

# **Finding the Dream Study Guide**

## **Finding the Dream by Nora Roberts**

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## Plot Summary

"Finding the Dream" is the third novel in the Dream series by Nora Roberts. In this third novel, Laura Templeton has finally gotten her life back on solid ground. Laura is working two part-time jobs to replace the money her ex-husband stole and to care for the family home that has become her joy and burden. Just as she thinks she might have found some peace of mind, Michael Fury, a face from the past, comes into her life like an earthquake, reminding her that she is a woman who is more than employee and mother. Unfortunately, just as Laura admits to herself that she might have finally found the soulmate she has always wanted, Michael ends the relationship. "Finding the Dream" is the perfect conclusion to the Dream series, bringing all three friends, Margo, Kate, and Laura together, and the loves they have always dreamed of having.

Laura turns thirty and finds her life wanting. Laura is a divorced mother of two with two part time jobs and a massive house that is her sole responsibility. While she has the support of four amazing friends and a household staff that are more than employees, but family, Laura finds her life lacking. However, after being burned so badly by her ex-husband, Laura is not ready to open herself to the possibility of being hurt again. Therefore, when her brother asks her to allow his childhood friend, Michael Fury, to rent the stables at Templeton House, the last thing on Laura's mind is romance.

Michael is the same as Laura remembers him, a darkly handsome, dangerous man. Michael has quite a reputation, after having been a merchant marine, a race car driver, a mercenary, and a Hollywood stuntman. However, it appears now that he has finally found his calling, raising horses. Michael is incredibly gentle with his horses, a gentleness that seems to extend to Laura's two daughters, Ali and Kayla.

Josh, Laura's brother, talks Michael into taking Laura to a dance one night to keep her from feeling like a third wheel. This arrangement is uncomfortable for both Laura and Michael as they feel unsuited for one another and as though they are both placing the other in an awkward position. However, when Laura's ex shows up and rubs it into her nose that he is engaged to be married, Michael comes to the rescue by helping Laura show everyone she could care less about her ex. This leads to a moment of intimacy between Laura and Michael, allowing him to confess a desire he has had for her since they were both teenagers. Michael makes it clear he would like to make Laura his lover. At first she resists him, but soon finds Michael irresistible.

When the Templeton House housekeeper learns of Laura's affair with Michael, she is outraged because she believes that Michael is a dangerous man who will only hurt Laura in the end. The housekeeper calls Laura's parents, bringing them home unexpectedly from an overseas trip. While also concerned about Laura, Susan, her mother, sets the housekeeper straight on the kind of man Michael really is and takes a sit back and wait attitude. However, Michael himself has never truly believed he could ever be good enough for Laura and he ends the relationship.



The day Michael breaks up with Laura, she goes for a walk alone along the cliff her home overlooks to work through her emotions. While there, an earthquake strikes, causing Laura to fall several feet to a ledge below. Michael comes to her rescue, placing his own life at risk to save her. Then Michael tries to walk away, to leave Laura to her own life, but she convinces him that they are meant to be together and that he is good enough to be her man.



# Prologue and Chapters 1-3

## Prologue and Chapters 1-3 Summary

"Finding the Dream" is the third novel in the Dream series. In the first book of the series, Margo Sullivan, the daughter of the Templeton housekeeper, found a gold coin from Serafina's dowry shortly before she and Josh Templeton were married. In the second book of the series, Kate Powell, the orphaned ward of the Templetons, also found a gold coin shortly before she and Byron De Witt found love and married. In this novel, it is Laura's turn.

Preface. California, 1888. Felipe visits the cliff where he and Serafina spent so many happy times and where Serafina, hearing reports of Felipe's death in the war, fell to her death. It has been many years now, and Felipe still misses Serafina, but he has lived a good life. Now Felipe wonders briefly if he should recover Serafina's dowry, which he knows she hid on this cliff, but decides to leave it. He hopes that someday two lovers will find it and have a happier life than he and Serafina.

California, 14 years ago. Sixteen year old Laura, Margo, and Kate are sitting on the cliffs below Templeton House, talking about Serafina. They have been searching for Serafina's dowry since they learned of her story, but have failed to find anything. A storm is blowing and Josh, Laura's brother, shows up with Michael Fury to give them a ride back to the house. Margo flirts with Michael, but he only has eyes for Laura.

Chapter 1. It is Laura's eighteenth birthday and she is preparing for the big party her family is throwing for her. Everyone is excited, but all Laura can think of is Peter Ridgeway, the twenty-something executive in the Templeton Hotel chain she has been seeing for several months. Everyone in the family, including Laura's friends Margo and Kate, seem to dislike Peter and Laura's romantic notions of him, but no one has the heart to tell her their true feelings. For this reason, when Peter proposes that night, Laura quickly accepts, unaware of the fact that Peter wants to marry her more because of her social position and her family name than because of love.

Chapter 2. It is Laura's thirtieth birthday. After ten years of marriage, Laura finds herself divorced with two children and two part time jobs as she struggles to return most of the money Peter stole from her in the days before the divorce became final. Anne Sullivan, Templeton House housekeeper, surprises Laura with breakfast in bed. Laura is soon joined by her two daughters, ten year old Ali and eight year old Kayla. Quickly behind them are Margo and Josh, as well as their three month old son, and Kate and her husband Byron. It is a noisy celebration that elevates Laura's spirits a little. Her friends forbid Laura from going to work that day, so she spends the day working in the gardens around Templeton House, trying to pick up the slack for her elderly gardener.

That night, after Laura referees a fight between her daughters, there is a small dinner party with Margo, Kate, and their husbands. Laura enjoys holding Margo's son,



lamenting the fact that she will not have more kids as she had hoped. Josh corners Laura and asks her if it would be possible to rent the horse stables and groom's apartment to his old friend, Michael Fury. Michael has recently returned to the area to raise horses, but his property was destroyed by mudslides. Laura reluctantly agrees, aware that the rent would be a big help in running the house.

Chapter 3. Michael Fury is unhappy having to take a favor from a friend, even if it is his good friend Josh Templeton. However, he hates keeping his horses at a public stable and the idea of keeping them at Templeton stables is very tempting. Michael has lived a wild life, going from the merchant marine to being a mercenary to race car driving to being a Hollywood stunt man. However, he feels now he has finally found his true passion, raising horses. Staying at Templeton stables is only temporary, of course, until he can rebuild his own stables.

