

~ Possibilities ~

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Disclaimers

Love/Sex: This story features strongly implied and explicit consensual relationship between adult women. If this bothers you, is illegal in the State, Province or Country you live or if you are under the age of 18, close this page immediately and find something more appropriate for you to read.

Language: The use of a mild expletive is used.

Violence: There is some violence.

Hurt/Comfort: There is definitely some hurt/emotional discomfort with some brief scenes of angst and heartache to be dealt with by the characters.

Acknowledgment: Thank you for all your help Alice, Carmen and Teresa

Dedication: For my friend T and the possibilities.

Author's Note: This story was written in three parts. The first part is from one characters viewpoint. The second part is from the other main characters viewpoint about the same events. The last part is from both their viewpoints.

Prologue

Events and people who constantly come and go shape our lives. Just as the universe is in constant state of flux so are we. As we continuously change and evolve, that which we swore we would never do, change as circumstances occur that make them possible.

Kylie Wilcox's life dramatically changed and she found herself in a position she never thought she would be in at the age of twenty-nine. Now, it is time for her to take steps to find a new and more challenging life.

Doctor LJ Evans, a renowned Archeologist, needs nothing but her work to survive. In her opinion, acquaintances and friends are nothing more than an annoyance in her structured life. Circumstances are about to occur that will change her life and her way of thinking.

Two worlds are about to collide. Will the outcome be nothing more than a learning experience or will it alter both lives forever?

* * *

Kylie's Story

"Bye, sweetheart, see you this afternoon." Kylie Wilcox waved goodbye to her daughter, Allie, as the school bus pulled out.

Walking briskly back the half block back to her home she crossed the lush green grass to the brick sidewalk then up the two steps and entered. She had one thought on her mind, coffee. Grabbing her coffee cup off the kitchen table she headed for the coffee maker. She closed her eyes as she swallowed the dark rich brew. Placing the cup on the table she pulled a Marlboro Light out of its package and flicked her lighter. She inhaled deeply then let the smoke drift out of her mouth. "Today is the day I find a job." She said aloud.

Spreading the newspaper out she located the classified section and began to see what kind of jobs were out there waiting for her. Life certainly had become complicated for her after the death of her husband, Ted. Immediately after graduation from the University she and her high school sweetheart married. Ted climbed the corporate ladder and once they discovered she was pregnant working for her was out of the question. Therefore, she spent the next eight years of her life playing the role of wife, mother, charity raiser, bridge player and doer of all things.

For a few months after his death, Kylie memorialized him and their marriage as nothing short of perfection. Now, as reality set in, she knew that the marriage was marginal at best for Ted cared and thought more of his job than of his daughter or wife. She also concluded that the mythical orgasm

was something that great love stories, songs and poems were created for. In reality, she doubted that she had ever experienced even the slightest twinge of pleasure or excitement when making love to Ted or anyone for that matter.

A job caught her eye as she recalled seeing it several weeks before. "Must be getting desperate, maybe I have a chance. It's in my line of expertise." Checking the time she dialed a number. *I haven't spent all these years volunteering not to be able to call in a few favors*, she thought as she heard the phone ring on the other end.

"This is Ruth, may I help you?"

"Hi, Ruth, this is Kylie Wilcox."

"Oh, Kylie, dear how are you doing? I think of you everyday and pray that you are getting on well."

"Thank you, Ruth, I am making the best of it and trying to get my life back on track."

"God bless you. I don't have the assignments yet for the volunteers but I will call you as soon as it is ready."

"Thank you. Ruth, I noticed a job listing for the museum and was wondering if it had been filled yet."

"Why, no, it hasn't. Are you interested, Kylie?" Surprise was evident in her voice.

"Yes I am. I need to do something, Ruth, and this sounded like the perfect job."

"Hmm, just a minute please."

"Certainly."

"Kylie, can you be here at eleven? You can interview with Dr. Ludlow then with the doctor you will be working for."

"Eleven? As in a little more than two hours from now?"

"Yes, I'm sorry dear, it is all we have and we do want to fill the position as quickly as possible."

"No problem, I will be there. Thank you for giving me the opportunity, Ruth."

"You're welcome. I will see you then. Bye."

"Bye."

Kylie hung up the phone and dashed up the stairs to her bedroom. She was sure two hours was plenty of time, she just needed to be certain everything was perfect before she left. Tearing off her clothes she headed to the shower.

* * *

Kylie arrived at the office of Dr. Robert Ludlow, the director of the museum right on time. She was dressed in a teal linen suit that accentuated her emerald green eyes and short blonde hair. Ruth Smith, the doctor's secretary, greeted her.

"Right on time. Dr. Ludlow said to show you in when you arrived. Will you come with me?"

Following Ruth into the office Kylie couldn't help but feel butterflies in her stomach.

Getting up from his desk Rob walked over to greet his visitor. "Kylie, it is so nice to see you looking so well. How are you holding up?" He engulfed her in his arms.

Kylie returned the hug. "Rob, thank you. As I told you and Louise last week at dinner, I have good days and bad ones, but at last I think there are more

good days." It felt good to be held safe in this man's arms for she considered him a father figure who would always be there for her.

Rob Ludlow was a tall man, not only in stature but also in reputation. He was in his early fifties, trim, handsome by most standards and kind to everyone. He was a no-nonsense, hands-on administrator who was well respected at the museum and in the community. Kylie met him five years earlier when she started volunteer work in the museum's gift shop. As time went by she and Ted began seeing his wife and him and they became close friends.

"Come, sit down, and tell me why you are interested in this job." He led her to a comfortable leather chair then pulled another up beside her.

"Well, Rob." A small laugh ensued. "I suppose since I am here for a job interview I should be more formal." Another smile then her face turned serious. "I need to make a life for myself and Allie and I think that means I need to do more than stay home and volunteer." She sighed. "We need normalcy in our lives, Rob." Tilting her head she added. "I think I am qualified for this job."

Rob patted her hand and smiled. "Did you bring a resume, Kylie?"

Kylie frowned; she knew this would be a problem. "I brought my high school and university transcripts, unfortunately there isn't a job history. I've never worked but I know if you give me the chance I can do the job. As you see, I did take extensive courses that pertain to archeology and I've done field work." Kylie's stomach was really churning now.

Patting her hand once again, Rob took the papers and looked them over. "Nothing to fret about. It seems to me that you may just be perfect for the job. Give me a minute to fax this down to Dr. Evans, then we can talk further." He then got up, opened the door, handed Ruth the documents then returned. "Now, tell me, do you think Allie will be alright with your working?"

Twenty minutes later Kylie was heading for the door and on to her meeting with Dr. Evans.

"Kylie?" Rob said as she reached the door.

"Yes."

"I shouldn't tell you this, but as your friend, I think you need to know. You are the eleventh person to interview for this job."

"Is it the job or the doctor?" Then she saw his face and knew that he would say nothing more.

"You will do just fine." Then he gave her a hug and opened the door for her. "Good luck." He said smiling as she left the office for the basement and her fate.

* * *

Knocking on the doorframe of the large room, Kylie called out. "Dr. Evans?"

Off in the distance she heard a strong voice reply, "Over here."

Walking through the maze of shelves and bins in the direction of the voice she saw a tall woman with dark hair braided down her back sitting at a desk that was so old it probably had many stories to tell. The woman was dressed in jeans and a gray t-shirt that hugged her body but not in a sexy way. When she rose Kylie noticed the front of the shirt had a dinosaur with the words *dem bones dem bones* on it. "Dr. Evans?" She said trying to cover her nervousness with a smile.

The woman nodded her head. "Mrs. Wilcox, take a seat and we can get started."

There was a tone of no nonsense in the voice causing Kylie's usual positive attitude to diminish somewhat. "Certainly." Was all she could say as she took the indicated chair.

Dr. Evans shuffled some papers around, then, finding the ones she was looking for, placed them in front of her. "Tell me, Mrs. Wilcox, do you feel like a falling star?"

A confused look crossed her face as Kylie tried to understand the question. "I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean."

"This resume' of yours states that you were valedictorian in high school and graduated cum laude from the university then nothing after that. You apparently had a bright future that faded."

Kylie couldn't believe what she heard. "I consider taking care of my child a bright future." She said defensively.

"I see you have extensive courses in archeology and even did some field work. Can I assume you know about cataloguing and the care of antiquities?"

Now we are down to business, Kylie thought. "Yes, I spent one field experience in Mexico unearthing Mayan ruins. I learned a great deal about documentation and the proper handling and restoring of finds. It is tedious work but the rewards are worth it." Looking at the doctor she smiled and added. "You need to be a good puzzle person."

"If your child is sick can I expect you to take time off to be *mommy?*"

Kylie scrunched her eyebrows. "I don't think that is an appropriate question to be asking, Dr. Evans." This woman was trying her last nerve.

"I need to know if I can count on you being here, Mrs. Wilcox. The work I am doing is extremely important; I need reliable help."

It was an understandable question since she never had a job that would indicate what kind of work ethics she had. "Of course. My parents live here in town and are very supportive. They will take care of my daughter if she is ill or has school days off. I have also done extensive volunteer work and you could ask them how reliable I am...I've never missed a day."

