, after some time had passed, Shelly reflected on this and realised that was it was risky trusting a total stranger so she shouldn’t have done that. Although it was pouring down with rain, she should have contacted one of her friends or a family member instead. Shelly and Stacey were good

friends and were both in the same year, studying Law and Politics at University. For a so-called naïve person, Shelly was surprisingly selective in choosing her friends, as she exercised deep thinking prior to making any important decisions. This week in lecture Shelly had been day-dreaming about meeting prince-charming. Handsome, kind and strong – an admirable gentle giant. Shelly had clearly watched one too many romantic movies which had shaped her idea of love. So, naturally, Shelly believed everything was going to be wonderful when she meets prince-charming - he was going to treat her like a princess and she was going to have the most amazing life ever. Shelly had dreamt up this surreal fantasy where he was *the* most perfect guy any woman could ever wish for. I mean, his manners would be nothing short of impeccable, his high moral standards would be admired by all and not forgetting that he would also be the most handsome bloke ever. Just that Shelly hadn't met this guy yet, but she was sure that she would. Shelly believed that one day prince-charming would walk into her life, would sweep her off her feet and they were going to live happily ever after. Stacey really cared about Shelly, so was concerned that she was hoping for a person that doesn't exist. 'Shelly, there is no such person as the perfect person – but sometimes, to a certain extent, it may be possible to influence the outcome', said Stacey. 'I don't understand' said Shelly confused, 'how can I influence the outcome? Stacey you are not making any sense here'. Stacey smiled, 'Ok Shelly, let me try to explain this to you. Imagine yourself as an employee of a company', 'Ok' said Shelly confused, not really knowing how this example was going to answer her question. 'Your co-worker has missed an important deadline, in fact, he or she misses an important deadline every month, so much so that the business is losing customers'. 'Ok, but what's that got to do with influencing the outcome?' asked Shelly. 'That will become clearer when I finish my explanation Stacey' said Stacey patiently, realising that Shelly was keen to understand Stacey's viewpoint. 'Basically' said Stacey, 'the co-worker was consecutively missing important deadlines. The employee's line manager hadn't tried to find out the reasons for this, so it continued. Had his/her line manager tried to understand the barriers towards meeting deadlines, it would have, for many reasons, been better for the company. For example, it would have helped to identify whether the deadlines were not realistic and needed adjusting, or whether there was a performance issue. Ultimately, the line manager was in a position where he or she could have influenced a positive outcome for the employee and the company. 'Oh I see, but how does this relate to meeting Mr. Right?' asked Shelly curious to know more. Stacey cared about Shelly and didn't want to see her hurt, so tried to provide a more relevant example 'Ok, let me try to explain this with a different example. Let's say you meet an amazing guy tomorrow, and he wants you to go to the movies with him', 'Ok' said Shelly feeling slightly confused at this as she couldn't fathom how this could be a bad thing.

This fictional story describes the journey of a lady called Shelly, who hopes for a bright future, often viewing the world through rose-coloured glasses. As Shelly journeys through her life, she encounters some difficult situations. Will the hopes that Shelly had for a bright future come true? Will she meet the love of her life? This heart-warming story describes how Shelly deals with some of the challenges she faces in life with hope and perseverance.

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