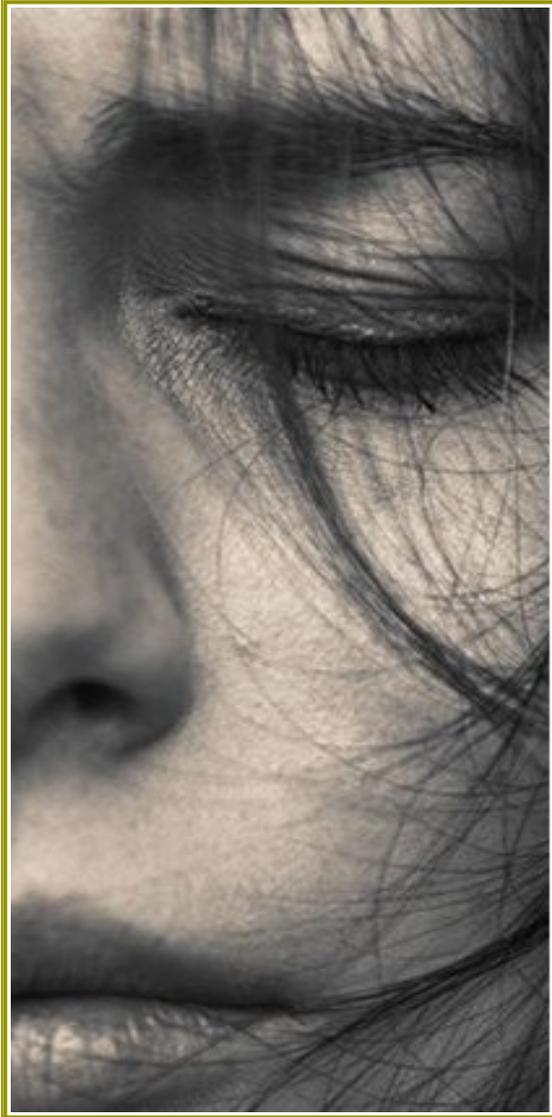


*Ashleigh & Megan*  
*Book I: Friendship*



*Wednesday, April 25*  
*Can't Wait*  
*Any Longer*

*Day 15 of Book I*  
*(Thirteen Days since Megan and Christopher went*  
*Bowling)*

*Part Two of Six*

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*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 character 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*

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## **April 25 Can't Wait Any Longer Day 15 of Book I**

*(Thirteen Days since Megan and Christopher went Bowling)*

**J**ulie felt an overwhelming amount of relief when she stepped into the yacht. She immediately started to cry. While crying: she shut the door, stooped down, removed the leash, stood up, and stepped over to where her backpack was.

Julie clung to the backpack and wept.

Nikita sensed Strong Sense was upset. She followed her to the chair.

Julie knelt down and pet her.

Nikita licked her tears.

Nikita's collar jangled.

Julie heard from the galley, "I'm assuming it's you."

Julie sucked in all the tears, wiped the tears from her face, and stood up.

This is when Nikita went running to her bowl.

Julie answered, "Yes Ma'am."

"You can use my shower."

"Yes Ma'am."

Based upon Ashleigh's tone Julie surmised she was in what Julie termed: her Vice President mood.

Julie opened her backpack. She quickly took out a mirror and tissue. She removed all evidence she had cried. She took a deep breath. When she felt confident is when she stepped into the galley.

Ashleigh was standing in the middle of the galley reading a stack of stapled papers. Based upon the papers folded over Julie guessed Ashleigh was on the fifth page. This was clearly the reason Ashleigh never appeared in the hall.

Julie immediately noticed Ashleigh was wearing a brand new tailored woman's suit. Julie felt this suit was: bold, boyish, slightly gangster, but on Ashleigh it appeared feminine. She was wearing: a heather carbon pinstriped vest, underneath she was wearing a strawberry colored three-quarter sleeve shirt, it was very neatly tucked in, her traditional woman's trouser matched the color and stripe of the vest, when the vest moved Julie spotted a strawberry colored thin belt, she was wearing strawberry colored high healed shoes, she was wearing a red tie with very small white polka dots; Julie believed Mr. Bob wore this tie once. Her long blond hair was pinned, slicked back, and in a bun. She was wearing light makeup but with red lipstick; bold for Ashleigh. She matched this with: simple gold earrings, a matching gold chain attached to one of the pockets of her vest, and an expensive watch with a red band. Julie surmised this was a brand new watch. Julie spotted the matching suit coat hanging off one of the kitchen chairs and on the table was a matching heather carbon stripped newsboy hat. Julie wondered how long Ashleigh would wear the high healed shoes.

Julie was surprised Ashleigh was wearing this outfit because of how the vest and shirt revealed her breasts. Julie was jealous on how Ashleigh could easily conceal or enhance them. She wished her breasts were Ashleigh's size and shape. There was no doubt Ashleigh's vacation was over. Julie wondered what Mr. Bob would feel about Ashleigh cutting her vacation short.

Julie found herself asking, "Is your vacation over?"

Ashleigh looked up and in a serious tone answered, "If you could shower and get ready. I need to get going."

"Yes Ma'am."

Ashleigh spotting Julie's disappointed body language, "We'll talk on the way. I really need to get to work."

"Yes Ma'am."

Julie turned around and headed toward Ashleigh's suite.

Ashleigh called out, "Julie."

She turned, "Yes Ma'am."

"No getting yourself off today."

They looked at one another. Julie found Ashleigh's approach refreshing: there was no ridicule, no sexual pass about it, and it was honest.

"Yes Ma'am."

Ashleigh nodded her head and went back to reading the report.

Because of the respect she felt toward Ashleigh she hurried to the shower and restrained herself. This was difficult because she loved enjoying herself in Ashleigh's large bathtub.

**A**shleigh closely observed Julie step to her suite. Based upon Julie's body language Ashleigh believed something traumatic happened to her.

When Julie stepped into the suite, Ashleigh turned toward Nikita and asked, "Girl what happened?"

Nikita tilted her head. She could sense Best Friend was concerned. She approached Ashleigh.

"Go to your spot."

Nikita listened.

Ashleigh set the papers on the table and stepped to Nikita's closet.

Nikita looked up and was about to run over there.

Ashleigh commanded, "Stay."

Nikita listened but her tail was a weapon and she made dog noises.

Ashleigh stated, "Don't act like you aren't spoiled."

Nikita replied with her own dog noises.

Ashleigh: opened the door, took out a bone, Ashleigh shut the door, walked the bone to Nikita, this focused Nikita, Ashleigh shook her head, set the bone down, Nikita laid down, started to enjoy it, Ashleigh picked up the papers from the table, and was quickly engrossed in the paperwork.

She angrily adjusted her shoes and proclaimed, "I hate shoes!"

