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# THE DADDY ARRANGEMENT

Sugar 101 Book One

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PAIGE PARSONS



Published by Blushing Books  
An Imprint of  
ABCD Graphics and Design, Inc.  
A Virginia Corporation  
977 Seminole Trail #233  
Charlottesville, VA 22901

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EBook ISBN:978-1-64563-023-4

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Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

*To all of the wonderful men in my life. You've filled many roles over the last forty-six years and I am beyond blessed and grateful for all of them. You will forever hold a special place in my heart.*

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## From the Author

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Find your ideal daddy. Is he dark and dirty? Does he make you blush with the things he says and does? Is he about lavishing you with gifts or experiences? Or, is he healing a part of you long buried and forgotten? He can be your teacher, mentor, friend, supporter, snuggle partner, and yes, even a disciplinarian because sometimes you need to hear no even when you don't want to.

Asking for exactly what you want can be hard, but a good daddy somehow usually figures it out. His gift of discernment is what makes him special. He's fulfilling a need and being completed himself at the same time. He's creating the safe place you need to be the best you possible.

Keila had no idea what she was getting into when she embarked on seeking her own special arrangement, but once she met Jack, it all came together in her mind. Now, she just had to articulate her needs and her wants without fear. The fear was blocking her blessings, and the fact was after a long get to know you period, she knew Jack was for her, even if it was only temporary.

Jack was devastated after his wife's death and poured all his energies into work while ignoring his love life, beyond his physical

needs. Just when he thought it would be this way forever, he meets a young woman who begins to consume his head and his heart quite unexpectedly. It is a slow building relationship that reignites things in the powerful man that he, too, believed to be buried forever.

It'll take time to shift friendship and mentoring into romance, but the best things in life are worth waiting for and often lead to the best results.

Keila and Jack meet through friends who have taken their arrangement to the next level. Now, they'll need to figure out what *Daddy Arrangement* is best for them.

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## Prologue

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**T**he brownstone at Pierrepont Place had been in her family for two generations. It was the only house she'd ever lived in, but Keila Soriano was still ready to leave. Brooklyn Heights, with its mix of city and suburban living, had given her a lot of great moments that she would remember and carry with her, but there was a reason she picked a school south of the Mason Dixon. The stress of growing up Soriano could only be alleviated through distance. Keila loved her mother and grandmother, but decreased proximity was going to do them all a world of good.

Sitting in front of her trunk, Keila placed the royal blue graduation robe, her honor cords, her stole, and her graduation cap on top of all of the other memories from high school that she wouldn't be taking with her to college. One memory that wasn't in the trunk, but also wouldn't be going, was of her father. It was the thing glaringly missing from this important moment in her life. The last conversation she'd had with her mother concerning him had not ended well. It was made perfectly clear that the nameless donor was an off-limits discussion and would remain so.

"WHY ARE you trying to ruin a good time, Keila? Your father is not in the picture. He's never wanted to be in the picture. You have to stop asking and focus on the things you do have. Because in case you haven't noticed, what you have right in front of you is a lot and it's plenty good."

"Yes, Mother." Keila laced her proper words with all of the disdain she could conjure up.

"I don't appreciate your tone."

"I don't appreciate not knowing anything about my father, so I guess we both have something to get over. One question, maybe you can finally answer this one. Is it that he didn't want to be involved or that he wasn't given an opportunity? Knowing Grams, I have my suspicions. I'm guessing he wasn't a nice Jewish boy from the temple. Don't look at me like that. I have seen myself in the mirror, you act like I'm supposed to be okay with half an identity."

"You are a beautiful, strong, intelligent, Jewish woman. There's nothing partial about that. There's no half measure. You are destined to do great things. What more do you need to know?"

"You left out Black, Mother. I'm a Black-Jewish woman. That part is always conveniently left off by you and by Grams when you're spouting affirmations, but all I have to do is look in the mirror and I can see the truth as plain as day all over my face. You see it, too. My God, sometimes it's like you can't even look at me, because of how much you see him in my face. Is this why you look through me? Is it?"

