

Mom's
PERFECT
Boyfriend



Crystal Hemmingway



GALBADIA PRESS

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This story is true. I assembled it from my text messages, emails, and journal entries. I know it's hard to believe. I don't know if I'll ever be able to explain some of the things I experienced.

Names have been changed to protect the innocent (and because I don't want to get sued). "Boople" is a very real global tech company with a fleet of lawyers. Please don't sue me, Boople lawyers.

To offer a broader perspective, I have included excerpts from my mom's diary. Technically, I never got her permission to publish it – or even read it. Actually, it'd be better off if she never found out about this book.

In conclusion: true story, please don't sue me, please don't tell my mom.

-C.H.

BOOPLE CHAT, THURS JUN 29, 7:32 PM

Crystal: soooo excited for hawaii!!!

Crystal: think you'll be home soon?

David: they just found another critical bug on my level

David: it's going to be a late night

Crystal: aw i'm sorry

Crystal: i can help you pack

David: thanks i'd appreciate it

David: i really need this vacation

Crystal: we'll make it our best yet ;)

TEXT MESSAGES, JUNE 29

Mom: Hey, Sweetie. Do you have a minute to chat?

Crystal: Sure, I can talk while I pack. Can I call you in 10 min?

Mom: That would be great.

BOOPLE CHAT, FRI JUNE 30, 1:15 AM

Crystal: hey

Lisa: hi

Lisa: aren't you leaving for hawaii in like 4 hours?

Crystal: i just got off a three hour phone call with mom

Crystal: she kind of invited herself on our trip

Lisa: again?

Crystal: i tried to tell her no but she wouldn't listen

Lisa: she's not your responsibility

Lisa: you can't be her best friend forever

Crystal: i know but it's too late now ☹

Crystal: she already bought the ticket

Lisa: well then good luck

Lisa: you're going to need it

EMAIL, JUNE 30

From: Maui Turtle Tours <amanda@mauiturtle.com>

To: Crystal Hemmingway <crystalkitty_01@booplemail.com>

Subject: Re: Trip for Three

Aloha Crystal!

I have cancelled and rebooked your trip as you requested. I have attached an invoice with the updated balance. Please review the information below and feel free to call or email with any questions.

Hope you have a wonderful time here in Maui!

Mahalo,
Amanda S.

Cancelled*:

- 1 x Beachside Couples' Massage
- 1 x Beginner Surfing Lesson (Private), 2 adults
- 1 x Zipline Tour, 2 adults
- 2 x Maui Burlesque Cabaret Show tickets
- 1 x Candlelit Yacht Dinner for two

Booked:

- 1 x Snorkeling Adventure Tour, 3 adults
- 1 x Dolphin Cruise (lunch included), 3 adults
- 1 x Maui Pineapple Ranch entry tickets, 3 adults
- 3 x Deluxe Fire Dancing Luau tickets (1 vegetarian, 2 omnivore)

**All cancellations and rebookings may be subject to a fee, up to 50% of the cost of the tour, if requested by the guest less than 24 hours before the date of service. Cancellations and rebookings due to weather and other unforeseen circumstances will be made free of charge.*

TEXT MESSAGES, JULY 6

Crystal: hey are you coming?

Crystal: we set sail in 2 min

David: i'm going to sit this one out

Crystal: everything ok?

David: yeah i just need some time alone

BOOPLE CHAT, SAT JULY 8 10:32 AM

Crystal: can i call you?

Lisa: give me 15 min?

Crystal: k

Lisa: you alright?

Crystal: david wants a break

Crystal: like from our relationship

Lisa: calling now

TEXT MESSAGES, JULY 8

Mom: Happy Saturday!

Crystal: Thanks Mom, you too. ☺

Mom: Any plans this weekend?

Crystal: Unpack and do laundry. :P

Mom: Same here! And a walk with Ingrid tomorrow.

Crystal: Sounds good. ☺

Mom: Missing the Hawaii weather already.

