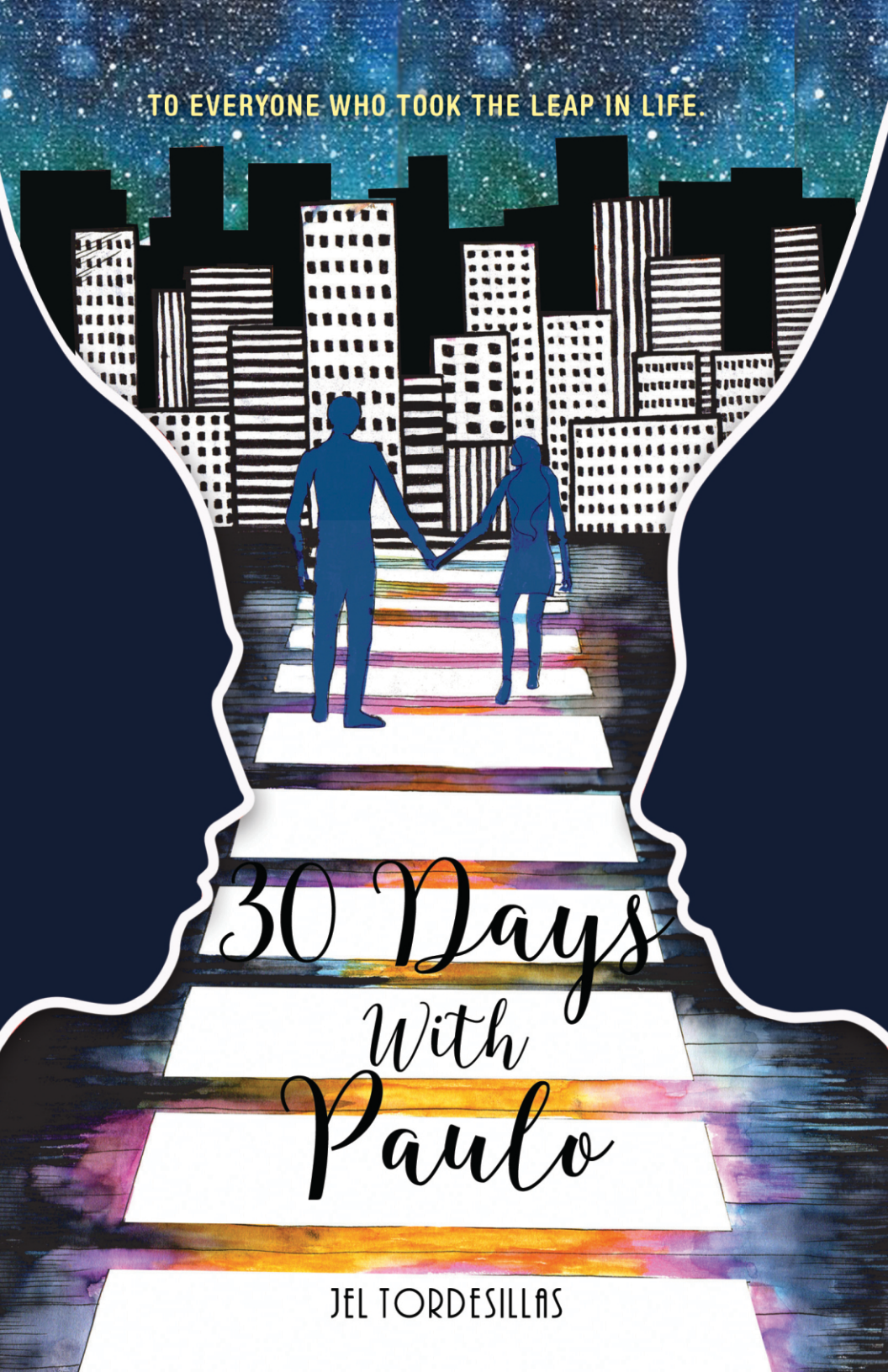
TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK THE LEAP IN LIFE.



30 Days With Paulo

JEL TORDESILLAS

Bea started to walk towards the exit sign, but Paulo stopped her by holding her tightly by the wrist. He suddenly realized his strength and loosened his grip.

