

Always Think of Me

Lori Keesey

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A brief encounter has a profound impact on two quite different people in the moving spiritual novel Always Think of Me.

A man falls into love that has supernatural power in Lori Keesey's quirky romance novel *Always Think of Me*.

TC, a failed real estate agent, is in a wayward state when he first meets pristine Ginny at a folk concert. She's dressed in white, a "muddled angel" in his usual party circuit. Ginny reveals a different life to him. They become close but are then parted without warning.

Later, Ginny has a baby, becomes depressed, and starts partying. TC, now occupying an "otherworldly dimension"—a space of "white light" symbolic of love and healing—visits and watches over Ginny. Being near her inspires him to grow. He tries to help Ginny, even though he can't intervene. With faith and hope that all will turn out for the best, he also starts to contemplate his own life choices during his "visits." Indeed, Ginny inspires TC toward change.

The plot is limited, moving between TC and Ginny's one-day meeting and the white light period. It's a simple framework that makes the characters and emotions focal. The white light is the only element that's outside of regular logic in a story that otherwise thrives on naturalism, moving the duo's story toward the realm of spiritual growth.

TC's earnest revelations as he look for Ginny elevate the book's drama. He worries, asking himself over and over why he let her go, why she was brought into his life after she left so quickly, and if there's any way he could have saved her. His voice is colorful and he is prone to quips, but he becomes more tender in his observations of Ginny, who "polishes her white cowboy boots for several minutes, like a cat washing its paws."

The characterizations are built on contrasts: TC and Ginny are flawed polar opposites who still somehow complement one another in their natural conversations. Ginny is bright and unassuming, while TC is empathetic and funny. "You're the one person she'll listen to," he is told when her life is threatened. "Do what you always do, talk to her." Their appearances are consistent, too: Ginny is always beautiful, with her hair and clothing choices noted in each setting, while TC has a car "littered with week-old fast food wrappers" and an "anemic mortgage." Indeed, it's never lost on TC that his meeting with Ginny, however brief, was special.

In the upbeat Christian novel *Always Think of Me*, grace magnifies the love between two people, changing the world they share.

GALE HEMMANN (December 28, 2024)

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