When Michael drives up to Templeton stables, he finds himself immersed in many memories of his childhood. His friendship with Josh brought him to this property frequently as a teen even though he grew up on the wrong side of the cliffs and never should have known a world like this. Everyone always thought Michael would lead Josh into trouble, but Michael believes his friendship with Josh is what kept him out of trouble all those years ago.

Michael makes his way into the apartment over the stables and is surprised to find Laura Templeton herself scrubbing out the bathtub. Laura is just as shocked to see him. Laura takes him quickly through a tour of the small place and gives him the keys before escaping as quickly as possible. Later, Laura describes the encounter to Margo and Kate at their shop, Pretenses, comparing Michael to hero Heathcliff of "Wuthering Heights". Margo suggests to Kate that Michael might be a good rebound romance for Laura, but romance is the last thing on Laura's mind. Laura is still struggling to keep herself on an even keel after her disastrous marriage and divorce.

## **Prologue and Chapters 1-3 Analysis**

Laura Templeton and her two good friends, Margo and Kate, are clearly romantics. They fell in love with the tragic story of Serafina and Felipe the moment they heard it and have been searching for Serafina's dowry ever since. Not only this, but Laura's romantic side allowed her to fall crushingly in love at the young age of eighteen and marry a man whose intentions were not as true as she believed them to be. For this reason, Laura finds herself divorced and miserable at the age of thirty.

Laura's marriage was very difficult. Peter ruled everything Laura did as well as everything that happened in the household and with the children. This has left Laura feeling a bit skittish about her own behavior as well as the behavior of people around her. While Laura no longer wants to be told what to do and how to do it, she also is lacking the confidence to live her life the way she wants to. This makes it difficult for Laura to trust new people in her life, making dating an impossibility



Laura's focus in the past two novels has been on fixing her broken heart and her relationship with her children. While Kayla has clearly adjusted to the divorce, Ali still has a great many issues with it. This adds to Laura's stress and her need to focus more on her children's needs than her own. It also suggests a possible roadblock in the future should Laura ever decide to begin dating again.

Michael Fury is a man who comes from a troubled childhood, a man who had a reputation for being a rough guy, a hoodlum, when he was young and who perpetuated that image by living a rough life as an adult. Michael has settled down now, however, and found his passion in horses. This is a lucrative career that shows Michael's gentle side as well as his head for business. However, Michael still sees himself as that teenage hoodlum, suggesting another obstacle to a possible relationship with Laura.



# Chapters 4-7

## Chapters 4-7 Summary

Chapter 4. Michael works for a week, repairing and cleaning the Templeton stables to prepare for his own horses. The stables have not been used since Peter forced Laura to sell their own horses years ago. Shortly after he transfers his horses to the stalls, Michael receives a visit from Laura's daughters, Ali and Kayla. Kayla quickly wins Michael's heart with her openness and her quick affection for each of the horses. Ali holds back, clearly unsure whether she can trust Michael or not. However, both girls fall deeply in love with the horses, especially Max when Michael shows them some of the tricks Max, a Hollywood stunt horse, can do. However, when Max plays dead, Laura panics as she joins them, thinking the horse is really dead. Michael and the girls have a good laugh. Afterward, Laura awkwardly tries to flirt with Michael as they discuss the horses and his need for barn cats. That night, Michael has dinner with Margo and Josh that night, meeting their baby for the first time. Michael is exceedingly good with the baby, surprising everyone.

Chapter 5. Laura brings home not only two tom cats for the stable, but two kittens and a puppy for her daughters. The girls are thrilled, but Laura is a little overwhelmed by her small zoo. The next day, Laura is over tired when she goes to work. Byron tries to talk Laura into taking some time off, but she has a big romance writers' convention coming and she does not feel she can. Then Byron reminds her about the Valentine's dance that night at the club. Laura would like to skip it, but she is expected because it is a Templeton family affair. Unbeknownst to Laura, Josh is at that moment asking Michael to escort Laura to the dance. Margo suggested it because she says that Laura has been feeling like a fifth wheel since Kate and Margo got married. Michael reluctantly agrees. Laura is angry when she learns what Josh has done, but cannot find a graceful way to get out of it. Therefore, when Michael picks her up, Laura makes it clear that he is only her escort and she does not expect him to spend the entire evening with her.

Chapter 6. Although Laura made it clear she did not intend to spend the evening with Michael, she manages to remain at his side much of the evening. When Kate and Byron arrive, Michael hits it off with Byron immediately. Laura and Margo have a brief argument when Josh and Margo arrive, causing her to rush off to the ladies' room. While in there, Laura runs into a friend whose daughter likes to ride horses, so she suggests the woman contact Michael to buy one of his horses for the daughter. When Laura tells Michael this, he is grateful. Moments later, Laura's ex-husband arrives with his new girlfriend, Candy. Candy makes a big show of the engagement ring on her finger, rubbing it into Laura's nose. Laura's first concern is having this woman as her children's stepmother, surprising Michael. When Laura wants to leave, Michael encourages her to stay, to show everyone that Peter's actions do not bother her. Michael then takes her to the dance floor and kisses her passionately. Then, on the drive home, Michael makes it clear to Laura that he wants to make her his lover, but he promises he will be patient enough to allow her to come to him.





Chapter 7. Kayla has become a regular visitor to the stables, and Michael enjoys hearing her talk while he works. Three days after the dance at the country club, Kayla admits to Michael that she is glad that her father is no longer a part of the family because she does not believe he ever loved any of them anyway. Michael is saddened by this and makes him dislike Peter Ridgeway even more. Later, Michael goes up to the house to see Laura and is sidetracked by a visit to the kitchen with Mrs. Williamson. Michael credits Mrs. Williamson for saving him as a teen. He flirts with her and is rewarded with cookies and coffee. When Ann Sullivan comes into the room, however, an instant chill arrives with her. Kayla comes into the room and directs Michael to where he can find Laura. When Michael comes across Laura in the solarium, she is asleep. Michael wakes her with a kiss. Laura gets upset, but does not send him away. Michael tells her he sold a horse to her friend and offers to take her to dinner to thank her, but Laura refuses. The girls then join them and Michael is surprised by the amazing drawing Kayla presents him with. Michael then offers to give riding lessons to both Ali and Kayla.