"Bea, wait. Just give me a chance to explain," he begged, clasping his hands together. Bea could see the sincerity in his eyes.

. "And why should I listen to you?" she prodded.

"Just, please…" Paulo pleaded.

"Okay. I guess you deserve that for at least showing up," she said reluctantly.

"I want to get to know you more Bea, as much as I can. I honestly want to know if we have a chance of being something."

Paulo looked at Bea. There was truthfulness reflected on his face and the way he said his words. She couldn't believe it was Paulo she had been chatting with for weeks. Still, Bea wasn't one hundred percent convinced.

"But you're Paulo Aveneda. You're a movie star. You're famous. Everyone knows who you are."

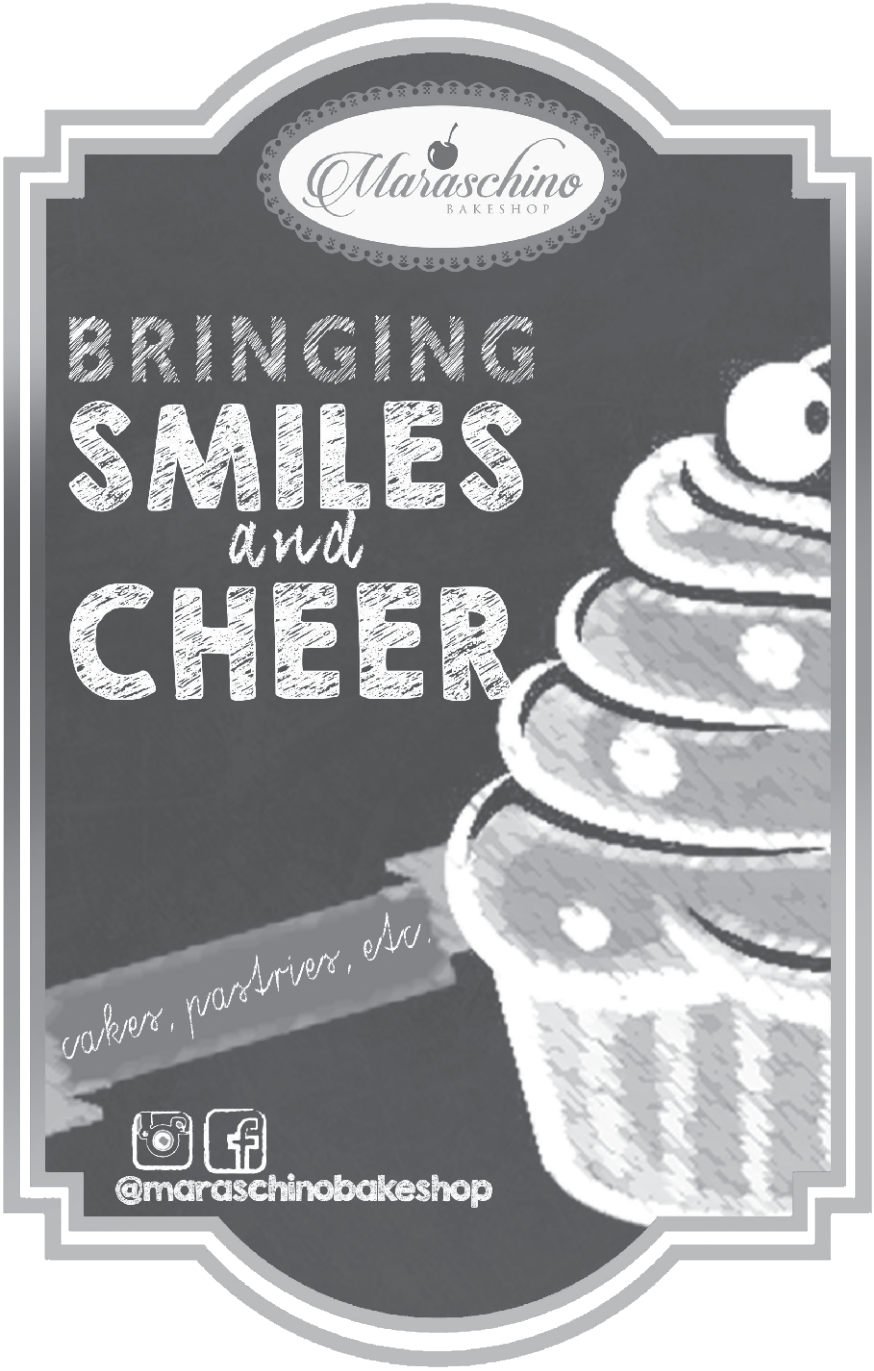
"It can work," he argued. "How will we know if we don't even try?"