"I can't deal with your hysterics today."

"I am not hysterical. I think I'm quite calm, considering the run around I've gotten for the last eighteen years."

"Please get ready to come down for dinner. Your grandmother is having guests and she won't be happy if she has to explain your late appearance at the table."

"I could just not come down at all. She could tell them I'm sick."

"Keila, I'm begging you. These social things are important to your

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*grandmother. With everything she does for us, a few social functions aren't a lot to ask."*

*"Nothing has changed for you, has it? She's still controlling you. Whatever money Grandpa left or whatever secrets she's holding over you can't be worth it. So what, you got pregnant in college. Big whoop! Who didn't?"*

*"I am not doing this. I know you're working me up on purpose, but I made my choices a long time ago and going over it every time you're in the mood to stir up trouble isn't going to change anything. She's my mother. She was right. I accepted that a long time ago. It would be great if, just once, you could follow my example."*

*"You mean I should blindly do what you say no matter how it makes me feel. I should be just like you, huh? That's a hard pass. I think I'll be my own woman. I'll ask what I want. I'll feel what I want. And, I won't become her second bird in a gilded cage."*

*"So disrespectful. Get your attitude together and get yourself downstairs. And, Keila, don't bring this up again."*

*Turning her back to her mother, Keila waited for the silence to eventually crescendo to the height of discomfort. Then she would hear her mother move across the room and the door shut behind her. It was how these talks always ended. Master avoider, that was the woman who raised her, guided her, and taught her how to deal with the world and she couldn't wait to get away from her and try things in a whole new way.*

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HOLDING THE TASSEL BACK, Keila decided she could make it part of her dorm room decorations. As she closed her trunk and locked it—respect for privacy wasn't her mother's testimony—Keila glanced around her current bedroom. Truly, it could've belonged to anyone. It wasn't decked out like a lot of the friends whose rooms she'd slept over in. Her mother and grandmother kept offering, sometimes threatening, to redo the entire thing when she was gone over the weekend. Her grams even entered her in



one of those room makeover contests that the various DIY shows she watched ran. Keila counted herself lucky that the woman never won. She could imagine the ruffles and bows nightmare that would have been forced upon her. She liked beautiful things for sure, but taste between the two women who raised her and her own tastes ran down very different paths. The one thing that truly made the space her own was her collection of stuffed animals. It was no surprise that neither her mother nor grams were fans.

Having spent the last four years with her eyes on the prize toward graduation and college preparation, Keila thought the fewer frills and distractions was best. Her diligence had paid off in triplicate; all of her efforts had yielded a scholarship. She had a few more celebrations to grit her teeth through, and then she could put this particular chapter in her life behind her. Her endurance test was wearing the itchy and utterly out of character spring dress currently draping her curvy frame. It actually had crinoline underneath it and flowers splattered all over. As she bent over to look under the bed for her missing ballet flat, Keila felt the cool air-conditioned breeze kiss her upper thighs. Why couldn't the day just be over? More than ready for a new start, she wanted to get out of the smothering, loving, clutches of her mother and grams and set out on her own path, even if she wasn't entirely certain where it would take her.

Even though there was a glaring absence in her life and on this day, in particular, Keila's life wasn't exactly the makings for the lyrics of a country ballad. Today wasn't the day to focus on her rarely discussed and extremely absent father. She continued to work on letting that go and lived well in spite of it, but she wasn't leaping at the chance to relive the highlights of the last eighteen years, either. She lived in a nice home, in a nice neighborhood, and had gone to a great high school, but she didn't make time for anything extra that wasn't directly aligned to a goal toward her future. That goal was always freedom from her smothering and very loving family.

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When it came to clubs, she did things that might garner her even a few hundred dollars more toward her tuition coffers. There'd been swimming, model UN, speech and debate, and two co-editor positions junior and senior year for the newspaper and yearbook. Although admirable and a point of pride for her family, it was one of the many things her mother and grandmother fought about constantly. Mom wanted her to be more social for the sake of socialization and Grams wanted good grades and singular focus on her future. There was plenty of time for her to date and to have fun just for the sake of fun. As she liked to remind her daughter, fun was how Keila had gotten here in the first place.