The reason she was standing was because of her shoes. She was concerned if she took them off she would never wear them again. If it was up to her she would never wear a pair of shoes ever again; she knew this was an unrealistic expectation. She changed her mind: she reached down, slipped them off, set them on a nearby kitchen table chair, pulled the chair next to it out, and sat down.

Ashleigh glanced at the suite door. She correctly believed Julie looked up to her; Ashleigh felt this was an admiration thing. If Ashleigh felt there was anything sexual to this crush she would have been concerned. The least thing she wanted was for a teenage girl to make a pass at her. It was bad enough a woman at the Y bluntly asked her out on a date and recently another was going out of her way to flirt with her. The idea of having sex with another woman was both awkward and pointless; to her it was like having hours of foreplay without ever having the full feeling at the end. She correctly believed she was being hit on because of the rumors she was bisexual.

She turned her attention back to the shipping report. She appreciated Haley sending the report to her.

Ashleigh was alarmed at the issues their logistics department was having with *Criti-Medical*. It was obvious for the first three weeks of the month very little shipped; but in the last week and a half of the month at least ninety-five percent of all the product was shipped. Both Bob and Ashleigh believed this was the cause of so much of their problems. Bob believed they could easily fix this problem. Reading this report she was more convinced they should avoid purchasing this company. She felt this report confirmed her feelings of mistrust for the leadership of the company.

A frustration for Ashleigh was her brother seemed to be discounting her analysis. Overall she felt Bob was a great judge in character. The exception was his first business partner. She believed he was making a similar mistake by believing: the investors, the owner, the CEO, the President, and everyone in management.

She hoped she could convince Bob to avoid purchasing this company.

She heard Nikita's collar jangle, she looked up, watched Nikita run to the suite door, and spotted Julie step out of her suite. Ashleigh glanced at her wrist watch. She was impressed Julie held to her promise. She: stood up, walked to the end of the table, pulled out a different chair, quickly placed this paperwork in a sleeve of her laptop bag, slipped on her hat, grabbed her shoes, walked around the table, slipped on her coat, stepped over to the China cabinet,

glanced into her purse, she spotted her keys, grabbed them, she swung her purse over her shoulder, and adjusted everything. She spent extra time primping herself.

When Julie reached the galley, Ashleigh asked, "How's the hat?"

Julie smiled, "Good touch."

Julie concerned asked, "How do I look?"

Julie was wearing a conservative looking yellow cuffed button shirt, underneath she was wearing what Ashleigh believed was a yellow colored tank, and underneath the tank she was wearing a very supportive bra. She matched this with a pair of: vintage colored blue Capri five pocket styled jeans, with contrasting detailing on the hem and pockets, a wide waistband, and a banded two button hem. She: was wearing light makeup, had simple yellow earrings in, her long brunette hair was slightly brushed, her bangs were over her forehead, she was wearing a new black belt, a brand new pair of dark blue gladiator sandals, and her backpack hung over her shoulders.

Ashleigh was astounded on how mature she looked. Ashleigh believed her mature look came from her rectangular face shape, her winged eyebrows, her beautiful greenish-blue eyes, and her height. It was obvious to Ashleigh she was growing taller and her breasts were enlarging. Ashleigh was envious of the height but was grateful her boobs were nothing like Julie's.

With Ashleigh being five foot one the least thing she wanted was huge breasts. She always felt her breasts were perfect for her petite frame. They looked larger than they were, she liked their even round shape, and she could highlight or conceal them. What she always wanted was to be five inches taller.

"You look good. Why?"

Julie held back tears. Julie feared she looked like a slut. She wanted to discuss the hurt she felt on being called a whore. She was unsure of how to do this. There were five adult women she knew she could talk to about sex: her mother, Auntie Megan, Auntie Diane, Auntie Sam, and Ashleigh. The three she was most likely to talk to were her: mother, Megan, and Ashleigh. She worried if she told them of what she was going through they would look down upon her, ridicule her, or even reject her. The least thing she wanted was for these ladies to believe she was a slut too.

She answered, "I'm growing taller again."

Ashleigh smiled, "You can't stop it."

Julie rolled her eyes and in joking matter, "Y'all know of a doctor who could stop it?"

Nikita holding the bone in her mouth followed Best Friend and Strong Scent.

Ashleigh allowed Nikita to bring the bone.

Ashleigh became serious, "God has decided for you to be tall. It'll help you playing volleyball."

"Yes Ma'am."

Ashleigh looked at her, "What's the matter?"

Ashleigh: opened the door, Nikita went running down the stairs, turned around, looked up the steps, set the bone down, and sat down. Julie stepped out and stepped down a couple steps. Ashleigh: stepped out, locked the door, turned around, Julie let her pass her; she watched Ashleigh make her way down the stairs.

Julie stated, "I wish my boobs would stop growing."

She held back tears, "Guys make comments."

Ashleigh said, "They said things about me."

"They did?"

Ashleigh decided to be honest, "I slept with my boyfriend because I loved him. After he went around telling everybody. Soon I was known as the easy lay."

This hit Julie.

"What did Y'all do?"

They stepped off the steps, walked a few steps, and stepped off the yacht onto the wooden pier.

When they passed Nikita she reached down and picked up the bone. Nikita was excited. She walked next to Best Friend.

"My impulse was to sleep around."

"Why didn't Y'all?"

"Victoria told me if I slept around I was exactly what they said I was. I'm glad I didn't."

"What's it like?"

"Being called a slut or having sex?"

Julie answered, "Both."

"It really hurt being called a slut. I mean. I loved the guy. The worst part was knowing I wasn't one but no matter what I said people wouldn't believe me. I'm sure people still believe I slept with half of the guys at school. I even heard I slept with the musicians at Bob's club."

They stopped at the end of the wooden pier. While standing on the concrete pier Julie unlocked the bike.

Nikita growled at the bike.

Ashleigh forced Nikita to sit.

Julie walked around Ashleigh and they were now shoulder to shoulder.

Julie was unsure of how to ask the follow up question. She was grateful Ashleigh explained.

"There was no way Bob ever allowed anyone the opportunity to hurt me."

In a very serious tone Ashleigh stated, "The bouncers would have killed anyone who touched me."

This made Julie smile. Julie correctly assumed Ashleigh was flirty all her life. She imagined Ashleigh as a young girl melting the hearts of the toughest of men.

She asked, "Bouncers of the club? Or the bodyguards of the musicians?"

Ashleigh stopped and looked up at her, "I never thought about that."

Julie smiled.

"Most likely both."

Ashleigh smiled, "Thinking about it. I believe some of the musicians I met would have kicked someone's ass too."

Julie asked, "Like who?"

Ashleigh touched Julie, "You know I never name names. It would have most likely have been any number of the country singers. Like you guys say down here. They would have Defended my honor."

