

Ashleigh & Megan *Book I: Friendship*



Wednesday December 6th

Shopping
Book 1 Day 7

*(6 Days since Julie started to walk
Nikita for Ashleigh)*

Part One of Seven

Authored By:
R. P. Voght

Posted on ashleighandmegan.com on:
May 13, 2018

© R. P. Voght 2023
This edited edition was posted on: January 25, 2023

I hope you enjoy this pioneering format I call, "A Story Cast."

What the term "Story Cast" means; is this story is designed to be read in small to medium intervals. This particular story is broken up into "days." These portions are broken up into part or all of a particular fictitious "day" of the story. Each day surrounds the characters lives, relationships, adventures, struggles, mishaps and triumphs. This story is very different from a Novel or conventional story in many ways. Again, THIS IS NOT A NOVEL AND IS NOT WRITTEN IN A CONVENTIONAL NOVEL FORMAT. Instead; as the reader you are following the characters thoughts and actions during the course of this "day." This fiction story is set up like a TV series and or a third person journal. It always starts with one or more characters getting up and ends with one or more characters going to bed; while during the day you experience the Characters actions, feelings, and their thoughts.

On a large overview; there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to this "Story Cast"

R. P. Voght

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

December 6th, Shopping

(6 Days since Julie started to walk Nikita for Ashleigh)

Megan's daily routine was to: immediately get up, make coffee, take a shower, get ready, and go about the business of the day. This was far from her routine this morning.

She reached up and pulled the digital alarm clock down from her bookcase headboard and looked at the numbers.

Her dimples flashed.

She: sat up, she secured the clock back onto the bookcase head board, bumped into the small ship-in-the-bottle trinket, it was knocked off the secure location; she was quick enough to catch it.

She calmed herself down.

She gently put the trinket back.

She laid back down and pulled the covers over her exposed chest.

Nicole was hosting what she called a Make Your Own Breakfast. This was for everyone attending the annual Christmas shopping trip. The women going on this trip were her Sister-in-laws Nicole and Diana and her Best Friend Ashleigh. What was different this year was: Ma, Auntie Alice, Auntie Ruth, Cousin Rebecca, and her other Sister-in-law Sam were absent. What seemed strange to Megan was how Sam canceled at the last minute; in years past when she promised to attend she showed up. A new addition to this years event was having dinner at Diana's condo. What seemed odd to Megan was this is when her Auntie Ruth and her Cousin Rebecca would join them. Megan wondered why they avoided the shopping part of the day.

The only reason Megan attended this yearly shopping trip was because she loved her family. Megan preferred to shop: by herself, through catalogs, at discount stores, and she recently started to shop online. She felt shopping online held the most temptation. She

accumulated a small collection of what she called “special clothes.” These were clothing items she wore in the privacy of her home to enhance her self exploration. Or she ended up exploring herself because she wore these clothes. She often times indulged in elaborate fantasies while wearing these clothes. The three things holding her back from purchasing a wider selection of special clothes was: her own person self restraint, someone she knew seeing what she purchased, and her budget.

As a twenty-eight year old virgin she found her relationship with clothes troubling. Sex in general was a struggle for her. She experienced her first orgasm the previous September while horseback riding; to say this was a revelation would be an understatement. After this event; she recognize the odd feeling she experienced while wearing certain clothes were sexual. Based upon recent research she learned these feelings were known as fetishes. Exploring this subject more deeply, she came to understand other women admitted to having them as well; even with this knowledge she felt isolated. Adding to her feeling of isolation was a very powerful fetish she experienced in October. It was one she never thought off. The only reason she considered it was due to a serious of circumstances falling into place; it was highly pleasurable for her. Compounding all of this was her faith.

She loved the relationship she had with Jesus, she believed in what the Bible said; but she wondered what the Bible actually said about sex. She was battling between two philosophies. The extreme religious belief that sex was only about having babies. The extreme secular view that everything sexual was to be enjoyed. She recognized and agreed with the view rape and incest were evil. In general: she felt guilty for some of her desires and practices, others she felt were permissible, other desires worried her, some of her fantasies she would leave as fantasies, some of her ideas she would never even fantasize about, and there were those desires she hoped she could explore with a husband.

While researching sex on the internet she was surprised to discover pornography intended for women. At the current moment she was tempted to log onto the internet and view photographs of naked men. This bothered her. She felt pornography made women into objects and caused men to be fascinated with a certain type of woman. She easily thought about the men she witnessed in the underground male strip club and the nude pictures of men she viewed on the internet. She believed if she continued to view pornography she would end up disappointed in her husband. This was the least thing she wanted. She felt a future husband would be disappointed in her because of the way the media seemed to worship a woman of a certain body type. She felt if she continued to view pornographic material she would end up only liking the type of man she was viewing; just like how a man would be disappointed in her. Based upon her research she discovered the average size of a male was six inches; this was not the type of man she was viewing on the internet.

She reviewed her personal masturbation boundaries. Anytime she enjoyed herself she always made sure she: was alone, it never interfered with any of her responsibilities, it specifically would never interfere with her charter, and it never superseded friends or family. Going over this personal list she believed it was permissible if she indulged in a session. The next step was to decide the method she would use.

She uncovered herself and stepped out of bed. She stepped over to her closet and pulled down her body pillow. Humping her body pillow was her favorite technique. What was stopping her from proceeding with the body pillow was the strong desire to recreate what happened to her after the last convention.

Every October she was a presenter at a huge outdoor convention and boat show. After this show and while attempting to enter her houseboat she unintentionally found herself in a pee desperation situation. To her surprised this was highly arousing to her. Since this incident she often thought about ways to recreate what happened. She never followed through on these ideas because of guilt and time.

She set her body pillow on her bed.

She stood by her bed contemplating her actions. She imagined wearing a pair of jeans she purchased at the thrift store. This pair of: light blue, slim fit, hipster jeans, with large buttons on the front, with a short zipper, and decorative embroidery on the back pockets was the newest addition to her special clothes. She would never wear this pair of denim jeans outside of her houseboat. She wondered what it would feel like to pee in these jeans.

With her heart pounding she stepped in front of her red and black trunk; this trunk was in front of her single bed. She: opened the combination master lock, lifted the lid, lifted up a shelf; underneath were neatly folded clothes. She went through her small stack of: pants, denim jeans, and a short skirt; she selected a bright red pair of skinny jeans. She went through one of two stacks of shirts and picked out a red ruched cami with contrasting lace. She loved the color, she liked the feel of the lace, and when she tried it on in the thrift store her nipples responded to the fabric. She: set the clothes she picked out next to the trunk, reorganized the contents of her trunk, put the shelf back, grabbed her journal, shut the trunk, set the lock on top, stepped over to her closet, opened the french doors, opened a drawer, pulled out a pair of boyshort panties, stepped over to the clothes next to the trunk, and enjoyed putting on the outfit she selected.

Her: body tingled with anticipation, her nipples responded to the cami top, she lightly touched them, she felt the pleasure of her touch, she stopped. and focused. In spite of feeling guilty and childish she proceeded with a plan she often thought about and even wrote down in her journal. She: stepped into the head of her houseboat, shut the door, modeled in front of the mirror by twisting and turning her body; she inspected her red skinny jeans. Her red skinny jeans: showed the lines of her long athletic legs, created a bump to her already tight rear-end, and she could clearly see the outline of her private area. She stood straight and inspected herself. The top hugged her 34b sized breasts. They were erect and her nipples were very visible. She hated how her left breast was smaller than her right one. She was sure a husband would dislike her quarter sized areolas. Anyone else would have barely noticed the size difference. Her girl muscles (these muscles were were created by hard work and by regular exercise and were not grotesque) were visible throughout her six foot frame. Her long dark blond hair was hanging loosely, she felt her dark blue almost plum eyes were unique, she disliked her inverted triangle shaped face, her skinny dark blond eyebrows were evenly plucked, she despised her nose because of it's bend to the left and it's natural bump just above her nostrils. She felt the way her nostrils curved up and almost out were unappealing. In reality; a reality outside of Megan's over critical judgment of her looks, her nose blended well with her: high cheekbones, long jaw line, and long chin with its rounded point. She was feeling sexy and adventurous. Feeling sexy was an uncomfortable feeling for her, one she only allowed herself to feel in the privacy of her houseboat. She was feeling adventurous because of her willingness purposefully indulge in pee desperation. The feeling of embarrassment and guilt were strong. She felt embarrassed for how her privates looked. She was feeling guilty for moving forward with her desires; these feelings were so conflicting she almost stopped.

Instead she: stepped out of the head, opened her linen closet, grabbed an old towel, turned on the light to her galley, hung the towel over a kitchen chair, stepped over to her L-shaped counter, opened up a top cabinet, took out a large plastic cup, opened her refrigerator, pulled out a pitcher of ice tea, filled up the cup, set the cup on the counter, placed the pitcher back into the refrigerator, went back for her journal, set the journal on the table, grabbed the towel, laid it in front of the L-shaped counter, leaned against her counter, drank down the ice tea, waited, after a short time she opened her refrigerator, grabbed a large bottle of water, after drinking this bottle of water she cringed, she stood up, made sure she was back on the towel, leaned her back against the counter, and looked over at the table.

She imagined an understanding husband sitting at the kitchen table, he was just as excited to see what would happen; as she was excited to perform for him.

She cringed.

Her dimples flashed.

She bent over and held it.

This caused her to lose her fantasy. She felt the likely hood of a husband enjoying his wife peeing in her jeans was very slim. With how guilty she was feeling she was unsure if she was enjoying it either. She was willing to leave this activity behind if he disliked it. The most important thing to her was finding a partner she could express her sexual desires too.

She stood up straight.

Her dimples flashed.

She: picked up her cup, she drank some more, she set the cup on the counter, and took a deep breath.

She restarted her fantasy. She imagined an understanding husband asking her questions on what it felt like. Her fantasy ended when she cringed in pain. She again felt a mix of emotions. Doubt set in. She was about to stop but it felt so intense. She wanted to keep going. Then she wanted to stop. Yet, she wanted to feel it.

She closed her eyes.

She took a deep breath.

She cringed in pain. It took an extreme amount of effort to hold it back.

She stood back up and again took a drink.

She stood there feeling guilty she was doing this.

Her heart pounded and she felt aroused.

She took another deep breath.

She knew she could no longer reach her head.

As her bladder emptied she felt a mix of: pleasure, guilt, shame, embarrassment, excitement, and relief. An emotion that caught her off guard was the feeling of being naughty.

When it was over she undid her jeans and slipped her hand behind her panties.

Ashleigh hated being awake so early. She was thankful she thought ahead and laid out her clothes the night before. Her long blond hair was pulled into a cute bun, she was wearing a light amount of makeup, she liked her newer pair of dark blue pair of bootcut jeans, she was wearing a skinny belt, a dark blue long sleeved crewneck shirt, a brand new light weight blue hoodie, and blue Nike tennis shoes; she knew she sacrificed looking taller for comfort. These were the times she disliked being five foot one inches tall. She felt her outfit was good for:

work, being with the guys, was comfortable, and she felt if they bumped into anyone they knew, these people would understand why she was dressed so casual.

Nikita howled.

Ashleigh scolded Nikita, "No howl."

Ashleigh yawned.

Nikita was curious about this new territory. She enjoyed the ride in the moving territory called "Jeep". She enjoyed the territory called "work". What was odd for Nikita: many of the people she usually met at the work territory were absent. She was taken to a different area of this territory and marked the outside of this area. She liked meeting the male human she usually met at the territory called, "Megan's Charter". She liked meeting the male human who was Woman Friend's father. Nikita knew this because of similar qualities only a dog would notice. Nikita enjoyed a ride in a moving territory she never was in before. She loved the attention she received before they reached the current territory. Nikita was excited to explore this new territory.

Captain held the door open and helped Ashleigh step out of the large truck; a truck Ashleigh rented.

Ashleigh commanded Nikita; "Stay."

Jake was looking at Ashleigh through the open doors of the truck, "You ain't a morning person?"

Ashleigh answered with a grumble, "No."

Jake lightly chuckled and shut the drivers side door.

Before Captain shut the door Ashleigh turned toward Nikita and said, "We won't be long. You need to be a good girl."

Nikita recognized the tone in Ashleigh's voice and reluctantly laid down.

It was difficult for Captain to spend time with Megan's suspected lover. A private conversation with Nicole helped him prepare for meeting any of Megan's lovers; he never suspected it would be in this situation.

Captain was holding onto what his daughter told him. She mentioned she was looking for a man like him. Captain believed this explained why his Daughter was single. After observing Ashleigh throughout the morning and recalling the first time he met her; he wanted to believe Ashleigh was straight. Whenever Ashleigh called Ma and Captain about their rental properties she was respectful; even if she missed their southern customs. Captain's analysis of Ashleigh was: she was sharp, was as respectful as a Yankee could ever be, had spunk, he could tell she overcame a lot in her life, and he admired how she handled her dog. He wanted to dislike Ashleigh because of the possibility she was his daughter's lover. This was proving difficult because of who Ashleigh was and the type of person Captain was.

He felt it was only right to tell her what he believed to be true, "Young lady you have a good dawg."

Ashleigh stated without batting an eye, "I love her."

Captain witnessed this loyalty with K-9 units.

Jake who made his way around the truck told Captain, "She's a good dawg but never hurt Shorty."

Ashleigh cringed, "You shouldn't have pretended to hit me."

Jake smiled, "Shorty don't be fretting. Nothing happened."

Ashleigh made a face.

She often wondered what Nikita's response would be if someone actually hurt her.

Ashleigh mentioned, "We're thankful for your help."

Captain answered, "I'm happy to be helping. There's a lot of families hurting. What Y'all are doing is a blessing."

"It's a shame Ma ain't here."

Captain answered Jake, "I ain't told her. I love her dearly and she is a woman of integrity but she'd have difficulty locking her tongue. Seeing this donation she'd be singing like a canary. She'd be telling folks on how Mr. Bob was blessing everyone." He looked at Ashleigh and took an even more serious tone, "It ain't like she'd be spreading rumors. She'd just be feeling grateful."

Ashleigh gently responded, "Bob doesn't want any attention for this."

Jake asked a little confused, "Linda was saying Y'all are having a food drive?"

"You promise you won't tell anybody?"

Captain stated, "Y'all sworn us to secrecy."

"Everything in this truck was bought from Bob's own money."

Captain exclaimed, "Ain't that the berries!"

Jake: looked at this rented truck, he thought about all of the stuff they loaded into the truck, he estimated on how much money was spent to fill the truck; this private estimate impressed him.

"The food drive is something the company is sponsoring."

Captain and Jake looked at one another.

Ashleigh became real serious, "Please don't tell anybody. My brother does what he says. If people find out he's the one who donated everything he'll never do it again. He'd be less upset if people thought the company did it. We shouldn't push this though."

Captain answered, "We'll just have to keep our tongues locked."

Captain and Ashleigh looked over at Jake, "I ain't telling."

Captain: looked at his watch, lifted up his Navy baseball cap, then set it back down, "We need to get cracking if we're wanting to be finished before Pastor Lilly and the other volunteers arrive. With this being the day the Center hands out food we ain't having the time to be yapping. It'll be light soon and someone's bound to show up. If someone finds me here with Y'all. I'll be needing to answer a lot of questions."

He looked at Ashleigh very serious, "I ain't one to be lying to her. Jake and I spend time fishing."

Ashleigh touched his arm, "I don't like lying either. Bob asked me to take care of this and keep it quiet. I trust the two of you."

Captain asked, "We only met once? When Y'all were lost?"

Jake added, "You trust me?"

She crunched her forehead, "Your my friend? I see how you treat Megan and Linda. Linda is my friend. Why wouldn't I trust you?"

Jake would never tell Ashleigh on how much Linda mistrusted Ashleigh after Linda found out Megan and Ashleigh were both straight.

She turned toward Captain, "I'm aware I'm asking you to do a lot for me and you don't really know me. Megan's my best friend."

Ashleigh paused changed the direction of what she was going to say, "Mr. Bob and I are impressed with how you've treated our employees. Others jacked up the rent and you guys

didn't. I've heard you volunteer out here a lot."

Jake added, "With Y'all spending so much time out here. I was thinking she should talk to Y'all."

"I was hoping to meet you. I missed you a couple times when you were visiting Megan."

Captain: lifted his hat, scratched his head, his gray straight hair was a mess, he smiled, set the hat back on his head, "We spend a lot of time here. Why didn't Y'all ask Megan for help?"

"She needs a day off of work. Plus, my brother didn't want her to know."

Both men would talk about this later.

"Shorty we better get started."

Captain turned and went up the six metal steps onto the dock of the Eastbank Community Center.

Jake nudged Ashleigh, "He likes you."

Ashleigh winked.

Captain barked orders, "We ain't waiting for the sun to rise. Jake get up here."

"Yes sir."

Jake quickly went up the stairs and lifted the back door of the truck.

Ashleigh followed close behind. Captain: with his key opened the community center, turned off the security alarm, turned on the light to the back of the center, pushed the button so the dock door would open, and barked, "Just set the trees and food over here."

Jake used a hand truck to push a brand new artificial Christmas Tree into the center.

Ashleigh reminded Jake, "Make sure the envelope is facing up."

"Yes Ma'am."

"Call me Ashleigh."

She started to push a hand cart. On this cart were seven cases of unopened canned food.

Captain rushed into the truck and stopped her, "Whoo. Young lady you just wait right there. You hear?"

She asked, "Where does this go?"

The cart was as tall as Ashleigh.

He'd have a lot of explaining to do if something happened to Ashleigh. After all she was the vice president of the largest employer in his community and was the sister of the person who owned this company. More important, his southern sensibilities were alarmed seeing this short cute gal pushing such a heavy cart. More important than any of these reasons; he respected her.

Captain suggested, "How a'bout leaving this for Jake. Follow me. I'll show Y'all where the Christmas decorations go."

She knew what this meant.

Captain could tell she disliked this suggestion.

Jake stepped up to them when he noticed Ashleigh's stubbornness was about to kick in.

Jake mentioned, "There's a lot of families who'll be happy to receive a box of ornaments. I'm sure brand new ones have never been donated before."

Ashleigh gave him a look.

Captain from his heart stated, "Ms. Ashleigh. Y'all are a blessing. I ain't liking the idea of Y'all getting hurt."

"I'm not going to get hurt."

Jake diverted Ashleigh's stubbornness by stated a small fib, "We'll know where to place the food. We ain't knowing how to set out the Christmas decorations."

Ashleigh understood the layers and knew time was a factor, she caved in; "Where should I put them?"

Jake grabbed the hand truck of canned food.

Captain answered, "In here."

Ashleigh followed a man she admired into the Community Center. She was well aware he was a leader in this community and needed to be respectful.

Julie stepped out of her room and shut the door. She was dressed in her brand new ice blue Adidas outfit. Her favorite part of this outfit was the ice blue polyester lined jacket: it had white stripes down the side of the arms, a white vertical patch on both sides of the zipper, and a noticeable white zipper. She matched the jacket with an Adidas jersey: it had sky blue sleeves, sky blue trim, a white front, red shoulders, and on the front written in red letters was the word Adidas. She wore matching elastic drawstring pants with sky blue stripes on the side, and she matched this with metallic white and sky blue Adidas athletic shoes. She owned a similar outfit in red. The reason she purchased this particular outfit was because it was on sale; and her Momma let her use a coupon she received in the mail. Over her shoulders was the backpack she carried with her at all times. In it: was a change of clothes, everything she needed to take a shower, and things a young woman needed to get through a day.

She glanced at her brand new digital sport watch. Even though she was ahead of schedule she quickly headed down the stairs. When she reached the kitchen she noticed her Daddy studying something on the table; she went over to see what he was looking at.

He was dressed in a plain blue suit with a matching white shirt and a simple blue tie with stripes. Julie knew two things: he picked out the suit himself and he was attending a couple meetings. If he was working on the production floor he'd have dressed far more casual. Everyone in the Steward household believed Jimmy was happier since he began working for *Renewed Mastery*. What was difficult for Julie was how her Daddy struggled selling insurance. Seeing her Daddy struggle was upsetting. Her Daddy: was a Marine, was a construction crew foreman, became qualified by attending night classes, was a leader at their church, and was a good Daddy. She knew of other daddy's who were creepy or mean.

Julie loved her Daddy.

She: glanced at the table before opening the refrigerator, grabbed her lunch, turned around, let the refrigerator door shut, and began to study the blueprint on the table.

Jimmy took a sip of his coffee and looked at her. It was obvious she was already a young woman. He was proud of her and believed with all of his heart she'd be successful.

Julie rightly assumed her Daddy was studying a blueprint of the *Renewed Mastery* production floor. Julie knew *Renewed Mastery* started by making wooden games and wood wall decorations. Everyone in Eastbank quickly realized the company made a lot more than games and wall decorations. Julie felt Mr. Bob and Ms. Ashleigh were smart putting her Daddy in charge of wood production. Julie believed he would be promoted to production manager. Currently the production manager was in Wisconsin. There were three people above her Daddy: one was the production manager, above the production manager was Ashleigh,

and above them all was Mr. Bob.

Jimmy asked in a serious tone, "How's walking the dawg?"

He knew his daughter was doing well because he talked with Ashleigh the day before.

Julie was happy to answer him, "She's great. I've learned so much about taking care of a dawg."

"This experience will help you when you have your own place."

She hoped walking Nikita would convince her parents they should get a dog. Julie's dilemma was her Momma already said no. The quickest way into trouble was to manipulate the two parents against one another. Work duty was worse than a paddling or a grounding. Depending on the offense and the age; a person could receive all three punishments for the offense of manipulating.

With this on her mind she asked, "Are Y'all working late?"

"Before we discuss my work I wanted to discuss Y'all walking Nikita."

"Yes sir."

"Momma explained to me on how Y'all are handling the routes."

She wanted to sigh, but restrained herself because she was talking to her Daddy.

"Y'all will be in trouble if you say Y'all are on one route and you choose another."

There was only one answer if she wanted to continue walking Nikita, "Yes sir."

"I checked out those routes."

"Yes sir."

"I want you to be careful anytime Y'all are walking alone the preserve."

Julie made a face and stated, "People hike it all the time?"

She felt her Daddy's look was awful strange, "Lets just say there are things in the preserve. I wouldn't walk into the preserve by myself. I ain't saying Y'all can't walk along it. What I am demanding is you stay on the road or the bike path. I'm the one disapproving of Y'all walking along the river."

"Yes sir."

"That's my girl."

Julie reassured her Daddy, "I'll be okay."

"People have disappeared while exploring the preserve."

She'd heard this rumor.

"Yes Sir."

Jimmy's countenance changed, but was still serious, "Like it or not. Mr. Bob and Ms. Ashleigh are powerful people in this here town. I've heard about the scholarship. Mr. Bob is a big influence on who receives it. Y'all promise to keep what I'm about to tell you to yourself?"

Any promise was important to Julie, "Yes sir."

"Mr. Bob is a man of his own will. He'll do what he says. He makes his own decisions. As far as I can tell there are only two people who he trusts."

Julie said in the pause, "Ashleigh."

"Y'all are correct."

Julie asked, "Who's the other?"

"His personal secretary Haley."

"He doesn't trust people?"

"I believe he trusts the dawg more than people."

She would think about this.

Jimmy stated, "Keep in mind he's allowing Y'all onto his yacht. If he disliked you. Y'all wouldn't be walking the dawg much less entering the yacht."

She took this to heart.

"Notice everything and keep your lips and tongue locked."

"Yes sir."

He said as only a Daddy can, "I'm proud of you."

She perked up and smiled.

"I won't let you down."

"I'm sure Y'all won't."

She asked again, "Are Y'all working late today?"

Jimmy answered, "They ain't allowing me any more overtime. So I'll be home early."

Julie liked it when her Daddy was home for dinner. She would never tell him, but she felt better when he was there.

He looked at her, "I was thinking I could make us some hamburgers on the grill."

"You cook the best hamburgers."

"No ass kissing."

Julie's eyes went wide, "Don't let Momma hear you swear."

Jimmy answered with a smile, "I must've heard Mr. Bob say this to often."

They both smiled.

Even though she was looking forward to her Daddy's hamburgers, she'd have preferred to be eating at her Auntie Diana's condo.

She asked, "Where's Momma?"

"She's getting ready for the annual Christmas shopping trip."

Julie decided to ask her Daddy, "I'm feeling Auntie will announce she's gay."

"Many of us have wondered. I ain't approving of it but she's my Little Sister. I ain't about to treat her as Uncle Timmy is starting too. You understand?"

"Yes sir."

"Some things have been difficult for your Auntie."

"Like what?"

"You should ask your Momma for those details."

Julie respected this a great deal.

Jimmy asked, "Ain't you needing to go?"

She glanced at the kitchen clock, "I have a few minutes yet. May I ask Y'all something else?"

"What?"

She smiled, "Are we getting a pool?"

"Have you made plans for one."

"I found a few online."

"Here's what I'm wanting. Take the ones you like and make em' into a design you like. Make sure the pool will fit in the back yard. It can't be touching your Momma's garden. I'll be needing a room for a fence. Then we'll see."

"Really?"

"I'm thinking we might be able to swing one in a couple summers. With Y'all being the one pushing for a pool I'm wanting Y'all to make them plans. You hear?"

She stood at attention, and in a very respectable way answered, "Yes sir."

“At ease.”

She relaxed.

He gently approached her, “I believe Y’all are capable of being anything you want. It’ll be a good learning experience for Y’all to figure out where to place the pool. I want the measurements and a professional looking plan.”

“Like the one on the table.”

“Yes.”

“Okay Daddy.”

With heart Jimmy stated, “I need to get to work.”

Julie stated, “Daddy.”

He looked at her.

“I’ve heard it’s cold in Wisconsin. When Y’all take the trip the business trip to Wisconsin dress warm.”

“I’m planning on it. I’ve been up north before.”

“I’ve been hearing the Midwest is different from the East Coast?”

His body stiffened to be one of a military stance, “I’ll be ready.”

She again wondered what he actually did in the Marines. Feeling her Daddy would be okay, she headed toward her parents room.

She heard her Daddy pound on Jeff’s bedroom door and yell at him to get up. Julie liked it when her older brother was yelled at. She felt some compassion for her Brother. The playoff loss the high school football team experienced was difficult for everyone who lived in Eastbank. To lose by two points, in overtime, would make anyone who played in the game upset for years. Julie could relate to how her brother felt, he played the game of his life, and they still lost. She promised herself she would check on her friend Billy.

Before Julie reached her parents bedroom door she heard through the door, “Who’s there?”

“Me.”

“Ain’t you running late?”

The door opened.

Julie could tell her Momma was struggling with what to wear: she was still wet from the shower, was wearing pajama pants, was holding onto her robe, and her Momma’s cleavage was easily visible. Julie hoped her breasts would never be as large as her Momma’s. Julie already felt her breasts were getting in the way.

“Where’s Jeff?”

“He’s having trouble getting ready. Daddy’s talking to him.”

“Is Ester up?”

“I ain’t sure.”

“She’s been getting up at the same time as you.”

This bothered Julie as well.

Nicole informed Julie, “Y’all will have to get to the yacht on your own. I have to get the house ready for the make your own breakfast.”

“It’d be easier if I missed today.”

“You ain’t missing school.”

This was expected but was disappointing. It was doubly disappointing because she wanted to be there when the ladies asked her Auntie if she was a lesbian. Julie felt this was a

possibility based upon a conversation she overheard between her Auntie Diana and Auntie Sam. Julie would never forget this day, not only did she watch Diana's boys, she watched Sam's identical twins. Julie often times felt the twins were one person.

Nicole asked, "Are Y'all okay?"

Julie was ready to ask her Momma a woman to woman question, but she heard her brother stumble out of his bedroom.

Julie lied, "I was seeing if Y'all could take me."

This shocked Nicole, "We talked about this?"

"I remember."

"Y'all said you'd bike to the yacht. After walking the dawg they'll take you to school. Ashleigh said Y'all could shower at the yacht. Do you have your things?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"Get going and I have to get ready."

"Okay."

Nicole sighed, she wished she could have it back, but said, "I'm sorry. If Y'all need to talk I'm here for Y'all."

Julie looked at the floor and then at her Momma.

"It's okay. I was just asking for a ride."

One of the reasons Julie changed her mind was because she noticed her brother was eating at the counter and was glancing at her.

"I'll bike."

"Y'all better get a move on."

Nicole grabbed the door, "Don't be late for dinner."

"I thought Y'all wouldn't be here?"

"This ain't meaning Y'all are allowed to go anywhere else. Y'all understand me?"

"Yes Ma'am."

Nicole stopped just before she shut the door, "I promise I'll tell you everything that happens today."

Julie smiled and her body language perked up, "You promise."

"Yes."

Julie with some energy stated, "I'm needing to leave."

Nicole watched: Julie glance at her watch, pulled a hair tie from her jacket pocket, placed her dark brunette hair into a pony tail, and moved quickly toward the garage.

Nicole smiled and shut her bedroom door.

Nicole stepped over to her large closet. She opened the french style doors and gazed into it.

This thirty-six year old woman was deciding on what to wear. Her long brunette hair was hanging loosely and drying quickly after her shower. Nicole was grateful she received a resistance to gray hair from her mother; Nicole often wondered if this trait was passed down to her children. Her beautiful brown eyes were focused. This concentration could be seen in her: oval shaped face, Ruina shaped lips, round chin, and lower cheekbones. She was aware her face was showing the signs of aging, these signs only added to her unique qualities. She disliked her roman style nose and was still surprised her husband liked her larger upper lip. What helped her appearance was the time she spent working out and healthy eating habits.

She spent a lot of time fighting what she felt was gravity. She often times wished she could step into a machine and have her hips shrink. The counter to all of this negative thinking was how many younger men eyeballed her when she was in the gym. She was certain many of these men would have slept with her. Besides believing an affair was morally wrong, she never felt the temptation to cheat, because she knew how much her husband loved her. She worked out to be healthy and active; an added bonus was how much her husband desired her.

She heard her youngest laugh and then scream.

Nicole focused on the sounds coming from the kitchen. There were a variety of outcomes to Jeff playing with his younger sister. The one Nicole hoped for was the play would just sort of stop and both would go back to what they were doing. Another possibility was Jeff stopping and Ester pleading for Jeff to continue. An outcome that often happened was Ester crying and screaming.

Nicole often times felt sorry for her ten year old. Ester craved the attention from her seventeen year old brother and her fifteen year old sister; usually this attention was ignored. Nicole believed this was the reason Ester wanted to grow up so fast and why Ester was so excited about her birthday. Nicole did her best to separate the traditions of Christmas and Ester's birthday. With Ester's birthday on January eighth it was sometimes stressful for Nicole to give Ester a special birthday. This was currently in the back of Nicole's mind.

The issue on the forefront of her mind was Megan's sexual orientation. Based upon reasonable assumptions and consistent rumors the family believed Megan was a lesbian. The ladies in the family were hoping Megan would come out of the closet today. If Diana and Nicole felt Megan and Ashleigh were indeed lovers; they would breech the subject at dinner. Nicole was grateful Auntie Ruth and Ruth's daughter Rebecca would attend the dinner. Nicole was just as relieved Ma and Auntie Alice would be absent. What Nicole wanted was for Megan to feel comfortable enough to come out of the closet before dinner. What worried Nicole was the possibility they were mistaken and asking Megan would hurt Megan. The reason the ladies in the family were ready to risk hurting Megan, were the rumors they were hearing, and the comment Timmy made during Thanksgiving. Nicole was grateful Megan missed Timmy's comment.

In the last three days Nicole imagined hundreds of different ways to ask her. She kept debated on: who should ask her, when to ask her, and if they should ask her. Nicole imagined a hundred different reactions to these questions. What concerned Nicole was how this day would affect her relationship with her sister-in-law. Nicole loved Megan as a baby sister. The worst imagined consequence was for Megan to be so angry their relationship would be tarnished for the rest of their lives; Nicole wanted to believe this was highly unlikely.

The wild card in all of this was Ashleigh. Nicole was concerned about Ashleigh's reaction to the ladies confronting Megan. A spouse often had a powerful influence over another. Nicole wanted to believe Ashleigh would be understanding.

Nicole was worried Ashleigh would move back to Wisconsin. Nicole felt Megan was a very monogamous person. Nicole's fear was if their relationship ended badly; Megan would never attempt a second one. Nicole believed this no matter if Megan dated a man or a woman.

Nicole was about to grab a Georgette blouse with brown animal print with cream colored background. She would match this with a supportive cream colored shirt underneath, she'd have matching slacks, and a belt. This would have been an ideal outfit if she went

shopping with Diana; especially if they ran into Diana's friends. She put the blouse back.

She stood there looking at her closet of clothes.

Nicole decided her goal was to appear as though she was able to keep up with women who were 23 and 28; without appearing as though she was trying to be something she was not.

Nicole was confident Megan would wear: a nice blouse or shirt, nice slacks, and dress shoes. What both Nicole and Diana appreciated was Megan never wore her usual athletic wear or casual wear when they went shopping. Secretly; these sister-in-laws wanted Megan to wear a casual dress. They felt Megan looked wonderful when she wore dresses.

The wild card was Ashleigh.

Nicole felt Ashleigh: had a natural aura about herself, she was youthful, colorful, flirty, filled with energy, and was sarcastic. Megan was intense, determined, confident, an idealist, and was very loyal. What Nicole felt they had in common was their: intelligence, they were hard workers, both loved their families, both were honest, and both had layers. Nicole felt Ashleigh had an abundance of layers, Nicole as a sister-in-law worried about some of these, her biggest concern was Ashleigh's loyalty to Megan.

Nicole again focused on her wardrobe.

She ruled out a skirt or a dress.

Jeans were too casual going anywhere with Diana. Nicole pulled out a white pair of Poplin pants. She observed women in their twenties and thirties wearing these type of pants. She liked the zippers on the leg bottoms and the small pocket on the thigh. Holding this pair of pants up she considered the tops she owned. She was hoping to find a top where the pants would look less casual.

As she was considering a printed top she heard the sound of feet coming down the hallway. Nicole was expecting this.

Nicole heard a small knock.

"Yes."

"What are you doing?"

Nicole was unsure about the pants and neatly draped them over an empty chair, then asked, "Did you eat?"

"Yes Ma'am. Jeff gave me cereal and I ate a banana."

"Is all of your homework done?"

"Yes."

"What about your spelling test?"

Even through the door Nicole heard the sigh, then heard, "I studied yesterday."

Nicole decided to ignore the sigh.

Nicole stated, "If Y'all are ready come in."

Ester opened the door.

Nicole spotted the big bright smile on Ester's face.

Ester felt it was a treat to be in her parents room. Even more important than stepping into the room was being with her Momma all by herself. The two most important women in Ester's life were her Momma and her Sister. Ester admired and wanted to be like her Older Sister. It was her Momma who kept the world from being a scary place.

Just as Ester stepped into the room Nicole asked, "Is your brother still home?"

"He's watching TV and waiting for friends."

"If he's still here close the door."

Ester stopped, turned around, and shut the bedroom door.

Ester asked, "Y'all getting ready for shopping?"

Nicole smiled, "I'm trying to decide on what to wear."

"Is Auntie Diana coming?"

"Yes."

"Is Nana going?"

"No she decided not to go this year."

"Oh."

"Is Auntie Megan going?"

"Yes."

There was a pause.

During this pause Nicole pulled out a red shirt and placed it over the white pants.

Ester asked, "Y'all like it?"

"No."

Ester watched her Momma place the shirt back.

Nicole pulled out a white stretch Poplin v-neck shirt; she liked the seams and the snap front; this would highlight her breasts and give them support. This would make her look younger without looking foolish. She was still unsure.

"Momma."

"Yea."

"Is Nana upset Megan's bringing her girlfriend?"

Nicole immediately turned around.

"Who told Y'all Megan has a girlfriend?"

"Nobody."

This was true. Ester just put the pieces together by listening and watching everyone.

Nicole said, "We've talked about this before. We ain't jumping to conclusions. Until Megan tells us she likes girls we're assuming she likes boys."

"Oh."

Nicole knew she needed to have a more in depth conversation about sex but based upon the digital clock next to her bed this was not the time.

"No matter if Megan is a lesbian or not we're treating her nice."

"Yes Momma. Why would Auntie Megan like girls and not boys? Why can't she love a boy like you love Daddy?"

Nicole studied her daughter who was sitting on her bed. "Some people believe a person is born that way. Others believe it's a choice. Some people believe people choose to be gay because of how they were raised."

"Oh."

Nicole being in a hurry: set the white stretch Poplin v-neck shirt onto a near by chair, she slipped off her robe, hung it over the same chair as the shirt, and quickly slipped off her pajama bottoms.

"Momma?"

Nicole expected another question about Megan.

"Why ain't I pretty like Y'all and Julie."

Nicole turned around. She slipped on her pair of jeans, "Y'all are a very beautiful young lady. Y'all shouldn't want to look like me or your sister."

“Why?”

“Because you ain't your sister and you ain't me. You need to eat right and take care of the body God gave you. Don't be disappointed in the body God gave Y'all. He makes us all different.”

Ester watched her Momma slip on her bra. She witnessed Julie run from the bathroom to the bedroom naked. She observed different women nude at the YMCA. A boy at school brought a magazine to school with nude women in it.

“Momma will I have tits?”

Nicole stopped and studied her daughter. It occurred to Nicole based upon Ester's body language Ester was worried about this.

“When we talk about woman to woman things we use proper terms.”

This excited Ester. This was the first time she was involved in a woman to woman conversation.

“Yes Momma.”

“Ladies use proper terms for body parts. They're called breasts.”

“Oh.”

Nicole slipped on a nice light blue button shirt, as she buttoned it up, she stated, “Yes. Soon you'll start to grow them.”

“Why? Will they be big?”

Nicole smiled, “Y'all want big breasts?”

This look of fear came on her, “No.”

Nicole smiled, “You don't have a choice.”

“Oh.”

Nicole smiled a reassuring smile, “Y'all might want bigger breasts.”

Ester said, “They'll bounce and hurt.”

Nicole quickly: grabbed some socks, a pair of athletic shoes, and sat down next to Ester. She tapped Ester on her right leg, “Y'all haven't a choice on how large they'll get.”

“Why?”

“It's part of growing up,” Nicole knew this next comment would fascinate her daughter, “If girls didn't grow up to be women their wouldn't be babies.”

Ester took this as an opportunity to ask, “How does the baby get in a Mommy's tummy? How come Debbie at Julie's school has a baby growing inside of her? She ain't married? Will Julie have a baby growing inside of her?”

Nicole gave her a mom look. She put on her socks and shoes. Then asked, “How about if I explain this to you tomorrow night?”

Ester had been curious about Momma's and babies for a long time. Anytime she asked about babies and how they started to grow in a woman's tummy, her Momma told her she needed to be older.

In an excited tone she said, “Yea!”

“This is serious. You need to act like a lady when I discuss this with you.”

“Yes Ma'am.”

“Until then you think about any questions you have and don't talk about this with anyone else.”

“Even Danielle?”

“It's up to Ms. Jennifer to tell Danielle.”

“Why?”

“Only Mommies should tell daughter's where babies come from.”

“Who tells boys?”

“Daddies.”

“What happens if there isn't a daddy or a momma?”

Nicole knew how this could lead to a list of endless questions, “We'll talk about this tomorrow.”

“Yes Ma'am.”

“Remember what I said? I ain't you wanting to tell people we're discussing this.”

This would be difficult for Ester, but she promised, “I promise.”

Nicole stood up and led Ester out of the bedroom.

“Where's your backpack?”

“On the chair.”

“Go get it and I'll walk Y'all and Rosie to the bus stop.”

“I don't like Rosie.”

“She's one of your best friends.”

“She ain't my friend no more.”

Ester said with a hurt look on her face.

Nicole rolled her eyes.

The doorbell rang.

Nicole sighed.

She stepped to the door and looked through the peep hole. Lisa was a transplant from Pittsburgh. She moved to Eastbank to be near her parents after her husband was killed in Iraq. It was easy for Nicole and Lisa to become friends because they were pregnant at the same time. Lisa was forever grateful for Nicole being there during her pregnancy and the mourning of her husband.

Nicole was sure this would not take long. Lisa was a reasonable person and a good parent.

Nicole waved Ester over and opened the door.

Lisa said, “Hi.”

“Howdy.”

Ester stepped in front of Nicole; Rosie and Ester looked down at the ground.

The two Momma's gave one another the look and rolled their eyes. The two ladies swiftly resolved the issue between Ester and Rosie. The two adult women talked for a good fifteen minutes before Lisa rushed the two girls to the bus stop.

During this conversation with Lisa a friend of Jeff's picked up Jeff. After shutting the door Nicole promptly checked the refrigerator. She wondered if he was forgetting his lunch on purpose. She: shut the refrigerator door, started to clean the kitchen, and promised herself she would talk to her Son about eating healthy. While she was preparing for her guests to arrive she: thought about what to wear, she continued to think about her Sister-in-law, and was making a mental Christmas list.

Before she changed clothes she spent a short time in prayer.

*A*shleigh was laying on the couch with her eyes closed; she made sure her long blond hair

stayed in the wave she set it in.

She was concerned about her outfit. The trend of flare legged slacks was just about over. In spit of this trend ending she decided to wear her white and wine thin colored stripped flare legged slacks because: it was one of the few pairs of slacks she owned, she only wore them twice, and they helped her look taller. She debated wearing three different tops: a wine colored drapery top, a wine colored cotton button shirt, and an orange colored bra top silk cami. She decided on the wine colored cotton button shirt. She purchased the pants and shirt at the same time so the colors matched. Added layers by wearing a thinly striped wine colored mini-seersucker jacket. She could have gone without the jacket but locals were wearing light jackets. She matched this outfit with a pair of brown oxford shoes with three inch heels; they were sitting next to the couch. She hoped her feet would survive a day of shopping.

She was delighted her wine colored drop earrings and her beaded necklace matched her outfit. These beads were in sequences of five, and each sequence was separated by a silver bead, between the silver beads the beaded sequence was colored: wine, light purple, and white. She loved this necklace because: the beads were small on top, each sequence became a little larger, and she liked how colorful it was.

She decided she would ask Julie about her outfit.

She felt guilty for taking the day off. *Renewed Mastery* was entering one of the busiest times of the year, she was in the midst of organizing the move of the companies employee's to Florida, she was helping Madison prepare a select number of local employees to see the current operation in Wisconsin, with Bob leaving with this group she was preparing herself to run *Renewed Mastery Headquarters* by herself, she was missing her family in Wisconsin, and she was looking forward to spending time with her brother on Christmas. What no one knew, except for Bob and Ashleigh, it was her choice to work as many hours as she was.

This irritated her brother.

She thought of her brother's favorite sayings; "*Overtime is a sign of inefficiency, poor planning, and bad management. I'm not running a company with inefficiency. The solution is to find more effective ways of doing things.*" Ashleigh was well aware he took this seriously. She was upset with his implication she was setting a bad example. He wanted his employees to have a work life balance. She was still upset they had an argument over this saying.

She repeatedly resisted her brother's suggestion she should go back to Wisconsin for Christmas. With this being the only time in the companies history anyone would be working between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day, she felt obligated to stay in Florida. With her being the contact for anyone having difficulty moving to Florida; she felt she was obligated to stay in Florida until all of them employees moved. She was already being contacted by employees and families who were planning to move right after Christmas or were already in the process of moving. She felt she assembled a great team to help employees get acquainted to the area. This included: a small trustworthy staff within the company, Stan and Barbara promised to help anyone from the upper east coast, Megan and Jake were eager to help, and she was delighted Captain agreed to help.

She smiled when thinking about how the only two people on the planet she allowed call her "Shorty" was Jake and Captain.

Nikita was laying in her spot in the galley. It was close to the time of her walk. Nikita sat up and started to wag her tail when she heard and sensed Strong Sent. Nikita disliked the thing she rode. Nikita: made sure Best Friend was up, ran to the door, heard Strong Scent tie

the thing up, Strong Scent ran up the stairs, sensed Strong Scent by the door, Nikita howled, and Nikita heard the sounds that meant someone was at the door.

Ashleigh yelled; “No howl.”

Ashleigh was sitting up when “The Theme to the Pink Panther,” sounded. When all of the employees were settled she promised herself she would find out who designed this doorbell. She would start in the electronics division. What was annoying about the doorbell was her brother set it to only play movie theme songs.

Before Julie would ring the doorbell again she yelled, “I’ll be right there.”

Hearing Ashleigh's voice was surprising to Julie. The usual routine was: hitting the doorbell twice, hearing Nikita howl, have Bob answer the door, Julie entering the Yacht, a barely awake Ashleigh walking passed her into the galley, Ashleigh would grab an orange juice, and sit at the kitchen table attempting to wake up. Julie enjoyed the routine of Ashleigh, Bob, and Nikita. Julie especially enjoyed those mornings when Bob would have a discussion with her. The only thing more enjoyable was walking Nikita.

She was disappointed Mr. Bob was not the one answering the door. Julie made the decision to call him Uncle Bob as soon as Megan came out of the closet and announced Ashleigh was her lover. Julie thought it was awesome to have: a rich, odd, smart, and very eccentric Uncle. Julie already considered Ashleigh to be her Auntie. Julie felt Ashleigh was: cool, easy to talk to, she kept everything real, and in her own ways was eccentric; Julie suspected Ashleigh would never admit she was eccentric. Julie was convinced Ashleigh and Megan were already a committed couple.

Nikita could barely contain herself.

Ashleigh was expecting the same routine. She observed Julie and Nikita's routine every morning. Julie would immediately bend down and pet Nikita, during the greeting, Julie would casually acknowledge either her brother or herself. Julie would play a little rough with Nikita; this would end with Nikita laying on her back and Julie rubbing her belly. Julie would get up and practically run to Nikita's Closet, Nikita would be right on her heels, Ashleigh would hear the word “sit,” Julie would wait until Nikita did so, as soon as Nikita obeyed Julie; Julie would open the closet door. She would grab: the little shovel, a plastic grocery bag, place the shovel into the bag, and place these items into her back pack or into a pocket. They would walk to the refrigerator, Julie would post the route they would take, Julie would put her hair into a pony tail, they would run to the door, Ashleigh would hear Julie command Nikita to sit, Julie would put on Nikita's leash, the door would fling open, and the two of them would run down the steps of the yacht.

The one variable to this routine was if Bob stayed in the galley. Ashleigh would be forced to listen to their conversations. These conversations would flow with sarcasm, real information, Julie challenging Bob, Bob challenging Julie, both trying to one up the other; Ashleigh believed her Brother was trying to teach Julie life lessons.

Ashleigh always hung around to protect them in case someone accused them of an inappropriate relationship. Ashleigh was not only hanging around Julie, Ashleigh was hanging around any female employee who wanted to talk with her brother. Ashleigh would either walk into the office or open Bob's office door, Ashleigh trusted her brother with all her heart; what Ashleigh mistrusted was the women after her brother's money.

The Yacht door opened.

“Howdy.”

Julie was all smiles.

Ashleigh answered with a smile and a, "Hi."

Ashleigh liked Julie's new Adidas outfit. Ashleigh took notice off the new digital sport watch. Ashleigh assumed Julie purchased the watch with the bonus check she received from *Renewed Mastery*. Julie received this check because she listened to Bob's instructions and opened a savings account at the companies credit union. Ashleigh noticed her backpack was fuller than usual.

