



Destiny's Plan

Victoria Saccenti

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"FINALIST OF THE 2017 INTERNATIONAL BOOK AWARDS UNDER FICTION: ROMANCE"

One empty bus seat. Two aching hearts. A future written by Fate...

When Raquelita Muro's overbearing mother rips her and her little sister away from their beloved Papa, one tiny, rebellious corner of Raquelita's heart is grateful that the bus is crowded, and the only seat left is out of Mama's sight. Next to a handsome young man.

Matthew Buchanan's beautiful traveling companion is more than something pretty to look at before he ships out for Viet Nam. Deep in her sad, whisky-colored eyes he glimpses a new dream to replace the ones he's leaving behind. It breaks his heart to leave Raquelita in her tyrannical mother's hands, but she gifts him with a token of love and a tender promise to exchange letters in secret.

But their first, shy "hello" has reached the ears of Fate. Fate is in the mood to see how far it can push two lonely hearts—to the brink of temptation, desperation, and despair—before they break. Perhaps beyond any hope of healing...

Destiny's Plan Details

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Author : Victoria Saccenti

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From Reader Review Destiny's Plan for online ebook

Jo Barton says

Raquelita Muro and Matthew Buchanan meet by chance on a Greyhound bus ride between Texas and Tallahassee. For both of them the journey is difficult and fraught with emotion. Raquelita is travelling with her difficult and irascible mother, Isobel, and her sweet younger sister, Marité, ostensibly, to make a new start, after her parent's separation, and to stay with family in Florida. Matthew is travelling a very different path, a journey which will take him to Fort Benning and to deployment in Vietnam. The attraction between the gentle Raquelita and idealistic Matthew is instantaneous and they acknowledge that on some primal level, they have found, in each other, their soul mate.

But all is not going to be easy for the young lovers, as fate has a nasty habit of intervening, and Raquelita's abusive mother is disinclined to let Raquelita pursue a relationship with a young man of whom she knows nothing, and, of course, Matthew's deployment brings with it a whole heap of worrying complications. The complexities of life for Raquelita and Matthew is explained well, you feel their angst and suffer emotionally as they face countless setbacks and difficulties. Isobel, on the other hand is manipulative and cruel, with her own complex relationship issues, which dominate throughout the narrative.

Overall, I think that it this is a commendable debut novel and when viewed as a whole, the story works very well, although there were times when I thought that the writing was perhaps a little over complicated, but, I put that down to the exuberance of the debut novel and a new author's enthusiasm for description. What does come across, however, is the fine attention to detail and the obvious love the writer has for both her story and her characters. Destiny's Plan is unashamedly romantic, but to counteract the sweetness, there is also the anguish of survival, the darkness of people scarred by hurt, and the deeper passion which comes from overcoming adversity. I liked how the story developed, there was so much to consider, not just about the pain and anguish of young love, but also the irresistible notion that, eventually, love can conquer all.

I am confident that as the Destiny's Plan series progresses, the author will continue to go from strength to strength, and I will watch, with great interest, to see how this exciting series plays out.

Lorena Blanco says

Subtle, elegant and full of wonderful landscapes, this classical romance novel was very nice to read, from the purity and novelty of first love, to the discovery of adult love, it navigates through different characters, some pure, some very damaged, some suffering with unrequited love. I especially loved the calm and flowing pace of the story, which reminisced a long gone lifestyle.

Donna Porter says

Raquelita Muro and Matthew Buchanan were destined to be soul mates however they didn't know it as yet. The only reason I didn't give this book a five star is because the author lost me at times with all the big words she used to explain certain things and feelings in their lives. This is a very long book so it will take you a few days to read. Raquelita and her sister Martine were traveling with their mother to a relatives in Florida. They left their Texas home with their father when they got divorced. Lita had to sit with a stranger on the bus for

two days. She had lead a very sheltered life for her seventeen years. Her and Matthew hit it off instantly but she hid this from her stict mother, Isabel. By the end of the trip they both felt they were in love and would keep in touch. Lita gave Matt her medal to protect him. There are a lot of players in this book to Lita's father and step mother and her mother and Xavi her mother's sutor and father's best friend. Jonas and Coralina Lita's aunt and uncle and Lorrie her cousin plus many more along the way. This book isn't boring if you can get past some of the words. The spanish was fine it was just some of the ways the author explained things. Otherwise, this is a great love story in many ways for three couples but mostly the connection with Lita and Matt as he goes into the service during the vietnam conflict. A very good read This book does contain profanity and sex scenes so it isn't for all. The story is great