Julie respected this, "Yes Ma'am."

"Musicians from all types of music were good to me."

She became serious, "There were others I just knew to stay away from. I have to say. Looking back on it. The wives and girlfriends who were on tour seemed to mother me."

Julie could picture this.

They turned and headed to the garages.

Ashleigh was honest, "Looking back on things. I'm surprised nothing bad happened to me."

Julie nodded her head.

They waved at Barbara who drove passed them.

Julie mentioned, "She's cool."

Ashleigh smiled, "They both are."

"Stan loves to talk."

Ashleigh mentioned, "I love it when they sort of argue but don't argue. You know what I mean?"

"Yes Ma'am."

Ashleigh said, "Their accents are hilarious."

Julie found this funny. Every local talked about how fast Ashleigh talked and her strong Midwestern. Julie no longer had difficulty understanding Ashleigh's strong southeastern Wisconsin accent.

Julie simply said, "It is."

Julie unlocked her bike, wrapped the chain around the bike, and then locked the chain. They headed off of the pier.

Ashleigh was silent for a few steps.

"I've slept with three guys. The first guy I slept with. The one who told everyone I was easy. Sex with him was horrible."

"Why?"

"He must have thought because he was big he didn't have to do anything. He was in such a hurry he used his dick like a jack hammer."

"Oh."

Ashleigh added, "I know there are a lot of women who want to be with a guy who's big. I'm one of the few who prefers below average. But I don't think I'd want a micro penis."

This was the first time Julie ever heard a woman openly confess they preferred a small penis.

"Why?"

"First I'm smaller down there."

This struck Julie. It never occurred to her women were different sizes. All at once this made sense.

"The best guy I ever slept with was smaller. He went out of his way to make up for his size. He was the first guy I ever had sex with where it didn't hurt. The first guy was a horrible lover. The second guy tried. But the third guy taught me how important foreplay was."

There was a pause.

Ashleigh added, "Just because a guy is small doesn't mean he'll be a good lover. I had a friend who broke up with a guy because he was small."

Julie asked, "Why?"

"He kept wanted her to tell her how big it was. He didn't care about foreplay. And because he was small she never felt it. For me. If I had to choose I'd choose the small guy. It was so painful having sex with the first two guys I'm afraid of having sex with a real big guy."

She paused and stopped walking.

Ashleigh stated very serious, "No matter what his size. Effort means a lot."

Julie asked, "Did you give them blow jobs?"

Ashleigh blushed.

Julie waited.

Ashleigh stopped, "I'm trusting you."

"I ain't saying anything to anyone."

"I didn't even try with the first guy. I did with the second guy and I threw up on him."

"Because of the taste?"

"He never warned me."

"Oh."

"It surprised me. I hated the texture."

"Oh."

This was the very reason Julie never performed oral on any guy. Plus, it was just as easy to get a venereal disease from giving a guy a blow job as having sex.

They stared at one another and then started walking again.

"After that I promised myself I would never go down on a guy again."

She made a face.

"I changed my mind with my last boyfriend because he was so nice to me. Plus it was smaller so I didn't mind so much."

"How big was he?"

"About four and half inches."

This seemed small to Julie.

"I'd prefer a little bigger. I'll never do it if he's over six inches long. The small guy was the only guy I had an orgasm with while he was inside."

Julie made a face, "He was?"

"Because he touched me while he was in."

Julie stated, "Makes sense."

Ashleigh added, "He was willing to try a variety of positions. There was one I really liked."

"Which one?"

Ashleigh reached into her purse and hit the button to the garage door opener.

They looked at one another as the garage door opened.

"I don't know if I should tell you."

"Why not?"

"No one at school talks about this."

"Why not ask your mom?"

"She bought me a book with drawings."

"She did?"

"Honest."

Ashleigh made a face, "Look up the crossed keys and the butterfly. My favorite with a guy who's smaller is the Nirvana."

Julie confirmed, "It's like missionary but your legs are together?"

Ashleigh winked.

Ashleigh asked her to wait outside of the garage. Julie watched Ashleigh lead Nikita into the Yellow Sport Edition Jeep. Julie loved the flower trim and the pin stripping. Soon the

Jeep was backed out of the garage. Julie attached her bike to a brand new bike rack. Before the bike rack Julie would set it in the back of the Jeep. Julie believed the only reason Ashleigh bought the bike rack was due to driving her to school. Julie admired the quality of this bike rack.

While attaching the bike to the rack she spotted Ashleigh reach up to the driver side visor and hit the garage door opening. Immediately the garage started to close.

Ashleigh: turned on her radio, set it to auxiliary, pulled her Ipod out of her purse, plugged it in with the cord she left in the Jeep, and selected a mix playlist she made a couple days earlier.

Nikita watched Strong Scent.

A classic Johnny Cash song started to play.

When Julie secured the bike to the rack Nikita growled.

“Do you have to growl at her bike every time?”

Nikita listened for a noise she knew.

Julie quickly rushed to passenger side and stepped into the Jeep. The seat was already as far back as it could go.

They looked at one another and smiled.

Ashleigh lifted up the parking brake and put the Jeep into neutral.

Ashleigh picked up a pair of old athletic shoes she kept in her car, she checked it for bugs and spiders, then slipped them on, “I hate shoes.”

Julie said in a joking matter, “There’s a lot of people who don’t like shoes But they really like feet.”

Ashleigh gave her a look.

Julie blushed.

Julie was unwilling to tell Ashleigh how she knew guys liked feet.

This was a red flag for Ashleigh. This was the first time she considered the idea Julie was sexually active. She was reluctant to ask Julie if she was indeed having sex and how she knew about foot fetishes.

Julie could tell Ashleigh was reluctant to talk about this. Julie found Ashleigh being skittish fascinating. She would look for the opportunity to bring up the subject.

Julie continuing the original conversation by asking, “Ain’t you missing sex?”

Ashleigh slipped on her shoes and looked at Julie. Because of Julie’s look Ashleigh decided she would both answer her questions and try and convince Julie to wait.

“It’s much more difficult to wait after having sex.”

Ashleigh looked at Julie, “You aren’t thinking about having sex?”

Julie lied, “No. I don’t even have a boyfriend.”

Ashleigh was honest, “You don’t need a boyfriend to sleep with a guy.”

Julie hated the fact she blushed.

Ashleigh answered the blush, “My suggestion is to wait. It’s not like the movies. Often times it’s anti climatic and it takes work for it to be good.”

Julie looked down.

Ashleigh gently touched Julie’s leg.

When Julie turned toward Ashleigh, Ashleigh answered, “It’s been difficult waiting. I’ve had the desire to have a friend with benefits or a one night stand.”

They looked at one another.

"I just don't want all that drama."

