

*The Truth About Melissa: A Soul Mate Experiment* is based on a true story of meeting and marrying Richard Bach's son, Jonathan. You've heard of people postdating their checks? Well, Jonathan engineered the idea of 'postdating his soul mate.'

*The Truth About Melissa* opens in 1992 with a brief scene of Jonathan first meeting Lisa, the new front desk girl at his favorite hangout, Jillian's Billiard Club. After a brief encounter, the chapter ends with Jonathan furiously scribbling the note: Melissa, Is it you?

There is a quick flashback scene to 1988 when Jonathan complains to his father and brother about not yet having met his soul mate. The conversation turns into a challenge from them for Jonathan to 'create' his soul mate. They prompt him to manifest her by putting pen to paper and detailing her biography and even penning letters both to and from her. He calls her Melissa.

Back to 1992, the story unfolds as Jonathan and Lisa are both presented in their lives separately leading up to their first encounter. Jonathan is an almost-published author and visits Jillian's every day where he is desperately looking for somebody to love. He is socially awkward, yet endearing. And, more importantly, he is extremely lonely.

Lisa has just moved to Seattle from a small town in Idaho. She has no plans to get into a serious relationship having just left her college sweetheart of three years. She is continuing her education and attending court reporting school, but takes a part-time job at Jillian's. Lisa lives with an older cousin, Cathy, who is shocked at her naivety of the big city but provides Lisa with a curious and animated view of life.

Jonathan and Lisa quickly dismiss each other as any type of romantic pairing. She thinks he is a dork and he thinks she is a party girl. Until one night when a mutual friend of theirs, Keith, conveniently seats them next to one another, forcing them into conversation.

The exchange progresses to mutual interests, literary critiques, and an invitation for Lisa to read Jonathan's galley copy of his soon-to-be-published book. From there, they start to spend more time together. However, 'Melissa' keeps arising as Jonathan slips a few times and Lisa overhears conversations with his brother, leading her to believe that perhaps there is another girl. But Jonathan assures her there isn't. Just when their relationship turns serious, Lisa knows for sure there is a 'Melissa' and Jonathan must scramble to explain the situation.

It is here that Lisa is introduced to two shoeboxes full of letters and notes and biographical sketches of Melissa written over the last four years. A third box is labeled 'Lisa' and contains letters that Lisa had written to him over the weeks. When Jonathan exposes her to the parallel facts of Melissa's biography to her own life and the similarities in the letters, Lisa is shocked by the coincidences and falls in love with the serendipitous idea of being Jonathan's soul mate.

A few months into the relationship, Jonathan and Lisa travel to California to meet his two brothers and her sister. Two families cannot be any more different. Lisa finds one brother to be a bit of a con artist and the other brother to be a lot of a narcissist. Jonathan finds her sister to be welcoming and friendly and he quickly connects with Lisa's niece exclaiming how much he loves kids.

Jonathan proposes to Lisa on this trip and they head back to Seattle with plans for a wedding. Although stunned by the whirlwind of their relationship and hesitant about Jonathan's family's background—everyone in Jonathan's family has been divorced: no one in Lisa's has—Lisa is blinded by the intricacies of Jonathan's soul mate experiment and continues forward.

The wedding day is complete with Jonathan's dysfunctional and unfriendly mother and siblings. Lisa starts a journey for the rest of her life. However, as they begin their honeymoon, Jonathan's quest has just ended as he realizes that the Melissa experiment is done. Lisa becomes sick as she leans over his computer on the plane to Hawaii and sees Jonathan's next project; generating a new and improved Melissa. Her name is Samantha.

The marriage ends after eighteen months and Jonathan boards a plane the next day to meet his next 'soul mate.'

The experiment of Melissa and the story of Jonathan and Lisa is an interesting story of manifesting and coincidences and it was fun to write. The story is not motivated by bitterness or revenge and it does not come across that way.

*The Truth About Melissa* is written in third-person point of view because the Lisa from 1992 is so different from the Lisa of now. The epilogue is in first person and is a brief summation of the next few decades of growth and resilience experienced after Jonathan and I went our separate ways.