

Heartbeat

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Story Premise

For many people all over the world, it can be difficult to find the perfect person for them, but now, with one simple necklace, it can all be solved. In the near future, everyone is assigned a soulmate by the time they turn eighteen and all they have to do is wear a necklace called a Heartbeat in order to find them. Once a person comes face to face with the love of their life, their Heartbeat will light up along with their partner's. It's as simple as that.

Jude is one of the many people in the world that is determined to find her true love as soon as possible. Being from a rich family, she is able to travel often, in hopes of coming face to face with the love of her life. However, when she finds her Heartbeat light up one day, the guy she is facing is wearing a necklace that does not light up in return. She then starts to doubt this "perfect" system and decides to discover how an error like this could even occur.

Historical Background and Timeline

In the year 2000, the final creation of the Heartbeat necklace was perfected. Through the past few decades before then, scientists had been trying to figure out the coding for these necklaces so that people could finally find their perfect soulmate and find true happiness. With the multiple surveys taken throughout a person's life in order to help accurately match them with someone, the code will allow the necklace to light up when they come near the person with the matching necklace.

The necklace was put into place as soon as it was guaranteed to work. Every person not currently in a serious relationship was required to get one, ultimately increasing happiness rates around the world and putting an end to the high divorce rate. As time went on, the Heartbeat system became the norm for everyone and they decided it was best to forget about the past and no longer teach children about the way love and marriage used to operate.

Now, in the year 2050, there have been a few glitches detected with the coding of the Heartbeat, but the government simply refuses to acknowledge them and will not let the public find out about these errors. As far as society is concerned, the world with Heartbeats is a perfect world.

Main Character – Jude

Jude is a bubbly 19-year-old girl that is determined to find the love of her life, no matter how long it takes. She grew up in a very wealthy area of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin with a kind, loving family and a good education, but she often fails to understand how good she had it back then. Her parents loan her money constantly so she can travel to find her true love, hoping that will give her the true happiness she deserves. However, she takes this for granted and does not pay as much attention to her family as they want her to.

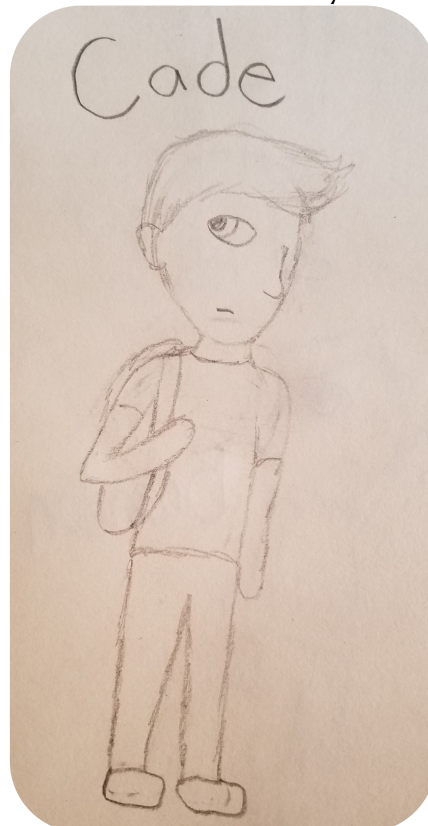
The moment Jude turned eighteen and received her Heartbeat, she began traveling the world as much as she could in hopes of finding her true love. She made sure to visit all of the major cities as much as possible since the odds would be even better there. She tries her best not to waste her time with a job or hobbies. That stuff does not seem important to her while she is without a soulmate, which is why she has devoted so much time to finding him.



Main Character – Cade

Cade grew up in a poor neighborhood near Los Angeles, seeing so many happy couples pass by when he'd walk through the streets. Ever since the moment he learned about the Heartbeat necklace, he despised it, convinced that there is no way a necklace could determine a person's true love. This is because his parents never seemed truly happy together as he was growing up and he did not want his match to end up the same way. However, just like every other person, he was assigned one, even after trying to get out of the surveys.

Now, at age twenty, due to his many outbursts against the Heartbeat system, Cade has been removed from the system, causing his Heartbeat to no longer glow, making it near impossible for him to find the love of his life. He still carries his Heartbeat around in his backpack, secretly hoping that it will one day work again, but he spends most of his time just ignoring the world and pretending that finding a soulmate means absolutely nothing to him.



Supporting Character – Stacy

Stacy is Jude's best friend, but despite being only a year older than Jude, she has already met her soulmate and has settled down with a typical life in Florida. Jude goes to visit Stacy as much as she can because they rarely get to spend time together anymore. When Jude first turned eighteen, the two of them would go out and look for their soulmates together, but that quickly came to an end once Stacy found the love of her life and no longer had a reason to travel around. Even so, Jude still tries desperately to cling on to their friendship.



