

**Escaping
From
Paradise**

By

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Chapter 1

It was all a dream where the hot sun roasted the Arizona desert, and the waves of heat looked like ponds of water.

Black smoke billowed out of a 1880s black old western train while it whistled and raced down the train tracks in the middle of the desert.

A horse with a cowboy raced in the desert, leaving a trail of dust.

The cowboy on his white horse raced toward the speeding train. "Yaaaa, yaaaa!" Josh Bryant, an average looking 31-year-old cowboy with black hair, yelled at his horse. He looked determined to beat the train headed to a hump located in the tracks.

The old western train raced closer to the hump in the train tracks.

"Yaaaa!" Josh yelled out while he slapped his horse with the reins.

The horse picked up speed and raced to the hump on the tracks.

The hump in the train tracks was Kathy Watson, a drop-dead thirty-year-old gorgeous brunette with big brown eyes, and she was tied to the rails with rope.

"Help me!" she screamed out, scared to death while she eyed the train with tons of weight racing down the tracks at her. "Please help me!" she screamed out again when she felt the vibration in the rails while the train raced toward her.

She heard the sound of a horse galloping and craned her neck and saw John. "Save me, Josh!" she yelled out. "Save me!"

Eight buzzards circled thirty feet above Kathy, waiting for their dinner to finally die.

Josh saw the buzzards circling above Kathy. "Not while

I'm a cowboy," he said and looked determined while he raced his horse closer to Kathy.

The train raced closer to Kathy.

"Yaaaa, yaaaa!" Josh yelled out while he slapped his horse with his reins to make him move faster and just missed being pricked by a Saguaro cactus.

The train raced closer to Kathy.

Josh screeched his horse to a stop three feet from Kathy and the tracks.

He jumped off his horse and ran over to her and whipped out a six-inch shiny knife that was tucked inside a sheath in his right cowboy boot.

The train raced closer to Kathy and Josh.

The sun reflected off the shiny metal of the knife while Josh brought the blade down to the rope that kept Kathy a prisoner to the railroad tracks.

The train whistle blew a warning cry while it was nine feet from Kathy and Josh.

"Hurry up, Josh!" Kathy screamed out while Josh frantically cut on the rope with his knife.

The train was three feet from Kathy and Josh.

Josh finally cut away the rope and whisked Kathy off the tracks.

The train raced past and missed them by inches while they both tumbled in the dirt.

She gazed in Josh's eyes, and they welled up while she lay on top of him. "Josh Bryant, you're my hero!" she called out while she lovingly touched his cheek.

Josh looked proud while got Kathy on her feet then shoved the knife back in the sheath that was tucked inside his cowboy boot.

They embraced in a passionate kiss while the train raced away down the track.

The buzzards above them realized their dinner wasn't going to happen, so they flew away.

They separated from their kiss, and Kathy gazed in Josh's eyes.

"Will you marry me, John Bryant?" she asked with a

sparkle in her eyes.

"Yes, Kathy Watson, I'd be happy to marry you," he replied and was the happiest man in the world.

Josh escorted Kathy over to his horse and assisted her up into the saddle. He got up in the saddle and sat behind her.

He turned the horse around and galloped away into the desert.

The next day, Josh and Kathy were inside the small church of Desert Town.

They stood before the Preacher, who was an old man with thin hair and a week's growth of beard stubble.

"I now pronounce you mister and misses John Bryant," he told them. "You may now kiss your wife," he added.

Josh and Kathy kissed in front of the preacher.

They held hands and ran down the aisle and headed to the front door of the church.

Outside the church, Josh assisted Kathy into the wooden seat of a buggy. He climbed up and sat down next to her. He grabbed the reins for the horse. "Yaaa!" he yelled out, and the horse walked the buggy away from the church. On the rear of the carriage was "Just Married" whitewashed on a wood plank with tin cans trailing from a string tied to the buggy.

A little while later, Josh carried Kathy across the threshold of their small white farmhouse with a picket fence, barn, and a small corral with six cows, a pig pen with four pigs, and a chicken coup. This was Josh's farm, and it was located three miles outside Desert Town.

He immediately carried her into their small bedroom, where they quickly disrobed and stood naked before each other for the first time.

Josh looked in awe at the sight of Kathy's perky B-cup breasts and quickly got her on her back on the bed.

He climbed on top of her, and they passionately kissed.

Then the second Josh was about to deflower Kathy, loud footsteps were heard in the bedroom.