## Chapters 4-7 Analysis

Michael meets both of Laura's children and quickly falls for Kayla. The relationship between Michael and Kayla is instant and easy. It takes a little longer for Ali to come around to Michael, but he likes her just as well. Michael instantly takes on the role of male role model to the girls without really wanting to or intending to. However, these girls are so desperate for a father figure that they cannot resist Michael's easy manner. At the same time, Michael clearly is a man who yearns for a family despite his rough past, as evidenced by his easy manner with both Laura's girls and Margo's baby. This suggests a possible place for Michael in Laura's family.

There is a great deal of tension between Michael and the household staff at Templeton House, especially between Michael and Ann Sullivan. Ann is a strong woman who takes her role at Templeton House very seriously, especially her role as caretaker to Laura. For this reason, Michael desperately wants her approval but has placed himself in a position to bring down her wrath on himself. The reader must wonder what it is that Ann dislikes about Michael beyond his reputation as a hoodlum as a teen, as it is clear that Ann is not a person who easily judges those around her.

Laura finds Michael alluring, exciting, in a way she has never found another man. When Laura's ex-husband announces he is remarrying, it causes Laura some grief, but more for her children than herself, making it clear she is over her ex and ready to move on romantically. However, when Michael admits to a crush on Laura that has roots to their teens and a desire to make her his lover, Laura hesitates. Laura has only had one lover and the idea of taking on a casual lover has little appeal to her. Deep down, Laura continues to be something of a romantic and she wants more than the casualness of the type of relationship Michael is suggesting. However, the fact that she is so drawn to him suggests that Laura will eventually give, leaving the reader wondering if this is only going to leave her vulnerable to another broken heart.



# Chapters 8-11

## Chapters 8-11 Summary

Chapter 8. It is Sunday. Laura and her daughters are on the cliffs with Kate and Margo, searching for Serafina's dowry as they have done every week since they were kids. Ali hounds Laura about buying a horse, deciding that she is now an expert horsewoman since Michael has been giving her lessons. Conversation then turns to Peter's upcoming wedding and Laura finds herself sickened by the idea of Candy as her daughters' stepmother. Laura tells the girls to set up lunch to end the conversation. Alone with Margo and Laura, Kate announces that she thinks she might be pregnant. Then Michael surprises them all with an appearance. Michael pulls Laura aside and tells her that he thinks Ali is a natural horse rider and that she might think about getting her a more experienced teacher. Laura becomes annoyed because it seems that Michael can read her daughters better than she. They snip at each other for a minute and then Michael leaves.

That night Laura cannot sleep because of erotic dreams of Michael. Laura goes for a walk and finds herself watching the stables, therefore she sees Michael when he rushes down into the stables from his apartment. Laura rushes after him, afraid something is wrong. When she arrives, Laura discovers that Michael's pregnant mare is in labor. Laura goes into the stall to help deliver the foal, finding herself forced to calm Michael more than the laboring horse.

Chapter 9. Laura and Michael spend hours sitting with the laboring horse, talking about the past. Michael tells Laura about his mother's three marriages and how he came to deal with them. This leads to Michael confessing how he once got into a fist fight with his mother's second husband because he was beating his mother. Michael then came to Templeton House where Mrs. Williamson and Josh took care of his wounds and offered him support and a place to stay after his mother threw him out. Michael joined the merchant marine shortly after that. As the conversation grew too uncomfortable for Michael, the foal began to emerge. Within minutes, the horse had delivered a beautiful filly. Michael allows Laura to pick a name for the filly and then sends her home to rest.

When Laura arrives in the kitchen at Templeton House, Ann Sullivan sees her ruffled appearance and the blood on her clothing and quickly assumes that Michael attacked her. Laura sets her straight before realizing that it is morning and she has to be at a meeting in less than an hour. After Laura rushes off to change, Ann Sullivan goes to the stables with muffins for Michael and to verify Laura's story. Ann is surprised to find the stable clean and the horses well cared for, but it does little to change Ann's opinion of Michael. Michael is equally surprised to learn that Laura works for a living and has to go to work that day despite her long night.

Chapter 10. Laura is exhausted when she arrives at Pretenses for her afternoon shift. Margo and Kate tease Laura for spending the night with Michael but not being intimate



with him. Then Peter walks into the store. Laura and Peter go for a walk. Peter tells Laura that he wants the girls at his wedding because it is expected. Laura asks Peter if he loves the girls and after working around the question for a few minutes, finally admits that he does not care for them as he should. Peter then admits that he never really loved Laura either. Although this is hard for Laura to hear, it is a kind of closure.

When Laura arrives home, she goes to the stable to see her children. Michael yells at her for going to work that morning as they watch the girls ride in the paddock. Ali rides over to the fence to introduce her mother to the horse she is riding. Ali tells her mother that she would like to buy the horse with money in her savings account. When Laura balks at the idea, because the money is no longer there even though Ali is not aware of this, Ali becomes angry and sasses her mother. Laura walks away. However, Michael is angry and he tells Ali that she is no longer allowed to ride his horses until she apologizes to her mother. Michael then tells her that if he ever sees her do such a thing again, he will spank her. Ali is shocked and immediately runs off. However, Kayla knows where she has gone and leads Michael to find her.

Chapter 11. Ali goes to an alcove in the garden that is her favorite spot in the gardens. When she arrives, however, she finds her mother is already there. Laura is crying. When Ali speaks to her, Laura quickly tries to reign in her tears. Michael and Kayla come upon the scene and Michael quickly takes Kayla away. Ali apologizes to her mother and they talk for a few minutes about Peter and the divorce, setting a few facts straight. Later, Ali goes to the stables and apologizes to Michael for her behavior. Then Ali asks if he really would have spanked her and he makes it clear he would have. The following day, Michael goes to the hotel where Laura is the special events coordinator. There is a romance conference just beginning and Laura is going crazy trying to stay ahead of the chaos. Michael follows her around for a few minutes, then before he leaves he gives her a big kiss in front of the head of the writers' conference.

## Chapters 8-11 Analysis

Laura spends the night with Michael, helping him deliver a foal. They talk and Laura learns things about Michael's turbulent childhood she never knew. The reader has new insight to Michael and his character, as well as possible reasons why Ann Sullivan does not like him. Michael had a terrible time after his father deserted the family and his mother married an abusive man, forcing Michael to take on a role at eighteen he never should have had to take on, defender of his mother.