The questions kept coming without comments on her answers. *This woman must have a heart of ice. She can't even be pleasant. She thought to herself.*

"What does your husband think of your working?"

"He died eight months ago. It is just Allie and myself now."

Dr. Evans sat in thoughtful contemplation before she spoke. "Have you decided to start working so you can find yourself another man then quit the job?"

Kylie couldn't believe the audacity of the woman. "How dare you ask that question, Dr. Evans? Not only is it inappropriate it really is none of your business." With that she got up from the chair and headed for the door. Walking quickly down the hall she muttered to herself. "What an arrogant bitch!"

As she started to exit the building she heard Rob call her name. "Kylie, wait up. How did it go?"

Turning around quickly she flashed him a look. "From my point of view, I can see why she hasn't found anyone to work for her!" Just the sight of her friend helped calm her anger. "Rob, thank you for giving me the opportunity. I will see you once I start volunteering in the gift shop again."

Rob took a long deep breath. "She can be difficult, I am sorry it didn't work out."

Kylie laughed ironically. "Rob, there's nothing for you to be sorry for, I think I sealed my fate when I walked out."

A growl was heard before he spoke. "Unacceptable!" He growled again. "I cannot allow anyone to be so intimidating and offensive that someone interviewing for a job feels the need to walk out." His agitation was clear by his body language.

"Rob, it could be I irritated her. I can be rather blunt at times." For some reason she didn't want to see the doctor be reprimanded.

"Still unacceptable, Kylie. It makes the museum look bad and I can't have that. I think it is time to have a talk with Dr. Evans."

Glancing at her watch Kylie noticed that she was late meeting her friends, Linda and Judy, for lunch. "Rob, thank you again for giving me a chance. I need to go now, will you tell Louise I will be calling her later on in the week?"

"Of course I will." He now was smiling. "Maybe we can get together for the weekend."

"I would like that. See you later, bye." As she was leaving she saw Rob head down the stairway to the basement.

* * *

"Why is it you get every red light whenever you are in a hurry?" Kylie said to herself as she thumped on the steering wheel waiting for the light to turn. Her attention was diverted with the melody of her cell.

"Hello."

"Kylie, this is Rob. Is there any chance you might consider turning around and coming back here? I have a job proposal for you."

"Rob, I don't want you to force me on her." She was irritated with him for putting her in this position.

"No, you don't understand. She told me she wanted to hire you."

A long sigh was heard. "Hold on a minute, Rob, the light has changed and I need to park." She pulled into a parking lot and stopped then picked the phone back up. "I'm back. Listen, it was clear to me she didn't think much of me so why would she want to hire me?"

"Please, just come back, get the forms from Ruth, fill them out then meet with Dr. Evans and me. Please, Kylie, I am telling you the truth," His voice sounding sincere.

Kylie thought for a minute weighing the pros and cons. "Okay." She said reluctantly. "I'll be there, bye."

After hanging up she dialed Linda's number. "Hi, guess what I think I got the job!" She said excitedly into the phone.

"Kylie, that is wonderful! You will have to tell us all about it when you get here." Linda replied.

"That's just it...I can't make it. I need to fill out papers then meet with the person I am to work for. Why don't you both come over for dinner tonight and I can tell you then."

"Sorry, tonight isn't good. Hey, I have an idea, why don't we go to Rusty's on Friday night? I hear they are having a great band!"

"Sounds good to me, it's been a long time since I've been there. Okay, I will call you later on and tell you about today and we can firm up plans for Friday."

"Great. Kylie?"

"Yes?"

"I am so happy for you about the job. You need to get on with your life, it is time."

"Thank you, you are right, it is time. Talk to you later, bye."

* * *

After filling out all the forms Kylie waited in Rob's outer office for the meeting between herself, Dr. Evans and Rob. She looked towards the door as it opened and saw Dr. Evans walk in. Out of the dark basement the doctor looked different. For the first time Kylie noticed how stunning she was with the most brilliant blue eyes. As much as she didn't want to, she smiled at LJ and was not disappointed when none was returned. *Bitch*, she thought.

The uneasiness of the room didn't last long as Rob entered shortly thereafter and motioned for them both to come into his office.

Once inside they all sat down around the conference table making it impossible for Kylie or LJ to sit anywhere but next to or across from each other.

"Mrs. Wilcox, thank you for coming back." He began. "We need to talk with you about hours and salary then you and Dr. Evans need to get together and work out what your job responsibilities will be."

Kylie nodded as a small shiver went through her body at the thought of spending any time alone with the bitch.

LJ was the first to speak. "Rob, I am very impressed with Mrs. Wilcox's knowledge and enthusiasm. I know we have a starting salary based on experience and I suggest we start her off at the top rate. Also, since she has a daughter she needs to get off to school, I suggest her hours be from nine to four with a half hour paid lunch."

"That idea sounds good to me, LJ. What do you think Mrs. Wilcox?"

Kylie just sat there stunned, trying to take in all she heard.

"Mrs. Wilcox?" Rob said loudly.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, that is most generous of you both. I am in shock; I can't believe what is happening. Thank you, Dr. Evans, for your kindness, now I don't have to burden my parents so much. Thank you." She said looking for the first time directly into the blue pools.

"Great, now that that is done you two can head down to the tombs." Rob dismissed the women as he got up and went back to his desk.

"Right, shall we go, Mrs. Wilcox?" LJ got up and headed for the door.

"Sure." Kylie said as she followed.

* * *

As they entered the workroom LJ pointed to a locker. "You can use that one for your coat and personal belongings. If you want a lock, you will have to purchase your own. Down here is the area where you will spend most of your time."

They walked towards a large worktable that was mapped out much like a site. In each compartment was an assortment of bags and photographs.

"I know my way is a bit unconventional but I like things visual so I can recall exactly the time each item was found. What I'll need you to start with are making sure all the items match up with the catalog. After that, we will see if we can create any complete or nearly complete items."

Kylie listened to the voice that she once associated with a bitch but now, when she was talking about her work, there was passion and love.

"I want to thank you for your generosity towards me. I really appreciate it." Kylie still was having a hard time associating the person she saw in Rob's office with the one in front of her now.

"We shall see how grateful you are after a week. I'm expecting you to start as soon as possible, which means tomorrow."

"Yes, I expect we will. Any chance you could call me Kylie? Mrs. Wilcox sounds like my mother in law." Kylie wondered if she was making a mistake. "Will tomorrow around noon be okay? I have some things I need to take care of before I begin." Kylie noticed the look of disapproval. "Listen, I just called for this appointment at eight forty-five this morning. I need to arrange for my daughter and reorganize my life. I can't do that overnight." Green bore into blue.

Shaking her head LJ took a moment before answering. "Why don't you plan to start Wednesday." She said with a sigh, then stood there somewhat awkwardly as if she didn't know what else to say. "I will see you then." Then she added, "Glad you'll be working here."

Kylie blinked as she saw the mysterious doctor turn and leave. "Sure, see you then." LJ Evans was an enigma that was for sure. She was cold and distant,

most of the time never acknowledging a comment or question. Yet, when she spoke of her work her voice was soft and warm. *How can that be?* Kylie wondered. *Making my schedule so accommodating for Allie seems so out of character for her. Hmm, this should be an interesting job.* She thought as she crossed her fingers hoping she had made the right decision.

* * *

Kylie arrived at the museum a half hour early not knowing if the door would be open. But, it was and she locked it after she went in just as she was instructed to do. *Wonder if they'll ever trust me with a key?* Walking down the stairs she found the room with the locker then started looking for the doctor.

Not finding Dr. Evans, Kylie went across the hall to the large, brightly lit workroom. Walking over to the table with grids she began inspecting the contents of each area. Each one had an index card attached describing the contents and the date of the find and location. In addition, there was a container with all the artifacts along with another card identical to the first. A large envelope containing photos of the relic's actual position at the dig was also there. As she checked each cubicle Kylie became lost in what she was doing until she heard someone enter the room. Looking up she saw LJ standing there with a bag in her hand.

Holding the bag out LJ spoke. "Time for lunch. I didn't know what you would want so I brought a turkey sandwich and a salad."

This confused Kylie and it must have shown on her face.

"Don't you like what I brought?"

"No, I mean yes, I do like it I just didn't know it was already lunch time. Let me get my wallet and I'll pay you." She was trying her best to act casual when she had no idea what was going on. *All I need now is for her to think I'm a dumb blonde.*

"No money needed, this is a benefit of the job."

LJ said as she looked somewhat uncomfortable and Kylie was certain that this gesture was totally out of character for the doctor. "Thank you. I lost track of time." She said smiling.

Placing the bag on a nearby chair LJ walked towards the worktable. "Have you found any discrepancies? My team arranged all this after we got back from Peru last summer."

"None so far. This is so fascinating...to think that someone long ago held the very piece in their hand that I am." Her voice was filled with awe. "Do you know anything about them yet?"

