

# If Only

a tale of love at first sight

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**Edwin Vizer** was born in Birmingham (UK) in 1947. He grew up in a loving family where money was always tight. However, they always managed a holiday and this is where his love of Cornwall began. At School he always loved writing essays and although he did not start writing seriously until recently, his book, *If Only*, had always been in his mind. Most of his working life was involved in Sales and Marketing on a self-employed basis and in recent years he trained and graduated as a Professional Hypnotherapist. Dealing with the public has enabled him to emphasise and extract a lifetime of experiences which as an author have been invaluable in contributing to this novel.

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## Arena Books

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Edwin Vizor

*If Only a tale of love at first sight*

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This book is Dedicated  
To my handsome Grandson  
**Bradley Carl Rollings**  
who died as a result of a tragic accident  
(In Memorium 20<sup>th</sup> May 1994 – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015)

## CHAPTER 1

William's bike was his pride and joy. It was his first full size one and he had been given it by his parents for his 14th birthday. He knew that it must have been difficult for his parents to afford, as money was always tight. His father, Henry worked in a factory that manufactured electric fires and his position was that of Foreman. This was a role that he was very proud of as not only as this gave him responsibilities with regards to the production line but also meant he was in charge of about 15 members of staff, the majority of whom were female, a situation that as he grew older, he would discover that his wife was not always happy with. William had recently passed his 13 plus exams and therefore the bike had come in useful as a means of transport to and from his new school. whilst it was not top of the range as bikes go, having only three gears as opposed to some that had as many as twelve, it still was his favourite present ever. It had a bright red frame and yellow mudguards, making it stand out from the usual colours of silver or black. It also had a dynamo light, instead of the battery type.

William's mother, Doris, had only a part-time job working as a cleaner at a local dentists' surgery. So yes, money was tight, but each year his mom and dad scraped enough money to take him and his sister, Mary on holiday for a week.

His father always found places to go to that nobody else had heard of and were usually off the beaten track in Wales, where he would hire a caravan or a cottage. It was always fun and gave them plenty to talk about to their friends when they returned home. The only problem with having a bike was that if his friends didn't have one, then other than going to school on it, once you had cycled to show it off to aunties, uncles and cousins, it became quite lonely endlessly riding around.

William's friends at that time didn't have any bikes, which meant he spent a lot of time on his own cycling around the streets where he lived. Occasionally he would venture further away to places out in the country like local beauty spots such as Earls Wood lakes or the Lickey Hills. But it was no fun on your own and William started to use his bike less and less. Then one day his bike would inadvertently be responsible for deciding his future.

It was a Saturday morning and William was doing his usual cycling around the block, which incorporated a road that ran parallel to his own and was approaching a gap in the curb whereby a service road entered on to the main road. Opposite was a shop like a general store that sold in the main, groceries. As he got closer he noticed a girl standing on the edge of the pavement waiting to cross the road. He slowed down to let her cross and as he did so he looked at her face. Immediately he was struck by her beauty. She was slim and had a snub nose. Her brown hair was tousled and as she crossed in front of his bike she smiled, showing what can only be described as having very attractive eyes. Her lips were full and her white teeth gleamed showing no imperfections. It was 'love at first sight'. She looked younger than him, but that did not bother him.

She disappeared into the shop, and determined to see her again he cycled like mad to the top of the road so that he could go around the traffic island and come back down the road hopefully in time to see her again. Alas, as he approached the shop she was nowhere to be seen. She had gone. He cycled home and was unable to think of anything else other than her. His plan for the next day was to go back and cycle around the same area hoping he would see her again.

As soon as he was awake the only thing on his mind was the girl that he had seen yesterday. 'Gosh you're up early. Have you got plans for things to do today?' said his mother. As usual William gave the same monosyllabic answer that he always gave when asked by his parents what he was doing or where had he been. 'No'.

I think this was quite normal and thinking back to my teenage years, I never told my parents anything about my movements or what I had been

doing, apart from the bare minimum that I could get away with. Of course, this was a lie. William's intention was to get on his bike as soon as possible and track back to where he had seen the girl. He had worked out that as she was on foot and that she had gone into the shop just across the road from where she was standing, the likelihood was that her house should not be too far away. Having swallowed his breakfast in one gulp, he went outside and took his bike from the lean too.

