

The Tiny Diary.

Chapter One

I once knew a girl who told me that when she was young, between 24 and 25 years young, that one New Years Eve, sometime in the middle of the afternoon of a 31st of a December, she was absolutely convinced she would never fall in love the way 'normal' people fall in love. She couldn't really articulate why she felt this but she told me she just sort of 'felt it', and as she said this she touched her chest.

But this girl was an eternal optimist. That is what she told me. She couldn't possibly go through her entire life without sharing her world. So she cast a spell.

"In an effort to force the chance?" I asked.

"Yes, but I prefer the words 'cast a spell'."

"OK."

She explained that this would be a one-year spell, but in reality it would turn out to be a year-long ritual that nobody knew about. With her plan conceptualised in the diminishing December light, she decided the next morning she would purchase the first diary she set eyes on. Over the course of the next year she would fill the diary with thoughts, poems and her innermost secrets. Then, exactly one year later, she would bury it.

"Why?" I asked.

"To be found!"

"Found by who?"

"The one!"

I looked puzzled.

“The Man Of My Dreams! He will find this diary in the woods or wherever I bury it and he will read it cover to cover and fall in love with me and my world-view. Then he will track me down and we will fall in love with each other instantly.”

“How will he know it’s there, buried in the woods?” I asked.

“I don’t know, I guess I’ll mark the spot with an X made of sticks or ribbon.”

“And what if someone else finds it?”

“Well I’ll put a note on it saying: ‘Unless you are The Man Of My Dreams, please replace the diary in the ground’.”

“OK.”

She certainly was an optimist. But you couldn’t fault her for her vision.

Chapter Two

So it had to be the first diary she saw. That was the rule. Don’t get distracted. Be spontaneous. She knew what she was like. Fingers in mouth, torn between the faux red leather perfectly bound diary with a gold 2002 embossed on the front, and the A4 spiral bound with a lenticular cover showing butterflies in flight. None of this mattered. It would just be the first diary she saw regardless.

The next morning she got up early like she always did, and set off towards the newsagent, where she would buy her cigarettes, and then she would go to the stationers, (independently owned, and always open, even on New Years Day). Her dad had told her they had a good work ethic and he admired them for it.

As she walked into the newsagent she hoped that The Man Of Her Dreams would be there buying a magazine on photography and a Bounty (that was her favourite -- they could share it). But of course he wasn’t, so she bought her twenty Marlboro Lights and waited for her change.

Glancing around she saw all the different magazines that they sold, and as the man gave her change for her cigarettes her eye was drawn towards Dolls Accessories Monthly. On the cover it said 'This month, lucky reader, we are giving away A Fantastic Diary, Just For Your Doll! For those busy days of fun and the good times all your Dolls have!'

Now she had promised herself she would buy the first diary she saw. And this was it! Well, this saved her a walk to the stationers, she had a free magazine (sort of), and if she ever regressed into a child-like state and suddenly regained an interest in dolls, even better!

Her first thought was: "What value! How lucky the readers of this magazine staffed by people clearly passionate about their specialist knowledge, giving away these fantastically detailed little things! What attention to detail. The dedication they must have put into this tiny, tiny diary that no one would ever use as a diary. It's for the dolls! The good-fun doll times that need putting in tiny diaries. But no-one would actually use it."

But *she* would. This was the diary she must buy. The one. It was going to happen.

Now writing at length in a diary this small was going to be impossible, made harder still because it was a one day per page diary. If she tried to write her thoughts at length, they would span months and months and months and people would think that her life was really slow or that she had only thought about two things that year.

She would have to summarise her thoughts into four or five words, written with a sharp pencil. 'No problem!' she thought. 'One page for each day -- Easy.'

Today, New Years Day, was the start of the year-long spell. That evening she sat herself down to make her first entry and looked at the wall where (should the spell work) she would hang her wedding picture. Mr Diary Finder and Mrs Diary Burier. Perfect.

She stared hard at this white wall, and realised that to make this spell work she would have to do this every night, without fail for exactly one year. She started to write in her new diary with her new sharp pencil.

As she summarised her thoughts each evening, her sharp pencil got considerably shorter with all the sharpening. 365 evenings passed.

Chapter Three

So now, one year and a day has passed since she decided she would never fall in love and the pencil sharpener is blunt, and pencil she bought is now only 2cm long.

She was in the woods now, and as the hole she was digging to bury the tiny diary got deeper, the irony of the pencil length became clearer. Doll size. So she thought about throwing the pencil in the hole, in case a child would dig up the tiny diary instead of The Man Of Her Dreams and think: "This would be a great diary for my doll" and "Oh look! A pencil too! I can even write it in!"

But she thought that if she did throw the pencil in the hole, this would somehow increase the chances of that happening, in that weird chancy way that things happen. And she totally believed in it. That was why she was standing in the woods on a chilly New Years morning burying a tiny diary.