"I did feel something," Bea agreed. "But I'm not sure…."

"Please give me a chance, Bea," Paulo cut in.

"What?"

"Give me 30 days."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TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK THE LEAP IN LIFE.

30 Days With Paulo

JEL TORDESILLAS

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Because You'll be Wanting More.

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FOREWORD

When Jel showed me the initial summary for *30 Days With Paulo*, the first thing I thought of after reading it was the movie Inception. You see, it's a story within a story. It's a book within a book. And for me, that's a strong and intriguing premise that could take this book far and wide.

I like smart stories with clever twists and a lot of what we call "Easter eggs", which are inside messages that only reveal themselves if the reader is sharp enough to notice. These hidden messages, which often connect the real world to the world inside the books, take the reading experience to a whole new level.

I like reading stories that make me think, hey that's clever. It makes me nod my head, bite my lower lip, and think, "Hey writer, I know what you did there. Brilliant." I had that experience when I finished reading the manuscript for *30 Days With Paulo* for the first time.

And so the wheels inside my head started turning. I thought of movie posters, cast and crew, locations, and even corporate sponsors inside my head because, well, that's part of what I do as a mentor: I dream big for my students' works. I don't just teach them how to write a book and self-publish it, I teach how to position, market, leverage, pitch, and sell their ideas to a vast world of opportunities. I teach my students not just to write books, but also to be the best cheerleaders of their works.

So before I get carried away and start designing a movie poster for *30 Days With Paulo*, join me in celebrating Jel's first book for what is today: a dream come true. Jel and I have been working quietly, efficiently, and diligently on this project since the last quarter of 2017. Today, the first edition of *30 Days With Paulo* is in your hands.

It has been a real pleasure working with Jel on this. I know that one of her dreams is to publish her own book. In my Facebook profile, I call myself a "pursuer of dreams." Thank you, Jel, for giving me the opportunity to help you pursue yours.

Best of luck! May Paulo and Bea take you to beautiful places!

Kath C. Eustaquio-Derla
Author, Editor, Printer, Pursuer of Dreams

30 Days With Paulo
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to
Angelica Joy Z. Tordesillas
on her first book,
30 Days With Paulo!

Rita D. De Leon
and Officers and Staff
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PROLOGUE

On her 7th Birthday, Bea Fernandez' mom handed her a book of poems.

"What's this?" Bea asked.

"It's a collection of poems," her mom told her. "I loved to read when I was growing up and I have a feeling that you will, too."

Bea excitedly took the book that would change her life forever. She stared at the cover of the book with the title *Far and Away* embossed in sparkling gold. On the cover was a picture of a prince and a princess surrounded by a sea of people wearing fancy robes and hats.

The book was calling her to open it. And so she did.

She read it over and over again—before sleeping, while taking a break from studying, and basically every time she could. Since she was seven years old, the book was quite big for her, and so she read it sitting down with the book on her lap. Other times, she would read it on her father's work table at home since he was at the office most of the time.

Once the book was open, Bea's mind was lost in the world of fairies and far away kingdoms. She was transported to another world where magic existed and anything was possible. For the first time in her life, she fell in love.

One of those days after school, after reading the book once again, Bea felt something.

Rhymes and verses began to form inside her head. They were her own. She didn't know where the words came from. They just popped out of nowhere, similar to the hiccups she frequently got as a kid. The words in her head came in a swift manner that excited Bea.

She had to write them down before it was out of her system.

She looked over and saw an old, unused notebook sitting on one of the shelves of the study table. Without missing a beat, she reached for the notebook, grabbed a pen out of her old, blue and yellow, checkered school trolley bag, and started to write.

"In a kingdom far away…" she wrote.