Stephanie Collins says

I have very conflicted feelings about this book. There were clear and distinct positives and some aspects that just weren't for me. First the positive:

This book has remained thought-provoking long after the last page was read. It's always a good thing when a book becomes the topic of discussion on a lengthy car trip. Sprinkled throughout the book were a number of passages that just read beautifully - poetic and musical with great depth of feeling. There were also times when I was completely immersed in the emotion of the characters - from bursting joy to utter devastation - always a thrilling trip, and I was surprised with some interesting, unexpected plot twists.

On the negative side: The story read a bit long for me, and lagged at times. I feel the storyline could have been tightened up some, to great effect. This is really 2 love stories, one for a daughter and one for a mother. I enjoyed the main story - that of the daughter. I was confused and rather turned off by the mother's love story. While it provided an abundance of intriguing thoughts about the wide spectrum of lingering effects of abuse, I don't feel it necessarily added to the story. There was also a supernatural slant to the story that I felt rather detracted from the integrity of the tale. My favorite part of the book was the intense anticipation that built toward the reunion at the end, after a long-suffered separation, and the demonstration of unconditional and steadfast love.

Pearls says

My favorite part of this historical romance novel is that it explores so many different types of love. Young love, unrequited love, mature love, free love, familial love. It also explores duty, to your country, your family, your loved one, and to your own self. The Vietnam War, a time of epic social upheaval, is the perfect setting for this exploration as Raquelita and her family are faced with changes, both within and outside their family. Is a chance meeting on a bus part of Destiny's Plan, and if so, what is that plan? Get swept up in the winds of change as one twist after the other leaves you wondering what the ultimate outcome will be.

Barbara says

Destiny's Plan is a story of love at first sight that faces many challenges. Raquelita is leaving the only home she has ever known. Traveling with her mother and sister, she takes an empty seat next to a handsome young soldier, and her life changes forever.

Isabel, her mother, also has her own story in Destiny's Plan. She is relocating to Florida after her divorce and will soon realize that this event has been orchestrated by one who has loved her from afar. She and Raquelita

will face many obstacles to their romances, each growing in awareness and maturity as the events progress.

The timeframe of this novel encompasses the Vietnam War, and Matthew will experience hardships that threaten his happiness with Raquelita. The subject is handled with respect and lends another level of emotion to this engaging book.

Ms. Saccenti writes beautifully. "They sat in silence, each immersed in the other. Words would only be superfluous. And as Raquelita and Matthew reposed, the wizened old oak, with its ancient, shading limbs, enclosed the lovers within its benevolent protection for a long, long, while."

Passages such as this are throughout the book and brought a smile to this lover of words. 5 stars.

Teresita says

I had the immense pleasure of reading an early draft of this story ~ in a word: Captivating!

You will be absorbed into this story on so many levels. The innocent and instant connection between Raquelita and Matthew is as real as anyone that has been blessed with love at first sight and will make believers out of others.

The first novel from the talented Victoria Saccenti Author, transports you to another time, when the country was discovering the awareness of love, life and the world.

This story is a definite pre-order and must have for anyone that appreciates a well-written story, will fully developed characters, riveting story plots, and a romance that your heart and mind will not forget.

Itsy Bitsy Book Bits says

Rating four stars

Destiny's Plan by Victoria Saccenti was a phenomenal book and I absolutely loved it. I love historical fiction and I thought that was one of the best elements of this story. It's interlaced with history that adds to the drama and poignancy that I always gravitate toward when finding a good book to read. I felt like I was inside of the book the entire time I was reading it. I was emotionally invested in the story while I was reading. I felt everything. Being severely visually impaired, everything in life for me is sensory, including reading. I experienced everything the characters experience and I loved this book. I felt like the author had a great connection to the era she wrote about even in her own world that is this book. The characters are relatable and loveable. I have always been a lover of romance and a believer in fate and destiny. Destiny's Plan is a must read for everyone, this book will make believers out of people who weren't before.