Knowing her mother loved her and never entertained not having her didn't mean she failed to see the fleeting look of regret that crossed the woman's face when that particular barb was hurled at her.

Her focus seemed, in part, a deliberate effort to avoid the typical teenage social life both women felt so strongly about. As far as she was concerned, she'd created sufficient balance in her life. The highly honored teen wanted a different balance, though. The balance of testosterone was more in line with what she felt would make things at home a little easier to bear.

Her father wasn't in the picture or any father figure, for that matter, but her grams always ran a consistent counterpoint to whatever her mother thought or wanted. Witnessing her mother practically bite through her tongue on so many occasions, at the dinner table, was only more fuel to the girl's fire of eventual full independence. She loved her grams but quickly learned that the woman got her way and her power from the fact that she held the purse strings. As tough as her mother was, Keila watched her wither under her gram's verbal assaults. She'd convinced her daughter decades before that without the help of Keila's father or a good husband, she was all she could rely on for a good upbringing for her granddaughter.

"Keila." Her eye roll response was on autopilot. Grams was calling her down, already. It was not a sound she would miss and she so wasn't ready to face the party portion of the day.

When Keila's mother had shown up pregnant the summer of her junior year of college, her grams had given her hell. Grams knew her daughter thought her upset was over her Black boyfriend, but truly it had been about the derailed future that was so painstakingly mapped out. Grams had dreamed of going to college herself, but it wasn't as forward an opportunity or expectation for her generation. She had made her daughter move back home and transfer to the local university. She wanted her daughter's degree completed and she wanted her grandchild, but her help would be on her terms as long as she footed the bills and provided all the support a son-in-law would've.

It was the deal with the devil her mother had signed and was basically held to through the present. Their fights were epic and her mother was no mouse, but her loss column was definitely longer than her win. Keila suspected that was why her mother didn't date much while she was growing up or have at least one serious relationship. She assumed no one passed her gram's sniff test, so to speak. Keila, although she would never have the guts to say it, didn't see her mother having any real relationship until, God forbid, her grams was out of the picture.

"Keila, I don't want to call you again."

"Coming, Grams!"

She gave herself another once over in the full-length mirror in the corner of the room and rolled her eyes in exasperation again. Another blasted graduation party full of folks she didn't know, this group, her grandmother's temple friends. A temple Keila had gone to until she was fifteen, but one she felt almost no connection to and didn't especially care about.

"And don't you go rolling your little eyes at me, young lady. These people are here to celebrate you."

"Grams, you scared me! Stop sneaking around."

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"I don't have to sneak. It's my house. You just mind what I said."

"Yes, ma'am. I know they are, but they're your friends. They don't know anything about me or my plans, which means the whole night will be spent with me being interviewed like I'm on some daytime talk show round table. I really don't need this fuss made."

"Again, it was my fuss to make, and if your mother didn't insist on her fancy restaurant party, we could've done one big one. Besides, all those graduation gift checks will be worth the fuss. Now, let's go. You look fine."

It was a risk, but Keila couldn't resist one more little eye roll to the heavens as she said a silent prayer for strength. What in the world would the two women fight about when she was gone?

Turns out, she needn't have worried. Grams and her mother were pros, and finding something to disagree over, big or small, was a challenge they were up to, obviously. Why did the university give options? Both women did better with clear boundaries and decisions. First, it was on what day to take the trip to drop her off to college. Then it got laser focused down to what time of day to leave. Next, they debated the route. All they were going to do was plug it into GPS, but once they saw options, the fight was on.

When it came to what she would take, what she would get in December when she came home for the holidays, versus what she would leave altogether, it was a three-way war. That resulted in Keila being virtually dismissed, her mother screaming cuss words, which almost never happened, and her grams stricken to her bedroom with a migraine. It was never brought up again and no apologies were made. Whatever got into the car would go and the rest would wait. They didn't talk about things. They let things silently slip into the rearview and fade away.