Julie paused seeing Ashleigh in her outfit. Julie was certain Megan would find Ashleigh attractive. Julie believed this was the first time she ever witnessed Ashleigh wearing dress slacks; Julie was sure she wore them to impress Megan. These thoughts caused Julie to stare and ignore Nikita.

Ashleigh felt Julie just gave her an odd smile, but instructed nicely, "You better greet Nikita."

"Oh."

Julie focused and bent down and greeted Nikita.

Ashleigh smiled and stepped into the galley. She prepared a couple of pieces of toast to hold her over until Nicole's custom breakfast. Ashleigh watched as Julie and Nikita literally ran through the galley.

"Y'all are looking awful nice today."

Julie opened the closet door.

This was a relief to Ashleigh, "You think so?"

Ashleigh put herself in a place where she could observe Julie. She placed the little shovel into a plastic bag and both went into a pocket.

"I feel you look nice in those slacks. They make you look taller."

Julie shoved a second plastic shopping bag into another pocket; she suspected the store printed on this plastic bag was from Wisconsin.

"You think so?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"I was worried these slacks made me look short. You think these are out of style?"

Julie stopped and honestly answered, "I still see gals wearing flare."

"Should I change them?"

"No Ma'am."

Ashleigh made a face, "What about my top?"

Julie noticed the coat hanging on the chair nearest the cabinet, "Are Y'all wearing the coat too?"

"Should I?"

"They match."

This was a relief to Ashleigh.

"You feel I should wear a matching hat?"

Julie answered honestly, "No Ma'am."

"I'm not sure."

"Ms. Ashleigh you look awful cute."

Julie observed Ashleigh's look of disappointment.

"I don't want to look cute."

Again Ashleigh observed an odd look on Julie's face.

Julie asked, "What's wrong with being cute?"

Ashleigh shrugged.

"Many gals would love to look cute."

"Your Mom told me the same thing."

Julie commented very seriously and spontaneously, "She's right about a lot of things."

The toast went up.

Julie commented, "Megan wouldn't like you eating white toast."

This comment seemed strange to Ashleigh.

Julie recognized this sounded odd.

Julie wisely walked over to the refrigerator, "I'm taking Nikita passed the mansions."

Ashleigh observed Julie rotate the maps and put the proper route on top.

"You better be using the same path you're telling your Mom."

Julie ignored the comment.

Nikita was growing restless.

Ashleigh stated as a fact, "You have a Mom who loves you."

Julie pulled out a pony tail holder, Nikita understood what this meant and became agitated.

With a smile Julie answered, "Yes she does."

Ashleigh heard the sincerity in Julie's voice, this gave Ashleigh confidence to ask a question, "Have you been at the mall we're going to?"

Ashleigh poured herself a glass of fresh squeezed orange juice. Ashleigh loved the flavor of the fresh squeezed orange juice; it tasted so much better in Florida than in Wisconsin.

Julie smiled, "Their taking you to a two malls. One is called *The Rose Garden* and the other is called the *Golden Reef Mall*. *The Rose Garden Mall* is newer. I like the *Golden Reef Mall* better."

"Is there a good place to buy swimsuits?"

"Most of the stores sell swimsuits."

Nikita howled.

Ashleigh scolded, "Have patience."

Julie loved it when Ashleigh talked to Nikita like she was a person.

Julie noticed the look of worry on Ashleigh's face, "Are Y'all buying more than one?"

Ashleigh stated with a lot of trepidation, "Two of them."

Julie tried to be reassuring, "I'm sure Y'all will find something." She added, "I'm sure somebody will find you hot."

Ashleigh observed Julie change into a giddy teenager, this was odd, overall Julie was very mature for her age. Julie never gave Ashleigh a chance to question Julie's statement.

Julie remembered and asked, "Mamma said I could take a shower here?"

"You can take one anytime you'd like."

"I'm looking forward to riding in the Jeep."

"I'm glad to have it back."

"Did my Uncle Timmy fix it?"

Ashleigh made a face, "Yes."

Julie answered Ashleigh's face, "Don't tell anybody. But I ain't a fan of Uncle Timmy."

"He did an excellent job at fixing my Jeep."

Julie shrugged.

Julie changed the subject, "Momma makes the best Eggs Benedict and grits."

Ashleigh somewhat smiled.

"Momma's cooking is great. Especially her Eggs."

"I'm worried about grits."

"Momma makes the best grits."

"I'll have to trust you."

Julie smiled. Then asked, "May I leave my backpack here?"

"Oh sure. Put it next to the counter."

Julie: set the backpack down, she looked at her watch, she realized she was running late, she commanded Nikita, "Come."

Nikita stopped sniffing the backpack and followed Julie.

The two of them ran to the door. Like usual Ashleigh heard, "sit." Ashleigh heard the jangling of Nikita's collar; this happened when Julie slipped on the leash. The door opened and shut, Ashleigh heard their feet run down the stairs. Ashleigh was sure Julie ran Nikita. Ashleigh based this assumption on Nikita's behavior after the walk. Nikita would drink all the water in the bowl and lay down until Ashleigh was ready to go to work.

Ashleigh: opened the curtains in front of the sliding doors, she looked down at Megan's charter, she was grateful her friend could take a day off; Ashleigh felt Megan needed a day off. Ashleigh: caught movement to her left, she turned to observe Bob stepping into the galley, she sat down at the kitchen table, she took a bite of her toast, a sip of her orange juice, and observed her brother.

Bob opened a top cupboard and grabbed a box of fruit flavored cereal. Ashleigh rolled her eyes.

"I was thinking of leaving work early and putting the tree up. Where should we put it?"

Ashleigh looked at him, "I thought about the TV Lounge or the Dance Hall."

"I thought maybe the rec room?"

"I'd like to see it."

"I'll put the new tree in the Dance Hall and the small older one downstairs in the rec room."

She watched him pour his milk into the bowl and walk the box over to the table.

"Instead of two trees we could really decorate the Dance Hall and just hang lights in the rec room."

He looked at her and smiled, "Good idea. I was of the assumption you were helping."

Ashleigh smiled, "I haven't trimmed the tree with you in a long time."

"I remember a time when you were excited to help me decorate."

"We always put the tree in your living room."

Ashleigh recalled purchasing trees from a local farmer. There were a few years where they purchased the least expensive. Once his club became popular they purchased beautiful ones. Then they purchased smaller ones when he started *Renewed Mastery*. After a few years they went back to purchasing really full ones.

Bob said, "There were times when the trees were less than spectacular."

"I thought they were all beautiful."

"I always looked forward to the day you'd come over and we'd decorate it."

She knew this was important to Patty and later Shelly. It never occurred to her the one looking forward to putting it up was her brother.

"If we're going to decorate the tree together are we going to exchange ornaments like we used too?"

Bob smiled, "It's a tradition."

Ashleigh recalled making an ornament for her brother at school. One of her favorite Christmas memories was when Patty and herself made a glittered snowflake for him. She was living at the Anderson household and it was during the time Bob and Patty were still engaged. Soon after they would split but this was a favorite Christmas of Ashleigh.

"You still have the ornaments I made you?"

Bob turned away from reading the back of the cereal box and looked at her and said, "Why would I dispose of something you gave me?"

Since moving in with her brother there were times when her brother shocked her. Using Megan's standard of things, there were both positive and negative things, this was a definite positive. Few straight men would look at an ornament as important or sentimental. Ashleigh wished he would show this side of himself more often.

"So when are you leaving for Wisconsin?"

Ashleigh asked with a tone, "What are you firing me?"

He gave her a very weird look.

"Why would I fire you?"

"You fired another accountant yesterday."

With complete annoyance he answered, "He was trying to make decisions."

"You let other people make decisions."

He set his spoon down and looked at her, "This is why my company is successful. Accountants lack vision. Life goes beyond spread sheets and columns. I'll talk to you about this at work."

This was one of the things she disagreed with. She understood what he meant about accountants lacking vision; she promised herself she would find two accountants he'd trust. Partly to prove him wrong, partly to help their frustrated Accounting manager, a frustrated Gracie who was trying hard to find an accountant who would last, and more important to solve his brother's frustration with accountants.

"I assumed you would leave the day before Christmas Eve."

Ashleigh glared at him, "I was intending on working with everyone else."

"I was sure you'd change your mind."

She answered in an angry tone.

"No I have not. There is way to much to do. It'd look horrible if I just up and left leaving the team here to do everything. Have you ever had anyone work during this time?"

"You know the answer."

"Well then I'm working it. Just give me the extra week in Easter."

Bob looked at her, "You could fly up to Wisconsin the day before Christmas Eve and come back the day after Christmas."

Ashleigh felt hurt and appreciated at the same time, "Are we family?"

Bob observed Ashleigh's look of dismay, "Most certainly."

"Okay. Then I'm staying."

Ashleigh was somewhat perplexed why she would need to explain this. Ashleigh purposely repeated herself.

"With all the work I have to do this year. I can't leave."

"I'm more than capable of handling any situation that would occur."

"Okay Mr. Arrogant. How are you going to handle everything?"

Ashleigh disliked the look he gave her.

Bob answered, "We are a family. I'm aware of the affection you feel toward the Anderson family."

"With everyone arriving on January second. I would not enjoy a vacation. Why do I have to repeat myself? Victoria understands."

He looked at her like she was crazy.

She was afraid he would send her to Wisconsin on some irritating business trip.

"Just give me the extra week in Easter. Everyone will be moved in and my first big responsibility will be over. You're the one who thinks I'll need a break at this time."

"Does Victoria truly understand? Or are you trying to reassure me?"

This comment surprised Ashleigh, "I didn't expect to be in Wisconsin during Christmas that's why we had a huge Thanksgiving."

"I'll let it go this year. I want you to take three full weeks off during Easter and next year leave for a full week during Christmas."

"What about here?"

"We'll discuss this more fully after Christmas"

"Can they come here?"

"If Victoria isn't completely outraged I asked you to move here."

"She isn't angry."

Bob squinted his eyes, "I'm certain she's furious."

Ashleigh gave him a face.

The door opened and they heard, "Sit."

Bob smiled.

Ashleigh: rolled her eyes, stood up, grabbed the glass and the plate, and stepped over to the sink.

Julie stepped into the galley.

Nikita ran to her water bowl.

Julie took notice of what Bob was eating. She: opened the refrigerator, grabbed an apple, and with a sarcastic tone commented, "Mr. Bob sugared cereal isn't good for you."

Nikita was making lapping noises.

Bob answered, "The chemicals they spray on apples are horrendous to your health."

Julie smiled, "This is why you wash them."

Julie looked over at Ashleigh while she rinsed the apple, "We had a great walk."

Nikita was laying down and chewing on her rope.

Ashleigh was certain they ran.

Julie observed Ashleigh just set the dishes in the sink.

Julie stated, "Megan gets angry at Jake for leaving dishes in the sink."

This comment caught both Bob and Ashleigh's ear.

Julie realized her mistake, "I'll put away Nikita's things. May I give Nikita a treat?"

Nikita perked up and looked over at Julie.

Ashleigh answered, "Sure."

Julie stepped over to the closet; Nikita ran to it.

Ashleigh hoped they would refrain themselves from a debate.

"They talked about global warming at school."

Julie ignored Ashleigh's facial expression.

"Nikita give me paw."

Bob answered, "You mean false science?"

"Good girl."

Julie: shook Nikita's paw, gave Nikita the treat, Nikita greedily ate the treat, and Julie shut the door.

"Mr. Bob why would it be false?"

Julie walked into the galley and winked at Ashleigh.

Ashleigh gave Julie a warning glare.

Julie pretended she never saw the glare.

Julie leaned up against the island counter and rested her back against one of two pillars. The pillars were on opposite ends of the island they went from the top of the island to the ceiling.

Ashleigh was grateful Julie planned on taking a shower. There were days, like today, when Julie's body odor was strong. Ashleigh never mentioned it because it was obvious Julie did everything possible to cover it up. Ashleigh stepped away from her and sat at the table.

Bob turned toward Julie, "There are two things to consider in answering your question."

"What are those?"

Julie purposely made a point of biting into the apple.

"I washed this cereal out with skim milk. Some would say your destroying the planet by eating the Apple."

"I'm curious as to what makes you feel the Milk you poured over the cereal is able to wash away the preservatives and additives in the cereal?"

Julie smiled and bit into the apple.

Ashleigh rolled her eyes.

"It's obvious your teachers have trouble with reality. They are fabricating ideas like global warming so students such as yourself feel compelled to want a government to take away your rights."

"Mr. Bob have you ever considered the notion global warming might be correct?"

"I'm surprised an intelligent young woman such as yourself, would be under the assumption global warming is true."

"Mr. Bob I never said I believed it to be true. I just said it might be true."

Bob nodded, "Your point is well taken."

Julie took a bite of her apple.

"There are many scientists who believe global warming is all about liberal politics."

"Do tell."

Julie purposely crunched into the apple.

"You see if you plant an Apple tree you are cutting down all the rain forests and the world will get warmer. Then we will all die. So we are all better off eating this fruit flavored cereal."

"Y'all are assuming the only place Apple trees are grown is in a rain forest. I contend if they are grown here in the US a rain forest would avoid being cut down. Plus it would promote American business."

Julie smiled at Ashleigh.

Ashleigh gave her the look.

Julie pretended to miss this.

"If you are to listen to anyone who believes in global warming they believe three trees growing in your yard is a rain forest."

"This assumption is very general. I believe Y'all are trying to distract attention from the fact the sugared cereal you are eating will give you a heart attack or diabetes."

"One bowl will not give me a heart attack."

With a serious tone, "Mr. Bob it's not one bowl. You are eating one bowl a day this is 365 bowls a year. By the time you reach fifty years old this is eighteen thousand, two hundred, and fifty bowls. This is enough to kill you. It could ruin any possibility of you reaching fifty one."

Ashleigh smiled.

"You must be studying to be an accountant? I see a definite lack of vision. You're not going to be an accountant are you?"

Ashleigh in a very scolding manner announced, "She has every right to be an accountant."

"Mr. Bob you say this in such detestable manner."

Julie winked at Ashleigh.

Ashleigh made a face.

Julie asked, "Why would you say such bad things about accountants? I'm so distraught you'd think less of me if I became one. It sounds like you wouldn't even hire me."

"Becoming an accountant would make hiring you a difficult decision."

Ashleigh commented, "I'd hire you."

Julie appreciated the defense.

Bob gave Ashleigh a look.

Ashleigh squinted a response.

"Y'all are aware I'm a quick learner."

Julie smirked and stood up straighter.

He answered her with a smile, "Ms. Julie."

"Yes?"

She purposefully took a bite out of her apple.

"If you became an accountant I'd assume all your vision and at least a quarter of your intelligence would have simply been destroyed by what you were taught."

Ashleigh, replied, "Don't forget. I'd hire you."

"You should listen to your sister."

Julie bit into her apple again.

Julie said with confidence, "If Y'all ain't hiring me I'll just have to buy out *Renewed Mastery*."

A very confident Bob stated, "No one will ever buy me out. Someone tried that maneuver and it failed miserably."

"You don't think a gal could buy you out Mr. Bob? Maybe Megan is right when she calls you sexist."

Ashleigh laughed.

Bob glanced at Ashleigh and turned toward Julie, "Let me answer you in two parts."

"Yes sir."

Bob pushed up his glasses.

He looked at her as if he was a professor and she was a student; "First. By you becoming an accountant all the vision you currently possess would disappear and you wouldn't be able to compete with a man with as much intellect as I have."

Ashleigh made a face and folded her arms.

"Are you ready for the second part?"

"I feel I'm not ready."

"Why?"

"My vision has fallen out since I started studying accounting. I'm also surprised at your sexist remark."

Bob laughed, "That was pretty good."

"You think so?"

Ashleigh rolled her eyes.

"It was clever."

Bob enjoyed these little jousting matches. He respected her and understood her age, because of this he never personally attacked her. This was why he never mentioned her body odor.

Julie looked at him and went back to being the sarcastic intellect, "Mr. Bob what is the second part?"

"Ms. Megan is wrong."

"In what way."

"I'm far from sexist."

"Mr. Bob I beg to differ. My Auntie is a very good judge of character and she is of the opinion Y'all are sexist."

"Your Aunt is wrong."

"Why is she?"

"The reason I appear arrogant is because I'm generally correct ninety nine percent of the time."

Ashleigh in an angry tone stated, "Do tell."

They both looked at her.

She: crossed her arms, her legs, and leaned against the cabinet between the galley and the lounge.

"I'm far from sexist. In fact I promote women based upon their their abilities. In all actuality I'm a gentleman."

"I feel you are."

Bob and Ashleigh noticed how sincere she was.

Being sincere she added, "Y'all keep it to yourself."

She suddenly worried she said too much.

Ashleigh nodded her head in agreement.

Bob answered, "You're a perceptive girl."

This caught her off guard. This meant a lot to her.

Nikita stood up and ran for the door, two seconds later, the theme song from the movie Rocky played, "Gonna Fly Now".

Julie in a panic asked Ashleigh, "Could I use your shower?"

Ashleigh expected a sarcastic comment from Bob. Ashleigh could tell Bob was aware of

her body odor. Ashleigh observed, Julie changing her posture, and kept her arms closed. It was obvious to Ashleigh Julie was embarrassed.

Ashleigh answered, "Sure."

She asked, "Bob would you get the door?"

She appreciated Bob heading to the door.

Ashleigh commanded gently, "Follow me."

End of Part One Of Seven

December 6th, Shopping

© R. P. Voght 2018, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

Ashleigh & Megan *Book I: Friendship*



Wednesday December 6th

Shopping

Book 1 Day 7

*(6 Days since Julie started to walk,
Nikita for Ashleigh)*

Part Two of Seven

Authored By:

R. P. Voght

Posted on ashleighandmegan.com on:

June 3rd, 2018

© R. P. Voght 2023

This edited edition was posted on: January 25, 2023

I hope you enjoy this pioneering format I call, “A Story Cast.”

What the term “Story Cast” means; is this story is designed to be read in small to medium intervals. This particular story is broken up into “days.” These portions are broken up into part or all of a particular fictitious “day” of the story. Each day surrounds the characters lives, relationships, adventures, struggles, mishaps and triumphs. This story is very different from a Novel or conventional story in many ways. Again, THIS IS NOT A NOVEL AND IS NOT WRITTEN IN A CONVENTIONAL NOVEL FORMAT. Instead; as the reader you are following the characters thoughts and actions during the course of this “day.” This fiction story is set up like a TV series and or a third person journal. It always starts with one or more characters getting up and ends with one or more characters going to bed; while during the day you experience the Characters actions, feelings, and their thoughts.

On a large overview; there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to this “Story Cast”

R. P. Voght

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

December 6th, Shopping

(6 Days since Julie started to walk Nikita for Ashleigh)

Megan was thinking.

She was: sitting at her kitchen table, the shades to the galley were open, the sun was up, the galley smelled like pine cleaner, her diary was shut, she was staring at her plants in the living room, and she was dressed for shopping.

She had difficulty picking out the outfit she was wearing. She received in the mail: a pair of dark blue seemed denim jeans, a gray cargo trouser in seamless stretch, a cranberry colored lace top, and a white bell-sleeved poplin shirt. She purchased these items from a catalog brand she ignored for two years. This changed when she received a fall preview issue. On the cover of this issue was a model wearing a coat and a button shirt. This cover caused her to closely page through the catalog. She was surprised at the variety of items she wanted to try on. She was delighted when she received a couple sales catalogs.

Her intention was to wear the jeans and the cranberry colored lace top today. When she wore this outfit she felt: sexy, over confident, aggressive, and sexually charged. She believed this was inappropriate to feel this way on the annual Christmas shopping trip.

She decided on a different outfit.

The white bell-shaped poplin sleeved shirt was the most comfortable shirt she ever tried on, but it was the tightest shirt she ever wore in public. The only shirt tighter was the cranberry colored lace top. Many people would have considered both these tops conservative but to Megan they felt provocative. The only reason she wore the bell-shaped poplin sleeved shirt was because of the gray colored vest she layered over it. She matched these items with the gray cargo trouser in seamless stretch. She purchased these slacks to wear at her: *Women's Business League*. She almost returned them. These slacks highlighted her athletic

legs and her toned buttock. She added a nice thin belt and a gray jacket. On her feet were a pair of thongs with metallic detail. She wanted to wear athletic shoes but even in athletic shoes she towered over her best friend. She added a simple cross necklace and post earrings. She set a part in the left side of her hair, she made sure it was neatly combed, and she carefully put some wave at the tips of her hair.

She chose this outfit over a very conservative dress. She knew Nicole and Diana would have been delighted if she wore a dress. She considered wearing one because she liked the idea of being the woman she was before discovering an orgasm. The truth was, she was just as uncomfortable in the dress, as she was in her current outfit.

She was trying to think of an excuse to cancel her participation in this years shopping trip. If she canceled: she would work on a presentation for the next *Women's Business League*, when she was certain everyone else was shopping she would exercise, work on her business, and masturbate for the second time today. The idea of masturbating twice in one day was risqué for her; she never did this before. Her best idea was to call everyone and tell them she was too sick to go shopping.

Megan thought of the negative consequences.

It was highly probable Ashleigh would check on her. This would lead to: Ashleigh's feelings being hurt, maybe create a level of mistrust, it would ruin Ashleigh's day off, and it was likely Ashleigh would go to work; Megan felt Ashleigh needed a day off.

Megan imagined Nicole rushing over to make sure she was okay. Megan very rarely became sick, when she was, she struggled through the illness. Megan had three surgeries. These included the removal of her tonsils and two minor knee surgeries. There were four times when she was knocked out with a cold and flu; Megan was convinced the last one was because of Chinese take out. Having Nicole show up would have been annoying even if she was sick.

Megan was sure Diana would believe she was telling a fib. She imagined the phone call. Then her sister-in-laws questions. Megan expected to feel like she was ten. This would lead to feeling completely guilty. Megan knowing herself would end up going. This would turn into a whole set of different negatives. One of the worst would be the slack she'd catch for years.

She decided shopping was the smartest option. It was simply easier to deal with whatever personal feelings she felt while shopping; compared with all the negatives she would experience and feel with lying.

She was honest with herself. She felt the main reason in wanting to cancel was the impulse to masturbate again. She felt this was the wrong reason to cancel. Megan felt self exploration could never: interfere with family, could never be irresponsible, and should always be in private. She believed if she canceled just because she wanted to masturbate again would go against all three of her boundaries.

The idea of telling everyone why she was nervous about shopping bounced around in her head. Her face contorted into many different emotions when she imagined trying to explain her desires.

She blushed.

The only person she wanted to share these desires with was a husband.

Megan held back tears. She wanted to believe she would find a husband who would understand she had these desires. What she expected was a guy to break up with her. She was beginning to feel the only way she would ever get married was to conceal her intimate desires.

She hated this idea. She wanted to build a marriage on trust and honesty. She believed there needed to be trust and honesty in the bedroom.

Megan brushed away some tears.

Megan decided to use this shopping trip as a way to teach herself self control. She again promised herself: if her feelings became uncontrollable, if they interfered with her personal life, her business, or it became impossible to make love to a husband; she would seek professional help.

What she found positive was spending time with her Sister-in-laws and her Best Friend Ashleigh. Megan was aware Ashleigh considered just about anyone who treated her nice a friend. Megan was concerned some of the people Ashleigh considered friends would take advantage of her. Megan was certain Diana and Nicole would be authentic friends to Ashleigh. The love Megan felt toward her family, and how she cared about Ashleigh, made this shopping trip a large enough positive to: stand up, place her journal back into the trunk, she locked it, stepped into the head of her houseboat, closed the door, and looked at herself in the full length mirror; she felt she looked attractive.

She very rarely felt this way. With this feeling she decided to wear a light amount of makeup. She: stepped to her sink, washed her face, dried it, opened the cabinet above the sink, dug out her small makeup case, and carefully applied makeup. She wore the same basic colors, the same basic way, and it was always a small amount. She was pleasantly surprised on how she felt. Megan never liked how she looked in makeup. The truth was, she looked very attractive wearing makeup; but she never felt she did. The feeling of being attractive made her feel so uncomfortable she thought about washing all her makeup off and changing into the conservative dress she tried on earlier.

Instead; she again looked at herself in the mirror. She felt: confident, comfortable, and believed she looked like a successful business woman. She loved the idea of accomplishing a lot with her business. A fantasy she often indulged in, was being a CEO of a large company and having an attractive but submissive male secretary. She closed her eyes and stopped herself from indulging in a fantasy.

This bothered her.

This is when she recognized she was still feeling aroused from her earlier session. With any other session, she felt relief and was able to move forward throughout the day. She: pushed her sexual thoughts aside, turned off the light, stepped out of the head, walked into the galley, looked up at the clock, poured coffee into her Seminole coffee cup, slipped on her coat, grabbed her purse, grabbed her keys, and stepped out of her houseboat. She turned toward the door, took out her keys, again she wished she would have changed the key system before October, and locked the door. She turned toward the yacht. She stepped onto the first pier of the marina and headed toward the yacht. When she passed the stern of the yacht she spotted Julie's bike locked against the wooden pier. She glanced at the river and the town of Eastbank across the Eastbank River.

She sighed.

Her dimples flashed.

She looked up the steps and climbed up to the second deck.

She thought about Bob.

Her dimples flashed.

She brushed her hair behind her right ear.

Megan rolled her eyes at what she felt was an obnoxious doorbell. She understood why her friend disliked their doorbell.

Bob opened the door.

This was the least person Megan wanted to see.

Being a lady she said, "Howdy Mr. Bob."

"Hi."

Megan being hopeful asked, "Is Ashleigh and my niece ready?"

She noticed Bob was checking her out.

She suddenly felt self conscience.

She asked, "Is there something wrong?"

"You look..."

Interrupting, "Don't say something Y'all regret."

He smiled.

She disapproved of this flirtatious smile.

If they were dating she would have felt different.

"Ashleigh is currently assisting young Julie. Why not come in?"

Megan demanded, "As long as you behave as a gentleman."

Bob reaffirmed his opinion on this matter, "I am a gentleman."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Megan: gave him a look of disbelief, stepped inside of the yacht, greeted Nikita, but she was careful of Nikita's shedding fur.

Bob shut the door behind her.

Megan could feel him stare at her backside, she changed the way she was petting Nikita, she disliked feeling the need to do so; especially because she now had dog hair on her slacks. Luckily for Bob he walked past her and into the galley. Megan stood up and followed him. Nikita followed Megan. When Megan stopped just passed the China cabinet Nikita sat down next to her.

Megan was annoyed Julie was running late.

Bob asked politely, "May I get you anything?"

Megan followed his eyes. She crossed her arms across her breasts. She already felt self conscience wearing makeup and being dressed up. To have him stare at, what she considered hideous looking breasts, only added to her feeling of being self conscience. She again wished her Niece was running on time.

"I'm fine."

She noticed the box of fruit flavored cereal.

"Why are Y'all eating sugared cereal?"

Megan: stepped up to the kitchen table, set down her coffee, picked up the box with one arm, while still crossing her other arm over her breasts; she read the ingredients of this cereal.

"I like it."

She stated, "This ain't food."

Megan perceived he enjoyed her sideways profile. She followed his eyes to her legs and rear end. She purposefully turned to look at him.

Ashleigh stepped out of her suite. Before stepping out she gave: Julie a towel, a wash

cloth, and permission to try out any of the scented soaps she owned. Ashleigh decided she would purchase Julie a gift card to a store that sold scented soaps.

Julie never seen one person have so many different kinds of soap. Julie took notice of how expensive some of these soaps were. With how large the bathtub was Julie wondered if her Auntie and Ashleigh took a baths together. Julie felt this was romantic. This gave her an idea.

As Ashleigh walked up the steps and entered the main lounge, she heard Bob's response.

“Since it's edible it's food.”

“Food that'll kill Y'all.”

Megan placed the cereal box back down on the table.

“If Y'all like eating cold cereal pick something without the corn starch and all the sugars.”

“What happens if I told you I had a destiny and it wouldn't matter what I ate?”

She pushed her hair behind her right ear, shifted her weight, and with a tone stated, “I'd feel Y'all are being awful arrogant. I ain't God. So I ain't in the knowing if Y'all have a destiny. But you better not be thinking there ain't a consequence for the way Y'all are eating. You might regret it. Destiny or not.”

Ashleigh with a smile added, “She's right.”

Bob was about to respond, but Ashleigh ignored him and turned toward Megan, “You need something?”

“I was just explaining to your brother how he should be taking better care of himself. Is Julie ready?”

Megan hoped the answer was yes.

“In a few minutes.”

Based upon Megan's body posture, Ashleigh believed Megan was covering up. Ashleigh felt Megan looked attractive.

Ashleigh asked, “Am I under dressed?”

Megan relaxed, “No. You look great.”

Ashleigh answered in return, “You're dressed nice yourself.”

“I ain't sure.”

Bob interjected his opinion, “You look exceptional today. You should wear slacks more often.”

Megan and Ashleigh looked at him, Megan was unsure of what she felt about this comment; his tone was better than any other time.

“Thank-you.”

There was a slight pause.

She added, “It's nice hearing a compliment from a friend.”

Megan hoped he understood what she just implied.

“Sure.”

Both ladies quickly understood by his body language he ignored Megan's implication.

Julie stepped out of Ashleigh's suite: her long brunette hair was still wet, her backpack was swung over her shoulder, she was in a pair of jeans, a nice conservative button shirt, both were recently purchased at a popular department store with a coupon. She was adjusting her watch as she headed to the galley.

Megan turned, faced Bob, and with a tone of emphasis stated; “Y’all are the brother of my best friend. This will makes us friends.”

This made Ashleigh feel pretty special.

“I hope you ain't thinking something else. As your friend I feel Y’all should be thinking about your sister and the people depending on you.”

Julie stepped into the galley. Megan's tone caught Julie by surprise. Julie never heard Megan speak this way before. There was something else, something between them, and this confused Julie.

Bob became defensive, “I care deeply about Ashleigh and all my employees.”

Megan replied sternly, “You ain't showing it by eating junk food.”

He answered, “Why is it any of your concern?”

This irritated Megan, “My best friend is counting on you to be around. My brother and many of my friends have been hired by your company. I'd assume you'd care about this town and my family and friends. What'll happen to em' if you fall over dead?”

Ashleigh and Julie gave Megan a look and then glared at Bob.

“I've already considered this.”

“This is a surprise to me.”

“Why?”

“Y’all were just saying Y’all have a destiny and until you fulfill it you ain't dying.”

Julie was now confused. Julie wondered if her assumptions about her Auntie were true. The reason Julie questioned her belief Megan was a lesbian was the tension she felt between Megan and Bob. Plus, she never witnessed her Auntie have the type of body language she was displaying.

Being sarcastic he answered, “Maybe I'm just too stubborn to die?”

“Y’all just keep eating and living the way Y’all are living and see if the theory works.”

In defiance he answered, “I don't smoke or drink.”

“That's good and all. Most men in your position have one of these vices. I haven't spotted Y’all exercising or eating right.”

Bob hinted, “Maybe I need a trainer.”

Julie and Ashleigh glared at him.

In the heavy silence Julie and Ashleigh waited for Megan's response.

Megan broke the silence with a tone; “I know of several. I'd be happy to give Y’all their cards.”

“I was hoping you'd take the job.”

Megan's dimples flashed.

She imagined tossing him over the balcony into the river.

“So Y’all are able to stare at me? Like some act in a freak show?”

Nikita's body showed she was feeling the tension. She could feel the anger of Woman Friend toward Favorite Male. Nikita disliked this.

“Why on earth would you believe you'd be a freak show?”

“I don't appreciate you staring at me.”

Her finger tapped the table.

“Y’all have been checking me out the whole time I've been here.”

“I'd never act inappropriately to any woman. Especially one I'd like to take out on a dinner date.”

Julie was prepared for Bob to be knocked out.

Ashleigh was shocked he allowed Megan to directly challenge him; more important he was listening to her.

"This is what every gal falls for. I guess I'm to fawn all over some wealthy guy. Then feel a smitten cause he makes a pass. I'm not the type of gal to fall for such nonsense."

Megan was tired of this and asked, "You gals ready?"

Nikita was prepared for Favorite Male and Woman Friend to start mating.

Julie and Ashleigh nodded their heads.

Megan commanded, "We have to take Y'all to school."

Julie answered, "Yes Ma'am."

Ashleigh glared at Bob.

Bob shrugged his shoulders and pushed up his glasses.

Megan observed all of this. Megan assumed the best way for her to stay friends with both Ashleigh and Bob was to keep a personal distance from Bob.

Ashleigh commanded, "We'll take the Jeep."

Ashleigh: grabbed her purse, her sunglasses, walked over to Nikita, and told her, "You listen to Bob today."

Ashleigh turned and looked at Bob, "Make sure Nikita gets her water and you have to let her out."

"I will,"

Bob in a very polite way said, "Megan."

"Yes sir?"

"Find me a trainer you trust."

This shocked all three ladies.

Megan mistrusted this.

"Y'all want some hottie?"

"What makes you assume I'd want what you term a hottie?"

"Isn't it what all men want? Some brainless big boobed gal?"

He answered, "Don't assume I'm a man who only considers a woman's appearance. Every woman I've ever had a relationship with I admired them for who they were."

Megan snipped back, "I bet Y'all noticed their looks first?"

"Why is it so difficult for you to believe I find you attractive?"

The room was filled with an awkward silence.

Nikita was paying close attention.

"I didn't say me."

Bob answered, "Sure."

He pushed up his glasses.

Julie's eyes opened wide.

Megan's dimples flashed.

She turned red, "If Y'all don't start catching some manners I'll jerk a knot in your tail."

"I am. A man of manners."

"Y'all need to find em.'?"

Megan turned and looked at Ashleigh, "Let's go."

Julie was surprised at her Auntie's tone.

Ashleigh winked at Julie.

Julie felt this conversation were about: sparks were flying, or Megan was establishing a sister-in-law type of relationship. Julie decided she would talk to a lesbian schoolmate of hers.

Based upon what Nikita was sensing she wondered if Woman Friend was trying to mate with Favorite Male. This agitated Nikita.

Ashleigh pet her and again reminded her to listen to Bob.

Once Megan was outside of the yacht she took out an older pair of sunglasses and set them on her head.

Ashleigh made sure Nikita was okay. When Ashleigh stepped out of the yacht she followed her friends example; she now had sunglasses on top of her head.

They stopped when Julie reached her bike.

One last time they discussed who should drive. They headed toward Ashleigh's Jeep.

Nikita was confused on Best Friend left her behind. It was time to leave for Work Terriotry.

Mary Stewart was in the middle of her morning prayer. She woke up every morning at five thirty to pray, she would pray until a need was pressing, or until she felt she was finished. At fifty-nine years old she loved being: a Born Again Spirit Filled Christian, a wife, a mother, a Grandmother, a mentor to many ladies at church, and a friend.

Mary's long brunette hair with its speckled gray was nicely pinned back. Mary's face was long and her green eyes seemed to glow. They could glow with: love, determination, or they could change the direction of a bank robber. Mary carried herself with humble modesty. Mary considered modesty wearing a long skirt or a dress (on rare occasions she wore slacks). The only person who knew exactly the shape of her medium sized breasts was her husband; she always was modest. At this moment she was in a simple yellow skirt with white trim, she matched the dress with a white blouse, and her only accessory was a cross necklace. She would never admit to it, but she liked how very few people guessed her age. She rarely wore makeup. She had a small collection of clip on earrings and a few necklaces. On her feet was a pair of simple white athletic shoes.

What she learned from her daughter and daughter-in-laws was how important staying healthy was. Since her mid forties she never once regretted working out. She was convinced regular exercise helped her have the energy to accomplish all of the things God sent her to accomplish. She believed without God's determination she would never work out; working out was never a favorite activity.

What she loved the most was being whatever her family needed her to be. There were times, what her family felt she needed to be and what she felt she needed to be were different. She enjoyed volunteering and ministry work. This included: visiting the VA hospital, being involved in veterans affairs, being involved in women's ministry, and her favorite was volunteering at the Eastbank Community Center. The reason she enjoyed the Community Center was because of the love and respect she felt for Nicole. She enjoyed working with her Husband on their rental proprieties. Her one hobby was sewing. At one time she used this hobby to give her family a little extra money, she now enjoyed sewing because it helped other people.

To an outside observer someone might have thought sharing her faith was part of her religion. Sharing her faith was far from an obligation, she shared her faith because of who she

was. This sharing could involve: verbal teaching, helping out, and she was known for praying on the spot. Mary tried to love everyone she met. Her version of love often times ruffled a few feathers, but overall Mary was highly respected.

She was in the study. Her Bible was open in front of her. She was standing with her arms up and was praying in the spirit. On this desk was a computer monitor and below on the shelf was the computer. In the room was: a new computer chair, neatly against the wall to the right of the desk were two old computer chairs, a lamp on the desk, a floor lamp left of the desk, and two very tall bookshelves. They were filled with religious reading materials, classics, and a selection of historical books. Hanging above the desk was a simple silver cross. On the wall to the left of the desk was a three section print of a beach scene; Ma purchased this print because of the flying birds and the sunset. On the wall to the right of the desk was: a high school graduation picture of every one of her children, there were military pictures of her Sons and her Husband, there were three college graduation pictures, and on the bottom were important school pictures of her children and grandchildren. In the dead center was her wedding picture; Captain was in his Navy uniform and she was in a simple white wedding dress.

Mary: accepted Jesus as her savior when she was eight, she received the power of the Holy Spirit in a revival meeting when she was fourteen, and she claimed she learned how to pray during Vietnam. This is when she became the leader and the woman everyone in Eastbank knew as Ma. She very rarely talked about those days. When she thought about them she often cried and thanked God she made it. As a wife she spent many hours praying for her husband. The worst was being there for her friends who lost their husbands. She could clearly remember all of those flags given to her friends. She became angry whenever she thought about the men who came home from the war and were treated horribly. She often times had to forgive those people who treated her friends poorly. Mary believed the 1960's was a turbulent time, a terrible time; one she hoped she'd never experience again. She felt her generation was filled with spoiled brats who used any excuse to get high and act disrespectfully. She often felt these "protesters" helped encourage the enemy to kill her friends.

Every morning she prayed for her family. Currently she felt the need to pray for Megan. Starting in high school she regularly prayed about their relationship. Mary being older and wiser understood she was part of the reason they struggled. Mary was making an effort to bring healing between the two of them. Mary realized this might be a slow process but Mary believed love and faith could heal many things.

Mary began to pray more deeply for her daughter after: Nicole, Diana and Sam came over to her house and very nicely confirmed a shocking rumor. Mary was aware Megan was a tomboy and was accused of being a lesbian when she was in High School; Mary discounted these rumors. The reason she ignored them was because of the crush Megan carried for a boy named Simon. Mary again discounted the rumors she heard while Megan was in college. Mary could tell her daughter was fascinated with one of her self defense instructors. Megan never directly told Mary she was deeply infatuated with this instructor; but a Momma is able to know things. Mary was taking this latest round of rumors more seriously. The rumor came from a concerned mother in her woman's Bible study. This upset woman pulled Mary aside and asked Mary's advice on how to handle a daughter announcing she was a lesbian. This caught Mary by surprise. Mary's reaction at the time caught this other Momma by surprise. This woman approached Mary because this woman believed Mary knew her daughter was

considered a lesbian.

Mary's conversation with this upset momma was terribly upsetting for Mary. It was Nicole, Sam, and Diana who helped Ma right after this conversation. If her daughter was a lesbian, Mary prayed to have the wisdom and heart to handle her daughter behaving in a way she so vehemently disagreed with. At no time did Mary consider treating Megan harshly or consider abandoning her daughter. Mary was just unsure of what to do. One of the reasons she was praying so deeply about this subject was because her daughter-in-laws, her sister-in-law, and her niece were planning to ask Megan if she was a homosexual.

The first adult rumor of Megan being gay involved Gina. Gina was always open about her sexuality. So when Megan as a friend, helped Gina get settled and introduced her around town, people in town made the assumption Megan finally found a girlfriend. Even though Megan never came out as a lesbian, the people who knew her, just assumed Megan would never say she was. The talk about Megan going out with Gina stopped when Gina was spotted with Daisy.

The current rumor was her daughter was dating Ms. Waller. Mary believed it was improper to call someone of her status Ms. Ashleigh. Mary remembered the day she prayed for this young woman. She knew, because of the impression the Spirit gave her, she would be important to her community. At the time Mary believed Ashleigh was a good girl. This feeling was reaffirmed when she called about an employee who was behind in rent. She heard from a variety of people how much time Ashleigh and Megan were spending together. Mary was told Ashleigh convinced her Brother to move to Eastbank so Ashleigh could be near Megan. Mary wanted to discount all of these type of rumors. She became worried by the way Megan talked about Ashleigh. To Mary all of this could have disastrous consequences to both her family and her community. She was verbally confessing her worries when she heard the land line phone ring.

Mary never answered the phone during her morning prayer; she stopped and listened.

She quickly closed in prayer when she heard her husband walk up to the door.

She heard the knock and Captain say, "Ma."

"Who's on the phone?"

"It's Pastor Lilly. She's asking for Y'all to help at the Community Center."

Mary quickly headed to the door. She knew who was running the Community Center. She felt they were very capable of running it without help. Based upon past experience Mary assumed something happened.

She opened the door and asked, "Did someone break in?"

"It'd be awful difficult with the security system we have installed."

She asked Captain, "Whats the world coming to? Where we'all need locks on a place where we're helping folks?"

Dave shrugged his shoulders and handed the phone to Mary.

Mary immediately stated, "Y'all all right?"

Pastor Lilly immediately asked, "Is it possible to come down to the Community Center?"

"Did someone break in?"

Lilly brushed away the tears.

Hearing Lilly cry concerned Mary.

"Something wonderful. Mary-Beth just called me. The center is filled with everything. I

mean everything. We're needing help sorting it all. God blessed us. Someone left four brand new Christmas trees with gift cards attached to em. There's three hundred dollars worth of gift cards."

"Total?"

"No. Three hundred gift cards."

Silence.

"There was a note saying we ain't suppose to be saying we received it or they'd never give the items again."

"Well that's a peach."

"We ain't saying a word. Our tongues are staying locked."

Lilly stopped and caught her breath. She again needed to wipe the tears away.

"There's so much food. So much. We'll be able to give out extra this Christmas."

Mary exclaimed, "Well praise be to Jesus!"

Mary took a breath and calmed herself.

She asked very calmly. "Who donated it? And how did they get in?"

"We ain't sure. I'm feeling it must be a board member. Nothing is missing. Christmas decorations were spread out on our long tables."

"Christmas decorations?"

Somehow Lilly stopped herself from crying, "They were all organized. There's notes saying how many of each type a person should take."

"What are you meaning?"

"It's complicated. Y'all have to see it."

Mary exclaimed, "Well, praise Jesus!"

"This is just a blessing."

"We'll be right over."

Mary hit the button to hang up, "Captain the community center needs our help."

Captain pretending to be ignorant of the situation asked, "It ain't sounding like someone broke in."

"Jesus is blessing us for staying open when others said we should close."

"They donated brand new Christmas trees."

Captain suggested very strongly and seriously, "You ladies should give one of those trees to the young fella at church with all them kids. I's heard he's been looking for work for six months. They'd appreciate a tree."

Mary smiled, "The Billings."

"That'd be them."

All Mary could say was, "Praise Jesus."

Mary calculated they'd be there in ten minutes. She quickly called Nicole. They had a brief discussion and it was decided Nicole could volunteer the following day and help handing out items or leading people to items. In cases like this the people running the shelter would first call those families needed the most help. Nicole and Mary believed it would take a day to figure out who should receive what. They both decided it was to important to the family for Nicole to cancel the shopping trip.

Captain looked at his beloved wife, "Y'all alright?"

"I'm worried about Megan."

"There ain't anything we can do."

"We can pray and be there for her."

Captain answered, "I'm with Y'all. I ain't liking the idea my daughter likes the company of a women."

"I don't either."

Captain recalled what Megan told him and wanted to believe Ashleigh was straight, "We might be wrong."

"We'll find out."

They stood looking at one another. Captain asked, "What else is eating you?"

"The person who donated the items left three hundred gift cards."

Captain lifted his hat, "Geez."

"Yes Papa."

Captain wondered how wealthy Mr. Bob actually was.

Mary crinkled her forehead together, "I was told there was a note saying if we mentioned anything about the donation the person wouldn't donate again. Why would someone be putting such a condition on being generous?"

Captain answered as if it was a guess, "Maybe he or she wants this to be about helping folks instead of getting attention."

Mary smiled, "Lets get cracking."

Captain traded his train engineering hat, the hat he wore when he worked on his model train, for his U.S. Navy baseball cap.

Nicole primped herself.

When she was done she took one last look. She believed she managed to end up with a good outfit: she was comfortable, she looked sophisticated enough to be around Diana, and she felt she appeared younger while maintaining her dignity. She liked: the slight wave she set into her long black hair, the amount of makeup she was wearing, and she felt young. She was wearing: a light blue and white striped poplin shirt; there was a white flower pattern on both sleeves. She matched this with a pair of white pants, she added a white grommet belt with blue detail, and a matching necklace and bracelet. Both of these jewelry pieces had round blue and silver charms hanging off of them. She would layer this outfit with a blue tweed jacket.

She heard a vehicle pull up into her driveway. She quickly slipped on her pair of light blue roman sandals and she grabbed her tweed jacket. She stepped out of her bedroom and headed toward the kitchen. Once in the hallway she heard the door open and three male voices. She immediately recognized the voices of: Buck, Billy, and her son.

She liked both Buck and Billy. She was well aware Billy struggled in school. She felt he was a well mannered boy. Buck had been a friend of Jeff since first grade. Nicole liked Buck and was happy he spent a lot of time in her house. She felt her family was a good influence on him. She was accurate in her feeling Buck looked up to both Jimmy and herself as a second set of parents.

She caught a glimpse of these three walking through the kitchen and into Jeff's bedroom. It was obvious her son forgot something. It amazed her how he could remember: all of his plays, endless sporting stats, and could repeat movie quotes word for word; but would forget the things he needed. This was one of the few times she liked her son's bedroom being

just passed the kitchen.

She could hear their mumbled talking.

She opened the refrigerator door and grabbed Jeff's lunch.

Just as the three young men stepped out of the bedroom she shut the refrigerator.

"Howdy Ms. Steward."

"Hello Billy."

Buck asked, "Howdy Ms. Nicole? How are Y'all today?"

"Fine."

"Ain't Y'all late for school?"

Billy answered proudly, "I drove them here."

"How's the truck running?"

He smiled as he answered, "Ma'am. I'm keeping her going."

"I'm sure you are."

He smiled again.

Buck added, "We'll be on time."

Jeff declared, "We have to leave."

"Why are Y'all here?"

"I forgot an assignment."

He showed his mother a folder.

"You forgot something else."

All three boys stopped just passed the table and right before the hallway.

"What did I forget?"

"Your lunch."

Billy asked, "I thought we're eating out?"

Buck and Jeff gave Billy a look.

"Y'all ain't skipping out of school."

Buck answered politely, "Ms. Nicole we ain't really skipping."

Jeff agreed, "We're not skipping."

"What are Y'all calling it?"

Jeff answered, "Eating out."

Buck noticed Nicole's reaction to this and stated, "It's technically only skipping if Y'all miss a class."

Jeff agreed, "We're always back before class."

"Buck and Billy."

