

The
Persistence
of Fate

a novel

C.R.C.



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First Edition

*To all the soulful souls who look past
life's monotony, seeing beyond the veil of illusion
and daring to question everything*



From the moment we are born
We have an inner compass
That guides us to little hints and signs
For us to discover, to follow
Putting us in the right place
At the right time
It is Fate, whispering
Leading us to our calling
To our higher selves,
Along the way Delivering us to our personal destiny
Where we must fulfill what was left undone.
It isn't always the easiest path to follow
But the journey pushes us to a greater Awakening.

Prologue

Have you ever wondered what lies beyond this material world? Even beyond death? Most people subscribe to the belief that we die and go to Heaven, or that we die and wait for Jesus's second coming to be resurrected from our graves. There are others who believe that we just die and that is all there is to it. Whatever you choose to believe, this story may challenge your preexisting beliefs on life and death. Or it may simply make you ponder the possibilities of this realm we live in. It might even evoke the question: What more is there to this thing we call life? One question begs another.

Many people, when asked what they think the meaning of life is, will answer that it is love. Love is intoxicating. Those who fear it want it the most. Yet they sabotage themselves by running away before ever even giving themselves the chance to love and to be loved in return. Perhaps they're afraid of being hurt, so they put up excuses and walls instead of opening themselves up to the love they crave. With well-thought-out rationality, they will do whatever it takes to talk themselves out of the very love they are starving for.

There is no rationality in love—none. Your heart falls for someone, and it consumes your very soul. It will kill you if you fight

it, slowly and painfully, every day that you and your beloved are apart. Love doesn't care if you come from privilege and royalty or if you're dirt poor, what society deems a "nobody." The universal energies say that like attracts like, and that is true, but there are also complementary opposites that attract each other. In those cases, one has something the other needs to have balance in their life. Many of us, born into certain cultures and places in the world, are taught certain beliefs, morals, and values that we must live by and uphold. As children, we don't second-guess what our parents and family in general teach us. As we grow older and start to discover the world for ourselves, our mind and our spirit begin to realize just how much we don't know and how much more there is out there to be discovered. Love teaches us that no matter how different two people are—in their backgrounds, social status, race, or inward and outward differences—there's no obstacle that the power of love cannot overcome.

This is what two young people from completely different worlds—Emery and Rose, once known as Emmett and Helena—discover in this story of love, fate, and the power of free will. They decide for themselves if the seductive allure of history and familiarity between two souls is worth the resurfacing of old wounds, and although it may be painful, they grow in the process. Growth—to evolve from old and outdated behaviors that no longer serve any purpose—is something to strive for. If growth is resisted, one is doomed to repeat past mistakes.

Time and distance cannot keep two people apart if fate wills that they be together. Our destiny is already written before we are even born to our parents. It's that little voice that guides us throughout life; we must always listen to it and trust it. It is our road map to our

fate. It can be those instinctual feelings we get sometimes but dismiss in our daily lives. Sometimes those feelings can be about small things; other times they involve monumental decisions that could change our direction forever.

We all have our course set; we must keep an open mind when traveling along our journey, knowing that all will be okay, especially when going through the challenges that may present themselves. They are there to make us grow and evolve from who we used to be to who we are meant to become.

A unique young couple experiences this for themselves along their journey in search of meaning. They discover a simple truth that stares us all in the face. Love is the meaning of life. Loving one another makes life worth living. It makes us become better versions of ourselves. Both in search of something more, they experience for themselves the persistence of fate.

Emery

A decorative flourish consisting of a central horizontal line with two curved, scroll-like ends extending downwards and outwards.

Chapter 1

“**W**hy did you invite them?” Emery asks his mother, annoyed that his parents invited Juliet, an overzealous admirer of his, to dinner that night. Standing behind his mother’s dressing table, Emery continues to grumble. “I don’t want to sit there and be fake, pretending like I actually *want* to be there. Or as if I even fancy the girl. Really, Mother. It’s not fair to either of us! She gets her hopes up even if I simply look her way.” Emery crosses his arms in defiance. He knows he can’t get out of the commitment, and he’s angry that his mother has put him in this position.

Victoria Williams looks at her son through her vanity mirror, her large blue eyes emphasized by the champagne color of her eye-shadow. “Emery, she is simply accompanying her parents to dinner. That is all. You don’t have to speak to her if you don’t want to. Just keep to yourself. And they will be here shortly, so go get dressed!”

Emery Williams was born into a wealthy English family, with roots dating all the way back to the eighteenth century. His biggest concern is doing his best not to behave out of character for someone of his family name. Though he comes from privileged circumstances, his life isn’t entirely easy, as he has one looming struggle: He

wants to be himself, and he doesn't want to be forced to marry for money instead of love. Of course, he knows his struggles don't compare at all to the kinds of real-world struggles so many other people have—trying to put food on the table, feed children, pay rent, and sometimes care for elderly parents.