Supporting Character – Mary

Mary leads a support group on the outskirts of Los Angeles for all of the people that found errors within the Heartbeat system. She herself had an error, but she rarely ever talks about it. When she stumbles upon Jude, she encourages her into the support group so that Jude can learn all about the other people that have gone through similar struggles as her. Mary believes that the Heartbeat system had good intentions, but there will be errors in any kind of system. This is why Mary has created a support group for people to talk about what has happened, rather than trying to fight the system.



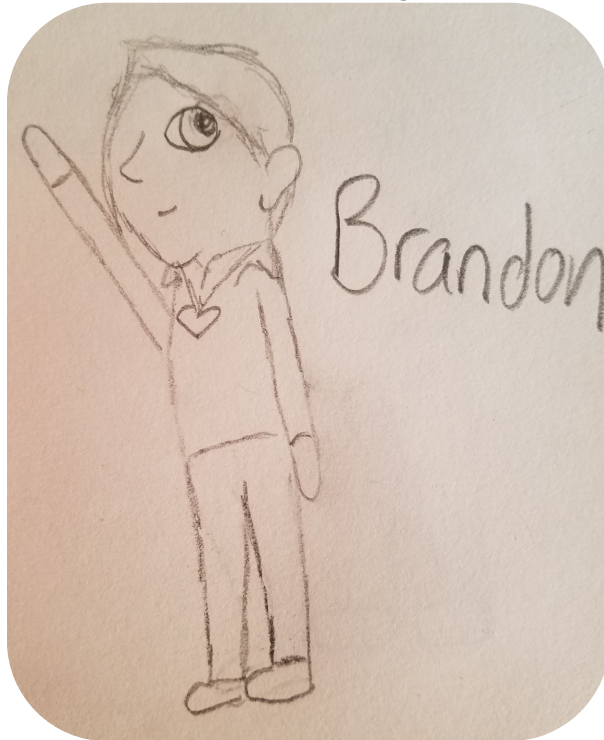
Supporting Character – Rory

Rory is one of the friends that Jude ends up meeting after attending the support group. Rory has always been a bit skeptical of the system, but still made her attempts to find a soulmate of her own. However, once her necklace glowed, she knew it was a mistake because she is only interested in girls, however, the person looking back at her was a boy. She still wears her Heartbeat in hopes that the error can be fixed, but she attends support group, hoping to find an answer for these types of errors. After befriending Jude, the two of them decide to go out and try to solve their problems for themselves and put an end to all of the errors in the Heartbeat system.



Supporting Characters – Brandon

While Jude's necklace originally lit up for Cade, once she comes face to face with Brandon a while later, it glows again and this time, Brandon's glows back. She then realizes that maybe Brandon was the one for her all along and immediately moves in with him, eager to start her perfect life. However, Brandon may not be exactly what she had been dreaming of.



Jude's Family

Mom

Jude's mom lives in Lake Geneva and works as a doctor. She was very close to Jude as a child and tries to reach out to her daughter often, but is disappointed when Jude is too busy looking for her soulmate to respond.

Dad

Jude's dad also lives in Lake Geneva with her mom. He works as an accountant and is very friendly, but is also more reserved and tries to give Jude her space.