Worried that the concept would be lost on the desired diary finder, she decided to attach a piece of paper to the diary with some gingham ribbon that was tied around her wrist. On the back of an old receipt she wrote:

"To whoever finds this. Because I have purchased such a tiny diary, with a page per day view, I have had to summarise my thoughts for the day into four or five words. You see I promised to buy the first diary I saw and this was it, but when you find me I will explain. If you are The Man Of My Dreams then hurry up and find me."

This should make him understand. A disclaimer perhaps.

She thought about maybe including one of her hairs between the pages so her new love could feed it into some kind of auto DNA location gadget and it would provide her exact location, like some kind of map that shouldn't really exist. But that would be in the future and she didn't want to wait that long. Then she realised she would be dead in the type of

future that allowed you to do that kind of thing, or at least it would be represented by far creepier technologies.

She buried the diary beside a path in the woods -- A beautiful place where only people with good intentions and a penchant for rescuing animals would walk. The place where she hoped a man would one day walk, and look down and see a tiny mound of earth filling a tiny hole containing a tiny diary. And he would see this diary and immediately fall in love with the author and have to find her and love her. DNA location gadget or not, she hoped this would happen. Hopefully next week sometime; not when she was an old spinster with a load of cats.

What a year it had been, and no one could call our optimistic heroine shy, that was for sure.

She flicked through the pages.

Chapter Four

Monday 14th June: Dear Tiny Diary. Today I just waited.

When The Man Of Her Dreams found her, with muddy hands and keen eyes, she would explain.

This was the day she was brave and spoke to the waiter in the Mexican restaurant. She eats there all the time, partly because she can order in Spanish (and enjoys the practice), and partly because they have a great evening menu, but mostly because of the waiter.

He'd served her on several occasions and they started to recognise each other. So one day, after the 'hi how are you's? the 'good to see you's', the 'working late again's" and the 'yeah tell me about it's", she took a sharp breath and introduced herself to him.

"Oh you have the same name as my sister," he said smiling. He offered a hand to shake but really she wanted to hold it and not let go. "I'm Paul."

Paul. The same name as her brother. She stifled a laugh. This was enough to convince her that this was a sign. He is the one. Forget the diary! No more 'summarising'. No hole digging when the year is out. Action was needed. But not right now, with Paul's dangling hand. She shook it and smiled and told him he had the same name as her brother. This time they both laughed, then they both looked away and Paul was the first to speak.

"Enchiladas and taco on the side?"

"Yes please Paul! I'm starving here!" But she didn't feel like eating now. So she waited outside the restaurant until closing time. Looking inconspicuous. He would be out soon. She would just walk up to him and say:

"Hey Paul! Wow! Hi again!. Ha ha.. I... I've just been down at the gallery, I was just walking past..." (this bit would be a lie) "Hey, as our parents have great taste in names do you fancy a drink?"

And maybe they would shake hands again and this time she wouldn't let go and he wouldn't mind.

He came out. She stepped forward. He saw her, smiled and promptly got into a waiting car and kissed the driver with a kiss that said this wasn't his sister or his aunt. She went home.

She flicked through the pages again.

Saturday 30th September: Dear Tiny Diary. I am an eternal optimist.

Earlier in the year She had met a nice man who she had allowed herself to get terribly enthusiastic about. They were meeting for the third time. She thought this was going excellently.

"Hey! How are you"? she asked.

"Good" he said, not looking at her. The way he said "Good" meant that this was going to be bad...

“Listen I uh... I met someone.”

Bingo!

“Lisa, she’s a pilot” He offered her this irrelevant information on Lisa's career choice as if that would make it OK. It wasn't.

She thought about Lisa the Pilot. And so did he. They both thought about Lisa the Pilot at exactly the same time and she knew this would be the only time ever in history where this would occur. She knew this because she would never think of her after this moment had passed.

He looked at the ground and she looked left and to the sky and didn't blink. A plane flew past overhead. The wretchedness of this situation registered in her head but she did not let it show. Fuck Lisa.

“We just clicked,” he said. It's still not OK.

“I bet you did,” she replied, quickly managing a smile. Thinking now: ‘Like an index finger and a thumb. Snap! Click! There it was.’

‘If you are a thumb and I'm a finger, I'm not an index finger. That's why we don't click. We can't possibly.’

‘I'm most likely the little finger; barely able to reach across the vast palm to click with you. I barely touch you. Just a whoosh sound. Fast and quiet and no one will notice. No one will stop and jump and turn around and say “Hey! look at those two! They really click together!”

Looking directly over David's shoulder, in her mind it was clear.

‘Of course! We're probably not even fingers on the same hand. That would explain things. That would make it really hard to click.’

'In fact we might not even be fingers of the same person! We'll never click. That's not just difficult, it's neigh-on impossible. Especially as the person I am a finger on lives the other side of the whole world from the person that you are a finger on.'

Almost as if she had shouted this thought out loud and not just thought it, David raised his open hands and continued to look at the ground. This was the classic 'I'm just going to exonerate myself from any wrong-doing here' move. He sort of smiled and shook his head, whispered sorry and turned and walked away. Fuck David.