Within ten minutes he was cycling past the shop at a speed which could have only been about 5 mph, with his head straining from right to left mimicking the head rotations of a Barn Owl.

He cycled on to the service road which ran parallel with the road that he was on, as this took him closer to a row of houses where hopefully she might live. As it was a Sunday the traffic on the road was very light which gave him more opportunities to look around without the fear of being knocked off his bike. Something else entered his head in his desperation to see her. He noticed that at the end of the row of houses was a Baptist Chapel, and as it was the Sabbath it might just be possible that she would attend, perhaps on her own or even with her parents. Either way it didn't matter to him as long as he had the chance to see her.

William cycled as far as the Chapel. He got off his bike and looked up at the notice board. It said that there was a service at 11 am and a further one at 6 pm. So this was the plan. Having looked at his watch it meant that he had about an hour to kill before the first service began.

He cycled home only to be greeted by his mother who asked where he had been and as you can imagine got the usual answer 'Out'

Half an hour later he was off again and within 10 minutes was outside the chapel. He spent the next 20 minutes bending down doing and undoing his shoe laces, with the bike propped up against him, and at the same time keeping an eye on the congregation arriving at the chapel. At 11.15 am he gave up. No sign of the girl anywhere.

Once again he went back home and spent the rest of the day doing homework and cleaning his bike. He was counting the hours so that he could head out again to see if the girl was attending the 6 pm service.

He repeated what he had done earlier in the day. He parked outside the chapel, pretending to do his shoe laces up and keeping an eye on who was going into the evening service this once again proved to be a waste of time. He cycled home despondent. Was he ever going to see her again? Did she exist? Was she a figment of his imagination?

One thing was certain; he had no intention of giving up. It was obvious to

him, that she must live in the vicinity, so as long as it took, he would continue the search.

## CHAPTER 2

William had failed his 11 plus examination, though as mentioned previously he had taken and passed his 13 plus exam. This resulted in him having to spend a year at the local Secondary Modern School, which he hated.

To him it bordered on being a third-rate school or an institute for all the dregs and downbeats in the area. Perhaps that's being too harsh, there were a few decent lads and teachers. In general the school was run on fear, and that included the Headmaster, who was a bully. At times it was so bad that one teacher was so frightened of the pupils that he used to lock himself in the classroom at break time, to avoid running the gauntlet to the staff room.

The school was an all boys' school and therefore fights were a regular occurrence. This was not just always boy against boy but sometimes boy against teacher. In the short while that William was at the school he had witnessed this on two occasions, both resulting with the pupils being frog marched to the Headmasters Office by members of staff and never seen again. He made a few friends at school during this time, one of which became a good friend with the name of Ron. He was a quiet and sensible lad; though he was a keen footballer and supported Birmingham City football club. Like William he had taken his 13 plus at the earliest opportunity to escape the mad house. At that time if you passed the exam, you had a choice of three schools to go to. In Ron's case he chose a local Grammar school. William chose to go to a brand new school that would be complete in time for the new term.

This was called a Technical School, with a greater emphasis on technical subjects. As it was brand new, it also meant that he and his fellow pupils would be the first ones to enter the school. That prospect was too great to miss. The boys who had passed the 13 plus were actually told by one of the teachers that they were making the greatest mistake of their lives by leaving this school. What a joke. You could hardly believe it!

So the time came for William and his friend Ron to leave the school and go into the new term at their respective new schools.

They swapped addresses and phone numbers and both agreed to see each other again in the future.

When William looked at the scrap of paper that he had given him with his address on, he couldn't believe his eyes. The address was extremely close to

where he had seen the girl that he was looking for. Could this be right? Could this be fate? His heart began to race. Ron could see that he was visibly shaken.

‘Are you okay mate?’

‘Yes I am fine, just felt a little queasy in my tummy, must be something I ate

‘Have you got any neighbours that are girls around the 13/ 14 age by you?’

‘What do you want to know that for?’

‘Oh nothing, nothing really,’ came the unconvincing reply.

‘Well there are a few girls that live near me, but you need to be more specific,’

‘Forget it; it’s not that important.’ With that they both said their goodbyes and off they went. So now this was the beginning of the summer holidays. Six weeks of having fun.

No more lessons for a while. Fourteen is a funny age, as you are not as grown up as you would like to think. However, in William’s case he was classed as one of the older ones as his birthday was early in the new term. This meant that he would be fifteen in October - a proper teenager. He couldn’t wait.