This was the start of the first thing that she had ever composed in her life. The process came out naturally. It was utterly exhilarating. She was thrilled to experience it for the first time.

When she finished, she read what she had written, hardly believing that it had come out of her. She had created this. Seconds ago, these lines didn't exist and now they were written in her notebook. Bea closed the notebook and held it against her heart.

She knew she wanted to do it again, again, and again.

So she did.

CHAPTER 1:
Ghosts Of The Past

Drops
by Bea Fernandez

As the rain pours down
From the sky to the ground
I sigh and remember
The days since September
I forgot to forget
You.

It was 10:45 P.M. and an emotional 23-year-old Bea Fernandez was wearing her old, white, and reliable Sony headphones, listening to Sam Smith's *Too Good at Goodbyes*. She was in her pajamas. In her case, pajamas meant an oversized shirt and shorts.

It was raining quite hard, which made the temperature cool inside Bea's room. The sound of raindrops falling against the window made her even more sentimental. Typical bed weather.

For writing, that definitely was a good thing.

She had just written a new poem for her blog. Satisfied, she sighed and reviewed some of the other poems that have earned a space in her blog, which she called **BEA'S NOOK IN THE WORLD**. It was now turning six and had compiled quite a lot of memories since college.

Ah, college.

College started out as a happy time for Bea at Manila University. Even back then, she knew she wanted to become a writer. Actually, she had pretty much set her mind on being one when she was seven. It was after she wrote her first poem entitled *Ever After.* The process had been a magical and mind-blowing experience for her, opening her mind to all the possibilities that writing could offer. When it was time to go to college she

took BA Communication Arts, confident that she just needed to do that—and then her career would start. Bright-eyed, driven, and somewhat innocent, Bea lived for her major.

Then came 25-year-old Bryan and Bea started living for him. At that time, he was taking his Masters in Business Administration at the university's School of Management, while working as an assistant brand manager for a pharmaceutical company. He was a dreamboat. Tall. Dark. Handsome. Smart.

Bea was only human.

It had been a normal summer at the school library when Bryan had walked into her life. Seeing him for the first time immediately had a magnetic effect on her. She was instantly drawn to him. Everything about him. His tall built. His smile. His wavy brown hair, brown skin, and square jaw.

Back then, it felt like love.

She looked up to him and sought his approval. She wanted to make him happy. She wanted to make him proud. Bryan, on the other hand, adored her. Well, all, except for her dream of being a writer.

"But you're so smart." he would say in annoyance. "Why don't you shift to BS Management? The career options are better."

At first, Bea would just brush off his comments. Writing was what she was good at. She knew that in her mind and in her heart. After hearing Bryan's speeches of being a struggling artist after graduation, the sick monster of self-doubt started to creep in her system.

What if she wasn't that good after all?

What if it was all in her head?

What if she couldn't make it?

How would she support herself?

This was why after her freshman year, she did the unthinkable and shifted to BS Management. Needless to say, she hated it. Every single minute of it. She made herself do it because she wanted Bryan to be happy. Unlike him, she wasn't.

Now, six years later, there was no more Bryan and practically, no writing career. After four horrible years, she finally graduated and confirmed the obvious—that she should have stuck with communication arts. Not that it was impossible to pursue writing with a different degree. It's just that all her confidence in herself was gone. Now, she was kind of exploring freelancing, which actually meant that only one foot was inside the door. The other foot was still with Bryan, believing that she didn't have what it takes. She was also working as a barista at DreamCup to get by. She liked her job and all. The truth, however, was that a career in the food and beverage industry wasn't what she wanted. Her heart belonged to writing.

Bryan was an ass.

Bryan destroyed her life.

Bryan….

"It wasn't even Bryan's fault," she realized. "It was my own weak self."

CHAPTER 2
Hi! I'm Paulo

Bea suddenly got distracted from her vibrating phone. Tinder was telling her that she had just gotten a match. She had just installed the application because of the insistence of her friends from work. According to them, the dating app was supposed to be how you find love nowadays.

She picked up her two-year-old Samsung phone to check and groaned as she saw a not so attractive face appear on the screen. At least not physically.

