

Right. Deep breath. I'm going to make this first day, *my official first day at the shop*, work out right even though on the inside I am exploding into a billion butterflies and I think I'd rather go *bungee jumping in the nude* instead.

Nothing is going to go wrong. I'd checked and double-checked that everything was perfect yesterday. All the stock out on the floor, the cash register working (yes I know that's old technology, but I just like it that way), everything spick and speck and cleaned and double and triple cleaned.

I'm going to prove to everyone that this isn't just a crazy whim; I'm serious about this. I don't care if every second-person tells me that the chances of a small business failing within the first three months is something depressing like 90%.

I am going to make this work. I have a good hunch about it. I just know it's going to be right, that this is what I want to do in life. I pinched the back of my hand to make sure I wasn't dreaming.

Nope. This was definitely real. Seeing the door in front of me, the nervous excitement in my heart boiled over until it reached fever pitch and I jumped on the spot in a circle and threw my arms over my head. I coughed and composed myself again when the people passing by stopped to stare.

I jangled the keys in the keyhole and stepped inside to the musty air of the store. *Ahhh!* I inhaled deeply. Some people say they can't stand the smell – the same people that like brand new things and say that antique stores smell like death and that they don't want other people's old junk anyway. But I love it. I love the comfort of it, the knowledge that all these things had once belonged to someone and that they were to go to new owners. That death is not the end; that a good thing can go on forever.

"Isn't that right, Great Granny Amy?" I said out loud to the old framed photo I had hung up on the wall.

As fate would have it, I came to be named after her and on my seventeenth birthday, got the best present ever when I discovered that she had bequeathed me her antique store.

I was shocked because after all I didn't know Great Granny Amy. She died a year before I was born. But the executor showed me the will and it read *to my yet-as-unborn great-granddaughter, I leave my antique store, to be made public and given to her on her seventeenth birthday.*

No one liked this news of course, especially my parents who wanted me to sell the store immediately because they wanted me to go to uni. They had arranged a real estate company to handle it and everything... but as soon as I stepped inside the store, dusty and disused for years ... it was funny, but I felt like I had come home. Like I had been there before, even though that was crazy.

I had turned to the snooty real estate lady immediately and told her "No sale. Over my dead body no sale. This is mine! Now get out."

How could I do it to Great Granny Amy? She had given it to me. And looking at all the other stores in the complex, all full of new and fashionable things and *Buy Gones* the only original store left since the complex was built and upgraded a million times since... I couldn't do it. It was a piece of history. I didn't want some developer to buy it and turn it into another coffee chain store. Deep inside of me I suddenly had the urge to want to own it and one day pass it down to my children and then onto the grandchildren and...

I snapped myself out of my daydream. Crazy. I didn't even have a boyfriend. I was eighteen and as of today I was going to be running a whole store by myself and doing uni by correspondence to please my parents... when was I even going to have the luxury of going out and finding a boyfriend?

"How on earth did you do it by yourself, Great Granny Amy?" I sighed looking at the photo again.

My dad said I was the splitting image of her although I couldn't see it myself. All I know is that in the photo she had on a really nice 2011 turn-of-the-century dress on. That sort of thing was becoming highly fashionable again according to the fashion magazines. I looked nervously at the racks of vintage clothes. I hope this was going to work in my favour.

"What goes around comes back around, hey Great Granny Amy?"

Dad said that I had the same mannerisms and personality and even the same quirks (I think he means the head strong thing) as Great Granny Amy and that he wasn't surprised when she left me the shop and he wasn't surprised when I insisted on keeping it.

I stepped behind the counter and before I had a chance to drop my bags out the back, my phone rang.

"Ooo! It might be my first customer!" I squealed out loud, maybe to myself, maybe to Great Granny Amy, maybe because I was slowly going mad.

I picked up the phone.

"Rebecca! Yes, good thanks... maybe just a few butterflies, you know how it goes... *what?* Are you serious? Oh my God! Congratulations!"

I put my hand over the receiver and whispered excitedly up to Great Granny Amy, "Did you hear that? Rebecca just got engaged to Michael! I know they're young, but they're so in love."

"Of course we have rings," I said back to Rebecca over the phone, "In fact, I am sure you will find the perfect one here."

I put my hand under the counter and drew out the first tray of antique gemstone rings. I smiled to myself. Rebecca was my best friend and she was going to marry her high school sweetheart – what could be more romantic than that?

"Okay Bex, we'll definitely get together tonight for a celebratory drinks. Oh... customer at the door... gotta go."

The bell on the door twinkled and a guy walked in. I immediately straightened myself and dusted down my skirt. I hope I didn't have breakfast burrito all over it. Didn't have time this morning to crank out the healthy muesli.

"Can I help you sir?" I went over to the glass counter where he was starrng down at the display of wedding rings.

