

## Untitled by Shelly Prince

**Short introduction:** Miah has won a trip to the Bahamas and decided to go with a push from her friend Amanda. She first met Ash on her last day of vacation when she went to have dinner. As she entered the room, their eyes connected and fireworks started for both of them.

She felt like a different person as she had dressed that evening, finishing her makeup as per Amanda's instruction. She wished it had ended there. She glanced casually around the room and locked eyes with him. The moment her eyes had connected with his from across the room, the electricity that zapped through her body didn't stop when eye contact ended. The aftermath of his intense gaze left her body vibrating.

With his hot searing eyes on her, she tried to keep her balance on the ridiculously high heels to her table. She almost fell when the Maitre d' held her chair because she was so flustered. She took a deep breath, trying to clear her head and figure out what she wanted for dinner, when she felt a presence behind her.

She knew it was him. She slowly looked up and almost choked as her gaze connected with smoldering sapphires. The menu slipped through her fingers and fell to the floor. They both reached for it at the same time and bumped heads.

"Sorry," they both said in unison and smiled.

"I should be the one apologizing for startling you," his brilliant white teeth gleamed a contrast to his tanned skin. His voice was as smooth as silk, a cool caress on a hot summer's night.

"That's alright, thank you," she replied, trying to calm the nerves that were churning in her stomach. He was tall, maybe around six feet two inches, with unruly wavy thick brown hair, that looks as if it was pass time for a trim. Somehow it made him sexier. His lips were full and sensual as if they were made to be kissed for hours.

The twinkle in his eyes reminded her of a little boy. One who knew that if he were bad, he could get away with anything. Somehow she had a feeling that the man in front of her could too. He had an athletic body hard and well toned. The small scar over his left eye gave him a sense of mystique.

“May I join you for dinner or are you waiting for someone?” he asked looking at the empty chair.

“No. Yes. I mean no, I am not waiting for someone and yes. You may join me.” She said flustered.

“Thank you,” he took the seat across from her.

She looked back at her menu with such concentration the words seemed to leap out at her. Her hands tightened on the menu, and she tried to breathe. Her body was humming to whatever music he was playing. She could feel his heated gaze on her and knew he was smiling as well without looking at him. This was her last day on holiday. She wouldn't be seeing him again in her boring life back home in Canada. Here she could be anyone she wanted to be, and tonight she was Lucy. Lucy didn't have any baggage, nor was she still grieving for her dead mother who had passed away ten months ago.

No Lucy was bold, sexy and flirtatious. She was a confident take charge type of woman who knew what she wanted and went for it. She didn't care what others thought of her or worry about money and keeping a roof over her head. She defied logic and anyone who gets in the way of what she wanted. Spontaneity was her name. Tonight she was Lucy, who didn't care if she was wearing underwear or not.

There was no room for the shy, awkward Miah. She was going to be someone her roommate would be proud of; tonight she was going to get her first kiss, and if she was lucky maybe more. She carefully put her menu down and smiled at her companion, “forgive my manners. My name is Lucy,” she said, hand out stretch.

“Ash,” he said, engulfing her smaller hand in his. Miah pulled her hand away after the brief contact putting them in her lap. She tried not to focus on the amount of electrical energy that was between them. She felt as if she was on a hydropower plant.

### **Editor’s Critique:**

Thanks so much for letting us read your hero and heroine’s first meeting. Miah seems like a strong, contemporary heroine, and I liked her right away. I did notice a few romance clichés in this scene—the electricity Miah feels when she looks at Ash, the moment when they bump in to each other. That’s not necessarily a bad thing—clichés crop up so often because they’re popular. But when they do appear, it’s a good idea to see whether the cliché could be subverted or twisted to make it fresh.

Romance based on love at first sight can be tricky, as it tends to be surface, based on physical attraction. In longer, character-driven stories, love at first sight doesn’t always work—characters need to be true to who they are, not overwhelmed by physical attraction and suddenly head-over-heels. But in this instance, you’ve given the reader more than just surface attraction. Miah’s drawn to Ash not just because he’s handsome, but because of what he represents. Ash gives her a chance to be a new person, even if it’s just for one night. This was my favorite part of the scene—the insight into Miah’s character.

To make this scene even more powerful, I’d suggest keeping RUE in mind. RUE stands for Resist the Urge to Explain. It’s stronger writing to show the reader and trust that they’ll understand rather than spelling everything out. For instance, I’d suggest the following tweaks: The moment her eyes ~~had~~ connected with his ~~from across the room, the~~ electricity ~~that~~ zapped through her body, **and it** didn’t stop when **the** eye contact ended. ~~The aftermath of his intense gaze left her body vibrating.~~

You’ve already told the reader that she feels as if she’s being zapped with electricity, and that the feeling goes on after they break eye contact. There’s no need to repeat this info—trust that the reader got it the first time.

Thanks again for letting us read your First Meeting scene, and best of luck in the contest!