

## *The Wedding Box Easter Eggs*

If you've read the note above or the reader letter at the beginning of *The Wedding Box*, you know I wrote this book when I was grieving my parents' deaths and reflecting a lot on my life. As an unplanned result, I found myself tossing in small references to real things in my life, real connections to places and people and even pets! Of course, many random tidbits of real life have made their way into my stories over the years, but this felt a little different and more specific. It started very randomly, but once I noticed it happening, I continued it on purpose, as a small way to pay homage to those people and places. I thought it would be fun to share them with you here:

### Page 3

Cora is a nod to the daughter of a longtime agent who kindly gave me the first kernel of an idea for this book.

### Page 6

Lulu, Pastor Tom's dog in the book, was named after a real goldendoodle who belongs to my dear friend, Jacquie, who is mentioned in the book's dedication and who you probably feel like you know if you follow me on Facebook.

### Page 9

Puff, Haley's family cat, was named after my first kitten as a little girl, and like the Puff in the book, mine was also gray.

### Page 21

Bella, the Yorkie, was named after my parents' last dog, also a Yorkie, who you might have seen if you follow me on Facebook. After they passed away, she was adopted by one of my oldest friends who was also a neighbor to my parents, and Bella couldn't have gotten a better home.

### Page 29

Mr. Veigel was named after a real history teacher I once had, and I loved his creative, engaging teaching style. He passed away not long ago, so I thought it might be nice to remember him in this way.

### Page 30

I refer to Cincinnati throughout the book, which is obviously a real place I don't need to explain. But because Ben says that, while growing up in the country, Cincinnati was to him "my New York, my L.A.," and "my city on the hill," I thought it might be noteworthy to explain that's what Cincinnati once was to me, too. Although I was raised in the country, my grandparents met and married in Cincinnati, and my mother lived there as a child. I met my husband there, and I worked there in a downtown office for eight years. It was the place where I challenged myself with new goals and really became an adult. So I feel very much about Cincinnati as Ben does in the book.

### Page 36

Highland Cemetery is a real cemetery in my community, and though I didn't grow up nearby, my parents did, and both have family members buried there. I sometimes walk there in nice weather,

and occasionally visit the graves of my great grandparents and uncle, who was hit by a car riding his bike at the age of seven in 1961.

#### Page 40

The Talcrita Tower, Ben's skyscraper, is named after my parents. My father's first name was Talc and my mother's was Rita. It's a clunky sounding skyscraper name, I admit, but I indulged myself.

#### Page 45

Robin the waitress is named after my lifelong bestie, who was a waitress as a teenager and a darned good one!

#### Page 65

Riverside Drive is another of many real places in the book, and while some of those locations are fictionalized for storytelling purposes, I described Riverside Drive as accurately as I could. I mention it here only because, like Haley in the book, I also used to fantasize about living in one of the grand old mansions that line the street facing the Ohio River, so that's just one more little "truism" that made it into this story.

#### Page 70

Grandpa Ed is named after my father's grandpa. Like Ben, my father was in many ways raised by his grandpa and saw him more as a father figure than a grandfather, and like Grandpa Ed in the book, the real Ed is buried in Highland Cemetery, and he really was a brickmason who also ran a dog kennel behind his home. Like Ben, my dad knew a great deal about dogs from helping with the kennel while growing up. In the book, Grandpa Ed dies of sepsis. I don't know how my great grandpa really died – I was only five at the time – but the way I describe Grandpa Ed's death in the book is actually the way my father passed away.

#### Page 73

Sorscha the cat is named after my friend Mackenzie's cat.

#### Page 77

Emma the kitten is a nod to reader Alicia S., who has an adorable family of cats, all of whom she encourages to pose for pictures with my books! This started when I was writing the Destiny series, in which one character was constantly rescuing cats and making her friends adopt them. It kind of became a thing – a new book comes out and Alicia sends me a photo shoot of various cats with the book, which I loved and appreciated! So when Alicia shared the adoption of Emma online around the time I was writing this book, I thought I'd try to immortalize her kitty in this small way.

#### Page 78

Daphne was named after a real shiba inu, belonging to my friend Lindsey who was also my assistant for many years. Like the fictional Daphne, the real Daphne was rescued from a breeding mill and is a very sweet and pretty dog.

Page 81

Jacqueline the realtor was named after my dear friend, Jacquie – real name Jacqueline – who really is a realtor and an excellent one at that!

Page 99

Ben's friends, who he refers to by their last names – Faber, Daher, Hughes, and Kaeding – happen to be named after my own dear friends, who I actually do not ever refer to by their last names. 😊

Page 129

The memories Ben shares about watching his family play cutthroat games of Monopoly as a kid are actually my own. My dad loved Monopoly and he made up his own rules, insisting that was okay because the rules don't say you can't do that. 😊 And like Ben, my favorite Monopoly piece really is the wheelbarrow.

Page 167

The band shell at Devou Park is yet another real place, which I mention here only because I really did sled ride there, same as Haley and Ben in the book. I was much littler at the time, and ended up injured, but that's a different story – and the upshot is that when I think of sled riding, I think of the band shell at Devou, so it seemed the obvious place for Ben to take Haley.

Page 173

All the places mentioned during the Winter Fun Day excursion are real, but most noteworthy for this list the Immaculata Church in Mt. Adams because the spot where Ben proposes to Haley, looking out over the city, is the same spot where my husband proposed to me. We revisited the spot together as I was writing the book to discover that where it used to be just a sidewalk next to a rock wall, now there's a large viewing platform. Sadly, the view isn't all that it used to be because some trees have grown and obscured it, but for purposes of the book, I kept it wide open, as it was when the night I said yes.