Both answered, "Yes Ma'am."

"Are your Momma's aware Y'all leaving school?"

Billy answered, "No Ma'am."

Jeff and Buck gave him a look.

Nicole jumped on this opening, "Billy Y'all are aware I know your Momma."

"Yes Ma'am."

"Doesn't she make Y'all a lunch?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"What you boys are telling me is a fast food restaurant tastes better than the effort we're putting into making you boys a lunch?"

Jeff and Buck glanced at one another. This time Billy had a good answer, "No Ma'am."

Momma's cooking is better.”

The two boys looked at him.

“Then why are Y'all visiting a fast food restaurant?”

“Cause I like eating both.”

Jeff agreed, “We eat both.”

“It isn't the point.”

Billy stated again, “I like em' both.”

Nicole smiled, “Y'all are becoming men. What I ain't liking is Y'all skipping out of school and eating junk food.”

Buck tried, “The teachers don't care as long as we're back to class. They can't watch everybody.”

“We have to get back.”

“Y'all believe your Momma's care?”

Buck and Billy's faces gave Nicole the answer.

Billy asked, “Y'all ain't calling Momma?”

“I just might.”

All three knew she would.

“I want all three of Y'all to eat healthy.”

All three answered, “Yes Ma'am.”

“If Y'all are still hungry buy something healthy at the school.”

Billy answered, “Yes Ma'am.”

Buck gave an odd look.

Nicole answered this look, “If after eating lunch and Y'all are still hungry I'm sure Jeff will borrow Y'all money. I'll pay him back. Y'all pay me when Y'all are able.”

Before anyone would get embarrassed.

She stated, “You boys get going.”

Billy answered, “Yes Ma'am.”

Buck nodded his head at Nicole.

She winked.

“By Ms. Steward.”

Billy stopped, “Is Julie needing a ride?”

Jeff rolled his eyes.

This immediately interested Buck. Buck, since he started to notice girls, had always liked Julie. Due to Jeff's encouragement he played football his Freshman and Sophomore years. The sport he found a passion for was swimming, he was one of the schools best swimmers, and was up for a scholarship. He did the work to get good grades and because of Nicole and Jimmy's encouragement was hoping to become a lawyer. As a Christian he was concerned about a few of the rumors he was hearing. Even with these rumors he would have dated her.

Buck asked, “Is she here?”

Jeff stated, “Lets go.”

This is when the doorbell rang.

Nicole stated, “Y'all need to get going. Y'all go through the garage?”

She turned and headed toward the door.

Jeff whispered to Buck and Billy, “Ms. Ashleigh is coming over.”

Billy asked, "Who's she?"

Buck answered in a whisper, "The sister of Mr. Waller. The guy who owns *Renewed Mastery*."

"The new company?"

"Yea."

Buck said, "I've heard things."

Jeff answered, "I've heard she's cute."

Buck asked, "Have Y'all seen here?"

"I haven't yet. Momma and Julie have been talking about her."

Buck whispered so Billy couldn't hear, "I've heard your Auntie is gay?"

"We're not sure."

Billy asked, "Of what?"

Jeff answered, "If we'll get to school on time."

Billy asked, "Are we running late?"

Nicole heard this and turned to them, "If Y'all don't hurry Y'all will be late."

Billy commented, "We better listen."

Jeff answered Billy, "We have time."

Nicole wanted to refute her son but needed to get the door. Nicole rolled her eyes, straightened herself, and opened the front door. Standing in front of her was Megan and just behind and to the left stood Ashleigh.

Nicole said, "Howdy."

Megan answered, "Howdy."

Ashleigh answered, "Hi"

Megan again formally introduced Ashleigh to Nicole, "I believe you've met Ashleigh."

"A couple times."

"I'm glad you invited me."

Nicole smiled and shut the door behind them, "Did you want me to take your coats?"

Megan answered, "Thank-you."

Ashleigh gave Nicole her coat and said, "Thank-you."

Ashleigh's accent fascinated the three young men.

Nicole took note of Megan wearing makeup, the white shirt, the vest, and the tight pair of slacks; this outfit was very different from anything Megan wore before. Nicole assumed Ashleigh encouraged Megan to dress this way.

Nicole was honest; "Megan Y'all look nice."

Megan smiled and answered with some doubt, "Thanks?"

Ashleigh was impressed with Nicole's Christmas decorations. She heard Megan's doubts.

Ashleigh tried to encourage her friend by saying, "You see. You look attractive."

Nicole took note of the comment.

Nicole looked over at Ashleigh, "Honey, You are attractive."

Ashleigh smiled and looked down upon herself and up at Nicole, "You think?"

"Oh yes. You are a cute gal."

Ashleigh made a face, but would take the complement.

Jeff never felt the way he was feeling about an "older" woman. He was so attracted to Ashleigh he forgot: his Aunt and his Momma were standing next to Ashleigh, the rumors this

was Megan's lover, about school, and his friends.

Buck recognized Jeff liked Ashleigh. Based upon past experience, he suspected a train wreck was about to happen.

Ashleigh answered, "Thank-you."

Nicole who often picked out striped outfits for her husband stated, "You look very nice in stripes."

Feeling comfortable Ashleigh stated, "It took me a while to figure out what top to wear. What about the slacks? I'm not sure about them."

"They're down right wonderful."

"I'm always concerned about slacks."

Nicole acknowledging, "You just have to wear the right type of slacks."

Ashleigh sighed, "It's difficult for me to find slacks I feel look right."

"It's difficult for many of us."

"Really?"

Buck snickered when he witnessed his friend head toward the three women. He grabbed Billy and shook his head. Billy listened. Buck was one of the few guys who never picked on him.

Nicole and Megan found Jeff's behavior rude when he practically pushed his Auntie out of way, and forced himself into their circle, and announced boldly, "My name is Jeff. I'm a football player."

He was lucky Megan was with Ashleigh, even though Jeff was a big strong guy, Megan's expertise in self defense would have put her unprepared nephew on the floor.

It was blatantly obvious this young man was attracted to her; this was both flattering and uncomfortable.

Nicole interrupted with a tone, "'This is Ms. Ashleigh Waller. Megan's best friend and Vice President of your Daddy's company."

Jeff glanced at his Momma and stated, "Oh."

Megan, Ashleigh, and Nicole stared at him.

Megan hoped Jeff would recognize Ashleigh was an important member of the community. Nicole hoped her son would pick up on the fact there was a possibility this woman was Megan's lover.

Jeff trying to be sophisticated asked, "I understand Y'all are from Wisconsin. How are Y'all liking it so far?"

Nicole just gazed upon him and Megan was ready to knock him out

"Yes I'm from Wisconsin. Its been really nice."

Ashleigh avoided any flirtatious behavior. It was painfully obvious he was very inexperienced around women.

"We all watch high school football. I'm on the team."

Without any emotion, "That's nice."

Jeff feeling a little confident, "I'm one of the best inside linebackers in the state and I wrestle. You should see one of our meets."

Buck rolled his eyes.

Billy stating the obvious, "She talks funny."

Megan gave Billy a look. Megan knew Billy and his background.

Megan became angry at Jeff when she noticed Jeff's eyes were starting to focus on

Ashleigh's chest. Megan felt this was uncalled for. Ashleigh was wearing a very conservative blouse, and was concealing her medium sized breasts.

Ashleigh crossed her arms over her breasts.

An irritated Momma interrupted Jeff.

"Y'all need to get to school."

There was a pause.

Nicole replied to Jeff's awkward look, "Yes you."

"I'm talking to our guest."

"You'll be late."

Nicole turned to Jeff's friends, "Billy you need to get Jeff to school."

"Yes Ma'am."

Billy listened by: walking passed them, opened the door, left it open, it slowly closed; in a few moments the truck was started.

Nicole on purpose stated, "Don't forget your lunch and your school work."

Jeff felt like a child and replied back with, "Momma?"

Ashleigh was taken aback by her feelings: he was in very good shape, was infatuated with her, was very inexperienced, was very eager, and would have been easy to seduce. Being a moral person she felt ashamed of herself.

Nicole was angry at her hormonal teenager and was already being stern; in a moment she would take it up a notch.

Buck came to the rescue, he tapped him on the shoulder, "Hey buddy we have to go."

This knocked him out of his trance.

Buck was very polite, "Bye Ms. Steward. Ms. Megan it's nice to see Y'all again. Ms. Waller I'm Jeff's friend. I'd talk but we need to leave. Other wise we'll be late for school."

Ashleigh would never forget this, "You don't want that."

The boys were taken back by her accent.

Nicole sternly said, "Bye."

Ashleigh and Megan watched as Nicole shoved these two boys out of the house and shut the door.

Nicole primped herself and recaptured her southern dignity.

"Jeff was my son and the other two boys were his friends."

Ashleigh could tell Nicole was embarrassed by her son's behavior.

"My son never acted this way before. The other boy who commented on your accent is a very good boy. He's just a little slow. I'm deeply..."

Ashleigh interrupted with a reassuring smile and said, "Life is often times difficult for teenagers. They look like good boys."

Ashleigh winked.

"I'm sure his mother will have a talking to him."

Nicole understood Ashleigh's layers, "Certainly."

An angry Megan added, "An Auntie will have a word as well."

Nicole stated, "Let me hang your coats."

Ashleigh said, "I'd love to see how you decorated the rest of the house."

This sincere complement meant a lot to Nicole.

Nicole and Megan both smiled.

Nicole asked, "You like the decorations?"

"It reminds me of my Mom. She loved decorating our house for Christmas."

As Nicole put the coats away she asked, "Did Y'all help?"

Nicole assumed by the photo she studied in Ashleigh's yacht she had. She shut the closet door and looked at the two of them.

Ashleigh answered, "The whole family helped."

Nicole answered, "Christmas is my favorite holiday. Y'all want to take a tour of the house?"

Megan encouraged Ashleigh, "Take the tour."

She looked over at Nicole, "Y'all need me to start the breakfast."

Nicole smiled, "Why not enjoy the tour with both of us."

Nicole's tone seemed odd to Megan.

Ashleigh replied, "Yea. I'd like a tour. It'd be cool if you came with us."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Okay. Lets take the tour."

Nicole smiled, "We'll start upstairs. If my youngest room is a mess please forgive me."

"It's no big deal."

Ashleigh answered with a reassuring smile.

Ashleigh enjoyed the tour but it made Ashleigh feel a little homesick. Nicole reminded Ashleigh of her Foster Mom Victoria. Nicole: talked different, the house looked different, Nicole was younger, but the dedication to the house and her family were exactly the same. Ashleigh admired the plants and the big candle holder in the playroom. Before Nicole could answer a question about the candle holder the doorbell rang.

Nicole stated, "It's most likely Diana."

Nicole excused herself.

Megan and Ashleigh stepped into the kitchen. They watched Nicole walk to the front door and open it. They watched the two ladies greet one another. They watched Diana and Nicole talk for a bit, and then Diana gazed into the kitchen.

With confidence Diana headed toward her Niece and the woman she heard so many rumors about.

While Diana headed toward the kitchen, Megan whispered, "It's my sister-in-law Diana."

Ashleigh studied this woman.

Julie loved Ashleigh's jeep. Because of Julie's long legs it was difficult sitting in back.

Julie pulled the bike out of the back of Ashleigh's Jeep.

Both Ashleigh and Megan waved bye to Julie.

Julie was grateful for the ride and waved back.

Julie wished she was going shopping with them and enjoyed her Momma's breakfast. She started to push her bike toward the bike rack. She noticed the kids at school observed her get out of Ashleigh's Jeep. Julie was certain this would fuel the rumors Ashleigh and her Auntie were a couple. After observing the conversation her Auntie had with Mr. Bob, and how they behaved with one another in the Jeep; Julie was questioning if indeed her Auntie was a lesbian.

There were a group of Senior boys standing off to the side of the bikes. She could tell

they: were talking about her, were waiting for her to lock up her bike, wanted her to walk pass them; she knew exactly what these boys wanted from her. Three of these boys had been at the party on Saturday. Leslie and Jennie wanted Julie to have one of these boys to be her first. Julie wanted her first time to be with someone she loved; not just some guy she met at a party. Julie was surprised Leslie and Jennie suggested the guy who treated the girls the best. The reason she was able to attend the party without being obligated to perform was because of Melissa; this was Chelsey's older sister.

A consequence of attending this party was being hit on by guys she despised. She was continually refusing their advances. She was receiving the reputation of being a tease. Julie was aware this could cause a girl trouble. The reason she was avoiding this type of trouble was because of: Melissa, Jeff, Billy, Buck, and Julie's knowledge of self defense. Julie's fights were swift and decisive; with Julie winning them all. She was realizing kids were voicing their displeasure by spreading rumors.

Since this party her nickname was: Finger Painter. It was hurtful and annoying to be given this nickname. To be picked on for masturbating seemed hypocritical to her. Julie suspected ninety-nine percent of her classmates touched themselves. After watching boys at the party masturbate without any criticism she believe it was alright for a girl to masturbate. It was clearly different if a girl decided to give themselves relief. What was doubly irritating was the nickname itself. She felt slang terms for sexual acts were childish; especially the ones for female masturbation. She felt it was childish to call female masturbation: Jilling, fingerbating, or finger painting. Julie suspected a group of jealous girls gave her this nickname.

Overall the party went the way she suspected. The girls did all the work. Many of the boys were rude and insensitive. Julie was certain a freshman girl was forced to give oral. Julie: heard a girl gagging, witnessed the girl run to the bathroom, gag and spit, then heard her crying, a friend of the freshman girl went into the bathroom, and Julie heard the sounds of someone brushing their teeth. It was evidence on how these parties could get out of hand. Julie was certain she was one of the few girls who actually got off and would avoid the outbreak of a venereal disease. This party reaffirmed her opinion she would avoid having sex with any boy her age. She hated their immaturity and their lack of stamina. What she enjoyed was taking pictures and filming everyone else having sex.

As she pushed her bike into the bike rack it; two of these boys started to approach her. She pretended to ignore them. While locking her bike she noticed one of these guys nod his head.

This is when Julie heard Melissa ask, "Do Y'all have time to talk?"

She finished locking her bike and answered, "Yeah."

Julie felt Chelsey and Melissa were an example on how two siblings are often times completely different from one another. Julie admired Melissa but couldn't stand Chelsey.

Melissa was one of Julie's favorite volleyball teammates. Melissa: had a diamond shaped face, her eyes were light brown, her nose was long and skinny, her lips had a Hollywood look to them, her chin was pointed, her teeth were white and straight, her long thick black hair was in a wave, and her eyebrows were thick and dark. This young woman was: the same height as Julie, she was in good shape, had a long upper body, a noticeable buttock, and medium sized breasts. Melissa never felt the need to flaunt her bod. She was one of the prettiest girls in school. Melissa never set up her parties to be popular, she set them up because she enjoyed sex; she would have been popular with or without the parties.

Julie often times wished her breasts were like Melissa's.

She was disappointed she needed to purchase new bra's over the weekend. Being an athlete she felt her breasts were a hindrance. One of the consequences of having a bigger chest was how self conscience she felt anytime she participated in an athletic event. She was certain because of how in shape she was they appeared even bigger than they actually were. She wanted people to notice her athletic ability rather than focusing on her breasts. She appreciated the money her Momma spent on athletic bra's so she could feel comfortable while exercising.

Not only was she disappointed they grew but she disliked how they were changing shape. She felt when her breasts were B-cups: they were less in the way, it was difficult to tell her breasts pointed upward, and she liked the size of her areolas. Since becoming a C-cup: her breasts were clearly torpedo shaped, her areolas were at least an inch and a half in circumference, and they pointed upward. Worse, was the fact her areolas became noticeably erect when her breasts hardened. She reminded herself on how many guys were fascinated by them; she wondered why some guys found her breasts so fascinating.

Melissa motioned for Julie to follow her. The two of them went to the back of the school. They stepped a few feet from the back entrance. Behind them was the school and fire exit. In front of them was the schools practice fields.

Melissa opened the conversation, "It was obvious Y'all enjoyed taking pictures."

"I enjoy photography."

"Y'all have the camera?"

Julie answered, "Yeah."

She swung her backpack around, opened it, and took out her friends digital camera.

"Are the pictures on here?"

"Yes."

"Did they turn out?"

This offended Julie, "I took them."

Melissa smiled and placed the camera in her purse and stated, "I've always admired your confidence."

This caught Julie by surprise.

In a serious tone Melissa stated, "You understand people were expecting Y'all to participate."

"I did."

"Some wouldn't consider sitting in a chair getting yourself off participating."

Julie pointed out, "The guys were enjoying themselves."

"Those are the guys, gals ain't interested in."

"Maybe I don't want to be with any of the guys."

"There are gals who'd be interested in having sex with Y'all."

This caught Julie by surprise, but answered, "I'm straight."

"No pressure."

There was an awkward silence.

Melissa broke the silence, "Y'all interested in taking video next time?"

"If Y'all hold to your promise."

"What promise?"

It irritated Julie she was unable to recall the promise, "I would never be forced to

participate.”

“If you keep to few promises.”

“What are they?”

“Bring your own camera. I want a copy of all your pictures and video. And Y’all promise to keep me out of any of the pictures?”

“Why do Y’all want pictures?”

“Does it matter?”

Julie shrugged her shoulders, “I guess not.”

“Think of it this way. You get to enjoy the action without any of the pressure.”

Julie smiled, “I guess.”

“It’s true.”

Julie answered matter of fact, “I guess it is.”

“If Y’all don’t mind the teasing.”

Melissa for the first time touched Julie’s arm.

“Y’all get to enjoy yourself and take pictures.”

Melissa winked and nudged Julie.

Julie blushed, but answered; “That’s true.”

“If Y’all feel you’d like to loose your virginity you have a place to find a good looking guy.”

“I’m not ready to loose my virginity.”

“As long as I’m scheduling these parties and Y’all are taking good pictures Y’all wouldn’t need to engage.” Melissa purposely repeated herself, “What I’m wanting in return is a copy of everything Y’all are shooting.”

“Okay.”

Melissa smiled, “Oh. I have a request.”

“Another one?”

Melissa winked and joked, “Yes Ma’am.”

“What is it?”

“The next time you get off I want to watch.”

This surprised Julie and answered sheepishly, “Okay.”

Melissa smiled and winked.

The first bell went off.

Julie looked at her watch, “I have to go.”

Melissa mentioned, “We have twenty minutes. Just wait I have something for you.”

“What?”

She grabbed Julie, Julie allowed this because she respected Melissa, and even allowed Melissa to walk her a ways from the door.

“What?”

“Open your backpack.”

“I don’t do drugs.”

“It ain’t drugs.”

Julie trusted her friend and opened her backpack.

Melissa pulled the backpack close to her, she dug into her purse, and dropped a black plastic bag into the backpack.

“What?”

“Don't look at it until you get home.”

“But...”

it.”
Melissa interrupted, “Y’all will like it. I bet if you brought it to the party guys will like

it.”
Melissa winked.

This sexual wink made Julie feel uncomfortable.

Melissa added to this feeling by saying, “If Y’all want to try a gal I’m hoping Y’all would ask me.”

Julie calmly stated, “I'm into guys.”

Melissa became unsure of herself but asked anyway, “Would it be okay if I touched your breasts sometime?”

“You like em'?”

Julie noticed Melissa's eyes look down at them.

This felt awkward.

Melissa blushed, “I like em’ when they get hard.”

Julie was again surprised a person liked it when her breasts became erect.

Melissa turned, and while walking away said, “See you at volleyball.”

It was awkward for Julie to have a girl admire her in a sexual way. Julie reasoned this was similar to the many different guys who wanted to have sex with her. Once Melissa stepped into the building Julie: dug into her backpack, found the black plastic bag, opened the plastic bag, and blushed. She made sure the object was buried under her books. She looked at her sports wrist watch and headed into the building.

End of Part Two Of Seven

December 6th, Shopping

© R. P. Voght 2018, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

Ashleigh & Megan *Book I: Friendship*



Wednesday December 6th

Shopping

Book 1 Day 7

*(6 Days since Julie started to walk
Nikita for Ashleigh)*

Part Three of Seven

Authored By:

R. P. Voght

Posted on ashleighandmegan.com on:

July 6th, 2023

© R. P. Voght 2018

This edited edition was posted on: January 25, 2023

I hope you enjoy this pioneering format I call, "A Story Cast."

What the term "Story Cast" means; is this story is designed to be read in small to medium intervals. This particular story is broken up into "days." These portions are broken up into part or all of a particular fictitious "day" of the story. Each day surrounds the characters lives, relationships, adventures, struggles, mishaps and triumphs. This story is very different from a Novel or conventional story in many ways. Again, THIS IS NOT A NOVEL AND IS NOT WRITTEN IN A CONVENTIONAL NOVEL FORMAT. Instead; as the reader you are following the characters thoughts and actions during the course of this "day." This fiction story is set up like a TV series and or a third person journal. It always starts with one or more characters getting up and ends with one or more characters going to bed; while during the day you experience the Characters actions, feelings, and their thoughts. On a large overview; there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to this "Story Cast"

R. P. Voght

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

December 6th, Shopping

(6 Days since Julie started to walk Nikita for Ashleigh)

Ashleigh immediately recognized Diana was from a privileged background and believed in etiquette. This was obvious by the way Diana: stopped before she reached the kitchen, turned around, apologized to Nicole, removed her purse from her shoulder, very politely handed Nicole her white trench style jacket, and slipped the purse back over her shoulder, and waited for Nicole. Nicole: hung Diana's jacket into the hallway closet, turned, when Nicole reached Diana; they both stepped into the kitchen. Diana was wearing: a white tie front tunic with a shirred branded collar and cuffs. Ashleigh knew this blouse was slightly ahead of the fashion curve but felt the blouse was very appealing on this sophisticated forty something woman. Overall Ashleigh liked this sophisticated lady's outfit: she was wearing a blue pencil skirt, a blue fashion belt just above her waist, blue high heel shoes, a blue purse, blue beaded necklace, and white and blue bracelets. Her nails and earrings matched her purse. Ashleigh really liked her light brown shoulder length hair with it's red highlights.

Ashleigh felt the respect and admiration Diana showed Nicole went beyond a family courtesy. To openly show Nicole this respect, when Diana could have looked down upon Nicole; impressed Ashleigh a great deal. Ashleigh took note of the deep admiration the two sister-in-laws had for one another.

When Nicole and Diana entered the kitchen it was obvious they cared deeply for their sister-in-law Megan.

Ashleigh and Megan heard Diana say as they approached the kitchen, "You've outdone yourself this year. I just love the decorations."

Nicole replied, "Thank-you. I'm sure your decorations will be excellent."

Diana's arms flared, her bracelets jangled, "My decorator is just loving your idea. It'll be wonderful. I can't thank you enough for your suggestions."

Nicole mentioned, "I thought you were decorating this year?"

Diana's arm waived and her bracelets jangled, "Oh dear, I must have simply changed my mind."

Ashleigh glanced over at Megan and Megan returned this glance with a look; Ashleigh smiled. Ashleigh became serious as she studied the woman who just entered the kitchen.

Diana was well aware of Ashleigh, Diana assumed she would be introduced shortly, she turned toward Megan. Diana was intrigued by Megan's more daring clothes selection; she suspected this was because of the stranger in their midst.

Diana stepped back and honestly stated, "Honey. You look splendid. I love those slacks and the vest."

This caught Megan off guard.

Her dimples flashed and she blushed.

Megan answer, "Thank-you."

Both Nicole and Diana took note of Megan blushing.

Diana responded in a serious tone, "Honey. There isn't any need to be embarrassed. You're a fine looking woman."

Megan's dimples flashed.

What helped Megan was Nicole's reassuring facial expression. Megan was concerned everyone could spot the sexual expression behind this outfit. The only person she wanted to feel or to know she was expressing herself sexually was herself.

Megan quickly recovered when she spotted Diana turn toward Ashleigh.

Nicole felt it was only proper for Megan to introduce Ashleigh otherwise she would have already.

"This is my friend Ashleigh Waller."

Diana heard through: family contacts, business associates, and local socialites Ashleigh Waller was young. Diana assumed young was early thirties; not early twenties. A large percentage of these contacts believed Ashleigh's title of Vice President was just a facade. Diana heard from other contacts Ashleigh's title was very real; these contacts claimed she worked very hard. Just about everyone talked about Ashleigh's flirtatious behavior. She was certainly aware of the rumor Ashleigh and Megan were lovers. It was Diana's mission to find out what was true and what was just rumor.

Ashleigh could feel she was being inspected. She disliked this. She was receiving this inspection at many of the business and political meetings she was attending. This scrutiny increased when she was given the title of vice president. She often times wished she would have refused this position. The only reason she took it was because her Brother gave her the title.

Diana broke the short silence, "I'm glad to meet you. I've heard many good things."

Ashleigh heard the layers.

"Likewise."

Diana asked, "I understand you live next door to Megan?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

She answered for Ashleigh, "We're not just neighbors we're friends."

Ashleigh added, "Megan's my best friend."

Both of their reactions impressed Diana.

"Honey. It's a blessing to be best friends."

Ashleigh and Megan wondered what this really meant.

Nicole gently stepped into the conversation, "If you ladies are ready. I'd love to start making Y'all breakfast."

As Diana placed her purse on one of the tall chairs, she stated; "I'm looking forward to enjoying your famous eggs Benedict."

"I ain't sure it's famous."

Megan said, "Around these parts it is."

Diana grabbed her necklace and touched Megan, "Dear. This isn't keeping you away from business is it?"

Megan smiled, "No. I'm doing well."

"Isn't this your busy season?"

"Jake's handling the charter for me this morning. From what I've been hearing the afternoon charter might be postponed until tomorrow because of the weather. If not Jake will handle it."

"I'm so happy to hear it."

"Thank-you. You've always been in my corner."

More for Ashleigh's benefit, Diana commented, "Families should always stick to together. You work hard. I like how you've proved so many of them wrong."

Nicole added, "Megan we're proud of you."

Megan felt the many layers to these compliments.

Nicole asked, "Are any of you up for a coffee or something to drink?"

Diana answered, "I'll have a coffee."

All three ladies pulled out chairs and sat at the kitchen table. Ashleigh glanced out the sliding glass doors. If they returned early enough she would ask to see Nicole's garden.

Nicole asked, "Ashleigh. What are you wanting to drink?"

"I would love some orange juice. I really love the orange juice here. Especially the fresh squeezed stuff I've had from the grocery store."

Diana stated, "I'll accept the compliment."

Ashleigh asked with an inquisitive look, "Did you squeeze all of the orange juice?"

Nicole and Megan looked over at Ashleigh. Normally Diana disliked sarcastic humor.

Diana laughed, reached over and gently touched Ashleigh's arm and stated, "Honey. It ain't me who's squeezing anything. It's my Daddy."

Ashleigh looked at her strange.

Megan and Nicole were shocked at how Diana just answered Ashleigh.

Diana answered Ashleigh's look, "My Daddy owns the largest citrus plantations in the country. Along with the countries top bottling company. We've been in the business for generations."

Nicole set a pitcher of orange juice and a few glasses onto the table. She quickly returned placing a cup of coffee in front of Diana and Megan.

Diana waved her arm, the bracelets jangled, she winked; "It's nice hearing a compliment when someone ain't in the knowing what my families business is."

Ashleigh smiled. "All the citrus tastes better here."

Diana knew full well where she was from, but wanted to hear it from Ashleigh; "Where a'bouts are you from?"

"Wisconsin. The town I grew up in is called Brookside. It's a suburb of Milwaukee."

Nicole asked, "I'm sorry to interrupt you ladies what would Y'all like for breakfast?"

This question reminded Ashleigh of when Victoria would give everyone a choice for breakfast; many times before or after church.

Megan stated, "There ain't any pressure in choosing. But Nicole makes the best Eggs Benedict you'll ever have."

Diana waving her arm stated, "She even makes better grits."

Nicole reaffirmed, "I'll make Y'all any type of breakfast even pancakes and waffles."

Ashleigh smiled, "Would you mind making me a three cheese omelet?"

"Y'all want anything on it?"

"Three different cheeses."

Nicole checked, "Ain't you wanting some peppers, mushrooms, or any sauce?"

"No. If you don't have three different cheeses. At least put a lot of cheese in it. It wouldn't matter what type."

"Okay."

Nicole answered with a smile.

Megan interjected, "She likes cheese on everything."

"It's because I'm from Wisconsin."

Diana and Nicole smiled.

Nicole asked, "Diana what are you having?"

"I'll take your famous Eggs Benedict."

Nicole accepted the complement.

Megan stated, "An omelet sounds good. I'll have mushrooms and peppers."

Ashleigh said, "You don't have to get an omelet just because I want one."

Megan answered, "It's what I'm wanting."

This was untrue but both appreciated this exchange of conversation and Megan's gesture.

Nicole was again impressed with Ashleigh.

Diana asked in a gentle but nice tone, "Honey. You've come a long way. How are you liking it here?"

The ladies heard the sausage hit the frying pan. Megan noticed Nicole was already making the grits. Nicole managed to put a coffee pot and fill the pitcher of orange juice.

"I've liked everyone I've met."

This sincere statement impressed Diana. It was her experience many northerners complained and disliked southerners and their customs. It was refreshing to hear a Yankee say good things.

"Well thank you."

Diana was touching her necklace.

Ashleigh added with a smile, "Megan took me around town. I like everyone in the marina."

Nicole mentioned, "I was hearing the men were upset the Jeep was scratched."

"They were just watching out for me."

Nicole followed up with, "Have Y'all taking care of the scratches?"

"My lawyer called and the company who delivered the Jeep. They will have to pay for the scratches."

Before Nicole could ask, Megan answered, "She took it to Timmy's."

“Oh,”

Nicole under her breath mumbled her displeasure of Timmy.

A surprised Diana, waved her arm, her bracelets jangled, “Honey. You drive a Jeep?”

Megan's dimples flashed.

Megan answered, “It's a really nice one.”

Nicole took note on how Megan defended her friend. If they were indeed a couple Nicole felt this was a good sign.

“Honey. I ain't meaning anything by it. I'm just surprised she's driving a Jeep.”

Ashleigh came to Diana's rescue, “I don't need a real fancy car. I've noticed a lot of people are surprised my brother and I don't drive expensive vehicles. I'm happy with the Jeep. In transport it was scratched. The guys in the marina became upset with the delivery driver. I'm glad they were there. He was creepy. Nikita didn't like her.”

Megan said, “Nikita is her dawg.”

Nicole stated as she flipped Ashleigh's omelet over, “I heard there was almost a fight.”

“They're good guys. I'm sure they wouldn't have hit the delivery driver.”

Ashleigh made a face and questioned her own statement.

Diana asked her question on the sly, “You like any of them?”

“They're not my type.”

Nicole and Diana believed this was Ashleigh's way of saying she liked women.

Megan felt if Ashleigh wanted to mention Marcus it was up to her.

Diana out of concern for Megan stated, “Are you planning on putting your roots down here?”

“Working for my brother will keep me here. I'm not planning on moving anytime soon.”

Diana asked, “How long have you been living here?”

Ashleigh answered, “A few weeks. Megan has helped me feel like this is my home.”

Both Nicole and Diana glanced at one another.

Nicole walked over with the omelet and a small amount of grits. Julie mentioned Ashleigh disliked grits. Nicole was certain she would like hers. Being a good host she only put a small amount on the plate. Megan knowing Ashleigh disliked grits politely stood up and helped bring the utensils and sausages over to the table.

Nicole would have protested if Diana or Ashleigh helped in this matter.

Nicole gave Megan a smile of appreciation.

Nicole gave Diana a look and said; “Yours is up next. The Eggs Benedict will take a little. It's taking me a bit to cook the slice of ham.”

Diana answered with a wink, “Darling don't worry.”

Nicole added, “Lets pray.”

Nicole wondered and asked Ashleigh very sincerely, “Y'all ain't against praying?”

Ashleigh answered, “We always prayed before a meal.”

Diana, Nicole, and Megan all smiled.

Nicole said a quick prayer, and went back to her cooking.

Diana asked, “I'm assuming you grew up in Christian household?”

“My Foster Mom taught me who Jesus was. She's a prayer warrior.”

Megan smiled.

Nicole was unsure of how she felt about this. She liked the fact Ashleigh was a Christian

but was struggling with the idea a Christian could be a homosexual.

Nicole asked with sincerity, "Are Y'all looking for a church?"

"I was hoping to find one before Christmas. It was a tradition at my house to go on Christmas Eve."

Nicole volunteered, "You're always welcomed to join us."

Megan felt the need to say, "I'm going to miss the Sunday service this week. I thought I was going to make it but a charter was scheduled."

Diana asked, "A morning charter."

"It's a two day charter starting on Saturday."

A concerned Nicole stated, "Y'all stay safe."

Megan annoyed answered, "I'm always careful."

Ashleigh could feel the worry from Nicole.

Nicole answered, "Anything can happen out there."

Megan answered with a gentle tone; "God is watching out for me. Besides I was taught by Captain. Jake and I prepare for any trouble."

Nicole gently handed Megan her omelet and a large portion of grits. With affection they smiled at one another.

Nicole reassured Diana, "Yours will be up in a minute.:"

With an arm gesture Diana answered, "I ain't worrying."

Nicole nodded her head.

Ashleigh liking Diana changed the direction of the conversation, "I heard your an expert at fashion?"

Megan interjected, "I told her."

Nicole gave a look.

Ashleigh spotted the look, "Since I met you I've been impressed with how you present yourself. It's obvious your into fashions."

"Bless your heart."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Diana reached out to Ashleigh, her bracelets dangled, and in a whisper sad, "She'll get over it."

Ashleigh felt like she missed something.

Diana purposely stated with a louder voice, "Well I do declare. Y'all are talking' to the right ladies. Nicole and myself are fashion guru's."

She gestured with confidence, "If you'd please stand up?"

Ashleigh glared at Diana. Then glanced over at Megan.

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Y'all asked for their help."

"Honey. I ain't criticizing Y'all. I'm just needing Y'all to do some modeling."

Nicole set Diana's eggs Benedict in front of her.

Diana said to Nicole, "Don't be thinking we ain't needing your ideas."

Ashleigh picked up on what she missed earlier, "I'd like to hear what you have to say."

It took some bravery on Ashleigh's part but she stood up.

Diana immediately stood up with her.

Diana studied her outfit, her shape, and was considering her personality.

"Is there something the matter?"

Diana snapped out of her thoughts. She gently touched her, “Honey. Y’all are a cute gal.”

Both Diana and Nicole spotted the disappointment.

Nicole answered this look, “There ain’t anything wrong with being cute.”

Nicole noted Ashleigh ate the grits.

Megan responded, “I keep telling Y’all. there ain’t anything wrong with being cute.”

Ashleigh answered with some defensiveness, “I’d just like to be called gorgeous or beautiful just once.”

“Oh my.”

Diana stopped herself. She was about to say guys will find you attractive.

Instead she stated, “Honey. Many people prefer cute gals.”

“I’ve heard this before.”

“Dear;” in a stern tone. “It’s obvious you adapt to anything thrown at you. And you’ve been taking everything giving to you and making the best of it.”

“But...”

Interrupting, “I’ve been around awhile. You might need some refining. Every gal at your age needs some.”

“But....”

Interrupting, “Honey. Does God ask a humming bird to be a swan?”

“Who doesn’t want to be a swan?”

Diana stated sternly, her bracelets jangled, “Don’t be taking an offense until I’m finished.”

Nicole and Megan were smiling, Nicole leaned over to Megan and whispered, “Diana likes her.”

Megan looked up at Nicole.

Nicole became afraid she went too far with this statement. Nicole went back to cooking herself some scrambled eggs.

“Have Y’all watched a humming bird?”

“There are some really cool ones down here. I love watching them.”

“Why like em’?”

Ashleigh answered honestly, “I love it when they hover over a flower. Then they dart from flower to flower. Then they zip away.”

“I’m sure others are observing you just like you watch hummingbirds. They’re admiring your flirtatiousness and how you move about. Why would you want to be something God hasn’t made you? Why be a swan when others love you as a humming bird?”

Ashleigh smiled at this revelation and just hugged Diana.

“Oh my!”

Diana returned the hug. From this moment, as far as Diana was concerned, Ashleigh was part of the family.

Nicole was surprised at this sudden show of affection.

Megan was used to Ashleigh hugging people.

Ashleigh stepped away like nothing happened and asked, “So you have any idea’s?”

There was a brief silence.

When Diana recovered: she smiled and instructed, “Let me take a look at you. You don’t mind if I enjoy my Eggs Benedict?”

"No go right ahead."

Diana sat back down in front of her meal.

Nicole walked over with scrambled eggs and a cup of coffee.

"My Foster Mom would mix bacon and cheese in her scrambled eggs."

Nicole thought about this, "I'll have to try it."

Ashleigh stated again, "I'd like your opinion."

Nicole asked, "Do you mind me asking something a little embarrassing?"

Megan was done eating and glanced over at Nicole.

"No."

The three ladies sitting at the table spotted Ashleigh's look of worry.

Nicole tried to think of a delicate way of asking her question and believed she found one, "How are you finding clothes that fit?"

Ashleigh instantly asked; "Am I gaining weight?"

Nicole reacted quickly and answered, "Honey. Y'all are far from overweight. It's obvious Y'all are starting to work out."

Megan added, "With Y'all adding weight training Y'all can't just look at the weight."

"I've always been able to eat what I want."

Diana commented, "Honey. It'll catch up with Y'all. When I was your age I could eat anything too. Now I have to watch everything I'm eating. Plus I'm working out something fierce. I keep my man happy."

The least thing Megan wanted to hear about was Diana and her brother's sex life. Trying to be more open to sexual conversation she kept her thoughts to herself.

Nicole bailed out Diana, "I'm asking because I assumed you'd have trouble finding clothes because Y'all a petite gal."

"Thank-you."

Diana recovered, "It's a good point. Because of your height are you having trouble finding clothes?"

Ashleigh blushed.

Megan defended Ashleigh, "She's always dressing nice."

Ashleigh rescued Diana and Nicole, "May I confess something?"

Nicole answered, "By all means."

"I sometimes have to wear Junior clothes. I know what to wear casually and as a secretary. I need suites and better work clothes."

Diana stated, "I know of a designer and seamstress. I'll take Y'all to her."

Megan asked, "Today?!"

Diana answered, "I'll make an appointment for later in the week."

Ashleigh answered, "It'll have to be later at night."

Diana waved her arm, "Honey. If I make the appointment she'll help us."

Ashleigh smiled, "Okay."

Nicole being encouraging, "We'll get you started today."

"I'd like that."

Both Nicole and Diana clearly heard Ashleigh's Midwestern accent.

After this statement they spent the next half hour Diana and Nicole discussed fashion with Ashleigh. This was very interesting and helpful for Ashleigh.

Megan became bored with this conversation she: cleared the kitchen table, rinsed the

dishes, and tried to set them into the dishwasher. As Megan cleaned Nicole's kitchen she became anxious. This was first time in her life she was looking forward to shopping at the mall. This was the first time shopping at the mall knowing she had fetishes. There was a part of her who wanted to try on every piece of clothing she felt an attraction too. There was another part of her who felt guilty for having any fetishes. What added to this guilt was having this feeling while being with her family.

She again contemplated faking an illness. There was a list of reasons why she chose not too. The three most important were: she was a horrible actress, her Best Friend would be disappointed, and Nicole would assume it was her cooking.

Megan because of her nervousness dropped a couple dishes and broke a glass.

Nicole and Diana could easily tell how nervous Megan was. This was the first time they ever witnessed Megan brake anything. Both ladies believed this nervousness was caused by Megan announcing she was a lesbian. Both ladies felt Megan was nervous because of something they said or did. Diana and Nicole sincerely wished their Sister-in-law was straight, at the same time, they felt horrible because she was having difficulty coming out of the closet. Both ladies hoped Megan would announce she was a lesbian before dinner.

Nicole helped clean up the mess.

Ashleigh and Diana continued where they left off, "I do wear skirts. It's just I haven't found good business skirts or dresses."

Diana answered, "We'll just have to find Y'all a suit with a good skirt."

Diana glanced at the kitchen clock.

She stated, "You ladies ready to help our friend?"

Megan was tired of the anticipation and was embarrassed by breaking a glass. After putting the last piece of glass into the garbage and washing her hands she stated; "Lets head out."

Nicole and Diana gave her a surprised glare.

Ashleigh missed this glare because Ashleigh was grabbing her purse, while slipping it on her shoulder she stated, "I need to shop for swimsuits."

Diana put an arm around her, "We're here to support you in this pursuit."

Nicole and Megan were shocked at Diana's found sense of humor.

Ashleigh winked, "I'm thankful you'll be helping me pursue the best suits possible."

Diana and Ashleigh smiled and laughed.

Nicole took shopping for swimsuits to seriously to find any humor in it.

Nicole stated very serious, "It's horrible shopping for suits. Especially when Y'all have tried on twenty different suits and none of them fit right. Why can't they make suits to fit a woman's breasts? They either are way to tight or they sag? One piece suits are just as frustrating. They'll fit up top but won't fit in the hips. It's frustrating."

The three other ladies were shocked at Nicole's rare outburst.

Megan being supportive, "Ashleigh; I don't think it'll be as bad as they say."

Ashleigh replied with a face of uncertainty and added, "I hope so."

Nicole and Diana nodded at one another.

This was the first time since middle school Megan shopped for a swimsuit with others. She was open to purchase one if they were on sale.

Diana believed Ashleigh would make a very good sister-in-law. In the past they tried to get Megan to shop for swimsuits with them but it was impossible. Diana was of the opinion

Ashleigh was more of the “girl” in the relationship.

Ashleigh commented in genuine excitement, “I’m ready to explore the mall Nicole was raving about.”

The four ladies carrying their purses headed down the hallway but stopped at the closet. Nicole passed out the jackets; three of the four slipped them on.

Diana out of concern stated, “You ain’t wearing your coat?”

Ashleigh answered matter of fact, “It’s warm outside.”

Nicole looked at her and said with concern, “The top temperate today is predicted to be seventy-two.”

Ashleigh answered this concern as nicely as she could, “That’s warm for me.”

Nicole warned, “You could catch a cold.”

Megan jumped in right away, “Nicole’s a nurse.”

Megan stated the last part as Ashleigh and Megan stepped out of the house.

Nicole shut the door behind them and locked it.

Ashleigh felt she was surrounded by family. This feeling was extremely important to Ashleigh. Ashleigh’s one concern was why Megan was acting nervous ever since she encouraged everyone to go shopping.

As they headed to the minivan Ashleigh complimented Nicole, “I love the flowers in front of the house.”

Nicole rolled her eyes, “They just about trampled them.”

Ashleigh noticed the string of Christmas lights on the gutter. She knew exactly what Nicole meant. Victoria often yelled at Blake anytime he was working around the front window of the house.

Ashleigh asked, “Did they have trouble hanging the lights?”

Nicole rolled her eyes as she opened the drivers side door.

Megan gave Ashleigh a nod and a look as she slid open the side minivan door.

Ashleigh smiled and stepped in.

Nicole started, “They put the ladder right...”

The drivers side door shut.

Nicole took the receipt from the valet and placed it into her purse.

The four of them were in front of the *Golden Reef Mall*. The name of the mall was in block lettering on an awning above a series of glass doors. Ashleigh watched the minivan pull away and go around the circle brick driveway. She admired the Mediterranean style mall: she liked the slanted red roofs, the red flowered plants in big concrete planters, these planters were part of concrete square pillars, in between these pillars was a black fence line, in front of the fence line were lower concrete planters, she wondered what green plant was planted in these square planters, this fence line separated outside seating of the restaurant from the long sidewalk; when she turned to look at her friends she admired the row of palm trees in front of the mall. She was looking forward to seeing the inside of the mall.

Megan commented, “I could’ve parked the van.”

Nicole answered, “It’s easier this way.”

“Something could happen.”

Nicole gave Megan a look, “Nothing will happen.”

Diana nudged Ashleigh.

Ashleigh looked up at Diana, Diana leaned down and whispered, "This is what Megan's like shopping."

Ashleigh whispered back, "It's because she's a jock girl."

Ashleigh focused on the conversation between Nicole and Megan.

Diana: smiled, she twisted her arm, taped herself on her cheek, her bracelets jangled, she never thought of this before, but thought it was a good insight into Megan's character.

Megan asked, "When did they start valet parking?"

Diana answered Megan, "Six months ago."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"The parking lot is just a few feet away."

Nicole sighed, "Some people ain't a fan of parking."

Megan stated, "It's because of the new mall? Ain't it?"

"What mall is that?"

Megan answered Ashleigh, "It's this fancy fashion mall."

Diana mentioned, "The mall we're shopping at after lunch."

Nicole added, "It's the one Julie likes."

Megan replied, "I believe she likes this one."

Nicole retorted, "I'll find out."

Megan stopped in front of the glass doors and looked at Diana, "If Ashleigh needs some business suits we should start there."

Ashleigh found this funny.

Diana commented, "We'll look for business suits at the fashion mall."

Megan asked, "Then why are we shopping here?"

Nicole said matter of fact, holding in her frustration, "I have coupons for *Dimes*."

Ashleigh mentioned, "I received some coupons from a store name *Willards*. Is it a good store."

Nicole was excited to say, "I love *Willards*."

Diana's bracelets jangled as she asked, "It's one of my favorite stores."

Ashleigh answered, "Oh."

Megan mentioned, "It's a southern upscale department store similar to *Dimes*."

Nicole mentioned in hopes to cheer up Megan, "There is a *S and R* at *Rose Garden*."

"I do like *S and R*."

Megan's dimples flashed.

With a tone she mentioned, "These malls have some of the same stores in them."

Diana in a flustered tone, "The malls are different."

Megan acknowledged, "Okay. The malls ain't the same. But there are two *Masters*."

Diana pointed out, "They have different merchandise. If one of the stores don't have the size we need we'll be able to hold it at the other."

Megan's dimples flashed.

In desperation she asked; "Do we all have to shop the same stores? Especially *Masters*. I can't afford anything in there. Why is it in this mall anyway?"

Nicole retorted, "Not everything is overpriced."

"It's at the fashion mall ain't it?"

"Not every store at the fashion mall is expensive."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Nicole tried to be understanding, "We wouldn't have too repeat the same stores."

Diana suggested, "Lets only shop at the second store if we ain't finding an item here first."

Nicole mentioned, "*Dimes* and *Willards* are only here. *Dime's* would the perfect place to find the shirts Y'all are looking for."

Megan started to answer, "I'm looking for shirts but I just..."

Ashleigh decided it was time to get moving.

Everyone stopped talking when Ashleigh opened one of the glass doors and held it open. She allowed some locals into the mall. She assumed they were locals because they were wearing jackets. She was learning the difference between the locals and tourists; locals were dressing warmer.

Ashleigh slipped into the mall.

Nicole found her actions rude. She decided if this it what it took to stop their discussions while shopping she'd accept Ashleigh's boldness.

Diana chuckled and followed Ashleigh into the mall.

Megan mentioned, "Maybe we shouldn't argue when we're shopping."

Nicole answered, "I ain't a fan of our discussions."

Megan opened the door for her Sister-in-law.

Nicole acknowledge within herself if Ashleigh could get Megan to have a better attitude when shopping this would be a plus. All four were now in the mall.

Nicole heard Diana say to Ashleigh, "They changed the name to the *Golden Reef*."

"Why?"

Megan answered, "Because of the *Rose Garden Mall*."

"Is it a good mall?"

