



The Dream I Never Knew I Had: Jackson

Francesca Thomas

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Those who want to get lost in another's life and story and who enjoy romance and heartbreak will find all they desire.

Twenty-eight-year-old Alexandra Kingfield's first meeting with New York businessman Nick Tasconi is deliberately planned, as she's driven by desperation to do something she normally wouldn't. Their star-crossed paths continue to mesh and weave over the next tumultuous year as Alex deals with the trauma of numerous life-altering events in Francesca Thomas's drama-laden romance novel, *The Dream I Never Knew I Had: Jackson*.

Alex, though an educated, intelligent woman, still deals with childhood issues stemming from her illegitimate birth and her mother's negative attitude toward her. Her stepfather, an admiral in the Navy, has always been much more supportive, as have her lifelong friends, Amanda and Olivia.

The story line begins in June 2012 and follows the often-beleaguered Alex as she contends with an abusive lieutenant with eyes on marriage and a promotion; the dashing and wealthy Tasconi brothers, Nick and Jackson; and the adoption of Oscar, a friend's young son.

The story is mainly voiced in first person by Alex but also contains several entries narrated by others. The name of the person narrating usually heads each chapter. While this is a good device to get other characters' points of view across, many times someone else's train of thought slips in and is expressed.

Set mostly in Washington, DC, and Colorado, with stops in New York City, Montana, and London, the atmosphere is reflected in a cast that's an even mix of normal joes, the military elite, some high-handed Brits, and glamorous jet-setters.

Alex's domineering mother, Lady Elizabeth Waterford, is so antagonistic and mean she's almost a caricature. Oscar, however, is written as a very realistic seven-year-old boy, both in his dialogue and with his age-authentic behaviors. A subplot revelation that Amanda is a lesbian is handled without fanfare, unfolding as it does in the normal course of events.

Because there is a big jump in the timeline from July to September 2012, it appears some information may be missing, particularly explaining how Nick's company hired Alex and how he met Amanda, because he purportedly knows where the women's DC apartment is located. There is also a small glitch in timeline dates.

The three sex scenes involving Alex are graphic but tasteful. There are quite a number of pertinent characters, but each is sufficiently imbued with their own backstory and personality. It's heartwarming to see the protagonist have such a strong set of friends and family available to embrace her during turbulent times, though hopefully she can relocate the strong, independent core she possessed in earlier chapters.

The prologue demonstrating the strong bond between Alex and her three best friends lends an aura of intrigue that hints that not all secrets have yet been revealed. This is the first book in an intended three-book series.

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ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (August 16, 2017)

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