But it is a real struggle. At age thirty-four, he wants to be free from the expectations of his world of titles and class. He enjoys the lifestyle and carefree luxury money allows him, especially from his rolling family estate in Virginia Water, Surrey, just forty minutes from downtown London. But the fame and gossip—and the constant watchful and judgmental public eye—he could do without.

He could also do without the admirers who, he is pretty sure, pursue him because of his position, not to mention his wealth. Emery is also one of the most eligible bachelors in all of England. Women flock to him and will come around just to catch a glimpse of him. His mother's friends all hope that one of their daughters will someday end up with Emery. However, he is distant and unavailable. On the surface, it seems that distance is due to his career as an archaeologist, which demands a lot of travel. His studies allow him to escape the world he sees as superficial and silly. Emery is much more interested in things that have depth and mystery, but he also is glad to have an excuse to escape *her*—Juliet, the very persistent daughter of his mother's friend—who will be arriving any minute.

Emery, arms still crossed, eyes still fixed on his mother's eyes in the dressing table mirror, shakes his head. "You know I have no choice."

Victoria raises her eyebrows, gifts him a little smile, and shrugs. She checks her makeup one more time and heads out the door, but she stops to look back at Emery.

“Oh, and, dear, please try not to start a debate with your father while our guests are over. You two just don’t know when to stop once you start.” Then she closes the bedroom door behind her.

Emery’s relationship with his father is fairly good, even though the only thing they agree on is that the sky is blue. Sir Ashby and Emery often enter into fierce debates at the dinner table over the Catholic Church and the basic structures of religion—so much so that some guests feel uncomfortable in the midst of such a conversation. To be honest, they both enjoy the drama.

But more important right now than his father’s drama is Emery’s frustration at having to show up—yet again—to an event where he will be forced to endure the attentions of a woman he isn’t interested in. He wants love, but he wants to find it on his own terms, the way his friends did. All of Emery’s friends have a beloved or are about to get married; they are ready to settle down. He would never say it aloud to anyone, but his mother, Victoria, whom he has a very close and intuitive bond with, says that the only reason his friends’ parents approve of the marriages and relationships is the wealth and status of the girls’ families. He often tells his mother how if he married, he would want it to be for love and nothing else. She believes in allowing Emery to be himself and does not argue with him when he speaks of the importance of marrying for love rather than status.

His mother is incredibly spiritual. She believes in reincarnation, past lives, and the law of the universe. She also believes in metaphysics and has the gifts of clairvoyance and claircognizance—the gift of psychic knowledge. She will sometimes go to church with Ashby to show support or simply accompany him so that he doesn’t have to go alone. Victoria is kind like that.

Emery is much like his mother; he has a certain type of wisdom that seems unusual for a man of his age to possess. She knows him better than anyone, yet for some reason it seems as if her favorite pastime is to revel in his suffering. Often he hears her giggling quietly when she sees him trying to escape the attentions of Juliet or any other young lady who wants to date him. He is so polite and well-mannered that he can't imagine insulting any of the women by turning them down. It would also cause a bit of an uncomfortable rift between the families, so he thinks it best to avoid giving a direct answer and instead focus on finding a way around the situation.

Emery knows that his mother has always hoped and wished for him to find love for himself, someone who will be good to him and love him for who he is, not for what he has. But she also understands that he will have a hard time trusting completely and letting someone in, because of his fear of the other person being with him simply for superficial reasons. Luckily, Emery is very intuitive and can see right through people. He can see what drives them, their insecurities and faults.

Emery glares at the back of his mother as she walks away. Defeated, he walks slowly to his own bedroom, almost dragging his feet. He really has no choice but to make the best of the evening. It is not just about honor but also about treating people with dignity. Emery is extremely compassionate with everyone, for he knows all too well that a little bit of kindness and love can go a long way, for anyone in general. People remember for the rest of their lives the way someone treated them, and no matter how short of an interaction he has with someone, he always wants to leave a good impression. Some people in London get caught up in reading tabloids and the papers, making

judgments about his character based on lies. It would be exhausting and too much for anyone to bear after a while. However, he has learned to deal with it, thanks in part to his mother's help.

He can hear Juliet's family arriving on the gravel driveway below his bedroom window, as well as his parents walking outside to greet them. He peeks out the window to catch a glimpse of the activity. Juliet looks up just then and sees him; she smiles. Frantically, he darts off to the side of the window, out of view. He isn't quite ready to face her, to politely but firmly turn away her advances.

Emery rushes to shower and get dressed; he expects his mother's knock at the door soon, insisting he come down and join them. After getting out of the shower, and just as expected, he hears a knock at the door. He quickly ties his oversized white bath robe at the waist and shouts, "Coming!" while hastily opening the door.

But instead of his mother, it is Nannie, the housekeeper, a very sweet woman who has worked for his family for nearly fifty years. Her large dark eyes look up at him in astonishment.

"Master Em," she says affectionately, "your mother would be unnerved to see you are not ready to join them for dinner. They have already been seated at the dinner table, sir."

Emery pushes his black hair back and nods. "Thank you, Nannie. I'll be down as soon as I can."

Emery quickly closes the door and rushes to get dressed. He chooses a simple yet elegant outfit and heads downstairs.