Julie stated, "Who says there has to be drama?"

Ashleigh answered honestly, "My heart does."

This hit Julie.

Ashleigh asked, "Is someone pressuring you to have sex?"

Julie lied, "No. I'm just curious."

"Think about what my sister is going through."

Julie thought about the discussion she had with Felicia on Facebook. Julie felt Felicia was struggling with everything and was being plagued with regret. What Julie admired was Felicia's dedication to having the baby and doing the correct thing. It was obvious to Julie, Felicia was having trouble deciding if she wanted to keep it or give it up for adoption. Julie never wanted to go through this.

Ashleigh stated, "It's normal to be curious. I wanted to have it when I was your age. I heard people telling me how I should wait. I did it anyway. I could blame the guys I slept with but I wanted to have sex. I justified having sex because I felt I loved them. Being honest I was just as curious about sex as they were. Out of the three guys only one was dedicated to making sure I came or not."

"Only one?"

"Like I said before. Without my last boyfriend I wouldn't know what real foreplay is like."

Julie was unable to stop herself and asked, "Did any of the three like your feet?"

Ashleigh said with a tone, "My last boyfriend."

Julie found this interesting, "He did?"

Ashleigh rolled her eyes.

A person who owned a houseboat on the third pier his car horn at them. Ashleigh and Julie turned around.

Ashleigh raised her hand and yelled, "Sorry."

The driver of the car waved his hand.

Ashleigh: turned around, released the parking brake, hit the clutch and brake, started the engine, and headed down the row of garages.

As always Julie was impressed with how she drove a manual transmission.

Julie decided to ask, "Doesn't Mr. Bob want Y'all to stay on vacation?"

Ashleigh, facing forward stated sternly, "Mr. Bob needs me to go to work today."

Julie wanted to know why.

Ashleigh reached over and gently touched her arm, "I'm trusting you."

"Yes Ma'am."

"Mr. Bob is considering buying a medical device company."

Julie asked, "Y'all don't like the idea."

"No."

"Will Mr. Bob buy it?"

"I hope not. But I'm sure he will. So I need to be there for when he does."

"Y'all are trying to convince him not to buy it?"

"You didn't hear it from me."

Julie asked, "What company?"

"It's a company in Wisconsin."

Julie promised herself she would look up Wisconsin medical companies. What she would look for was a company looking to sell, having financial trouble, or legal trouble.

They reached the entrance of the marina. Ashleigh quickly looked both ways and turned north (left) on *Bluff Beach Parkway*. This road went through the preserve and at the end of the preserve the road turned into a sideways T (the flat part of the T was parallel of the ocean). The road going west (left) was named *Swamp Road*.

At this intersection is when Julie was unable to restrain herself from asking, "Your last boyfriend was into feet?"

Ashleigh looked at her, "You don't want to hear about this?"

Julie smiled and nodded her head.

"Why?"

Julie answered in a half truth, "Just curious."

Ashleigh thought about it.

Julie begged, "I ain't telling anyone."

"Maybe I shouldn't tell you."

"Why? Y'all should hear what we talk about at school."

Ashleigh sighed.

She put the Jeep into gear and made a left handed turn. Julie again admired how Ashleigh drove a manual transmission vehicle.

Ashleigh said with some animation, "I'm not into feet. He was."

Julie found this interesting, "Yeah?"

Ashleigh rolled her eyes, "Whenever I was barefoot he would stare at my feet."

"He did?"

"He stared at them like guys stare at your boobs."

With a face, "He did?"

"He begged me to give him a footjob."

Julie eager, "Did you?"

"He thought it was the greatest thing in the world. I still don't understand it."

Julie laughed.

"It ain't funny."

Ashleigh blushed.

Julie laughed more.

Ashleigh ended up laughing as well.

Julie asked with a smile, "Did it make a mess?"

They then laughed some more.

Ashleigh became serious and answered, "I made him clean it up."

This calmed Julie down. The mess created by a guy ejaculating was a concern for Julie. She found this to be a huge turn on but the clean up was something different. Plus, she witnessed guys being disrespectful. She disliked any pornographic scene where a guy was disrespectful. She hoped this would never happen to her.

They were silent for a while.

After weaving their way through the neighborhoods they were a block away from the school.

Julie again felt the need to ask, "Did Y'all like it?"

"No."

Julie asked in an adult manner, "Then why did Y'all give him one?"

Because Julie was being mature Ashleigh decided to answer the question.

Ashleigh with a very serious tone, "I let him because he was a great lover. I could have cared less one way or another. It wasn't something I was into or ever would be. But I didn't mind because he cared about me and did things I liked. More important he cleaned up the mess. If he complained once I wouldn't ever do it again."

Julie answered, "Makes sense."

Ashleigh felt the need to say, "If one of the other guys asked. I'd have said no and probably hid my feet."

This made sense to Julie.

Ashleigh on purpose changed subjects, "Your Mom confirmed you'll be getting your drivers license over the summer."

"First I'll need to take a written test to get my permit. Here in Florida they make you keep a permit for a year. During the year I'll need to drive fifty hours of behind-the-wheel experience with ten of them being at night. After the year is when I'm able take my drivers test."

Ashleigh answered, "That's cool."

Julie asked, "Y'all want to teach me how to drive manual?"

"I'll teach you when you get the permit."

"Yes Ma'am."

"I hope Y'all will walk Nikita?"

The word walk caused Nikita to poke her nose up front.

Julie pet her, "You are such a good girl."

Nikita loved the attention.

Julie answered over Nikita, "I'll walk her until I go to college."

Ashleigh smiled.

She commanded, "Nikita lay down."

Nikita did lay on the back seat. In a few minutes she was again sitting looking out the window.

Julie observed Ashleigh use the clutch.

Ashleigh asked, "Why doesn't your Dad teach you?"

"None of our cars have manual. It was Daddy's idea you teach me. He says If we had one he'd teach me."

"Why does he want me to teach you?"

"He says everyone should be in the knowing on how to drive manual. Especially a gal."

They looked at one another.

Ashleigh stated, "You have a good Dad."

"Yes Ma'am."

"I'll teach you."

Julie hated to ask, "Jeff would like to drive manual too."

Ashleigh gave her a look.

"Since he's been dating Bette I ain't believing he has a crush on Y'all."

"I'm not taking any chances."

Julie understood this.

"Is it going well?"

"I'm thinking he's in love with her. Even if he ain't willing to admit it."

Ashleigh said, "She's a good girl."

"Momma says the same."

They reached the bike rack of the High School.

Julie became somber.

Ashleigh reached out, "It'll be alright."

"I let the team down."

"Bob always says. You can't change yesterday. You can only do better today to make tomorrow better."

Julie gave a half smile.

"I don't want to go in today."