It must have been about two weeks into the holiday when he decided he would give his friend Ron a ring, to see if he wanted to meet up. He thought it would be brilliant idea as he confessed he was bored out of his mind. Apparently, he had got a younger sister and his mom, who was pregnant, continually asked him to look after her. He suggested that William come down the following day to his house as by that time it would give his mother time for somebody else to look after his sister, and as he had told his mom that a friend from school was coming over then this seemed to make more sense.

So the following day William took his bike from the lean-to and cycled the short distance to Ron’s house. When he arrived there he realised the amount of times he must have cycled past without knowing that he lived there. He knocked on the front door and after a few seconds it opened. He had the shock of his life, as there standing in front of him was this well-built man with a face as black as the ace of spades. He smiled which made the white of his teeth seem twice as bright against his black face.

‘You must be William. Ron said that you were coming to see him. He won’t be long; he is just in the shower, only he has been helping me at work this morning.’ Ron’s father could tell that he looked surprised.

‘Oh he said,’ he hasn’t told you what I do for a living has he?’

‘I am a coal merchant and we have our own business.’

Ron came running down the stairs, ‘You have met my dad then,’ he said.

‘Come on let’s go round the back into the garden and bring your bike with you.’ The house was a modern semi which was only two years old

Ron introduced William to his mother as she was pegging out the washing on the line. He couldn't help notice how fat her tummy was. He knew that he had told him that she was pregnant but these sorts of things to him still seemed a little unknown. She seemed very pleasant even though she seemed as though she was in some discomfort as she stretched to grab hold of the washing line.

'Would you mind very much if we went across the road to meet another of my mates? Only I told him that you were coming around to see me today, and I wouldn't want him to think his nose was being pushed out. You will like him he is a nice guy and his name is Gerry.'

So across the road they went. Ron knocked on the door. Nobody answered so he knocked again. In the back-ground he could hear a female voice shouting, 'won't be a minute, coming.'

'That's Gerry's sister.'

The door opened and standing in front of them was the girl he was looking for 'His love at first sight girl'. William could not believe it. Close up she was still as beautiful as ever, if not more so.

Gerry pushed his sister out of the way. 'Don't do that,' she said, as she punched his arm. 'Go and play somewhere else.' It was obvious there was no love lost between them.

'Go away.' Said Gerry.

Ron introduced William to Gerry, but he really wanted to be introduced to his sister. She stood her ground and refused to go. He could not restrain himself further and asked her what her name was. She said it was Joanne. She asked him where he lived and without a care in the world said, 'Can I have a go on your bike, it looks fab?' Once again, Gerry stepped in and told her to go and play elsewhere. Ron suggested that they go back to his house as he had put up a small set of goal posts in the back garden so that they could practice having shots at him as he fancied himself as a goal keeper.

Joanne asked if she could come as well. Ron said she could but Gerry said she couldn't. William piped up and said that it would be a good idea if she came. (Surprise surprise) as then they could play two against two. Gerry relinquished so off they all went back to Ron's back garden.

When they got there his mom was sitting in a garden chair, resting. 'Don't worry you can still play football, as I shall be going in the house in a moment', she said. Joanne had noticed how big her tummy was due to her pregnancy and asked Ron if he new how women became pregnant. Needless to say, he was surprised at the question and wasn't sure whether she meant it or was just playing around. At this point Gerry heard what his sister had said and told her to stop asking silly questions. 'They are not silly questions,' she said. It is only



‘cause you don’t know how she got the baby there.’ Ron said he new and proceeded to tell them.

He said, ‘The man buys this special rubber tube from the chemist and places it by his willy.’ Joanne giggled. The other end of the tube is strapped on to the woman’s tummy, and this causes her to be pregnant. !! So now they all knew how to get pregnant!!

Gerry seemed a nice guy but soon seemed to lose interest quickly in kicking a ball around and spent most of his time having a conversation with Ron’s mom as she had returned to the garden. Joanne on the other hand seemed to be in her element when giving as good as she got when going into a tackle. It was very apparent to William that she was quite the tom-boy and this he found very attractive.

So not only had she got the looks but she seemed at this early stage to have the personality to go with it. The question that William was asking himself was ‘does she like him?’