Ann Sullivan reacts oddly when she finds Laura covered in blood and returning from the stables. Ann clearly thinks that Michael attacked Laura, but the reader must wonder where this conviction comes from. The reader knows that Michael was something of a wild child, that he appeared to be troubled, when he was young. However, despite his strange jobs and his instability, it is clear to the reader that Michael is a good man. The reader is left wondering what Ann knows about him that could be the cause of her concerns.



Laura and Ali finally have a confrontation, brought on by Michael's refusal to allow Ali to be rude to her mother, leading to a truce between them. At the same time, Laura has a final confrontation with Peter and learns what she has probably understood longer than she realizes, that he never really loved her or their daughters. This is a painful realization, but it also allows Laura some closure in her relationship with Peter, to allow her to move on with her life.



# Chapters 12-16

## Chapters 12-16 Summary

Chapter 12. That night Laura goes home feeling good, content with her life. Laura bathes and dresses, realizing at the last minute that she is preparing to go see Michael. This causes her to hesitate, especially when she reaches the steps outside his apartment. Instead of going up, Laura goes into the stable to check on the foal. Michael comes down and confronts Laura. After a few minutes, he demands that she admit she has come to submit to him. When she does, Michael takes Laura into an empty stall and they spend most of the night making love. The following morning, when she wakes, Michael makes love to Laura again before taking her upstairs to find some clothes to replace the ones that were ripped the night before. When Laura goes back to the house, Ann Sullivan catches her sneaking in. Ann demands to know what is going on. Laura makes it clear that her relationships are her business and tells Ann to stay out of it. Instead, Ann calls Laura's parents. That afternoon, Laura tells Kate and Margo all about her night with Michael.

Chapter 13. Michael has sold another of his horses and plans to use the money to buy another mare and her foal. Byron comes by to invite Michael to a game of poker and finds himself making an offer on one of the bays. That night, Michael waits impatiently for Laura to come to him. When she finally does, they quickly make their way to bed. Afterward, Michael tells Laura about Byron buying one of his horses, and that leads to a conversation about marriage. They spend the night together and Laura again finds herself sneaking into her own house. Michael follows a short time later to have breakfast with Mrs. Williamson. Laura comes into the kitchen in a rush, worried about an early meeting she forgot. Laura has no one to take the girls to school, so Michael volunteers.

Chapter 14. Taking the girls to school is a trial for Michael, but he manages to do it without going completely insane. Laura has a busy, hectic day, but manages to get home feeling content once more. Laura sneaks out the side door to check the garden because her parents are expected the next day and she wants everything to look perfectly. While cleaning out the pool, Michael comes across her and demands to know why she is doing such a thing. When Laura tells him there is no one else to do it, he tries to do it for her, but she will not allow it. This leads to a fight and soon Michael has Laura in his arms and he jumps into the pool. They frolic together for a few minutes and are surprised to be caught by Laura's mother who has arrived home early.

Chapter 15. Laura sits in the study with her father and they talk for a few minutes about business. Then Susan comes down and sends Tom up to read the girls a story. Susan then questions Laura about Michael and is somewhat satisfied that her daughter knows what she is doing. However, that night Susan watches Laura walk on the cliffs from the tower bedroom she shares with her husband and expresses sadness that Laura has yet to find a relationship like theirs. Laura, out on the cliffs, thinks how content she is with



her life and wonders if Michael expects her to come to him that night. He does, but becomes angry when he sees her on the cliffs, thinking that she will not come because she is concerned about what her parents will think. However, it is him turning off his lights that causes Laura not to go to him. Instead, she sits on a ledge on the cliffs and finds a gold coin like the ones Kate and Margo have found.

Chapter 16. Michael is working with a sorrel colt when Susan comes out to the paddock and comes under the false conclusion that Michael plans to beat the colt. Instead, Michael shows Susan that he has been trying to teach the colt a movie trick. Susan is impressed with Michael and his work with his horses. However, she warns him not to hurt her daughter. That afternoon, Laura shows Kate and Margo the coin she found the night before. Margo claims it is a sign that Laura has fallen in love with her soulmate. Laura refuses to admit her feelings, however. That night, Michael attends a poker game at Byron's house with Josh and his father, Tom. Michael is uncomfortable at first, but soon gains the upper hand by making both Byron and Josh think that he has had intimate relations with their wives. Tom finds Michael amusing, and a suitable rival at the card table. At the same time, Laura, Margo, Kate, Susan, and Ann are at Templeton House watching old movies and eating junk food with champagne.

## Chapters 12-16 Analysis

Laura and Michael become lovers despite Laura's fears of having a casual relationship. Laura finds the sex to be nothing like she has known in the past and this causes her to become confident, stronger, to feel whole again. At the same time, Michael is clearly enjoying himself, but he constantly reminds himself that it is a casual affair, a temporary thing, that will not last.

Michael's lack of confidence in himself is becoming more and more clear to the reader. Even as Laura opens herself to Michael and begins to allow him in in a way that she has not done with anyone in a long time, Michael is becoming guarded, trying to keep her out while enjoying the physical side of their relationship. It is clear that Michael still sees himself as the hoodlum teenager and not the successful businessman he has become. It is also clear that Michael sees Laura as a privileged woman who is used to a certain standard of people. Michael is clearly wrong on both counts.

Laura's parents return unexpectedly from overseas after Ann Sullivan's call. Laura is straightforward with her mother, telling her the truth about her relationship with Michael. Susan is surprised, but not upset. In fact, Susan hopes that Michael can give Laura what she has longed for most of her life, but is worried that he might break her heart. It is a concern any mother might have for her adult child. However, it is clear to the reader that both of Laura's parents like Michael and have no intention in interfering. Any interference on their behalf is limited to Michael's own insecurities.



# Chapters 17-21

## Chapters 17-21 Summary

Chapter 17. Michael does well playing cards against Josh, Byron, and Tom. During play, Michael picks up little bits of information about Laura, including the fact that she sold her wedding ring from Peter to help start Pretenses. He also learns about the coins each woman found over the past two years. When Michael finally makes his way home late that night, he finds Laura drunk and waiting for him. Laura has lost some of her inhibitions with the alcohol and Michael finds himself enjoying completely her actions.