Keila didn't grow up with a lot of warm fuzzies, other than the stuffed variety. She didn't grow up mastering conflict resolu-

tion, and after seventeen years with the mistresses of passive-aggressive behavior, Keila grew up understanding that if you wait long enough, some things will simply go away and others will always remain a lingering question. The dust-up over what to bring to school was the former and who her father was, remained the latter. In the end, both were on a super high emotional shelf and she knew if she reached for it, it would come crashing down around her with unintended and unexpected consequences.

When they first pulled up to Rhoads Hall dormitory, she may have trembled a little. If she said anything memorable in the car on the drive up, she was sure it was with a quaking voice, but as she stood on the steps in front of the building that was her new home, her wave was powerful as she said the last goodbye. That power flowed from her fingertips as she sent her mother and grandmother on their way. Sure, there were a lot of questions and plenty of things she still wasn't sure of, but she *was* certain she was ready to tackle them all in her own unique way. She was finally ready for life to begin.

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## Chapter 1

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**K**eila and Brianna, eventual roommates and best friends, met three years earlier when Keila moved into her freshman dorm. A year behind one another in undergrad, they became friends and surrogate sisters in the dorms during Keila's freshman year. Bri had been her resident assistant and neighbor, much to the chagrin of Keila's party girl first roommate. Their first few months were rocky, to say the least. Keila was in the room dubbed the second-floor sweet spot. A corner triple, a room meant for three residents, it was one of the two biggest rooms on the floor. Its duplicate sat at the other on the backside of the building. In the middle of the hall were the bathroom, laundry room, and a bank of elevators.

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THAT MOVE-IN DAY had been epic. All that was left was for Keila to survive her mother and her grams. They'd driven by the building three times before there was a spot for them to pull into and unload. The twelve-story brick and stone structure loomed and represented her future and all of the anticipation and

anxiety that went with it. Visiting was one thing, but now she would be living there.

She would finally be on her own. Her mom and grams wouldn't be there reminding her when to eat, that she needed to go to bed, to set her alarm, or anything else. Gone was her safety net, and although it was something she had been looking forward to her entire senior year, now that it was here, she was equal parts terrified.

There were a lot of ways to mess up. Keila knew she was responsible, for the most part, when it came to school, but she wasn't exactly sure how she would tackle navigating a social and academic life. Her mother and grams set high expectations and didn't leave a lot of wiggle room for messing up or acting out. She could do it all if she was great at it all. The few times Keila crossed the line were met with swift justice. The teen had become well versed on the ins and outs of being grounded indefinitely, and the guilt train made frequent stops at her door. When her mother was disappointed in her, she never failed to let her know or remind her, until she believed Keila would never even consider screwing up in the same manner again. High bars had yielded equally high results. So, in the end, her mom believed her means were justified.

As soon as they entered the building, everyone they encountered informed her about her prime real estate. The team distributing keys let her know. The security guard positioned right inside in front of the elevator bank let out a whistle. Even the older lady passing out mailbox combinations smiled with a little twinkle in her eye. Her grandmother had never attended college, so she was enjoying every step of the process. She remarked on the efficiency of the system each time they completed a step. Her mom was all business as usual. Like a literal buzzing worker bee, her mom had her area in the room looking like a virtual duplicate of her room at home. She'd been lucky to arrive first, so she got to pick first and decided to

go for the bed/desk combo that was furthest away from the door.

Having spent most of the summer communicating with one of the girls she was rooming with, Keila had only received a single response from the third. It seemed unusual to them, but the university just told them that the girl was out of the country. Like they didn't have email outside of the United States. It didn't matter, though, because Rain and Keila hit it off immediately. They both tried to get their parents to agree to let them drive up together but were both given a big fat no to said request. Apparently, dropping your child off to college was a necessary rite of passage.

"Where do you want your laundry basket? We also need to get your desk set up, so you have optimal outlet usage." Keila was hanging clothes up that her grandmother was handing her as her mother situated her desk. The woman was hyper-desk focused. She actually offered to get a smaller side table for work overflow. Keila just laughed and assured her mom that the university's library would provide plenty of overflow space.

