

P ROLOGUE

The night before Lauren's encounter, she prayed the rosary and wrote this in her journal.

I don't know how this madness I call my life came upon me. I just know there was a time when things were clearer; and black and white to me. I used to believe in eternal love, such as a parent's love, or a boyfriend's love forever; even God's love forever. But I grew up and saw reality; families broken apart, boyfriends betraying their girlfriends, and it haunted me. I wasn't a child – just child-like in my approach to life. I was pure, innocent and optimistic. I believed that people were basically good and honest in their dealings with one another and that evil was only in a small part of human existence; I was wrong.

I grew up in the Irish Catholic community of Brookline, just outside of Boston.

My parents were devout Catholics, making sure their four children went to church every Sunday, said their bedtime prayers and prayed that God would bless our food at dinnertime. We Lane children were also very sheltered from life's darker side, maybe protected a little too much.

At night, when most of the residents of our neighborhood were asleep, my mother, Collette, prayed the rosary for her husband, Lucas; for her two boys, Lucas Jr. and Shawn; and for her two girls, Cassidy and me. I know this because I could hear the murmur of my mother's voice in the guest room, where she had

constructed an altar equipped with a crucifix, statue of the Blessed Mother, candles, the Bible and her rosary beads.

I don't know if it was God's prompting, or my mother's rosary prayers, or Sister Mary Alice's love of the Lord that inspired me to consider the religious life, but this desire was strong from the time I started junior high until I graduated from Saint Agnes Academy; that's when life became unclear and I began to question my decisions.

I intended to seek God's will as Sister Mary Alice had suggested, but that summer of my high school graduation changed the course of my life. If not for the grace of God, I am sure I would not be here at this moment, telling you my story. Now, I am entirely certain that whatever happens in a person's life brings them to the place and purpose meant for them. I often tell hurting souls that God is love and everything, whether good or bad, that he allows is out of love, and in time they will understand the why and how things had to happen as they did,

I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but whatever it brings, I know it's God's will for my life.