"Why are you naked with my wife?" Alvin yelled out at

the two naked lovers.

Josh and Kathy saw Alvin, a thirty-five-year-old gunslinger standing at the door. He had both of his hands above the handles of his Colt 45s. His fingers twitched above the pistol handles, ready to move into action.

"Your wife?" Josh asked while he looked at Alvin then looked at Kathy for an answer.

"Sorry, Josh, I sorta forgot to tell you that I was married," Kathy replied with a smirk.

Josh looked confused while he glanced back at Alvin, who whipped out his Colt 45s and aimed them at the two lovers.

"No man sleeps with my wife and lives to tell about it!" Alvin yelled out in anger.

Josh jumped off Kathy and stood naked before Alvin. I didn't know she was your wife. Honest!" Josh pleaded for his life.

"It doesn't matter!" Alvin replied, then squeezed the triggers of his pistols.

The annoying sound of a digital alarm clock resonated in the room while the two Colt 45s fired.

Back to Josh's reality, and it was May and 6:00 on a Thursday morning in the Hunters Creek area south of Orlando, Florida.

Inside Josh's home, his bedroom digital alarm clock blared that annoying sound that indicated it was the start of a new day.

Josh jumped up in a panic from his bed and immediately felt his chest for bullet holes. It was a dream! He thought to himself and felt relieved, as his immediate thought was that he was shot and killed.

Josh got out from under the covers and stretched by the bed in his Universal Studios souvenir tee shirt and blue boxer shorts.

He glanced over at his dresser and smiled at the pictures of Kathy and him at Sea World, Disney, Universal Studios, and in the sand at Cocoa Beach. All precious moments with the love of his life.

Josh left his bathroom, walked down the hall, and went inside his bathroom.

Twenty minutes later, Josh was dressed in Khaki pants and a black golf shirt while he sat in his kitchen and ate his breakfast of Chocolate Lucky Charms and orange juice.

Twenty minutes later, Josh drove his 2005 Sandy colored Toyota Corolla north on the Central Florida Greenway for his daily trek to work.

A little while later, Josh pulled into the parking lot of the All Solutions Software Company.

After he parked his car, he walked through the lot and scanned the other cars for Kathy's silver BMW Z3, but he couldn't find it parked in the lot.

Josh walked to the front entrance of the building.

He glanced at the beautiful courtyard located to the side of the building. He thought Kathy might be enjoying her morning coffee on one of the benches, but she wasn't seen in the courtyard.

A little while later, in a large room where it was a maze of cubicles, Josh entered his cubicle where on the cloth walls were pinned more pictures of Kathy and him having more good times at Cocoa Beach and the theme parks in Orlando. Nestled between all those pictures was a framed "Software Engineer Of The Year" award for Josh for last year.

Josh sat down and propped his shoes upon his desk.

He reached inside his pants pocket and removed a small engagement ring box.

He opened up the ring box and smiled at the 14K white gold, one-fifth Carat \$400 engagement ring.

He pondered on the exact words to use later tonight for that special moment that he longed for the first day he saw Kathy.

Ricky Abbot, a forty-five-year-old administrative assistant, stepped inside Josh's cubicle. "Hey Josh, Mister Marcus needs status on your program and wants it presented to the senior committee at six tonight. You can expect a long meeting," Ricky told Josh.

Josh looked upset when he heard that bit of news.

"Ricky, can you try to postpone it to next week? I'm so far behind with that program," Josh asked with pleading eyes.

"Sorry, no can do buddy. Mister Marcus wants status, and he wants it tonight," Ricky replied.

Josh opened up his engagement ring box and showed the engagement ring to Ricky. "But I'm having dinner with Kathy later making tonight that exceptional night," he said and begged with his eyes.

"I'm sorry, Josh, but you know Mister Marcus and his demands. You better ask her after the meeting," Ricky replied, then walked out of the cubicle.

"This job blows!" he said while he picked up his phone and made a call.

On the other side of the room, Kathy sat by her cubicle desk.

Paul Hargett a thirty-five-year-old handsome Accounting Manager with an athletic body, sat on the corner of her desk.

"I'm so excited about starting flying lessons," Kathy told him with a gleam in her eyes.

"I'm so looking forward to teaching you," Paul replied with a warm smile while he looked into her eyes.

Kathy's phone rang on her desk.

She leaned forward and looked at the caller ID window of the phone and wasn't interested, so she let it ring.

"Do you need to get that?" Paul asked while he stood up, ready to leave her cubicle.