"You'll have to face it tomorrow."

Julie looked at Ashleigh.

"It's something I learned in treatment. A person can drink or take drugs to avoid facing things. But sooner or later you have to face it anyway."

Julie nodded her head and stepped out of the Jeep.

This upset Nikita because Strong Scent usually pet her before leaving moving territory.

Ashleigh pet Nikita as Julie took off the bike, "You'll see her tomorrow."

In the rear view mirror she spotted Julie slowly push the bike to the rack.

Once she knew for sure Julie reached the bike rack she pulled out of the High School's parking lot.

While driving to work she contemplated what she would say to her brother and what her actions should be in the meeting.

**J**ulie was trying to ignore everyone.

Before locking her bike she looked for William, his friends, and his truck. She spotted the truck but was relieved none of the guys were around. She believed neither one of his friends would touch her; Williams was another matter. She felt she had the training to really hurt him if he tried something. The fights she had with girls were different. This morning seemed to prove this.

After securing the bike she: made sure her backpack was in order, zippered her backpack closed, swung it over her shoulder, and stood up. She spotted Belinda and Mindy-Lynn approach her.

Since softball started Belinda and Mindy-Lynn were hanging out together. Julie considered them to be friends. Not as close as Hannah and Zoe but Julie liked them. She wondered if they still liked her. She questioned their friendship because of how she played the night before and the rumors.

When they reached one another they timidly greeted one another

Belinda in her New Jersey accent said, "U's okay."

"I guess."

Mindy-Lynn said, "It ain't your fault."

Julie answered, "I let everyone down."

Mindy-Lynn stated, "We all played horrible. We could've helped Y'all out there."

"I was the pitcher."

Belinda mentioned, "Every pitcher has a bad game. When you went to shortstop you calmed everyone down."

Mindy-Lynn added, "You made some great plays."

Julie smiled then held back tears, "It wasn't enough."

Belinda trying to be positive stated, "We have next year."

Mindy-Lynn said, "If you dwell on the last game how are Y'all able to play well in the next game?"

"It ain't fair using my own words against me."

The girls giggled and then became somber again.

Belinda said, "I'm looking forward to playing with U's next year."

Mindy-Lynn glared at Julie

Julie answered, "I'll be there."

The two girls smiled.

Belinda said with determination in her voice, "We's better kick Boca Raton's ass next year."

Both Julie and Mindy-Lynn smiled at the way she pronounced Boca Raton. It amazed the locals on how often people from the rest of the country butchered the name of this town.

This encourage Julie, "We will. We'll win it all next year."

This excited Mindy-Lynn, "There's the Julie we'all know."

They heard the first warning bell.

Belinda asked as they headed into the building, "I's hear U's are pretty smart."

Julie blurted without thinking, "It's a rumor."

All three gave one another looks. They all wished Julie would have said anything else.

Belinda asked, "I's heard U are taking accounting?"

"Yes."

"Would U mind helping me?"

Mindy-Lynn added, "I'm needing help."

Julie smiled, "I'd love too."

Together they stepped into the high school.

They decided they would meet in the library after lunch. With the second warning bell they separated and headed to their lockers.

*A*shleigh opened the glass doors of *Renewed Mastery* and stepped into the lobby area.

She inspected the walls. The walls of this lobby were painted into thirds. The three sections were: a coastal beach, an old time sailing ship, and a marina. She specifically looked at the progress of the coastal beach. This artist was taking his time but it was worth the wait. Ashleigh was excited to see he finished the large sea turtle crawling out of the water. She admired the job the woman artist did on the island. She liked the added touch of whales swimming off to the side. She then glanced over at the dock. She found it interesting on how the bird was completed before the dock was. The dock was close to being finished. Overall she loved this wall and the lobby.

As she walked through, she made a note of how a sales woman moved a chair to sit with other salespeople. Like always there were people filling out applications. She noticed an attractive young man sitting in a single chair with an art portfolio leaning up against the

chair.. Based upon how he was dressed she assumed he was from the Midwest. He dressed neat, had on nice pair of black pants, a black vest, a red button shirt, a black tie, and black hat with a red band. She spotted the red hair under the hat and liked his green eyes. He was biting his nails. She found it interesting how he just stopped, looked at his fingers, took a deep breath, and sat very proper in his chair. She felt every artist who sat in the lobby: always chose a single chair, were fascinated with walls, or they focused on 3d art work that was sold in the displays, and appeared nervous.

Nikita turned, stopped, turned, and wanted his attention. Her tail was wagging and wanted attention.

This surprised Ashleigh. Nikita acted this way with anyone sitting in this area.

Her tail became a weapon.

He asked, "What's her name?"

"Nikita."

"Like the song?"

Ashleigh smiled, "It's where I got the name from."

"May I pet her?"

Ashleigh smiled, "Nikita sit."

She did so, her tail was a weapon. She liked this male human.

He allowed her to sniff him.

She could sense he liked her. She was happy they greeted one another.

"Is she a husky?"

"Siberian."

"She's a beautiful dog."

Ashleigh asked, "Is this the first time showing your artwork?"

He made a face, "Second."

"Who's seeing you?"

"Leah."

Andrea was all ears. She could tell they had the same accents.

"Are you from the Milwaukee area?"

"Close. I grew up in Washington county."

"I know where that is."

He smiled.

"Unless I get the job here. I'm planning on moving to Upper Michigan."

"Why there?"

"My Mom is from up there. A lot of my paintings are from there."

"Did you bring them with you?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I was told to bring my illustrations."

Ashleigh smiled, "Makes sense. Before you leave. Why not visit the art gallery. Some call it the Museum. If you get hired on you'll have a place to sell your paintings."

"I've heard that."

She glanced at her watch, "I have to go."

He smiled, "Oh sure."

In a respectful way he eyeballed her.

They heard the buzzer of the door.

Nikita went straight for the door.

Ashleigh looked at the young man, "Good luck."

He said very serious, "Luck has very little to do with it."

Ashleigh liked this but focused on the door and opened it.

Ashleigh missed a woman applicant who was eyeballing Ashleigh. This out of town thirty-something woman was unaware Ashleigh was the vice-president. After studying Ashleigh she came to the conclusion Ashleigh was straight. She reminded herself what it was like to fall for straight women or trying to have a relationship with a "bi-curious" woman. She wished she could meet a young lesbian who looked and dressed like Ashleigh.

Ashleigh and Nikita stepped into the main office area of the building.

Andrea was quick to greet Nikita.

Ashleigh felt this was a good sign. When Andrea moved slow, there was a high probability she was in an argument with her boyfriend. Everyone Andrea knew wanted her to fully break it off with him. Their on again off again relationship was clearly hurting Andrea both physically and emotionally. It frustrated Ashleigh when it looked like she would completely break it off and within a week they would be back together. Yet, Andrea refused to allow her boyfriend to move into the house she purchased for herself and her sister.

