

# The Man I Marry?

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She meets the guy who has everything she wants and needs, but trusting men has never been her strength. And how can she be with him like he wants her to be when all she has to offer is a heart in pieces? What kind of a man would want Brenna? Surely not even Tex could handle her and her past. Of course not, because maybe all Brenna really is a little girl with a broken heart and a fear of men because of her father. How could she ever ask Tex to accept the broken person she really is?



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I probably won't like him, when I first meet him. I'll think he's over confident, I'll think he's a jerk. I most likely won't even want to be around him, no matter how much I am attracted to him. But he'll be persistent, he won't leave me alone, no matter how much I tell him to go.

And then one day I'll be so irritated, so furious, and he'll grab me and he'll kiss me, shut me up for a few short seconds and I'll be dizzy and surprised, and fall right into his arms. Then of course when I realize what I've done, I'll be so embarrassed and angry, and I'll push him away and storm off.

But he won't give up even then. He'll understand that I'm a stubborn woman that just needs to be worked down. And he's got all the time in the world to do it, because he knows exactly what he wants, and he will get it. So he'll send me flowers, roses most likely, with a note that says, thinking of our kiss.

And I'll throw the roses into the garbage and rip up the note. And just as I finish throwing the scraps into the trash with the flowers, there will be a knock on the door. And I'll know it's him, and I'll refuse to answer the door, but of course my mother will be thrilled that he's here, and she of course just loves him and thinks it hilarious how I loathe him.

But more than that she'll get onto me for being rude and invite him right on in. He'll smile at me triumphantly, tip the cowboy hat he often wears to my mother, telling her how beautiful she looks. Which even though I hate him, I can't help but appreciate that he does that and makes her smile, and she'll ramble about how she looks just awful when she knows she's gorgeous.

So for this I'll ignore the fact that I hate him, because my mom means so much to me and if he makes her happy he's worth putting up with. So I'll offer him sweet tea, and he'll accept and I'll dig the roses out of the trash while I'm in the kitchen and put them in a vase, picking off any trash contents.

I'll bring him his glass, and he'll give me that irritating cocky smile and say, â Thank you so muchâ just to irritate me. He'll chat lightly with my mom, talking about cars and guns as she often like to talk about those things, and I'll be lost, not hardly knowing one word from another because I barely know the basics about either.

I'll wish he was older, her age because they would be a good fit. But what I don't realize is all that my mom sees in him is a good man who would be perfect for her daughter, even if right now I can't stand him. And though she's protective of her little girl she'll eventually excuse herself to give us a moment alone.

And he'll understand her gesture, and he'll turn to me, speak to me, and say something that makes me hate him just a little less, and try to lean in and kiss me. But I'll refuse, because I'm not a cheater. I'm with a perfectly good boy, who treats me right and I really appreciate. And I'll remind him of the boy, of how I care for the boy.

He'll sigh with that impatience he occasionally has, and ask me how long we've been together.

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“Awhile.” Is what I’ll reply. “Nine months.”

He’ll ask me if I love him, and I’ll know the answer immediately. Yes. But not like he means.  
“Of course I love him, he’s one of the best friends I have.”

He’ll lean toward me, shaking his head. “No, I mean, do you really love him? Because if you don’t you’re leading him on when you know nothing is going to happen. And I won’t sit by and watch you do that to a perfectly nice guy.” And he’ll stand up, walk towards the door.

“Wait Tex.” I’ll say. “Please. I’ve spent so much time with him—”

“And you’re wasting your time and his. You’re not going to love him, not like that, Brenna. You know what you’re doing is wrong.”

He won’t listen to anything else I have to say, and he’ll leave, leave me sitting there in my own shame, because I’ll know in my gut and in my heart, that dammit he’s right. And then I’ll realize that I can’t let him be right! I’ll have to prove him wrong. So I’ll stand and run after him, and shout at him. “And what the hell do you know?” I’ll scream. “You can’t know who I’ll love!”

When he just shakes his head again and opens the door to the driver’s seat, I’ll run over to the truck, throw the passenger door open and jump inside, then stick a finger in his face. “Don’t come back here for me anymore, you understand? You can come see my mom, because you make her feel good and make her smile and dammit you don’t know how much that means to her and to me. But as far as I’m concerned, just leave me alone.”

And I’ll want to storm away, but I won’t because I’ll have to hear him agree. To promise.