Soon it was tea time and Gerry and Joanne said their goodbyes to Ron and his family and made their way home. William decided that it was a good time for him to leave as well, so he too said his goodbyes and joined Gerry and Joanne as they made their way home. When they got to Gerry’s front door, he asked William what he was doing tomorrow and would he like to come to his house if he had no other arrangements. Joanne straight away asked William if she could have a go on his bike tomorrow. Of course, he said yes. What a day. He could not believe what a splendid way fate had played its hand today. He felt that this was the beginning of something wonderful. This was a double bonus as he was sure a new friendship would develop with Gerry, who although he had only just met him he felt he preferred his company to that of Ron’s.

He was now aware that Joanne was younger than him. The question was how much younger? And would that really matter?

To him he knew it didn’t, but to others that might be a different question. If only they were older..... If only.

That night William slept like a log. He couldn’t wait for tomorrow to come. Joanne had cast her spell on him. Here he was, just nearly fifteen and so deeply in love. Was this normal he thought, and how long will it last? As far as he was concerned it would be forever.

As soon as William was up and washed, he grabbed a piece of toast that his mother had made for him. ‘What are you going to do with yourself today?’ his mother asked. ‘Well you know Ron, my friend from school, yesterday he introduced me to a mate of his who lives near him, and he asked if I wanted to go down to his house today, so that’s what I am going to do.’

‘Oh, does he have any brothers and sisters?’

‘I am not to sure. I think he might have a sister.’ said William, being sparse with the truth.

‘Will you need some lunch, because if you do, tell me now as I am going to work today and I can leave you some sandwiches?’

‘I will sort something if I need it mom. Don’t fuss.’

William wanted to get away as soon as possible and not have to wait for his mom to make sandwiches.

His mother thought this was out of character as he was always asking for food and snacks; however, she didn’t dwell on it and didn’t ask him again.

William got his bike out and began to cycle to Gerry’s house, shouting goodbye to his mother as he left. As he approached the house he began to feel queasy with nerves. This he would later discover would always be the feeling he would experience when about to meet the one he loved.

This feeling would stay with him all through his teenage and later in to adult hood.

On his arrival he knocked the front door, having placed his bike against the wall in a passageway next to the house. It was a similar house to Ron’s.

Joanne opened the door. She looked lovely, wearing a pair of blue jeans and a white tee shirt. ‘Hi William, where is your bike?’

‘Oh, I have put it in the passageway.’

She beckoned him inside. The house seemed quiet apart from the distant sound of a radio playing a ‘Beatles,’ record. This was the 1960’s and the Beatles pop group were the band of the time.

‘Mom and dad have gone to work and Gerry told me to tell you that he won’t be long, as he has had to do an extra paper –round this morning. I have got to do the washing up so if you want to come into the kitchen while I do it you can keep me company. ‘Do you like the Beatles?’ he asked. ‘Oh yes, especially George Harrison, can you hear them on my radio in my bedroom?’

He replied that he could and then he found the courage to ask her the one question he desperately needed to know.

‘Do you mind if I ask you how old you are?’

‘That’s a rude question,’ she said laughing. ‘Guess it.’

‘I am no good at guessing and if I get it wrong you might be upset.’

‘Okay, I will be 13 next month,’ she said. ‘I know how old you are as I asked Gerry last night.’

‘How old did he say I was?’

‘He said that he thought you were 14.’

‘Well, he said I shall be 15 in two months’ time.’ A few minutes later Gerry arrived back and apologised for not being there.

William said that it was ok as Joanne had kept him amused and had even asked him to help her dry the crocks. Gerry had a go at her and told her that it was a cheek asking him to do that. William said that it didn't matter and he was fine helping out.

It transpired that both their parents, Frank and Eileen Roberts went out to work full time and that each day Gerry and Joanne were given chores to do including Hoovering, washing up, and ironing. They didn't seem to mind doing this and of course this only applied to school holidays.

Although like most brothers and sisters at that age the occasional falling out was par for the course. Yet he could feel an underlying respect that they had for each other.

Although they had really only just met, the three of them got on well. William found Gerry to be an interesting and different sort of guy who was unlike anyone he had ever met before. He had piano lessons every Saturday morning and was already an accomplished pianist. He had a paper round, Oh yes I forgot to mention, he had a bike as well!!