24th January. Dear Tiny Diary. I don't want to write in you forever.

This would take no explaining.

12th May. Dear Tiny Diary. Why do I bother?

They'd had sex twice. And they didn't do it on the first date. Because he was different.

Paul had recently bought her a GPS receiver for her birthday. One day, after having four dates and two sexes with That Bastard she went for a drive and decided it would be fun to spell out 'THINKING OF YOU LOVELY' with GPS co-ordinates and upload them to Google earth. She was a modern girl and in her mind this was cute.

She would drive around the country roads and spell out the words. It would only take a few hours or so. Then she would go home and he would come over and after dinner and some wine she would show him.

After working out what roads she would have to drive on to spell out each individual letter she set off. Things were going well. The words soon started to appear, mapped in GPS co-ordinates. The word 'THINKING' took shape. A T junction for the T, reversing back over her tracks for the top of the T. Switch it off -- no joined up writing here -- turn around. Switch it on and down the road, switch it off. A 'U' turn, switch it on, around the hair pin. Switch it off. That was H.

After three hours she had driven around enough to write 'THINKING OF'. Geographically, these two words spanned two villages. She was about to start on the word 'YOU' when she encountered a closed road due to a burst water main.

Now for the sake of legibility, the word 'YOU' had to be written using this particular road. But no matter, she would come back tomorrow. Undeterred, she decided to continue and write the word 'LOVELY'. During the left turn to spell out the letter L the petrol light came on, but with enough petrol to finish the word anyway she continued. O, V and E. Nearly there.

Then a traffic jam. 'Wow how hard can this be?' she shouted at the windscreen. Getting stuck in this would mean she would run out of petrol and she really didn't want to explain to some police officer why she had run out of petrol, so decided to turn around and slowly drive the car home. Better still, the new Love Interest's house was nearer. She would just stop there the night, and finish up her GPS love note tomorrow.

She pulled into his drive and thought about how she would surprise him, and as she hoped that this time this one would last, he became 'The Bastard'. He would not know the exact moment he would become 'The Bastard' but if she ever chose to tell him she would say 'it was when I pulled into your drive and saw some hussy, some harlot, some *LISA* half *NAKED* pulling your bedroom curtains, and before you even think to justify it, I saw you in the background you BASTARD!"

Quietly, and absolutely devoid of any thoughts except 'is my life some horrible Truman Show-esque movie and the whole world is laughing?' she spotted a jerry can of petrol he had left by the garage and helped herself. Excellent.

She drove home and decided not to tell anyone of her little GPS love note she had written. Right now, unfinished it just said 'THINKING OF LOVE'.

31 October. Dear Tiny Diary. It's the little things that count.

When you find me, Man Of My Dreams, we will do lots of fun things together, like making a point of noticing the little things more often. So when we get invited to a fire works display by friends we will meet in the future, we will only look for the flashing lights of passing airplanes.

There will be a thousand eyes on the burning magnesium and sulphur; those fleeting colours have their audience. We will be the only people in the vicinity who notice the airplane passing by and we will quietly say: "Hello all you passengers!, wherever you are going, have a great time!" Although they wouldn't hear us, we will think that it's a nice thing to do.

When we are in the car and I am driving, I will allow my hand to fall off the centre console arm rest and land in your lap. Sometimes I will do it on purpose and sometimes it will be accidental. I won't flinch and say 'oh sorry'. We won't have to look at each other or even speak. Everything is in the gesture. The squeeze of the palm or a touch of the arm.

Chapter Five

The hole in the ground was dug. The hole where only kind. animal-rescuing future lovers would walk past.

Tomorrow was Day One. Bury it today, go to sleep and then and sit back and wait to see if the spell would work. A year in the casting, a day to results. That would be nice.

Unbeknown to her at this point (mercifully -- as this would be very unfair), years would pass and no man would come to her door holding a tiny muddy diary in his hand.

After one week she stopped imagining that she would be in the delicatessen, looking at ham, and turn to see a man with muddy hands. She stopped imagining she would say: "Oh, here let me help you with that" and offer him a handbag size bottle of antiseptic hand rub, and she stopped imagining that he would explain "the weirdest thing just happened, I was walking in the woods and..."

After two weeks she stopped imagining she would be cooking spaghetti when her neighbour would knock on the door and say: "There's a man here who says he's looking for you."

After a month, she stopped getting excited every time the door bell rang.

After a year, she had nearly forgotten where she had buried it.

After three years, she decided that the tiny diary had been eaten by tiny creatures that didn't need diaries and if they did they would be even smaller.

Chapter Six

After a long period of time, several years in fact, she ended up habitually writing the word 'Love' with a biro on the left side of her chest. Pressing hard so it scratched and hurt. Sometimes no ink would come out, just angry red lines. She preferred it like that.

She wrote it right on herself like part of some script written on paper and that paper was her skin. That way, now it was part of her and so it had to happen. Scripted. She didn't really believe it, but it was a part of her now. Now she could feel Love. Right there over her heart.

THE END