Megan dimples flashed.

With a tone she answered, "As far as malls go."

Nicole mentioned, "*Willard's* is to the right."

Ashleigh was making a mental note of the food court and the restaurants near her. Looking forward she spotted a Christmas display in the center of the mall. On the left, before the center was a national chained jewelry store.

"Diana whispered. Don't worry we'll be treating Y'all for lunch before we head over to *Rose Garden*."

Ashleigh mentioned, "I was planning on treating."

This caught Diana by surprise, before she could explain, Nicole mentioned; "I love the decorations."

They all smiled.

Ashleigh commented, "It looks like the center is decorated."

Nicole answered, "They change the theme every year."

"I'd like to see it."

Megan mentioned, "It's on the way to *Willards*."

Diana gave Megan the stare.

Nicole mentioned, "Lets head to *Dimes* first."

Megan trying to be as patient as possible said in a very nice tone, something she felt she had suggested over a hundred times in her life; "Lets start at one end and work our way to the

other. Shopping back and forth ain't the best."

All three ladies gave Megan a look.

Her dimples flashed.

Ashleigh answered, "We'll try not too."

Nicole asked, "Ashleigh where would Y'all like to start?"

"Well," she looked around, "Let's head to the center and decide from there."

This seemed like the perfect idea for three of the four ladies.

Megan reluctantly followed them. She wished with all of her heart at least once they would: head for one end, when they reached the other end they'd go up to the top floor, head back, and then out the same entrance they stepped into. It was obvious to Megan this was just a hope.

Nicole was happy to be shopping with someone who wanted to view the Christmas decorations.

Julie: wrapped the dildo Melissa gave her into the black plastic bag, grabbed her backpack, stuffed it far into her backpack, moved it, adjusted her bra, stood up, pulled up her jeans, buttoned her shirt, tucked it into her jeans, buttoned and zipped up her jeans, picked up the hall pass, grabbed her backpack, stepped out of the stall, looked under all of the other stalls, was grateful no one else was there, walked across the pink bathroom floor, set the backpack onto a sink, and looked at herself.

She looked away.

She: opened her backpack, took out scented hand soap, washed her hands, brought them up to her nose, sniffed, washed them again, sniffed them a second time, and placed the soap back into her backpack.

She again studied herself.

She: washed her face, reapplied her makeup, brushed her hair, looked at herself; at this moment she felt she looked normal.

She correctly believed being an honor student helped her have these moments; otherwise her teacher might have looked for her. She now felt ready to handle all of the stresses of the day. She: grabbed her backpack, the hall pass, and headed back to class.

Megan: was standing in front of the guardrail, in her left hand was a plastic shopping bag, she was watching kids enjoying the play area. She was reviewing her shopping experience so far. They stopped at a candle store. She liked candles, but after smelling as many as Nicole and Ashleigh encouraged her to sniff, Megan was grateful her sense of smell returned.

She was reviewing her shopping experience at *Dimes*. A department store designed for the middle class and upper middle class, with sales and coupons the upper lower class could find good quality clothes. In the past she purchased items from this store. She made the assumption she would easily avoid any sexual feelings while shopping in this store. This assumption was wrong. Being honest with herself, she recognized the store's merchandise had not changed; what changed were the items she focused on.

What caught her eye was a selection of animal prints. She really liked how the skirts and tops matched. What also interested her were the black, white, and brown slacks near the

animal print display. What kept her from purchasing these items was the price point and the strong feelings she experienced.

A specific outfit that caught her by surprise was a fairly conservative three piece pant set. What she first noticed was the mandarin opened collar jacket with it's quarter inch sleeves. She admired the pattern on this jacket and the matching pattern on the bottom of the blouse. She liked the form fitting black slacks. It was at a reasonable price point. She avoided purchasing this item because of how aggressive this made her feel.

A simple item which caused her feelings to flare up was a silk blouse with a matching cami. She loved the silk. She especially liked the selection of red colored tops in this style. What was tempting about this combination was: it's price point, how it would feel against her breasts, how it was perfect for her private times, and she could layer this with just about any outfit. She felt awkward purchasing it with her family; she decided she would purchase the item online.

She heard Diana approach her.

Megan pushed her thoughts to the side.

Both Diana and Nicole noticed Megan was shopping different. With how many people were in line, and without any items to purchase, Diana felt this was an opportunity to talk with Megan on her own.

Megan greeted Diana with a simple, "Howdy."

Diana smiled and asked, "What did Y'all purchase?"

"I bought a shirt and tie for Daddy."

Diana smiled.

"Ma was saying he needed new ties for church. When he wears dress shirts there always in white."

"She ain't stretching the truth."

"I was feeling he needed to add some color. I bought him a coral colored shirt with a matching pattern tie."

Diana wondered about this.

"With Nicole's coupon it made it affordable."

Diana asked, "I ain't ever spotted Captain wear coral?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Y'all think I should return it?"

Diana smiled, touched Megan's arm, her bracelets jangled; "Honey; he's needing to expand his wardrobe."

"It's what I was feeling."

Diana felt this was a good opening, "Are Y'all feeling you should expand your wardrobe?"

This worried Megan, "Why Y'all asking?"

"I saw you gazing at a few things you've never worn before."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She blushed.

Diana gently touched her Sister-in-law on the arm, "When I first started dating your brother. I never wore skirts. I just didn't like em'. I always preferred dresses."

She waved her arm and her bracelets jangled.

"We went to some function and I decided to wear a skirt. If Y'all don't mine me saying

he just found me so appealing.”

Megan gave her a puzzled look.

Diana whispered, “When I wear skirts he likes to playfully taps my behind. It never hurts. It lets me know he's liking me. A gal likes it when a partner is into her.”

Diana waved her arms and her bracelets jangled.

A few months earlier Megan would have cut the conversation off. The present day Megan recognized her Sister-in-law was telling her something for her benefit.

Megan's heart pounded.

“It's sometimes a mystery knowing why a partner likes certain things. As long as a partner is asking us something that'd be morally wrong. Give it a try Y'all just might like it.”

Megan's dimples flashed.

She again blushed.

Diana again tapped Megan on the arm, “There ain't any need to be feeling embarrassed. We all like certain things. When we're in love we'll try things we'd never thought we'd try. There are partners who like it when the other wears something.”

She paused. She thought about how to proceed because she was talking to Megan.

Megan's dimples flashed.

“It's like how some guys are into shoes. Why a guy would get all excited over shoes. Who's to say?”

Slight pause.

“If a partner happens to like seeing the other wear.”

Her arms moved and her bracelets jangled.

“Lets say, tighter pants why not wear the pants? Whats the harm in wearing something the other might find exciting.”

Diana leaned in, gave a facial expression Megan never witnessed Diana have before, looked around, leaned backed in, and stated in a whisper; “Y'all just might find out Y'all are into it more than the partner.”

Megan assumed her Sister-in-law figured out she had fetishes.

Diana hoped Megan would tell her she was a lesbian and was dating Ashleigh. Diana felt this would make it easier to discuss how Megan should handle Ashleigh's requests. At this moment it never crossed her mind it was Megan who was kinky.

Megan reached deep within herself and grabbed some courage. Courage she was unsure she was capable of having when it came to the subject of sex.

Her dimples flashed.

“Lets say Y'all are a gal who feels sexual when wearing things?”

“Huh huh.”

Diana said with a surprised tone.

It was very difficult for Megan to proceed but she did, “Lets say Y'all want to wear provocative outfits but Y'all are afraid if Y'all tell the partner the partner might break up with Y'all. But Y'all ain't wanting the partner to break if off. Should the gal tell the partner? It ain't every day when a gal has these type of desires.”

There she said it.

Diana immediately switched her thinking. This made perfect sense to Diana. Many times conservative people were the wildest in the bedroom; it was surprising to Diana this included Megan.

It was easy for Megan to spot Diana's surprised look.

Diana quickly found her southern dignity and stated, "Honey. With a true lover Y'all will find it easy to talk to a partner. This ain't always easy at the beginning because private things seem difficult to talk about. Often times we need to feel safe in expressing our needs."

Megan grabbed the wisdom of this.

"When is it time?"

Diana gently touched Megan's hand, "There's different ways of bringing these things up."

"What do Y'all mean.?"

"Lets say Y'all are trying to dock your boat on an island."

"Huh Huh."

"Sometimes Y'all see the dock and get the boat in there. But when Y'all are cruising to an island you might need to go around to find a safe place to anchor. Y'all might find out it ain't safe docking anywhere on the island. Or Y'all realize you need to approach the island a little at a time and you find it's a paradise."

Megan took this to heart.

Diana mentioned, "If it's someone special. Y'all will find yourself expressing things you'd never tell another soul. There's personal things I'd never say to my ex. There are things I enjoy with your brother I'd never consider with my ex."

Her whole demeanor changed, "The cheating bastard."

There was a brief silence.

Diana in disgust waved her arms, her bracelets jangled.

She proceeded, "Maybe if I could've trusted him. I'd been more willing to have fun with him."

They looked at one another.

Megan asked, "What happens if the partner isn't ready?"

"If I were the gal who enjoyed wearing provocative things."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Diana gently touched Megan's hand and winked.

"I'd start with something slightly sexy but ain't to sexy."

She waved her arms and her bracelets jangled.

Based upon Megan's look she proceeded, "Honey. The gal should find out what the partner likes. Keep wearing what the partner likes but every time make it slightly more provocative. Based upon how the partner reacts add bolder items. It's what I mean by floating around the island."

"I ain't wanting to deceive anyone."

Megan realized what she said and really blushed.

Diana gently tapped Megan, "If the partner is liking what Y'all are wearing what's the worry?"

"What will everyone else think?"

"There are times when Y'all should be concerned about what others are thinking and there are other times when it ain't any of their business."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She was a little unhinged talking to Diana about sexual things and at the same time was feeling a sense of relief; she craved this feeling of relief.

Diana hoped Megan would tell her she liked gals.

Trying to encourage Megan she stated, "Y'all are from a conservative family. It might feel like we might react harshly to news."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"What news?"

They both stopped when Ashleigh and Nicole were close by.

They heard Ashleigh answering Nicole's question, "Layers"

"Why layers?"

Ashleigh asked, "Didn't Virginia get cold?"

"It ain't appearing it's the same. Based upon what Y'all have told me and what I was reading on line it's much colder in Wisconsin. Jimmy was talking to Mr. Bob about what's it like. He's been around but I ain't believing he's ever been to the Midwest or Canada."

"The wind from the Lake is cold. Especially those cold fronts coming down from Canada."

Just the way Ashleigh said this statement made all three southern ladies cringe.

Nicole repeated herself, "He's been around but I ain't believing he's ever been to the Midwest or Canada."

Silence fell upon the group.

Megan broke the silence, "Howdy."

Nicole asked Diana, "Didn't find anything?"

"I was feeling I could find something better at *Willards* or *Masters*. If not there's a necklace set Laura will like."

Megan asked, "What's in the bag?"

Diana expressed a pet peeve, "I don't know why Y'all are asking. Nicole never tells anyone what she gets anybody."

Nicole defended herself, "I want everyone to be surprised with their Christmas gift."

Megan mentioned, "The problem is we end up with doubled gifts."

Nicole again defended herself, "It doesn't happen all the time."

Ashleigh smiled when she caught Diana and Megan's look.

Ashleigh came to Nicole's aid, "My foster mom never tells us."

Nicole asked, "Now why might this be?"

"She says everyone ends up knowing what they get."

Nicole answered with a tone, "It's why I ain't telling. No one can keep their tongues locked. You want to keep a gift a surprise Y'all can't be saying a peep about what Y'all are intending."

Megan realized Nicole spoke to Ashleigh as if she was a new family member. This made her wonder if her Family believed they were a couple. This stung. She tried to push the idea away but Diana's comment about news now made sense. Megan put this idea on the shelf. She hoped she was wrong. It was hurtful to think her family believed she was a lesbian.

Diana peeked at the large bag Nicole was carrying, "It looks like a man's jacket."

"It is."

Megan asked with a smile, "She told us what she's bought someone?"

Nicole gave Megan a glare, "No. Ashleigh helped me pick out a warm coat and two sweaters."

Ashleigh mentioned, "Have him bring extra money for more layers once he's there."

Diana asked, "Why is he needing such a warm coat?"

"My brother is having employees from around the country visit the Wisconsin plant. They're going to be given the tour of the Wisconsin plant and go through training. He's hoping for some ideas on how to reorganize the plant down here."

All three ladies found it funny in the way she pronounced Wisconsin.

Nicole mentioned proudly, "Jimmy was asked to go."

Diana asked, "Ashleigh. Are Y'all attending?"

In a nervous tone Ashleigh answered, "I'm going to be running things down here."

This spoke volumes to Diana.

Megan asked, "Let's see the coat?"

"It's a wool blended trench coat."

Ashleigh said concerned, "There wasn't a lot of coats."

Nicole looked at her strange, "*Dimes* and *Masters* carry the most coats of any store."

Ashleigh said, "I guess it's like living in Wisconsin and trying to find a swimsuit in November."

Diana asked, "Honey. How cold does it really get?"

Ashleigh answered, "Yesterday it was ten degrees."

They glared at her with a look of wonderment.

Nicole asked concerned, "Will Jimmy be warm enough?"

"It's why I'm suggesting he bring the sweaters and money to purchase warm clothes."

Nicole hoped her husband would be warm; ten degrees sounded horrible.

Ashleigh kept it to herself, but the week before the temperature for five days in a row was below zero.

Nicole asked, "What did Y'all purchase?"

Megan answered, "The coral shirt and tie I showed Y'all."

"Captain is needed some color. I'm tired of him wearing white shirts all the time."

This made Megan feel better.

Nicole expressed to Ashleigh, "Thanks for helping me."

Megan asked, "Where are we headed next?"

Nicole answered, "Let's head over to *Willards*."

Ashleigh asked, "Which way is it?"

Diana answered, "To our left."

Megan made a point of saying, "If we stay on this level we'll pass a lot of stores Y'all like."

Ashleigh mentioned, "I'd like to go to the hat store over there. My brother would love a Green Bay Packer hat."

Diana rolled her eyes, "How many of them sports hats does he own?"

Ashleigh answered with a tone, "Way to many."

Nicole put in her two cents, "Instead of buying a new shirt or anything else Jimmy's needing. He's buying another Marlins hat or Dolphins hat."

Megan defending her brother, "What's wrong with owning a Miami Dolphins hat?"

Diana asked, "How many do Y'all own?"

Megan answered, "Two."

"Duke must have twenty of them hats."

Ashleigh added, "I just know he'd like one."

Nicole suggested, "When Y'all are done meet us at *Willards*."

Ashleigh made a face, "But I'd like Y'all to help me again."

Diana asked, "You liked the suit we picked out?"

"It's great but I need the pants hemmed."

Megan mentioned, "There is a small tailor shop by *Willards*. It wouldn't take em' long to measure Y'all. While they are hemming the pants we'll shop at *Willards*."

Diana mentioned, "Let's wait until I take her to my tailor."

Ashleigh answered, "I was hoping to wear this suit tomorrow. I'll wait with everything else."

Megan pleaded, "What about lunch and the *Rose Garden Mall*?"

Nicole asked, "Isn't there a tailor shop there?"

Diana answered, "What a splendid idea. The tailor at *Rose Garden* ain't my favorite gal. But the gal running the shop will be able to handle a hemming. Plus; she owes me one."

Ashleigh was shocked by this, "I don't want to cause any trouble."

Diana interrupted, "It ain't any trouble."

Nicole and Megan were used to Diana knowing everyone.

Megan being impatient mentioned, "Let's get a move on."

Ashleigh was unsure of what was going on and asked, "Are you going to help me again?"

Diana explained, "Let's go to *Willards* first. After we'll split up Y'all can shop at the hat store."

"That's cool."

Ashleigh grabbed her plastic bag with *Dimes* written on the side.

Megan started to head over to *Willards*. Her wish of shopping in a pattern was over.

Ashleigh mentioned, "Look at the bakery over there."

Nicole answered, "It's a temptation I ain't taking in today."

Diana mentioned, "Y'all might want to leave space for lunch. Where we're taking Y'all they serve a big meal."

Megan asked, "Ain't Y'all full from breakfast?"

"It was a while ago."

Nicole and Diana recalled the days when they could eat anything they wanted.

Everyone took note of the stores they were passing; even Megan took note of a new store dedicated to running. Megan was curious on what outfit her friend picked out. She knew enough to ask later; asking now would stop progress. She wanted to make progress because the mall was filling up with people. Megan listened to the three ladies talking about what type of women's business suits Ashleigh should try on next. Megan would mentioned a toaster to Nicole and a new coffee pot to Diana. She knew if she mentioned one or the other in the open she might end up with a double gift.

Ashleigh was standing in front of the mirror wearing: a dark blue functional suit jacket, a dark blue polka dot shirt, and dark blue trousers with shaped trouser legs. She liked how she looked and the price. She noticed *Willards* average price point was the same as *Hammers* and the higher end products of *Dimes*. She spotted many of her female managers at *Renewed Mastery* were purchasing items from *Willards*. She suspected many of her female managers

also purchased many of their items from *Hammers*. She suspected politicians, *Renewed Mastery's* executives, and the upper classes shopped at *Masters* and *Nobility*. Ashleigh secretly wished her brother would shop at these high end stores. She would have been happy if he shopped at *Hammers* and *Dimes*; instead he shopped for bargains at *Dimes*. He purchased most of his clothes at *Bradford's*, and when he wanted to buy a suit he went to a store in Milwaukee called *Boston Place*. Next time her brother went clothes shopping she would encourage him to shop here at *Willards*, to her it felt a lot like the store *Boston Place*; but with a southern flare.

She liked the feel of the suit and how it looked. What concerned her was the dark color. It was obvious locals very rarely wore navy's and it was a rare to see a woman wear black. She could tell Diana wanted her to purchase items from either *Masters* or *Nobility*. It was equally obvious Diana was trying to steer her away from separates. Ashleigh was well aware she could afford purchasing a few items at either *Masters* or *Nobility*, but she liked the idea of having a wider variety of clothing items purchased at *Willards* or *Hammers*.

Before stepping out of the large fitting room she hung up a few blouses, piled up the many different trousers she scattered over the bench, shoved a few pair of shoes out of the way, picked up a button shirt off the floor, tossed it onto the bench, and stepped out of the fitting room.

She immediately spotted the conflicting looks and body language of Nicole and Diana. It was obvious by Diana's facial expression she hated the outfit but by Nicole's expression she loved it.

Megan was shopping by herself. She went to the men's department to look for some printed polo's she spotted in the newest *Willards* catalog. It was obvious to Ashleigh, Megan could have cared less if these shirts were the stores brand; she liked the shirts and the price point.

Nicole asked, "Where are Y'all shoes?"

"Do I need them?"

Diana answered, "It'd help us."

Ashleigh sighed and went back into the dressing room.

The two ladies shook their heads.

Diana whispered, "She's defiantly the girl in the relationship."

Nicole smiled.

She had concerns. She wanted to voice some of these to Diana but would wait for a time when they were alone.

Nicole acknowledged, "She's listening to us."

Diana's bracelets jangled and she touched her necklace. She felt this was a good observation by Nicole.

Ashleigh stepped out with fancy high heal pumps.

Diana smiled, "It's much better."

Ashleigh asked in an excited tone; "You like it?"

"Yes I do."

Ashleigh answered Diana, "You think I could get away with flats?"

At the same time Nicole and Diana said, "No."

They looked at one another.

Ashleigh would purchase this outfit but suspected her feet would pay the price.

Megan found the circular rack. In a metal frame attached to the rack was a sign announcing buy one get one half off; sticking above in orange was another message announcing the shirts were on a second mark down. She decided: were good quality, were worth the price point, and the men in her life would like these printed polo shirts. She found a print of a pirate ship. She liked the picture but disliked the dark blue print. She was happy to find the same print in red; she grabbed this shirt for Jake. She selected a shirt with a print of a fisherman catching a marlin. This time she liked the print against the dark blue and chose this one for her brother Duke. She found a print with a speed boat sliding across the water; she felt this was perfect for her brother Timmy. She came across a shirt with a print of a scuba diver, if it was a t-shirt she would have bought it for herself. She hung it back onto the rack. She paged through the surfer prints. She cringed when she reached a section of Hawaiian prints. She pulled out a bright orange shirt with yellow leaves. She pushed her hair behind her right ear imagining her neighbor wearing this shirt; why he wore so many Hawaiian shirts was a mystery to Megan. She felt he would look better in plain polo shirts or nice button shirts. She knew he could afford to look better. She suddenly felt very awkward. She shoved this shirt onto the rack and moved along. She was delighted to find a print with a sailboat crossing the ocean. In a hurry she selected this shirt and stepped away from this rack.

She decided to get Jeff a CD or a DVD.

She decided to find her Sister-in-laws and Ashleigh.

While she was making her way through the men's clothes she spotted three posters announcing a new line of denim. She felt herself flutter. She was attracted to the guy pictured on these posters. It was obvious by his guitar and hat he was a country singer. In one of these pictures his shirt was rolled up and she could see his muscles. In another poster she liked the jeans he was wearing; she imagined her future husband wearing a pair of jeans just like the one in the poster. She held her sexual emotions in check. What caused her to feel awkward was in the last poster, because of the way the singer was standing, she noticed a bulge in his crotch. She turned away and kept walking.

She was feeling the same emotions she felt when she went into the underground strip club or viewed pictures of naked men on the internet. She felt guilty for this. Then she felt a little relieved. Then she felt guilty. She wondered if she noticed these posters because she was already aroused or if the pictures themselves caused her to feel aroused. She decided it was both. She: blocked the images of the posters out of her mind, ignored the clothes around her, and tried to think of what she needed to purchase for Christmas. She was grateful when she reached Ashleigh and her Sister-in-laws.

Megan asked Diana, "Are Y'all helping her?"

Diana gave a face, "I thought I was fussy."

Nicole answered, "If she'd just wear shoes."

Ashleigh yelled, "I heard that."

Nicole responded, "We apologize."

Megan whispered, "She hates shoes."

At this moment Ashleigh stepped out, "How's this?"

Megan smiled, "It looks splendid."

Diana answered, "It does."

Nicole nodded her head.

Ashleigh became excited, “We actually all agree. I'm going to get this dress.”

She headed back into the fitting room.

Megan understood why husbands and boyfriends disliked shopping.

End of Part Three Of Seven

December 6th, Shopping

© R. P. Voght 2018, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

Ashleigh & Megan *Book I: Friendship*



Wednesday December 6th

Shopping

Book 1 Day 7

*(6 Days since Julie started to walk
Nikita for Ashleigh)*

Part Four of Seven

Authored By:
R. P. Voght

Posted on ashleighandmegan.com on:
July 30th, 2018

© R. P. Voght 2023

This edited edition was posted on: January 25, 2023

I hope you enjoy this pioneering format I call, "A Story Cast."

What the term "Story Cast" means; is this story is designed to be read in small to medium intervals. This particular story is broken up into "days." These portions are broken up into part or all of a particular fictitious "day" of the story. Each day surrounds the characters lives, relationships, adventures, struggles, mishaps and triumphs. This story is very different from a Novel or conventional story in many ways. Again, THIS IS NOT A NOVEL AND IS NOT WRITTEN IN A CONVENTIONAL NOVEL FORMAT. Instead; as the reader you are following the characters thoughts and actions during the course of this "day." This fiction story is set up like a TV series and or a third person journal. It always starts with one or more characters getting up and ends with one or more characters going to bed; while during the day you experience the Characters actions, feelings, and their thoughts.

On a large overview; there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to this "Story Cast"

R. P. Voght

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

December 6th, Shopping

(6 Days since Julie started to walk Nikita for Ashleigh)

Megan and Ashleigh were standing next to the railing. Megan took the pink colored intimates shopping bag and shoved it into a shoe store bag.

Ashleigh was surprised Megan shopped at this intimate store. What was equally shocking was Megan had coupons. Ashleigh was aware, the only way to receive the type of coupons Megan used, was if someone ordered from the companies catalog. Ashleigh would have never guessed Megan would purchase anything from this company.

Ashleigh mentioned, "Thank you for the coupon."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"I ain't shopping without em."

"Me too." Ashleigh added, "I should have bought those tennis shoes."

"We'll all could go back."

Ashleigh discounted this suggestion because it was obvious Megan disliked going back and forth; something as a group they had done twice.

"I'm okay. It's my fault. I should've bought them when I was in the store."

When the pink bag was clearly hidden Megan stood up and looked over at her friend.

Ashleigh mentioned, "We need to meet up with Nicole and Diana."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She rolled her eyes, "It could be hours before they're done shopping at Clara's."

"My foster mom likes to shop at that store too. She spends way to much time in that store."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh took this as an opportunity to mention, "Your family has been a huge help."

Ashleigh stopped talking and immediately turned around. The only time Megan ignored her was when she spotted something threatening. Ashleigh was forever grateful when Megan spotted a coral snake while they were walking Nikita. The five things in Florida Ashleigh disliked were: sharks, big bugs, snakes, alligators, and the nature preserve at night. What Megan spotted was a stores display; they dodged human traffic to reach the display.

This was the first time Megan paid attention to this particular stores displays. The display on the right side of the entrance had three full sized manikins: two had black leather pants, one had suede pants, all three had boots with high heels, and all were wearing white blouses. She took note of the middle manikin wearing a pair of red boots with buckles. She then focused her attention on a pair of chocolate colored sued pants and a blouse with wide sleeves. The display on the left side of the entrance, was presenting six different styles of jeans. These jeans were on specially designed manikins to display only pants. Megan noticed she purchased a pair of jeans with this brand name at the thrift store; jeans she only wore in the privacy of her houseboat. Three of these pairs were interesting to her. One was a dark blue skinny jean with gold embroidery on the right leg; this embroidery ran from the hip to just below the knee. She also liked a coral colored pair of hipster cut jeans with two buttons above the zipper. The third pair was a medium blue colored pair of bootcut jeans. She knew this pair would sit low on her waist and would highlight her rear end.

After quietly following Megan and watching her reaction, Ashleigh asked; "Are you okay?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

"I like those suede pants and the jeans."

"You'd look good in them."

Megan answered while staring at the displays, "I ain't sure."

"You always look good in jeans."

Megan asked, "Y'all like this store?"

Ashleigh made a face, "This store is frustrating. I bet they'd fit you perfect."

Megan turned toward Ashleigh, "What are Y'all meaning?"

"They design their stuff for tall slender women. Anytime I've tried on their jeans I look like a frumpy dwarf."

Megan answered honestly, "With Y'all being shorter I'd understand why you'd feel this way."

Ashleigh gave her a look.

Megan trying to recover added, "Slacks are frustrating for me."

"One of the reasons I've always wanted to be taller is so I can wear pants like those. It's got to be easier for you to find clothes to wear."

Megan appreciated how Ashleigh never seemed to hold a grudge. One of the reasons Megan disliked shopping was because of people's reaction to her honesty.

Megan answered, "Where I struggle is finding slacks that fit my thighs. What's worse is finding pants in my length."

"I'm always needing my pants hemmed up. I might look good in those camel colored jeans. I say that now. That is until I try them on. I wish stores would cut clothes the same."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Why isn't one size the same in every store?"

"It's a great mystery."

“One I'd like an answer too.”
Ashleigh smiled, “You want to go in?”
Megan blushed.
Ashleigh asked, “Why are you blushing?”
Megan's dimples flashed.
She shrugged her shoulders.
Ashleigh surmised the store was too expensive for her.
“I assumed you wanted to shop here.”
Megan asked, “Y'all feel I look good in jeans?”
“Of course. Haven't you ever noticed how many guys look at your legs and butt? Hell, I wish I had your legs and butt.”
“You shouldn't swear.”
Ashleigh gave her a look, “Heck.”
They giggled.
Megan stated, “I've spotted guys glancing at your backside.”
Ashleigh smiled, “Guys do like my butt. Its because it isn't too big nor too small. It's just right. I just wish I had your long legs.”
They both smiled.
Megan answered Ashleigh, “I'm aware guys are liking my legs and backside.”
“Then why don't you want try them on?”
Megan answered in a soft tone, “I can't wear those.”
“Why?”
Megan blushed, “I'd feel...ah...”
Ashleigh let Megan find the word.
Megan's dimples flashed.
She crossed her arms, “Awkward.”
“There isn't any reason to feel awkward.”
“Some people say a lady shouldn't wear slacks.”
“Who says that?”
“Lots of people.”
Ashleigh answered, “The idea Christian women should look frumpy is ridiculous.”
Megan mentioned, “The Bible says a woman should appear modest.”
“I agree. But; I feel the church takes this too far. My brother thinks so too.”
“What do Y'all mean?”
“Many in the church say a woman should only wear dresses. Right?”
Megan answered, “Maybe they're onto something. Maybe we're all needing a little more modesty.”
“I agree with that. But; the idea a woman is immediately modest when they wear a dress seems silly to me.”
Ashleigh pointed to a neighboring store's display.
“If I wore that dress would I be modest?”
Megan answered, “I ain't sure how Y'all could bend down or walk in them.”
“I'm not sure I could.”
“What are Y'all getting at?”
Ashleigh answered, “Let's say I believed a woman should only wear a dress. If I wore a

dress like that. Would I be a lady?"

"No."

"It's an example of Christians abiding by man made rules but missing God's original intent."

Megan found herself blurting out the question, "What if a gal wears certain type of clothes and it causes her to think..."

Megan trailed off.

Ashleigh gave her a look.

Megan's dimples flashed.

She blushed.

She reached inside of herself and asked in whisper, "What happens if Y'all get sexual thoughts wearing certain clothes?"

This caught Ashleigh off guard.

There was an awkward silence.

Megan was certain her newest friend, a person she felt was already a best friend; would pull away from her.

"Would these thoughts lead you to have sex?"

Megan answered in a whisper, "With myself."

Again; Ashleigh was caught off guard.

Megan: grabbed her bags, turned around, and started to walk away.

Ashleigh exclaimed, "Wait!"

Megan stopped.

Her dimples flashed.

When she turned around it was obvious Megan was embarrassed and nervous, "What?"

Ashleigh: grabbed her bags, stepped up to her friend, gently led her to the side but still in view of the display, and whispered her opinion, "I don't think getting ourselves off is a sin."

"Some would disagree."

Ashleigh answered, "It keeps me from having sex."

Megan whispered, "What would Y'all tell someone if they get the urge because of the clothes they're wearing?"

Ashleigh answered in a whisper, "If you were wearing those jeans would you go and have premarital sex?"

Megan's eyes became as wide as an owls, "NO."

"Then who cares?"

"Maybe it ain't right."

"Is drinking wrong?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

Megan answered, "Some say the Bible gives mixed messages about drinking."

Ashleigh repeated something she heard her brother ask people all the time, "What do you think the Bible actually says? Not just what you've been taught it says."

Megan answered honestly, "The Bible suggests giving wine to someone when they're hurting. Jesus even turned water into wine. I ain't sure anyone was getting drunk but he turned it into wine. The Bible is clear being a drunkard ain't right. I ain't ever witnessed getting drunk to be a positive thing."

"If wearing certain clothes would cause you to sleep around I wouldn't wear those type

of clothes.”

“What if a gal is married?”

Ashleigh shrugged her shoulders, “I don't see the harm.”

“How does a lady tell a husband she gets. Y'all know.”

“In the Mood.”

“Yea.”

Megan's dimples flashed.

“Should she tell him she gets excited by the clothes she wears?”

“It depends if she wants to share this with him or not.”

Megan gave Ashleigh a look.

Ashleigh answered the look, “If she wants to share it she should tell him.”

“What happens if she's afraid he'd break up with her? Or she's having trouble telling him?”

“Maybe he isn't the guy for her.”

Ashleigh was about to go into more detail but stopped.

She said, “They're coming.”

Megan turned.

Nicole pulled a black V-neck blouse with an elegant pattern off of the rack.

Diana mentioned, “With the white cropped jeans they'd match.”

Based upon Diana's facial expression Nicole placed the blouse back onto the rack.

Diana pulled a red and green patterned silk shirt off the same rack.

“It's nice.”

Diana: smiled, waved her arms, her bracelets jangled, “It'd go with your white cropped pants.”

Nicole stepped over to Diana, “You ain't wearing it?”

“It'd look better on you.”

They smiled at one another.

Nicole grabbed the same exact blouse from of the shelf but in her size. She studied it and added it to the clothes she wanted to try on. She stated, “I'm ready to try these on.”

Diana asked, “What's the matter?”

Nicole frowned, “Y'all feel Megan's acting funny? I ain't liking how's she shopping.”

“What are Y'all meaning?”

“It's what she's looking at and how's she behaving.”

“She's most likely nervous. Coming out of the closet can't be easy.”

“Maybe she'll tell us on lunch.”

“I'm believing she will.”

“It ain't the coming out. It's what she's shopping for.”

Nicole stated, “She's shopping oddly.”

Diana was holding a fancy short sleeved t-shirt with an embroidered black pattern.

Nicole answered, “It'd go with the skirt.”

Diana's bracelets jangled, “It's what I was feeling.”

“I ain't ever seen Megan looking at animal patterns. She was looking at them at

Willard's and at *Masters*.”

“What's wrong with animal prints?”

“There ain't anything wrong with em'. Did you see the styles? It ain't like Megan to look at such styles.”

Diana pointed out again, “We've been wanting her to expand her wardrobe.”

“I'm surprised she'd like those prints.”

Nicole emphasized the word those.

“Maybe we ain't knowing her like we think.”

Nicole would consider this.

She said, “The animal prints are just an example of what she's looking at. Did Y'all see the jeans she tried on at *Hammer's*?”

“We've suggested she wear jeans.”

Nicole made a face, “They were what they call skinny jeans. I swear she was trying on a size smaller than she normally wears.”

Diana answered, “She ain't buying any.”

“I ain't liking how she tried to hide the fact she was trying them on. She never acted this way before. Y'all believe it's cause of Ashleigh?”

Diana cautioned, “We shouldn't jump to conclusions. Maybe she didn't want us purchasing anything for her. We've never shopped with a lover of hers before.”

Nicole made a face, “Maybe Y'all are right.”

“Shouldn't we be happy her lover is encouraging her to try on different outfits?”

With a look of concern stated, “What happens if Ashleigh is forcing her to change what she's wearing. It's like the slacks she's wearing today.”

“I like em.”

Nicole wished Diana would see what she was saying, “I ain't feeling she'd have worn them before meeting Ashleigh?”

Diana played dumb, “What are Y'all meaning?”

“Ashleigh must be pressuring Megan.”

Diana gave her Sister-in-law a look, “Y'all should know better..”

Nicole felt the need to get more specific, “With this being Megan's first love maybe Ashleigh's pressuring her to wear clothes she ain't liking. I bet she's feeling pressured to please her lover.”

“Megan ain't the type to do anything she ain't liking.”

“It's her first relationship.”

Diana answered with a serious tone, “Maybe she's been dressing different when we ain't around. With this being the first time she's brought a lover she might feel a little torn on how she should be presenting herself. We ain't in the knowing on how Megan's dressing when she's with her lesbian friends.”

“I still ain't used to her being a lesbian.”

“There ain't anything we can do about it.”

Diana added in a gentle way, “Ashleigh has her behaving better while shopping.”

Nicole agreed by nodding her head.

Nicole focused on a rack.

Diana asked, “What's the matter?”

“I'm feeling we should ask at lunch.”

Dina smiled, waved her arms, and her bracelets jangled, "What a splendid idea."

"What about the dinner?"

Diana touched her necklace, "If they're a couple we'll handle it like ladies."

"What if they tell us in confidence?"

Diana's bracelets jangled, "Once Megan tells us she ain't keeping it a secret."

Nicole gave a look of worry, "I wish this was easier."

"It'll work out."

"What if we ask and she's straight?"

"Hopefully she'll tell us before we ask. I'm agreeing with Y'all We need this settled."

A clerk approached, one they already worked with, "Ma'am Y'all ready?"

Nicole answered, "We'd like to try these on."

"Yes Ma'am."

The college aged clerk: led Nicole and Diana to dressing rooms right next to one another, she unlocked two doors, the two ladies stepped inside of the dressing rooms, and the clerk shut the wooden doors behind them.

Diana mentioned as she placed a few items on a bench and a couple others on a hook, "It'll be nice getting it out in the open."

Nicole was hoping Diana was correct.

Diana added, "It ain't the first time I've seen a gal change the way a lover dresses."

Nicole thought about the guys she met who dressed one way before meeting a gal, and how they ended up dressing after settling down with a gal.

Diana pointed out, "You have to give it her. She's the one who suggested lockers."

"It was a good idea. Y'all see how Ashleigh bought a larger one and allowed Megan to use hers."

"We'd do the same with our husbands."

This stopped Nicole for a brief moment.

Diana mentioned, "They're always helping one another without making a fuss."

Nicole would consider this too.

Diana stated, "I'm liking Ashleigh over the other gal."

Nicole answered, "Y'all meaning Gina?"

"Yeah."

"I couldn't agree more."

Brief silence as they were studying their outfits in the mirrors.

Nicole asked, "Why is Megan liking Yankees?"

"It ain't because they're Yankees. It's because they haven't lived here."

Nicole added, "We've all heard the rumors. It must've been difficult growing up in Eastbank."

"It's why she's picking ladies from out of town."

With a concern in Nicole's voice she asked, "Y'all feel she's been suffering?"

"I'm sure it hasn't been easy."

"Why hasn't she told us? We ain't rejecting her."

"It's hard telling."

They again focused on the clothes they were trying on.

Diana broke the silence, "It was hard telling folks I was getting a divorce."

"With how the family talks about gay people. I'm sure we haven't made it easy to come

out.”

Diana answered with a sad tone, “Sometimes a person ain't knowing how we're affecting someone else.”

“I ain't in the business of purposely hurting others. That'd be why I ain't looking forward to lunch.”

“Maybe the cat will come out of it's bag before we're put in the place of hurting either of em'.”

Nicole asked, “What are Y'all meaning?”

“We keep assuming they're a couple. What if Megan prefers the company of a lady and Ashleigh is straight. She's awful flirty.”

Nicole voiced a concern, “What happens if Ashleigh likes both?”

“There ain't a thing we can do about it.”

This bothered Nicole but she knew it was true.

They were silent for a while. They were considering clothes they were trying on and they were thinking about the Sister-in-law they loved.

Nicole broke the silence, “It feels different with it being Megan.”

Diana mentioned something she never told anyone else, “I sometimes think Dustin is gay.”

Nicole answered, “He's just a little boy.”

“Some say a person knows when they're little.”

“I ain't sure.”

Slight pause.

Nicole continued, “Dustin is just a little sensitive and he's the youngest.”

Diana wanted Nicole to be right but Diana was preparing for the day Dustin came out of the closet.

Nicole broke the silence again, “I ain't like the idea Megan is pressured into something she ain't liking. I'd feel this way if a man was pressuring her.”

“What if Megan is pressuring Ashleigh.”

In a tone Nicole answered, “I ain't believing Megan would pressure anybody.”

“We can't just assume it's Ashleigh.”

Nicole stopped changing clothes, “I've known Megan for a long time.”

Diana momentarily stopped trying on clothes, “It's like hearing about affairs. You look at a couple and everyone thinks everything is okay. But the guy is having an affair with the secretary.”

Nicole could still hear the hurt, “I ain't seen nothing good from affairs. You'd be surprised on how many wives are cheating too.”

“It's what I'm saying.”

Diana again stopped changing clothes.

“We have a bias. With Megan being our Sister-in-law ain't meaning she ain't the one who's kinky. We ain't sure what turns Megan on.”

Nicole was about to answer in an angry tone, but considered the possibility Diana might be correct; Nicole disliked the idea.

Diana broke the silence, “Maybe it's the reason she's so hushed and embarrassed about sex.”

Nicole answered, “I was believing it's because she's still in the closet.”

Diana stated, "She's always struggled with sex."

Nicole looking at herself in the mirror stated, "A lot of it has to do with Ma."

"You ain't whistling Dixie."

"Why can't blouses fit better. I hate my boobs."

Diana answered, "I swear they don't make slacks to fit a woman's waist."

Her bracelets jangled, "I should have a sign on my ass saying wide load."

"Y'all have a wonderful figure."

Diana answered, "I ain't looking like I used too."

"I don't either."

Nicole made a face and yanked on the top she was trying on, "Why are we shopping?"

Diana answered with some frustration, "It's what we do."

They: finished trying on clothes, stepped out, the clothes they disliked they set on a rack near the changing room, talked with the clerk who helped them, checked out, and headed out of the store.

Nicole broke the silence, "I hate feeling we're the reason she's hasn't told us."

"We shouldn't be so upset about this."

Nicole made a face and shrugged her shoulders.

Diana mentioned, "It ain't easy talking about sex. Especially with family."

"I've always felt we were like sisters."

"Just because she ain't telling Y'all everything ain't meaning she doesn't love you like a sister."

Diana nudged Nicole.

"What?"

Diana pointed, "What are Y'all looking at?"

Nicole pointed directly at Ashleigh and Megan.

Nicole and Diana slid themselves in a spot where they could look across the open part of the second floor; they casually dropped their bags. It was very difficult for Ashleigh and Megan to spot them. They witnessed Ashleigh lead Megan in front of the display. It was obvious they were having an intense conversation.

Nicole gasped.

Diana asked, "What?"

"Julie and I argued over the clothes they sold in that store."

"I'm surprised Julie would want to shop there."

"They carry what they call skinny jeans."

Diana rolled her eyes and her arm waved, "Lauren wears em' all the time. They might as well be painted on."

In frustration Diana stated, "It's better than the baggy clothes they were wearing. Why ain't people liking something in the middle?"

"It wouldn't make any money."

There was a brief silence.

Nicole stated with concern, "Y'all believe she ain't the one pressuring Megan?"

"We shouldn't jump to conclusions."

"Ain't you seeing how upset Megan is?"

"I'm feeling Ashleigh's trying to calm Megan."

"Ain't this showing its Ashleigh pushing Megan into something she ain't liking?"

Because of the conversation Diana had with Megan she became a little forceful.

"We'all should be jumping to conclusions. It's no different if our husbands were asking us to participate in something we ain't liking. It ain't like we'd tell everyone what our husbands are wanting us to do."

Nicole recognized the truth in this statement.

"It's hard for me to believe Megan's the one pressuring Ashleigh."

Nicole pointed when they were whispering back and forth, "Look at em'."

Diana mentioned, "It's looking like they're trying to work it out."

Nicole made a face.

She reluctantly agreed, "Y'all might be right."

Diana stated, "I'm feeling we're invading their privacy. Lets act like the ladies we are and step over to em'."

Nicole nodded her head but asked, "Is it wrong to be worrying?"

"I ain't saying we shouldn't keep an eye on what's going on."

Nicole caught Diana's wink and body language.

The two picked up their bags and headed toward Ashleigh and Megan.

It was impossible for Nicole to completely conceal her worry. She was grateful Diana greeted them first.

Ashleigh and Megan heard Diana say, "Howdy. Looks like Y'all found some things."

Ashleigh and Megan noticed a brief look of concern on Nicole's face.

This concern faded when they discussed their shopping experience.

During this conversation they agreed: they were done shopping at this mall, they were hungry, they wanted to stop at a book store, and they were ready for the fashion mall. The debate was: when to go to the book store, when they should go to the lockers, and before they left what stores they needed to revisit.

Megan's dimples flashed when they headed back to *Master's*. She made it a point to mention how there was a *Master's* at the fashion mall. It was pointed out the other store might not have what they put on hold at this mall's store. Megan's dimples flashed when they headed directly to the store.

On the way to *Master's* they passed a well known locally owned wedding dress store. Both Ashleigh and Megan took note of the stores display. Diana held her tongue. She wanted to ask which one of them would wear a wedding dress; she decided this would be improper. Her assumption was Ashleigh would wear the dress. Nicole wondered what the etiquette of a lesbian wedding would be. Ashleigh believed finding a dress her size would be a nightmare. Megan loved their dresses. She felt a tinge of sadness as she passed the display. She was having trouble believing she would ever get married. If she was ever to get married she hoped her Ma could sew a dress like the one displayed in the stores window.

Julie: looked over at Hanna's worksheet, she pointed to one of four beaker's, then pointed to the sheet, and said; "It's C."

Hannah tried to push up her glasses; she bumped into her plastic safety goggles. Hanna was grateful Julie was her lab partner. Hanna originally signed up for Biology but ended up in Chemistry; a class she would have never taken at an honors level. She never went to the office to complain or change the class. She was struggling through the class with a passing grade.

Hanna promised herself she would never take a physical science or a chemistry class again. The next science credit would be Earth Science or Biology.

Julie calmly explained to Hanna why it was the beaker marked C.

The six students around Hanna and Julie: looked at their papers, listened to Julie, they whispered to one another, they recognized she was correct, and changed their answers.

Many of these classmates were calling Julie a tease and a slut behind her back. Her common nickname was now Fingerpainter. Bradley Williams and Burt Atterly, who were two of the students who benefited from Julie's knowledge of chemistry. They heard about Julie's actions at Melissa's party. Unlike most of the boys in the school, but like many of the nerds in their group, they were happy to hear she refused to have sex. The two boys found it fascinating a girl would freely masturbate. Both these boys wanted to date Julie, but both were afraid to ask her; they would have given anything to see her play with herself.

Hannah heard about Julie's actions at Melissa's party. Hannah felt it was hypocritical for anyone at Melissa's party to call Julie a slut when she never performed any sexual act with another person. Before Melissa's party there was a rumor Julie often times played with herself in the bathroom. Before the party many of the girls in school discounted this rumor. It seemed to Hannah, because of what her Friend did at the party, everyone was claiming to have caught her in different places and at different times. Hannah believed the stories were getting more outrages as time wore on. Hannah felt it was foolish to masturbate in front of others or in the schools bathroom; but it seemed outrages for anyone to tease anyone else for an act most people participated in. There were a number of girls who listened to the teasing and backbiting and refused to participate in it. These included four of Julie's true friends: Hannah, Brenda, Zoe, and Amanda.

Three of the six reasons Julie was nicknamed Fingerpainter were in the same chemistry class as Julie and Hannah. The names of the three girls were: Chelsey, Kendall, and Leslie. The three other girls responsible for spreading the rumors were: Jennie, Pamela, and Tiffany. Julie would have been deeply hurt to find out Jennie was one of the ones spreading the rumors. The reason Chelsey and Pamela were attacking Julie was because Julie: never once performed an act with someone else at the party, was a natural athlete, was smart, defended other students, and vocally disagreed with Chelsey and Pamela.

Chelsey was wrathful. Her goal was to make Julie's life miserable. She no longer cared if Julie was in their group. When a girl showed up at one of these parties they were expected to give out. A girl was expected to be selective on what guy she performed an act on, but a girl who wanted to remain in the elite crowd had to engage with someone. Jennie was the one who suggested to Chelsey Julie would enjoy a sex party. Secretly; Chelsey wanted Julie to refuse to participate and then pay a price for being a prude. Instead; her older sister allowed Julie to take pictures and get herself off. This was unprecedented. Chelsey felt if anyone should get the privilege of with holding sex; it should be herself. Chelsey would forever hold this against her older sister.

Chelsey sneered to Leslie, "Look at her."

Leslie was tired of hearing Chelsey complain about Julie. Leslie understood she needed to get good grades if she wanted to attend an elite college. She was able to receive some of her good grades by giving sexual favors to her teachers; this small percentage of teachers included both male and female teachers. In this class she needed to pass the class honestly.