LJ cocked her head and actually smiled. "I think the site we found was a Inca village. When the pieces start fitting together we will know more. The jungles of Peru hold many secrets it is just a matter of finding them and deciphering the clues we get." Her voice was filled with excitement as her eyes scanned the grids. "Any one of these items could hold the key to unlocking the mystery that surrounds their disappearance, although most of the people in Peru today are of Inca descendant in some way."

"I find this all so exciting. I can remember the first time I found a cache of arrow and spearheads. It was such a thrill." It was hard for her to contain her enthusiasm and wanted to spend the day talking with this fascinating woman about her work.

"Hope you enjoy your lunch." Was all LJ said as she left.

As she watched the doctor walk away Kylie could do nothing but stand there shocked. *What just happened? She asked herself. She is one strange bird that's for sure.*

Over the next two days the same routine occurred. LJ would show up with lunch precisely at noon, check out what Kylie had done and then...go leaving her perplexed by the woman.

At first, Kylie would take her lunch to the tables outside of the museum and join other employees there. They were all very friendly and didn't hesitate telling her all about Dr. Evans.

"Did you know that poor Sally Johnson worked for her and would go home crying every single day? The woman has no heart at all." One woman said.

"Then before her was Jack Tremble, a really nice guy, but she managed to run him off in less than two months." Another would say.

"I heard she hates everyone and goes around at night changing displays to her liking." A small young man said. "You better have a thick skin, Kylie."

After two days of it, Kylie had enough and chose to take lunch inside by herself.

* * *

Friday night Linda, Judy and Kylie found themselves at Rusty's Dancehall. The place had been a favorite haunt over the years featuring local bands. Entering the place was like going back in time. Swinging doors opened to a room with a twenty-foot Mahogany bar complete with brass rail, spittoons and a large mirror with a nude painted on it. A half dozen tables surrounded by chairs filled the room. Another archway led to the dancehall, which had numerous long tables and benches in the middle with others lining the side of the room. There was a large stage at one end with a dance floor in front of it and another section with two pool tables. The band was set up against the wall where the bar was. The night's entertainment was a group called Cassie and the Cassettes.

Linda sat down placing three beer bottles on the table. "Wow this is great, just like old times isn't it?"

Kylie was beaming. "I can't believe this place hasn't changed at all since I was here seven years ago. It's still a great place to people watch."

"You're right about that, Kylie. See that guy over there?" She pointed to a man about six-foot, brown hair, which was obviously a toupee, dressed in jeans and t-shirt with quite a beer belly. "He thinks he is God's gift and hits

on women all the time. Never gets lucky though." Linda was laughing as was Kylie and Judy.

"Look at that guy over there, now he is a hunk. Want me to see if we can fix you up. Kylie?" Judy asked.

Lightly slapping her friend Kylie shrieked. "Noooo." Then laughed out loud.

"How is the job going? Do you like it, Kyl?" Linda gently touched her friend's hand.

"I love it. It is so interesting..." She pensively stared off into the distance.

"What's the matter? Do you think you made a mistake taking on a job?" Linda was concerned for her friend.

Kylie's green eyes captured her friend's. "No, no mistake, I just can't figure my boss out. But, I will, you know me...I can always charm them in the end." She smiled then gave her friend a hug.

"Hey, guys, look over there at the door. That woman always sits there, drinks a few beers and then leaves. But the stud man is going to try his luck with her." Judy was laughing as the man was trying to suck in his belly.

Kylie looked in the direction of the doorway as a stunned look came over her face. It was LJ Evans sitting on the table clearly annoyed by the man's advances. She watched, fascinated as she saw the cool exterior turn to ice as the man was rebuffed.

"Go get him lady!" exclaimed Judy as she laughed. "Looks like stud man lost again. I can't believe he actually thought someone like her would have anything to do with him."

"What do you mean by that?" Kylie asked.

Judy just laughed. "Kylie, look at her, she is gorgeous and classy and he is a big fat slob. Do the math...dah!" She shook her head.

Linda joined in. "You graduated where in college, Kyl?" Laughter was filling her eyes.

The three women sat there laughing just as the band was about to begin their set.

Cassie was the lead singer and looked every bit the part. Her spiked short hair was a burgundy sort of color. She had pierced eyebrows and when she opened her mouth it was clear the tongue was pierced too. The other three members of the band were rather plain in comparison, as it should be. When she started to sing the listener forgot all about the outward appearance, as it was a smooth and mellow sound.

"Wow! Are they great or what?" Linda asked.

Everyone agreed and they spent the next hour listening to the soft bluesy music. Every now and then Kylie would glance over to where LJ was sitting. *They're right she is one good-looking woman.* She thought as she wondered if she should go up to her and say *hi*. After all she was her boss and if LJ had seen her and she didn't say something it might look bad. Just the idea of speaking with LJ here sent a strange, yet pleasurable, feeling throughout her body. Finally the band was taking a break and Kylie thought it would be the perfect time to approach the doctor.

"My turn to buy, who wants another?" She asked her friends. After getting their orders she headed for the bar and LJ Evans.

As she finally worked her way through the crowd she looked up to see the singer, Cassie, talking with LJ. The woman was leaning into the doctor in a very provocative way. At first Kylie scrunched her eyebrows together wondering what was going on until it finally dawned on her. A funny feeling went through her as she found herself jealous of the singer's advances. When LJ got up and left with the singer, Kylie felt a pain in her heart, as she had never known.

Making her way to the bar she stood waiting for the beers when she noticed the other band members standing right next to her.

"Looks like Cassie is going to get lucky, you know what that means." The man said with an evil grin.

"Yep, nothing but love songs for the rest of the night." The other man said as he laughed.

"Hey that is better than her bitching all night. Besides this one always makes her happy."

Kylie couldn't believe her ears or the nauseous feeling in her stomach. Grabbing the beer bottles and throwing money down on the bar she hurried back to her friends.

"There you are. Is everything okay, you don't look so good?" Judy asked.

Kylie didn't know what to say for she couldn't even explain what she was feeling to herself. She hardly knew the woman yet she was feeling physically ill at the thought of her bedding down with the singer. "Yeah, I'm fine...just not used to the high life I guess."

Fifteen minutes later the band was tuning up but the singer was not there. Finally she came in hurriedly with her clothes all cockeyed. As predicted she started the set out with a very sultry love song. Kylie looked over to see if LJ came back too and smiled when she hadn't.

* * *

Every so often, if invited, LJ would join her at lunch. On these occasions she found LJ to be very affable and quite amusing.

On one such day Kylie had been working on trying to piece together a very intricate piece when LJ came in with lunch.

LJ sat the lunch down and began to leave when Kylie said, "Will you stay and share this with me? There is plenty and I would appreciate any help with this piece, it is really frustrating me."

A smile crossed the doctor's face as she turned back to her assistant. "Come on now, Kylie, it isn't that hard is it?"

They sat there sharing a sandwich as LJ looked over the piece then told Kylie the story of the site's discovery.

"We had a plane go up and do something that is similar to what oceanographers do with the ocean's bottom to find a likely area of Mayan ruins." LJ gave out a small laugh as she recalled the time. "I am usually very meticulous, but this time I really screwed up. It never occurred to me that we would have to hike through dense forest to get there. We hacked away at vines as we made our way towards our destination."

"Oh no, how long did it take you? Did you actually do the hacking or did the bearers do it." The blonde woman asked.

LJ was all smiles as she continued. "I wish, we all took turns and eventually we came upon the site." A look of awe came across the doctor's face. "There we cut away some vines around what seemed to be a pyramid type structure. A wall appeared with glyphs...it was incredible to view a building that no one else had seen in hundreds of years. I remember thinking at the time that it must have been the way the archeologist felt when they opened Tut's tomb." Her face was so serene and beautiful as she retold the story. "Well I need to get back to work. Thanks for sharing your sandwich." Then she left the room.

As her attraction grew, Kylie tried to busy herself when noon came around so she had as little contact with LJ as possible. But, everyday when the doctor came in she would go up to where Kylie was working and stand close to her to observe her progress. Soon she became to know the sound of her footsteps, the smell of her cologne and the different variations in her voice that indicated her mood. The very thought of LJ sent her senses reeling and when she stood close, it was all she could do not to touch her.

Confusion ran rampant through Kylie's mind. There was no doubt that she found LJ Evans fascinating, but there was something else. How could it be? How could she feel excitement and happiness when she was around the woman? These feelings were supposed to be for men...weren't they?

* * *

Kylie was finally able to piece together a rather complicated bowl and it was at that moment LJ came in with lunch. Looking up at the woman she beamed with the news. "Look, LJ, I finally have a whole one."

LJ reached over and brushed Kylie's hand sending a shiver through her body. For a moment blue and green held each other before letting go. Taking the bowl in her hand, LJ began examining it. "What do you make of these markings? They are rather odd and different from anything I've seen before." Her calloused finger pointed to a strange marking that looked almost like a sun symbol but not quite.

Kylie leaned her head in to get a better look. "I noticed that too and checked to make sure part of it wasn't missing. It is intact. Do you think it's Mayan?"

Picking up a magnifying glass LJ leaned in closer too and their heads almost touched. Kylie was reeling from the heady smells and the closeness of the woman. Clearing her throat she stepped back a bit to put space between them.