Chapter 18. Laura wakes the next morning with a terrible hangover. As she leaves Michael's, she runs into him on the stairs outside his apartment. Michael gives her advice on how to deal with the hangover. When Laura expresses regret at spending the entire night, Michael becomes annoyed and sends her away quickly. That night, there is a dinner party but Laura is so tired that she misses most of it. Ann expresses her concern to Susan. When Ann tells Susan that Michael's mother once told her that he beat her, Susan quickly sets Ann straight. Susan tells Ann that Michael's mother lied out of embarrassment and that Michael actually tried to defend her and she kicked him out.

The next day, Laura goes horseback riding with Michael. They talk a little and he tells her about his previous marriage. It turns out Michael married a casual lover who had become pregnant, but she lost the baby four months into the pregnancy. The marriage turned sour and they chose to divorce. Laura is touched by this story, as it shows another side to Michael. However, Michael sees it as the beginning of the end. Michael then tells Laura that he has to go to Los Angeles for a few days.

Chapter 19. Michael has been gone for two weeks and has not called Laura. Laura is annoyed that he feels he can ignore her in this way. To add to Laura's unhappiness, tonight is Ali's ballet recital and Ali is in a terrible mood. However, all this changes when Michael arrives unexpectedly, apparently keeping a promise he made to Ali to attend the recital. At the recital, Michael finds himself thinking about the resolution he made, to end his affair with Laura before it can go much further. At the same time, Margo tells Josh that Laura and Michael are lovers. Josh confronts Michael the following day. They argue and nearly come to blows. This only seems to reinforce for Michael the fact that he is not good enough for Laura and should end it before she realizes it too. That night, Michael tells Laura it's over. Laura becomes angry, busting up the apartment and announcing that she loved him.

Chapter 20. Laura leaves, going to the cliffs to clear her mind. Michael wants to go after her, but he knows that they cannot be together and to prolong things will only make it worse. Instead, Michael goes into the stable with the horses. A few minutes later, as Laura stands on the edge of the cliff imagining the rest of her life without love, an earthquake hits. Michael's first thought after the quake is Laura. Michael rushes to the cliff and finds her lying on a ledge. Michael carefully climbs down, quickly searching for





a pulse. Michael is relieved to find that Laura is alive, but she has hit her head and dislocated her shoulder. When Laura wakes, pain overwhelms her. Michael carefully pushes her arm back into place. Then Michael leaves to get Max and a rope so he can pull Laura back up the cliff. Before he returns, Laura finds Serafina's dowry hidden in a small cave behind the ledge. When Michael comes back, she makes him promise he will return for the dowry. Michael lifts Laura up the cliff and carries her home. Ann Sullivan and Mrs. Williamson are frantic, but relieved to find them safe. Everyone arrives soon after and Michael slips away in the chaos. Josh follows Michael and insists that he allow Mrs. Williamson to see to his injuries. Michael insists he must get the dowry for Laura, so Josh and Byron decide to help.

Chapter 21. Laura, Margo, and Kate are thrilled to have finally found the dowry. They look through it, finding many pieces of jewelry, a bag of coins, and a diary. Laura suggests they place the collection on display at Pretenses. At the same time, Ann Sullivan goes to Michael's and insists on treating his wounds. As she works, Ann tells Michael that he has always underestimated himself and that he should stop. Later, Michael runs into Kayla and Ali. Michael feels bad when he realizes how much they have come to depend on him. In the house, Michael confronts Laura. They argue for a time. Laura then convinces Michael that his worries that he is not good enough for her are all in his head and never anything she ever thought. Finally, Michael gives in to his desires and asks Laura to marry him.

## Chapters 17-21 Analysis

Michael plays poker with Tom, Byron and Josh only to find himself fitting in perfectly with the group. It seems a natural friendship has grown up between Michael, Byron and Tom that complements the friendship Michael has always had with Josh. This seems to be a plus for Michael's relationship with Laura. However, as the plot continues, it becomes more and more clear that Michael has fallen in love with Laura and this has caused him to become afraid of losing her. For this reason, Michael convinces himself that he is not good enough for Laura, that she will one day realize that, and that he should end the relationship before she does.

Michael's insecurities have been hinted at throughout the novel. The reader knows all about Michael's difficult childhood and how Ann Sullivan has always thought he was dangerous. However, it is also clear that Ann's beliefs were based on a lie. The reader can see that Michael is a good man and it is clear that Laura's family sees that as well. This is only made more clear by Michael going out of his way to keep a promise to Ali to attend her ballet recital.

Josh learns of Laura's relationship with Michael and becomes angry, afraid that his friend is only using his sister. However, after the earthquake it is obvious to everyone that Michael loves Laura. Michael risked his life to save hers, therefore it is clear that if not for his own doubts they could live happily together. For this reason, both Josh and Ann encourage Michael to overcome his own insecurities and embrace what he wants.



Laura does her part as well and eventually Michael comes around, asking Laura to marry him. Clearly it is meant to be. After all, Laura found Serafina's dowry.



# Characters

## Laura Templeton

Laura Templeton is a young woman who was raised in privilege and married young, a romantic woman who thought she had found the man of her dreams. Instead, Laura found herself in an unhappy marriage with an unpleasant man she could not please no matter what she did. In the end, Laura found her husband in bed with another woman and filed for divorce, choosing to end the marriage rather than continue to live such an unhappy existence. Unfortunately, Laura's oldest daughter, Alison, blames her for the divorce and the fact that her father never comes to visit.

Laura lost most of her money before the divorce when her husband emptied all their joint accounts, including their daughters' college funds and personal savings. For this reason, Laura works two part time jobs in an attempt to pay for the expense of the family home and to replace all the money her ex-husband stole. This leaves Laura exhausted and unable to find time to date. It also places further strain on Laura's relationship with her children.

When Michael Fury comes to live on the Templeton estate in order to house his horses in their stables, he rekindles a past relationship with Laura, taking it to a level she has never experienced before. Laura quickly falls in love, but Michael holds many misconceptions about Laura that causes them a number of difficulties. In the end, however, Michael overcomes his fears and misunderstandings, proposing to Laura.

## Michael Fury

Michael Fury was a trouble maker as a teen, a friend of Josh Templeton who seemed to threaten the privilege boy's future. However, Michael credits the Templeton housekeeper, Mrs. Williamson with saving him. Michael has lived a nomad's life, moving from one wild career to another. Michael was a merchant marine, a mercenary, a race car driver, and a Hollywood stuntman. Michael now has a horse business in which he buys and trains horses to sell. Unfortunately, Michael's property was destroyed by a mudslide, so Josh offers to allow Michael to rent the stables and groom apartment on the Templeton estate until he can rebuild.