Hmmm. Nice ironed shirt. Nice ironed pants. Traditional almost. Not the disgusting colours and faddish cuts all the men were wearing these day.

"We have more rings just over here... with some very beautiful matching pairs if you and your fiancée are looking for..."

I hadn't expected him to be so young when he looked up at me. He didn't look more than just a teenager really, around... my age.

"Oh no," he said blushing and he ran his fingers through his hair. "I don't have a fiancée, I don't even have a girlfriend to be brutally honest. Oh shit. I don't know why I just told you that."

"That's fine! I have heaps of great things for a ... single guy..."

Hang on. Why did I sound so happy about the last bit?

“What is that?” He suddenly leaned forward toward my cleavage.

Amazingly, I didn’t move backward an inch.

It took me a while to realise he expected an answer from me.

“Oh, you mean this old thing?” My fingers wrapped themselves around the locket on the chain around my neck.

“It belonged to my great grandmother. Sentimental value only.”

“Sorry. I just can’t help... but be drawn to it. It reminds me of... I just can’t put my finger on it... it’s pretty.”

“If you like fine jewellery I have a lot for sale... but this old thing... this is what us antique sellers would value as ‘a piece of shit’”

I laughed nervously and he laughed back. Well, at least he’s not so repulsed that he’s edging for the door.

“I’m Amy,” I said holding out my hand. “Amy Lee... the second.”

Why did I just say that? I didn’t just say that did I?”

“Hi, Amy Lee the second,” the boy replied and he shook my hand. “I’m Logan... the second.”

“Oh! That’s lovely! Well, maybe lovely’s not the right word... Logan, that’s a very old fashioned name isn’t it? Popular I believe in the nineteen-eighties. But I guess if you’re named after a descendant...”

Oh my God, why was I acting like such an idiot? I’m normally cool Amy. Boys don’t fluster me. I know heaps of boys... I count heaps of boys as my friends...

“Funny you mention the nineteen eighties... Amy the Second... can I call you simply Amy? You can call me simply Logan. I’m actually looking for old movies from that era. I thought I might find them here. In an antique store.”

“Aha! You’ll be interested in these then.” I held up a finger and went out the back. I came back carrying a stack of thick, rectangular boxes.

“Have you seen these before? VHS. Or as they used to call them back in the day – tapes! When’s the last time you heard terminology like that, huh? Over a hundred years old and still in working condition.”

I plonked them onto the counter and watched as Logan picked up the one at the top. It was a copy of *The Princess Bride*.

“That’s my personal favourite,” I chimed in. “But can I ask Logan, why are you looking for these when you can just get them on the latest format? They’ve reissued all the golden classics just recently I heard. Again.”

“Well, they’re originals aren’t they?”

Logan rubbed the cover with his sleeve and popped open the box.

I watched his nostrils move a little. I think he’s inhaling the smell. Like I would.

“Anyway, things are so easy to get these days. It’s nice to have something that requires effort.”

“That’s right!” I perked right up and stared at Logan in the eyes. He had lovely light coloured eyes. So pale they were almost invisible in the airy and bright room of my antique store. I could feel my heart skip a beat.

“I got bad news for you though, Logan...”

“Yes?” Logan put his hand into his pocket and drew out his wallet.

“Unfortunately these aren’t for sale. They belonged to my great great grandmother and they’re... sentimental.”

“Oh. A shame.” I could see the disappointment in his face. He put the wallet back in his pocket.

“But um... I have a VCR at home and if you like how about you come over one night and we can watch these tapes. We can have a golden oldies movie marathon. I’ll make icing sugar popcorn. A secret family recipe passed down from the generations.”

Amy, what are you doing? What would Great Granny Amy be thinking? You’re supposed to be selling antiques, not a dating service!

“That sounds great,” said Logan. He looked surprised... but if I wasn’t mistaken... also not that surprised at the same time. Like he knew I would ask him.

“Anyway,” I said, regaining my usual breezy tone. “Are you interested in buying a stuffed barn owl? It’s over two hundred years old. It’s hideous. Please buy it and remove it from my family tree forever.”

“I’ll take a look, but I can’t promise anything.”

“Great, I’ll go get it from out the back...”

“Amy, before you go” said Logan. “Have I met you before?”

I was going to say no. Of course not, do you know how big this city is? Sure, I was excited he was my first official customer through the door, but no need to overact. I mean, I had already made an embarrassing fool of myself by asking him out, but shit! It felt so right, like it was all meant to be. Maybe it was fate! Maybe I had met him before and I just didn’t know it and therefore I had a natural disposition to him or maybe we were supposed to meet today, at this exact moment, over my favourite movie *The Princess Bride* – what are the chances of that being coincidence? Anyway, settle Amy. Settle down.

I was going to answer his question with a cool, not-coming-on-too-strong response of “Logan, of course we’ve never met”, but to my surprise, I found myself opening my mouth and saying:

“Logan... I preloved you.”