"Naw," she replied, then grabbed his hand and moved him back to her desk. "Its just Josh, and he can wait," she replied while the phone kept ringing.

The phone stopped ringing, and Kathy looked relieved. "So you stated that you won't charge me for being my flight instructor?" she asked while she looked up at Paul.

Paul lightly touched her shoulder. "No way, Miss Watson," he replied with a warm smile.

Kathy returned a warm smile.

During the next thirty minutes, Josh lightly worked on his software program while he continued to glance at his

phone.

His phone rang; he quickly looked and saw "Kathy 8-8733" on the phone caller ID window.

He fumbled with the receiver while he quickly brought it to his ear. "Hey there," he answered.

"I'm sorry I missed your call. I was in the bathroom, and when I came back, Paul stopped off in my cubicle. We started talking about my program and lost track of time," she fibbed on the phone.

"No problem. So, do you want to take a walk and stretch your legs?" he asked her into the phone.

"I guess so," she replied after a little hesitation.

"I'll meet you out in the courtyard," he replied.

"Okay," Kathy replied, then disconnected her end of the call.

Josh hung up his phone, stood up, and did a little victory dance while he headed out of his cubicle.

A few minutes later, Josh waited at the entrance of the courtyard outside their office building.

The courtyard was a maze of concrete paths with benches, trees, flower beds, and landscaped shrubs. Management allowed their employees to take small breaks in the courtyard, figuring it was an excellent way to reduce stress and made them more productive.

Josh's eyes lit up the second he saw Kathy walk over to the entrance of the courtyard.

When she got closer, he noticed that she typed a text message into her iPhone with a smile. He was a little curious but decided not to pry into her life right now.

"Hey," she said when she walked up to Josh with her iPhone in her hand.

They started walking down one of the paths.

"I need to find a new career," he told her, hoping to gain some sympathy.

"Put your resume out there and look for another job," she replied while she glanced down at her iPhone.

Josh looked upset when he recalled Ricky's conversation. "I have to brief Mister Marcus and the senior

committee about my project, so I can't meet you for dinner at six," he said.

"That's too bad," she replied with little sympathy for his situation and showed more interest in her iPhone.

"But I can run over to your place when I'm done. It might be around eight," he quickly replied with a gleam in her eyes.

Kathy quickly typed a message on her iPhone then she smiled. "It's unhealthy to eat late, so I'll just go to bed early and read a sexy romantic book," she replied with a smile then shoved her iPhone into one of her back pockets of her jeans. "We'll have dinner another night."

Josh looked disappointed while they walked down another concrete path and passed by some beautiful flowers.

Kathy's iPhone buzzed from her back pocket while they turned down another path. She quickly removed it and looked at the text message, and smiled. "I just called to a meeting," she told Josh.

"Oh," he replied, a little disappointed his time with her was cut short. "I understand," he replied.

He went to give her a little kiss, but Kathy turned around and rushed off down the path and headed to the entrance of their building.

Josh moped back down the path and headed back to the building.

For the rest of the workday, Josh tried to concentrate on his software program and his presentation to Senior Management. But it was difficult since all of his thoughts were on Kathy and wondered why she hasn't called.

Six o'clock finally arrived, and Josh nervously stood at a podium at the front of a large conference room that held 100 people. Josh's presentation for his software program was on the seventy-inch LCD TV that hung on the wall behind the podium.

I'm so fired! He thought to himself, knowing Mister Marcus would blow a fuse once he realized Josh was months behind with his program.

He looked around the conference room and saw stuffy

old men in suits that probably already had three drinks under their belts from the small bars in their offices. They chatted amongst themselves while they sat and waited for the boss man at a long, expensive wooden conference table.

Ricky Abbott waited at the table amongst all the other stuffy old men.

Josh looked at his watch and saw it was now 6:05 p.m., and he was pissed for missing his romantic evening with Kathy.

Then the conference room suddenly got quiet; the second Mark Marcus, the seventy-five-year-old overweight white-haired CEO of the company, rushed into the room with his fifty-year-old nerdy male assistant.

"Sorry I'm late, let's get started," Marcus called out while he sat down at the head of the table. His assistant sat down at a chair by the conference room door.

Marcus looked at Josh while he stood at the podium. "Who are you?" he called out from across the long table.

All eyes in the room were on Josh, which made him nervous.

"I'm Josh Bryant, and I'm presenting the status on my software for the Ford Motor Company," Josh said while his voice was shaky.