April (TwilightTINK) says

This is such a terrific coming of age story. Set in the 1960's, it is the story of two young people who meet on the train - Raquelita heading to a new life and Matthew heading to war. It was love at first sight.

It is the story of fate and destiny. Beautifully written, it kept my interest. It showcases an interesting part of our history and tells a wonderfully compelling story.

Great first book from a new author.

Joannemaria says

It took me a long time to read because of medical conditions but it was so worth it. Matthew and Raquel's love is timeless, love destined. The time period, 1960's, brought me back to a special time in my life. The events and music helped me travel to this wonderful, sad and unforgettable place. Thank you Victoria-for the ride.

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Amanda's review posted at Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews

Destiny's Plan is a coming of age story, of first love and lost, and their journey to be together again. It was a chance meeting on a Greyhound bus that Raquel Muro meets Matthew Buchanan and both their lives will change forever. Its 1967 and they are going in different directions but find solace with one another on the long bus trip. Over a course of hours they fall in love with and make a spiritual connection to one another. This story covers their journey and how they deal with their separation for the next two and a half years. It is an extraordinary story during a perilous time and a bittersweet ending for 2 well deserving characters.

This story resonated with me because I could totally empathize with the character of Raquel and the relationship with her mother Isabel. It wasn't a very nurturing relationship and it looked more like Raquel was the mother and Isabel was the child instead. With her mother's recent divorce and decision to move to Florida, Raquel's life has been turned upside down and she is feeling lost in the shuffle. I can see how meeting Matthew and finding tenderness and understand so appealing when it was never something given freely. Things get twisted for Raquel when she believes he has perished in Vietnam and turns to friends for sympathy after things go terribly wrong with her mother. Feeling her only recourse is to run away, she accompanies her friends to New York and that takes her from the frying pan into the fire. Things get much worse with dire health consequences for Raquel. All is not lost because there is a happy ending for Raquel and Matthew and I thought it was well done how it all comes about at the end of the story.

The story was written in two parts and the beginning dragged on much too long for me. Not only was there the story of Raquel and Matthew but also Isabel's. Her story also is part of this book and her new relationship with her ex-husband's best friend, Xavi. There were multiple people introduced and their points of views were mixed throughout which distracted from the main characters storyline. In retrospect I understand why it was necessary to better understand Isabel's behavior but I think it could have been condensed a bit because to me it dragged on far too long. Once part two began the story became totally engaging and I wanted to hurry and finish it so I could finally see Raquel and Matthew back together again. It was definitely worth it to finish and end on such a high note.

This is her debut story and overall I thought it was a wonderful book. It will definitely not be the last because there were other characters in it that captured my interest and I was glad to see that a sequel is planned telling the story of the younger sister Marite. Victoria Saccenti is a gifted author and there were wonderful passages throughout Destiny's Plan. If there is such an entity as destiny, karma or fate out there in the world, it

definitely played a hand in this story.

Review copy provided for an honest review.

Amber Proud says

****This book was provided by the author/publisher to Nerd Girl in exchange for an honest review****

A love story set in the 1960's. I mean who doesn't swoon over those love at first sight and now I'm off to war type storylines? I know I do! So many elements in a story like this. Love, tragedy, loyalty, despair, hardship, happiness and solace. A true love story that hits home for some and brings you to the reality of life itself.

Raquelita is a girl victim of circumstance. After her mothers marriage is destroyed she flees to Florida with her two daughters. How does she get there? A very long bus ride!

Matthew is a young dutiful soldier. Committed to defending his country. Currently on his way to Fort Benning. How does he get there? A bus ride!

A chance meeting. Could be just a random chance or could be destiny stepping in. An instant connection. One that sparks from within the soul. These two never stood a chance. From infatuation to young love. The connection takes its hold and blossoms into full blown out unrequited love!

The journey in which these two embark is that of a realistic, heart wrenching, simplistic and yet crushing story. For many who have lived this story, in this time period can completely relate to it. Between the historical background and the absolutely enchanting plot within the pages, this book is definitely worth the read. I give it 4 stars.