He’ll purse his lips. “No.” Is what he’ll reply. “No, I won’t.”

And I’ll get mad, like I haven’t done in so long, not like this. “Why do you have to be such an asshole?” I’ll demand to know.

And he’ll lose a little of his own temper then grab me again, press his lips to mine. And I’ll fight him, push against his chest and see red. But he won’t let me go, and will keep his lips to mine, until I calm down and stop scratching at him. And he’ll just keep holding me there, looking right into my eyes as our lips are pressed together, both of us perfectly still.

Then he’ll turn his head a little move his lips against mine, and I’ll find myself kissing him too, still angry, but for a different reason I’m not quite sure of. And he’ll grab my leg, jerk me into his lap, and kiss me harder, until both of us close our eyes and are wrapping our arms around each other.

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And when the kiss finally ends, when we finally let go, Iâll feel just awful, because Iâm with someone else, and this is wrong.

And heâll say heâs sorry, seeing the guilt in my eyes. â Not for kissing you, but for making you feel like a cheater. But itâs time to end it with him, and now you know that.â

â And if I donât?â I'll ask.

â Then Iâll leave. Because I wonât watch you be with him when I want to be. Need to be. Iâm only giving you a couple of days. Thatâs it. And if you really donât want me to leave, youâll end it, and youâll be nice about it, then youâll come be with me.â

And Iâll stare at him, knowing I want him and want to be with him, and Iâll get out of the truck, and shut the door. Heâll drive away and Iâll watch. Then Iâll let the feeling of the kiss pass, and Iâll make the wrong decision. Because Iâll decide Tex is too much like my father, whom I donât speak to, and will have not seen in a year since I grew tired of his alcoholism, of his abuse.

Iâll be afraid Tex will turn exactly as him, and Iâll know the one Iâm with right now will never become that way. So Iâll go back into the house, and after my mother leaves, Iâll cry, and cry. Iâll have never told Tex about my father, because I'll have not ever really had the chance to. And I'll know I wonât, because I'll be so tired of talking about that evil man. After Iâve had myself a good cry, a familiar song will soon be played, whether by me or not I am not sure. And Iâll make a decision to tell him. See how Tex reacts to the story of my father, and then decide. He wonât want me after he finds out what evil I come from anyway.

And then I'll go on with my plans. Iâd been working hard to get in shape, so I could be what Iâve always wanted. A smokejumper in the northwest of the United States. Thatâs what will happen, and Iâll be married to my career, and Iâll be happy enough from then on, because me and the guy Iâm with now obviously wonât last, and I guess Iâll have always known that.

So the next day Tex will come to the house, and weâll sit down, and Iâll avoid his eyes and say, â Thereâs something you need to know about me.â Heâll just wait for me to speak.

â Itâs about my father, about why I donât speak to him anymore, why I never want to see him again.â And Iâll tell him about the time I watched my father hold a knife to my loving motherâs throat, the time I watched him try to strangle her, and how me and my brother tried oh so hard to stop him, pulling at his arms and screaming at him to stop. The time I watched him beat my brother on the side of the road, the time he dragged my mother into their bedroom by her hair because she didnât do something the moment he asked.

Iâll tell him how the last time I was with him he told me woman were worthless, were to only speak when spoken to. About how he used to lift me up in praise to put my brother down. About how he used us all, and

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never loved any of us. About how he never treated me as a daughter, not like a father should.

And for the first time in years, I'll cry in front of a man. I hardly cry in front of anyone. But here I'll be, crying. And I won't feel embarrassed, just sad, and angry. And I'll shake my head at him. "You can't really want to be with me now. I have all these problems, and they won't leave me alone no matter how much I suppress the memories. I come from such an evil man, and I just don't trust men. So I shouldn't really be with anyone because it's not fair to them. They deserve so much better than me. You deserve better. Don't you understand?"

And dear readers, I wish I could tell you the ending to this story, but I am afraid I just don't really know what Tex says to Brenna. But I would love to hear what you think. Would you still want to be with a girl who comes from so much evil? Who has all those issues, all those fears?

And I don't mean use her, I mean be with her. How could any man want something so sad, so torn apart? Why would any man want a woman- or little girl, because Brenna is not sure which she is- who has had all this done to her?

Who in their right mind would want a girl who has had her heart shattered by her own father too many times to count? Who would want her broken heart?

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