Kendall reacted, "Why does she get away with everything?"

Chelsey responded, "It's infuriating."

Leslie responded while studying the experiment, "I keep telling Y'all no one will touch her. Have Y'all seen her fight?"

Chelsey shrugged her shoulders, "Shouldn't she protect us? Like. You know. Why does that matter anyway?"

Kendall agreed by saying, "Yea."

Leslie shook her head.

Chelsey sneered, "Why are Y'all defending her?"

Kendall repeated, "Shouldn't Y'all be on our side?"

Leslie looked up and stated, "She ain't doing anything she doesn't want to do."

Chelsey snarled, "She needs to listen."

"You ain't forcing her."

Chelsey sneered.

Leslie looked up from the experiment, "She has a weakness?"

Chelsey asked, "What's that?"

"Sex."

Chelsey and Kendall glared at Leslie.

"Stop fighting her. If she fails it'll be on her own."

Kendall stated, "It ain't happening fast enough."

Leslie wisely stated, "It won't happen if Y'all push. I ain't fighting her."

Chelsey took note of Kendall's analysis, but suggested, "Maybe we could help it along?"

Kendall asked, "But how?"

Leslie stated, "First we should finish the assignment."

Kendall mentioned, "I wish Julie was helping us instead."

Chelsey smiled, "We'll just have to enter her locker and find the answers."

Leslie warned again, "One day she'll notice."

Kendall stated, "We're careful. Right?"

Chelsey snickered, "She hasn't caught on yet."

Julie would ever so often glance over at her three "friends." She was growing more and more suspicious of their behavior. She was ready to leave Jeannie behind. What was keeping Julie in this group of girls was Amanda. Julie believed if she left the group without Amanda leaving the other girls in the group would make Amanda's life a nightmare. Julie would again talk to Amanda about leaving the group.

Hannah nudged Julie, "What's the matter?"

Julie smiled, "Nothing."

Hannah knew better.

Nicole, Diana, and Ashleigh were in the housewares department of *Dimes*.

From across the department Nicole was observing Ashleigh inspecting a toaster. On Nicole's mind was the earlier conversation about duplicating Christmas gifts. Nicole assumed if Megan was in love with Ashleigh she'd want the two of them to live together in a monogamous relationship. Nicole reasoned it was Ashleigh's intent to stay in her brother's yacht just long enough for the two of them to find a place together. Nicole wanted to believe they were waiting to have sex until they were living together; this was similar to the idea of a

straight couple waiting until they were married to have sex. Nicole was concerned Ashleigh was about to buy Megan a toaster for Christmas or was planning to purchase one for their own place.

Diana asked, "You like these plates?"

"Could you excuse me for a second?"

"Why?"

"I'm needing to talk to Ashleigh."

Diana put her hand on her necklace, "What about?"

"It's about Christmas."

"Okay."

Diana answered with some doubt.

Nicole answered the look, "If they're planning on moving in together I ain't wanting them to have two toasters."

"Ain't you assuming a lot?"

Nicole answered, "If they're sleeping together Megan will want them to move in together. Lesbian or not she would only have sex with her if it's a committed relationship."

Diana made a face of concern, "We shouldn't be assuming things."

Nicole ignored the advice, "I bought her a very nice toaster. It was on clearance so I can't return it."

"I bought her one too."

Nicole answered, "I could give it to someone else?"

Diana smiled and her bracelets jangled, "It'll be easier for me to return it."

"Y'all sure?"

It was a bother to Diana but she answered, "It ain't a bother."

Nicole smiled, "Thank-you."

Diana's bracelets jangled, "Y'all better get a move on."

Nicole turned around and looked. "Oh."

Diana commented, "If she's considering buying the one she's inspecting she ain't hurting for money."

In Ashleigh's hands was a red four slot toaster.

Nicole hurried herself over to Ashleigh.

Diana played with her necklace. She was certain Nicole was about to discuss more than a toaster. She prepared herself for the consequences of this conversation.

"Howdy."

Ashleigh was startled, "Hi."

"I'm sorry to startle you."

"It happens."

Ashleigh noticed an odd look on Nicole's face.

"I was deciding if I wanted to buy this toaster."

"It's why I'm wanting to talk with Y'all."

This caught Ashleigh's attention.

"Okay."

Nicole wished the two of them were out of the closet, "I would wait to get a toaster."

"Is this a bad one?"

Nicole answered, "I'm sure it's a good one."

"I was thinking a toaster like this would be good for the both of us. A lot of times we're up at the same time."

Ashleigh meant herself and her brother.

This statement was upsetting to Nicole. Nicole recognized her expectation of Megan and Ashleigh waiting until they moved in together to have sex was based upon her own assumptions.

Nicole answered very ladylike, "Would you wait until after Christmas?"

Ashleigh smiled and gently touched Nicole, "I wasn't expecting us to exchange gifts."

Nicole felt this was very noble on Ashleigh's part, "I ain't in the knowing of what you ladies have worked out. But I'm sure she still would want to exchange gifts."

Ashleigh gave her a look, "Are you worried I'd buy this for Megan?"

"I assumed you were exchanging gifts?"

This confused Ashleigh, "If I bought this one. I was going to give her my old one."

Nicole became concerned. She reluctantly answered, "I bought Megan a very nice one on clearance. It ain't as nice as this one but I'm sure Y'all will like it."

Nicole felt better getting this out in the open.

Ashleigh was confused and asked, "Why would I have to like it?"

Nicole maintained her southern dignity, "I love my Sister-in-law like a sister."

Confused Ashleigh answered, "I'm sure you do."

Nicole was upset by Ashleigh's reaction and statement, "With me knowing Megan she'll want a commitment out of you."

"Huh? A commitment? Wait a second"

This reaction angered Nicole but she maintained her dignity, "We all love Megan very much."

"I'm sure you do?"

Nicole held in her anger, "I was worried about this."

"About what?"

"You'd string Megan along."

Ashleigh gave Nicole a confused look.

"Look honey."

Nicole reminded herself she was in a store.

"To my knowledge. Y'all are the first relationship she's had."

Ashleigh's eyes became as large as an owl's.

Nicole continued, "She ain't taking a relationship lightly. You ain't using Megan while you stay here and then one day you go sneaking back to Wisconsin."

Ashleigh tried to get in, "But..."

Nicole stiffened, "We'll be here when Y'all leave. If Y'all want our blessing we'll be expecting a commitment from you. If you ain't ready to move in with her and commit to her move on along. I ain't wanting to see her hurt. She ain't like others. If Y'all break her heart she might never accept the love of another person. Are Y'all hearing what I'm saying?"

"Yeah. But..."

Nicole interrupted again because she was so upset, "I ain't telling a soul we ever had this conversation. I'd ask Y'all wouldn't tell anyone else. I'm assuming if you continue to be with Megan Y'all be in it for the long haul."

"Okay."

"If you'd be so kind and give me some space for a few moments."

"Sure."

Nicole as a dignified southern lady turned and headed back to Diana.

Diana suspected everything was out in the open.

When Nicole reached Diana, Nicole asked, "What has Ms. Ashleigh done with the toaster?"

Diana answered, "She set it down and headed out of the store."

Nicole appreciated the fact Ashleigh set the toaster back.

Diana touched her necklace as she watched Ashleigh high tail it to wherever Megan was.

Nicole mumbled, "I ain't liking the fact she's a lesbian. But that Yankee ain't using her. She'd better be in it for the long haul."

Silence.

Diana touched her necklace.

Nicole asked, "Why are we here?"

"I'm needing to pick up a couple things."

"Let's get a move on."

Diana answered with concern, "Sure."

*A*shleigh felt stupid. She felt she should have caught the odd comments Nicole and Diana were making. Suddenly; all of the odd comments Julie made since walking Nikita made sense. Ashleigh wished she would have caught Nicole's implication way earlier in the conversation. If she had, she would have avoided the conversation she was about to have with Megan. More important, she could have cleared up any misunderstandings with Megan's family. Based upon all the comments and Nicole's conversation they were about to confront Megan about her presumed sexual preference. In some respects Ashleigh believed this conversation would be good for Megan and her family; but Ashleigh felt it was to soon.

When Ashleigh stepped out of *Dimes*: she looked for the store Megan said she would be in, she spotted it, she headed straight toward it, Ashleigh thought about what she was about to say, and stepped in. She felt this was a well maintained store. Along the walls were carefully hung framed sports prints. In the center of the store were racks of prints customers could page through. In selected places were tall locked display cases filled with different sports memorabilia. On the right side of the store was a long display case with a register on top.

A gentleman behind the long counter said, "Howdy."

"Hi."

"May I help you?"

"In a moment."

"I'm here if Y'all are needing anything."

"Okay."

Ashleigh turned away from the guy at the counter. Megan was gazing at some framed items on the wall. Ashleigh stepped up to Megan.

Megan glanced over at Ashleigh and asked, "Are the ladies done shopping?"

"Diana still needed to pick up some things."

Megan's eyes rolled, "How much longer?"

"I'm not exactly sure."

"Look at it."

Ashleigh turned toward the framed jersey on the wall she liked the light blue color, was surprised a player would use the number thirteen, knew this player was a quarterback because of two pictures underneath the jersey; Ashleigh assumed he played for the Dolphins. Before moving to Florida she had no idea there was a team named the Dolphins.

Ashleigh glanced at the price tag and thought it was a crazy price.

Ashleigh felt compelled to ask, "If you had the money would you actually buy it?"

Without even thinking about it, "It'd be irresponsible for me to buy it."

Ashleigh smiled.

She asked, "Let's say you could spend as much money as you wanted and it wasn't irresponsible. Would you buy it?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

She bluntly answered, "No."

This answer surprised Ashleigh. She assumed because of Megan's small collection of Dolphin memorabilia she would have purchased this jersey.

"Why?"

"Rich or not. I feel it's way too much money."

Ashleigh would never forget this.

Megan asked, "Would your brother?"

"Yes."

They studied one another.

Ashleigh felt the need to mention, "He isn't irresponsible. He isn't ever going to be stupid and claim bankruptcy one day."

Megan brushed her hair behind her ear.

She would never forget this.

Ashleigh was unsure of what to say or where to begin, "We were shopping in housewares."

Megan asked, "Were they looking at toasters?"

"Nicole talked to me about one."

Megan gave a look of concern, "I think I told Diana I needed a toaster."

Ashleigh gave her a look.

Megan answered the look, "I'm getting two toasters."

"I'm sure you won't get two toasters."

Megan was convinced she would receive two toasters for Christmas.

Ashleigh asked, "Would they have Brett Favre or Green Bay Packer stuff?"

Megan answered, "Over to your right."

Ashleigh noticed Green Bay Packer items and prints.

"I could help you find something."

Ashleigh took a deep breath, "I need to talk to you about something."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"What?"

Ashleigh was unable to conceal her feelings.

Megan noticed.

"Have you been catching some of the odd comments they've been making today?"

"Who?"

"Julie, Diana, and Nicole."

Megan's her dimples flashed.

She looked at the floor and crossed her arms.

Ashleigh could see and feel the hurt.

"Yes."

"I believe they think we're a couple."

An upset Megan asked, "Why would you say such a thing? Maybe your mistaken."

Ashleigh could see Megan was trying to hold in tears.

"I'm not."

It was obvious her Sister-in-laws talked with Ashleigh while they were in *Dimes*.

In a whisper, "What do I have to do to make people stop believing I'm gay?"

"Tell them."

Megan brushed a tear away, "I shouldn't have too."

"I agree."

"I'm sorry I dragged you into this."

Ashleigh reached out to her friend and said, "It isn't anyone's fault. With all the talk about coming out of the closet. And all the talk about homosexuality. It isn't surprising your family thinks we're a couple. What's frustrating is the idea all love has to be sexual. Why can't we love one another as friends. I don't love you in a romantic sexual way. You understand?"

Megan held in her tears, "I've been asking myself those questions since I was in middle school."

A brief silence.

Megan asked, "What now?"

"I believe they want you to come of the closet. Not that your in it. If you don't I'm suspecting they'll ask you."

"But I'm straight."

"I know."

"What are Y'all saying?"

"You know they love you?"

"Of course."

"Lets say you were gay."

"But I'm not."

"I know but lets say you were."

"Okay."

"How difficult would that be for them."

They starred at one another for a few moments.

Ashleigh broke the silence. "Why not tell them what you've told me."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Again Ashleigh reached out to her, "You don't have to tell them everything. But tell them about your sexual struggles. Maybe even tell them how it hurts to have people think you are gay."

"What happens if they don't understand?"

Ashleigh made a face, "They'll understand."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"It's so difficult for me to talk about it."

"One of the reasons they believe you are a lesbian is because you don't discuss your struggles."

Megan took what her friend said to heart. She often times wrote this idea in her journal. She had a written argument over this idea; the pages crinkled and it turned into a private crying moment. She had this moment the day after Jake asked her if she was gay. In these pages she asked herself how she was responsible for this whole misunderstanding. This was very difficult to face.

Ashleigh gently broke the silence, "I know your straight. But if we were a couple and your family was struggling with you being a lesbian would you tell them?"

These were subjects Megan wrote about in her journal.

"Yes."

"If that's true. Before they confront us. Tell them what you've been going through" Ashleigh repeated herself on purpose, "I've met them. Believe me. They'll understand."

What caught Megan was the word us.

Megan looked at Ashleigh, "When should I?"

"At lunch."

"Okay."

Megan's phone rang.

Ashleigh spotted a couple theatrical movie posters; they were of sport movies. Ashleigh politely excused herself and talked with the owner of the store. They exchanged business cards.

Megan stood next to Ashleigh. They were looking at a large display of Christmas ornaments. Megan was carrying a couple Christmas cards. Diana and Nicole were picking out for their husbands. This was the last store they were visiting before leaving the *Golden Reef Mall*. All four ladies were caring their purchases in paper shopping bags; they were the nice bags with handles. Bags Ashleigh purchased for everyone after they cleared out their mall lockers. When Ashleigh found out this store was absent from the fashion mall she asked if they could stop here before leaving. If they disliked Ashleigh they would have disagreed because it was a smaller store filled with a large amount of people.

Megan quickly recognized she took picking out an ornament seriously. Megan observed her bend down and pick up a square box. On the outside of the box was a picture of the Ornament.

Megan asked with some curiosity, "Y'all like Bugs Bunny?"

Ashleigh answered with a smile, "My brother is a big fan of *Loony Tunes* cartoons."

This was somewhat surprising to Megan.

Ashleigh asked, "Where is a clerk?"

Megan could see over the mass of people, "Up front."

"Keep this spot for me."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She answered, "Okay."

Ashleigh immediately headed to the front counter.

Megan watched her friend make her way to the sales associate by dodging and pushing

her way to the front. One of the reasons Megan disliked Christmas shopping was because of the crowds. This was on a weekday, she imagined how horrible shopping would be during the weekend, or on black Friday.

What was a concern for Megan was how Nicole and Ashleigh were behaving. It was obvious there had been a discussion at *Dimes*. She suspected this was how Ashleigh knew her Sister-in-laws thought she was a lesbian. This added to Megan's hurt. One of Megan's goals was for Diana and Nicole to become friends with Ashleigh. Megan believed these older wise women would be a positive influence; especially with Bob making her a vice president. Megan was well aware being a vice president was tough on Ashleigh. What impressed and worried Megan was how she just took this on; even if Megan believed she should have objected.

Heavy on Megan's heart was how to bring up her struggles with sex. She felt her struggles were affecting others in a negative way, because of this feeling, she believed it was her responsibility to bring discuss these struggles with her beloved Sister-in-laws.

Ashleigh managed to bring the sales associate to where Megan was standing.

Ashleigh pointed to a sculptured ornament with a Christmas Tree and an owl.

Ashleigh asked, "I don't see the box for this ornament? Do you have any more?"

The college aged girl looked at Ashleigh and gently asked, "Ma'am. Have Y'all looked for one?"

Ashleigh gave her a face of understanding, "Sort of."

The sales associate said, "Let me take another look."

Megan, Ashleigh, and the sales associate started to look at the small ornament boxes below the display of hanging ornaments.

Megan never noticed how interesting these type of ornaments were. She felt the one Ashleigh picked out was cute. This caused Megan to be interested in Ashleigh and Bob's Christmas tree.

Megan brushed her hair behind her right ear.

Megan assumed Ashleigh would need help putting up the tree. In her family the women and children were the ones who put up the Christmas tree. If the men were involved they worked on the outside lights.

After a few minutes the sales associate mentioned, "It doesn't look like there are any more of these ornaments left. You want the display?"

"If I could."

The girl: made a face, took down the ornament, carefully handed it over to Ashleigh, and stated; "I'll get Y'all the box. It'll be in back."

"I'd appreciate it."

The girl was polite, but it was obvious she wished she could avoid going in back, "Ma'am if you could wait here."

"No problem."

Megan and Ashleigh watched her walk toward the back: she was stopped four times. she pointed three times, and told a senior citizen she would have to wait.

Diana stepped up to them, "Honey. What ornaments have you picked out?"

"This one."

Ashleigh showed her an ornament of Bugs bunny playing pinball and Daffy standing on the side.

Ashleigh gently opened her hand, "She's trying to find the box for this one."

They started to get bumped into, the three moved out of the main aisle, and were now standing next to the display.

Diana asked, "You like Bugs Bunny?"

"It's for my brother. He likes *Loony Tunes* cartoons. I grew up watching *Loony Tunes* at his house."

Diana smiled. She found it interesting Ashleigh was buying her brother an ornament.

After picking out a Christmas card for her husband, Nicole noticed there was a general sale on all cards; she was taking advantage of this sale by collecting a variety of cards.

Ashleigh saw the sales associate come out with the ornament box. This sales associate was again stopped numerous times on her way back. Megan helped this sales associate by waving.

Ashleigh said very affectionately, "Thank-you."

Ashleigh watched closely as the girl placed the ornament in the box. The girl was stressed but was gentle with the ornament.

Nicole came over and apologized, "I'm sorry for taking so long."

Ashleigh answered, "It's no big deal. She was getting me a box."

Nicole took note on how Ashleigh had been trying to make amends.

Nicole asked, "What ornaments did Y'all pick out?"

Ashleigh noticed how different her tone was, "These two."

Nicole asked sincerely, "Let me see."

Megan was happy they were starting to move along.

Megan stated sternly, "Let's get into line."

They all agreed and stood in line. In line they talked about their purchases. Nicole like the others found it interesting Ashleigh was purchasing ornaments for her brother. They went through the line: Nicole paid for her cards first, Ashleigh was second, Megan third, and Diana forth. When they stepped out of the store they again reorganized their items. By the way Ashleigh organized her things, it was obvious Ashleigh had a sentimental attachment to the ornaments she just purchased.

Once they were organized they headed out of the mall.

End of Part Four Of Seven

December 6th, Shopping

© R. P. Voght 2018, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

Ashleigh & Megan *Book I: Friendship*



Wednesday December 6th

Shopping

Book 1 Day 7

*(6 Days since Julie started to walk
Nikita for Ashleigh)*

Part Five of Seven

Authored By:

R. P. Voght

*Posted on ashleighandmegan.com on:
September 22nd, 2018*

© R. P. Voght 2023

This edited edition was posted on: January 25, 2023

I hope you enjoy this pioneering format I call, "A Story Cast."

What the term "Story Cast" means; is this story is designed to be read in small to medium intervals. This particular story is broken up into "days." These portions are broken up into part or all of a particular fictitious "day" of the story. Each day surrounds the characters lives, relationships, adventures, struggles, mishaps and triumphs. This story is very different from a Novel or conventional story in many ways. Again, THIS IS NOT A NOVEL AND IS NOT WRITTEN IN A CONVENTIONAL NOVEL FORMAT. Instead; as the reader you are following the characters thoughts and actions during the course of this "day." This fiction story is set up like a TV series and or a third person journal. It always starts with one or more characters getting up and ends with one or more characters going to bed; while during the day you experience the Characters actions, feelings, and their thoughts. On a large overview; there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to this "Story Cast"

R. P. Voght

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

December 6th, Shopping

(6 Days since Julie started to walk Nikita for Ashleigh)

Megan: stepped out of the minivan, took a calming breath, turned toward the three ladies, and asked, "Are we sure we want to eat here?"

Diana answered, "We're wanting Ashleigh to experience fine Floridan cuisine."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She really loved this upscale restaurant but was unable to afford it. Anytime they chose this restaurant someone needed to pay for her, this was really bothersome to her; she longed for the day when she could treat.

Ashleigh mentioned, "I planned on treating."

Diana was about to rebuke Ashleigh but Nicole gave Diana a look and gently touched her arm. It was difficult for Diana to hold her tongue; but she did.

Ashleigh mentioned as a valet stepped over to the van, "I like the plants in those planters."

Diana asked, "You've never seen them before?"

"I don't think so. What are they?"

Diana answered, "They're bamboo."

Nicole saw a chance of finding common ground, "I could show you how to grow them."

"Really? We don't have any plants on the yacht. I think they would look nice around the pool."

Megan interjected, "The valet is waiting."

Nicole grabbed her keys, walked over to the valet, and said; "Honey. I do apologize for having Y'all wait. Would you be so kind and park the van?"

The valet was polite, "Yes Ma'am."

Ashleigh spoke up, "Wait a second."

They watched a flirtatious Ashleigh lead the driver him away from the others.

“What's she doing?”

Megan answered Diana, “It's her way of thanks.”

The three ladies witnessed Ashleigh: have a short flirty conversation, reach her hand into her purse, pulled out her wallet, hand the valet a couple bills, he eagerly took the bills, she winked and whispered something to the driver, he smiled, he quickly stepped into the minivan, and went to park the vehicle.

Ashleigh: calmly secured her wallet into her purse, adjusted her clothes, walked over to the three ladies, pointed at two concrete planters on either side of the glass doors, and asked Nicole, “What type of flowers are those?”

Nicole felt the impulse to question Ashleigh's flirty behavior. She decided to withhold her tongue. Nicole answered Ashleigh by naming each flower and plant; most were local floral.

Diana smiled and grabbed her necklace. Diana was concerned Ashleigh was bisexual, but she felt if Megan was okay with this, she had no right to interfere. Diana was impressed on how Ashleigh was handling the situation with Nicole. She already believed her friends in the business community were wrong about Ashleigh. She believed Ashleigh and Megan were good for one another.

Megan asked, “May we get a move on?”

Ashleigh told everyone, “I can't wait to see the view from the restaurant.”

Nicole mentioned, “We'll get a table near or on the deck.”

“I'd like that.”

Whenever Ashleigh said this saying it was easy for the southern ladies to hear Ashleigh's Midwestern accent; especially if she was excited.

Diana mentioned, “The view of the ocean is simply divine.”

They stepped into the restaurant.

Ashleigh mentioned, “I like the umbrellas.”

Nicole smiled.

Diana was more than happy to tell Ashleigh, “They've been on the tables since the place opened.”

Ashleigh smiled, “Nice touch.”

They were approached by a very well dressed hostess.

Nicole: took her first bite of the Grilled Volcano Shrimp, quickly took a sip of her sweet iced tea, set down the glass, and took interest in Ashleigh.

Ashleigh: poured more hot sauce on her pieces of shrimp, picked up a piece of shrimp, calmly took a bite of the shrimp, in a ladylike way wiped her mouth off with a napkin, and took another bite.

Nicole held in her gasp. Nicole felt the shrimp was spicy as it was, and only agreed to the appetizer because Ashleigh wanted to try it.

Diana stated, “Oh my?! What a surprise.”

Megan, Nicole, and Diana all gave Ashleigh a look.

Ashleigh stopped eating her jumbo shrimp and looked at her three friends, “What?”

Nicole covered for Diana, “We're surprised on how well the shrimp tastes. Y'all must

like it?"

Ashleigh smiled, "I love the seafood here."

Nicole asked, "Have you had a home cooked seafood dinner?"

Ashleigh glanced over at Megan.

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh answered, "Megan has made me a few seafood dinners."

Diana mentioned, "Nicole makes a wonderful grouper."

Ashleigh commented, "I saw grouper was on the menu. I'm assuming it's some sort of fish?"

Megan answered, "It's a large ocean fish. It's part of the bass family."

Ashleigh smiled, "I love bass. My foster dad would catch them every summer."

Diana's bracelets jangled, "Nicole made Duke and I a wonderful pan-grilled grouper in cream sauce."

Nicole added, "I used an olive cream sauce."

Diana smiled and her bracelets jangled, "It was dreamy."

Nicole asked on the sly, "I don't recall. What was the occasion?"

Diana was more than willing to answer, "Y'all made for Duke and I after we announced our engagement."

Ashleigh glanced over at Megan.

Megan knew this was another opening. It was obvious her Sister-in-laws believed she was in a romantic relationship with Ashleigh. Megan was hurt by this. In her head she knew how she wanted to respond. She believed her Sister-in-laws could handle a serious discussion about sex, but in Megan's heart it was a difficult topic to discuss with them.

Nicole's heart went out to Megan and decided to go beyond a hint. Nicole assumed by Ashleigh's glance it was up to Megan to come out of the closet and announce they were a couple. Nicole's intent was to make coming out easier for her beloved Sister-in-law.

Nicole started simply, "Megan."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Yeah."

They all knew what was about to be brought up.

Choosing her words carefully, Nicole mentioned, "The dinner was my way of welcoming Diana into the family."

Diana added in a sweet tone, "It was much appreciated. It's a wonderful way to welcome another in-law into the family."

Nicole smiled.

Ashleigh looked over at her Best Friend. She feel how hurtful and difficult this was to her Best Friend. Ashleigh felt the need to rescue her Friend but reasoned it was best to let Megan address the situation.

Nicole pushed the issue, "If Y'all were in a committed relationship but because of the type of relationship."

She paused unsure if this was okay.

When she noticed the silence she continued, "With how are family is I'd..."

Diana interrupted, "We."

Nicole answered, "Yes we."

Slight pause.

Nicole continued, "We would both welcome a committed partner into the family."

Silence from Megan. Her feelings were a mess.

Nicole added, "It'd be a pleasure for me..."

Diana interrupted, her bracelets jangled, "I'd love to help."

"I'd appreciate it."

Nicole gently touched Megan's arm, "I'd be delighted to make a dinner for yourself and your partner. I'd assume. Maybe I shouldn't. But I'd assume this would be a long term monogamous relationship."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Their college aged waitress showed up: could feel they were having an intense conversation, collected the plates from the appetizer, made a mental note on who needed refills, and told them the meal would be arriving soon.

Megan was grateful for the interruption. It gave her a few moments to sort out her feelings.

Ashleigh could feel the emotion. Ashleigh believed Megan's Sister-in-laws loved Megan and were trying to avoid hurting her.

Before the waitress excused herself they complimented her.

There was an awkward silence.

Diana had enough she: touched her necklace, leaned in, and with a southern charm asked, "What my beloved Sister-in-law is trying to say. Please Forgive me."

Nicole answered, "It's okay."

"Megan..."

Megan's impulse was to be angry but she could see how difficult this was for Nicole and Diana. Megan interrupted Diana, she did so, because she knew how hurt she would have felt if Diana verbalized her question.

With a heavy heart stated, "Diana."

Diana smiled and allowed Megan to continue.

Megan's dimples flashed.

Megan wished her family believed she was straight. She said, "I'd love for you to make me an engagement dinner."

Ashleigh immediately recognized Megan's mistake.

Nicole stated with a gentle sound, "Oh. Y'all are engaged?"

Diana smiled, "When did you get engaged?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh jumped in, "I'm sure when she finds a good Christian guy she'd get engaged."

This was when Megan recognized her mistake.

Nicole and Diana looked at one another.

An upset Diana glared at both of them, "Look here. I ain't putting up with some foolery."

Ashleigh started to say, "She..."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Megan blurted out, "I'm straight."

Nicole sternly sated, "Y'all needing to lie to us. It's obvious why you'd want to stay in the closet."

Megan reached inside of herself, "The rumors of me being a lesbian started when I

refused to sleep with a guy in high school. In school I was picked on for being gay. The rumor I was gay continued into college. It's obvious they've continued. I'm sure people are saying Ashleigh and I are a couple."

Megan brushed away a tear.

"Sex is very difficult for me. For a while I even questioned my own sexuality but I've realized I'm straight. I wish people would see I'm a straight gal. I'm so..."

She stopped. She brushed a tear away. Megan wanted to get up from the table and find a quiet place to cry. She reached inside of herself and held in her tears and stayed at the table.

Nicole encouraged, "It ain't your fault."

Diana was still suspicious and said, "Honey."

Megan whimpered a, "Yeah."

"We ain't about to reject you."

Diana looked over at Ashleigh and her bracelets jangled, "Or you either. There ain't any reason for some trickery."

If anyone else had said this Megan would have been angry, but she understood her Sister-in-law, "I wouldn't lie to you. In some ways it'd be easier if I was a lesbian. If I was I would have told Y'all."

The waitress arrived: she was carrying a serving tray full of rolls, salads, and refills. They were polite to the waitress and were honestly grateful for the break.

When the waitress stepped away Megan found the courage to add, "I never felt I could talk to anyone about my struggles."

Diana answered with a stern but loving tone, "Honey. We love Y'all. We're here for you. No matter what the struggle."

Ashleigh smiled.

Nicole reassured Megan, "You could've come to us at any time."

Megan teared.

Ashleigh was impressed with Megan's Sister-in-laws.

Nicole stated very seriously, "It's sometimes very difficult talking about sex with family. Being a long time member of the family. I'm understanding why you'd feel this way. I should've approached you."

Megan was suddenly feeling a little bit more comfortable and said, "It ain't your place. Ma should have talked to me. Right? Ain't a Momma suppose to talk to their daughters about such things. Daddy talked to my brothers. Ma never talked to me about sex."

Diana waved her arms, her bracelets jangled.

"There ain't any need to be carrying all that around. If your Momma ain't able to talk to you. I'm sure the three of us would be glad to answer any of your questions."

Ashleigh immediately agreed, "I'm here for you."

Nicole maintained her southern dignity, "I just ask we use proper terms. Unless of course Y'all ain't sure of what they'd be."

Diana rolled her eyes, grabbed her necklace and stated, "Honey. Y'all have any questions?"

Nicole looked over at Diana.

Ashleigh refrained from giggling.

Diana's bracelets jangled, "We're all adults here. Honey, shoot me one of your questions. I'd be happy to answer it."

Megan looked over at Ashleigh.

Ashleigh smiled and winked.

Megan imagined this moment, in her imagination she pictured herself asking a list of questions; at this moment she had trouble verbalizing any of them.

Nicole felt the need to say, "I apologize for believing Y'all were a lesbian."

"It's okay."

"It ain't."

Diana continued, "Rumors are so hurtful. I hope you'd forgive us for our oversight."

Megan felt partly to blame and answered, "I forgive Y'all."

Ashleigh wisely asked, "How's the salad. I think this dressing is to die for."

Diana winked at Ashleigh.

Ashleigh returned with a wink of her own.

This stopped Megan from being overly emotional. She noticed Nicole and Diana preparing their salads; she prepared hers as well.

Ashleigh mentioned, "Julie is doing a great job."

"She ain't letting her run loose is she?"

Ashleigh sort of told the truth, "She runs her. What she does is tie the leash around her waist."

Nicole was sure this was a half truth but asked, "Is she setting up the maps?"

Diana asked, "Maps?"

Nicole answered, "We have her taking certain routes. She has to put up a map at the house and at the yacht. In case something would happen we'd know where to find her. If we didn't do this who knows where she'd take the dawg."

Megan asked, "Is she careful when she walks along the preserve?"

"She says she stays on the bike trail."

Nicole answered Ashleigh, "Make sure she ain't running her through the persevere."

Diana asked, "What type of dawg is it?"

Megan answered, "It's an Alaskan Husky."

Ashleigh became excited, "You want to see her? I have a picture of her on my phone."

This surprised Nicole, "Y'all have a camera on your phone?"

Ashleigh answered, "It isn't the greatest but it works in a pinch."

Ashleigh picked up her purse and took out her phone. She showed Nicole how to page through the pictures.

Megan said, "She's really a good dawg."

Nicole asked with concern, "I've heard she gets protective."

Ashleigh answered, "She's a good dog."

Diana was given the phone. Diana studied the phone just as much as she studied the picture.

A worried Momma asked, "Would Nikita bite someone?"

Megan tried, "Only if someone tried hurting Ashleigh."

Nicole studied the two of them.

"She's really good around people. I take her to work all the time."

Ashleigh repeated, "She's good with people."

"I let her on the charter."

Nicole felt they were leaving out information.

Diana mentioned, "She's a pretty dawg. Ain't it hot for her?"

Ashleigh answered, "She's been shedding like crazy."

The waitress came out and took their salad plates, refilled their drinks, and promised their meals would be out shortly.

While the waitress was serving them Megan decided on a question. It was something she wondered about since she glanced at the sex book in college and the curiosity increased since the underground strip club; she still regretted stepping into the strip club.

Ashleigh mentioned, "I took her to a vet Megan suggested. I liked her. She was very nice."

Diana asked, "What the vet say?"

"She's healthy and doing well."

Megan leaned in and in a sheepish whisper asked, "I have a question?"

Diana and Ashleigh held in their giggles.

Nicole gave a warning glance to the other two ladies, then with a ladies dignity answered, "I'd love to hear it."

Silence.

Megan could feel herself blush. She was nervous but reached inside of herself and asked, "What does..."

She blushed.

Diana trying to help and finished, "What does it feel like?"

"Yes but..."

Megan's dimples flashed. This was so difficult for her.

"What does a cock feel like?"

The three ladies looked at one another.

Nicole answered, "It's like a rocket. It starts out limp. It grows. It hardens. Then it explodes. When it explodes it gets messy. Just remember he exploded because of what Y'all all did to him. It grew cause he liked Y'all."

Ashleigh, Diana, and Megan were shocked at how blunt Nicole was.

Silence.

Nicole asked the two ladies with experience, "Ain't it true?"

This was when the waitress came by and handed out the meals. Megan received a Maple Mustard Glazed Salmon, Nicole ordered Bronzed Swordfish, Diana was given Caramelized Sea Scallops, and Ashleigh was handed a seafood platter.

Ashleigh immediately asked, "Do you have more hot sauce?"

The waitress gave this Yankee a very concerned and odd look. It was rare to have someone from the Midwest ask for more hot sauce.

The waitress answered, "Ma'am our food tends to be pretty spicy,"

Ashleigh reassured the waitress, "I won't complain if I put to much on. I promise. It's been delicious so far."

"Ma'am. It'll be right up."

After she said this, the waitress checked with the other three ladies, she grabbed the empty salad plates, and stepped away from the table.

It was obvious to everyone sitting at the table Megan had more questions.

Megan was feeling a mix of emotions. What surprised her was how safe she felt.

Ashleigh decided to brake the silence, "If a guy has never had sex. It'll explode very

quickly. It's very disappointing.”

Megan asked, “Is there a way of stopping it?”

Diana answered the question. Megan felt comfortable enough to ask another question. This answer led to many more questions and answers. These answered questions helped Megan have: many of her concerns addressed, her basic knowledge of sex increased, she was given accurate information by Christian women who wanted the best for Megan, and when the conversation was over she felt a sense of relief. There were personal things Megan avoided asking about, just as she suspected there were things these three ladies left out of their personal experiences. This confirmed Megan's belief everyone's personal experiences were unique and at the same time universal. She made the decision she would talk to a perspective husband about sex before they were married; this would include her fetishes. She again felt passionate about remaining a virgin. She still believed there was a responsibility and a morality to sex. This conversation reaffirmed her belief, for sex to be truly fulfilling it sometimes took some work. She no longer felt guilty for wanting a fulfilling sex life.

Megan was grateful when Diana and Ashleigh started to talk about the rest of the shopping trip.

Nicole and Megan were delighted when Ashleigh: grabbed her purse, stepped away from the table, met the waitress before the waitress had a chance to deliver the bill, and they especially loved Diana's expression when Ashleigh paid for the bill with a platinum credit card.

Nikita sniffed Ashleigh's desk.

When her best friend never arrived she slept.

Once awake she watched different people walk through the territory called “work”.

She was happy when Work Friend gave her water and took her outside. This friend pet her and made lots of noises at her. Nikita knew by the tone of these noises this friend liked her. She liked going outside because she was pet by others.

She again watched different people walk through the territory called “work”.

One of the people who walked in and out of the territory called “work” was Favorite Male. She was never allowed in his territory called “Bob's Office.” He took her for a “ride.” She loved rides. She met many humans. They were females and human pups. The only time she disliked human pups was when they hugged her or touched her muzzle. She enjoyed playing fetch. It was a different ball. What she liked is they threw the ball many times. She enjoyed the ride back to “work territory”. Favorite Male took her out. He did it different. She went anyway. She stopped and sniffed Best Friends desk. Favorite Male made a bunch of noises and pet her. She listened to his commands and waited at her spot.

She listened for Best Friends moving territory.

She watched everyone walk through the work territory.

She was excited when Favorite Male took her for an another ride. She disliked waiting in his moving territory. Two people shoved a long thing into the moving territory and other smaller things. She sniffed these things. She disliked having less room. She was excited when they arrived at the territory called “yacht.” She was greeted by many people she knew. She heard her Favorite Male make many noises to these people. Two of these people took the big thing and the smaller things into the territory called “yacht”. She liked one of these human

males because his territory was close to the Yacht territory. He often pet her near the territory called “the yacht” and at the territory called “work.”

She went to her spot and waited for her friend. All of the humans made noises in the area called “dance hall.”

Favorite Male took her outside. Like before he did this different. When he brought her back she sniffed an object that looked like a tree but smelled funny. She believed she needed to put her scent on this tree. Favorite Male scolded her and sent her to her spot. She listened for Best Friend's moving territory.

Megan attempted a fib. This fib was based upon her past behavior when they went shopping at the mall. In the past when she was bored she would sit in the center of the mall. Shopping today was far from boring. While shopping she felt: at times overwhelmed, felt temptations, felt apprehension, different levels of frustration, guilt, was at times aroused, felt adventurous, and believed she was discovering what she called her sexual personality. She left *Masters* and was now headed to the store named *Hammers*. Her intention was to fulfill a sexual fantasy and get back to the center of the mall before Ashleigh and her Sister-in-laws would start looking for her. *Masters* was a high end department store designed for the upper classes. Nicole and Diana were helping Ashleigh pick out women's business suites. *Hammers* was a department store catering to the upper classes but a person in the upper middle class could find deals. Megan was unable to afford any of the clothes in either store. Megan knew: Diana and Ashleigh were willing to purchase about sixty percent of the clothing at these stores; Nicole sometimes purchased items at *Hammers*. Megan was afraid one or all three ladies would offer to purchase an outfit for her. A larger concern, was the possibility her friend or a member of her family would spot what she was trying on. When they first shopped at *Hammers*, a rack of skinny leg pants and a rack of velvet shirts caught Megan's eye. This was the reason she fibbed and was in a hurry to get to *Hammers*.

Megan quickly selected the items she spotted earlier and stepped into a large corner fitting room. She was currently: bra less, was wearing a purple velvet bra top with a very low square neckline, she matched this with a skin tight taupe pair of skinny pants with a low waist, she was studying herself in the many full length mirrors; Megan felt provocative because the top pushed up her small breasts and the pants were so tight it created a camel toe. She believed her best feature was her attractive legs and butt; they were appealing because of her healthy lifestyle. The reaction of her nipples reaffirmed how sensitive her breasts were to certain fabrics. She was aroused because: of the outfit she was wearing, the conversation during lunch, the feeling of being provocative, the clothes she tried on throughout the day, and the anticipation of fulfilling a fantasy.

Her dimples flashed.

She blushed.

The question of privacy was very important to Megan. After much personal debate she convinced herself a dressing room could be private. In Megan's mind this depended on the dressing room and the store. She felt this dressing room was better than the one in the thrift store. This one: was carpeted, was larger, had better mirrors, the dressing room door reached to the floor, the door could be locked, the bench was longer, it seemed quieter, and she felt isolated.

She blushed and her dimples flashed.

She started to feel nervous.

She decided if she wanted to fulfill this fantasy she would have to be quick.

She found the courage: to unbutton the slacks, to unzip them, to sit on the bench across from the large mirrors, and to slide her hand underneath her boyshorts.

Just like the time at the thrift store, the fantasy of this event was turning out to be far different from the reality. She heard a mother and a daughter step into a nearby room. She heard someone else enter another dressing room. She often enjoyed the fantasy of another person being a few feet away while she got herself off. The reality was turning out to be different. Indulging herself in this dressing room was far from enjoyable: she became conscious of her breathing, started to glance at the door handle, it felt awkward with a mother and daughter in the next room, and had this nagging feeling after doing it here she would start indulging herself in inappropriate places and times. She imagined the consequences of an Eastbank police officer catching her rubbing herself off in her pickup truck. What killed any enjoyment of her activity was when she heard a clerk start to clean out a couple of the rooms.

She: stopped, stood up, closed her eyes, took a deep calming breath, opened her eyes, took another deep calming breath, ignored her reflection, removed the clothes she was wearing, changed into the clothes she came in with, sat on the bench for a couple minutes, made sure she was presentable, grabbed her two small shopping bags, stepped out of the changing room, placed the clothes in the return rack, went to the restroom, washed her hands and face, and headed to the center of the mall.

This incident reaffirmed her feeling she wanted a partner who understood her sexual feelings. She imagined what it would be like if her husband wanted her to wear what she considered her “special” clothes in public. This idea made her feel nervous and excited at the same time. She speculated on what her future husband would enjoy seeing her wear.

When she arrived at the center of the mall she purposefully avoided gazing at any of the attractive males sitting in this area. She focused all of her thoughts on her business. After a while she decided to talk with a couple retired gentlemen waiting for their wives. She ended up giving these men from Colorado her business cards. She was fascinated by their stories of: fly fishing, experience with horses, their hunting tales, a story on how one avoided being mauled by a grizzly, and problems they were having with wolves.

She was grateful when she spotted Ashleigh stepping into the center of the mall.

*A*shleigh appreciated Megan.

Megan suggested, “Let me take a few of those bags.”

Ashleigh smiled, quickly sorted out her bags and said, “Take this one.”

“Okay.”

It was easy for Megan to carry her Best Friends biggest bag and her two small ones.

Ashleigh suggested, “Before we do anything else let's go to the locker.”

“I agree.”

Megan noticed how much shorter Ashleigh was, “I see you bought new shoes.”

“I hate shoes.”

Ashleigh stopped, looked at Megan and asked, “Do you think these tennis shoes match?”

Megan answered, "Not exactly."

"I was afraid of that."

"Are they comfortable?"

"Yes."

"Who cares what anyone else thinks."

Ashleigh smiled, "My feet agree with you."

They giggled.

Megan asked, "I'm assuming Nicole and Diana decide to shop on their own?"

"We went to different stores."

"Oh."

They casually headed to the lockers, both were thankful the lockers were close to the center of the mall.

Megan asked, "Did Y'all find a business suit?"

"Two of them. I had difficulty choosing between a few of them. But Nicole and Diana helped me a great deal. Later I'll show you."

"I happy for Y'all."

Ashleigh mentioned, "We're suppose to meet them at the swimwear store."

"It's a good one."

Ashleigh's facial expression and body language expressed her doubt.

Megan answered, "I hate shopping for swimwear."

Ashleigh could feel her friends nervousness.

Megan repeated with desperation in her voice, "It's horrible shopping for swimwear."

They reached the locker.

Ashleigh pulled the key out of her purse and stuck it into the locker. They discussed on how they were to handle the bags. After they placed them into the locker.

Ashleigh put change back into the locker, took the key, and shut the locker.

Megan matter of fact said, "I look horrible in swimsuits."

Ashleigh rebuked her, "You look awesome in swimsuits. I wish I had your legs and butt."

Megan made a face, "The only reason anyone likes my legs is because I work out."

Ashleigh answered, "What guy doesn't like long legs?"

"Guys who like big boobs."

Ashleigh took the opportunity to mention, "My brother likes smaller breasted women."

Megan pushed her hair behind her right ear.

"He stares at my rear end."

Because Ashleigh knew this was true she was unsure of how to answer.

Megan broke the silence, "Where are we headed?"

"I'd like to go to *J.C.* It's my favorite store. There's a one piece I saw in their catalog. I want to see if they still have it."

Megan suggested, "Lets go to *S and R* first. We'll go upstairs and then head to *J.C.*"

Ashleigh answered, "Good idea."

Megan appreciated Ashleigh's willingness to accept her suggestions.

They headed toward *S and R*.

Megan asked, "I don't recall you ever wearing a one piece?"

Ashleigh answered, "I haven't wore a one piece since my Mom made me."

“What's the matter?”

Ashleigh made a face and answered in what Megan felt was an odd tone, “I usually wear a two piece. I don't wear thongs or anything skimpy. I never thought I was inappropriate. I don't know.”

Megan's dimples flashed.

She had a list of questions but waited for Ashleigh to break the silence.

Ashleigh made a face, “Bob asked me to wear a one piece. He's never told me how to dress before. It felt weird.”

“What did he do?”

“He didn't do anything to me. Just...”

Ashleigh trailed off.

“What?”

“I decided to take a dip in the pool. He was outside reading. All I did was take off my swim shirt and took a dip. After the dip I laid down in one of our new chairs. I was going to ask him something. This is when I noticed he was gone. We talk all the time. When he's not hiding in his office.”

She paused and rolled her eyes.

“It can't be about work. Anyway; at the time I figured he wanted to be alone.”

Ashleigh made a face.

“Later he asked me if I could wear a one piece around the yacht. It made me feel uncomfortable.”

Megan thought about the difference between her brothers Timmy and Jimmy.

Ashleigh shrugged her shoulders and repeated, “He's never asked me to wear anything before.”

They stepped into *S and R*.

Megan's dimples flashed.

“Y'all mind if we check on the washing machines?”

Ashleigh liked how she said washing.

Ashleigh mentioned, “A couple of our pictures have fallen off the wall.”

“Y'all need better fasteners I'll show you what to use.”

Ashleigh smiled, “I'd appreciate it.”

They headed toward the appliances.

Just before they reached the appliances Ashleigh in a very serious tone mentioned, “Its the first time I ever felt uncomfortable around my brother.”

Megan remembered the times her brother Timmy made her feel uncomfortable.

Ashleigh led Megan to a secluded area; the appliances were in their view.

Ashleigh held in some tears. “He's never done anything to make me feel uncomfortable.”

She shrugged her shoulders and wiped away a tear.

“I never thought he was like that.”

Megan thought of her brother Jimmy, Duke, and her Daddy. Megan brushed her hair behind her ear.

“In my way of thinking he was trying to be a good brother.”

Ashleigh was surprised by this, “Really?”

Megan's dimples flashed.

"I hate to admit it. Y'all ain't looking at it right."

"Are you sure?"

"It's terrible when a brother is looking at Y'all in a way to make you feel awkward."

Megan again thought about Timmy.

Ashleigh started, "It's..."

Megan interrupted, "When was the last time Y'all were wearing a swimsuit in front of your Brother."

Ashleigh thought about this. "Maybe when I was fourteen or fifteen. It was the last time I went camping with Bob and Shelly."

"I'm assuming you were developing?"

"Yea."

"What did Y'all wear?"

Ashleigh sighed and rolled her eyes. "A very ugly one piece."

"Did he go swimming with Y'all?"