LJ seemed not to notice anything but the small bowl she held in her hand. "I think we have a significant find here." She turned and looked at the woman next to her who was clearly flushed. "I brought you a chicken Caesar salad today. When you're done, see what else you can come up with in the same area." With that she left the room.

Slowly, she closed her eyes trying to squelch the trembling inside. In all her life no one had ever affected her this way. The idea of LJ Evans was invading her thoughts and her dreams. She needed to do something about it but what?

It was almost four thirty when Kylie gave up trying to fit one piece, which clearly wasn't going to cooperate, into another. Gathering up her belongings she stopped by LJ's desk to say goodnight.

"I'm leaving now. I think I may be on to another piece but at the moment my eyes are too tired to focus right." She smiled at the doctor who was hunched over the artifact from earlier in the day. Books were strewn all over the desk each earmarked with a notation.

LJ looked up and stretched. "Yeah, that can happen. Sometimes you just need to walk away to get refocused." Then she returned to her work.

Kylie began towards the door when she turned around. "LJ, would you like to have dinner tonight with Allie and me?"

At first it seemed as though she hadn't heard then LJ lifted her head. "I can't tonight, some other time maybe."

"Sure." Kylie responded trying not to let her disappointment show. Despondently she walked away. *Tomorrow is another day*, she thought to herself.

* * *

Friday came and Kylie was looking forward to the weekend where she could separate herself from her increasing fascination with LJ. Her parents were taking Allie for a visit to her great-grandmother's, which meant she had the whole weekend to herself. She called Linda and Judy but neither could get away until Sunday. Pacing her living room she could feel the pull of LJ on her emotions. *Get a grip on yourself! She doesn't even know you are alive and what if she did just what do you think you would do about it? Run up to her and give her a passionate kiss? Yeah right. Get over it Kylie.*

With that she grabbed her keys and jacket and headed out the door on her way to Rusty's. After buying a beer she headed into the dancehall and found a seat close to the door but not too close. Looking at the place where the band would be playing she noticed tonight Cassie would be there. *Damn* she thought to herself as she swallowed some beer and lit a cigarette.

Soon the band was set up and the music was beginning and Kylie glanced over to the table by the door only to see it vacant. This gave her some hope that the burgundy haired singer and her doctor were not an item. The songs were

mellow and along with the beers Kylie found herself feeling relaxed. Putting her bottle down on the table she started to get up to get another when she saw LJ sitting and listening to the music. Her heart sunk as the band took a break and Cassie headed towards LJ. *Not tonight slut!* She thought, as she too headed towards the doctor.

Cassie was leaning into LJ when blue met green and for a fleeting moment everything seemed to stop.

"Hey, LJ, I thought that was you." Kylie said trying to sound casual.

LJ stood up and pushed Cassie aside. "It's me alright." Turning to Cassie she said, "Wait outside for me." Then looked back at the woman with the green eyes. "Do you come here often? Doesn't seem like your kind of place."

"And, just what would my kind of place be?" Kylie countered then added. "My friends and I used to come here all the time so tonight I thought I would see if it had changed any."

"Has it?"

"Not really...well, you're here." Even though she was trembling inside Kylie managed to laugh and was surprised by the smile she was given.

A smiling LJ looked at her, "I don't come here often myself, only when I am in the mood."

Yeah, for a quick one with that slut singer, Kylie thought. "It was nice seeing you LJ." She said as she turned to leave.

"Are you leaving? I'll walk out with you." LJ caught up with her and headed to the door also.

Kylie head was in turmoil as her heart was beating fast following the doctor outside. Watching her walk she noticed how taut her body was and how gracefully she walked. Feelings were stirring inside of her that could only be called lust. Once the cool night air hit her, Kylie became focused. She

touched LJ's arm and said. "You can do better than that, LJ." Her eyes were casting a glare in the direction of the singer.

LJ took her by the arm and led her to the side of the building. "I can do better? With who, you?" Her voice sounded irritated and somewhat menacing.

Kylie looked into the clear blue eyes and whispered. "Yes."

LJ pulled her close and kissed her deeply. "Is that what you want?"

Again Kylie whispered. "Yes." And put her arms around LJ's neck and drew her in for a kiss. Never in her life had she felt so alive, she wanted this woman in her bed.

LJ pulled herself away. "It will never happen." She said as she turned to leave.

"Why?" was all Kylie could manage as she saw LJ take Cassie by the arm and lead her to a nearby car.

* * *

Standing at the door to the museum, Kylie debated with herself about going inside. Just thinking about her actions on Friday night flushed her face. The remembered feel of LJ's kiss still fresh in her mind. How could she ever face LJ again? *What a fool I was!* She thought as she sighed deeply before getting out of the car.

Once inside, she quickly hung up her jacket in her locker and headed for the table in the workroom. If she kept a low profile maybe LJ wouldn't see her or her embarrassment. No such luck, of course, for there at the table was one Dr. LJ Evans.

Kylie could feel the hot flush of redness cover her face as LJ turned in her direction. "Good morning. Didn't expect to see you in here this early." Kylie managed as she avoided looking at the doctor going straight to her current project and began working immediately.

LJ followed her. "Is this the piece you had trouble with on Friday?" she asked.

"Yes, it seems to be missing some parts." She said, still avoiding those blue eyes.

LJ picked up a drawing pencil and started to sketch something. "You see, it's suppose to look something like this. You have to look beyond what you think you see to what is...kind of like looking outside the box. If you haven't any preconceived ideas of what it is and just look at the parts for what they are...parts...then you may have an easier time of it. From what I can see there is not enough to make a complete piece. Why don't you try and form something that looks like this and then see what you need. It's not often that we can find all the pieces like you did before."

LJ was so close to her that she wanted to take her in her arms. But, the bitter disappointment of Friday was still fresh in her mind and she wouldn't be doing that again anytime soon. "I see I will try that. Thank you."

Putting the fragile fragments down LJ moved to another area. "When you're done with that I want you to look over here and see what you can do."

Kylie shook her head in acknowledgement then watched as LJ left the room. *What just happened?* She asked herself. *It is as though Friday never happened.* Raising her eyebrows she thought, *okay, I can live with that.* Then she went back to her work until she heard the familiar footsteps bringing lunch.

* * *

The time flew by and before she knew it she had been working at the museum for several months. The amount of completed pieces was staggering, as they just seemed to fall into place. Kylie couldn't help but notice LJ was looking haggard with dark circles around her eyes. She had been working long hours trying to find the meaning of the symbol that kept showing up on many of the artifacts.

"Hey, are you okay?" she asked.

LJ turned her head and actually smiled. "Nothing that a week's sleep won't cure."

Kylie's heart went out to the woman, not out of lust or want or need but out of genuine caring. "Why don't you give yourself permission to take a night off and come home with me and have a good home cooked meal. Bet it's been a while since you had one of those."

The doctor leaned back in her chair and sighed then closed her eyes. "I would like that very much. Thank you." She swiveled around in her chair. "Want me to bring anything?"

Kylie couldn't help the goofy grin that found its way to her face. "Nope. You aren't a picky eater are you?" She asked in a playful way.

Once again LJ smiled, albeit a small smile, but it was definitely a smile. "I have sat in the jungle and eaten bugs. Don't think there is anything you can serve I won't eat."

"Good, is six okay with you?"

"I will be there." Then, she turned back to her desk and the volumes there only to add, "Um, Kylie, will I need a map to get there?"

Laughing Kylie replied. "Hey, you have hacked your way through dense undergrowth I bet you can find your way to my home."

Then she laughed as she left the room and began planning the meal. *Pick up Allie, go to the grocery store, cook dinner and all by six? I must be out of my mind!* She thought, laughing all the way to her car.

* * *

Dinner consisted of baked chicken, saffron rice and a salad. It was an easy meal that didn't take very long to make. Kylie was not foolish enough to think LJ would actually show up...she knew what it was like to get involved and forget the time. But, she did have everything ready just in case.

Precisely at six o'clock the doorbell rang. Kylie's heart skipped a beat as she headed for the door only to be passed by Allie. "I'll get it, Mommy." She said as she raced for the door. Opening it she said, "Hi, my name is Allie, who are you?"

Standing back somewhat in the shadows Kylie watched as LJ uncharacteristically squatted down and held out her hand. "Hi, Allie, my name is LJ."

Kylie moved towards the door. "Hi, glad you could make it. I see you have already met my daughter." A happy smile crossed her face. "Come on in, dinner is almost ready. Are you hungry?"

As LJ moved inside Allie quickly grabbed her hand. "Want to come see my Barbie's?" The child asked hopefully.

It was clear that LJ didn't know what to say or do. "Hmm, why don't I help your Mom first then we can take a look." She seemed to be trying her best while clearly out of her element.

"Allie, why don't you go wash up for dinner." Kylie gently touched her daughter's shoulder. "Then after dinner you can bring one doll down to show our guest."

Allie was all smiles. "Okay, Mommy."

"Sorry about that...I think she likes you. Do you want anything to drink?" Kylie was smiling at LJ. "Come on in and have a seat, dinner will be ready as soon as I put it on the table." She was babbling but couldn't help it; nervous couldn't begin to describe how she felt at that moment.