### CHAPTER 3

Gerry said that he forgotten to mention to William yesterday that he had decided he wanted to go swimming today and therefore would he like to go with him. William was put on the spot and for a moment did not know what to say. Firstly, he said that obviously, he hadn't brought any swimming trunks with him and secondly, he had forgotten to bring his key with him to get into his house as there was nobody at home to let him in. Gerry said that as they were about the same size, it would be no problem and could lend him a pair of his.

The real reason for his hesitation was very simple; he could not swim and hated the water. He told Gerry not to worry and said he should still go without him, and he would go with him on another occasion.

Joanne came into the room and asked if they were all ready to go swimming. Gerry told her that William would not be going with them and explained the reason why. He had not realised that Joanne was going with them as well.

Immediately he said 'On second thoughts I would like to go with you and if that is ok I would like to borrow your spare pair of trunks and a towel.'

A look of astonishment came across Gerry's face.

'That was a sudden change of mind.'

'Well I don't want to appear a stick in the mud.' William thought he would brave it out, as there was no way he was not going to spend the rest of the day

without her company. He still kept the fact that he could not swim a secret from the others.

It took them about half an hour to walk to the local swimming baths, and on the way the conversation made it clear to William that both Gerry and Joanne were very good swimmers. As they got closer to the baths he began to wonder how he was going to get out of this situation in which he found himself.

He needn't have worried. Lady luck was with him today. When they arrived at the baths there was this big notice pinned to the door,

CLOSED FOR THE DAY DUE TO MAINTENANCE

Sheer relief came across William's face. Total disappointment came across Gerry's and Joanne's

'Well that was a complete waste of time. Come on let's go home.'

William, of course played along as well muttering how disappointed he was as well. To make matters worse, it started to rain as they were walking back, which meant that when they arrived back at Gerry's they couldn't go outside, so they spent the rest of the day playing cards. At least, thought William I can still be in Joanne's company.

He was still there when their parents arrived home from work.

He was introduced to them as Gerry's new friend. They seemed a nice friendly couple and asked if he wanted to stay and have some tea with them. He thanked them for asking but said it was time for him to go home as his mom would have prepared a meal for him. Joanne, he thought looked very much like both her mom and dad, but he could not see any resemblance that Gerry looked like either of them.

As William was leaving Gerry asked if he was coming back to his house again tomorrow. He answered by saying, 'Yes that's if it is alright with you.'

'Of course it is.' shouted Joanne and perhaps then you will allow me to have a go riding your bike?'

After William had gone, Gerry turned to Joanne and said, 'He is not coming to see you tomorrow; he is my friend, so you go and find your own.'

She replied by saying, 'Why can't he be friends with us both?'

At this point Gerry's mom butted in and told Joanne in no uncertain terms that William was Gerry's friend and that she was too young to expect the boys to allow her to join in with whatever they wanted to do.

Joanne turned around, and in a huff went to her bedroom.

William could see that things might become difficult as he didn't want to lose Gerry as a friend so soon, as he genuinely liked him. Of course he certainly didn't want to lose the company of Joanne either as his feelings for her were

just as strong as ever and yes each time that he was about to see her he had that funny feeling inside the pit of his tummy.

Over the next couple of weeks' it would be fair to say that William must have spent most of his spare time in the company of both of them. Joanne managed to tag along, much at times to the disappointment of Gerry. Although in reality all three of them got on well together.

It was their mother who seemed more bothered about Joanne being part of the trio. Perhaps it was a mother's intuition that caused her to be that way. Perhaps she could sense that William's feelings for her daughter were perhaps a little more than a friend and more to the point perhaps she could sense that her daughter's feelings for William were similar especially as the onset of puberty had recently taken hold.

On one of the days that Joanne was not around, the two guys got into deep conversation about things in general, covering such items as what sort of jobs they wanted to do once they had left school to more about each others respective families. William discovered that they had an older sister, who was about ten years older than Joanne and had been married for about one year.

Strangely enough Gerry's older sister called Sue had the same occupation as William's sister who was two years older than him. They were both Civil Servants. It was during this conversation that Gerry told William something that on the one hand he was quite surprised to hear yet on the other, was not. He told him that he was adopted as a baby and he did not know who his blood parents were. This explained the lack of similarity within the family. Apparently after Sue, was born, Gerry's mom and dad tried unsuccessfully to have another child, so they decided to adopt. They were surprised three years later when his mom got pregnant with Joanne.