"Oh my gosh, this is so bad," she thought. "That would be a no." She continued to swipe a series of lefts. She wasn't really a Tinder person. Attraction was so much more than just the physical. It was objectifying the dating process, limiting it to what a person looked like.

Not that it wasn't important.

Left. Left. Left.

But there was definitely, definitely much more to it.

She was about to put down her phone when she suddenly got a notification. She opened her profile and saw a rather attractive guy named Miko Cruz, who she might consider dating.

Before she knew it, she had already sent a "Hello *smiley face*" message. "Gosh, what am I doing?" she thought, laughing a little. Before long, Miko replied, "Hey there. Haha. This is so awkward but nice to meet you here. *smiley face*"

[ON TINDER]

BEA: What are you up to?

MIKO: Oh you know. Just resting from work. It's been a tiring couple of days.

BEA: What do you do?

MIKO: I am an artist.

BEA: Interesting. What kind of artist? Hey, would you like to chat on Viber?

MIKO: Sure, here's my number!

[ON VIBER]

MIKO: Hey there.

BEA: Hi Miko. So, are you on Tinder often?

MIKO: Just now. My schedule doesn't give me a lot of time online. What about you? What are you up to?

BEA: Just reading a couple of old poems. Haha.

MIKO: Wow. Why, hello Ms. Writer. Can I tell you something?

BEA: Yes.

MIKO: I write, too. I write songs.

BEA: That's awesome! What type of songs?

MIKO: Alternative Rock. Hehe. But I start them off as poems. That's how I started writing.

BEA: That's cool. I wish I could compose songs.

MIKO: Let's do that right now.

BEA: Right now?!

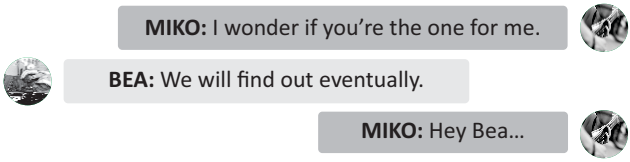
MIKO: Yes, let me start.

MIKO: Hey Bea…

BEA: Isn't it funny we met this way?

MIKO: What can I do to make you stay?

BEA: Hey Bea…



Their conversation went on and on. Not that Bea noticed this because she was too busy being engaged in their conversation. Sometime later, Bea was lying down on her bed and she could barely open her eyes. She was about to fall asleep when her phone rang. Miko was calling her.

"Hello?" she answered, slightly surprised by the call.

"Just wanted to say goodnight and thank you. I had a blast chatting with you. Umm, bye…" Miko said quickly and hung up. Bea could tell he was nervous. There was also something very familiar about his voice. She really felt that she had heard it before. She brushed it off. And still, she wondered why on earth would his voice be familiar?

They continued to chat and text for days. And soon, Bea found herself looking forward to his messages as well as thinking of him in between moments of the day.

"This is impossible," she thought. "How can I connect with someone I've never even met?" And then she does the inevitable.

"Miko, would you like to meet me?" she asked during one of their conversations.

♬𝄞♪

It was 5:00 P.M. and Bea had just gotten off her shift in DreamCup. She went home to her place, a bed space at Taguig that she was renting with her friend Stephanie or Steph, who was a fellow barista. Bea's family was now in the US. They migrated when she was still in college. Bea chose to stay for Bryan. But unlike Bryan, her family supported her writing. They had remained close throughout the years via Skype and Viber.

Petite and fashionable, Steph was her closest and dearest partner in crime nowadays, partly because they saw each other every day, but mostly

because they got along so well. Armed with a quirky but lovable personality, Steph was Bea's unofficial life and fashion adviser. She was 25 years old, which made her older than 23-year-old Bea. She had a twiggy haircut that was dyed ash grey. Her hairstyle went well with the edgy, black, square-framed, thick glasses she wore as well as her tan skin.

Bea had always admired Steph for her bold and aggressive personality. She was working to put herself through law school, which in Bea's opinion, was superhuman of her. Bea, on the other hand, was more reserved and unsure. This often frustrated Steph.

"You have to believe in yourself for your dreams to come true," Steph always reminded Bea.

Despite her somewhat aloof attitude, Bea's feminine features always got people to notice her. Bea had dark, wavy hair, slightly chinky eyes, and a pointed nose, thanks to her family's Spanish ancestry.