LJ stood there for a minute as if she were trying to solve a problem that she didn't have all the numbers to. "Would you like some help?"

"Sure come on, I can always use some help."

Dinner was a rather strange affair, as both women seemed to be searching for something to say though Allie monopolized the conversation. Leave it to an almost seven year old to keep everything lively. Once dinner was over Allie grabbed LJ's hand and said, "Come on." Starting for the stairs and her Barbie collection.

"Allie, I don't think Dr. Evans wants..."

"It's okay, I don't mind." With that the cold as ice Dr. LJ Evans headed up the stairs.

Little kids and puppies always thaw the coldest of hearts, Kylie thought as she stood there shaking her head. "I do believe behind that icy exterior is a heart of mush. Wonders never cease to amaze." She said as she began clearing the table.

Sitting in the living room, Kylie could hear the sounds of Allie's laughter and the low tones of LJ. They had been upstairs for twenty minutes and she was debating on whether to go up and see what was happening when she saw them heading down the stairs with Allie in LJ's arms.

"Looks like you two had a good time with the Barbie's." She said.

"Mommy, she is a really good Barbie player. Can she come back and play with me again?"

"We'll see pumpkin." Kylie bent down and gave her daughter a hug and a kiss. "Now why don't you get ready for bed then I will tuck you in."

"But, Mommy..." The child began to whine.

"No, but, Allie, you know the rules. Now go and get ready for bed."

"Okay." Allie pulled a pathetic face as she headed back up the stairs only to turn around and say, "Will you tuck me in too?" She looked pitiful as she pulled a face for LJ.

A genuine smile crossed LJ's face. "Sure I will, Allie."

After Allie was tucked in a calm quiet filled the house while LJ and Kylie sat on the sofa drinking coffee.

Kylie bent to get her cup from the table at the same time as LJ and their hands touched. That was all that was needed as next their eyes met then their lips.

Explosions of all kinds were going off inside of Kylie. She wanted this woman; there was no doubt about that. As the kiss intensified she found herself lost in feelings and needs she had never known. "Make love to me...please." Her raspy voice cried out.

The kisses continued to intensify until LJ pulled away. "I can't."

"Yes, please, yes." She wasn't getting away, not this time!

In a split second LJ was standing seemingly distancing herself from Kylie. "I can't, I just can't."

"But you could with that singer? What is wrong with me? If its because I work for you, I'll quit." Kylie was confused.

"You don't understand. The singer means nothing to me. You deserve better and I can't give it to you."

"That isn't good enough. Why, LJ, why?"

"Kylie, you are asking me to climb to the top of Kukulcan's Pyramid and I am telling you I don't have any feet but you still want me to climb the 365 steps. I just can't, don't you see that?"

Kylie was now crying. "All I can see is that you don't want me."

LJ sat back down as blue captured green watery eyes. "Kylie, you are not a one night stand...you're forever and I just can't give you that." She pulled the distraught woman into her arms and just held her close.

Kylie sank into the strong arms and sobbed understanding what LJ was saying but unable to accept it as final. *Tomorrow is another day and I will find a way*, she thought as she closed her eyes.

[Continued in Part 2...](#)

Feedback is always appreciated

Please let me know what you think. Thank you. eorielly@yahoo.com

END OF PART ONE

[The Athenaeum's Scroll Archive](#)

Part Two

LJ's Story

To understand LJ Evans one needs to go back to her beginnings. She spent the first nine years of her life in a small west Texas town where doors were never locked and everyone knew everyone. When she was nine years old her family moved to small, very wealthy community outside of New York City. Everything was different there and that had shaped her life forever.

The first day in her new school was her last. Entering the classroom the teacher asked her name. "My name is Lucinda Jane Evans." After all, that was what she had always been called and why should this be any different.

The teacher replied with a sweet smile and kind voice, "Nice to meet you, Lucy, I'm Mrs. Parker. Why don't you take that empty seat over there."

Blue eyes pierced the teacher. "My name is Lucinda Jane, not Lucy!"

The teacher was taken aback by the child but condescended to her wishes. "Okay, Lucinda Jane, please take that empty seat."

Later on in the morning while at recess she was surrounded by other schoolmates and taunted. "Lucy, Lucy is a goosey"...and, "my name is Lucinda Jane not Lucy, Lucy." Laughing the children continued the same at lunchtime.

Arriving home, Lucinda Jane told her parents she would never go back to that school and she never did. From that time on she was called LJ and at the age of sixteen legally changed her name. Her thick skin and aloofness remained with her until college when she met and fell in love with a classmate, Holly.

Holly was patient, kind and loving. Soon she was able to break down all the barriers LJ had set up and found the way to her heart. They were both passionate about archeology and spent many an hour at the Indian digs near the University. Holly was so full of life and so much fun to be with that LJ was certain she would spend the rest of her life with her.

Unfortunately life has a way of throwing curveballs and LJ and Holly had no free pass. It was the summer of their senior year at a dig in Mexico that...

"LJ, don't!" squealed Holly. "I need to go get the drinking water for the camp...today is my turn."

"The water can wait a bit longer, don't you think?" LJ asked as she ran a finger lazily over a taut nipple. "You know you can't resist my charms." She purred.

Smiling Holly pulled the sheet up over their heads. "No, I never could."

"Holly, it's your turn to get the water so it is time to get out of bed lazybones." A voice called from outside their tent.

LJ collapsed on top of her lover. "Don't go." She pleaded.

"Tell you what. You hold that thought and I will be back shortly and we can pick up where we left off." She nuzzled the tempting neck. "I'll go so fast you won't have a chance to miss me."

LJ rolled over. "I'll hold you to that so I suggest you get a move on cause I'm timing you. Hey, you want me to go with you and help?"

"Always my protector." She whispered climbing over the tantalizing woman as she stole one last kiss. "I'll be fine. Go back to sleep so I can wake you when I return." She winked before hurriedly putting on her clothes.

LJ stretched her long frame and rested her head on the fingers linked behind it. A smile of joy crossed her face as she fell asleep. Waking with a start she called out, "Holly." Then looking at the clock she was alarmed that it had been over an hour since she had been gone.

Quickly getting up and dressing she exited the tent and began looking around. Satisfied that Holly was nowhere in site she went to the dig and asked if anyone had seen her. They hadn't. "She went for water over an hour ago. She's missing, we need to find her!" She shouted to the others.

Fifteen minutes later they found her lying on the path writhing in pain. What happened was evident by the two fang marks on her swollen leg. Swiftly she was carried back to camp and the anti-venom medicine she desperately needed.

Sitting by her side LJ held Holly's hand as tears cascaded down her cheeks. *If only I had gone with her. What an idiot I was to let her go alone. God, please don't let her die.* She prayed.

Twenty minutes later Holly opened her eyes and smiled at the vision before her. "LJ." She whispered.

"Holly, thank God." She said as she bent down to kiss her cheek. "You had me worried to death. Thank God you are going to be okay." Tears were more abundant now realizing how close she came to losing the love of her life.

Once again Holly whispered. "LJ, I love you and I'll wait for you." Then she closed her eyes and passed peacefully from this life.

LJ sat there disbelieving what had happened. She can't be gone...she was just speaking to me. "Come on baby, wake up and tell me this is all a nightmare." She pleaded but she knew it wasn't; her heart ached and she knew she was alone in the world.

It was then that her heart turned to ice vowing never to let another in. Her work would become her compensation for the emptiness in her life.

* * *

The summer's dig in Peru had been a great success. LJ returned with a treasure trove of relics the likes of which she had never seen before. To her great dismay, her assistant of five months quit leaving her to fend for herself. The job had been posted and she interviewed several people but never could quite find the right one.

"Listen, LJ, if you are going to get any help you need to not be so hard on the applicants." Rob Ludlow, the director of the museum, said to her.

"I will not have some lazy ass come to work here. All I have seen are people thinking this is a no-brainer job. They are either stupid or lazy or both. I will not have that! I will keep interviewing until the right one comes along. My research is far too important to trust it to some idiot looking for a free ride."

Rob shook his head. "Did it ever occur to you that you have spent so much time with the dead that you have forgotten how to be human? LJ, you are not going to find anyone if you treat them as you did your last assistant. Can't you try a little kindness?" If she weren't such a valuable commodity he would have let her go long ago.

"Look around you, there are people working here that don't have a problem with me." LJ was annoyed with the man...*who is he to be telling me who to hire? I know what I need!*

"Only because they have no direct contact with you. I have a meeting with a potential candidate at eleven then I'll send them down to you. You be nice...this one could be just what you need."

LJ watched him walk away and muttered. "Like you have any idea about what I need."

* * *

The fax arrived and the doctor looked it over quickly. *Sure, Rob this is just what I need...someone with no experience.* She thought as she put the paper back down and resumed her work.

LJ was deep in research as she heard her name. "Dr. Evans?" a female voice called out.

"Over here."

Hearing footsteps LJ turned her head to see a small woman with short blonde hair and striking good looks. *Hmm, she thought, not bad, not bad at all.*

"Dr. Evans?" The woman spoke in a nervous yet clear voice.