Michael has always had a crush Laura, but has always felt he was too far below her socially to be a fitting companion. However, now that Laura is divorced and Michael is single, he expresses his desire to become her lover. Laura eventually gives in to Michael's overtures and they become lovers. Michael suffers many misconceptions about Laura because of her privilege upbringing and the way in which she continues to live, misconceptions that are slowly changed as he gets to know her better. However, his conviction that he is not good enough for her continues to haunt him.



When Josh confronts Michael and tells him to leave Laura alone, Michael becomes set in his decision to end his relationship with her. However, Laura does not take the end well. Laura goes to the cliffs to think about what Michael has said and an earthquake causes her to fall over the edge. Michael saves her, proving to everyone that he loves her. Laura confronts him and Michael eventually relents, asking Laura to marry him.

## **Margo Sullivan Templeton**

Margo Sullivan is the daughter of the Templeton housekeeper, therefore she grew up in the house with Laura, Kate, and Josh. Margo became a supermodel, traveling all over the world and taking many lovers. However, in the first novel of this series, Margo found herself down on her luck and returned home. Margo and Josh, Laura's brother, have always been close, but in the first book of the series love blossoms between them. In this novel, Margo and Josh are married and are the parents of a three month old baby. Margo, Laura's best friend, remains her close confidant, pushing her toward and encouraging her to have a relationship with Michael.

## **Kate Powell De Witt**

Kate Powell is an orphan who became a ward of the Templetons as a young girl. For this reason, Kate grew up with Laura, Margo, and Josh. In the second book of this series, Kate fell in love with and married Byron De Witt, the new executive with Templeton Hotels. In this novel, Kate continues to be Laura's best friend, encouraging her to move on with her life after her disaster of a marriage. Kate also learns she and Byron are to be parents.

## **Josh Templeton**

Josh Templeton is Laura's brother. It is Josh who arranges for Michael to move into the Templeton stables after his property is destroyed by a mudslide because Michael and Josh have been close friends since childhood. Josh is not happy, however, when he learns that Michael and Laura have become lovers because he knows that Michael often uses women and he does not want his sister hurt. However, when he sees that Michael truly loves Laura, he encourages them to stay together.

## **Peter Ridgeway**

Peter Ridgeway is Laura's ex-husband. Peter is a selfish man who only married Laura because of her family. Peter imagined that by marrying Laura he would rise in the Templeton Hotel organization and have the social standing he has always desired. However, Peter never truly loved Laura and he makes her life miserable for ten years. In this novel, Laura confronts Peter and demands to know if ever loved her or their two children. Peter admits that he did not despite his best intentions. This allows Laura to move on with her life.



## Allison Ridgeway

Allison Ridgeway is Laura's oldest daughter. At ten, Ali is very intelligent and judgmental. Ali blames her mother for her father's lack of concern as far as his daughters are concerned and for this reason takes out a great deal of her unhappiness on her mother. As the novel progresses, Ali comes to the understanding that her father does not love her because of his own failings and that her mother has done the best she can. Ali also becomes close to Michael, finding that she can trust him in ways that she never could trust her father.

## Kayla Ridgeway

Kayla is Laura's youngest daughter. At eight, Kayla is a beautiful, artistic young girl who has a real talent for drawing. Kayla falls in love with Michael on their first meeting and quickly draws him into her little world. It is his relationship with Kayla that often pulls Michael into Laura's world in the first few weeks he lives at the stables and Kayla that makes the idea of walking away incredibly painful for Michael.

## Ann Sullivan

Ann Sullivan is the Templeton House housekeeper and Margo's mother. Ann is a very straight-laced woman who considers Margo, Kate, Laura, and Josh all her own children because she cared for all of them most of their lives. Ann dislikes Michael despite all he does to try to win her approval because his mother once told Ann that Michael hit her. Ann worries that Michael might beat Laura one day. However, Ann soon learns that this information is untrue and she goes to Michael, telling him that she was wrong and that he is a good man.

## Tom and Susan Templeton

Tom and Susan Templeton are Laura and Josh's parents. Tom and Susan come home when Ann Sullivan calls them to tell them that Laura has begun having an affair with Michael. Tom and Susan are concerned about Laura and Susan has a talk with Michael, warning him to be good to her daughter. However, Susan sees that Laura is happy with Michael and hopes that he can give her the kind of relationship that she knows her daughter craves.

## Mrs. Williamson

Mrs. Williamson is the Templeton's cook. Mrs. Williamson was with the family when Michael was a teenager and she took him under her wing, helping him in a way that his own mother was unable to do. It was Mrs. Williamson's belief in Michael that he credits with keeping out of trouble when he was a kid. Michael often teases Mrs. Williamson

that he would like to marry her, making her one of his biggest supporters in the Templeton household.



## Objects/Places

### Kayla's Drawings

Kayla is a very talented artist at eight years old. Kayla draws a horse for Michael that blows him away.

### Gold Coins

When each of the girls, Margo, Kate, and Laura, find themselves admitting to themselves they are in love, they find a gold coin they believe comes from Serafina's dowry.

### Serafina's Dowry

Serafina is a young lover who once killed herself on the cliffs outside the current location of the Templeton House. Serafina is rumored to have hidden her dowry in the cliffs somewhere. Laura, Margo, and Kate have been searching for the dowry since they were kids.

### Ballet Recital

Ali takes ballet classes. When she has a recital, Ali invites Michael to come and is surprised when he remembers and actually shows up.

### Cliffs

There are cliffs overlooking the ocean behind Templeton House. Laura often goes here when she wants to be alone. While walking here after Michael breaks up with her, an earthquake causes Laura to fall and injure herself. The fall also allows Laura to finally find Serafina's dowry.

### Pretenses

Pretenses is the name of the store Laura, Margo, and Kate opened together.

### Tower

Shortly before their marriage, Tom Templeton added a tower to Templeton House to house a bedroom for himself and his new bride, Susan. From the windows in the tower, Susan and Tom can see the cliffs.



## **Templeton Stables**

Michael rents the Templeton Stables and the groom's apartment after a mudslide destroys his own property. This places Michael in Laura's backyard, forcing them in close proximity to one another.

