

A  
Second  
Chance

Jill Kramer



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NOVEL, Romantic Fiction  
'A Second Chance'

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Falling in love with someone is the most wonderful, yet the scariest feeling in the world. When you are not sure where life will lead, but it's too much of an exciting adventure for you to care. When just the sight of someone gives you butterflies; when hearing them say your name gives you a warm fuzzy feeling running through your body. You get all these odd little feelings and you are happy. But there is a niggling feeling when you are apart that tries to discourage you. But then you see the other person again and everything is better, everything is perfect ....

This book is dedicated to all of you who know exactly, in all walks of life, how great it is to have **A Second Chance**.

I hope you enjoy.

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## Introduction:

When Kate unexpectedly decides to take a last minute trip to New York City, she never realizes that this will be the beginning of a new phase in her life. She runs a business called Baking for Beauty with her friend Thea. They have been incredibly busy up until Christmas with their special boxes for the Holiday Season. When her friend Beth invites her to come over, she doesn't hesitate and gets on a plane to John F Kennedy Airport in New York. In the taxi queue waiting to go into Manhattan, a fellow passenger asks if she would mind sharing. Actually she does, and sits in silence all the way into the city until the taxi drops him off at Central Park. During her stay they keep bumping into one another all over the place. Surprising really when there are so many people there at this time of year.

A chance meeting in Bloomingdales, they make an appointment to meet up in Bryant Park, Kate is disappointed when he does not show up, even though she waits for almost an hour.

Months later, back at home, suddenly one day, someone arrives with a huge bunch of flowers and an invitation to lunch.

Read on .....



## CHAPTER ONE

### Christmas in New York

It was a really cold day and as the plane taxied off toward the runway it started to snow. Kate was glad that she has decided to take her full-length coat with its real fur collar, as she was sure it would be even colder in New York at this time of the year. The engines of the plane got louder and soon the Boeing 747 (completely full) was charging down the runway ready for take off. After a steep climb up and through the clouds. Kate hoped there would be some blue skies and some sun on the long flight into JFK.

It was quite some time since she had been to New York. Three years to be exact. In the past she had been many times, but more often on business trips rather than for pleasure. Her dear friend Beth had asked her to think about having a holiday and spending Christmas with her. Christmas in New York! She was looking forward to it so much. Christmas trees, lights and the buzz of a city that never sleeps.

She settled herself down into her seat on the plane, glad she had got a bit more leg room in the comfort class. Business Class was so totally over the top expensive these days, luxurious, but to be honest she would rather spend the money shopping in New York than actually paying a fortune for a plane seat! The stewardesses were rushing back and fro as the 'seat belt' sign had been extinguished and people began to move about.

Kate got out her Ipad and went to her e-books. It was the only way to survive a long flight she thought to get engrossed into a book because the flight was quite boring after take off.

There was a good film on offer, but for the time being she was happy to read the book, the latest from Dan Brown, an author who she loved and again about his character Robert Langton, so she knew it would be an exciting book from start to finish.

Some of the places mentioned in just the first chapter were familiar to her. Montserrat just outside Barcelona was a place she had visited several times.

She was glad that the seat next to her was filled by a small child, who had fallen asleep within minutes of the plane being up in the air and she was not squeezed in by an older larger person. Flying time to New York was nearly 9 hours and she would be there around lunch time local time. 6 of the hours being the time difference at this time of year.

Within minutes she was totally engrossed in her book, the plane flew across the north of England and Ireland and then all the way across the Atlantic Ocean to John F Kennedy International Airport.

Her mind wandered off her book and she closed her eyes. Having had such an early start to the airport, it was not surprising that she drifted off into a sleep, filled with mixed dreams about the past year, what had happened and it could be concluded that 2017 had been an eventful one for sure.

She was woken by the stewardess asking her if she would like a drink and something to eat, the majority of passengers were already eating those typical plane meals. She accepted gratefully. The air in planes is so dry it made you thirsty.