Crystal: Yep it was nice

Mom: It was so kind of you and David to include me. It was a wonderful trip, and I'm so glad I finally got a chance to see Maui. Thank you so much! <3 I'm so proud of you and excited to hear more about your novel. Love you so much!

Crystal: Thanks, I enjoyed it, too. Won't be much to show on the novel for awhile. Love you too. <3

Mom: Bye! Say hi to David for me!

Crystal: Thanks, I will, bye. ☺

MARGOT'S JOURNAL, SUNDAY JULY 9

I had a great weekend. I flew back from Hawaii on Friday night, so I slept in on Saturday. We had a great time in Hawaii, and I think Crystal and David enjoyed it, too. There was a mix-up at the hotel, so they upgraded us to the honeymoon suite! It was so nice that we could all stay in the same room. I've never stayed anywhere that fancy, not even when I went to that dentists' conference with my

ex-husband. This place was much better, and right on the beach. The view was to die for.

We packed a lot in on the trip, but I wouldn't have minded a few more days. We still managed to squeeze in snorkeling, a dolphin cruise, plenty of shopping, a luau, some hikes, a surf competition (as spectators), horseback riding, a few movies, some ice cream, and a lot of great meals. Crystal is still doing the vegetarian thing, so we looked for places with options for her. David was a bit down this trip, and it looked like he'd put on a bit of weight, too. It sounded like his last video game project was very stressful, but he just finished it. I hope they treat him better on the next one.

It was hard to come home to overcast weather after all that Hawaiian sun, but it was nice to be back in my own place and eating my own food. I got the house cleaned up a bit, and ran a bunch of errands. I had a nice walk with Ingrid, although she's a bit depressed right now. Her husband is dealing with a lot of health problems, and she doesn't have a lot of people to talk to. I'm trying to be supportive, but I hope she can find a way to be more positive soon.

After the walk, I did some grocery shopping at the farmers' market and two different grocery stores. Then I cooked everything up for the week, so my meals are all ready to go. It's going to be another busy week, and I always feel better when I eat my own food. My pants are also a little tight after the trip (must've been all the ice cream! Hehe!), so I'll have to cut back a little there.

Tonight, I went online to post some photos from the trip. I didn't mean to, but I saw a post from James, and then I looked at his profile. It looks like he bought a new car – a red corvette with black interior. Why didn't he get that earlier? I had to ride in his beat-

up old Corolla. I know I shouldn't have even looked, but it's still hard to see pictures of him with that skinny new girlfriend, both happy and smiling. I thought James and I really had a connection, but now it's like I was never even there. I'll have to work on releasing those feelings, because the yoga and meditation don't seem to have cleared them yet. Maybe another month will be enough.

Then I saw a picture of Lisa and Bryan and his parents at brunch. Lisa never goes to brunch with me. I know we're not in the same town, but we could be. I guess I don't understand why they live near his parents and not me, and why we can't be the kind of family that brunches.

I also got an invite to the Helping Hands Housewife Association (HHHA) holiday fundraiser. Mother is in charge again, and it would probably be good for me to go. I'll have to check with the girls on their holiday plans, because the fundraiser is on Christmas eve this year.

It's going to be a good week. I'm going to focus on being compassionate toward my patients, especially those with halitosis and gingivitis.

Gratitudes:

1. I am grateful for the unexpected Hawaiian vacation.
2. I am grateful for Crystal and Lisa.
3. I am grateful for my job, which deepens my appreciation of vacations.

BOOPLE CHAT, MONDAY, JULY 10 2:13 PM

Crystal: yo

Crystal: has mom been texting you like every five minutes?

Crystal: like photos of her coworkers and her food and stuff?

Lisa: YES

Lisa: i stopped responding an hour ago and it's still going

Crystal: i think it's withdrawal from the trip

Lisa: probably

Crystal: did she ask you about christmas?

Lisa: yeah

Crystal: i know she wants to get her tickets early but still

Crystal: it's half a year away

Lisa: yeah

Lisa: we're doing the usual Fontana christmas

Crystal: at bryan's parents' place?

Lisa: yup

Lisa: i told mom we haven't made plans yet

Crystal: so she'll be on her own then?

