



Pearl arrived on Sea Glass Lane in her SUV during the late winter on Hatteras Island. Carrying a brilliant smile, she got out and inhaled the chilled air. In the distance, she could see the white-capped waves of the vigorous Atlantic Ocean. Above, clouds tumbled into each other. The remnants of a storm were blowing out to sea.

“Knock, knock! Hi, Earl, it’s me.” Pearl shut the door behind her, not without the help of a gust of wind. She removed her gloves and hat and looked around. “Gosh, Earl, the place looks fabulous!” Pearl’s eager eyes met his. “I can’t believe how far it has come. It is going to be magical!”

Earl removed his baseball cap and made his way over to Pearl. He planted a kiss on her cheek and stepped back. “Good to see ya, Pearl. This place is almost ready for its building inspection. Then you and your sister can decorate it up all fancy with those purty things I saw in the upstairs bedroom.”

Pearl's face flushed with a sense of pride. Her heels echoed in the airy space as they walked around and stopped. "We are so thrilled." She looked across the room. "The mountain of windows overlooking the ocean is spectacular." She spun around. "This is going to be one beautiful retreat! I can't believe it is the same place. It was a dull diamond in the rough and you, Earl, are the artisan that brought her sparkle back! Thank you so much for selling it to us." She took her phone out of her purse. "Lorelei just texted me. She's running late."

Earl's voice filled with concern. "She ain't bringing that, Conchita, is she?"

Pearl let out a small chuckle in response to him. "Of course not, Earl. Conchita is resting."

"Resting in the pillowcase, I'm guessing. And what about Wilbur?"

"My sister goes where Wilbur goes, as does Conchita, even if she is resting."

"I get all nervous around that glass ball. I bought Wilbur a big bone."

"Thank you, Earl. I'm sure he'll love it." Pearl looked over Earl's shoulder. "Is Dillan here? I know he had some ideas for the bottom back deck and the swing I would like to put out there."

Earl scratched his forehead. "He showed me that picture you sent. It sure looks like a bed on ropes!"

Pearl's face lit up. "It is!"

"Dillan is over in Ocracoke, fixin a place up for a few days." He made an about face, reaching into a box on the floor. "I got us some scuppernong wine. Whaddaya say?" Adding a wink, he reached for her hand.

Pearl's face softened. "I say yes! We need to celebrate."



And so that is the beginning of the Sea Glass Retreat. After much consideration and bending Earl's arm, Pearl and Lorelei were over the moon with joy as new owners of the cottage next to the Beach Heart Cottage. The time-worn place had strong bones and needed much TLC.

The sisters spent a lot of time planning the healing oceanfront retreat. A splendid place for weary guests to relax, heal, and learn to live a happier, simple life. A mystical *experience*, they prefer it to be called. Healthy eating classes, rooms filled with gentle spa music, salt lamps scattered about, and soft beds piled with cozy white linens. The whispering echoes of the ocean lull them to sleep. And don't forget the new bed swing!

Lorelei, a retired nurse, and reiki practitioner was, as they say, over the moon! Can it get any better than this? Inhale and imagine as you arrive at the retreat. In the distance is the sound of the ocean as sea mist finds you. You put your head back and smile at the warming sun.

Once inside the retreat, you step into your ethereal bedroom with endless views of the Pamlico Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. As the sun rises and sets, you find solace in meditation. You can choose to eat healthy, do yoga on the beach, or have a healing reiki session. Mingle with the other guests or unwind by the

shore. One could even try standup boarding and kayaking as the marigold sun sets over the sound. Even Conchita would come out on special occasions.

Now let's not forget the Beach Heart Cottage. That is the heartbeat of the bloodline where sisterhoods, mermaid ceremonies, and bonds are sealed. A sacred place that, after a discovery in the recesses of the attic, will become more mystical. Much like the ebb and tide, generations of women will come and go. Some will stay around while others may wind up on the mantle next to grandpop.

Caroline has left her partnership with Lawson. It took much negotiating and regret on Lawson's side. He needs her. She needs a new life. A fresh start. Is Hatteras Island the answer? She does freelance PR work, calling on former clients. It helps pay the bills, but her heart is elsewhere.

Caroline often chuckles to herself about the magic of Hatteras, and the night they crowned her Seraphina. She steps into her closet, retrieves the crown from the sacred box, and has a chat with it as if it were a crystal ball. What is my destiny? Am I becoming Auntie Lorelei? Do I need a dog like old Wilbur and a crystal ball?

She takes out the wand, tucked into the bottom of the crown box. Isn't it supposed to touch you and you find your life's love? After she waved it around during the ceremony, yes, a little tipsy, did she shake all the magic out of it? Did she ruin it? The magic seems to have stayed on the island. Is her heart with Dillan enough so she'll make that life change? It is possible.

Colton, now President Jameson, even with his hectic schedule, finds time to wiggle his way back into Caroline's life. He's not an easy man to let go of. Especially with Caroline's mother visiting the White House and even volunteering as a docent. She relishes hearing her heels echo on the very floors she and her late husband once walked as guests.

Dillan, kindhearted, salt of the earth Dillan. His heart remains with Caroline. It has taken time to heal wounds. Wounds no one saw coming. He wanted her to move to Hatteras. And heck, it has not been easy. Caroline, having much on her plate, must decide.

Pearl sold her home in Westchester and with Lorelei, along with old Wilbur, moved to Manteo, where they rented a condominium while the renovations of their retreat were happening.

Grams Dorea is trying to remain busy back in DC with her senior clubs. If she isn't knitting or joining book clubs, she's playing cards or fussing with puzzles. Truth is, she's bored after the wonderful summer she had at the cottage. She misses her daughters and Caroline. It's time to head to Hatteras. Live out her life and enjoy the briny air. Relax in her recliner and talk to her husband, who has passed away. You know, the man in the Ball canning jar on the mantel, in the sofa, and under the rug.

She will find items for Earl to fix so she can poke him with her cane. She isn't getting any younger. None of us are. And, just maybe, if we open the door to the Sea Glass Retreat, we can find some youth in our hearts. A place to laugh, cry, forgive, and love. What are you waiting for? Step inside.