## **Templeton House**

The Templeton House is a large home that sits on the cliffs above Monterrey. The house has been home to the Templeton family for many generations and Laura Templeton has recently taken custody of the home, using her own earning to pay the household bills.

## **Templeton Hotels**

Templeton Hotels are luxury hotels all over the world owned by the Templeton family. Laura is employed by the Templeton Hotel in Monterrey.



# Themes

## Parent-Child Relationships

There are multiple parent-child relationships in this novel. The first is the obvious one between Laura Templeton and her daughters, Ali and Kayla. Kayla is a sweet, open child and at only eight years old, she seems a great deal more perceptive than some of the adults around her. Kayla is aware that her father is an unkind man incapable of loving those closest to him. At the same time, Kayla falls in love with Michael at first sight, making it clear that Michael is not the bad guy that Ann Sullivan is convinced that he is. At the same time, Ali is a moody, difficult child who openly blames her mother for the divorce between Laura and Peter. This causes a great deal of friction that only adds to the difficulties Laura has had in adjusting to life after ten years of marriage. However, Ali comes to understand, with Michael's indirect help, that Laura is just as injured from the divorce and Peter's callous behavior as everyone else.

Another parent-child relationship in this book is the relationship between Laura and her own parents. Susan and Tom are kind, gentle people who have a strong marriage and want the same for their two children. Susan is concerned that Laura will never find a good partner to share her life with and her fears are doubled with Michael, not because of his reputation as a wanderer. Susan is afraid that Michael will not be able to settle down in one place, to be a part of a large, extended family. However, Susan manages to stay out of it, except to warn Michael that Laura was shattered by the end of her marriage and that she remains fragile.

Ann Sullivan is Margo's mother. However, in this novel she seems more like Laura's mother, worrying over her the way her own mother attempts not to do. Ann Sullivan was told an untruth about Michael Fury once a very long time ago and she continues to believe it. For this reason, Ann worries that Michael might become violent with Laura. When Ann learns the truth, she is the first to go to Michael and try to make things better, to encourage him to follow his heart, as any mother would.

Finally, the relationship between Michael and Mrs. Williamson, while flirtatious and apparently casual, is more of a mother-son relationship than Michael had with his own mother. Mrs. Williamson has pulled Michael to her since he was a teen and was the first to console him after the fight with his stepfather that led to his mother kicking him out. It was also Mrs. Williamson who encouraged Michael to see himself as a good man, helping him stay out of trouble as a teen. For these reasons, parent-child relationships are an important theme of the novel.

## Class Divisions

The Templetons are very wealthy people who own a chain of hotels. Laura and Josh both were raised in wealth, going to private schools and having everything they could





ever possibly want. For this reason, Michael lives under the mistaken idea that Laura remains a privilege woman, spending her days getting her hair and nails done. However, when she filed for divorce from her now ex-husband, Peter raided all of his and Laura's bank accounts, depleting her of all her personal wealth.

Even though Laura is not as privileged as Michael thinks, she is a woman of a respected family who has to make certain concessions to her family name and reputation. For this reason, she gives the impression to Michael that she is still living a life of high class, that she is spoiled and could only marry a man of equal class. Michael was raised on the wrong side of the tracks with a mother who could not hold on to a marriage and who kicked him out when he was eighteen. For this reason, Michael believes everyone in Laura's world sees him as a second class citizen. It is for this reason that Michael convinces himself a relationship with Laura will never work, therefore he decides to break it off with her before she can come to this realization. For this reason, class division is an important theme of the novel.

## True Love

The theme of the Dream series is true love. The novels begin with the story of Serafina and Felipe, doomed lovers who part during war. Serafina hears that Felipe has been killed in battle and she kills herself, unaware that Felipe has faked his death out of embarrassment for his cowardice. Felipe leaves Serafina's dowry hidden in hopes that true lovers will one day find it. This inspires the girls, Margo, Kate, and Laura, to try to find the dowry reportedly hidden in the cliffs near Templeton House.

In the first novel, Margo returns home from an international modeling career broke and in need of her friends. In time, Margo is reunited with Josh Templeton, her childhood friend, only to have love blossom. In the second novel, Kate is a lonely accountant who falls in love with the new Templeton Hotel executive, Byron De Witt. In this novel, Laura, who has suffered a horrible marriage and divorce, finds herself reunited with her brother's childhood friend, Michael Fury. Immediately, lust blossoms leading to love.

Margo, Kate, and Laura have been searching for Serafina's dowry all these years. As each of the women fall in love with their soulmate, they find a gold coin they believe to be from the dowry. Finally, when Laura falls from the cliff during an earthquake and Michael comes to rescue her, she discovers the missing dowry hidden in a small cave. It seems that Felipe's wish, that true lovers will find the dowry, has come true. Each woman found a coin and now that Laura, the last, has found true love, they have found the entire dowry. For this reason, true love is a theme of the novel.



# Style

## Point of View

"Finding the Dream" is written in the third person omniscient point of view. The novel's narrators are many and varied, but the main narrators are Laura Templeton and Michael Fury. Laura begins the novel, taking the reader on a tour of her immediate past, showing how she came to be married to Peter Ridgeway, only to suffer in their marriage and through the divorce. Now Laura is picking up the pieces. Michael takes up the narration, discussing his past and expressing how he has always felt inferior to the Templetons, especially in the light of their housekeeper, Ann Sullivan's, disapproval of him.

The point of view of this novel is a common one, used most often in modern fiction. The point of view allows the author to delve into the thoughts and emotions of her main characters, presenting an intimate view of these characters that is almost, but not quite, as intimate as the first person point of view. This point of view also allows the writer to move from character to character, from the main character to any minor character who might participate in or see an event that is important to the plot, but not something the main character might be aware of. This allows a richer understanding of the plot for the reader, but limits the connection to any one character. This can be a difficult point of view for a reader to maintain without causing confusion for the reader, but this author handles the point of view well.

## Setting

The novel is set primarily at Templeton House in Monterrey, California. The house is a large, luxurious home that has been in the Templeton family for many generations. The house is set near a cliff that overlooks the ocean, a place full of legend and a place where the main character, Laura Templeton, often enjoys walking. The house also has a full set of stables with an apartment that have been abandoned ever since Laura's ex-husband asked her to sell her horses to give her more time to spend on her duties as wife and mother. These stables are taken over by a friend of Laura's brother, Michael Fury, setting up the conflict that will propel most of the plot.