Ashleigh thought about this, "You know. It was the first time he never went."

Megan asked, "What were Y'all wearing when Y'all weren't swimming?"

"When I was wearing the one piece I had on a pair of shorts or I was wearing a long t-shirt. Or I was dressed."

Megan suggested, "Maybe the reason he never went swimming with Y'all was because you and your friends were wearing swimsuits. I'm assuming you brought friends."

Ashleigh caught what Megan implied, "Yea. But I'm his sister?"

"He's still a man. Y'all were developing into a woman. I'm sure if you weren't his sister he wouldn't have said anything."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Or would make one of his famous inappropriate comments."

Ashleigh caught what Megan was saying, "I never thought about that."

"Again. I hate to say it. I'm feeling he was surprised on how much of a woman you've become."

"Oh."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"If he was being inappropriate he'd have stared at Y'all. I'd feel a lot more comfortable with a brother asking me to wear a one piece than stealing your panties and..."

Megan trailed off.

She blushed.

Megan was surprised she mentioned this.

She recovered by asking, "Did he ever touch you? Or anything else inappropriate?"

Ashleigh immediately said, "Never. He's not like that."

"Y'all have your answer."

Ashleigh smiled.

Megan pointed, "It looks like the washers are on sale. After I'll take you to hardware."

"Okay."

Ashleigh followed Megan.

Ashleigh wondered what happened with Megan's brother. Ashleigh assumed the brother who acted creepy was Timmy. Ashleigh felt this way because of the conversation she had with Timmy at his car and boat repair shop. She met Duke at *Renewed Mastery* and on

Megan's charter. Based upon Jimmy's conduct at *Renewed Mastery* Ashleigh was certain Jimmy would never act creepy.

Megan was looking into the mirror sitting on the counter. She was considering purchasing the pair of sunglasses she was trying on. She liked the look and the fact they were on sale. She never stopped at this kiosk before. On the lower level was a small sister store; like the kiosk it only sold sunglasses. Megan was happy this was to be the second to the last place any of the four ladies were shopping at. They would have already started shopping in the swimsuit store but Ashleigh convinced Megan to look for sunglasses.

Before shopping for sunglasses. Ashleigh took Megan to a store she never bothered to shop at; her Sister-in-laws never went into this store. Megan was grateful when Ashleigh bought Megan an outfit from Megan's favorite athletic store. She received this companies catalog; either way she was only able to afford the discounts. The worst was shopping at Ashleigh's favorite store *J.C.* Ashleigh tried on a lot of one piece swimsuits and a variety of work suit separates. Megan noticed Ashleigh picked out separates that matched the suits she already purchased. Megan liked the conservative one piece swim suit she picked out. It was dark blue with white polka dots with ruffles along the breast line. Megan reassured Ashleigh it was far from provocative; Megan avoided telling her she looked cute in it. Megan appreciated Ashleigh's promise if she disliked the suit or found a different one she would return the one piece on her own time.

Megan never shopped at *J.C.* before. What surprised her was the stores clothing line designed for taller women. The price point was a shock for her, even still, she signed up for the stores catalog.

Ashleigh handed Megan a pair of sunglasses, "How about this one?"

Megan's dimples flashed, "Y'all sure?"

Ashleigh was trying to conceal her smile, "Oh yes. It'll look great."

Ashleigh restrained herself from giggling.

Megan's dimples flashed.

Megan took off the pair she was considering and tried on the ones Ashleigh gave her.

Megan turned to her, "Really?!"

Ashleigh started to laugh, "They look great."

Megan again turned toward the mirror. Megan felt she looked like a fly. The glasses were big, round, and ugly.

Megan being silly placed the tag over the front and turned toward Ashleigh and said, "I'll wear it this way."

"New fashion statement."

"It ain't one I'm willing to start."

They both laughed.

They spent the next few minutes trying on pairs to make themselves look horrible. This ended when Ashleigh spotted a pair she really liked.

Ashleigh asked, "Seriously hows this?"

"I like em'."

Megan held a pair of her own, "What about these?"

Ashleigh made a face and shook her head.

Megan placed the glasses back onto a circular rack.

Ashleigh was holding a pair in her hands, "These would look good on you."

Megan took the glasses, looked them over, and tried them on.

Megan looking at herself in the mirror and mentioned, "I do like em'."

Megan pulled them off and looked at the price.

Ashleigh offered, "I'll buy them for you."

"I can afford em'."

"You should get them."

Ashleigh asked as she put on another pair, "How about these?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

She shook her head.

"Makes my face look wide?"

"Yes Ma'am."

Ashleigh made a face and put them back, "I love those type but they don't work."

Megan handed her a pair.

"How about these."

Ashleigh slipped them on, looked into the skinny mirror on the counter, "These would be awesome driving my jeep."

"I enjoy riding in your Jeep."

"I'm glad I have it back."

Ashleigh handed a different pair to Megan.

Megan tried them on, glanced in the mirror, and put them back.

Megan commented, "I hate it when I feel it'll be appealing but when I try on a pair it ain't"

Ashleigh answered, "I feel that way with all my clothes."

She slipped on another pair of sunglasses and asked, "How about this one?"

"I like the other pair."

"This one?"

"Yes the one with the big tag."

Ashleigh looked at the pair.

Megan added, "They'd match the blue dress you bought."

"The only reason I tried it on is because of Diana and Nicole."

Megan showed her big dimple smile.

"When my family comes down I'll have to introduce my Mom to them."

"Does your Momma take shopping as seriously as they do?"

"You think Diana's bad. You should see Mom."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"No one's worse than Diana."

"Mom will shop for hours just looking until she needs to go. Then she'll swing around and get everything she mentally took note off. She hates wasting money."

"Whats frustrating about Ma is she'll like an outfit until she looks at the price. She'll claim she dislikes it and puts it away. You have to be patient when shopping with Momma."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She commented on something she was thinking about, "With them asking me if I was a

lesbian. I'm feeling Ma didn't want to be around."

"Why wouldn't your Mom ask?"

Megan shrugged her shoulders, "She'd never ask."

"I'm unsure if Victoria would ask me."

Megan asked, "You like these?"

"Those are nice."

Ashleigh pointed, "But I like those better."

Megan studied both pair.

They finally decided on the sunglasses they liked, paid for them, they asked the associate to cut the tags off, the clerk did so, Ashleigh set hers in her purse, and Megan placed hers in a different shopping bag.

Megan asked, "Where did they say they went?"

"Amber's Company."

Ashleigh and Megan headed to a bench. It was in front of the second floor railing and next to a planted palm tree. Ashleigh liked all of the Christmas decorations but it seemed odd to have palm trees and Christmas decorations in the same place. While sitting there they organized their bags.

"My sister shops at *Amber's Company*."

Megan gave Ashleigh a look.

"Don't tell Victoria she shops there."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh commented, "I'm surprised Nicole would get something for Julie from that place."

Megan made a face, "Diana is most likely shopping for Laura."

Before Ashleigh could ask a question Megan stated, "It's Duke's child from his first marriage. We never liked his first wife."

Megan made a face.

"Laura was a good girl until the divorce. Her Momma cheated on Duke."

Megan shook her head.

"Laura ended up using drugs. She went to treatment but has replaced drugs with drinking."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"It's a shame. She's wasting her life away by struggling with vices."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Diana is a wonderful step parent despite what Laura says."

Ashleigh put this into her memory banks.

Ashleigh replied, "I'm sure I made it tough on Victoria."

"I was feeling Y'all were close."

Ashleigh held in a tear, "I love her with all my heart. As a teenager though. I was a mess."

Megan smiled, "You ain't a mess now."

"I sometimes worry I'll become one."

"I ain't believing Y'all will be one. I've never observed Y'all drinking."

Ashleigh stated, "You never will."

Megan showed her big dimple smile.

"Then I ain't worried my best friend will become a mess."

Ashleigh smiled.

Megan asked, "Would you let a daughter of yours shop at *Amber's Company*?"

Ashleigh thought about being a Mom, replied, "No."

She looked up at Megan then said, "Maybe."

She made a face when she finally decided, "No."

"Why?"

"I wouldn't want my daughter to be like me."

A brief silence.

Ashleigh with a different tone said, "My Mom tried to stop me but I'd change clothes at a friends or at school. Now I see what my Mom was saying. I don't know if it was good to force me to be dishonest."

Megan answered, "I wouldn't want my daughter to be dressing in an inappropriate way. I'd hope my daughter would listen to me. But I don't want to be as strict as Ma was with me."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh could see this was a very important issue to Megan.

"I want her to be a good person on the inside. I ain't sure wearing a skirt or pants makes a difference. It's a sign. But I ain't sure it's everything."

"Did your Mom make you wear skirts?"

"I had to wear a dress anytime I went to church. Or at any important doings."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Megan looked at Ashleigh. "Ma told me when she was little she had to wear a dress all the time."

"Maybe in your Ma's way she was being relaxed just like you'd like to be relaxed with a daughter of your own."

"I've been pondering that question."

Ashleigh said from the heart, "A thing Victoria did that always blessed me was how she'd give me choices and she'd explain why I shouldn't wear something. I felt this was cool before I started drinking."

They both made faces.

Ashleigh mentioned, "Our church was relaxed but if one of us girls pushed it they'd be approached. Where we lived we'd be considered conservative. Here it'd be considered pretty liberal."

Megan pointed out, "Ain't it funny how it works that way?"

They both shrugged their shoulders.

Megan's dimples flashed.

They observed the humanity walking passed them.

Megan started the conversation again, "I'm wanting my children to have a positive experience with the clothes they're wearing. I want to believe I'd be balanced."

"How about if your boy wanted to wear pink?"

Megan became real serious, "Why is it a girl has to be dressing in pink? Or a boy has to dress in blue? Who decides these sorts of things?"

"Okay."

Ashleigh could tell how passionate Megan was about this topic.

Megan wanted to discuss this further but could tell by Ashleigh's body language this

was something they would discuss later.

They sat in silence as they watched people walking in and out of *Hammers*.

Megan spotted her two sister-in-laws coming up the escalator.

Megan blurted out, "I don't like how they advertise."

This was in reference to the *Amber's Company* bag Diana was carrying.

Ashleigh agreed, "I don't either."

"This I'd talk to a daughter about."

Megan voiced with a serious tone, "I wouldn't want my daughter to be thinking she needs to look or act inappropriately to get attention."

"I agree. It really shows a lack of self esteem. I know this from past experience."

Megan and Ashleigh glanced at one another.

They: grabbed their things, stood up, they waved at Nicole and Diana, Nicole waved back, Diana nodded her head, and the four met up. There they stood and talked their purchases and their shopping experiences. Ashleigh was excited to show them her sunglasses. When the conversation was finished they turned toward their final store.

They all looked over at the name of the swim store, "*Every Body Swimwear*." Underneath it had a line, "*Swimwear and sportswear for every woman*."

Diana stated what everyone of the four thought, "I wonder if they have anything for me?"

Ashleigh commented, "With you being so attractive I'm sure they do."

Diana's bracelets jangled, she smiled, and answered; "There's a reason I like you."

Nicole smiled and mentioned, "I've purchased suits there before."

Ashleigh stated, "I've never shopped here before. Is it a good store?"

Diana grabbed her necklace, "For a store specializing in swimwear."

They stood there.

Diana was the one to say, "If we're wanting to purchase one we all need to move along."

They agreed and collected their things and headed toward the store. It was obvious Megan was nervous. They all wanted to ask her if she was alright. All chose to remain silent. Nicole reminded herself this was the first time Megan ever bought a swimsuit in their presence.

Megan's dimples flashed.

What bothered her was the idea of buying a swimsuit with others. The only person she ever bought a swimsuit with was Ma. She normally bought her suits from a catalog or by herself. The last time Megan felt this awkward was when she took her first shower with other girls.

She took a deep breath. She reached within herself and announced, "I'm looking for a really nice two piece."

This surprised all three ladies.

Megan added, "I like boyshorts but I ain't sure of the top."

Diana stated with reassurance, "Honey. Don't fret. We'll help Y'all."

Saying what she was looking for helped her feel better. When they stepped into the store she was surprised to see a table of very decorative yoga pants and stretch pants; she would review the table when she had a chance.

Attached to every table and rack were at least one and at most five different manikins. The manikins were: in different shapes, without heads, and they were helpful to all three

women. Megan led Ashleigh over to a poster hanging in the back of the store. The poster displayed a variety of different body shapes and the type of suits made for the body type; both ladies felt this was a blessing.

With confidence Diana headed toward the one pieces.

Ashleigh was grateful a clerk started to help her.

Megan took Nicole's advice and looked at a rack displaying separates.

Nicole felt like a mom.

Diana would only select a suit where she felt it would make her feel sexy.

Nicole was carrying a red shopping basket. In this basket were a variety of one piece swimsuits; she shoved a two piece swimsuit underneath one of these one piece suits.

Megan was reviewing a second rack of the store brands mix and match swimwear.

All three noticed Ashleigh talking with one of the clerks. Nicole shook her head, based upon the days shopping experience, Nicole knew Ashleigh could be picky.

Nicole was in a red two piece. The top was a halter with thick black trim, it came with a red mid-scoop bottom, she was wearing a red swim skirt with a black belt. She added the skirt to feel more appropriate. She liked how she looked in the suit, but it felt wrong to her. Being able to wear this two piece reaffirmed her dedication to working out and eating properly. What bothered her was the thought of being at a beach or in a pool where: her children were around, she took the churches youth group to the beach, what the talk might be at the YMCA, the thought of her brother-in-law Timmy, or having one of Jeff's friends see her in this suit. She turned and glanced at the other two piece she brought into the dressing room. This one was even more revealing.

She made a face.

She became angry with herself. She felt foolish trying to recapture her youth in such a manner. She believed she looked attractive in these suits. She was not the type of person to wear suits like these. She would again concentrate on the one piece suits, suits she believed showed off how attractive she felt, while feeling more comfortable about herself.

She took off the two piece and tried on the first of four one piece suits.

Megan tied the top of her matching two piece. She had already tried on a variety of mix and match swimwear from the stores own line. Megan liked: the plain brown, plain blue, brown and white floral pattern, blue and green floral pattern, and the brown and blue pattern. She also brought in two matching two piece suits. She disliked the denim styled two piece. After she slipped it on, she wondered why she would select such a skimpy suit.

Diana recommended the second two piece. In the past Megan disliked her Sister-in-laws fashion advice, today she decided she would give her sister-in-law the benefit of the doubt. Looking at herself in the mirror she was surprised she liked the suit and how confident she felt. She liked the red and cinnamon colored hued knit inspired two piece. The top was a halter with three round beads on either side of the neckline. The bottom was matched by a low rise boyshort with moderate front and back coverage. An accessory to these boyshorts was an attached fringe belt. She felt this suit went well with her frame, she liked the feel, and she felt

for a fashion type of suit it was conservative. It was rare for her to feel this way about a two piece.

She turned to the bench. On the bench were three very neat area's: the one area had the denim suit on it's hanger, the second area had suits she disliked; they were already neatly hung on hangers. The last area were four tops and four bottoms evenly spaced out. She felt it was between the suit she was wearing and one top and one bottom of the mix and match swimwear.

She heard Ashleigh ask the clerk, "Do you have a wrap with this?"

"No Ma'am."

Ashleigh sighed, "Which ones come in a wrap?"

"The island print separates and the flower patterned suit Y'all have hanging on the wall."

"Which ones?"

"Let me show you."

Megan heard the clerk step into Ashleigh's dressing room and say, "These."

"I like those. Does the flower pattern suit come in a tankini?"

"Ma'am we're out of your size."

"Oh."

"This was a very popular suit. Unfortunately we ain't getting more in. I could check another store?"

"I believe you said this one comes in a wrap? Is it in this pattern? I like the sunrise and the palm trees more than this orange colored one. I'm hoping it'll be in a skirt or a wrap. I like the skirt."

"Ma'am let me check."

"Could you please?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"Oh wait."

"Yes Ma'am."

"Do you have the flower pattern in a skirt?"

"I might."

"Could you check?"

"Yes Ma'am."

Megan felt sorry for the clerk.

Nicole was currently wearing a black colored one piece with red and gold flowers accented with green leaves. She was unsure of this current suit because it felt uncomfortable around her boobs; a frustration she often ran into when trying on swimsuits.

When she heard Ashleigh ask about the flowered colored suit she looked over at the two piece suit she set aside. After the first round of suits failed to work, she brought in a new set. After trying on the four one piece suits and the couple two piece suits; she felt a tankini would be a good compromise. Nicole picked out a one piece and a two piece with a black and cream colored flower pattern. When she spotted the flower pattern suits she was delighted to find the suit in her size. She believed she found an appropriate two piece; until she overheard Ashleigh's conversation with the clerk.

Nicole called out to Diana, "Diana would Y'all come here?"

Diana stepped into the dressing room already carrying two suits she intended on purchasing.

This frustrated Nicole, she set this frustration aside and whispered, "Is this the one she's asking the clerk about?"

"Oh my!"

Her bracelets jangled, trying to whisper but failing at it, "She's looking at the pink one."

Nicole made a face and said, "Well bless her heart."

Diana whispered, "It ain't on purpose. Y'all should see how she's struggling."

Nicole answered, "I'm struggling too. I'd wait. But with em' all marked down I'm determined to find me a suit."

In frustration she asked Diana, "It look like Y'all found one?"

"Two."

Nicole responded with a look of frustration.

Diana's bracelets jangled when she showcased one of the suits, "This ones for when I take my boys to the beach."

Nicole tried on what they called a golden-rose suit. The store had a selection of gold patterned suits. Nicole liked it but like so many swimsuits the top fit well but then the bottom of the suit failed. Nicole was grateful it was unwearable.

Nicole answered, "It's a nice suit."

"This one I'm sure Duke will like."

Diana showed Nicole a black and gold colored animal patterned one piece with attached straps and a moderate leg; the animal pattern covered the breasts and went down to a V.

Nicole winked, "I'm sure he will."

Diana winked, smiled, blushed, and when she tapped Nicole on the arm her bracelets jangled.

Nicole asked, "What are Y'all feeling about this one?"

Diana made a face, she grabbed her necklace, and asked, "What are Y'all feeling?"

Nicole answered by yanking on the suit, "It's cutting into my boobs."

"You'd think they'd make suits to fit a ladies chest."

They heard the clerk knock on Ashleigh's door, "Ma'am."

"I found wraps in both styles."

They heard the door creek open, "Give me the one with the sunset."

"How about the flower pattern?"

"I've decided I don't like it."

"Yes Ma'am."

They heard the dressing room door shut.

Diana: made a face, waved her arms, and her bracelets jangled.

Nicole looked over at the flowered patterned suits. She would ignore these suits. Nicole could relate to Ashleigh's frustration. She respected Ashleigh for choosing a different pattern.

Megan called out, "Diana?"

Diana's bracelets jangled, "Duty calls."

Nicole nodded her head.

Diana smiled and her bracelets jangled, she was about to leave, stopped turned around

and whispered, "She could've made a fuss."

Nicole answered from her heart, it was a loud enough whisper to have Ashleigh hear, but soft enough to make it sound like it was private, "I'm hoping she'll find a suit."

Diana: winked, stepped out of Nicole's dressing room, shut the door, stepped into Megan's dressing room, Ashleigh and Nicole heard; "Well shut my mouth."

The door closed.

Nicole turned and began to sort through her one piece suits. She set aside: a lined scoop back brushstroke styled one piece, a muted-floral full body suit, an aurora colored bandeau, and a floral surplice tank. The reason she selected these suits: were the bright colors, they gave her support, they all had moderate legs, no one she was shopping with would select these suits, and she was now on a mission to find a suit she felt attractive in.

Ashleigh was standing in front the mirror. She was modeling a flowered patterned mocha pink colored two piece. She was in a wrap top and a low rise bottom. She often wished she could wear a full coverage bottom but this never looked right on her short frame. She hoped the clerk would find a wrap or a skirt to cover up her hips. After talking to the clerk she was down to this flowered set or a tropical palm tree printed set. She liked the painted scene. The scene included: palm trees, vibrant sunset colors, and a beach. Even though she liked the beach scene she felt the flowered pattern two piece looked better. She stood in a way to look at her rear end, this is when she heard Nicole ask Diana if she was selecting the same suit as Nicole.

Ashleigh sighed when she heard the answer.

This was frustrating. She was about to go through all of the suits scattered over the dressing room. She knew this was a reaction to Nicole picking out the same type of suit. She calmed herself. She decided: to ignore any suit with a flower print, any tankini, would go with the one piece she purchased at *J.C.*, would ignore any suit with boyshorts, and any suit with ring detail; she disliked the jeweled rings. She would center her selection to: any suite with a skirt or wrap, any bottoms with a string or was a low rise, and a print she liked. She started to sort her mess. This is when the clerk knocked on the dressing room door.

Megan watched as Diana grabbed the red and cinnamon colored hue knit inspired two piece. She wanted to stop Diana but this would have led to Diana's feelings hurt. Megan already felt awkward because Diana asked her to compare two of the mix and match separates. Even with Diana stepping out of the dressing room when Megan changed. Megan felt self conscience having Diana view the suits on her. Once Diana left, Megan felt she was being fool hearty; after all her Sister-in-law had the same body parts and her request was innocent. She again questioned her beliefs on nudity and her body image.

Megan took off her plain brown top with removable pads and a mid scoop plain brown bottom. After mixing and matching these swimsuits in an organized way she decided on a floral print brown and white padded top, a plain brown boyshort with a white belt, and a matching print Cabana pant. She decided she could use this set both as a fashion set and a more purposeful suit.

She: collected the swimwear, rehung all of the suits onto the hangers, stepped out of the

dressing room, and placed these suits on a near by rack.

Ashleigh's mumbling was heard outside of the dressing room.

She stepped over to Diana.

Diana's bracelets jangled and she said sternly, "Don't say a word."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Megan whispered, "They're still trying on suits?"

Ashleigh called out, "I hate trying on swimsuits."

Ashleigh's dressing room door opened, a clerk headed out of the dressing room, and headed to a table.

Megan shook her head.

Nicole: stepped out of the dressing room, had a look of frustration, stepped to the rack, hung all but one on this rack, turned, and stepped over to Megan and Diana.

Megan asked, "You pick one out?"

"Yes Ma'am."

Diana understood Nicole's look.

Megan asked, "Y'all happy with your choice?"

Nicole smiled, "Of course."

This shocked Megan.

"Why look so gloom?"

"It ain't easy finding a suit."

The ladies talked about and showed one another their suits. Megan liked the suit Nicole picked out. Nicole explained how she liked a lined scoop back brushstroke styled one piece but she was concerned about the thoughts of others. Instead she picked out the floral surplice tank (this was completely different from the pattern Ashleigh and herself picked out). Megan told Nicole she liked the bright colors and was sure she would look attractive in the suit. Megan was delighted both Sister-in-laws liked her two suits. Megan acknowledged it was difficult finding a suit but believed Nicole and Ashleigh were way picky.

Ashleigh yelled, "There. I'm going to go with this one."

A clerk: was about to knock on the door, looked down at the two suits she was carrying, changed her mind, and scurried away before Ashleigh opened the dressing room door.

Ashleigh: stepped out, stood in front of the three ladies, and asked, "What do you think?"

She was wearing the island print two piece with the wrap. They spent a few minutes discussing how she looked, even with these ladies reassuring Ashleigh; it appeared she had her doubts.

Finally Diana asked, "What's the matter?"

Ashleigh's body language screamed annoyance, "I agree this looks nice but something is wrong with the wrap. The wrap usually gives me length. But this time it doesn't seem to."

Diana's bracelets dangled, "Follow me."

Ashleigh followed Diana back into the dressing room. The ladies outside of the dressing room, including a couple of the clerks wondered what Diana was planning.

They heard muffled talking.

Ashleigh with an excited tone stated, "That's great. I never thought about folding it like that."

Diana answered, "Honey. I've lived a life on the beach and around pools."

They were all glad to hear Ashleigh state, "I'm taking it."

If the clerks could have given Diana a medal they would have.

Diana with hand signals encouraged Megan and Nicole to head to the checkout.

The three ladies turned when they heard Ashleigh step out of the dressing room. Ashleigh stepped up to the clerks: gave them a cash tip, apologized for being difficult, filled out a customer service form, suggested to one of the clerks to apply at *Renewed Mastery*, and thanked them one last time before checking out. The associates of this store worried she would change her mind and want to return the suit.

As they left the mall Megan, Diana, and Nicole all reassured Ashleigh one last time the two piece with the palm tree print was an excellent choice. Diana believed she could have picked out a better suit for Ashleigh at a different store. Diana refrained from mentioning this. Even Diana was tired of shopping.

Diana acknowledged Megan's statement that she was heterosexual. There was always a tinge of doubt. She often felt Megan and Ashleigh were secretly bisexual and were indeed lovers undercover. She never expressed this to anyone and never felt it was her place to ever ask. Lovers or not, it was a fact these two ladies were indeed best friends, this was something Diana respected a great deal.

A few days later Diana warned Duke's associates and legitimate business contacts about Ashleigh. It was Diana's belief she was a pistol. As she learned the ropes she would be a force to contend with. Diana never mentioned her belief everyone was underestimating Ashleigh. She believed Bob and Ashleigh were a force to be reckoned with. She was grateful Mr. Waller supported the State of Florida and her family were friends with Mr. Waller. At this time Ashleigh was unaware of the connection between Mr. Waller and Diana's father.

Nicole was relieved to hear her sister-in-law was straight. She never wanted to believe Ashleigh and Megan were bisexual.

Megan was now grateful she discussed at least some of her sexual issues with her friend and two of her sister-in-laws.

Ashleigh felt she had three wonderful friends. She deeply appreciated and respected Diana and Nicole.

End of Part Five Of Seven

December 6th, Shopping

© R. P. Voght 2018, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

Ashleigh & Megan *Book I: Friendship*



Wednesday December 6th

Shopping

Book 1 Day 7

*(6 Days since Julie started to walk
Nikita for Ashleigh)*

Part Six of Seven

Authored By:
R. P. Voght

Posted on ashleighandmegan.com on:
October 26, 2018

© R. P. Voght 2023
This edited edition was posted on: January 25, 2023

I hope you enjoy this pioneering format I call, "A Story Cast."

What the term "Story Cast" means; is this story is designed to be read in small to medium intervals. This particular story is broken up into "days." These portions are broken up into part or all of a particular fictitious "day" of the story. Each day surrounds the characters lives, relationships, adventures, struggles, mishaps and triumphs. This story is very different from a Novel or conventional story in many ways. Again, THIS IS NOT A NOVEL AND IS NOT WRITTEN IN A CONVENTIONAL NOVEL FORMAT. Instead; as the reader you are following the characters thoughts and actions during the course of this "day." This fiction story is set up like a TV series and or a third person journal. It always starts with one or more characters getting up and ends with one or more characters going to bed; while during the day you experience the Characters actions, feelings, and their thoughts. On a large overview; there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to this "Story Cast"

R. P. Voght

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

December 6th, Shopping

(6 Days since Julie started to walk Nikita for Ashleigh)

Ashleigh: pushed in the clutch of her Jeep, shifted the gears, exited the off ramp, again shifted the vehicle, she was on the outer edge of Eastbank, and was driving five to ten miles over the posted speed limit.

Megan was grateful Ashleigh put the top on the Jeep. Driving from Nicole's house to the Condo, and then from Diana's condo back to Eastbank; would have been cold for Megan.

Megan stated, "Shouldn't your brother be representing himself at Diana's party?"

"He hates them."

Megan looked at her friend through her new sunglasses.

Based upon Ashleigh's body language Megan stated, "I'm sure Diana is happy Y'all are going."

Ashleigh asked, "Are you sure? Maybe she doesn't like me anymore."

"Of course she does. It ain't your fault your brother ain't going."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"The person invited should be the attending. It just ain't proper to send someone else in your place."

Ashleigh sighed, "I agree. But I promised my brother I'd go. He wants someone representing the company. How was I suppose to know the party my brother was invited to was Diana's party?"

They came to a smooth stop at the stop light. Megan was again impressed with the way she handled a manual transmission.

"Her family has been holding this Christmas party for generations. The who's who of Southeastern Florida is invited."

"I didn't know that."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"I ain't believing. He ain't in the knowing this was the case."

"He probably did."

Megan glanced over at her friend.

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh: downshifted, made a turn, they were near the *Rose Garden Mall*; Ashleigh looked for the bookstore.

Megan pointed, "It's over younder."

Ashleigh: smiled, she was grateful the light was green, she made a left turn.

Megan's dimples flashed when Ashleigh pulled into the bookstore parking lot.

Ashleigh was very familiar with this bookstore chain. The newer stores were two stories with a coffee station. This was an older one story store. One of the reasons Ashleigh wanted to shop at this particular bookstore was to see how the chain was displaying her brother's book.

Megan voiced her concern, "I ain't sure this is a good idea."

Ashleigh: found a parking space, pushed in the clutch, put the Jeep into neutral, pulled up the parking brake, turned off the Jeep, placed her brand new sunglasses on top of her head, and looked over at her best friend.

Megan did the same with her sunglasses.

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh stated in a very gentle tone, "A couple books will answer a lot of your questions."

"I ain't looking to buy porn."

"Just because a book talks about sex doesn't mean it's porn."

Megan looking at the front of the store asked, "What happens if someone sees us?"

"We'll pretend we're in the wrong aisle."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She gave her friend the look.

Ashleigh giggled.

Megan did the same.

When they finished, Ashleigh in a serious tone asked, "Did we help you today?"

"Y'all did."

"I feel you have more questions?"

"Yes."

Ashleigh repeated herself on purpose, "Maybe a couple good books. I'm not meaning anything pornographic. I just feel a good book will answer those questions you didn't want to ask us about."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Again looked at her friend.

Ashleigh answered the look, "Sex is such a private thing. No matter how open someone is. There's usually something we keep to ourselves. Or we only tell our closest partner. Even then there might be things we never share."

They turned toward the front of the bookstore and thought about their own private sexual desires.

Megan broke the silence by saying, "I wish sex wasn't so difficult for me."

Ashleigh answered, "In some way or another sex is probably difficult for everyone. It's

only in the movies where every thing about sex is great. Good sex takes effort. There are times when I'm tempted to have a one night stand. Or to get into a relationship. I could lie to myself and say it's about loving someone. I'd be getting into a relationship because I'm missing sex."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She stared at the store.

Ashleigh added, "It's more difficult to not have it after you've had it."

Megan turned and asked, "Is it wrong for me to want good sex? Some would say a gal shouldn't want good sex."

Ashleigh made a face.

"Hell no. It's perfectly alright to want good sex. Bad sex is horrible."

"You shouldn't swear."

Ashleigh answered "I want to have great sex. I think every woman wants that. But because sex is such a taboo subject. Especially within religious communities. Both men and women have miserable sex lives. Then there is the idea of the secular world that everything about sex is wonderful and should be explored."

Megan stated, "They never talk about the consequences."

"That's true."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"I see what Y'all are saying about people in church. They make it sound as if a guy will magically know how to touch a gal. Or it'll be wonderful without research. I ain't saying we should be sleeping around to figure it out. But Y'all can't be thinking it'll be great."

"Exactly."

Megan made an observation, "The Bible talks about sex all the time."

Ashleigh thought about this, "Yes it does."

Megan answered, "So why does the church feel so uncomfortable talking about sex?"

"I feel there's many reasons. Some good some bad. Most are so afraid of sinning they can't talk about it."

Megan gave Ashleigh a look.

Ashleigh answered the look, "It's either all about the sin parts of it. Or they pretend it doesn't exist. There's an assumption just because your married sex will be wonderful."

"Everything has a learning curve."

Ashleigh answered, "The problem is no one wants to talk about the learning curve."

"Why?"

Ashleigh answered, "At a guess. I believe it's because they want people to wait until their married to have sex."

"I'm glad I've waited."

"I wish I would have."

Brief silence as they stared at the bookstore.

Ashleigh broke the silence, "The church is doing a horrible job on explaining both the benefits and pitfalls of waiting. Like you said. They're making it sound like everything on the wedding night will be magical."

"If you've never had sex how'd it be great?"

"The first time with someone is both exciting and nerve racking. Feeling your in love makes up for the lack of experience. But there is the nuts and bolts of it."

"Misunderstandings."

Ashleigh smiled, "I've been thinking about something you mentioned at lunch."

"What?"

"Talking about sex before being married."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh stated, "I believe it's a great idea."

"Why?"

"Well."

Ashleigh became silent thinking about how she wanted to answer.

Megan waited.

"Nicole mentioned on how couples get frustrated with each other. I believe she was telling both of us this happens when one person has one type of expectation of sex and the other has a different expectation of sex. This can really be frustrating for one or both partners."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Like having a clothes fetish?"

Megan blushed.

"I wouldn't worry too much about that one."

"Why?"

Ashleigh smiled at the hope in Megan's voice, "What guy isn't going to want his wife to dress sexy?"

This caught Megan off guard.

Ashleigh stated in a gentle tone, "Most women wear sexy outfits because the guy has asked her to wear it. Or she thinks he'll like it. I'm sure most guys would love to be with a woman who is turned on by wearing sexy outfits. The discussion might be on what is sexy."

"What happens if he doesn't? What happens if he thinks I'm a slut? Or treats me different after I tell him?"

"That's the risk."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh added, "If a guy thinks that way after knowing you. He isn't worth dating."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She worried she'd fall in love with someone and then find out he felt she was slutty.

Ashleigh touched Megan, "It's why you talk about sex before your married."

Megan looked at her friend.

"If you talk about how you want to dress before your married. It's out there from the beginning."

"Diana said the same thing."

"Diana is a smart lady."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Yes she is."

"I..."

Megan interrupted, "Before we go in. I have a question."

"What?"

"Does every guy like oral?"

"Most do."

Megan thought about the underground male strip club.

Ashleigh smiled and took this as an opportunity, "Doesn't mean you have to swallow. Talk to him about what you'll want to do with it."

Megan had follow up questions but she felt awkward asking them.

Ashleigh winked, "I bet there is a book in there that gives suggestions on how to give a guy oral."

"What about the goo?"

Ashleigh chuckled.

Megan's dimples flashed.

She gave a downtrodden look.

Ashleigh reassured Megan, "I've never heard it called goo before."

Megan then understood why Ashleigh chuckled.

"I just don't know what to call it."

Ashleigh became serious, "Some care. Some don't. Some girls like to see it squirt everywhere. For me it depends on the guy and what we're doing."

This made sense to Megan.

Ashleigh tapped Megan on the leg, "I still want to find my brother a movie for Christmas. I really believe a book or a couple of books will help you."

Megan answered, "I wish a Christian would write a book about sex."

"Take out what you don't agree with. But a book will help you with the nuts and bolts of things."

With this Megan asked, "Nicole is wanting a new book by Robert Heart. Have Y'all heard of him?"

They both stepped out of the vehicle, locked the doors, shut them, and headed toward the store. Megan again wondered why Ashleigh was without her jacket.

Ashleigh answered, "Yes."

Megan answered this face, "Have you read any of his books?"

Megan felt Ashleigh's body language and facial expression was odd.

Ashleigh answered, "Have you?"

"No. He creates a fuss."

Megan opened the door for Ashleigh. Then followed Ashleigh into the bookstore.

"What do you mean?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

"So many people argue about his books. Some are saying he's a Christian. Others keep saying if he was a Christian he wouldn't write the things he writes."

Ashleigh assumed at some point Megan would figure out her brother was Robert Heart, or she'd just tell Megan. She felt this was the wrong time.

"He talks about stuff other Christians are afraid to talk about. What gets so many in a tizzy is he talks about sex."

Megan answered honestly, "It would be nice if the church didn't act so. What's the word?"

"Pent up."

Megan smiled.

Her dimples flashed.

"Yes. I wish I felt comfortable talking to someone at church about my struggles."

"I'm a Christian and so is your Sister-in-laws?"

They focused on the store. Not to far from the entrance was a display for Robert Hearts new book, *What Was That?*

Ashleigh was pleased with the location of the display.

Thinking about this new book she stated, "He's really a sarcastic asshole."

Megan's dimples flashed.

There was something about Ashleigh's body language and the way she said it.

Megan ignored the swear and mentioned, "I haven't heard someone say he's sarcastic."

Ashleigh made a face and waved her arm, "Believe me he is one of the most sarcastic authors ever to be published."

She emphasized ever.

Megan again felt there was something about her body language and the way she made the comment. Megan made a mental note of this.

"Oh."

Megan was about to grab one of the books on display.

Ashleigh decided to take a risk, "I believe I can get you a first one hundred print. Maybe I can swing a signed copy."

"I was told he never did any signings?"

"We own the publishing company of his books."

This surprised Megan.

"If I make a few inquiries I'm sure I could get you a copy."

"Nicole would be delighted."

Ashleigh smiled, "I'll have to ask her what she thinks of his books."

"She reads them all."

Ashleigh studied the display. She made mental notes and would make some calls.

Ashleigh suggested, "Why don't we go look at the DVDs first."

Megan recognized this was a good idea. The idea of carrying around a book about sex made her feel uncomfortable.

They headed toward the media section of the bookstore.

Megan asked, "Is there a clearance section?"

"I'm sure there is some."

"The DVDs are expensive here."

Ashleigh answered, "But there are movies here you can't find anywhere else. Especially classics."

"Does Bob like classics?"

Ashleigh mentioned, "He likes a variety."

Megan brushed the hair behind her right ear. She hated to admit it but this impressed her.

Ashleigh noticed this, "He likes documentaries too."

Again Megan was impressed. "Just wait a second."

They stopped.

Megan: dug in her purse, took out her coupon book, pulled out an old sheet of folded paper, and unfolded it.

Ashleigh could see a hand written list; some of the items of the list had been crossed off.

"What's the list about?"

"It's a list of movies."

"Oh."

"When people mention a good movie I write it down."

"I didn't know you watched movies?"

"It's for the charter or when my nieces or nephews are over. I don't let them watch a lot of TV."

"Cool."

They entered the media section of the store.

"I could help you with the list."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"I'd welcome the suggestions."

Ashleigh took the lead, Megan trailed along. Every so often Ashleigh would point out a good DVD. They'd discuss what the movie was about and if Megan liked the movie she'd write it down. Megan kept two movies Ashleigh suggested, *When Harry Met Sally* and *Hang Em' High*. The second movie would be a Christmas gift for her Daddy. Her parents very seldom watched movies but her Daddy enjoyed westerns; especially Clint Eastwood movies. Megan never heard of the movie but took Ashleigh's word for it. Megan recognized Ashleigh was an expert in movies and music. *When Harry Met Sally* would be added to the charter library.

Megan mentioned, "Rebecca is a lesbian."

"She told you."

Megan was surprised at Ashleigh lack of surprise.

Megan commented, "I was surprised."

"I could tell."

"You could? I wouldn't have guessed it."

Ashleigh suggested, "She probably figured if she told you then you'd feel comfortable coming out."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh was reading the back of a documentary, she was trying to figure out if her brother owned it.

While reading it Ashleigh casually broke the silence by saying, "She asked me if I was bi."

Megan never once considered this.

Ashleigh still reading the back said, "I'm not."

Megan still shocked at this revelation asked, "Why would she as Y'all?"

Still reading the back, "She was afraid I'd dump you for a guy."

"Oh."

Silence as they stood there.

Megan thought for a second, "If we were a couple would you break up with me for a guy?"

Ashleigh turned from the cover and gazed at her friend.

Megan blushed.

"I'm assuming we'd be a couple if we were lesbians."

"I don't think so."

"Why not?"

"We'd still be best friends."

"Y'all don't believe we could be best friends and lovers?"

Ashleigh thought about this, "I've had guy friends and I didn't want to have sex with them."

"So you wouldn't want to have sex with me?"

Ashleigh asked, "With our height difference how'd we do it?"

Megan blushed.

Ashleigh refrained from giggling.

Megan whispered, "How do two women have sex?"

"It's a lot of foreplay with an emphasis on oral."

With a hand gesture she said, "No punch."

Megan thought about her college friend Michelle. The only thing she ever considered was kissing and fondling. In a loud silent voice Megan asked herself; *Did Michelle want me to give her oral sex?* This made Megan cringe.

Ashleigh set the movie down.

Megan stated, "I want the punch."

"I like it too."

Megan blushed.

"What does it really feel like?"

"It depends."

"On what?"

"How your feeling that day. How wet you are. For some size matter. For others they could care less. How much foreplay there has been. How horny you are. We've talked about this before."

"I know."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"I've thought about it from time to time."

Ashleigh decided to tell her something very private. She blushed. "Try a cucumber."

Megan was unsure if she caught Ashleigh's implication; she was unwilling to ask for clarification in the bookstore.

Megan in a whisper confessed, "I like to grind on a body pillow."

Ashleigh mentioned as she picked up another DVD and read the back, "I tried that once."

"Really?"

Ashleigh smiled.

She put the DVD down and looked over at Megan. It was obvious Megan thought she was the only one to ever masturbate this way.

"When I was staying over night at a friends house I secretly watched my friend grinding on her pillow. She had no idea I was only pretending to sleep. The next day I tried it. It isn't for me."

A couple entered the area. Megan whispered, "Other gals use pillows?"

Ashleigh mentioned, "You really need to get a book."

"If I don't buy one today I'll order one online."

Ashleigh smiled and said, "Let me grab *Band of Brothers*. Then we'll go find you a book. You think Captain would like *Band of Brothers*?"

"It's the TV series about the World War Two guys?"

“Yeah.”

Megan made a face, “He doesn't like watching war movies.”

Ashleigh understood.

“Y'all are buying him a Christmas gift?”

“With Nicole inviting me over for Christmas I was thinking I should get everyone a gift.”

“It ain't required.”

Ashleigh had an idea. She received the idea when they passed a long row of calendars. She kept receiving calendars at work, she would set them in the cafeteria with posted notes marked “free”.

She asked; “Would your family appreciate calendars?”

“They'd be happy with anything you gave em'. They ain't expecting Y'all to give them anything.”

“Help me pick out a bunch of calendars. Lets wrap them and have everyone just pick one.”

“What happens if they get one they don't like?”

Ashleigh said, “I could split them up between boy and girl calendars. I'd mark them so there wouldn't be a mix up.”

Megan disliked the idea but went with it, “Place a note on them saying if they received one they didn't like they could trade them.”

“I like that idea.”

“Then it wouldn't have to be about boy or girl. What happens if a woman likes cars? Or a man likes flowers?”

“Or a girl wants a swimsuit model calendar?”

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh laughed.

Megan laughed along with her.

Julie stopped waving.

She watched her volleyball teammates leave the schools parking lot. Looking over the parking lot there were only a few bikes left and a few cars left; Julie rightly assumed these were owned by teachers and the schools administrators. She took particular interest in her coaches bike and her chemistry teachers bike. Julie believed her coach and her science teacher were dating. She felt this was true because her chemistry teacher stepped into the coaches office while Julie was talking to her coach. They made it sound as if her coach forgot a teachers meeting. Julie liked the idea he was being spontaneous, if this spontaneity had anything to do with sex; she then understood why they both acted surprised when he stepped into her office. The idea they were having sex in the coaches office gave Julie an idea.

She: set her backpack on the bike rack, unzipped a small pouch, pulled out her keys, looked around, bent down, unlocked the chain, set her bike helmet onto the bike rack, stuffed the chain and the lock into the big area of the backpack. Based upon the backpacks smell she needed to wash it or purchase a new one. This caused her to take notice of her current body odor. She hated the fact she was the only one in her family with this issue. What seemed to help was an expensive brand of body wash Ashleigh let her use; even though it was expensive

Julie would purchase it.

She: zipped up the backpack, took out her hair tie, put her hair into a pony tail, caught a whiff of her underarms, grabbed her helmet, put it on her head, adjusted the straps, pulled the bike out of the rack, looked up, mounted her bike; this is when she set the stop watch on her digital wrist watch. Her goal was to get home as soon as possible to enjoy two and a half hours of alone time. She believed she had this time because: her momma was having dinner at her Auntie Diana's condo, her Daddy was taking Ester to Ma's house for dinner, and Jeff went to Sal's family farm to help out.

She speedily headed home. A quarter of the mile into the ride Billy passed her going the other way. She: slowed down, turned off her stop watch, and waited for Billy to pass her. Just as she suspected she witnessed Billy's truck pass her and pull over to the side of the road. There were two things she wanted to talk to him about: one was the playoff loss and the other was a fight she heard about. She: stopped her bike, stepped off her bike, before Billy had time to get out of the pick-up she set the bike in the bed of the truck, and was at the passenger side door before Billy could walk around and open the door.

When Billy stepped out of the truck, Julie pointed, and said, "I'm needing a ride home. It's okay. You didn't need to place my bike into the bed of the truck."

Billy watched her friend open the passenger side door and step into the truck. He was upset he failed to be a gentleman and get the door.

Julie pleaded, "Get in."

She took off her helmet and undid her hair tie. Her long brunette hair fell.

He stepped into the truck and shut the drivers side door.

Billy asked, "Y'all need a ride home?"

"Yes. I need to get there as soon as possible."

"Okay."

He waited for a car to go by and pulled out into traffic.

Julie was again appalled at his outfit; she observed it at school. He was wearing: plain off brand khaki pants, a decorated black belt with a big belt buckle, his white socks were visible, he matched his white socks with black tennis shoes, a pale colored green polo shirt, and his hair was brushed oddly. Since playing football the kids were less likely to openly tease him but they did so behind his back; a lot of the talk was how he dressed. Julie recognized if he never changed his look the odds of him finding a good girlfriend were nearly impossible.

There was a glimmer of hope. While Julie was standing in the lunch line she heard Bobbi-Sue defend Billy. Bobbi-Sue had a few non-popular friends. Where Julie became acquainted with Bobbi-Sue was at the yearly Memorial Day Parade. Bobbi-Sue's Grandfather and Captain knew one another from the local Veterans Administration. Julie suspected this was why her family always volunteered at the Memorial Day Parade. Julie noticed Bobbi-Sue volunteered at a recent mixed denominational revival meeting. Bobbi-Sue had long straight blond hair with a defined part on the right side, had green eyes, an oval shaped face, a roman style nose, long thin lips, a very cute smile, a broad type of chin, high cheekbones, and sometimes wore glasses; Julie assumed Billy could have cared less about glasses. Bobbi-Sue was at one time the tallest girl in school and was the first girl in her grade to develop breasts. She was no longer the tallest, there were several girls taller than Bobbi-Sue's five eleven self, one was Julie at six foot. Bobbi-Sue now had the largest breasts of any girl in school. Julie believed the reason Bobbi-Sue very rarely smiled at school was because of the unwanted

attention she received. Julie could understand what Bobbi-Sue went through, Julie hoped her own breasts, had finally stopped developing. Bobbie-Sue was average in weight but was curvy in every place a guy would like; because of these curves she could have dated anyone she wanted. Julie admired Bobbi-Sue for never using her body to get attention, in fact she tried very hard to cover up her body, and desperately wanted people to notice her for who she was. Julie liked: how nice she was, her common sense, was in regular classes, went to church, and was the first girl other than herself to defend Billy. Julie easily believed the rumor Billy tried to stop guys from picking on Bobbi-Sue.