Marcus' cell phone rang. "Excuse me," he called while he removed his cell phone off his belt clip. "Marcus," he answered the call, then listened to the caller.

"Really?" he replied to the caller and looked concerned. "I'll be there ASAP," he replied, then placed his cell phone back on his belt clip. "Something vital came up, and I have to cancel this briefing," he told everybody at the table. "Mister Abbott, reschedule this presentation for next Thursday," he said while he looked over at Rick.

"Yes, sir," Ricky replied.

Marcus got up and rushed out of the room with his nerdy assistant.

All the stuffy old men stood up from the table and walked out of the conference room.

Josh did a little victory dance while he turned off the

computer at the podium.

He then quickly made a call on his cell phone, but the "Caller Unavailable" message was visible in the viewfinder. "She's reading her sexy romance book," he quietly said to himself while he placed his cell phone back on his belt clip.

Josh rushed out of the side door of the conference room.

A little while later, Josh was in his Corolla and raced north on the Central Florida Greenway.

A little while later, Josh drove through a neighborhood by the northeast of Lake Nona.

Josh soon parked his car along the curb in front of Kathy's house.

Josh got out of his car and looked concerned when he saw a red Corvette parked in Kathy's driveway.

He hesitated on heading to Kathy's front door, but after he saw her light was on in her living room, he curiously proceeded up the driveway.

Josh walked to the front door and paused before knocking. He paced in a small circle on the front door stoop while he debated on knocking.

He glanced over at the living room curtains and saw a small opening.

He heard the Love Is All Around song by The Troggs play from her CD player in the living room.

Josh's curiosity peeked when he heard that romantic song, and he looked in the living room window.

Josh craned his neck to see what was going on in Kathy's living room, then his eyes widened in shock with what he saw in the reflection in her mirror that hung on the wall. He saw Kathy and Paul in heated passion with lips locked on her couch while that romantic song provided the mood for their moment. She had her blouse off, and Paul was topless while they kissed. Then he watched while Paul removed Kathy's bra, and that was too much for Josh, and he stepped away the second Paul started kissing his way down to her bare breasts.

He looked stunned while he moped through her front

yard and headed back to his car.

He stopped when he got to his driver's door and stared back at her living room window. He looked back at the driveway, and evil thoughts of keying Paul's Corvette ran through his mind.

Josh's eyes welled up while he got inside her Corolla.

He started up his car and drove away.

Later that night, it was 10:00 p.m., and Josh lay in bed while he stared at his bedroom ceiling. The heated scene of Kathy and Paul ran numerous times through his head.

It was now 12:30 a.m. Friday morning and Josh was still wide awake in bed and stared at his bedroom ceiling while the heated scene of Kathy and Paul again ran through his head.

It was now 2:40 a.m., and Josh was still wide awake in bed and stared at his bedroom ceiling while the heated scene of Kathy and Paul again ran through his head.

Chapter 2

Josh only got three hours of sleep last night, and it seemed that the harder and harder he tried to forget about what he saw, the more and more he thought about it.

Josh yawned during the entire drive to his office, and all he could think about was Kathy.

After a couple of hours of staring at his computer in his cubicle, Josh got up and went to the Men's Room.

He exited the bathroom, moped, and yawned while he walked down the hall, where employees mingled and chatted.

Kathy walked into this hall from another hall, and she spotted Josh. "How was the presentation last night?" she asked while she walked up to him.

Josh looked hurt at Kathy, who waited for an answer.

Josh stared at Kathy for a few seconds, and she felt that it was peculiar. "So, was Paul Hargett the sexy romance book from last night?" he asked and looked pissed.

Kathy looked caught by his question and hesitated for a few seconds to respond.

The other employees in the hall stopped chatting when they heard Josh's question, and they inched closer to eavesdrop on the answer.

Then while she thought about his question, she got mad when it dawned on her. "Were you spying on me last night?" she asked in a raised tone.

"My presentation got canceled, and I rushed over to your house. I was going to make last night special," Josh replied while he removed the small engagement ring box from his pants pocket. He opened up the box and showed Kathy the engagement ring.

The other employees inched a little closer when they heard Josh was going to propose to Kathy last night.

Kathy looked sorry when she saw the engagement ring. “Josh, I ah, I feel terrible. I should have said this sooner, but it’s over between us. I need something more, and Paul offers me exactly what I need in my life right now. I’m so sorry,” she replied, then quickly rushed off to avoid a fight in the hall.