Andrea was one of their best employees. Bob, Haley, Gracie, and Ashleigh were looking for a new position for her. They were being selective because of how good she was in her current role. Anytime they breached the subject with Andrea she resisted to the idea. Ashleigh, Haley, and Gracie felt this was due to a lack of confidence and this job gave her a sense of stability. Only a few employees knew she was one of the highest paid secretaries in the company.

Bob gladly approved of every raise.

Another sign she was doing well was how she was dressed. Her long blond hair was in a nice wave, she was wearing an appropriate amount of makeup, she was wearing handmade dangling earrings (given to her from one of the artists in the building), she was wearing a honey beige short sleeved tuxedo shirt, a heather colored pencil skirt, and new metallic colored gemstone dress sandals; Ashleigh liked the gemstones.

This reminded her.

Ashleigh said, "Hold onto her."

"Yes Ma'am."

Andrea took Nikita's leash.

Ashleigh set everything but her strawberry colored high healed shoes onto Andrea's L shaped desk.

"I forgot to put these on."

Andrea was surprised Ashleigh would wear the type of shoes she was putting on.

When she slipped them on she was taller.

Andrea mentioned, "They match the suit."

"They do?"

Ashleigh restrained herself from reaching out to Andrea. Many times when she did so Andrea flinched.

Ashleigh asked, "How do I look?"

Andrea felt this suit was very boyish.

She answered honestly, "You look professional."

"Good."

Once Ashleigh's shoes were secured she asked, "May I have Nikita back?"

"Yes Ma'am."

Nikita hoped she would receive a treat. Sometimes she received one from Woman with the Noise and sometimes not.

Ashleigh took the leash.

Andrea asked, "Ma'am."

"Yes."

"Ain't Y'all on vacation?"

As Ashleigh was slipping onto her shoulder: the bag she brought in everyday, her purse, and her laptop bag she answered, "It ended today."

Andrea made a face.

In response to this facial expression Ashleigh asked, "Why are you asking?"

"If Y'all don't mind me saying?"

"Go ahead."

"I ain't sure Mr. Bob will like the idea."

Ashleigh answered, "I wouldn't be in here today if I didn't feel Mr. Bob would give me permission to stay."

For the first time knowing Ashleigh she felt she gave a deceptive answer; an answer a politician would use.

Andrea folded her arms under her small breasts and shifted her long athletic body.

She asked very carefully, "I ain't in trouble for allowing Y'all in?"

"Why would you get in trouble for that? The guys in the shack asked me the same thing."

Ashleigh annoyed stared, "I'm a vice president."

"Yes Ma'am."

With a tone added, "You won't get into trouble for allowing me in. As vice president I'm deciding I should be in today."

This was the blunt Ashleigh, Andrea admired.

She answered, "Yes Ma'am."

"If Mr. Bob asks you. You tell him I decided to show up today."

"Yes Ma'am."

She turned and her heel snagged on the carpet. She made a noise. She wanted to throw the shoes across the room. She was able to get her feet secured.

What she did was turn toward Andrea and asked, "You know what I don't like?"

With concern, "No Ma'am."

"Shoes."

"They ain't always the easiest thing are they?"

"No there not."

Ashleigh calmed herself.

"Thank-you."

"Y'all are welcome."

Andrea winked.

Ashleigh smiled and winked back. Ashleigh headed toward her office.

For one of the few times when people spotted Ms. Ashleigh they turned and headed in the opposite direction. Ashleigh pretended she never noticed.

This disappointed Nikita a great deal. One of the reasons she liked Work Territory is all of the people who greeted her. Nikita sensed Woman with the Funny Smells. This human: gave her treats, greeted her, gave her water, made noises at her, took her for walks, and took her out to make markings.

She sensed a new female human near Woman with Many Smells.

When Ashleigh passed the long wall of the hallway and was in the open area she spotted Brittany standing alongside of the Haley's desk.

Haley briefly looked at the letter inside of an envelope, she handed it back to Brittany, and suggested, "This is customer service. Have it go to Sally."

This is when Brittany spotted Ashleigh.

Haley followed Brittany's look.

Ashleigh spotted Haley whisper something to Brittany. Brittany stood for a second. She was fascinated to see Nikita. She focused. Brittany: turned, opened the glass doors to the office, and went to her desk. Ashleigh noticed a mail cart next to Brittany's desk.

Ashleigh stepped up to Haley's desk and asked, "Is she doing mail?"

"Well Hi."

"Hello."

Haley pushed a button on her panel, took off her headset, and stepped down to a very excited Nikita.

Nikita liked Woman with Many Smells. For Nikita it was a long time since she greeted Woman with Funny Smells. Nikita was so excited she dropped her bone.

Ashleigh demanded Nikita sit and calm her down.

Nikita made dog noises and was frigidity.

After extra petting and sooth talking Haley calmed Nikita down. Then she gave Nikita a treat.

Ashleigh believing everything would be alright took Nikita's leash off, led her into the office area, and told her to go to her spot.

Haley and Ashleigh watched Nikita walk right to her spot and start chewing on the bone Ashleigh let her bring (her spot was on a rug next Ashleigh's desk under the right window in the office area).

Haley commented, "She just started doing it."

"You didn't have to ask?"

"Nope. I gave her the same list you gave Julie. With the necessary changes."

"How's she doing?"

"You found a polite spitfire."

Ashleigh observed Nikita sit up.

"Exactly."

"Has she read any of Bob's manuscripts?"

"She wasn't suppose too. But she is stubborn like someone else I know."

"Mr. Bob is stubborn."

Haley gave Ashleigh a look.

Nikita and Ashleigh studied one another.

Ashleigh stated, "She's wearing a nice dress."

"She always wears dresses."

Ashleigh asked still watching her dog, "How's her baby?"

"He's a cutie. Her Mom arrived over the weekend. She's excited to be watching her grandson."

"What about the jack ass?"

Haley winked.

Ashleigh smiled and asked, "Bob must like her?"

"A lot more than he likes accountants."

An exasperated Ashleigh asked, "Did he fire another one?"

"The guy decided production should use cheaper boxes."

"Not again."

"That isn't the worst of it."

Ashleigh sighed and made a face; her body language screaming frustration.

"He started to rearrange the production schedule."

"Why? What made him think that was a good idea?"

Ashleigh gave a face and raised her arms in the air, "To cut costs!"

"You guessed it."

Ashleigh asked, "Did he ask anyone about it?"

"Nope."

Ashleigh asked, "Was the mess fixed?"

"Quickly."

"Is Gracie looking for another one?"

"Yup. Oh."

"What?"

"She hired a really nice assistant."

"What's her name?"