After she had finished some food and had a warm drink, Kate began to feel drowsy and settled down with the very inadequate cushion on planes and closed her eyes. It had been such a busy build up to Christmas this year. A couple of years ago she had started a little company called the Baking for Beauty.

She and her friend Thea, whom she had known for almost 20 years, suddenly had had the idea that they would make things for beauty based on the idea of bakery. Soaps were shaped like slices of cakes, 'bombs' for in the bath were shaped like donuts and so the ideas had flowed. There were body scrubs, body and hand lotions, hair masks and lip balsams. In the summer they started making products, all of which were purely natural and included no artificial ingredients and special boxes for Christmas and birthdays. After a lot of publicity on social media, things had taken off big time and the orders were piling in. It was a really busy time for them both (not to mention all their staff now) and that is why Kate had decided she needed a complete break and had chosen to go to New York for Christmas. She and Thea had been making, stirring, filling and boxing for weeks on end. Every single muscle in her entire body ached from the physical effort, but this year had been a record one for sales, their biggest ever.

She was grateful to the huge amount of helpers they had had, it was a full on job with little time to relax until all the parcels had been despatched and knowing that there would be a lull in orders during the week between Christmas and New Year, she had made a snap decision to accept Beth's invitation and actually go off on a trip somewhere completely different and away from the endless invitations to spend the days with the same people year in, year out. She was thankful that after her divorce the majority of her friends had remained loyal, but she still felt a bit of a loose end on her own during the Festive Season.

It was not long before Kate had drifted off into quite a deep sleep despite the plane noise and the huge amount of people on board as the plane was completely full not a single empty seat. In her dreams she was thinking of New York, of all the times she had been before and being a real romantic, wondering if she just might meet someone really special on this trip?

When Beth mentioned the idea of New York, she had just happened to see a picture of Central Park in the snow, it looked so pristine and white and so lovely, her mind was made up instantly.

In her dreams she was already there and having a totally romantic and wonderful time, and it was announcement on the tannoy that the plane was preparing its descent into John F Kennedy airport, which woke her up in a start.

After taxi-ing to the terminal and disembarking Kate joined the long queue through the passport and customs section. They were thorough and strict here and even though she already had her ESTA visa in place she still knew there would be fingerprinting and eye photo's to be made. Since the terrorist attacks in the USA, it was a nightmare these days and people who came into the country were screened literally from head to toe.

She collected her luggage and went out into the cold sunny day to join yet another queue for taxi's or limo's into the city centre. Beth lived in a beautiful top storey loft apartment in the Meat Packer's District in Lower Manhattan.

Eventually she ended up sharing a taxi with a man who was obviously either coming home for Christmas or doing a last minute business trip. As they both got into the taxi at the same time, and he asked: 'share', she had only nodded. He looked tired (well who would not after a long transatlantic flight), sad eyes but the most amazing colour blue and a boyish appearance. She didn't really want to make conversation or share a taxi, but it was inevitable really having to with someone when plane loads of people arrived at JFK at the same time, the number of taxi's and limo's were limited too. So she just stared out of the window and made no conversation. Neither did he.

The car sped through the motorway lanes towards Manhattan Island and her first glimpse of the Hudson River and the bridges crossing the water and the sky scrapers made her feel excited. She was really looking forward to being back again and also meeting up with her friend Beth, who she had not seen since her last visit.

The taxi dropped him off first in Upper Manhattan, at the top of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to be exact. She knew it well, it lead immediately down to Times Square, past Carnegie Hall. She carried on then on her own to where she would be staying.

## CHAPTER TWO

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December

After a difficult and disturbed night's sleep in a strange bed, with endless city sounds, which went on all night, Kate was awake early. It would take her several days to adjust to the 6 hour time difference anyway.

When she had arrived yesterday mid afternoon Beth had suggested that they spend an easy day at home. In the end they have given in and gone for a quick meal locally. Kate was tired and after the long flight you just needed time to chill out and stretch your legs, which she did walking to and back from the restaurant.