"Mrs. Wilcox, take a seat and we can get started." LJ looked the woman over once again sizing her up as she would an archeological site.

"Certainly." Was the woman's halting response.

LJ knew she had seen the resume but where she put it she hadn't a clue so she moved things around on her desk until she found it. Looking at it again she remembered what had struck her the most about it and decided to start there. "Tell me, Mrs. Wilcox, do you feel like a falling star?"

"I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean."

Seeing the confused look on the face across from her, LJ thought, *not too bright on the uptake*. Sighing she continued. "This resume' of yours states that you were valedictorian in high school and graduated cum laude from the university then nothing after that. You apparently had a bright future that faded."

Inwardly LJ smiled as she could see she had hit a nerve. "I consider taking care of my child a bright future."

Good comeback she thought before she continued. "I see you took extensive courses in archeology and even did some field work. Can I assume you know about cataloguing and the care of antiquities?"

"Yes, I spent one field experience in Mexico unearthing Mayan ruins. I learned a great deal about documentation and the proper handling and restoring of finds. It is tedious work but the rewards are worth it." Looking at the doctor the woman smiled and added. "You need to be a good puzzle person."

LJ nodded her head liking how the woman spoke and the presence she had. There were still some troubling areas that needed to be discussed though, one being the child. "If your child is sick can I expect you to take time off to be *mommy?*"

"I don't think that is an appropriate question to be asking, Dr. Evans." The woman said irritated with the inquiry.

"I need to know if I can count on you being here, Mrs. Wilcox. The work I am doing is extremely important; I need reliable help." LJ knew she was treading on thin ice asking questions that most likely could be construed as bias.

"Of course. My parents live here in town and are very supportive. They will take care of my daughter if she is ill or has school days off. I have also done

extensive volunteer work and you could ask them how reliable I am...I've never missed a day."

LJ was playing her cards close to the vest knowing that she never wanted to give anyone the upper hand. Listening to the woman answer the questions LJ was struck by her composure and reticence under fire. She answered everything clearly and concisely challenging only when needed.

However, one last question needed to be answered. The woman had a bright future that faded when she married and the way LJ saw it there could only be one reason for that...the husband. *So why has he allowed her to seek employment now?* She wondered...*the only way to find out is to ask.* So she did.

"What does your husband think of your working?"

"He died eight months ago. It is just Allie and myself now."

This was a turn of events LJ hadn't considered. Judging by her address she certainly wasn't in need of money so *why does she want a job?* Mulling this over for a moment LJ decided to ask the next most logical question. "Have you decided to start working so you can find yourself another man then quit the job?"

What happened next was clearly not what LJ expected. "How dare you ask that question, Dr. Evans? Not only is it inappropriate, it really is none of your business." With that she got up from the chair and headed for the door.

Watching the woman walk briskly between the shelves LJ smiled to herself saying. "I do believe I have found the perfect person." With that she picked up her phone and dialed Rob Ludlow's office to have him offer Mrs. Wilcox the job. Finding him not there she left a message for him to get back to her.

Ten minutes later LJ once again heard footsteps coming her way. Looking up she saw Rob and thought he must have gotten her message and came to see her personally. As he got closer the look on his face told her this wasn't going to be a friendly social call.

"Rob, what brings you to my neck of the woods?" She asked trying to test the waters.

Rob just stood there with a scowl on his face as he tried to compose himself before speaking.

Dealing with the problem directly LJ said, "I really was impressed with Mrs. Wilcox and would like to offer her the job. If that is all right with you."

Rob was stunned at her comment. "Excuse me? Are you talking about the woman that felt the need to walk out on her interview with you?"

"Yep, she has a backbone and I like that. When can she start?"

He couldn't believe this woman. "Exactly what makes you think she wants the job after you browbeat and intimidated her? That is absolutely unacceptable, Dr. Evans."

Oops, he said Dr. Evans, which meant she was in trouble and she had to think fast. "Rob, the work I do is very tedious and sometimes downright boring. The rewards outweigh all of that. I knew I wanted to hire Mrs. Wilcox after her first reply but I needed to have all my questions answered." She took a breath trying to collect her thoughts enough to make this convincing. "I needed to know how far I could push her in order to know if she is up for the job. I must say she passed with flying colors in all areas."

"That still doesn't resolve the fact that she walked out and you made no attempt to stop her. Do you have any idea how bad that makes this museum look? And, frankly, I am not certain she wants to work for you."

Sometimes in life it is necessary to eat humble pie to get what you want. "Rob, you are right, I was way out of order. Would you like me to call Mrs. Wilcox and apologize? I really want her to work with me."

"No, let me do it. I'm not sure she would welcome your call. I'll get back to you with her reply." He began to leave but turned around and said. "LJ, you and I have been through a lot of years together so I feel I can say this to you. Let it go and join the world of the living." Then he left.

No, she wouldn't change anything. He didn't have any idea of how much pain she was in or had been in. She liked herself and her life just as it was and that is how it would stay.

A half hour later her phone rang. "You're in luck. She is coming back to fill out the forms. I will call you when she gets here to come to my office. I expect you to be pleasant and kind, LJ. If you need an assistant as bad as you say you will be on your best behavior."

LJ didn't even get a chance to speak as Rob hung up as soon as he was done speaking. *Hey, I can do pleasant and kind. Yes, she would do everything possible to keep the woman happy for she needed Mrs. Wilcox just as badly as she suspected the woman needed to be here.*

* * *

As soon as the call came, LJ headed quickly for the director's office. Opening the door, she saw Mrs. Wilcox sitting there and smiling in her direction. Clearly out of her element, she didn't know what to do other than take a seat and wait. Sitting across from the woman, LJ noticed once again how strikingly beautiful she was. The linen suit she wore hugged nicely to the taut body and the color accentuated the eyes, which she thought were green. *Dare I speak?* She thought, knowing she was on thin ice with Rob, she decided not to take the chance. Fortunately, he entered the room and motioned for them to his office.

Once inside they all sat down around a small conference table making it impossible for Kylie or LJ to sit anywhere but next to or across from each other.

"Mrs. Wilcox, thank you for coming back." He began. "We need to talk with you about hours and salary then you and Dr. Evans need to get together and work out what your job responsibilities will be."

In this setting the woman seemed soft and...tempting. LJ had to admit she found herself attracted to her although she was certain she didn't have a snowballs chance in hell with her. Suddenly, she realized it was her turn to

she speak and cleared her throat in an attempt to collect her thoughts. What she didn't quite comprehend is why she was daydreaming; that was completely out of character.

"Rob, I am very impressed with Mrs. Wilcox's knowledge and enthusiasm. I know we have a starting salary based on experience and I suggest we start her off at the top rate. Also, since she has a daughter she needs to get off to school, I suggest her hours be from nine to four with a half hour paid lunch."

"That idea sounds good to me, LJ. What do you think Mrs. Wilcox?"

The woman just sat there seemingly staring at LJ as if she were having a seizure of some sort.

"Mrs. Wilcox?" Rob said loudly.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, that is most generous of you both. I am in shock; I can't believe what is happening. Thank you, Dr. Evans, for your kindness, now I don't have to burden my parents so much. Thank you." Her eyes became fixed on LJ's as she smiled.

"Great, now since that is done you two can head down to the tombs." Rob dismissed the women as he got up and went back to his desk.

"Right, shall we go, Mrs. Wilcox?" LJ said as she got up and headed for the door.

"Sure." Kylie said as she followed.

* * *

As they entered the workroom LJ pointed to a locker. "You can use that one for your coat and personal belongings. If you want a lock you will have to purchase your own. Down here is the area where you will spend most of your time."

LJ looked over the worktable with pride. This was her idea, her study, and her find and when she finished, it would redefine Mayan history she was sure. The summer's dig to the never before explored site was a bevy of artifacts revealing glyphs never seen before. "I know my way is a bit unconventional but I like things visual so I can recall exactly the time each item was found. What I need you to start with are making sure all the items match up with the catalog. After that, we will see if we can create any complete or nearly complete items."

"I want to thank you for your generosity towards me. I really appreciate it." Kylie said.

For LJ this type of praise was foreign. She expected people to do their job; as far as she was concerned a job well done was reward enough. Now, here was this woman thanking her for being generous which was a word she never associated with herself. "We shall see how grateful you are after a week, Mrs. Wilcox. I am expecting you to start as soon as possible, which means tomorrow."

"Yes, I expect we will. Any chance you could call me Kylie? Mrs. Wilcox sounds like my mother in law." LJ listened but did not hear. "Will tomorrow around noon be okay? I have some things I need to take care of before I begin working."

LJ couldn't believe this woman. Here she went out of her way to make sure her child was taken care of and now she wants to start at her pace.

Kylie noticed the look of disapproval. "Listen, I just called for an interview at eight forty-five this morning. I need to arrange for my daughter and reorganize my life. I can't do that overnight." Green bore into blue.

Shaking her head, LJ took a moment before answering. *Exactly what do I do now? Shit, I hate this type of thing; give me artifacts any day!* "Why don't you plan to start Wednesday?" *Damn this being nice is for the birds.* "I will see you then." Adding, "Glad you'll be working here."