"Jenny-Lou."

"Local?"

"Southern. But I don't believe she grew up here. She has a different accent than the locals."

Nikita went running over to Brittany and immediately laid on her back.

Brittany pet her.

Haley remarked, "Looks like she has a new friend."

"Looks like it."

Haley added, "If that dog doesn't like someone be leering of that person."

Ashleigh nodded her head in agreement.

"Another college graduate with a degree in counseling?"

"I think she might have a degree in HR."

Ashleigh asked, "How's April doing?"

Haley smiled, "She's appreciating the apprenticeship."

"I'm glad."

"She looks a lot like Megan."

"Most of the women in the family look similar and everyone in that family is tall."

Haley asked, "Are any out of shape?"

"Not if they are younger than fifty."

Ashleigh focused, "She's doing well?"

"I believe she gave you a thank-you card."

Ashleigh watched Brittany tell Nikita to go back to her spot. Nikita sat down and looked at her. Haley stopped talking when Ashleigh stepped up to the glass wall tapped on the window and pointed at Nikita's spot.

Nikita went to her spot.

Ashleigh believed Brittany was impressed but felt sorry for Nikita.

Ashleigh tried to pretend she was indifferent to the greeting card but she felt this was sweet.

She focused and asked, "So when is this meeting?"

"In four hours."

Haley purposely redirected the conversation, "Brittany made a print out of all your posted notes."

"What?"

"She organized them and hung the sheets on the clipboard."

"Maybe I wanted to look at the..."

"She put each days worth in a plastic sleeve."

"Oh."

"She does have a strong accent."

"I know."

Haley said, "So. You're going back on vacation after the meeting?"

"Nope."

"A brother won't be happy about it."

Ashleigh turned to her, "I don't care."

Haley knew she cared a great deal.

"I better check on those sheets."

"If you have any questions ask."

"I will."

Haley stated, "Wait one second."

Haley hit a button.

Ashleigh watched and listened to Haley answer a phone call. She moved the call to Bob's desk. Then told Bob who it was. Bob took the call. Haley made sure he received it. She hit a button and looked at Ashleigh.

Haley mentioned, "It looks like we'll be buying another company?"

Ashleigh stated, "I've been trying to convince him not too."

Haley had a concerned look, "Why?"

"I'm feeling it will be a disaster."

"It's a fairly big company."

Ashleigh mentioned, "I'm just not sure they'll be able to handle the changes we'll want to make."

Haley answered, "Both of you are good at training people."

"This will be a challenge."

"Let's hope everyone is up for the challenge."

"Let's hope."

Ashleigh caught a look of concern. She brushed this aside. Ashleigh: turned, opened the glass door, and stepped into the office.

Ashleigh heard Nikita's chain jangle. She looked over and Nikita was sitting up in her spot and her tail was wagging.

**B**rittany knew what Nikita looked like because of the paintings, drawings, and photo's of Nikita scattered throughout the company. They were in cubicles, on walls, and on trinkets. Brittany adored the paperweight on Ms. Ashleigh's desk. The reason she liked it was the engraved message on the bottom. Brittany believed Nikita was the unofficial mascot of the whole company. Even with this knowledge it surprised her to see Ms. Ashleigh walking a dog down the hallway.

There was an unofficial list of pets the office and art area were allowed to keep. The evidence of this practice were the pet gates in front of cubicle entrances. Employees policed this on their own because no one wanted pets to be banned from the site. Ms. Ashleigh, Mr. Bob, and Gracie all mentioned they would ban pets if a person was hurt. The unofficial list of animals not to bring in where: snakes, scorpions, spiders, mice, rats, and anything that could really harm people. Respect was always given to anyone who was allergic to animals; Gracie and Ashleigh handled this in many different ways. The animals Brittany spotted included: many had fish (no one went over a ten gallon tank), someone had a hamster, a few people had caged parakeets, a small lizard, a frog, a turtle, an artist had a cockatoo (he was a popular painted item and was tied down while in the building), two seeing eye dogs, and customer service had a cat.

Two ladies from Customer Service found this mother and a litter of kittens while sitting outside eating lunch. Ashleigh and Haley took these animals to the vet. As soon as the kittens were big enough they were easily adopted out. The Mother Cat adopted the ladies in the customer service department. Like the cockatoo and Nikita; this cat was a subject of many sketches, paintings, and photographs.

Brittany took a look at how Ashleigh was dressed and wondered if she was indeed bisexual. As a Christian she was against this type of lifestyle but at no time did she believe someone should be treated horribly. She believed if Jesus could change and turn her life around he could certainly change anyone's life. She would never forget how Ashleigh, Megan, and Nicole treated her.

She was forever grateful for her current job.

Haley handed her the envelope, "This is customer service. Have it go to Sally."

"Yes Ma'am."

Brittany was about to mention how Mr. Bob would be angry Ms. Ashleigh was showing up.

Haley whispered, "Why not go into the office."

Brittany answered, "Yes Ma'am."

She felt the toughest part of her job was understanding all of these northern folks. The worst part was how fast they talked. She specifically felt people from Wisconsin talked fast. She believed the HR director named Gracie had the craziest Midwestern accents. Everyone in the office was surprised these two were friends. What no one understood both grew up on a farm. They grew different crops and dealt with different animals, but there was an

understanding between the two. The other common bond was both worked really hard to get to college and move away from the country; both wondered if they made a mistake.

Brittany went to her desk and placed the envelope into the mail cart. A cart she received permission to take for just their area. She felt better if she collected the mail twice a day. She did more trips if she was looking for something specific. Brittany felt better if she handled Ms. Ashleigh and Mr. Bob's mail. One of the reasons she felt this way was Mr. Bob being the author Mr. Heart. She would do everything in her power to make sure no one discovered Mr. Bob was Mr. Heart. She took this seriously because Mr. Bob asked her too.

She felt people sticking posted notes on Ms. Ashleigh's monitor was a disaster waiting to happen. She was happy to collect them, type them out, and place the notes in plastic sealed bags. She wanted to stop people from putting posted notes on her monitor but she was unsure if she should or not.

She looked up when she heard Ashleigh say, "Go to your spot."

Ashleigh nodded her head.

Brittany returned in kind.

Nikita went running to her spot.

Brittany felt it was a very beautiful dog, a dog breed she never was in contact with before; she wondered if it was wise to have a dog like this in Florida. She understood the love an owner could have for a pet. She could tell Nikita was in great shape and was well taken care off. She worried about the heat of summer. She knew the dog could easily overheat.

She was studying the dog.

Nikita lifted her head and sniffed this human female. She sensed this human spent a lot of time with many different animals. Other animals marked her as friendly. Nikita sensed this female human cared about her. She sat up. It was difficult for Nikita to stay at her spot.