Josh stood there in the hall, stunned that he was just dumped by Kathy.

His fellow employees moved down the hall and felt sorry for Josh.

For the remainder of the day, Josh stayed a recluse in his cubicle, while the news of Kathy dumping him spread like wildfire throughout the office.

Ricky entered Josh’s cubicle and saw him slumped in his chair while he stared at his software program on the computer.

“Hey buddy, I haven’t seen you around the building all day,” Ricky said.

“I know, I’m just having trouble with this program of mine and worried about Thursday’s presentation,” Josh lied while he continued to stare at his computer monitor.

“Want to take a walk?” Ricky offered.

“Naw. I need to concentrate on this program.”

Ricky looked concerned while Josh stared at his monitor and knew he wanted to be alone, so he left the cubicle.

Later that night, Josh skipped supper since he didn’t have an appetite.

Since it was a Friday night, he stayed up late and watched movies while he sat depressed on the couch. The engagement ring box was on the coffee table next to an empty Mint Chocolate Chip ice cream box.

Inside the ice cream box were all the pictures of Josh and Kathy ripped into tiny pieces.

The movie he watched just ended, and Josh picked up his remote and surfed the channels.

He stopped on a channel of interest that had Rodney Winston, in front of a bunch of workers that were answering

telephones. Above their heads hung a “We’ll Find Ya” sign for the name of the TV show.

On a screen behind Rodney was a picture of Tony Moore, a 45-year old man with a crew cut and rough pot marked complexion.

“Tonight’s stories feature Tony Moore wanted for assault and battery and rape of men and women. Tony disappeared a day before his trial,” Rodney told the TV audience.

Josh flipped the channel, as the show appeared too dull for his tastes tonight.

On TV was a western movie that showed a love scene between a cowboy hero and a young woman.

Josh kicked back on the couch and watched the movie.

Josh fell asleep on the couch at 2:30 a.m. while watching the western movie.

It was Saturday morning, and Josh woke up around 10:00 a.m., still depressed.

He got off the couch and moped into the bathroom.

A little while later, he moped into the kitchen and ate his standard Chocolate Lucky Charms cereal and made a pot of coffee.

While he drank his coffee and scanned the newspaper, his cell phone rang. “Hey baby,” he quickly answered, thinking it was Kathy, and yesterday was all a bad dream.

“Since when did you call your male buddy at work, baby?” Ricky answered from his cell phone.

“I’m sorry about that. My mind was somewhere else,” Josh replied on the cell phone.

“I heard about Kathy,” Ricky said.

Josh looked depressed while yesterday’s episode ran through his mind again. “I need a new life, Ricky.”

“Let’s go do something to get your mind off her,” Ricky replied.

Josh thought about his offer for a few seconds. “I really don’t feel like doing anything today,” Josh responded.

“Aw come on, Josh, don’t give up. There’s a wonderful world out there with plenty of women better than her. Let’s

go meet some.”

“I’ll think about it and talk to you later,” Josh said then disconnected the call.

Josh put his cell down and drank the rest of his coffee and looked depressed.

He looked back at the newspaper, and his eyes widened with interest when he saw an advertisement for the “Blaine Fisher’s Old Western World Train House” display in the West Palm Beach area.

Josh spent a few seconds thinking about the advertisement while he continued to glance at the newspaper. He opened up his cell phone and made a call.

“Ricky, how about we take a drive over to the West Palm Beach area?” Josh asked.

“West Palm Beach? What’s down there?” Ricky replied from the cell phone.

“There’s a huge old western train set on display that sounds interesting. The newspaper claims it’s the largest in the world,” Josh responded.

“You’re finally coming back to life, that’s good,” Ricky replied, then there was a brief silence. “I would love to go,” he added.

“Great, I’ll pick you up in an hour,” Josh replied, then closed his cell phone.

Josh got up and went into the bathroom and showered.

Later that day, Josh picked up Ricky as his home, and during the drive down the Florida Turnpike to West Palm Beach, there weren’t any discussions about Kathy. They mainly talked about their interests in model trains.

After they parked, Josh and Ricky entered the large foyer of the 8,000 square foot mansion located way out in the west area of West Palm Beach in twenty acres of seclusion.

Josh and Ricky looked were a little jealous of how the rich lived, as compared to their no thrills home.

“It must be nice,” Ricky told Josh while they looked the foyer over and saw the fancy winding staircase that led to the upstairs rooms.

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