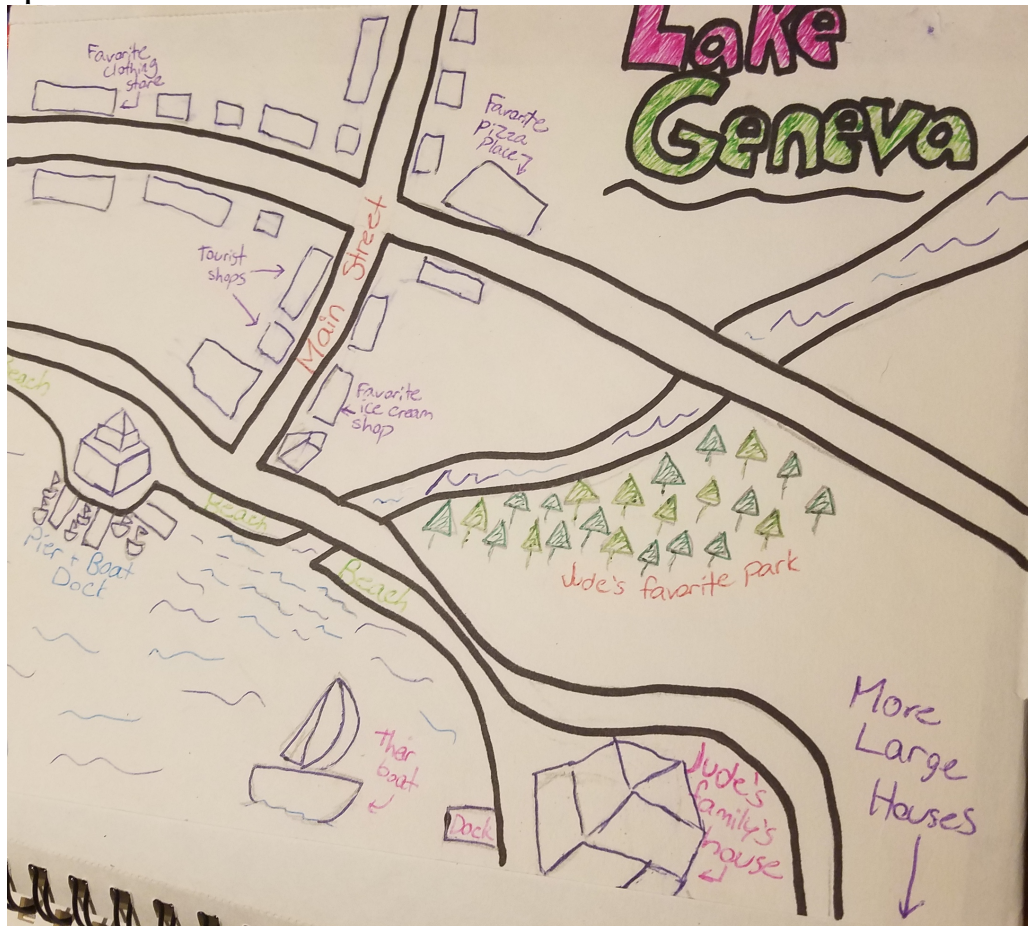
Braxton

Braxton is Jude's 17-year-old brother. He is very unenthusiastic about receiving his Heartbeat on his next birthday and likes to keep to himself.

Location – Jude's Old House

Jude grew up in a large house in Lake Geneva. The type of house that many kids would have considered a mansion. The house is about three stories tall and is right along the lake, so her family has their own dock and a boat as well. The yard around the house is extremely huge and as a child, Jude loved to run around outside and enjoy the fresh air.

Now that Jude is an adult and spends her time traveling instead of at home with her family. She often has flashbacks and thinks about her life growing up that house, but she rarely finds the time to actually stop by and visit both her family and the house she grew up in.



Location – Support Group

On the outskirts of the busy streets of Los Angeles, there is a support group held in an abandoned church. This support group is for all of the people that had errors with the Heartbeat system. Jude first attends this group out of curiosity, wondering if there really is a group of people going through a similar situation as her.

After the first visit, Jude slowly begins to befriend the other members. Each one has a different past and a different story, but they are all struggling because no one else will recognize the errors that have occurred in their lives. This causes Jude to want to take a stand against the system since she now knows that there are more people struggling out there, not just her. This is when she decides that her error should no longer be a secret, it should be heard by everyone so that an end can be put to these misfortunes.

Location – Milwaukee Airport

Living in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, for the entirety of her childhood, the closest large airport to Jude's hometown is the Milwaukee airport. At this point in the future, many airports such as this one have expanded and now have many more flights going in and out due to the frequent traveling associated with the Heartbeat system.

Jude flies in and out of this airport often, especially when she is going to visit her family. This was also the first airport she flew out of when she first received her Heartbeat, ready to explore the world and find her true love.

Location – Stacy's House

More often than stopping back at her family's house in Wisconsin, Jude stops by her best friend, Stacy's, house in Florida. It is a large house, not as massive as Jude's old house, but definitely in a wealthy area since Stacy's soulmate is a very wealthy movie star.

Stacy is always the one person she talks to first when talking about her travels. However, now that Stacy has found her soulmate and lives with him, Stacy does not seem as thrilled to talk to Jude when she stops by. Even so, Jude continues to visit her best friend throughout the story, hoping she can help her out, especially with all of the heartbeat malfunctions, but like the rest of the population, Stacy does not seem to think that the system is flawed in any way.

Heartbeat Necklace

After the coding for the Heartbeat necklace was completed in early 2000, the Heartbeat system was immediately put into place and has continued ever since. The necklace has a rather large, red pendant on it and it simply glows when an individual is near their soulmate, which is how they will know once they come face to face with the true love of their life.

