

If you're ever in Key West...

When Olivia's husband died suddenly, leaving her a widow at the age of 47, she sold her Manhattan apartment and moved to Key West, Florida where she found peace and paradise. She started painting, where her love for her surroundings was reflected in her work. Much to her own surprise, her paintings sold well. Her neighbors, a gay couple, became close friends, and her life in eternal summer offered her great contentment.

Every Thanksgiving she returned to New York to share the holiday with dear friends, and spend a week in the City visiting museums and galleries, and catching up with old friends. During such a visit, ten years after her husband's death, she encountered Owen on a rainy afternoon in the post office. He accidentally poked her in the back with his umbrella. She was angry; he was apologetic, and insisted upon taking her for coffee. They discovered they had many things in common, including both having been born in England. They were both great fans of the artist David Hockney.

Owen, an incredibly handsome, high powered attorney, was in NY on business, as well as to visit his aunt. When Olivia excused herself to go to the ladies room she was horrified to discover the havoc the rain had played on her appearance - runny mascara causing raccoon eyes, frizzy hair, rumpled clothing. Not her finest moment, but this was just a casual encounter, which ended with her saying "If you're ever in Key West, look me up, I'm listed in the phone book." Several months later, Owen did just that, while in Key West visiting his uncle.

Olivia invited him for lunch, gave him the "grand tour" of her beloved city on bicycles, and then made him lunch. It was a lovely afternoon, and they agreed to get together again the next day. Forty-two year old Owen was infatuated; Olivia was astonished and wary; her gay neighbors were titillated; her adult children were askance. Olivia was fifteen years Owen's senior! Women of "a certain age" will be fascinated and hopeful reading about their developing relationship. Women of any age will find this book lovely, and a wonderful woman's read. The characters are believable and compelling!

What woman doesn't want to be recognized for the beautiful woman she is - appreciated for her character, intelligence, wit, experience, and of course physical attractiveness, despite a few years, a few pounds, a few lines. That Owen recognizes all of these aspects of Olivia despite the raccoon eyes, frizzy hair, and rain-drenched demeanor, is what makes him so compelling, and desirable.

Marjie Bukzin
Woodstock, New York

IndieReader.com Review

If You're Ever in Key West...is a funny and romantic read, centering on Olivia Weston, the story's protagonist and narrator.

When Olivia, a 57 year-old Brit, is widowed by her American husband, she decides to move from New York to Key West, Florida. There she lives comfortably, plays Scrabble with friends and paints...her newly-discovered vocation. Olivia considers herself content, until--on a visit to New York--she accidentally gets poked with an umbrella by Owen Chamberlain, a dashing attorney and a fellow Brit. Owen, who falls head over heels in love with Olivia, conveniently has an uncle living in Key West and follows her back to that tropical paradise. Money being no object, Owen showers Olivia with gifts and affection. Everything seems right, but Olivia hesitates because Owen is 15 years her junior.

Olivia is a smart woman and narrates her tale in a witty, breezy tone. The dialogue is an engaging mix of American witticism and British phrasing. Author Jane Hawkins is a talented writer--sharp and to the point. If You're Ever in Key West... is a fun, light story. Although it drags a bit in the middle, the whole of the book is a worthwhile read.

Reviewed by Idelle Kursman

****IndieReader gives this book 3.5 stars****