LJ heard the woman say, "Sure, see you then." After she had already turned to go back to her office.

* * *

Wednesday came and for some reason LJ found herself anxious for the arrival of her new assistant. Kylie Wilcox did something no one had done to her in a long time...made her sit up and take notice. For LJ, that was very disconcerting and found herself desperately trying to distance herself from the woman by being cold and unresponsive.

Unlocking the side door she wondered if Kylie would arrive early. *My guess is she will, seems like the type. Better make myself scarce for a while...I don't want her thinking I'm sitting around waiting for her.* With that she headed up the stairs to work on a new display she was setting up.

Sometime in the morning LJ took a moment to call the deli down the street to have a sandwich and salad delivered by eleven forty-five. Then she walked quietly to the workroom stopping at the doorway to watch her latest assistant. She was pleasantly surprised to see Kylie engrossed in her work. *I didn't think she was the type to wait around for me to tell her what to do and when to start.* She thought to herself as she left the area. *Good choice all around.*

The deli order was delivered and LJ headed down the stairs to the workroom. It amused her to be standing there with bag in hand as Kylie worked seemingly unaware of her presence. Finally the woman lifted her head with a puzzled look on her face.

"Time for lunch. I didn't know what you would want so I brought a turkey sandwich and a salad."

It was clear that Kylie didn't know what to make of her standing there. *Shit I choose something she doesn't like.* "Don't you like what I brought?"

"No, I mean yes, I do like it, I just didn't know it was already lunch time. Let me get my wallet and I'll pay you."

The comment took LJ back a little, as she never intended Kylie to pay for lunch. Confusion rattled her brain before she managed to say, "No money

needed, this is a benefit of the job." *This being nice is for the birds. What should I do now?*

"Thank you. I lost track of time."

There was that smile again and LJ had a hard time keeping herself from trying to smile back. She placed the bag on a nearby chair and walked towards the worktable. "Have you found any discrepancies? My team arranged all this after we got back from Peru last summer."

"None so far. This is so fascinating...to think that someone long ago held the very piece in their hand that I am. Do you know anything about them yet?"

Cocking her head, LJ couldn't help but smile at this small woman's enthusiasm. "I think the site we found was a Mayan village. When the pieces start fitting together we will know more. The jungles of Peru hold many secrets it is just a matter of finding them and deciphering the clues we get. Any one of these items could hold the key to unlocking the mystery that surrounds their disappearance although most of the people in Peru are of Inca descendant in some way." She loved talking about her work and try as she may could not hide the passion she felt about it.

"I find this all so exciting. I can remember the first time I found a cache of arrow and spearheads. It was such a thrill."

Standing there for a moment, LJ was filled with the need to stay and talk with Kylie all day. But, that was an unacceptable option. "Hope you enjoy your lunch." Is all she managed to say before leaving.

Over the next two days LJ would arrive in the workroom with lunch, check out what Kylie had done then leave before she could be drawn into a conversation. The woman unnerved her and that was sending up all sorts of red flags to keep away.

* * *

Friday afternoon, as with the past two days, LJ watched as Kylie left the museum. Heading back to her desk she flipped through some books trying to

concentrate on her research. As it had everyday since the blonde's arrival, she found it difficult to stay focused.

Getting up she began pacing, trying to get a handle on the agitation she was feeling. "This has got to stop!" She said out loud to all the stored relics in the room. Sitting once again her mind drifted back to happier times recalling Holly and how wonderful it felt to hold her. That's when she knew exactly what she needed.

Parking her truck in the crowded lot, LJ walked towards Rusty's and a night of pleasure. Entering the swinging doors she nodded to the bartender who handed her the usual. Perching herself on a table just inside the doorway she surveyed the crowd just as a fat slob of a man approached her.

"Hey baby, good to see you here tonight. Can I buy you another one?"

Without even looking at the man, LJ said, "Get lost."

The man continued. "Why don't you come with me honey and I can show you a real good time." The man was leering at her, his breath stale with beer and cigarettes.

Suddenly, ice cold blue orbs focused on him as she grabbed his balls and squeezed hard. The man's face turned red as he grimaced in pain. "I said, get lost!" Then she gave one last hard squeeze before letting go.

The man turned and walked slowly away trying not to grab himself in an effort to stop the pain.

Just then the band began playing and LJ took a long swallow of her beer gazing at the singer as she lost herself in the music.

When the band took a break LJ saw the lead singer, Cassie coming her way. *Yep, she is just what I need.* She thought as she felt herself becoming aroused.

"Hey lover, glad to see you here tonight." The singer purred as she leaned into the doctor. "Mmm, you smell so good." Cassie rubbed her body against

LJ's legs as she bent to whisper in her ear. "What do you say we get out of here? I can't wait to feel you inside me."

LJ was on fire, throbbing with desire as she felt the woman's hot breath in her ear. Taking Cassie's hand she followed her outside to the truck. Getting inside they embraced in a flurry of passion as hands began groping and touching.

Stopping the advances of the singer, LJ whispered. "No, let me." Then she ripped at the shirt as her mouth closed around the taut waiting nipple pierced with a ring. Her teeth grabbed hold of the golden orb and tugged until the singer squealed in delight. Then her hand went under Cassie's skirt and was pleased there were no panties to deal with. Jamming her fingers inside she pumped hard and fast. *This is just what I need...an impersonal, mind blowing fuck.* She thought as she reveled in the singer's moans for more.

Cassie came up for air trying hard to breath after eating the doctor into an explosion of fluids and sounds. "Mmm, you take my breath away, lover. You like the feel of my tongue ball against your clit, don't you?"

LJ could only grunt as she too gasped for air. The effect the tongue piercing had on her was amazing. It drove her to distraction and that was what she needed! To rid her of the tension she had been feeling over the last few days. All because of the green eyed blonde that even now was invading her thoughts.

Cassie closed in on the doctor again, ready for more. LJ pushed her away. "Don't you have some singing to do?" she said, her voice cold and distant.

The look on the singer's face said it all. She knew it was over and there wouldn't be more. It was always like that. "You know one day you're going to want me and I am going to say no."

LJ snickered. "That will never happen and you know it. Now run along." Pulling her jeans up she zipped them then put the key in the ignition and started up the truck. Staring coldly at the singer she raised an eyebrow. "I said go."

As Cassie walked away LJ put it in gear and started down the street giving the bar one last glance before heading into the dark of the night alone.

* * *

Monday came around and LJ found herself once again watching and listening for the blonde to arrive. As noon approached butterflies began to flutter around in her stomach. She tried desperately to keep her distance from Kylie but longed to just feel her close.

With the woman's departure each day LJ felt a pang of loss and sorrow. She was confused and upset with herself for allowing anyone to have an effect on her. At the end of each day she resolved not to allow her emotions to run unchecked again. She meant it too until she heard the door open each morning.

It was several weeks later when she entered the workroom and Kylie greeted her with a broad smile and excitement. "Look, LJ, I finally have a whole one."

Reaching over LJ brushed Kylie's hand and she had to catch her breath. For a moment blue and green held each other before letting go. Taking the bowl in her hand, LJ began examining it. "What do you make of these markings? They're rather odd and different from anything I've seen before." Her calloused finger pointed to a strange marking that looked almost like a sun symbol but not quite.

"I noticed that too and checked to make sure part of it wasn't missing. It's intact. Do you think it is Incan?" Kylie moved to get a better view.

Picking up a magnifying glass LJ leaned in closer as their heads almost touched. Again she had to close her eyes to gather her wits. Being so close to the small woman made her senses peak and it took all she had not to act on those feelings. Focusing only on the bowl was her only way of keeping herself in check. "I think we have a significant find here." Turning towards Kylie she was puzzled by the look on the blonde's face. "I brought you a

chicken Caesar salad today. When you are done, see what else you can come up with in that area."

LJ took the opportunity to leave the work area quickly. Once she was out of the room she leaned back against the cool tiles of the wall. *Damn, what am I getting myself into?* Shaking her head and muttering to herself she went back to her office. *Get a grip on yourself.*

As always, LJ was watching for Kylie to leave and became a bit concerned when four thirty rolled around. She was about to go and check on her when she heard the familiar footsteps. Quickly she grabbed the reconstructed bowl and began looking intently at it.

"I'm leaving now. I think I may be on to another piece but right now my eyes are too tired to focus."

LJ looked up and stretched. "Yeah, that can happen. Sometimes you just need to walk away to get refocused." There were those green eyes again and the smile that almost made LJ smile back. She turned quickly back to the bowl afraid her eyes would betray her true feelings. As she heard Kylie leaving she began to breath easier...but not for long.

"LJ, would you like to have dinner with Allie and me?"

Closing her eyes, to try once again to gain control of herself, she sighed. "I can't tonight, some other time maybe."

"Sure." Kylie responded.

Watching the blonde walk away LJ's heart sank. *It can never happen.* She thought with a bit of sadness in the words.