Once two soulmates have found each other, they are no longer required to wear the necklace. Most couples typically keep the necklaces to remember the moment they met and the journey they took to find each other, but it is not required that they keep them. Once the necklaces glow the first time, it goes on record and it is no longer important that they continue wearing the necklaces after that point.

Once a couple meets, they usually start planning a wedding as soon as possible, but it is also not required. The goal of the Heartbeat necklace is to help individuals find the one love of their life. They are not designed to control a person's life completely. Once they find their soulmate, they are just expected to have a happily ever after and however they decide to go about that is completely up to them.

Heartbeat Rules/Offenses

Everyone that is eighteen years or older and single is expected to have a Heartbeat necklace on at all times. You never know when you could come across the love of your life, so in order for the system to be one hundred percent successful, you must always have one on in public just in case. You cannot be arrested for not wearing your Heartbeat, but the police can fine you if it becomes a constant problem.

Before the age of eighteen, there are a series of surveys that need to be taken throughout a person's life in order to accurately assign them to the right person. Any refusal to fill out these surveys will result in fines as well and will likely give them an inaccurate match. The more surveys denied, the larger the fines become until it becomes nearly unaffordable for a person with an average income. This helps ensure that even those individuals that are skeptical of system will still participate and give it a try.

No one is allowed to object to the Heartbeat system. The government wants to ensure that this is an ideal way to do things and if anyone tries to threaten that peace, the government could end up turning their Heartbeat off, possibly even without that person's knowledge. This will ensure that no one gets matched with a person that does not believe in the true love in this perfect world.

Synopsis

Jude is about to turn twenty years old and she has been searching for her soulmate nonstop since the second she turned eighteen. She is already sick of constantly traveling and is ready to just give up, but then her necklace suddenly glows. But Cade, the guy looking back at her, has a necklace that does not reciprocate.

Mortified and confused, Jude keeps this secret to herself, trying to convince herself that she just imagined it all. But as she wanders the streets of Los Angeles hopelessly, she runs into a group of individuals that have been through a similar experience to her. And one of the people is Cade.

After realizing that the Heartbeat error was not just a one-time thing between her and Cade, she decides that it's time for them to stand up against this system and get them to fix all these errors, but all of the people that have already found their soulmate find their cries for help to be ridiculous.

Just when Jude thinks they will finally get through to the government, she comes face to face with a different guy and both of their necklaces glow. This causes Jude to gain her hope in the system back and join this new guy, Brandon, in a new life and a new happily ever after.

But Brandon is not all she had hoped him to be and ends up being abusive. Her friends from the support group need to come to the rescue in order to both save her and put an end to this madness.

Story Excerpt

Los Angeles. Likely the last stop on my journey before I give up and take a break from this crazy life of traveling. All around me are people either scurrying down the streets, looking for their true love or couples happily taking vacation photos together. I wish I could say I was part of the second group of people.

I glanced in front of me to see an old lady with a Heartbeat still around her neck. Tears were in her eyes as she glanced at all the happy young couples around. She continued to hobble along, holding her Heartbeat tightly in her hand.

If I didn't find my soulmate soon, I would end up like that.

I turned around and began racing down the street, looking at each single person as I passed them. I only stopped when I needed to catch my breath. I don't know why my hopes were so high. I don't know—

A bright red suddenly illuminated beneath me. My Heartbeat! I grabbed it and glanced down to see it glowing brightly, unlike ever before. I turned in every direction, but only saw couples near me. Except for... one skinny guy with his back turned to me. I dashed toward him and quickly tapped his shoulder.

He turned to me and narrowed his eyes. "What do you want?"

He wasn't wearing a Heartbeat.

I held my necklace toward him. It was still glowing. "My necklace is glowing... that means you're my soulmate! My name is Jude!"

"Must be a mistake, I don't have a soulmate." He turned around and kept walking.

I darted after him and grabbed his wrist. "Wait! What do you mean you don't have a soulmate? Can't you see my necklace right now?" I paused, looking him up and down. "Where is your Heartbeat?"

He heaved a sigh and reached into the backpack that was slung over his shoulder. He pulled out a pretty scratched up Heartbeat and placed it around his neck. It did not glow.

"...I don't understand."

He shrugged. "Well, I do. It means you're not my soulmate. So, would you please leave me alone?"

He shoved the necklace back in his bag and walked away once again. I shook my head furiously. "Wait!"

"What do you want now?"

I bit my lip. "Can you at least tell me your name?"

"Cade." He responded without stopping. And just like that my only possible soulmate was gone.

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