There was such a real buzz in the air in New York. Everywhere was decorated for Christmas and after breakfast (all healthy and non fattening of course), she and Beth planned their day. First of all they would go to the shops along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and took a taxi there. The pavements were filled with last minute Christmas shoppers and each and every shop window was decorated. They walked down to Times Square, cutting through between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the crowds were huge. Preparations were already underway for the big ceremony planned for New Year Eve. Kate would not be there for NYE, she had to go back before then.

There was a distinctive chill in the air, as if there would be snow, quite normal for this time of year and as winds blew down from the lakes separating Canada and the USA, Pittsburgh had already had snow. Despite the cold, there was a wonderful atmosphere everywhere, people wishing one another a 'Merry Christmas' and huge numbers of Santa's shaking tins for donations at virtually every store. At the end of the afternoon, they decided to treat themselves (well it was Christmas Eve after all!) to cocktails at the Top of the Rock bar by the Rockefeller Centre.

Here was the famous Ice Rink and the biggest tree Kate thought she had ever seen. The lights all glittering in the wind, which had picked up during the day. They took the elevator all the way up to the top and settled down into comfortable chairs. 'Well' said Beth, 'I think it has to be a Manhattan don't you?' Kate nodded, as she gazed out of the windows across the skyline of New York. She could see all the famous landmarks, mainly because of the lights. The Empire State and Chrysler Building all lit up in different colours, with the winter background of the setting sun across the Hudson and East rivers. It was quite beautiful, Kate thought. She was glad to actually sit down, rest her legs as they had walked quite a distance, which was so easy to do when in Manhattan. Each block was number either East or West and the main road sleading up or down from Central Park were numbered.

Within seconds a smart waiter brought them their cocktails which were delicious and Kate thought that she must try not and drink it too fast, she felt the warmth of the whisky which it contained go down from her throat warming her entire body, right down to her toes.

She and Beth had also been talking non-stop. Their friendship was such, that they just started again from the moment they had left off and Kate had told her all about her little enterprise. Beth was a writer and very well known in fact. Kate was not a person to be influenced by this fact, probably the reason why they had become such good friends for quite some time now. Kate loved to write as well, and that is how she originally met Beth. At one of the book signing sessions, Beth had just looked up and said to her: 'You look nice, how about meeting up afterwards'. Kate at first had thought maybe she was being propositioned, but Beth was just one of those people you took an instant liking too.

They both sat there, stretching their legs, sipping at their cocktails when Kate suddenly was aware that someone was staring at her. It was her taxi man. He nodded and she nodded back but made no more effort than that. How strange bumping into him here of all places, considering the number of people who were milling around in the city today.

After a third cocktail and Kate was feeling decidedly tipsy by this time, she and Beth discussed their dinner plans, and decided a super sandwich from Dean and DeLuca was probably enough considering they would be eating huge amounts of food over the next two days. Beth's family were coming for Christmas dinner plus a number of friends and she was glad that Kate was there to help her with a turkey that looked so big they both had wondered earlier if it was even going to fit into the oven.

Traditional Christmas dinners were Kate's speciality, she had done so many over the years. Stuffing the bird first of all, then wrapping the breast meat with bacon or pancetta slices to keep the moisture in, then a huge roasting bag and setting the oven time. She and Beth had planned all the traditional trimmings of course including Bread Sauce, which had made them both laugh the evening before. Who on earth would want to pour a sauce made from bread all over their turkey? It sounded awful, but it wasn't, it actually went very well together, with the roast potatoes, cranberry sauce, and different vegetables. Beth had drawn the line with sprouts. She disliked them intensely and they had gone for a selection of roasted veggies, like parsnips, carrots, onions, pumpkin (which Kate was sure everyone in the USA would find strange as pumpkins were usually used for more 'sweet' dishes than savoury). But that was all for tomorrow morning.

It was time to pay the bill, which Kate did, and pull their tired bodies from their chairs and get their snack before the shop shut. As they went to leave, Kate looked back at her 'taxi man' who was staring at her quite intently and she just mouthed the words 'Merry Christmas' and left without another thought.