When everything was put away, Keila looked around, exhausted but happy. This was going to be her home for the next year and she couldn't wait to meet her new roommates in person. Her extended twin bed, with its specially fitted sheets that could only be used in a dorm room, was decked out with black and white bedding. Tucked away beneath her body pillow and several deep purple accent pillows were the remaining pieces of her dirty bunny. It had started out as a hand-knit blanket, with a bunny head with creepy eyes, that was now reduced to a greying, over washed, over rubbed, and super thin hankie square. Still, she had trouble falling asleep without the soothing effects of rubbing it against her cheek. She'd wanted to bring all her stuffed companions, but that battle had been lost.

"We should go and get a little lunch, girls. Your mom and I need to get back on the road before it gets too late."



"No problem, Grams. You guys can get going now. I'm all squared away and I'll take a walk around campus to check things out later."

"We're going to lunch, Keila, and to the store to pick up some things for you to keep in the room in case you don't want to run to the cafeteria for every meal. Your scholarship is covering tuition, but Grams and I are covering room and board. This could be your last decent meal out."

"I'm going into the financial aid office on Monday, Mom. I promise I'll have a job by the end of the week." Internally, Keila vowed to ask for nothing extra from her mother.

The ladies were in a tight three-person huddle when the door flew open. A little boy barreled through and past a man holding a huge box and two women arguing loudly behind him. The trio turned to face the door with mouths agape.

"This is exactly why I didn't want you to come! You ruin everything!" The younger woman was screaming at the older one.

"Lower your voice. Do you want the entire hall to hear you?" This came from the older one.

"I don't care about these people. Stop worrying about what everyone thinks. Nobody cares about you and nobody's talking about you."

The man placed the box on the floor and physically pulled both women in by the arm and slammed the door closed with as much force as it was flung open. The only breath of air taken after impact was when the latter trio finally noticed the former.

"Keila! You're already here. I'm so glad to meet you. Did you hear the news?"

Over the phone and online, Rain did come across as excited, but it was nothing compared to the energy she gave off in person. Keila was temporarily glued to her spot. The grip her mom had on her wasn't exactly making it easy to move, either. As she pulled away with more strength than strictly

required, Keila stepped forward and was enthusiastically embraced.

"Hey! Rain, it's so nice to meet you in person. This is my mom, Ms. Soriano, and my grandmother, Mrs. Soriano." Keila still had hold of Rain's hand as she walked her the few steps toward the women, who still seemed to be in a bit of shock over her roommate's entrance.

The knock on the door served as a temporary interruption to things. Rain's dad let in the student workers delivering her palette. Her little brother had claimed the middle bed and was engrossed in a handheld toy game.

"Which bunk does this go on?" the hunky student worker asked.

"The one without the six-year-old," Rain yelled in his general direction without turning around.

"Now, back to my news. We have this very awesome room for three as a room for two. High five!"

Keila waited for a beat too long because Rain grabbed her elbow and raised her hand up to slap it. The rest of the move-in went on in the same manner.

Noise and chaos came with Rain. Keila realized it that first day, and things didn't change their entire freshman year. The girl made things fun and memorable, and she was pretty bold in her dealings with their resident assistant, Brianna.

Brianna had been a first-year resident assistant, a musical theatre major, and their light sleeping neighbor, who apparently had the hearing of a wax moth. At her first-floor meeting, her biggest and pretty much only rule was not to let her hear it, see it, or smell it and, absolutely no knocking on her door for any reason that didn't involve blood, after ten o'clock at night. For a nineteen-year-old, she came across quite serious about her sleep. Bri was quite serious about a lot of things and more mature than anyone in their age group than Keila had ever known. As many times as she found herself getting lectured during her first

quarter of schools, it made sense. Brianna had to come across super mature just so she could deal with the 'infants' on their floor she was responsible for.

"Ladies, this is your third official write up. We're talking final straw stuff. If I write you up again, it goes to the Director of Housing and not just the building director."

"This stinks of entrapment!" Rain shouted and punctuated it by bringing her fist down on her knee.