The setting of this novel is a beautiful home in a beautiful setting. The author uses the house both as a backdrop to the story as well as a conflict for one of the characters. The house represents home and safety to the main character, Laura Templeton, but it represents a sense of inadequacy for Michael Fury, giving him a reason to be insecure in his relationship with Laura and eventually end the relationship. At the same time, the author presents the cliffs near the house as a romantic story, the place where a young lover fell to her death out of grief for her lover's death, but also a place of consolation to Laura, who has spent many happy days there with her friends. The cliffs, however, again become a dangerous, dark place when Laura falls from the cliffs during an



earthquake, but it is this earthquake and fall that bring Laura and her lover, Michael, back together. In this way, the author uses her setting well.

## Language and Meaning

The novel is written in simple English. The intended audience is adult women, therefore the language is not simplistic, but it is not overly sophisticated, either. The novel is written with the kind of language one would expect of an educated, but not overly educated, woman. This remains authentic to the main characters of the novel who act as narrators throughout the plot.

The language of the novel works well with the plot because it is the kind of language one would expect of such a romance novel. The novel is filled with intelligence, with sophistication, but it is also a common sophistication that does not make the reader feel talked down to or otherwise out of their element. This novel is meant to appeal to the average woman and does a good job maintaining this appeal.

## Structure

The novel is divided into twenty-one chapters and a prologue. The prologue is divided into two parts, the first a peek at Felipe as an old man, visiting the cliffs where his lover, Serafina, fell to her death, for a final time. The second half shows Laura, Margo, and Kate on the cliffs where they have often enjoyed spending time, talking about their search for the dowry Serafina reportedly left hidden in these cliffs. The novel continues, beginning at Laura's eighteenth birthday party where her husband of ten years, Peter Ridgeway, proposed to her. The novel then jumps to Laura's thirtieth birthday, now divorced for two years and trying to start over. The novel then tells its story in a linear fashion, taking Laura from lonely divorcee to lover to fiancée.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot of this novel follows Laura as she continues to struggle with her new reality after divorce and her move into new romance. One subplot follows the story of Serafina and her lost dowry. Another subplot follows Laura's relationship with her children, her friends, and her family. Another subplot follows Michael's relationships with Laura's children, friends, and family. All the plots come to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



## Quotes

"It was a long way for a man to travel. Not only the miles from San Diego to the cliffs outside of Monterrey, Felipe thought, but the years. So many years." Prologue, pg. 13

"On the day of her eighteenth birthday, Laura was in love. She knew she was lucky to be so certain of her feelings, and her future, and the man who would share them both with her." Chapter 1, pg. 19

"He was well aware that the Templeton housekeeper had considered him a mongrel let loose among her purebreds. And he assumed that she'd been worried about his intentions toward her daughter." Chapter 3, pg. 44

"It was humiliating, she thought as she jerked the zipper up. A thirty-year-old woman being fixed up by her big brother." Chapter 5, pg. 76

"And that reminded him that no matter how much he might enjoy the experiment, they weren't alone in a place where they could analyze the results." Chapter 6, pg. 89

"On the cliffs, the wind was rougher, whipped in from the sea and tasting, as Laura always thought, of adventure and romance." Chapter 8, pg. 106

"A heart could break again, she realized as she nodded and turned back to the sea. It could break again, and again, and again." Chapter 10, pg. 137

"Staggered, she stared, watching the woman she had always believed invincible sobbing as though the well of grief would never run dry." Chapter 11, pg. 142

"There, in the darkened stables with the sweet smell of hay and horses, her clothes in tatters and her blood singing, she felt like a woman again. Not like a mother, a friend, a responsible member of society. Like a woman." Chapter 12, pg. 159

"Michael Fury had jumped off buildings, fought in jungles, weathered a typhoon at sea, raced cars at high speed and, at one time or another, broken several major bones in his body. He'd been in bar fights, spent the night in a cell where the artwork on the walls ran to anatomically exaggerated etchings of female organs. He had killed men and loved women. And he had, he realized, lived a sheltered life." Chapter 14, pg. 178

"Men who had lived as he had lived didn't end up happy ever after with women of her class, her breeding." Chapter 20, pg. 249

"The words were just there, he realized. Just there, waiting to be said." Chapter 21, pg. 272



## Topics for Discussion

Who is Serafina? Why did she kill herself? Who is Felipe? Why does the author start the book with Felipe? How do Laura, Margo, and Kate know about her? Why are they inspired by her story? What are they trying to find her dowry? What do they hope will happen when they find the dowry? What does happen when they find the dowry?

Who is Laura? Why is she depressed on her thirtieth birthday? What has happened recently in Laura's life? What is her relationship like with her children? Why is there tension between Laura and her daughter, Ali? What is the cause of this tension? How does Laura deal with it?

Who is Michael Fury? Why does he come to live at the Templeton House stables? How does Laura feel about Michael Fury? How does he feel about her? Why does Michael escort Laura to a party? What happens when Laura's ex arrives? How does this lead to a moment of intimacy between Michael and Laura? How does Laura respond to this situation? What does this say about the future of this relationship?

Who is Ann Sullivan? What is her role in Laura's life? Why does Ann disapprove of Laura's relationship with Michael? Why does Ann immediately assume that Michael means to harm Laura? How does Ann respond to Michael's treatment of his animals and his work ethic? How does Ann finally learn the truth about Michael? What does she do to help Michael feel better about himself?

Who is Mrs. Williamson? What kind of flirtation goes on between Michael and Mrs. Williamson? What does this say about their relationship? How does Michael feel about Mrs. Williamson? For what reason? How has Mrs. Williamson helped Michael in the past? How does she help him now? How does Michael respond to this help?

Why does Michael feel that he and Laura can never have a lasting relationship? What does Michael think about Laura that he gets wrong? What does Michael think about the Templeton family in general? How does Josh Templeton underscore the doubts Michael has when he confronts Michael about his relationship with Laura? What does Michael do?

Why does Laura fall from a cliff? Who comes to her rescue? What does this suggest about the relationship between Laura and her rescuer? How does Laura find Serafina's dowry? What does she do with it? How do Margo, Laura, and Kate feel about finding the dowry after all this time? What does this say about Margo, Laura, and Kate, when taking into account Felipe's thoughts at the beginning of the novel?