Brittany looked through the glass. She observed Haley and Ms. Ashleigh having an intense conversation. She could tell Ashleigh was paying attention to Nikita and herself.

Brittany was unable to help herself, "Nikita?"

Nikita was unsure of what she said.

"Come?"

This she understood and ran over to Friendly Female. Nikita was unable to understand the noises Friendly Female were making but she felt so comfortable with her she laid on her back. She wanted this woman to pet her belly.

Brittany enjoyed talking and petting Nikita.

When she felt she wasted enough time she commanded, "Y'all go back to your spot."

Nikita sat up and listened for a noise she understood.

"Y'all will get me in trouble."

Nikita tilted her head.

"Get, back to your spot."

Nikita cocked her head and looked at her.

"Y'all seem to be such a good dawg. I ain't understanding why Y'all ain't listening."

This is when Ashleigh knocked on the glass wall and pointed to her spot.

Nikita understood this. She quickly went back to her spot and focused on her bone. She was keeping an eye on Friendly Human. Nikita believed Friendly Human was now part of "Office" territory.

Brittany made a face.

"Y'all only listen to Ms. Ashleigh?"

Nikita tilted her head and listened for a noise she understood. She liked Friendly Human but was enjoying the bone.

This is when Ashleigh stepped through the glass door.

Brittany stated, "Hi Ms. Ashleigh."

There was no doubt Brittany had the strongest southern accent she ever heard.

"Hi. You doing well?"

Brittany guessed at what Ashleigh said, "Yes Ma'am."

Brittany forgot how fast Ashleigh talked.

Ashleigh stopped at her desk and stated, "I hate shoes."

"Ma'am. I didn't catch what Y'all were saying?"

Ashleigh set her things on her computer chair. She purposely talked slower, "I hate shoes."

Brittany caught sight of her shoes because Ashleigh placed her hand on her desk and was rubbing her foot.

"Them be some tall heals."

"I don't normally wear shoes like this."

"I sees Y'all have shoes under your desk."

Ashleigh needed to pay close attention to understand what she said.

"They wouldn't match the outfit."

"If Y'all don't mind me saying?"

"Go ahead."

"With the type of pants Y'all are wearing who will see them?"

Ashleigh answered, "I should have worn flats."

Brittany made a face and answered, "Maybe a shorter heal. Something between them flats and the heals."

Ashleigh: set her foot down, adjusted her suit, and said, "I need to look confident and persuasive."

"By wearing heals?"

"You don't feel they help?"

Brittany asked, "I ain't getting in trouble for speaking my mind?"

Ashleigh answered honestly and pointed to her desk, "In here. All I want is people to speak their mind."

They studied one another.

Brittany broke the silence by saying, "Y'all ain't needing to prove anything around here."

This touched Ashleigh a great deal.

"Why do you say that?"

Brittany again guessed at what Ashleigh said.

She answered, "I'm surprised Y'all ain't aware."

"Of what?"

"Y'all don't act like other Yankees. The people here like Y'all the way you are."

It was impossible to keep all of her emotion in; a few tears dropped.

"Thank-you."

Brittany answered, "It's the truth."

Ashleigh demanded, "I need to make sure the people attending the meeting know I mean business. I don't trust them."

Brittany smiled, "Ain't Y'all a whipper snapper."

Ashleigh smiled. She was looking forward to hearing Brittany and her Brother's conversations.

Ashleigh answered with a smile, "My Florida Mom says this about me."

Brittany wondered what this meant, but it was said out of respect and affection, "She's a smart lady."

Ashleigh asked, "I heard you started to read one of Bob's manuscripts?"

"Yes Ma'am. I started reading *The Pirate*."

"You like it?"

Brittany asked, "I reckon he's sweet on someone?"

"Why would say that?"

At first Brittany felt she was being interrogated; by reading Ashleigh's body language she felt this was an honest question.

"I ain't in the knowing who he's sweet on. But if Y'all are asking me. Based upon what I've read so far he's smitten. I reckon it ain't anyone working here."

"Why would feel that?"

"On account the person he's written about just ain't fitting anyone who works here. But it's as plain as day this story is based upon someone he knows."

Ashleigh was glad someone else felt the same way. She felt the lead female was Megan. Bob always denied he put his love interests into his stories. Ashleigh believed every love interest, this was especially true of Shelly. His biggest selling book was obviously about their relationship. Worse, Ashleigh could easily pick out who she was in everyone one of his books. She was always a different character but everyone one of these characters were similar to who she was at the time. She wanted to believe this was subconscious but there was the high probability he knew exactly what he was doing.

Ashleigh answered, "I'm feeling the same thing."

Brittany was shocked to be validated.

They smiled at one another.

Ms. Ashleigh asked, "I understand you typed out my posted notes?"

"Yes Ma'am. They're under your keyboard."

"Thanks."

"Y'all are welcome."

Bob stepped out of his office.

"Why are you here?"

Ashleigh bluntly answered, "My vacation is over."

"You have a few more days?"

"Not if the plan is to purchase *Criti-Medical*."

"I was planning on it."

"Why?"

"There are a lot of good people working there. Once we turn it around the investment will be worth it."

"I don't think we can turn this around."

"Why?"

She turned and grabbed her laptop and said, "Let me show you."

Bob turned around followed Ashleigh into his office. He shut it behind him. This was the first time Brittany ever witnessed him shut the door when an individual woman entered his office.

Brittany: watched, listened, and took mental notes of their brief conversation. She discounted the perverted incest rumor. She recognized Mr. Bob valued Ashleigh's opinion. She believed Haley and Nicole when they suggested their relationships was more like one of a father and daughter with a brother and sister feel to it.

She adored Mr. Bob's office. An office she cleaned the day before. She felt the cleaning crew was doing a subpar job. It was her opinion his office should be as immaculate as a king; especially because of how he treated everyone. She felt Bob was overconfident at times, was sometimes difficult, was smart, expected change quickly, was honest (sometimes to honest), was eccentric, demanding, and was kind. She strongly believed he cared for everyone in the company. She felt he disliked firing anyone; it was the reason for many of their policies. The balance to this thinking; she correctly believed it was a mistake to cross him or someone he cared about. Growing up in Georgia she respected this a great deal.

Brittany heard Nikita's collar jangle. She turned to look at Nikita.

Nikita was on all fours her tail was wagging. It was obvious Nikita was seeing if she could receive attention.

"Y'all stay."

Nikita new this noise and sat down.

Brittany smiled at her.

Brittany focused on the mail.

She looked over at Nikita, "Y'all a last name would help."

Nikita sat up and wagged her tail.

"My. My."

She opened the envelope and placed it in a pile for Ms. Ashleigh.

## *April 25<sup>th</sup>, Can't Wait Any Longer Part Two of Six*

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