It was difficult for Julie to stop comparing her breasts with other women. It seemed to her both men and women paid a lot of attention to the size of a woman's breasts. Julie was surprised men liked her breasts because of their shape, her upturned nipples, her large areolas, and what her breasts looked like when she became excited. She wished her breasts stopped growing when they were a B cup. Julie reasoned guys liked her breasts because her breasts were larger for an athletic woman. Like Bobbi-Sue, Julie appreciated Billy because he tried his best to never stare at her breasts. He was a gentleman. Even so, it was obvious to Julie he liked larger breasts.

Julie could tell Billy was upset.

"Billy what's the matter?"

"We lost."

She answered, "Billy it ain't your fault."

Billy mumbled, "I couldn't get to him."

On the last drive of the game, the opposing Quarterback rolled away from Billy and just before Billy was about to tackle the Quarterback, the quarterback threw the ball down the field. After this play the team successfully gained on three short running plays and kicked the winning field goal. This was heartbreaking for everyone.

"The reason Y'all were in the game was because of Jeff and yourself."

"Jeff played good."

Julie smiled, "You played well too."

He shook his head and became quiet.

"We can't win em all."

"Why couldn't I get em'?"

"He's had offers for division one schools. Jeff has received offers too. And he couldn't get to him."

"I should be better."

"Without you the team wouldn't even have made the playoffs."

"Y'all trying to make me feel better?"

Julie smiled, "No I ain't."

He answered, "Y'all haven't ever lied to me."

"No I haven't."

Julie asked, "Did Y'all try your best to get to the quarterback?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"Sometimes no matter how hard we try we ain't winning. What's important is you played to win."

"I let everyone down."

He turned onto her street.

"Is football a team game?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"Did other people miss tackle the quarterback?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"See. It wasn't just you who lost the game."

"Jeff never missed him."

"That ain't true. Remember when the quarterback ran forward and Jeff blew passed him?"

"Yes Ma'am."

She smiled, "You shouldn't compare yourself with Jeff. Jeff is Jeff. You understand?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"What am I meaning?"

"Y'all tell me no one is good at everything."

"What are Y'all good at?"

"Fishing."

"What else?"

"Fixing things. I'm always fixing things for Momma."

"You like fixing peoples cars."

"Yes Ma'am."

She smiled, "I know something else Y'all are good at?"

"What?"

He pulled the car into the empty driveway of Julie's house.

"How Y'all treat your Momma."

He became really serious, "I take care of Momma."

"Y'all are great at it."

He stepped out of the truck and went to the back.

Julie grabbed her backpack and clipped the helmet to one of the backpack straps. She shut the door.

He lifted the bike out of the back and was waiting for Julie to approach him.

Julie commented, "It's nice to have a guy treat us ladies well."

"I don't like how boys treat girls at school."

Julie asked, "Were they mean to Bobbi-Sue?"

"Yes Ma'am."

"What happened?"

She caught him glance at her breasts then he quickly looked away.

"What happened?"

"It ain't proper to say."

She really wanted to know what happened, "Y'all can tell me. I'm a gal and your friend."

She again noticed Billy glance at her breasts. Billy said, "I have to go."

He headed to the drivers side door.

She left her bike fall and ran in front of him, "Did boys pick on her?"

He became angry. "Yes Ma'am."

"You tell me what happened."

"No. It ain't right."

He again glanced at Julie's breasts. He went for the drivers side door.

She asked, "Did they tease her because of her big boobs?"

He became really serious, "They wanted to see em'."

He tried to open the drivers door but Julie jumped in front of him, he was shocked, and stood looking at her.

"What happened next?"

In an angry tone Billy said, "Bubba-Joe grabbed her shirt."

This confirmed something she had heard,

"What did Y'all do?"

"I damn near knocked him into next week. I ain't ever hit a person before but he tried to take her shirt off."

Julie smiled.

"Y'all get suspended?"

He shook a little, but answered, "I was sent to the principles office. I never was sent there before."

"What happened?"

"He told me I should have went to a teacher instead of punching em'. I don't like Bubba-Joe. I have to write an essay on fighting."

Julie commented, "No one likes em'."

"I ain't good at writing letters."

"At lunch meet me in the library and I'll help you."

"Like before."

She smiled, "Like always."

He glanced at Julie's boobs and looked away, he wanted to step into his truck, Julie blocked his way; she knew he would never touch her.

Because of who Billy was and how he defended Bobbi-Sue she asked, "Have you ever seen a girls boobs?"

"Why are Y'all teasing me?"

"I don't tease you."

He thought, "You don't."

"No I don't."

"I saw em' in a magazine at school."

"Where they big like mine?"

He blushed,

She noticed he became hard.

He pulled his shirt down. She was still in his way so he awkwardly stood there.

She looked around, "You want to see mine?"

He blushed.

"Lets step into the garage and I'll show them to you. I've never had a guy touch em'. I'll let you."

Excited, "We getting married?"

She replied, "No."

"Then I ain't suppose to see em'."

"Who says?"

"Momma and Pastor Joe."

Pastor Joe was the youth pastor at his church. Everyone knew Pastor Joe was a mentor

to Billy. He's the one who taught Billy how to fish and how to work on cars. Julie suspected he, like Julie, helped him learn his plays.

With an excited tone in his voice, "We all courting?"

Julie felt bad. The least thing she wanted was to lead Billy on.

She was honest with him and said, "I ain't the type of gal you'd like to be with."

"I'd like to date Y'all."

"No you don't."

"Why not?"

Julie thought of: the website she created, her searches, attending the parties, what she filmed, her nickname, and the fact she never liked Billy in a romantic way.

"I think Bobbi-Sue is the type of gal for you."

He admitted, "I like Bobbi-Sue."

"You should get dressed up and ask her out."

He thought about this.

"Bobbi-Sue will never show her boobs to Y'all until she's married."

Julie smiled when he became hard again and he again pulled his ugly green shirt down.

Based upon the outline of his hard cock, his cock was big, she turned away; "She'd like a guy who'd protect her. She'll like you for wanting to wait until Y'all are married. It's okay to like her boobs but you remain a gentleman."

"Yes Ma'am."

"She'll be able to handle Y'all."

"I ain't smart enough to be with Bobbi-Sue."

Julie answered, "I think Bobbi-Sue might just like you for other reasons. You ain't dumb. You just struggle with things sometimes."

He: hugged her, picked her up, squeezed her, spun her around, and set her on the ground.

This hurt.

He let go.

Excited he said, "I'll buy me a new tie and ask her out."

By the time she had caught her breath, he was pulling out of her driveway. Julie believed he would by a bow tie. Julie was certain he would ask her out: in front of the wrong people, at the wrong time, and in a dorky way. Julie promised herself she would talk to Bobbi-Sue and Billy before Billy had the chance to embarrass both of them.

After the truck was clear she went up to the house. She estimated, she had two hours of alone time; being alone in the house was rare. She: opened the little plastic door to the garage door opener, it was to the left of the garage door attached to the garage, she typed an electric code, hit the open button, the garage door went up, she shut the little plastic door, she quickly pushed her bike to the side of the garage; she was grateful her parents allowed them to park their bikes to the side. She: moved quickly to the door leading into the house, hit the button to another garage door opener, it was to the left of this inside door, the garage door started to close, and stepped into the house.

She yelled, "Jeff."

Then, "Momma."

Then "Ester."

No answer.

She looked at the refrigerator and there was a note in Jeff's handwriting letting everyone know he'd be home late. Her Daddy left a note saying he wouldn't be home until after supper because he took Ester to their grandparents house. She opened the refrigerator and took out an apple and a bottled water. She ran upstairs to take her shower.

She took a quick shower, it was just enough to get rid of her body odor; she suspected she would need to take another one after she finished. Nude but dry she stepped into her room. She thought about taking her new object into the den; she discounted this idea because she already used it twice at school. Instead she'd engage in a personal technique she seldom had a chance to enjoy. She: grabbed her MP3 player, glanced at her bookshelf with all the binders, changed her mind, she slipped on a pair of panties, grabbed a pair of jeans, slipped on a loose fitting shirt, grabbed her bra, an older towel from the hallway closet, and headed downstairs.

Nicole was driving from Diana's condo back to her house. She was in deep thought.

In Nicole's heart the issue of Megan being a lesbian was settled.

Nicole's original plan was to hang around Diana's condo until the guests left and then she would have a private conversation with Diana. Nicole changed her mind. She politely excused herself after dessert. She would arrive, depending on traffic, almost two and a half hours earlier than what she told her family. Nicole was looking forward to some one on one time with her oldest daughter. Nicole tried to find one on one time with each one of her children, even if it was a few minutes; she was sure Julie would enjoy the left overs from dinner.

It was easy to tell Rebecca was disappointed when Megan announced she was straight. The first indication was when Rebecca and Ashleigh had a private conversation before dinner. How disappointed Rebecca was when Megan reassured everyone she was straight. Shortly after Rebecca pulled Megan aside and talked to her. Right after this conversation is when Rebecca announced she was a lesbian and was in a long term relationship. Nicole decided she'd write Rebecca's Christmas invitation in a way to let Rebecca know she could bring her partner to her party. If anyone had an issue with it they'd have to talk to Nicole. Thinking about all of Ruth's comments during the family debate on how to ask Megan if she was a lesbian; Nicole believed Ruth knew her daughter was a lesbian.

Nicole considered what the role of church should be. She strongly believed Jesus could heal anybody of anything but she felt the churches approach to homosexuality was misguided. This idea made her question how her church handled the subject of sex. She decided she would talk to some of the elders and the pastor's wife.

She was unable to stop herself from wondering how she'd feel if one of her children announced they were gay. She wanted to believe this experience with Megan prepared her for such an occasion. One thing was for certain; she would still love them.

She wanted to believe if her two daughters were struggling with sex they would approach her. Based upon what Jimmy told her and how a missing catalog was handled; she believed Jeff was able to approach Jimmy with sexual issues.

It was obvious both Julie and Jeff were masturbating. Based upon her own personal experience she believed masturbating helped her maintain her virginity and helped her remain faithful when Jimmy was serving overseas. If masturbating kept her children from

having sex she was all for it. Her concern was walking in on them during the act. She promised herself she would handle this situation better than her Mother.

There were two things Nicole would never permit in her house. One was pornographic material and the other was premarital sex. She was grateful for the parent blockers on the computer. She believed the closest thing to porn was a missing catalog she found slipped into Jeff's garbage bin next to his bed. She assumed he was planning on throwing it away but forgot to do so. Based upon crinkled pages and a stain he enjoyed himself. Since this find Nicole brought all the catalogs into her room. She was pleased when Jimmy searched Jeff's room and it was absent of any pornographic material. Nicole was grateful she married a man who disliked porn just as much as she did.

She was disappointed in the way her son treated Ashleigh. Nicole understood why her son was attracted to Ashleigh; but the way he handled himself was inappropriate. She wanted to believe Ashleigh was moral and would never touch her son. If Ashleigh did, leader in the community or not, Nicole would have a few choice words with this flirty Yankee.

It was obvious Ashleigh was best friends with Megan. It was equally obvious Ashleigh felt Nicole and her were friends. Nicole was certain Diana took a real liking to Ashleigh. Nicole was on the fence. Nicole's reservations were based upon her experience in Virginia. There were things about Ashleigh she really liked, then Ashleigh would behave in an irritating way. Nicole was honest enough to realize some of these negative feelings were due to the belief Ashleigh and Megan were partners. She found it much easier to accept Ashleigh after finding out the two were best friends and both were straight.

It was dreadfully obvious Ashleigh had a difficult upbringing. Nicole wanted to meet Ashleigh's foster parents. It was Nicole's feeling these two people had a great influence on Ashleigh. Nicole suspected Ashleigh's foster mother was a very exceptional lady.

When Nicole pulled into the driveway she wondered why the blinds were down. The point of putting the tree in front of the big picture window was so people could see the tree. She decided to bring all of the Christmas presents through the front door instead of the door through the garage. She eagerly: stepped out of her mini-van, went to the front door, took out her keys, unlocked the door, and stepped into her house.

She froze.

Her immediate thought was, *"Not on the couch!"*

She felt a wave of emotions.

She quickly shut the door.

She noticed Julie was listening to music.

She immediately chose a course of action.

She was unsure if it was wise or not.

She refused to act the way her Mother acted when she was caught.

Julie: set her MP3 player to a symphony she liked, stepped over to the couch, set her bra on the couch, carefully laid out the towel on the right arm of the couch, closed the blinds of the picture window, made sure the front door was locked, pulled down all the shades in both the kitchen and dinning room, stepped over to the right side of the couch, put her hair into a pony tail, removed her jeans, placed her bra over the jeans, laid them on the couch in a way she could easily grab them, rolled her shirt above her breasts, and straddled the couch. She made

sure her left foot hung over the couch and her right leg was ready to hit the floor. The least thing she wanted was to be caught humping the arm of the couch. If she heard the garage door open or a vehicle pull into the driveway she would make a quick get away to the hallway bathroom. The one time she was almost caught was when she faced the door. Her right foot became caught between the cushion and the back of the couch.

She slowly moved to the rhythm of the music.

After some time she glanced at her watch. She believed she had over an hour before her Momma would arrive home. This is when she made the mistake of turning up the music of her MP3 player; it was soft enough to hear the garage door but was too loud to hear a vehicle enter the driveway. With the blinds down she never spotted the headlights of the mini-van. She never: spotted the door open, her mother gasp, stand there, never heard the door close, never spotted her mother step into the kitchen, never heard her mother enter the kitchen, never spotted the kitchen light turn on; she was oblivious to her mother because she was nearing her zenith.

Just as she reached her zenith the dining room light turned on.

It was too late to stop it.

Her body reacted to the waves of orgasm as her Momma casually placed an iced tea on the end table and proceeded down the hallway. Julie never fathomed on how embarrassed she'd feel being caught. What was doubly embarrassing was the ice tea. This was her Momma's way of saying she had been there long enough to hear and see everything.

Julie slumped onto the couch in shock. A million things ran through her head.

She heard her mother: step out of her bedroom, step into the laundry room, and walk toward the living room. Julie quickly: set the MP3 player on the end table, jumped off of the couch, pulled her shirt down, grabbed a blanket from off the couch, wrapped the blanket around her body, was tearing out of embarrassment, watched as her Momma set furniture cleaner and a couple rags on the end table, received the glare, and watched as her Momma proceeded into the kitchen. Julie wondered on how long she had slumped on the couch because her Momma had changed into casual clothes.

Julie heard her Momma: set a glass on the kitchen table, pull out a kitchen chair, sit down at the table, and heard an envelope being opened. Julie looked over at the tall skinny table next to the stairs and the mail was indeed off of the table. Julie never imagined this was how she would feel or how her Momma would react if she was caught. She was feeling so many things she was unsure of what she should do.

Nicole hoped her Daughter was feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable. Nicole was annoyed her daughter used the couch as a sex aid. To masturbate in her own room or in the shower was one thing, but to get off in the middle of the living room where anyone could catch her; was unacceptable. Nicole could easily imagine the negative effects of her Daughter being caught by anyone else.

Nicole was somewhat angry and frustrated Julie was still in the living room. Nicole felt she needed to emphasize the point she was making; while being determined to act the exact opposite of her mother.

She shouted into the living room, "If Y'all would like to go another round go on ahead. Just be done within a half hour. The men in this household will be home in forty-five minutes."

At least give yourself fifteen minutes to appear presentable and to clean off the arm of the couch. Don't mind me as I'll be getting my chores done."

Immediately; she wished she could have this statement back. Nicole's idea was if she proceeded with her chores this would make her daughter feel so uncomfortable she would never masturbate out in the open again. She hoped her daughter would get dressed, clean the arm of the couch, and then they could talk. After making this statement it occurred to Nicole the flip side was possible as well. She mentally prepared herself for the possibility her Daughter would take her up on her offer. Nicole wanted to believe her daughter would make, what Nicole felt, was a more reasonable decision. Nicole made the conscience choice, no matter what her daughter decided to do, she would proceed with her chores. Depending on Julie's next step would steer the direction of her talk with her daughter.

She took another sip of her iced tea and opened another envelope.

Nicole yelled, "Oh. There is left overs in the refrigerator."

Julie in a sheepish voice answered, "Yes Ma'am."

Julie was stunned and stood there with the blanket wrapped around her nude body.

What bounced around in her head was: *"If Y'all would like to go another round go on ahead. Just be done within a half hour. The men in this household will be home in forty-five minutes. At least give yourself fifteen minutes to appear presentable and to clean off the arm of the couch. Don't mind me as I'll be getting my chores done."*

It seemed dubious to go another round while her Momma continued her chores. The message of masturbating in the living room was sent loud and clear. Thinking clearly she dropped the towel and quickly put on her pants.

She purposefully made a lot of noise while cleaning the arm of the couch. After she was done: she walked her bra, the towel she used, the rags, the blanket, and the furniture cleaner into the laundry room. Her next idea was to run upstairs, shower, and hide. Instead she heard her Momma open the shades and blinds. Then heard her walk toward the laundry room. Knowing her mother she knew she was in for a talk; part of her was relieved by this and a part of her wanted to die.

Nicole leaned up against the laundry room entrance.

Julie blushed and looked down at the washing machine.

Nicole spoke clearly and calmly, "I was taught only bad girls touched themselves. I always postponed masturbating as long as possible. I always felt guilty when I did it. The only way I could remain a virgin was by masturbating. I'd either wait until my parents were asleep or I'd do it before they came home from work. Grandma would talk to me before she went to bed. On one of these nights she only pretended to go back to her room. What she did was sneak back to my door and listen. When I was in the middle of my session she burst into my room. And accused me of many things. It was very hurtful."

Julie could tell by her Momma's reaction it was hurtful.

Julie asked, "What did she say?"

"She said I was a whore and she questioned if I was a virgin."

"She did?"

"Y'all know she has a sharp tongue."

Julie knew this to be true. Julie felt both her Grandmothers were intense but she always felt Ma was a lot more fair.

"What hurt. I was a virgin."

Nicole brushed away a tear.

The two looked at one another.

Nicole broke the silence, "I was masturbating so I'd stay a virgin. Sometimes it ain't easy saying no until you are married. I'm so glad I waited. But the only way I could stay a virgin. Especially after falling in love with your Daddy was by masturbating."

Julie and Nicole looked at one another.

"I ain't angry because Y'all were exploring yourself. I'm upset Y'all were being careless. What would have happened if your Daddy or Jeff caught you?"

Sheepishly Julie answered, "They said they would be home late. Y'all were early. I thought I was alone."

"Fair enough."

Nicole took a breath and proceeded in a calm manner.

"It's my furniture. When Y'all get your own place have fun on your own couch."

"Yes Ma'am."

"You promise to never hump any of my furniture again?"

Julie wanted to giggle but restrained herself and said, "I promise."

In a stern but gentle way Nicole demanded, "I don't even want Ester to catch you. I've heard of older sisters teaching their younger counterparts on how to masturbate. I don't believe this is appropriate. Let her discover it all on her own."

Julie understood her Momma's point and would respect her Momma's wishes.

"I promise."

Nicole acknowledged, "If she asks you about masturbating I'm trusting Y'all will give her appropriate answers."

Julie smiled, "Yes Ma'am."

"I'd hope you'd encourage her to talk to me."

"Of course."

Nicole was pleased to hear the sincerity in Julie's voice.

Nicole added, "I'm here if Y'all need someone to talk too."

Julie was about to reply.

Nicole raised her finger to stop her.

"I understand I'm your mother and it might be difficult to talk to me. I hope this would not happen. But if Y'all are to uncomfortable to talk to me I'd hope Y'all would talk to a trusted adult. I ain't wanting Y'all to suffer."

Julie answered, "I promise."

Nicole knew when Julie made a promise it meant everything to her.

Julie could tell her mother wanted to discuss something else but was having difficulty coming out with it. Julie was surprised when her mother blushed.

Nicole started, "Women have a variety of ways of enjoying ourselves."

Julie gave her Momma a look.

"Things can look interesting to try,"

Nicole paused.

She was having difficulty saying it but felt she needed too, "As an ER nurse I've witnessed many women hurt themselves by experimenting with objects."

Julie was surprised her Momma knew about her experimenting. Julie thought about the household objects she had tried. She thought about the dildo she was given. She planned on hiding it well.

Julie asked, "Like what?"

"Objects getting stuck. Food breaking off inside."

She thought about her experimenting.

Nicole asked, "Do you have any questions?"

Her Momma waited for Julie to ask a question.

"Wasn't it difficult to wait until you were married? Didn't you want to have sex with other guys?"

"The only person I've ever had sex with is your Daddy. I never wanted to have sex with anyone else because I love your Daddy and I've never loved anyone else."

The honesty was overwhelming.

Nicole decided to continue, "I'm not going to lie. Sex isn't always great but we care about one another. When we get into a rut we talk it out. I've always appreciated the fact your Daddy cares about me and I care about him."

Julie thought this was cool.

"Y'all have any more questions?"

"No."

Nicole decided she would proceed with an idea she personally questioned; at the moment Nicole was unprepared to proceed.

"Help me get the Christmas gifts under the tree before the rest get here."

Julie smiled, "Okay."

They hugged and headed to the front door.

Nicole switched to mother mode, "After we bring in the gifts I want you to put on a bra. I don't want your brother or Sal seeing you without one."

"Yes Ma'am."

They stopped at the closet and slipped on light jackets.

Julie decided to ask, "Are my boobs normal?"

Nicole asked, "Why are Y'all asking?"

There was a brief moment of silence.

Nicole broke the silence.

"They'll get hard when you become aroused."

"But they end up pointing upwards. My nipples look funny."

Nicole answered, "Many women have larger nipples."

"I guess."

"One day a husband will be excited to see them."

"What happens if he hates them?"

Nicole answered, "Every husband wants to see their wives breasts. If he's a good guy he won't care what they look like."

With this Nicole opened the door to the house and headed toward the van. Julie followed.

Julie asked, "How come Ashleigh doesn't wear a jacket?"

"It was only ten degrees where she grew up."

Julie made a face.

Julie asked, "Did Megan come out of the closet? Is Ashleigh and Megan dating?"

"Megan has confirmed she's straight. So is Ashleigh."

"Oh."

Nicole stated, "Rebecca has been in a long term relationship with a gal."

"Really?"

Nicole shook her head and handed Julie a paper bag with handles, "Take this."

"You've wrapped the presents?"

"Your Aunt Diana and I wrapped them at her condo."

"What did I get?"

"Coal."

By her Momma's tone Julie knew to be quiet and take the bag into the house.

Megan was sorting her purchases.

Ashleigh pushed one of the carts the marina provided up to the Jeep.

They heard Nikita howl.

Megan looked up from her shopping bags when Ashleigh yelled, "No howl."

They heard the front door to the yacht open and close.

Both witnessed an excited Nikita running down the pier toward them. Megan watched as Ashleigh stepped up to the pier and greeted her furry friend. After a short time Megan witnessed Ashleigh take Nikita to a grassy area in front of the giant fence to do her business.

Megan looked at the plastic shopping bag from the bookstore. In this bag were four books and the two DVDs she purchased. She found herself opening the bag. The first book was a hard cover instructional book about sex. What Megan liked about the book was: it covered the basics, how it was organized, it had viewpoints from both men and women, and she thought the painted illustrations were classy. The next book was a small hardcover book of questions. Even though the book was designed to be shared between couples it was Ashleigh's belief the book would help Megan figure out and deal with her fantasies. Ashleigh pointed out this fantasy book could be used to help Megan communicate her sexual desires with a potential husband. If the book was beneficial Megan would purchase another for a potential husband. The third book was a guide on how a woman should please a man. This was more detailed than the basic sex book. Megan liked it because: of the illustrations, was written by a woman, it showed detailed instructions on how to touch a guys member, and talked about oral; something she was leery about. The last book was a beginners guide to kinky sex. She liked how: the book was without pictures, it was broken down by subject, and she liked the tone of the author.

She started to flip through the book on how a woman could please a man. She stopped on a page where it illustrated a way to stroke a mans cock. She focused on the page. She was startled when Nikita snorted. She quickly looked down at Nikita; she was sitting there wagging her tail. She noticed Ashleigh was next to the cart. Megan haphazardly put the books into the bookstore bag and placed the bag into one of the paper bags with handles.

Megan bent down and pet Nikita until Ashleigh arrived.

Ashleigh spotted the book Megan was looking at. Ashleigh felt Megan acted like a curious teenager. She thought of a few jokes; knowing Megan's struggles Ashleigh pretended she never saw a thing.

"I was thinking we should go to your place first."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh answered the look, "I'd like to wrap Bob's gifts. Is that okay?"

Megan answered, "Y'all like to help me? I ain't the best at it."

"I don't mind."

Megan hated to ask but did so, "May I use some of the wrapping paper you bought?"

"Of course. I left all my wrapping paper in Wisconsin. It's tradition to have a variety of different types of paper."

Megan wondered why she bought so many roles.

They finished sorting out the bags and placed them on the cart.

"You want to help us decorate the Christmas Tree?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

"He's put one up in the Dance Hall."

She assumed he fastened it down. She had very little interest in dealing with her brother and was about to make up an excuse.

Ashleigh mentioned, "It would be nice to have a girl around."

"Do you need me around?"

Ashleigh mentioned, "When Patty or Shelly were around he'd get less intense."

"He gets intense when decorating?"

Ashleigh gave her a look.

Megan's dimples flashed.

"Some of my fondest memories are decorating the tree with Bob. But it was better when Shelly was around."

Megan reluctantly answered, "I'll help."

Megan pulled hair behind her ear.

Megan asked, "Who exactly is Shelly?"

Ashleigh made a face and answered, "A friend of his."

"Oh."

Ashleigh quickly mentioned, "They don't keep in contact anymore."

"Oh."

Ashleigh could see she needed to change the subject, "Bob had custard specially shipped from Wisconsin."

"You've mentioned this dessert before. Is it healthy?"

Ashleigh set the last bag on the cart, "It's too good to be healthy."

Megan gave a face of doubt.

"Would you pass on Florence's pie?"

Megan's dimples flashed, "No."

"You don't want to pass on this dessert. Come help us with the tree and we'll have some after."

"Alright."

Ashleigh smiled.

She was grateful she could get Bob and Megan to spend time together. She hoped Bob

would behave himself.

Megan mentioned, "It's one thing to leave your Jeep out during the day. At night I'd park it in the garage. Especially if you leave the top off. I'll wait here with the cart."

"Okay."

"Nikita stay."

Megan led Nikita and the cart to the front of the pier. They observed Ashleigh: get into the Jeep, turn on the headlights, and drive the Jeep to the garage. Megan glanced over at the river, the bank, and the preserve. Megan was grateful for the large fence and the lights of the marina.

Megan observed Nikita stiffen up and stare into the preserve.

"I feel it too."

Megan felt as though she was being watched.

Nikita could sense the thing she disliked; she growled.

Megan said in a commanding voice, "Stay."

Nikita listened. One of the reasons she listened is because she had the sense she needed to protect Best Friend and Woman Friend.

Looking into the darkness it seemed to Megan it was way to quiet.

What kept Nikita where she was, was Ashleigh's presence and Ashleigh saying, "Lets go to Megan's houseboat."

Nikita like the territory called, "Megan's houseboat."

Ashleigh started to push the cart.

Megan made one more glance to the preserve. She was convinced since Ashleigh and Nikita moved to the marina the weird vibe she received from the preserve had increased. She was unsure if this was true or not; but it was something Megan made a mental note off.

The two of them walked in silence as they made their way toward Megan's houseboat.

Megan mentioned to Ashleigh, "I like the Christmas lights."

"You should tell him."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She brushed her dark blond hair behind her ear.

Megan asked, "Who's the gal?"

"Who?"

"The gal painted on the yacht."

"I have no idea."

Ashleigh answered Megan's doubtful look.

"He won't tell me."

Megan felt the need to say, "It's rare for a pinup to be with small boobs."

Ashleigh mentioned, "You could ask him about it."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"The same guys who painted the yacht painted my charter."

Ashleigh mentioned, "They've done good work for the company."

"They appreciate all the referrals."

"Bob knows a lot of people."

Megan smiled.

They stopped the cart when they reached Megan's houseboat.

This is when they heard the door to Gina's houseboat open. They looked over. Gina:

stepped out onto the stern of her houseboat, waved, and yelled; “Hi there.”

She was wearing a bright green tunic and flowered patterned Capri pants; the only reason these Capri's matched was because of the bright green flower print over the knee. Otherwise the Capri pants were a mix of blue and reds. Her outfit highlighted her voluptuous figure. With the way she set her long blond hair and with her mannerisms she had a very feminine feel to her. When Gina bent down to pet Nikita it was obvious to both Ashleigh and Megan why a guy would like Gina.

Nikita really liked this human female.

Ashleigh and Megan smiled.

Gina stood up, “Hi.”

Gina liked the outfit Megan was wearing. She felt Megan looked sexy in the slacks and liked the vest. Gina loved how the slacks highlighted her long legs and highlighted her butt. Gina remained a lady and avoided staring at Megan's backside and her long legs.

Ashleigh could feel Gina was upset.

Megan caught Gina glance at her legs and rear end. She changed the way she stood. This made her feel slightly uncomfortable, unlike many guys, Gina was never rude about it. Megan wished Bob would understand this.

Immediately Ashleigh asked, “What's the matter.”

Tears, “Daisy broke up with me.”

“Ahhh.”

Ashleigh shocked Gina by hugging her.

Gina accepted the embrace even though she felt a mix of emotions. Gina was having a difficult time believing Megan was straight. What Gina believed was Megan was struggling with her sexuality and had fallen for Ashleigh. Gina was concerned about this because she knew what it felt like to fall for a straight woman. Gina was jealous of the time Ashleigh was spending with Megan.

They pulled away.

Ashleigh was encouraging, “You'll find someone.”

Gina answered with, “Maybe I should get a dog. A dog is loyal.”

Nikita could sense she was being talked about and looked up.

Gina looked at Nikita and said, “I bet you wouldn't cheat.”

Megan said, “I'm sorry to hear Daisy was being a snake in the grass.”

“I should have known better.”

The tears started to fall.

This caused Ashleigh to start tearing.

“You know.”

Gina wiped away a tear.

“She was acting strange. She wouldn't answer the phone. You'd think she'd have the common courtesy to tell me? You know what?”

Megan answered reluctantly. “What?”

“I spotted her kissing someone else.”

Ashleigh asked, “Really?”

“You betcha. She was around the club we like hanging out at. She was kissing the waitress. The waitress. You should see her.”

Megan's dimples flashed.

Very serious Megan stated, "They should break up with Y'all first. This sleeping around ain't right."

Both Gina and Ashleigh glared at Megan.

"What?"

Nikita could sense her friends were all upset, but sensed an aggressiveness from Woman Friend.

Gina in a worried tone asked, "What would you do if someone cheated on you?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

"If he knows what's good for him he ain't ever cheating."

Both Ashleigh and Gina glared at Megan.

"I'm believing I'll find myself a loyal guy."

Gina said with a quiver in her voice, "It's difficult finding a loyal partner."

Ashleigh reached out and lightly touched Gina's arm.

Megan sternly but with concern in her voice suggested, "Maybe. Y'all should be more selective. Try to find yourself a gal who's looking for a relationship."

Gina answered, "I thought Daisy was."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"It's probably me."

Tears started to fall.

"Ahhh."

Ashleigh again hugged Daisy.

Megan felt sorry for her friend but she had witnessed this pattern repeated before. Megan expected Gina to find someone else within a couple weeks, Gina would again be talking about how this was the one, the relationship would last a few months and again she'd be crying on how the relationship failed.

When they split apart Gina decided to change the subject.

"It looks like you went shopping?"

Megan answered, "It was the yearly family shopping trip."

Ashleigh cringed.

It was obvious to Gina, Ashleigh went along, again a sign to Gina.

Ashleigh spoke up, "Maybe the next time you could go along."

"I'd like that."

This made Gina feel better.

"We went to a good fashion mall. What was the name of it?"

"*The Rose Garden Mall.*"

Gina became excited, "I like shopping there."

To Megan's dismay the two ladies talked about the mall for the next ten minutes. Megan made the mistake of saying she liked the *Golden Reef Mall* better. This led to another ten minutes comparing both malls.

During this time Nikita was paying attention to the preserve. She could sense the thing she dislike move away into the thicket. She wanted to howl, but because of Best Friend, she remained quiet. She listened to the noises. She was listening for words she knew. She sniffed the air. There were things she sensed the three ladies around her would never notice. This was one of the reasons she looked over at Frank and Florence's houseboat; she could smell barbecue ribs.

Gina asked, "Are you done with your Christmas shopping?"

Megan answered, "Almost. But I need to wrap em"

Ashleigh added, "Bob and I are going to put up a Christmas Tree."

Gina surprised asked, "Ain't it going to fall over?"

"He says he's going to secure it. It's a tradition for us to exchange ornaments and then hang them on the tree."

Gina asked, "Won't they fall off?"

Ashleigh answered, "We're going to tie them onto the tree and we'll avoid putting up any of the antique ornaments. We've been buying plastic ornaments."

"Sounds like a plan."

Megan rolled her eyes, then mentioned, "I'll carry my bags into the houseboat."

Ashleigh said, "Okay."

To Gina they sounded like a couple. Gina was less angry because of the way Ashleigh treated her; with the hugs she now wondered if Ashleigh was bisexual. It was rare to have a straight women hug her without reservations.

Megan went to pick up two of her bags, both had handles, but one of these bags had her books in it. Because of the weight the bag ripped; all of her things fell.

Gina reacted quickly to stop the bag from falling onto the pier. In so doing, the books and the two DVDs scattered onto the concrete pier, but they avoided going into the water. Seeing the titles of the books finally convinced Gina; Megan was straight.

Nikita chased these items, Ashleigh yelled to her to sit.

Megan was horrified Gina saw the books.

Gina gently collected the books and the two DVDs and placed them into the plastic bag.

Ashleigh was grateful all Nikita did was sniff the books. She again wondered why Nikita tore Megan's diary. Ashleigh: secured Nikita, picked up the other bags, picked up the scattered shirts, and then distributed the shirts throughout all of the other bags.

When Gina turned around it was obvious Megan was upset.

Megan remembered how she acted when Nikita tore her journal; this time Megan remained calm. Megan was grateful Nikita just sniffed the books and appreciated how Ashleigh acted quickly to keep Nikita away from them. Megan was grateful her friends kept her things from falling into the river; but felt an overwhelming sense of embarrassment Gina was able to see what books she purchased.

Gina's impulse was to apologize for disbelieving she was straight.

Instead she simply said, "I had a partner who had difficulty telling me what she wanted. It was frustrating."

"It was?"

"You betcha."

"Why?"

Gina answered, "You know? I like to bless my partners."

Megan was unsure of what Gina meant but replied, "Yea."

Gina gently touched Megan and said, "You'll figure it out."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She blushed.

Gina winked, "There's a man out there who'll be happy you read these books."

"What happens if he thinks..."

Megan trailed off.

Both Ashleigh and Gina could see how embarrassed Megan was.

Ashleigh was surprised on how Gina was handling everything.

"A good guy isn't going to think anything horrible. He's going to like the fact you are good in the bedroom."

"What if we ain't into the same things?"

Gina winked, "Isn't it the reason you bought the book with the questions?"

Gina smiled and said, "I have an instructional book on lesbian love making."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"I believed I was straight for years. When I finally figured out and had my first experience I was really green. So I bought a book similar to one of the ones you have."

"Did it help?"

Gina gave a confident smile, "You betcha. I learned on how to give great oral sex."

Megan blushed.

Ashleigh again had to restrain herself from giggling.

Gina mentioned, "The way to tell if a gal is really a lesbian is if she'll go down on a gal or not. I wanted to learn. I think I have great skills."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Gina asked, "May I look at the books?"

Ashleigh and Megan glanced at one another.

Ashleigh shrugged her shoulders.

"Sure."

Gina gently opened the bag and took out the kinky book. She quickly turned to a chapter, paged through, and said; "This will help you."

She: gently folded over a tiny corner of the page, placed this book back into the bag, then took out the book on how a woman was to please a man, repeated what she did with the kinky book, placed the books back into the bag, made sure the bag would stay on the cart, winked and said, "I hope you ladies have a good night."

Ashleigh's eyes were as large as an owls. She knew what this meant.

The folding of the pages annoyed Megan, but she kept this annoyance to herself, because she saw the bigger picture of what her Friend just did.

Gina winked.

Walked back to her houseboat.

Megan looked over at Ashleigh.

Ashleigh with a smile said, "Everyone's sexuality is different."

"You think there's consequences?"

Ashleigh smirked, "You betcha."

Both laughed.

When they finished laughing they carried the bags into Megan's houseboat.

A disappointed Gina watched for a while. Eventually she: closed her curtain, grabbed some ice cream, some Kleenex, and watched a sappy romantic movie.

End of Part Six Of Seven

December 6th, Shopping

© R. P. Voght 2018, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

Ashleigh & Megan *Book I: Friendship*



Wednesday December 6th

Shopping

Book 1 Day 7

*(6 Days since Julie started to walk
Nikita for Ashleigh)*

Part Seven of Seven

Authored By:

R. P. Voght

*Posted on ashleighandmegan.com on:
November 25th, 2018*

© R. P. Voght 2023

This edited edition was posted on: January 25, 2023

I hope you enjoy this pioneering format I call, "A Story Cast."

What the term "Story Cast" means; is this story is designed to be read in small to medium intervals. This particular story is broken up into "days." These portions are broken up into part or all of a particular fictitious "day" of the story. Each day surrounds the characters lives, relationships, adventures, struggles, mishaps and triumphs. This story is very different from a Novel or conventional story in many ways. Again, THIS IS NOT A NOVEL AND IS NOT WRITTEN IN A CONVENTIONAL NOVEL FORMAT. Instead; as the reader you are following the characters thoughts and actions during the course of this "day." This fiction story is set up like a TV series and or a third person journal. It always starts with one or more characters getting up and ends with one or more characters going to bed; while during the day you experience the Characters actions, feelings, and their thoughts.

On a large overview; there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to this "Story Cast"

R. P. Voght

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

Megan decided if Gina was tempted to glance at her buttock and her long legs Bob would be worse. She prepared for Bob by: removing all of her makeup, brushing out her hair, wearing a simple western style button shirt, and a pair of blue bootcut jeans. She had difficulty choosing between her pair of boa constrictor cowgirl boots or a pair of black multi-strapped black boots; today was the first time she ever purchased a pair of boots like this. She settled on her boa constrictor cowgirl boots.

When she stepped out into the galley she asked Ashleigh, "Do I look okay? I don't want Bob staring at me."

Ashleigh surmised it was comfortable enough for her Best Friend and would be appealing to her Brother. Ashleigh hoped he would restrain himself from staring at her backside and her legs.

Ashleigh sort of stretched the truth, "There isn't any reason for Bob to say anything inappropriate."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Megan asked, "I ain't looking horrible?"

"Not at all. It'll be perfect for trimming the tree."

"I ain't wanting Bob to make comments."

"I can't control what he says."

"Should I change?"

"No. You look good but not. You know."

Megan smiled her big dimple smile.

Ashleigh commented, "I'm planning on changing."

The two of them proceeded to the houseboat door. Nikita stood up and followed. They: stopped at the door, they grabbed the bags with handles, Megan opened the door, Nikita stepped out first, the two ladies stepped out of the houseboat, Megan turned and locked the door; after they headed toward the yacht.

Megan mentioned, "I'm glad you bought everyone these bags."

"It's no big deal. I appreciate you helping me wrap presents."

"You wrapped way more than I did."

This was true.

Ashleigh commented, "I like your boots."

"These were made from a boa constrictor my Daddy killed in the front yard."

"Boa constrictor?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

"When hurricane Andrew came through a warehouse of exotic pets was hit. There's been speculation for years people are just releasing exotic pets into the wild."

"Oh."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"They've been feeding on local wildlife. I've been on a couple hunts for em'."

Ashleigh believed Megan enjoyed this adventure.

Megan added, "Not only have boa constrictor's been spotted. I've heard the green mamba is also loose."

"That poisonous green one?"

"Yes Ma'am."

Ashleigh glared at Megan.

"A fellow charter captain saw one hanging in a tree on an island near by. I've heard of a guy being bit by one."

"I hate snakes."

"I ain't a fan."

"A while back Jimmy killed a coral snake in Nicole's garden."

"You hear that Nikita?"

Nikita: looked up at Best Friend, turned away, ran up the stairs of the yacht; she was eagerly waiting for Best Friend and Female Friend.

Megan stopped her again, "Are you sure I look alright?"

"Yes."

Megan brushed her hair behind her right ear.

"I'm glad your helping."

They heard Nikita howl.

Ashleigh headed up the stairs first.

The door opened, Nikita ran in, Bob stepped out.

"Hello ladies."

"Hi."

Megan cautiously answered, "Howdy."

Ashleigh instructed, "Lets put the Christmas Presents over in the corner."

Bob asked, "You need assistance?"

Ashleigh answered, "We got it."

They entered what Bob and Ashleigh called the Dance Hall.

Once they were in Bob shut the door.

Megan: gave a look toward Bob, brushed her hair behind her right ear, she followed Ashleigh to the corner of the room, and set down the handled bags she was carrying next to Ashleigh's.

In the Dance Hall was a nine foot artificial tree. Near the tree was a ladder. Megan suspected he hired someone to secure the tree to the yacht. Megan was surprised on how many lights were on the tree: around the whole tree were colored lights, there were large white bulbs in the shape of acorns, and bubble lights were currently being hung on the tree. She liked bubble lights. She never witnessed someone wrap a whole tree with them. From where she was standing she could tell: he acquired new strings for the lights, the bubble lights themselves were from a variety of sets, the liquid in the bubble lights had a variety of colors; it was easy to conclude the bubble lights had been collected over decades. Surprising to Megan was how carefully each one of these bubble lights were fascinated upon the tree. On a tray table she spotted bags of green and white zip ties; she assumed this was how he was keeping everything in place.

The room was in the process of being decorated. What Megan found interesting was how the room appeared as though snow had fallen. On the tops of anything hanging or standing, with the exception of the neon lights, everything had white cotton on top. Megan hated to admit to herself she liked the green tinsel with the little white lights on the sound equipment table. A decoration she was glad was turned off, was a circular light, with multiple rows of lights. This motion light faced the room. She assumed these lights blinked and moved in a circular pattern; it seemed fitting to have it hanging behind the music table. She appreciated the Frank Sinatra Christmas song playing in the back ground. This was one of the few non-christian singers Ma and Captain listen to. The eye sores were green plastic bins, a couple tray tables, a ladder, cardboard boxes scattered on the floor; Megan noticed many of the boxes had new shipping labels on them.

She brushed her hair behind her right ear.

It was surprising to Megan a straight man would put this much effort into decorating.

"You like the tree?"

Ashleigh smiled, "I can't wait to hang the ornaments."

"Me too."

"I wish we could hang the antique ornaments."

Bob answered, "I don't think it's a good idea."

"We talked about it. I agree. I just wish we could hang them. How about your music boxes?"

"When you move you can have them."

"I can't take them. Your mom collected them."

"We'll discuss this further at some other time."

Ashleigh smiled, "Okay."

Megan took note of this conversation.

"As soon as I'm finish putting up the bubble lights we may begin decorating the tree."

Ashleigh asked, "How long will that take?"

"Maybe an hour."

This surprised Megan.

"Megan wants to see the changes made to the yacht."

"Megan is always welcomed here."

Ashleigh smiled.

Megan noticed he glanced at her, she waited; to her surprise he said. "Your ornaments are on the table."

Ashleigh smiled, "I can't wait to open them."

Bob looked at Megan, "You are more than welcomed to stay and decorate the tree with us."

Megan answered, "Ashleigh asked me too."

Bob pushed up his glasses, "I'm overjoyed you'd like to stay."

Bob turned and focused on the bubble lights.

Ashleigh motioned for Megan to follow her.

Nikita was already laying in her spot. She was chewing on a bone.

Bob mentioned, "The custard is in the freezer. Help yourselves."

Ashleigh answered, "I planned on it."

Ashleigh rolled her eyes and led Megan through the short hallway from the Dance Hall into the lounge.

Megan found the built in bookshelf interesting. Based upon the decorations on the shelves Megan could tell which shelves were Ashleigh's and which ones were Bob's. They turned toward the stern of the yacht, Nikita followed, they walked through the lounge, down the steps, they turned toward the starboard side, Ashleigh opened the door to her suite; they stepped into Ashleigh's Suite.

Megan: Megan chose to sit on the chair in front of Ashleigh's computer desk, she pet Nikita, and studied the room.

The first thing Ashleigh did was: take off her shoes, stepped into her head, took off her makeup, put her hair into a nice bun, put on a comfortable pair of jeans, slipped on a more comfortable bra, and put on a red t-shirt with a Christmas tree print on the front.

They discussed many of the items in Ashleigh's suite.

Megan was slightly envious of the curtains and bed clothes. She wished she could afford bedclothes like this.

Megan: took aim, threw the dart, the board beeped, and it announced Player One was the winner.

Ashleigh made a face of disappointment.

Nikita: looked up, she wagged her tail, she dropped her rope, she waited; after a while she nudged the rope.

Megan said, "It's these expensive darts."

"My set is more expensive than yours. It's the person I'm playing against. Do you play darts often?"

"Not really. Y'all were tough to beat."

"Bob bought me this set of Siberian Husky darts."

Megan pulled her darts out of the board.

"He'll be done with the lights soon."

Megan brushed her hair behind her ear, "He did a good job on the tree."

"He won't let us put on any of the ornaments until he puts on the star."

Megan mentioned, "Nicole has a similar rule."

"You think she'd like my brother's decorations?"

"Every lady in my family would be surprised."

"Why?"

"The men don't decorate anything in the house. They'll set up the tree and maybe hang up the lights. But it ain't anything like what your brother is doing."

They headed toward the bar.

Megan stopped at the large dinning room table; this was passed all of the video games and was a ways before the bar. On this table was a WW2 board game. She spotted it before but this was the first time they walked close to it.

Megan asked, "Is he playing by himself?"

"Sometimes he'll play games by himself. He says it helps him with the games he sells. This time he's playing with his best friend Al. Al and his wife Shaye live in Wisconsin. They play over the phone and online."

Megan studied the board: army men, tanks, planes, and ships were; neatly placed on land masses and sections marked off in the oceans.

Ashleigh mentioned, "This game takes forever."

"You've played it?"

Ashleigh made a face, "Yes."

"Looks complicated."

"You could say that."

"If Y'all didn't like it why did Y'all play?"

Ashleigh admitted; "I liked playing it. But it takes about ten hours to play."

Megan made a face.

Ashleigh answered, "It's why I don't play anymore."

"Y'all win?"

"No. Came close once."

Ashleigh became a little animated, "I was the Axis powers. With Japan I invaded Alaska and Canada."

Ashleigh pointed to the Western Canada, "I was stopped here."

"How did he stop Y'all?"

"Planes, two air craft carries, and he completely changed what he was doing. Bastard."

Ashleigh's reaction surprised Megan.

"From Australia with British troops he slammed me. He also shifted all of the planes he had from Europe and everywhere else and attacked me like bees. In three turns nothing was left of Japan."

"How old were you?"

Ashleigh thought for a moment, "Seventeen."

"When did you start playing this game?"

"Eight."

Megan gasped.

"He used to help me. Well sort off."

"He never let Y'all win?"

Ashleigh made a face, and then imitated her brother, "If I let you win you'll never appreciate winning."

Megan brushed her hair behind her right ear.

Ashleigh with some confidence stated, "When he's done with this game I think I'll play him."