Lisa: we could invite her, but she didn't seem to have very much fun last year

Crystal: yeah better not to

Crystal: well at least we've got some time to think about it

Crystal: i can't deal with december right now

Crystal: it's hard enough just getting through the week

Crystal: since my future is still a giant question mark

Lisa: you mean david?

Crystal: yeah

Lisa: have you talked to him yet?

Crystal: no

Crystal: i thought about emailing him, but i don't even know what to say

Lisa: do you still love him?

Crystal: of course

Lisa: do you want to get back together?

Crystal: i think so...but it's not like i can just disown mom, either

Crystal: i don't think "i'm sorry" is going to be enough

Crystal: our relationship won't work the way things are currently

Lisa: well all relationships require compromise

Lisa: but it doesn't all have to be on you, either

Crystal: thanks

Crystal: i do think there are some things i want to change though

Crystal: i can't be mom's companion for the rest of my adult life

Crystal: what she really needs is a boyfriend or husband, someone to be with her 24/7

Lisa: yeah

Lisa: is she still online dating?

Crystal: no she quit

Crystal: she told me on the trip that she wants to "leave it up to fate"

Lisa: again?

Crystal: it might work

Lisa: it hasn't for a decade

Lisa: seriously...she needs to find someone before she drives us both insane

Crystal: i know

Lisa: bryan and i have had talks about this

Crystal: really?

Lisa: yeah

Lisa: it's why i fly in twice a year, for two days at a time

Lisa: it's exhausting but i think we both enjoy it more that way

Crystal: but mom is only two hours away from me by car

Lisa: true but you still have choices

Crystal: so what do you recommend?

Lisa: start setting boundaries

Crystal: like limiting phone calls to two hours or less?

Lisa: plan them up against other commitments, even if they're imaginary

Lisa: and you don't have to respond to her texts right away, either

Crystal: but if i don't then i keep thinking about it and it stresses me out

Lisa: don't even look at your phone

Crystal: what if it's an emergency?

Lisa: she'd find a way

Lisa: she could email you, make an actual call...there are plenty of ways

Crystal: oh right

Crystal: yeah, i think i'll feel better once i have a plan

Crystal: i just wish mom didn't have such ridiculously high standards

Lisa: yeah

Lisa: i don't think anyone can meet ALL her expectations

Crystal: i wish we could just buy her a made-to-order boyfriend or something

Lisa: if only

TECHBEAT ARTICLE, JULY 11

Would You Shag a Robot?

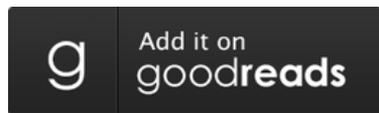
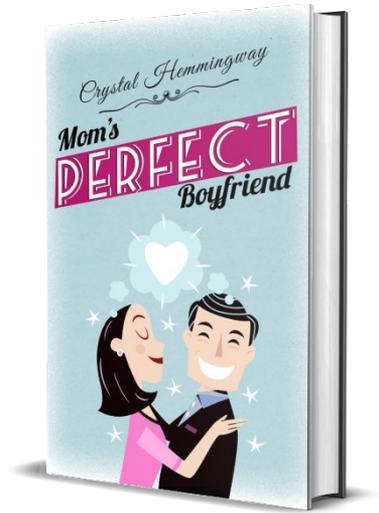
Ever wish you had a robot to do your dishes? Drive you to work? Keep you warm at night? That future may be closer than you think.

Boople has announced an experimental program of robotic “Smart Companions,” which the company claims are “designed for domestic use.” As the program is still in the research stage, Boople reps are closed to questions, but a source close to the company says there is “a strong possibility” that they will resemble humans, and emulate human behaviors.

The Smart Companion team is led by Dr. Paul Devereux, the leading AI psychologist who recently published *Robots Have Feelings Too: Essays on Technology, Psychology, and Love*. Boople clearly wants us to invite these Smart Companions not just into our homes, but also our hearts. Good luck with that, Dr. Devereux.

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