Michelle Ferrari-Johnson says

Such an amazing historical romance and coming of age story! The characters stories are written with passion and factual revelations of the time in which the story is set. Included are the beliefs of old and the powers that be. Your emotions will run from one extreme to another as secrets unfold and tragedy creates reactions. Victoria Saccenti definitely grasps and portrays the hardships of war and how it affects all extentions within a family. Love can definitely conquer all obstacles thrown it's way

Lisa Wolf says

Debut author Victoria Saccenti has written a complex, heart-wrenching tale of a chance meeting that changes lives, and the intricate ways that bonds of family and obligation can both hurt and heal. The love story here is startlingly sudden, but also quite sweet, as Raquelita and Matthew recognize their connection within moments of meeting and somehow manage to establish a bond so strong that it can withstand physical and emotional trauma.

Destiny's Plan has a plot that spans eras and continents, as the author weaves in not only the Vietnam War but also goes back to an important family episode during the Spanish Civil War. The author has clearly done

her research, as the historical elements are well presented. Not only do we get the facts of a deployment to Vietnam and what that might look like, but we also get the sights and sounds of the late 1960s through the inclusion of the music, fashion, and political and social upheavals of the time.

Raquelita's life is hard and complicated. One of the pieces of the story that I most enjoyed was getting to know the members of her family, from her damaged and cruel mother Isabel to her mysterious godfather Xavi, her loving father Emilio, and the aunt, uncle and cousin who give Raquelita a chance to experience a normal, loving home life. Raquelita's younger sister Marité is adorable, and I understand she'll be the central figure in her own book next.

Another element that really appealed to me in *Destiny's Plan* was the fact that love is shown in different ages and stages in this book. Yes, Raquelita and Matthew are the main characters and love story, but we also see several more mature adult relationships as well, and it's both unusual and refreshing to see true love, emotional and physical, shown as not only the territory of the younger generation.

A slight disclaimer: I'm not usually a romance reader, and so I don't have much in the way of comparison. I have a feeling that the plot elements that didn't really work for me in this book are probably things that would appeal to someone who enjoys romances -- but as this is not a preferred genre for me, I had to push myself a bit to get over it. Likewise, I was a bit taken aback by the many explicitly intimate scenes, but again, I think I just generally don't read romances and didn't know what to expect.

Overall, I'd say the time period gives this book an interesting and unusual flavor, and the characters are well-developed and memorable. If you enjoy swooningly romantic stories with underlying drama and painful obstacles, check out *Destiny's Plan*!

Michael Lynes says

'Destiny's Plan' by Victoria Saccenti is a classic Romance novel, beautifully written and realized by this obviously talented author. Set in the depths of the Vietnam War years (1967-69), the story within is as old as time; star-crossed lovers who fall in love at first sight, soul connections and love triangles; separation, perilous trials and a satisfying and unexpected resolution. All can be found in this tale and lovers of this genre will be enthralled. There is also more than a small nod to the classics, with echos of both Shakespeare (*Romeo & Juliet*) and classic Castellan romantic tales throughout the plot.

Our story opens as we are witness to the flight of Isabel Muro and her two young daughters, the seventeen year old Raquelita (Raquel) and her young sister Marite from their father Emilio's horse ranch in Texas. Emilio and Isabel's marriage has collapsed and Isabel is escaping with her daughters to Florida, via a long bus ride. As the author states, "It is on these rare, unintended occasions when paths cross, lives intersect, and the Fates intervene" So it happens that a young soldier, Matthew Buchanan, is also on the bus - on his way from Texas to Fort Benning, Georgia to join the Army and serve in the Vietnam War. The bus is crowded and Raquelita ends up seated next to the handsome Matthew. They experience an immediate connection which blossoms over the course of the journey to full-blown love. On this circumstance the entirety of the story hinges and though their bond is put through torturous trials and strained almost to the brink of destruction it is their love, pure and strong, that carries them and indeed the reader through to the interesting and tension filled conclusion.

I gave this story a rating of four stars, though it was very close to 4.5 out of five. The story lost some points for its somewhat overwrought and overly complicated plotting as well as an unexplained and frankly unnecessary supernatural overtone. That said this is a warm, exciting and rewarding tale and any romance fan will enjoy it immensely. This story would be rated somewhat high on the heat scale as there are several explicit sexual scenes and adult situations involving drug abuse and violence toward women. Certainly

written for a more mature audience.