Upon Emery entering the dining room, Juliet stands up, apparently out of nervousness, thus creating a very awkward scene at the dinner table. Juliet's parents look at her with puzzlement. Of course, Victoria knows about Juliet being smitten with Emery—everybody

seems to know it. As she sips her wine, she tries to hide her mischievous grin behind her wine glass.

Emery moves to sit beside his father, but seeing Juliet sitting so close to Sir Ashby, he realizes that it is too close to her for comfort. He chooses to sit beside his mother at the other end of the table.

“So sorry to join you late,” he says apologetically.

“It’s quite all right, Emery. We only just sat down,” Mr. Montgomery says. He smiles affectionately at Emery from across the table. Jack Montgomery and his wife, Elizabeth Martin Montgomery, are lifelong friends of Emery’s parents. Growing up in the same social circles, they would have had a difficult time avoiding each other. They went to all the same schools, parties, and gatherings.

Elizabeth Montgomery is clearly very fond of Emery and deeply wants him to become her son-in-law. She knows Emery is not all that interested in her Juliet, but she doesn’t really care. She probably hopes he’ll come around eventually, once he realizes how hard it is to find someone else of his class and intelligence worth marrying.

It is well known that Elizabeth Montgomery is prejudiced against people who are not of her class. She deems them unworthy of conversation even! She isn’t a very nice woman, to say the very least. Emery has come to the conclusion that Mrs. Montgomery is narrow-minded and stuck in the Stone Age with her way of thinking. She set her sights on him marrying her daughter from the moment he was born; Juliet was born three months after Emery.

Victoria doesn’t agree with the way Elizabeth thinks—with all of her snobbery and prejudice; the two women actually grew apart even as girls. But Emery figures she puts up with Elizabeth because Ashby is such good friends with Jack.

Conversation at the dinner table gets off to a lively start, with Jack Montgomery probing Emery about his newest archaeological finds.

“So, I hear that they found another tomb in Egypt. Were you a part of that expedition?” he asks Emery in between sips of his soup.

Emery puts down his spoon and napkin. “I was, initially,” he says. “I assisted with some of the first excavations, and once we knew what we had found, someone else took over.”

Mrs. Montgomery fakes interest as she widens her eyes at Emery. “Why did you not continue?”

“I had been there for quite some time, and I was due to come home anyway. The site is in very good hands with the people who took over.” Emery can see the pretentiousness seeping through Mrs. Montgomery’s pores. She doesn’t care one bit about what he does; nor does she care about his interests or passions. All she wants is for him to marry Juliet so that the two families’ banking and financing business empires can merge through their marriage. Emery also figures she wants to be able to say—to boast to others, actually—that she is a part of the “Williams family.”

But such a marriage will *never* happen—not if Emery has a choice in the matter. And he *does* have a choice, doesn’t he?

As the dinner continues, Ashby invites Mr. Montgomery to attend church with him and Victoria on Sunday. As his father extends the invitation, Emery quietly looks down at his dinner plate. He hopes it isn’t something he will be forced to attend too for the sake of being polite. He hates church; his father knows very well where he stands on organized religion—and the two of them see things very differently. Emery’s views are more in agreement with those of his mother. He is very angry and upset at the fact that his father

continues to be a part of the Catholic Church, an organization that allows for young children to be hurt and abused by Catholic priests. The church doesn't hold the priests accountable for their actions by ensuring they are—every last one of them—brought to justice.

“Yeah, go ahead and support the abuse of innocent children,” Emery mutters under his breath.

Emery's mother goes red from embarrassment. “Emery, now is not the time,” she pleads in a whisper.

Sir Ashby stares angrily at his son. “I am not supporting the abuse of young boys! This is my faith,” he hits back assertively. “I follow what the Bible says. I just go to hear the sermon.”

“How can you say that? That you ‘just go to hear the sermon?’” Emery fires back as he angrily stares down his father. “Just because it isn't happening to you or anyone you know doesn't mean that it isn't happening. It's almost as if you don't care about those children. Clearly you revel in your privilege, Father.”

The energy at the table shifts to an uncomfortable silence.

Emery loves his father but also resents his authoritarian “I know best” attitude toward him. In that silence the resentment builds. Eventually, everything Emery doesn't say will come bursting out, sooner rather than later. He won't be controlled by his family's expectations and traditions. He won't. Emery will do things his way, regardless of whether his father approves or not. Ever since he was a little boy, he was made aware that he was held to a different standard than some of his peers. It made him feel isolated and trapped.

The day is coming soon when he will no longer be able to avoid the mounting expectations heaped on him by his family. But even worse, he dreads moving forward without feeling true love. What is

The Persistence of Fate

a man without a partner to share life with, to enjoy the beauty of sunrises with, to discuss the day's events in the evening, to hold as he falls asleep at night?

If only his father knew how Emery felt about all of the expectations placed on him—from the family name to marrying sweet but uninteresting Juliet. What his father sees as Emery's birthright, Emery sees as a death sentence.

And a very lonely one at that.