"Y'all mind if I told Duke and Jimmy he plays this game?"

"No."

"I feel they'd like playing it. Duke is a fanatic of history."

"I'd love it if they came over."

They turned from the table and stepped inside of the bar. This was the dominate feature of the first deck. Ashleigh opened a drawer dedicated to darts. In the drawer: were twenty different complete sets, there was a pile of unopened flights, numerous unused shafts, and bags of different colored tips.

Megan asked, "Where is he finding these darts?"

"He's been buying them online."

"Does he take everything to an extreme?"

"Not everything."

She thought for a second, "You should play him."

Megan said, "I ain't sure."

"He doesn't let me win at darts either."

"Is he a poor winner?"

"No."

Based upon Megan's facial expression she disbelieved Ashleigh.

"He does get a little lippy."

"Maybe I'll play him. But I ain't promising anything."

Ashleigh found some hope in this comment.

They heard Bob from the top of the stairs, "Ashleigh!?"

Ashleigh walked to the bottom of the stairs, "What?"

"I changed my mind. Lets hang up the Hallmark ornaments."

Ashleigh answered back, "I don't think they'll brake if they fall."

"We'll use the twist ties. I bought enough to hang the ornaments with."

"Alright."

Bob then said, "There are unbreakable ornaments in our boxes."

"I'll go through them."

"Would you ladies mind bringing them up? I would but I'm working on something."

"Okay."

Ashleigh waved Megan toward the storage unit. Megan glanced at the door to the cabin and the engine room. She was curious about both.

When she reached Ashleigh she mentioned, "I ain't always a fan of your brother."

"I ain't either."

Ashleigh opened the door to the storage unit.

"Gees."

"What?"

Megan felt obliged to answer, "These cabinets are expensive."

Ashleigh asked, "Is everything in the yacht expensive?"

This caught Megan by surprise.

Ashleigh answered her look, "He won't tell me what he's spent on the remodel. What's your guess?"

"I ain't sure of the dollar amount."

"Oh."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"It isn't important."

This is when Megan answered, "It's looking like everything important is top of the line. Other things are not. But there ain't anything cheap. I'm feeling the mural on wall was one of the most expensive things."

They studied it.

Megan finished her thought, "He's updated this yacht. I'm sure the update was cheaper than a custom build one."

"I suspected that."

Ashleigh moved along the storage area and opened one of the cabinets. Inside were a few boxes.

Megan volunteered, "I'll help Y'all."

"I need to go through them first. I'm looking for some older plastic ornaments. There is a box of miscellaneous things I'd like to bring up. He'll want his football ornaments. I'm glad we decided to put up our hallmark ornaments."

Ashleigh set down six apple boxes marked, in Bob's handwriting, "*ornaments*." Looking at them she proclaimed, "Shit!"

"What?"

"I forgot a knife."

"I have one."

Ashleigh watched Megan unclip her keys, on the keys was a small pocket knife, she opened the knife, and carefully opened the boxes.

Ashleigh carefully went through these six boxes. She sorted them to make two of the six boxes into unbreakable ornament boxes and four into breakable ornament boxes. Megan appreciated: how many were antique, how many were handcrafted from Germany, how fragile they were, she felt they would have looked beautiful on a tree; the best part was Ashleigh's stories related to many of the ornaments. Megan could feel how important they were to Ashleigh. This was exactly how Megan felt about the ornaments her family put on her Ma's tree and the ornaments Nicole's family put on their tree.

Megan watched Ashleigh carefully put back the boxes of fragile ornaments.

Ashleigh stated, "After Christmas I'm going to put these in the storage area."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh took down a large green bin marked in Bob's handwriting, "*Hallmark Ornaments*."

Megan suggested, "I'll take it."

Ashleigh smiled, "I appreciate it."

"Do you see any other boxes?"

Megan's dimples flashed, "No."

At this moment they heard, "Ashleigh?!"

She stepped out of the storage area, "Yeah?"

Nikita: woke up, grabbed the rope, and ran toward these two ladies.

Bob announced, "We're ready to add the ornaments."

"We'll be right up."

"That'd be splendid."

When she turned around she noticed Megan had already put all of the boxes and the green bin outside of the storage area. She was looking at the artifacts on the wall.

Ashleigh asked, "You like that stuff?"

Megan answered, "Many of the pirate artifacts are priceless."

"Really?"

"Many came from the ship Captain found."

"I didn't know that."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"It's a good job of displaying them."

While Megan was staring at the antiques on the wall, Ashleigh made sure the storage doors and the main door to the storage room were locked up. Before she picked up the boxes she pointed to the big clock, "Is that clock nautical?"

Megan looked up at the clock, "I wouldn't think so. But it could be from an old cruise ship."

Ashleigh made a face.

"Where did Y'all get it."

"He won't tell me. I'm suppose to figure it out."

Megan volunteered, "Take a picture and email it to me. Maybe Captain will know where it was from."

Megan witnessed Ashleigh start to stack the unbreakable ornament boxes on top of the plastic bin. Megan stepped up to her and took the apple boxes. Ashleigh took the lead and the bin. They headed to the stairs.

Megan mentioned, "I'm amazed on how well the remodel went."

"It was a design from someone who works for us."

"Really?"

"Bob had a contest at work."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh stopped walking and answered, "Sometimes we'll have contests. Bob uses them to encourage employee creativity."

"Even with his own yacht?"

"He had a professional architect go over the winning design. I actually liked the third place winner better. In hindsight I think my brother made the right choice. He really blessed the winners. The money they received helped them get out of debt."

"He had prize money?"

"Yup."

Ashleigh mentioned, "The third place winner received a promotion."

"Why?"

Ashleigh stopped just before the first step and turned around, "What impressed Bob was the third place winner thought this design was better than his own."

Megan was surprised she never heard of this story. Many stories about *Renewed Mastery* and how Bob ran the company were spreading like wildfire amount the folks living in Eastbank.

Ashleigh turned and started up the stairs.

Megan asked about a picture on the wall, "What building is this?"

Ashleigh turned and leaned up against the railing, "It's *Renewed Mastery* when it first opened."

Megan was estimating the square footage. She was surprised on how large the piles of

snow were; especially with it appearing to be spring.

"He used just about every penny of his inheritance and some money he won in a bowling tournament. To purchase the building and the equipment to get started."

"Bowling tournament?"

Ashleigh became animated, "Don't ever mention bowling."

"Why?"

Ashleigh made a face, "If you think he's obsessed with the darts and decorating go bowling with him."

"I didn't know he liked sports?"

"Bowling is the only one he participates in."

"Oh."

Ashleigh turned and headed up the stairs.

"I'd like to confess something to you."

Because of Megan's tone she stopped and again leaned against the railing, "One of the reasons I was rude to Y'all is because I was trying to receive a loan for this yacht."

"This yacht was a demo?"

"Benny is a friend of the family."

"Oh."

"He was struggling to sell it and he needed the cash. He was offering me a deal for her."

Ashleigh asked, "What were you going to use it for?"

"I had plans to use her for weddings and business meetings."

"Maybe one day you'll be able to purchase a different one."

Megan answered, "It's my dream. Captain is on the look out."

Ashleigh smiled and mentioned, "We better get going."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She followed Ashleigh. They made their way into the Dancing Hall.

Nikita carried her rope to the room and laid down.

Megan noticed Bob was putting up a plastic star on top of the Christmas tree. Just as they were setting their boxes and the bin down; Megan witnessed Bob plug it into a green extension cord tied to the tree. Megan took note on how the star slowly changed colors.

"That's my favorite star."

Bob smiled, "With you residing here. It's only fitting I dig this one out and place it on the tree."

While looking at the star Bob again mentioned, "Your ornaments are on the galley table."

Ashleigh: winked, Ashleigh motioned with her head, and Megan followed Ashleigh into the galley.

Nikita: picked up her rope, followed these two ladies, sat down, dropped the rope, she nudged it, and waited.

On the table was a poorly wrapped square box and a poorly wrapped skinny rectangular shaped box. This was obviously a Hallmark ornament and a skinny box of ornaments. Megan was surprised and reluctantly impressed.

Ashleigh picked up the Christmas Gifts and stepped into the Dance Hall.

Megan followed.

Nikita: picked up her rope, ran into the hall, her tail was a weapon, she dropped the

rope, and again nudged it.

Bob was standing in front of the tree staring at the star. Megan believed he was contemplating the past.

Ashleigh motioned for Megan to step over to the bags.

Nikita: reluctantly laid down, she dropped her rope, she put her head on her paws, she was listening for any sound she recognized; she always liked to hear the sounds: treat, walk, toy, rope, or drive.

Ashleigh whispered, "When I was really little he let me pick it out. We went all over. I found it at a drug store."

This reminded Megan of Nicole and how she gave her children choices. A strange thought popped into her mind; *if he did this with Ashleigh would he do this with his own children?*

Ashleigh spoke up, "I have the ornaments."

Bob turned toward them, "What do you ladies think?"

Ashleigh looked at him and smiled, "Its the best one in years."

"It's the reason I left at Noon today."

Megan glanced at her wrist watch and calculated how long this took him. Megan stepped closer to the tree. Megan loved the bubble lights; she liked how the bubbles moved in the colored water, and how bright the bottoms were. It was obvious to Megan some of these were antiques. She inspected the white acorn lights. She believed they were rare or a northern custom; either way she found them interesting. Megan hated to admit the tree looked full and the lights looked great.

He glanced at her.

She expected a comment.

Instead he focused his attention back onto the tree. He again started to switch the bubble lights. Megan observed he was trying to keep the colors separated and was sequencing the new and old ones. She was impressed a man would do this. She was unsure of her feelings. She was bothered because he was paying more attention to the bubble lights, than saying anything to her; she wished he would say something appropriate.

Ashleigh sighed.

Bob still moving bubble lights commented, "You can start putting up the ornaments."

Ashleigh protested, "No we can't."

"Why?"

An upset Ashleigh reminded Bob, "We can't put any of the ornaments on the tree until we first open the ones we're giving one another."

This was an obvious Father Daughter type of moment. Megan understood this because of what Ashleigh told her. These were the moments Megan was grateful for her Daddy.

"I apologize."

Bob pushed up his glasses and commented, "Lets open our ornaments."

Ashleigh smiled.

Ashleigh explained to Megan, "Its tradition. The ornaments we give one another go on the tree first."

Megan watched.

They set the ornaments on a stack of boxes. Bob grabbed one of Ashleigh's boxes and Ashleigh grabbed one of Bob's boxes.

Ashleigh mentioned, "If we had tables attached to the wall, just like you had at your club, this would have been easier."

Bob acknowledged the idea, "I was contemplating your suggestion as I was decorating today."

Megan took note of this.

Ashleigh smiled.

Ashleigh expected new tables to arrive at *Renewed Mastery* or at the Yacht in a couple days.

Ashleigh opened the small square box. The box was of Curious George painting a candy cane. Megan was surprised when Ashleigh teared up.

In an excited voice Ashleigh commanded, "Open one of yours."

Bob opened his and his eyes light up, "I like it."

The ornament was of a snowman carrying an owl.

Ashleigh commented, "It's not as nice as yours."

"Who says?"

Bob reassured her by saying, "Open the next one."

Megan and Nikita were watching.

Ashleigh opened the flat skinny one. In the box were six wooden snowmen; each one was painted different.

"I thought it would remind you of home. You've always enjoyed making snowmen."

Ashleigh smiled.

She looked over at Megan, "It's the one cool thing about snow."

Ashleigh brushed away a tear.

Megan felt he was way to eager to open his second package.

He barged between the two ladies stating, "Two things I like. Looney Tunes and pinball."

Megan gave him a look and was about to make a comment.

Ashleigh said, "He likes them."

Megan remained silent.

Megan noticed Bob was digging into one of the boxes the ladies brought up. He removed a small white box, a box Ashleigh never opened, Bob placed it on a tray, and opened it. Megan walked up to the tray table and inspected the contents in the box: there were hooks, small snowflake ornaments, and long metal ornaments. At first Megan was unsure of what these long metal ornaments were. She picked one up and twirled it; this is when she realized it was an icicle. She had seen pictures of icicles but never saw one for real. Megan took note of two piles of brand new red and green cut pieces of yarn next to this box. Megan assumed Ashleigh had cut these prior to today.

Ashleigh was all smiles as she: carefully set the box and the packing material of the Curious George ornament on one of the pile of boxes, grabbed a green piece of yarn, walked up to the tree, and tied it on the tree.

Ashleigh came back and asked, "You can start hanging some."

Bob mentioned, "Lets use the zip ties on the Hallmark ornaments."

Ashleigh made a face, "Won't it be difficult to remove the zip ties?"

"Leave enough room to snip it."

Ashleigh grabbed a green zip tie and redid her ornament.

Megan debated if this would work or not; she kept these thoughts to herself.

Bob smiled as he opened the bin marked in Bob's handwriting, "*Hallmark Ornaments.*"

Before Megan could refuse and skip out on her promise, Ashleigh handed her one of the new snowmen ornaments.

Megan took it, grabbed a red piece of yarn, and tied it to the tree; she left enough room to "snip it."

Megan opened one of the boxes they brought up from the storage unit. She grabbed an old ornament box marked in an old font "unbreakable". It was obvious these were from the 1950's. Nicole had plastic bells like the ones in this box. She grabbed a clear round ornament with stripes. She hung it onto the tree. She watched Ashleigh and Bob hanging ornaments. She went back and grabbed one of the plastic bells.

Nikita went up to the tree. She sniffed it. It smelled funny to her. It looked like a tree. She noticed a toy hanging off of the tree. She was going to grab it.

An angry Ashleigh scolded, "NO tree. Sit."

Nikita looked up at a very angry Ashleigh. Nikita being a good dog laid down. Ashleigh felt bad and then comforted her friend.

After observing Nikita listen to Ashleigh, Megan again wondered why Nikita tore her journal.

While Bob was hanging one of the hallmark ornaments he asked, "Megan. Whats your favorite Christmas Tradition?"

Megan looked up at him.

She brushed her hair behind her right ear.

Her dimples flashed.

She found herself answering him, "My sister-in-law invites friends and family over on Christmas Eve. She decorates her house and sends out the most beautiful Christmas cards. The best part of the party is at eleven we all get together and sing."

Megan felt vulnerable.

Bob looked at her and smiled, she glared back at him, she was expecting something really offensive.

Instead he asked, "What do you like about the singing?"

Megan answered from the heart, "For about an hour we select different songs sing. People will bring their instruments and display their talents. Some are better than others but we all enjoy it. It's tradition we end at midnight with Silent Night."

Bob smiled and calmly said, "It does sound very authentic. I could see why you'd like it."

Megan stood there.

Ashleigh paid close attention as she hung another ornament.

Bob calmly walked over to the Hallmark ornament bin, he pulled out a different ornament box, and slid out the ornament, "I've always liked this one."

It was a mouse on top of some books.

Ashleigh responded, "Its one of my favorites."

Megan gained her composure and asked, "Who received it?"

Bob answered, "Ashleigh gave it to me."

This is when Megan decided she would avoid all of the Hallmark ornaments.

Ashleigh hung an ornament of a child Eskimo fishing. She was keeping an eye on how Megan was handling her brother.

Megan hung the ornament she was carrying. Clueless as to why, she went back to the box she was working from, and hung a round plastic ornament with strips around it. It felt odd for her to be staying: her mind was telling her to run, her heart was telling her to stay, and the rest of her felt confused.

Ashleigh asked Megan, "Are you putting up a tree?"

"I help Nicole set up her tree."

Ashleigh was aware of her brother eyeballing Megan. Ashleigh hoped Megan would miss it. Ashleigh was starting to feel these looks had meaning behind them.

This is when Megan stood up straight. Looked over at Bob. Bob had enough sense to turn toward the tree.

Ashleigh wondered if she would say anything.

Megan brushed her hair behind her right ear.

Her dimples flashed.

She walked up to the tree and hung another ornament.

Ashleigh hung another Hallmark Ornament.

Nikita sensed Megan's scent change.

Bob asked Ashleigh, "How was your shopping trip?"

While the three put up ornaments Megan and Ashleigh told him about the day; leaving out the part Megan's family believed the two of them were a couple.

Megan noticed Bob move one of the ornaments she put up.

She pointed to it.

Ashleigh sighed.

Megan asked in a whisper, "Why did he move it?"

"The two ornaments are very similar."

"So?"

Ashleigh answered, "We try not to hang the same ornaments close to one another."

Bob added, "It gives the tree more character if the ornaments are spread around."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She whispered to Ashleigh, "I know who the character is."

Ashleigh was thankful Bob missed the comment.

Megan whispered toward Ashleigh, "I'm not five years old."

Ashleigh whispered in return, "He gets that way sometimes."

Megan again whispered, "All the time?"

Ashleigh answered, "It's why I swear."

Ashleigh was sure Megan would stop hanging ornaments but was grateful Megan walked over to the boxes of ornaments.

Megan watched Bob from the corner of her eye: she took notice him checking out her backside, she turned her body in a way where she was no longer a show, she waited for a comment, she watched him take another ornament, casually walk up to the tree, bent down to hang another ornament, to her surprise she caught him glance at her breasts; this made her feel uncomfortable. It was her long standing belief a guy would dislike her small breasts.

Ashleigh remained silent but was prepared to jump in.

Megan was bound to make a point. She watched him hang another ornament.

She stood up, "You can't hang it there."

Bob answered, "Why?"

Ashleigh expected Bob to be really sarcastic or belittle her friend.

Megan walked up to the tree and pointed, "Ain't it similar to the ornament next to it?"

Bob pushed up his glasses.

In a serious tone answered, "My dear you are correct."

Megan politely answered, "You can't call me dear unless we're dating."

"That's fair."

Bob pushed up his glasses.

He moved the ornament Megan pointed out.

Ashleigh stood there holding one of the metal icicle ornaments.

Megan looked over at Ashleigh and asked; "Where did you get these antique ornaments?"

Ashleigh was still contemplating what just happened and in an odd tone answered, "Amanda did."

Megan asked gently, "Who's Amanda?"

Bob answered, "Amanda was my mom."

Megan answered, "Oh."

Ashleigh was able to focus. Ashleigh watched as Bob hung the last Hallmark ornament.

Bob pushed up his glasses.

"You were right about the ornament. It looks nicer moved."

Ashleigh desired the power to marry them. Ashleigh caught the odd look Megan gave Bob. Megan gently brushed her hair behind her right ear. Megan grabbed another shoe box. Inside were homemade ornaments.

Ashleigh pointed to them, "I made many of those for Bob."

Bob smiled, "Yes she did."

"You should hang em'."

Ashleigh smiled, "I won't disagree."

Megan gave the box to Ashleigh. One of the first ornaments she pulled out was a star.

Megan looked at the tree and observed the top was a little bare she suggested, "Ashleigh I'll grab the ladder."

"Yea."

"You can lift me up some of those handmade ones."

"Sure."

Bob surprised Megan by grabbing the ladder and placing it next to the tree.

Ashleigh stated, "Thank-you."

"You're welcome."

Ashleigh handed these hand made ornaments up to Megan. After these were hung Ashleigh grabbed a new box of brightly colored plastic ornaments.

Megan moved the ladder more toward the windows and climbed up the ladder.

Ashleigh and Megan started to discuss the next few charts Megan had scheduled.

Bob interrupted and asked, "Would you hang this ornament near the front?"

Megan made a face when she noticed it was a Green Bay Packer ornament.

She managed a, "Sure."

She hung it.

Megan observed Bob move one of Ashleigh's homemade ornaments.

While talking Megan pointed to the ornament.

Ashleigh made a face.

They kept talking.

When Bob's back was turned Megan removed one of his Green Bay Packer ornaments and placed it in front of the window and somewhat buried it in the branches.

Ashleigh thought this was funny.

They continued to make small talk and hang ornaments.

Ashleigh was about to hand Megan an ornament but Megan stepped down and moved herself to the other side. This caused Bob to shift.

He stopped and looked at the tree.

Megan watched.

Bob pushed up his glasses, "I recall a Green Bay Packer ornament being hung some where over here? Ashleigh did you see it?"

Ashleigh made a face, "No."

Bob answered, "I must have been mistaken."

Bob hung one of the new unbreakable ornaments he was holding.

Ashleigh winked at Megan.

Megan created her big dimple smile.

Megan: focused, she went up the ladder, received an antique fish ornament from Ashleigh.

"Why would you hang this one?"

"I was feeling it'd be alright because we can clip it."

"It's so beautiful."

"It's the only set of antique glass ornaments I'm using."

"I'll clip it and use the zip ties too."

"I'd like that."

Megan carefully clipped it to a branch and the other five fish.

Ashleigh mentioned, "That set is my favorite ornament set."

Bob answered, "Those were my Grandmothers."

This confirmed Megan's thought.

Bob stated in a question, "I believe you are a Miami Dolphin fan."

She glared, "It's Miami Dolphin country."

Ashleigh gave her another ornament.

Bob surprised Megan by saying, "Every team has a down year. I'm surprised how terrible the team performed. Especially after the season they had the previous year."

In angry tone, "Saban has been a disappointment. But we'll win the division next year."

"The Patriots will be difficult to beat."

Megan poked back, "The Bears won the North this year."

Bob looked up at Megan, "That won't last forever."

"Why?"

"We have Brett Favre. I'm hoping Mike McCarthy will be better than Sherman."

Ashleigh stood there holding an ornament.

Megan asked, "You like Ted Thompson?"

"It's his second year. Time will tell. I'm hoping he'll do well."

“What happens if Favre retires?”

“I've heard good things about Rodgers.”

Megan was expecting some slack. It was her experience guys tended to get irritable when she knew more about football than they did; she knew first hand there was a difference between a gal liking football and knowing more than a guy.

Bob mentioned before she could comment on Aaron Rodgers, “Everything goes in cycles. Miami's cycle of loosing will come to an end. People are forgetting how awful the Packers were.”

“People forget the past.”

Bob pushed up his glasses, “That's a very true statement.”

Megan was shocked.

Bob simply turned and went to grab another ornament.

Ashleigh gave Megan another Green Bay Packer one. She glanced at the tree. She looked at Ashleigh, “How many do you have?”

Ashleigh made a face, “To many.”

Megan decided she would purchase a Miami Dolphin ornament. Because of the Patriot comment she hung this Green Bay Packer ornament in an odd place.

Ashleigh handed up the last ornament from the box. Ashleigh mentioned, “This is the last one in this box.”

Bob stepped away from the tree looked at the ornaments left, “Ladies the tree looks nice. Unless you think we should add the last of these unbreakable bulbs.”

Ashleigh answered, “Don't open those. I'll take em' to work. We should have a tree up front.”

“A splendid idea.”

“It's disappointing we haven't decorated for Christmas.”

“Leah and I discussed this. Next year we'll have plans.”

Megan was listening as she stepped down from the ladder.

“I'm glad you guys talked about it. I can't wait to see the plans for next year.”

Ashleigh would first talk to Haley, Haley would talk to Leah, Ashleigh would then talk to Leah, then the three of them would go over the plans more than once before Thanksgiving.

Megan stated, “It might get cluttered if we add any more. We wouldn't want to many close together.”

Ashleigh winked.

Megan's dimples flashed.

Bob missed this because he was looking at the tree, “I believe you are correct.”

Megan was glad it was done because she wanted to escape.

Bob surprised her, “Megan do you believe the tree is secure? We've never put a tree up on a vessel before.”

She brushed her hair behind her right ear, “With how you tied her up and the size of this yacht. I feel the tree will be okay.”

Megan noticed Ashleigh tearing up.

She asked Ashleigh, “Y'all alright?”

“This tree reminds me of Victoria.”

Megan commented, “If I moved away I'd miss my family too.”

The two looked at one another, Megan put an arm around Ashleigh, and Ashleigh

found comfort in her friend.

Ashleigh: broke away, started by putting away everything on the trays, Megan bent down and started to collect paper that fell onto the floor, she stopped to look at an old 1977 newspaper with *The Milwaukee Journal* printed on top; she stopped when Megan watched Bob just walk out the room. Megan refrained from saying anything because of how upset Ashleigh was.

Ashleigh said, "I think I told you this. We all thought it was going to be Mom's last year. Victoria loves Christmas like Nicole does. My sisters and I decorated the house as best as we could. We didn't feel it measured up."

Ashleigh paused and thought back.

She broke the silence, "But she felt it was beautiful."

Megan could feel how difficult this was for Ashleigh.

"I sometimes wish I would have stayed in Wisconsin."

Megan reluctantly whispered, "Y'all could always move back."

Ashleigh whispered, "I can't."

"Why not?"

"With the move and all my responsibilities I don't want to go."

Megan whispered, "Is Bob making Y'all stay?"

Ashleigh shook her head no, she brushed tears away, "Bob offered to charter a plane. But this would be to stressful for me. Plus, Mom would rather have me come up during Easter break."

"You've mentioned this."

After this statement they again started to: clean up the floor by putting the packing material into the empty boxes, Ashleigh placed all of the empty Hallmark ornaments in the green plastic bin, they stacked the boxes of ornaments Ashleigh would take to work in an area, they set all the boxes that were going to be placed in the storage area in another area; what was difficult for Megan was seeing Ashleigh stop every once in a while and brush tears away.

Ashleigh broke the silence, "The family is arguing. Felicia and Patty want to come here but Mom doesn't want to."

"What's your Daddy saying?"

"I feel he wants to come down but he'll always support Mom. I didn't want anyone fighting."

Megan asked, "Are they wanting to do the Disney thing? Or would they stay in town?"

Ashleigh answered, "Both."

Just as they were about to pick up the boxes for the storage area Bob stepped into the Dance Hall.

"Ladies I'll take the boxes down after work tomorrow. I appreciate you cleaning up I received a call from Al."

Ashleigh answered for both, "It's okay."

Bob asked Megan, "Have you ever tried a dessert called custard?"

Megan shook her head.

"Its good. Are you allergic to nuts?"

"No Sir."

Bob smiled, "One scoop is Butter Pecan the other is Vanilla."

Bob commented, "Ashleigh I need to go to bed I have a couple long meetings

tomorrow.”

“Alright.”

“Ms. Megan I'm glad you helped.”

“Your welcome.”

Bob pushed up his glasses.

He demanded, “Tomorrow you take an hour or so of my time and call Victoria.”

Ashleigh smiled, “Okay.”

He proceeded to leave, he stopped, and greeted Nikita. Nikita had been asleep until she smelled food.

Megan watched him leave. Megan was unable to find a reason to be angry with him.

Ashleigh suggested, “Lets go to the galley.”

Ashleigh looked over at Nikita who was sniffing the tree again, “No. Come.”

Nikita: turned, followed them to the galley, she became excited when Best Friend went to what was called “Nikita's Close.” Nikita sat but was frigid until Ashleigh set a treat on the floor. Nikita waited for Ashleigh to command give her the okay to eat the treat. When she received the command Nikita enjoyed it.

After a couple spoon fulls, Megan stated, “This has to be unhealthy.”

“It's good isn't it.”

Ashleigh shut the closet door, commanded Nikita to sit, stepped to the table, pulled out a chair, and then sat in front of her bowl.

Megan commented, “I'll need to run an extra mile tomorrow.”

Nikita hoped one of them would drop what they were eating onto the floor.

Ashleigh was enjoying the creamy dessert (custard is similar to ice cream but creamier).

She said after a spoonful, “I hope you enjoyed decorating the tree?”

Megan smiled, “I like the bubble lights.”

“They are one of my favorites.”

A silence fell over them as they finished.

Megan felt the day turned out to be far more than shopping.

Megan asked, “May I have a glass of water?”

“Oh sure.”

Ashleigh took the bowls and rinsed them out and set them into the sink.

Megan shook her head.

“Let me get you a bottled water.”

“Okay.”

Ashleigh opened the refrigerator door.

Megan spotted a bag of cucumbers on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator door. Seeing the cucumbers she remembered Ashleigh's comment about cucumbers.

Ashleigh shut the door and walked back to the table.

Megan's dimples flashed.

Ashleigh could see Megan had a question.

Megan blushed.

Ashleigh encouraged Megan, “It's okay.”

“I ain't sure I should ask. It would be awful personnal.”

Ashleigh wondered what she was about to ask.

"If you don't want to answer I'll understand."

Ashleigh nodded and said, "I don't mind."

"Will Bob hear?"

Ashleigh put up a finger for her to wait.

Megan watched Ashleigh: walk into the hallway on the starboard side of the yacht, she turned on the light, walked a ways, looked at the door to his master suite, then stopped, listened, heard him snore, and came back into the galley.

Ashleigh was surprised to see a blushing Megan next to the sink.

Ashleigh walked up to her friend, "The light is off. He went straight to bed."

"Oh."

"He's a real sound sleeper."

"Okay."

"It's alright. I'll just be leaving."

"No."

Ashleigh stopped Megan from stepping away.

"What's your question?"

Ashleigh was patient.

Megan took a drink of water, then found the courage to ask, "How does a cucumber help you abstain from sex?"

Ashleigh gave Megan a look of surprise.

Megan blushed.

Ashleigh knew this was a sincere question. If someone else would have asked Ashleigh about her cucumbers, she would have given this person a sarcastic response, and sent them on their way.

"You have ten minutes?"

Megan nodded yes.

Ashleigh blushed.

"I'm sorry I asked."

Again Ashleigh stopped her.

Ashleigh stated, "Talk about something."

Megan being nervous said, "I have a weekend tour on Sunday. Don't be afraid to call Nicole about going to church."

This caused Ashleigh to pause. She asked, "You sure she isn't mad at me?"

"Inviting you to lunch was her way of apologizing'. If you don't call her about chapel and don't go to lunch she'll be upset."

Ashleigh smiled.

Ashleigh opened the refrigerator and grabbed the bag of cucumbers.

Megan started to say, "The pastor is talking about the difference between grace and sin. It's been..."

Ashleigh made a face and motioned for Megan to stop.

Megan thought about what she was saying and realized her mistake.

They looked at one another.

"Y'all don't have to show me."

Ashleigh answered, "I want to. Just talk about something else."

"Like what?"

They looked at one another.

They were trying to think of something to talk about.

Ashleigh made a face.

She needed to turn away from Megan and started by saying, "I'm selective in the store."

Megan gave her a look.

Ashleigh selected a cucumber from the bag and put the others back. Ashleigh started to wash the one she kept.

"I've wondered if other women are as selective as I am. I see women grab real big ones. I don't like them really big."

Ashleigh became confident and decided to use this as a teaching moment.

"Of course many women like them big. I never liked them too big. I feel this way because one of the guys I was with just tried to jam it in."

Megan's dimples flashed.

This is when she realized the cucumber was like a penis.

Megan blushed.

She knew enough to remain silent. A year earlier Megan would have judged this. Megan recognized, because of what she liked, it would be hypocritical to judge Ashleigh for what she liked.

Ashleigh continued, "It's what Nicole talked about earlier. It's really about the foreplay. I've been with both big and small. I know ladies who don't like small ones. But I'm smaller. The only time I ever had an orgasm with a guy inside of me was with a smaller guy."

This surprised Megan. She never considered the depth of a woman could be different. She assumed the bigger it was the easier it would be to have an orgasm.

Ashleigh continued, "It wasn't because of his thing. It was because of the way he touched me during."

Megan blurted, "He touched you while he was inside?"

Ashleigh blushed and was unable to look Megan in the eye and said, "Yup."

Both were silent as Ashleigh: turned on the water, she finished washing the cucumber, she opened a drawer, she took out a peeler, she carved the cucumber, she left it on the counter, and said, "I'll be right back."

They both blushed.

Ashleigh scurried away.

Nikita stepped over to Megan; Nikita hoped she would drop whatever was on the counter.

Megan cautiously picked up the sculpted cucumber. It was obvious her friend was embarrassed showing her this. Megan understood why. Looking at the cucumber Megan felt she would have made hers bigger.

Her dimples flashed.

She blushed deeply.

She gently set it down.

This was when Ashleigh stepped into the galley. Ashleigh assumed Megan had never seen a condom before. She handed one to Megan. Ashleigh explained to her what it was and the two of them opened it together. As an understanding friend Ashleigh showed Megan how a condom was suppose to go on.

Megan looked at the cucumber.

They stared at one another.

Megan nervously said, "I have to go."

Ashleigh led Megan to the Yacht door. Nikita followed and watched.

Before Ashleigh could shut the door Megan said to her, "Thank-you."

"For what?"

"For being understanding, And not picking fun."

"Why would I make fun of you? You're my Best Friend."

Megan smiled a big dimple smile.

Megan pet Nikita before she left.

Ashleigh was grateful she did so.

When Megan was done petting Nikita she said, "See you later Alligator'."

Ashleigh's responded, "After while crocodile."

They nodded their heads.

Megan headed down the wooden stairs.

Ashleigh shut the door.

Ashleigh: went back to the galley, cleaned the counter, buried the scrapings deep into the garbage, picked up the cucumber, the unused condom, the condom wrappers, headed back to her suite, twenty minutes later a disheveled but satisfied Ashleigh stepped out of her suite, she was only wearing her Christmas T-shirt, she locked up the yacht, turned off all the lights, went back to her suite, she let Nikita in, took a quick shower, slipped on her sleep clothes, went to bed, prayed, and quickly fell asleep.

Megan was wearing: a cardinal colored zipper hoodie with long sleeves and front pockets, cardinal colored drawstring athletic pants, was without a bra, and currently the drawstring was tied tight. She was sitting at her kitchen table reading the questions in her fantasy book. She felt conflicted with many of these questions: some of the questions went against her values and beliefs, some opened her up to new ideas, some of the questions she would only indulge in her own private times, some she hoped a husband would enjoy with her, some of the ideas actually frightened her, and others she neither liked nor disliked. She decided she would answer all of the questions in the book. She set this book to the side.

She started to flip through the basic book about sex. Megan felt a lot more comfortable looking at a book like this in the privacy of her own home than in a college library. She stopped at a page with a drawing of a woman on top of a man. She studied this for a short time. She noticed her body react to the picture. She: unzipped her hoodie, undid the drawstring, and started to tease her nipple with her left hand. She was about to untie her athletic pants. She stopped herself. She was determined to abide by her rule of never masturbating to any picture or written material. She: shut the book, stood up, finished her water, collected the two books, journal, she was so aroused she left all the lights on, stepped into her cabin, set the books on her trunk, would put them away after, quickly removed her hoodie, slipped out of her athletic pants, and laid down on her bed. She was enjoying her own touch.

This is when the doorbell rang.

She stopped.

Then Megan heard someone walk up to the galley window, this concerned Megan, then

she heard a familiar voice, "It's Sam your Sister-in-law."

Megan mumbled: about it being late, about Sam's comments, about Sam being rude, and about Sam being her Sister-in-law. She quickly: slipped on a new pair of panties, slipped on a pair of jeans, quickly put on a bra, put the hoodie back on, zipped it up, and ran into her head to wash her hands.

Sam waited for a response. She waited for a bit.

Then Sam decided to be funny and yelled, "I'm not an intruder so don't shoot me"

Megan yelled in frustration, "Maybe I should."

"Well bless your heart."

Megan responded, "Go to the stern."

Megan heard her Sister-in-law walk toward the stern of her houseboat.

On purpose Sam hit the doorbell.

Megan's dimples flashed.

Before Megan opened the door, she took deep calming breaths, this helped her body go back to normal. Megan suspected Sam wanted to ask her if she was a lesbian. A topic Megan was tired of discussing and wished everyone felt she was straight. Personally she wanted to put this discussion aside so she could move forward. She felt, even with all the help she received during the day; sex was still a struggle.

Standing on the other side of the door was her least liked sister-in-law. Sam at six feet tall was just as imposing as Megan. Both of these ladies worked out when they had a chance, both ate correctly, both participated in athletics in college, and both had an intensity to them. Sam's blond hair was a bleach color where Megan's was a dark blond. Sam's eyes were a light blue where Megan's were almost a plum color. Her diamond shaped face was different from Megan's long inverted shaped face. Sam's cupid shaped lips helped her look attractive. Megan admired her shorter nose with it's perfectly straight bridge and her upturned tip. Megan believed Sam had the perfect shape: she was curvy without being overweight, she was evenly portioned from head to toe, men salivated over her natural breasts; they were perfectly round and noticeable without being too large. Unlike Megan who had been successful collegiate athlete, Sam had a severe leg break while playing basketball in her second year of college. This injury ended her career in basketball and started an addiction to pain killers. Sam's life spun out of control, she was able to get clean, and through sheer determination managed to finish college.

Megan had a respect for Sam because she: turned her life around, ran a slew of women's shelters, was the mother of her twin nieces Tina and Stacy, kept her brother Timmy in line, and was street smart. Megan disliked Sam's views on politics and religion. This is where the gun comment came in. Megan often times regretted how they treated one another. One thing Megan could relate to was how Ma treated Sam.

Sam felt Megan was very intimidating and smart. Sam believed it took great courage to start a business in a man's field. Sam envied Megan's college championships and respected them at the same time. Sam knew if they were ever in a physical altercation Megan would most likely end up to be the victor. Sam was starting to believe Julie was climbing the chart of successful athletic women in the family. Sam was a good judge of this because of the people Sam dealt with on a daily basis; there were very few people who intimidated Sam.

She loved Timmy's family but often times they irritated her. Sam was aware: Nicole was the leader of the family, Diana had a large influence, Megan received a lot of attention,

and Sam often times felt left out. She questioned this feeling. Anytime there was a crises or there was an event she was invited to participate. Sam often disliked how they could get along so well one moment and at other times severely struggle. Something Sam understood, but often envied, was how much the families nieces and nephews admired Megan.

Megan invited Sam into her houseboat.

Megan was surprised when Sam in an apologetic tone stated, "I'm sorry for just showing up."

"It's alright."

Sam continued, "I'm just fit to be tied. I've been hearing some conflicting reports."

They only made it to the lounge before Megan sighed.

"What's the sigh about?"

An upset Megan answered, "Do you believe I'm a lesbian too?"

They gazed at one another.

Sam asked very gently, "Are you?"

Megan fought off tears and in an angry tone answered, "Yes. Will that make Y'all happy?"

Sam disliked Megan's tone, "It ain't about what we're wanting."

"Then why is everyone asking me if I'm a lesbian?"

"We're all concerned in our own way. So we're asking."

"Why are Y'all asking?"

"Oh."

Sam disliked Megan's tone, "I guess I shouldn't care?"

"Do you?"

This hurt Sam.

Megan noticed.

Her dimples flashed.

"I thought we were family."

Sam: turned, went up the steps, opened the door, slammed it, she heard the houseboat door open, before she reached the steps to the pier she heard, "Wait."

Sam stopped and turned around.

Megan felt horrible, "It hurts to think my family believes I'm a lesbian."

"It hurts to think I wouldn't care."

A slight moment of silence.

"I'm the one member of the family who'd accept it."

"Then why ask?"

Sam stepped down to the stern.

She took a deep breath.

Sam stated, "Because I've been hearing conflicting reports. I've been hearing for years Y'all are in the closet. Then I'm hearing Y'all told everyone today Y'all are straight. I'm wondering if your bisexual."

"Why would I be bisexual?"

Sam gave her a look of dismay.

"I'm not."

"How are we to tell?"

"You should know I'm straight."

Sam shook her head.

In a desperate tone stated, "You never say anything about men, girls, sex, or anything. Why are you shocked people are coming to the conclusion Y'all are gay?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

In a flustered, but honest tone said, "Y'all are right."

This shocked Sam.

"It's just sex and relationships are so difficult for me. I've liked many guys and they end up liking someone else. Not that Y'all know."

With a tone and a facial expression, "How would any of us know? You've never once mentioned a guy you've ever liked. But you've talked about different friends you've had. Why are Y'all shocked we'd feel Y'all liked gals? Maybe if you would have said something we wouldn't be assuming you were a lesbian."

Megan's dimples flashed.

Because of the light from the houseboat Sam spotted Megan's tears.

Sam very gently repeated, "I came over to ask you because of the conflicting reports. Based upon what you've just said I'm assuming Y'all are straight?"

She motioned her hand so Megan would keep listening.

"I'm concerned Y'all are only acting to be straight to make everyone else feel better. I ain't the type to reject Y'all. Just be honest with me. If Y'all are Bi or a lesbian tell me. I ain't telling anyone else."

"I'm straight."

Sam believed her.

Megan's dimples flashed.

She brushed away tears.

Sam mentioned, "I'm sure it's hurtful to be accused of being gay when Y'all are straight."

"It is. I've often felt it would have been easier if I was a lesbian."

Sam was surprised by this.

"Sex has always been a struggle for me."

"Y'all could talk to me? I run women shelters. I've heard a lot of things."

Megan produced her big dimple smile. This was the fourth or fifth person to say they would listen to her sexual troubles.

Sam added, "I'm sure Ma wasn't very open to discussing sex."

Megan answered, "She only told me the bare minimum. It was the taboo subject. The worst part is I'm sure she could've helped me."

"Honey; she ain't ever talking to Y'all about sex until the night before you get married."

"What?"

Sam with a very serious tone stated, "Mark my words. The day before Y'all get married is when she'll have a discussion with Y'all. To her this will be very progressive. It's probably more than she was ever told."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"That's infuriating."

Sam answered, "I ain't saying it ain't. A gal wants to know these things from their Momma. Ma ain't looking at it that way."

Megan motioned for them to sit down.

The two of them sat down on the bench.

Sam asked, "Did Jimmy build this?"

"Jimmy and Jeff."

"It's amazing what he can build."

Megan asked, "Didn't he build the girls a wooden slide?"

"It's more than a slide. It's their home in their backyard. Because of it every one of their little friends are playing on it. I'm sure it'd survive a hurricane."

Megan smiled.

They looked across the marina.

Sam left off where she finished, "Honey. Don't be afraid of talking to me. I've been feeling you've been struggling with sex for a long time."

"Why didn't you ask me?"

"If the situations were reversed would you ask me? I ain't the favorite in the family. Plus we ain't always getting along."

"We tend to disagree."

"Honey, that ain't the word for it. I'm feeling the only time we're getting along is when we're both frustrated with Ma."

"You ain't whistling Dixie."

They briefly glanced at one another and again looked over the marina.

Sam was enjoying Megan's company.

"I ain't ever been here at night. It's awful pretty."

"I love living here."

"It's a family trait."

"We all love the ocean because of Daddy."

Sam smiled, "Timmy says the same thing."

Megan decided to bring up a question she wanted to ask for a long time, "You mind me asking Y'all something?"

"What?"

"Y'all could have chosen anyone. Why did Y'all choose Timmy?"

"That ain't true."

Megan's dimples flashed. "You are the type of gal every guy picks over me."

"Just a second."

"What?"

Sam ignored the tone, "Y'all are selling yourself short. Y'all are an attractive woman."

"I ain't."

"You just ain't noticing."

"No guy ever ask me out in high school. In college I was the buddy."

Sam turned to look at her.

"What?"

Sam answered, "Sweet Jesus."

"What?"

"You never knew?"

Megan's dimples flashed.

Sam made a face, "I assumed Nicole told you."

"What?"

"The reason you were never asked out in high school was on account of your brothers."

Megan wanted to disagree.

Sam gave her a look, "It wasn't overt. I ain't sure they threatened anybody. I'm sure it was an understanding."

"Luke asked me out."

"The guy from the football team?"

"Yeah."

"He's the only one dumb enough or brave enough to ask."

Megan stared at Sam. All at once incidents during high school seemed to make sense.

Immediately she asked, "What about Simon?"

"I ain't ever heard about Simon."

Megan would find out.

Sam felt the need to repeat herself, "It ain't because Y'all were unattractive it was on account everyone was afraid of your brothers."

Megan's dimples flashed.

"What about college?"

"Y'all have always had a difficulty knowing when a guy liked Y'all."

Megan answered, "Others have mentioned this to me."

Sam was encouraging, "You ain't the only gal who feels unattractive. Many people. Gals, guys, straight, and gay miss out on how others like them."

On a rare occasion they both felt close to one another.

They sat looking over the marina.

Megan asked in a different way, "Please don't take this the wrong way. But why did Y'all marry Timmy?"

Sam smiled, "There be times when he's all sweet on me. You ain't seeing him every day like I see him. I ain't saying he ain't needed work."

Megan nodded her head.

"When he first asked me to dance I was smitten."

She was unsure of why anyone would be smitten with her brother Timmy.

"Y'all will find someone."

Megan shrugged her shoulders.

They looked out over the marina and talked about general topics.

All at once Sam looked at her watch, she stood up, "I have to be getting home."

"I'll walk Y'all to your car. Let me get a flashlight."

"I'd appreciate it."

Megan stepped into her houseboat and grabbed the flashlight she kept in the TV stand.

When she stepped out she noticed Sam was staring at the yacht. With the outside lights on it added to the overall look of the yacht. The reflection on the river added to it's overall view.

"Ain't it something."

Megan's dimples flashed.

She brushed her hair behind her right ear, "I believed I would own her."

Sam turned toward her, "That was the one you were getting the loan for?"

"Yes Ma'am."

Sam's face contorted.

Megan was surprised by Sam's look.

Sam recovered by saying, "Well ain't that the luck."

"It's disappointing."

They were now on the concrete pier.

"What about the gentleman who owns the yacht?"

"I wouldn't call him a gentleman."

"I've been hearing good things about him."

Megan with a tone answered, "Don't believe everything Y'all hear."

Sam knew by Megan's tone to be silent.

Breaking the silence as they passed Florence and Franks houseboat, "He acts like a king. I'm seeing how he's bossing around Ashleigh."

"Ashleigh is the one everyone believed was your lover?"

Megan made a face, "Yup."

"Maybe he's a benevolent king?"

"He's obnoxiousness and rude."

They reached Sam's sports car.

"If you say so."

Megan was unsure of the tone.

Sam looked out over the preserve and the river, "The preserve is awful creepy."

Megan looked over and scanned the flashlight over the bank of the river and the wood line, "Lately, I ain't liking the feeling it gives me."

Sam took note of this, everyone knew to listen to Megan's intuition.

Sam said, "I hate it when we fight."

"Me too."

They both smiled at one another.

"Tina and Stacy were asking about Y'all."

Megan perked up, "I'd love to watch em."

"How about after New Years."

Megan smiled, "I'd be happy to."

Sam: opened the door, stepped into her sports car, shut the door, rolled down the passenger side window, and said; "Y'all call me anytime Y'all are struggling."

"Okay."

"Bye Y'all."

Megan answered honestly, "I'm glad you came over."

With this Sam rolled up the window and sped out of the marina and made a right. Megan turned and looked at the preserve. She again panned the light along the woodline. She felt the lights, the fence, and the sounds of the boats kept something at bay. She hated when she was in the parking lot and felt something was watching her. She turned and headed back to her houseboat. While walking to her houseboat she considered what Sam mentioned about her brothers. She was glad to be inside of her houseboat. She locked it up and turned off all her lights. When she reached her cabin she picked up the clothes off the floor and set them in the hamper. She decided to forgo masturbating. She simply took off her clothes, placed the clothes she was wearing on the chair next to her bed, and slipped into bed.

She made a mental list of all the things she needed to accomplish to prepare the charter for the weekend. She started to contemplate on how the day was more than shopping. These

thoughts ended when she fell asleep.

End of Part Seven Of Seven

December 6th, Shopping

© R. P. Voght 2018, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.

© R. P. Voght 2023, this includes all characters, situations, descriptions, actions, and expressions of this story. This is a work of fiction any similarities to anyone alive or dead are a coincidence.