Keila and Bri were actually wearing the same shocked look on their faces. Technically, there was no way it could be entrapment when the boys of Alpha Chi had actually been in their room. They got lucky that Bri hadn't barged in and only told them the boys had to leave from the doorway. If she had seen the bottle of tequila and all the beer cans, they would already be sitting in the Dean's office.

"Rain, it cannot be entrapment when the noise was coming from guests you invited over and signed in. Not to mention the guests were boys on the girls' floor after hours. You all didn't even try to keep the noise down. This cannot keep happening. I don't want to see you tossed out of housing, but I'm not willing to get thrown out because I'm not writing up your violations. Kicked out isn't part of the plan. Do you understand?" Bri was sitting at her desk facing the girls, who were sitting on her bed.

It was always a bit hard to believe that she was just a little over a year older than them. Bri, as the RA, got a double size room to herself. Since there was only one bed, the room looked a lot larger. Keila noticed the room was pristine and decorated in a much more adult fashion than most of the girls' rooms on their floor. It looked like a page out of the Pottery Barn catalog. She even had the good hamper. It was the tall one that looked like basket weaving with the fabric insert. Keila was pretty sure it was as nice as the one her mother had back home. There was a free-standing oval mirror and a dresser tray that held a fancy brush and comb set. As she ran her hand down the bedding, Keila took

special note that the girl had a duvet. College kids didn't have duvets. Girls might have matching bedding and the super girly ones had the occasional throw pillow, but duvets were not the norm.

"Keila, you're on scholarship. I don't think something like this will look good, do you?"

Rain was out of patience.

"Um, dorm mom, we get it. No noise. No boys. Can we go?"

"Rain." Keila wasn't thrilled about being lectured, either, but she would never have said that and she thought for sure Rain saying it was only going to make things worse. Peer or not, Bri was in charge and a certain amount of respect came with the position. If they did end up in front of the Dean, she did not want to add disrespectful and uncooperative to their list of crimes.

"Sign the forms. The pink copy is yours," Bri said coolly.

She wasn't certain, but Keila thought Bri was looking at her with disappointment in her eyes. Sure, Rain could go too far, but she was mostly harmless. Bri was giving her the big sister stink eye, though, like she should've known better than to follow along with anything Rain did. Rain mocked Brianna and called her 'dorm-mom,' but Keila much preferred to see her as a protective big sister. As an only child, she secretly liked the idea. Rain was her friend, though. Sure, she had started to back off some, but how could she freeze her roomie out, or worse, go back to her high school persona of the goodie-two-shoes. So, she ended up doing things in a subtler way, like studying in the library more than their room, after her first quarter grades rolled in. Fun was one thing, but losing her scholarship was a complete other.

"Keila, I'm sorry. I need to redo your form. Would you hang back a minute?"

"Sure, Bri." Sweat came to the surface of Keila's hands and she felt her palm practically slid from the doorknob. *So much for*

*loyalty*, she thought as Rain was closing their room door without looking back.

"I'm sorry about Rain. She likes to have fun. I mean, she *is* fun, most of the time. You're right, though, I can't afford to get written up again."

"Look, Keila, freshman year can be wild and fun, but don't forget why you're here. Eye on the prize, right? I'm not planning on staying in the dorms next year. I need to focus on classes and auditions, but I think you would make a good RA. I want to recommend you, but you need to choose better. Here's the application."

When it came to people to emulate, there was no denying the fact that, as much fun as Rain was, the future was much kinder to the Bris of the world. Tall, thin, naturally beautiful, with seriously shiny blonde hair and perfectly cut bangs. How did one get hair that healthy looking? Keila wasn't an artist, but she did have dreams, and looking around Bri's room, she was certain that she wanted it to include plush area rugs, duvets, and fancy hampers. As she reached out to her 'dorm mom,' Keila took the application and promised to think about it. She had a few months.

Those months didn't go by easily, but Keila had a lucky streak. Her mom and grams teased her about it often. They would call her the good luck charm, and her grams always let her pick out her lottery numbers. This random luck would serve her college career in more ways than one.