Gerry confided to him that whilst he had had a very happy childhood he had always noticed that he was different in some way from the rest of his family. In particular, when it came to his father he always felt second to his sisters. It was not just the look of resemblance that was different, in the short while that he had known the family, he had noticed that Gerry's personality was completely different. As time went on William would be correct in saying that he thought Gerry's dad would have been happier if he had played football rather than learn the piano.

William was fortunate from the point of view that he enjoyed all sports and had in fact played football for the school team but also had an interest in all types of music and the Arts. I think that was one of the main reasons why the two boys got on so well together.

So the friendships blossomed. Gerry and William enjoyed each others company and Joanne had let William know how much she enjoyed his. The

following Thursday William made his way to Gerry's house, as he had for the past three weeks. On his arrival Joanne answered the door and let him in. 'Gerry's not in at the moment, He has had to help at the paper shop with some deliveries coming in, and he said he would be about an hour. Mom and dad are at work as normal.' Joanne went and sat on the sofa and after a little hesitation; he went and sat next to her. They started to talk and generally act the fool. Joanne started to play fight and William retaliated, but only in a friendly way. He then started to tickle her on the soles of her feet.

She could not stop laughing and threw her head backwards ending up lying flat out on her back on the sofa. Suddenly there was a moment of silence as he found himself lowering his face towards hers. He stopped and said to himself, what am I doing? Then, without warning, Joanne said 'kiss me.'

He lowered his face gently over hers and then softly just kissed her very briefly on the lips.

It was quick and without movement, as you might expect for a first kiss for them both. He always knew she had attractive eyes, he could see now why. One was blue and one was green.

## CHAPTER 4

William was lost for words, although in this situation he really couldn't find any words to say. Inside he felt like 'the cat that had got the cream.' However, he was aware of what the consequences might be when Gerry and more to the point her mother found out. He looked at Joanne, who had still got her arms around his neck, and said 'We are going to have to keep this a secret for a while. I know your mother will certainly not be happy and may go so far as to stop you seeing me.'

However, his immediate thoughts were what Gerry's reaction would be. Also, the age gap between them, which in the long term was absolutely nothing, but currently would be treated as enormous. If only they were both three years older then their relationship would be more likely to be accepted. William was aware that as Joanne was so young she could easily change her mind about him as she got older and to a lesser extent he may change his mind about her.

That's the future, and what they both wanted to do was live for now in a state of first love, that was both wonderful, and exciting.

They were both going to begin a new adventure that would have either a positive or a negative ending.

They heard the key in the door as Gerry arrived home. Quickly they gave each other a peck on the lips and made their way to separate parts of the room, both with a look of guilt all over their faces.

I hope you weren't too bored waiting for me to come back Has Joanne kept you amused?'

'Absolutely, we have been discussing what we could do today.' 'Have you come up with any ideas?'

'What about if we go to the park and have a game of tennis on one of the courts?' They both agreed that was a good idea. William said that he would nip home quickly and fetch his tennis racket while the other two complete their daily chores. On his return the house work had been completed, so of they went to the park. Three is not a good number to play tennis, meaning one person has to wait while the other two complete their game. You would have thought that Joanne would have a distinct disadvantage being a girl and not as strong as the boys. How wrong was that statement, she was equal, if not better than them which proved to be an embarrassment, particularly for Gerry, who was beaten each game by his own younger sister.

As we were about to finish, a girl's voice could be heard shouting across the court next to ours.

'High Gerry, I hadn't noticed you playing with Joanne and that boy. Can I come and join you, only my friend that I was playing with has had to go back home?'

'Who is that?' William asked.

'That is Ann who lives across the road from us in the shop. She fancies Gerry like mad, Every time I go in there she is always asking after him, and I am pretty sure that he fancies her as well.

'We are just finishing ourselves,' said Gerry, 'but you are welcome to walk back with us if you want to.' That's great. I would love to.'

Ann had a pretty face, with dark hair and ebony eyes, however without wishing to be unkind she was a little overweight. Gerry introduced William to her and she seemed to have a bubbly personality. She looked to be the same age as Gerry a fact that was later confirmed by Joanne.

William thought to himself that this could be the perfect solution.