"Hello, Bea! Are you ready for your date? Finally, you're actually going on a date!" said Steph as she buttoned her black and white checkered polo with funky patches all over it. "We have got to get you ready!"

"Do you think I am?" Bea asked uncertainly.

"What? As in ready, ready? You are! You've just been denying it for so long!" answered Steph impatiently, tapping her left foot.

"Don't you think I'm even the least bit insane for doing this?" asked Bea doubtingly as she browsed through her closet.

"Of course not. After all, everything worthwhile needs a leap."

After rummaging through Bea's closet for an hour, they ended up dressing Bea in a cute, dark red, vintage dress, with tiny flowers that went all the way to her ankles. This was paired with brass, dangling earrings fused with white crystals that formed a flower. For shoes, she wore medium brown, leather oxford flats. As a finishing touch, she wore a thin, light brown, leather belt that accentuated her waist.

"Now you're ready!" Steph finally said as she sighed with conviction.

They went on agreeing and disagreeing as Bea and Steph walked towards a nearby café named *Kape Po Kayo*.

"Wait, is this even safe?" Bea panicked just before they entered.

"You have five mutual friends on Facebook. How dangerous can he be? Now, will you go in?"

"Bea?" a good looking stranger suddenly greets her. No. Wait. That wasn't a stranger, it was Paulo Aveneda. Yes, Paulo Aveneda—the 29-year-old star of the 2015 hit romantic comedy, *Love You More.* The same Paulo who had one million Instagram followers.

At first, Bea didn't know what to do but stare. Standing before her was nearly 6 feet of gorgeousness in the form of a beautiful, beautiful human being. Paulo, or whoever he was, had dark brown hair that was styled in a clean crew cut, and very smooth fair skin. That didn't even begin to describe how attractive he was. He was built like a football player, lean and fit, but not bulky. Paulo was dressed in an obviously expensive vintage t-shirt which he matched with a sienna jacket, jeans, and crispy white Y-3s.

His handsome face was another story altogether. He had a slender nose, small but expressive dark brown eyes, and delicate pinkish-red lips. Bea found herself looking hard at Paulo's lips, but her thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a certain shouting from Steph.

"You're Paulo Aveneda," Steph said for her. "What are you doing here? Why do you know Bea?" Wait…where's Miko? Miko from Tinder???

"*Hinay* Steph!" Bea said, embarrassed. "Obviously, he's not here to meet me," she said looking at Paulo. "Right?"

Paulo patted his head uncertainly before nodding. "Actually, I am," Paulo said nervously. "I'm actually…umm…Miko from Tinder," he began. "Please don't be mad, I can explain."

Steph took her cue and left.

"You're Miko? But…you're Paulo? You're Paulo!! How? Why?" Bea asked, confused. "Was this a bet? A dare? This was a dare, wasn't it? Sorry, it was nice to meet you, but I can't be part of your little game."

Bea started to walk towards the exit sign, but Paulo stopped her by

holding her tightly by the wrist. He suddenly realized his strength and loosened his grip.

"Bea, wait. Just give me a chance to explain," he begged, clasping his hands together. Bea could see the sincerity in his eyes.

"And why should I listen to you?" she prodded.

"Just, please…" Paulo pleaded.

"Okay. I guess you deserve that for at least showing up," she said reluctantly.

"I did it out of curiosity at first, and then I connected with you. I did it because I wanted to connect with someone who didn't know who I was," he said.

"Well, you certainly did a good job hiding who you were," Bea mumbled.

"I want to get to know you more Bea, as much as I can. I honestly want to know if we have a chance of being something."

Paulo looked at Bea. There was truthfulness reflected on his face and the way he said his words. She couldn't believe it was Paulo she had been chatting with for weeks. Still, Bea wasn't one hundred percent convinced.

"But you're Paulo Aveneda. You're a movie star. You're famous. Everyone knows who you are."

"It can work," he argued. "How will we know if we don't even try?"

"I did feel something," Bea agreed. "But I'm not sure…."

"Please give me a chance, Bea," Paulo cut in.

"What?"

"Give me 30 days."

END OF TEASER

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