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WORK SAMPLE

Genre: Clean Romance

TITLE: Advice of the Heart

WORD COUNT: ~30-40k words

GENRE: Clean Romance

April Halloway is a 34 year old single mother to seven year old Jason, after Jason's father died in a car accident when he was three. April's day job is at a nail salon in her town, but since she is so well known for giving great advice to her clients, she applied for a job at the local paper as an advice columnist. She writes under a pen name, so only her best friend Lisa knows who "Nosy Nellie" actually is.

One day, April gets an email to her "Nosy Nellie" email from Charlie, a single man who recently had his heart broken. He was dating a woman who had a kid, but when they broke up, he realized how much he missed the little guy and being a father figure. His initial question is about whether Nellie recommends that he try to stay in touch with the little boy.

When April publishes her response to Charlie's email, he appreciates her advice so much that he starts sending her more emails. She responds privately, and they strike up a correspondence. April realizes that she's falling for him, and Lisa advises him to go for it, but she doesn't want to assume that Charlie shares her feelings and worries about being unprofessional.

One day, a very handsome man visits the newspaper offices asking for "Nellie." Not knowing that it's Charlie, and feeling shy, April points him to her editor in chief, a very attractive and no-nonsense professional journalist named Elizabeth. Charlie immediately asks Elizabeth on a date, and she accepts. April is devastated.

That night, April receives another email to the "Nosy Nellie" account, thanking her for a lovely evening. April is with Lisa when she gets the email, and Lisa takes her phone and sends Charlie a rude, terse email saying that she doesn't feel the same way! April feels terrible, knowing that Charlie is a good man who doesn't deserve having his heart broken again, but she doesn't know how to fix things.

The next day, Elizabeth comes in for a manicure and gushes about how handsome her date was, but seems to be turned off by how interested he was in having kids - she's focused on her journalism career and doesn't want children. She says she hasn't heard from him anyway, so it probably wasn't serious on his part either.

April decides to reach out to Charlie by writing a "Nosy Nellie" letter from herself, describing what she did and how bad she feels, and asking what she ought to do. Then, she advises herself to come clean, expressing that if this man is truly as wonderful as she seems to think, he will understand.

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Charlie immediately responds when the column is published. He seems angry and confused, but willing to work things out. They arrange to meet in the park nearby, and he recognizes her from his visit to the newspaper offices. He seems relieved that the cold, career-obsessed journalist wasn't really the warm, relationship-oriented "Nellie" he had been corresponding with, and the two reconcile.

Lisa, who had picked up Jason from school so that April could rush to this meetup, sees them in the park and comes over with Jason. It's clear from the way Charlie interacts with Jason that he's made for fatherhood, and even Lisa gets along with him and expresses approval.

The book ends with a scene of Charlie over for dinner at April's house, playing with Jason and helping out with dinner. Jason blurts out the question - "when are you going to marry my Mommy and become my Daddy?" Charlie turns red and splutters something about wanting to make sure April is ready, and respecting her love for Jason's "first Daddy."

April realizes that she is ready, and she says as much! Charlie then proposes on the spot. April says yes. Jason insists that he can't propose without a ring, so he runs into his bedroom and gets his Magic Batman Transformer Ring, insisting that Charlie put it on April. They embrace and celebrate.