Two girls and two boys. This would balance everything up.

He quietly passed his thoughts to Joanne, who could immediately see where he was coming from.

'All that we have to do now is some matchmaking,' she said.

When they arrived back, Joanne asked Ann if she had any plans for the following Monday and if she hadn't would she like to meet up with them as they had planned to go for a walk to a local beauty spot known as the 'Dingles'

Both Gerry and William looked a little surprised as neither of them knew anything of this. After a discreet knee in the leg by Joanne, William said 'that's right, we discussed it earlier, and don't you remember Gerry?'

He looked puzzled, but Joanne was right. The thought of spending sometime with Ann was too good an opportunity to miss for Gerry.

So that was that. They all arranged to meet up at Gerry's the following Monday at 11.am. Fortunately it was a warm summer's day on the morning as they met. Ann had brought some snacks and bottles of pop with her that her mother had given her from the shop. That meant they could have a picnic when they got there.

As planned they set off just after 11.am. Gerry and Ann walked ahead together with William and Joanne behind them. Ann turned to look at Gerry and as she did she said, 'Come on then, aren't you going to put your arm round me?' She didn't wait for an answer, grabbing hold of it; she put his arm around her waist. You could see that he was a little embarrassed, but underneath, he was as pleased as punch. Without hesitation, William immediately put his arm around Joanne's waist. She in turn placed her hand over his. This was just the opportunity they had been waiting for. Gerry turned his head to say something to William, but instead of speaking looked at both of them in utter surprise.

'I know what you are looking at, but if you can do it so can I, besides William and I love each other, and we were going to tell you anyway when we had chance.'

Gerry looked at William as though he was waiting for an explanation from him. 'Is this true'? He said

'Yes. To tell you the truth I have been in love with Joanne from the very first time I saw her.'

'Mom will go mad when she finds out, 'said Gerry.

'Please don't tell her,' 'She will say that William is too old and that I am too young and that he is your friend that I have pinched from you and.....'

Joanne started to cry. Ann and William tried to comfort her.

'Don't tell your mom, let's keep it our secret for the time being, that way we can all remain friends.'

With pressure coming from Ann, Gerry agreed, but said that he did not know how long they could hide it from mom.

They continued on their journey and within about half an hour arrived at the beauty spot. As mentioned previously, this was known locally as the 'Dingles.' It consisted of a small river winding its way through a woodland area with grassy banks either side. Depending on the season, blue bells, wild daffodils and primroses grew in abundance. There were also little areas that were hidden amongst the trees that made hidden 'dens', just big enough to



hide yourself in away from the prying eyes of any members of the public that might be passing. They found such a place and sat down to drink and eat the few snacks that they had brought with them. Once finished, both Ann and Joanne lay back on the grass.

William lay down next to Joanne and Gerry did likewise with Ann.

William suddenly had that funny feeling in the pit of his stomach.

He turned sideways placing his right leg over her right leg.

Joanne turned her face towards his, and he kissed her on her forehead and was just about to kiss her on the lips, when he stopped. This was all new to both of them, but as they say 'practise makes perfect' and William wanted 'practice' to go on forever.

Through the corner of his eye he noticed that Gerry and Ann were well away and it was obvious to him that they had done this before!

Then the strangest thing happened. Out of the blue Ann said 'Why don't we swap partners just for a laugh?'

William looked at Gerry and Gerry looked at Joanne. For a moment complete silence took over. He had no intention of snogging Ann. Then out of the blue Gerry said 'Why not, that would be good for a laugh.'

'I am not kissing you, you're my brother.'

Then all of a sudden Ann and Gerry burst out laughing. 'Only kidding, we just wanted to see your reaction.'

This sort of put the dampener on everything and they decided to call it a day and make their way back home. William could not get out of his mind the fact that Joanne and Gerry were not blood relatives, and as daft as it seemed it was possible that one or the other may find them attractive.

William knew that this in reality was unlikely and he had to get this out of his head.

They made their way back home, only this time they simply held hands rather than putting their arms around each other. The following day William went down to Gerry's as usual. Both he and Joanne said that they had got some news for William. Apparently when they got home last night their parents surprised them by saying that they had booked a holiday in Cornwall starting next week for two weeks.

## CHAPTER 5

It turned out that they had some friends who owned a cottage down there and they had offered to let them rent it.