* * *

It had been another emotional week for LJ. Watching Kylie leave she vowed to stop her stupid schoolgirl ways. *Mooning over someone who would never care about me like that...what is wrong with me? REALITY Lucinda Jane, don't you get it?*

Once again she began pacing and chastising herself for her perceived weakness. The little voice inside her head told her what she needed and she argued with it until she lost the battle. Leaving the museum she headed to her small apartment to get a shower and then go out. She knew where she would go and what she would do there and she loathed herself. But, she needed release, she needed to dominate and take and that was just what she would do.

Arriving at Rusty's she sat in her truck for a long time. With her window rolled down she could hear the mellow sounds of Cassie's voice. She knew what she required so she got out and headed for the swinging doors. Pausing for a moment she shook her head and thought, *you're pathetic*, before going inside.

The crowd was thinning out as the band prepared for their first break of the night. LJ just sat there as Cassie came up and leaned into her. "Thought you weren't going to do this anymore."

Cassie's lips lingered near LJ's ear running the gold ball over the lobe, as she said. "I thought you weren't coming back." Then she bit the lobe.

LJ's eyes were scanning the room while Cassie was having her way with the ear when she saw, but also felt, the beautiful green eyes on her. For a moment her heart seemed to stop while she tried to comprehend why Kylie would be here.

"Hey, LJ, I thought that was you." Kylie said as she approached the couple.

Standing up and pushing Cassie aside, LJ found herself at a loss for words. "It's me alright." Then she felt Cassie by her side again as if she were protecting her territory. "Wait outside for me." She commanded, irritated by the singer. "Do you come here often? Doesn't seem like your kind of place." It was strange to see this beautiful woman in a place like this.

"And, just what would my kind of place be?" Kylie's face was serious before she added. "My friends and I used to come here all the time so tonight I thought I would see if it had changed any."

"Has it?"

"Not really...well, you're here." Hearing the laugh and seeing the beautiful smile LJ responded with a smile of her own.

"I don't come here often myself, only when I am in the mood." *I wonder what would happen if she knew what that mood entails?* LJ asked herself as she slowly eyed the blonde.

"It was nice seeing you, LJ." The blonde was turning to go and LJ felt anxiety at the thought of her leaving.

"Are you leaving? I'll walk out with you." LJ caught up with her and headed to the door also. Her heart was racing. *Shit, Cassie is out there waiting for me. Damn it!* It was too late to do anything as the doors swung open and they walked out into the night air.

Once outside she felt Kylie touch her arm. "You can do better than that, LJ." She said as her eyes glanced at the singer.

LJ couldn't believe her ears. She took Kylie's arm and led her to the side of the building. Looking directly into the green eyes she asked. "I can do better? With who, you?" She didn't mean to sound so angry but LJ was clearly out of her element here and that scared her.

Then she heard the word, "Yes."

LJ pulled her close and kissed her deeply. "Is that what you want?"

"Yes." Was said again as the small blonde pulled her in for another penetrating kiss.

All the bells and whistles were going off in her head. "It will never happen." Inside she was shaking like a leaf so afraid to let her true emotions show...terrified of what might happen if she did.

"Why?" The woman asked as LJ turned away.

Walking over to Cassie, LJ grabbed her by the hand and began swiftly walking away dragging the singer towards her car. Once the car door shut she roughly kissed the singer as she lifted up her skirt and jammed three fingers inside. Cassie tried to do the same but LJ's strong hand pulled her away as she said, "NO!" Cassie's orgasm came hard and fast but LJ didn't let up. "Again, come again for me." She commanded as she began once more to pump the woman hard. When Cassie cried out, "Stop you're hurting me." LJ took her fingers out and wiped them on the singer's skirt. Opening the door, she got out only to turn back. "I won't be back ever again." She said as she slammed the door shut. Hanging her head she headed for her truck and the lonely night with her shame.

* * *

Looking in the bathroom mirror LJ wondered how her life had gotten so out of control. For the last fifteen years she found no need to have friends or even be pleasant to people. All she needed was her work and an occasional impersonal liaison. Now she was confused, fetching lunches and worrying about another human being.

"You have to get a grip on yourself." She said to the image in front of her.

"But, how do I do that?" the image argued back.

"You suck it up and rebuild your defenses, simple as that." She countered.

"I don't want to go back to being alone." Was the reply.

A tear began its way down her cheek as she thought of how lonely her life has been since Holly passed. Suddenly, she wiped the tear away and walked into her bedroom. Quickly, she changed into jeans and a t-shirt and put on her work boots. Gathering up her "dig" bag she headed for the door.

The university had a site south of the city where beginner students could dig and that is where she would go. There she could center herself again and find the answers she needed. Once there she could feel the healing sun on her back as she carefully dug looking for the past to find her future.

* * *

LJ arrived at work on Monday at six in the morning as she had everyday. The time in the field had cleared her mind and now her cool exterior was back in place. No more would she allow her emotions to rule her. She would conduct herself in a business like manner starting with making no mention of the previous Friday night.

Taking her coffee she entered the workroom looking for other clues that might lead to what the curious glyph meant. Finding what Kylie last worked on she inspected it and recognized why she had a problem. Then, she began picking up various photos and scrutinized them looking for something similar. So intent on what she was doing she didn't hear the footsteps.

"Good morning. Didn't expect to see you in here this early." Kylie's words were halting as she walked quickly to the area she had been working in on Friday.

LJ followed her. "Is this the piece you had trouble with?" she asked.

"Yes, it seems to be missing some pieces." The woman was clearly uncomfortable.

LJ fought the urge to sooth the woman's embarrassment. Instead she picked up a drawing pencil and started to sketch something. "You see, it is supposed to look something like this. You have to look beyond what you think you see to what is...kind of like looking outside the box. If you haven't any preconceived ideas of what it is and just look at the parts for what they are...parts...then you may have an easier time of it. From what I can see there is not enough to make a complete piece. Why don't you try and form something that looks like this and then see what you need. It is not often that we can find all the pieces like you did before."

"I see I will try that. Thank you."

One thing LJ realized over the weekend with the students was she hadn't taken any time to teach Kylie. She had courses and experience, but it was

limited and years had passed. It was time to act like a teacher and mentor and that is exactly what she intended to do.

Putting the fragile fragments down LJ moved to another area. "When you are done with that I want you to look over here and see what you can do."

With her new strategy in force LJ left the room only to return with lunch. Every time she entered the room she used it as a learning experience for Kylie. Yes, it was a plan she could live with.

* * *

The next few months became intense as more and more pieces were completed and the unknown symbol showed up on most of them. Long into the night LJ would work pouring over volume after volume trying to decipher its meaning. She would arrive at four in the morning so she could contact overseas colleagues and pick their brains.

She was exhausted and her brain was beginning to shut down, as she would find herself getting confused. The words *walk away from the problem* echoed in her ears. When she would become frustrated with a problem, Holly would take her by the hand and say those words. Her mind drifted back to happier times but was brought back to reality when she heard a voice.

"Hey, are you okay?" Kylie asked.

It was as if the small blonde was reading her mind. She turned her head in the direction of the voice and actually smiled. "Nothing that a week's sleep won't cure." LJ said as she closed her eyes realizing for the first time just how tired her mind and body were.

She was rewarded with the sincere, sweet, soft sounds of Kylie's voice. "Why don't you give yourself permission to take a night off and come home with me and have a good home cooked meal. Bet it's been a while since you had one of those."

Leaning back in her chair and sighing, she closed her eyes again. This woman, who LJ had been rude, nasty and cold towards, was speaking to her with

kindness and compassion. "I would like that very much. Thank you." Swiveling around in her chair she looked straight at Kylie. "Want me to bring anything?" She was rewarded with what could only be described as a goofy grin.

"Nope. You aren't a picky eater are you?" She asked with a playful tone.

LJ smirked at the notion of her eating habits being picky. "I have sat in the jungle and eaten bugs. Don't think there is anything you can serve I won't eat."

"Good, is six okay with you?"

"I will be there." She turned back to her research as Kylie left but added. "Um, Kylie, will I need a map to get there?"

Laughing Kylie replied. "Hey, you have hacked your way through dense undergrowth I bet you can find your way to my home."

Lifting her head she looked at the space that just moments before held the blonde. *How can she be nice to me after the horrible way I've treated her? No one ever cared about me like that except...*

* * *

LJ left shortly after Kylie and went to her small apartment to take a shower and clean up. On her way to Kylie's she considered stopping for wine but decided not to because one glass and she would be a goner.

Pulling her truck into the driveway of the house, she paused for a moment trying to convince herself she should just leave. The fact of the matter was she didn't want to leave; she wanted to go into the warm home and for a brief moment, find some peace.

Walking up to the door, LJ found herself feeling a sense of happiness. Waiting for the door to open she heard a small voice from inside say, "I'll get it Mommy."

Standing there, holding the knob was a small miniature version of Kylie. "Hi, my name is Allie, who are you?"

LJ couldn't help herself, she smiled broadly as she squatted down to the child's level and held out her hand. "Hi, Allie, my name is LJ."

Looking up she saw Kylie standing there looking more beautiful than LJ had ever seen her. "Hi, glad you could make it. I see you have already met my daughter." Smiling she added. "Come on in, dinner is almost ready. Are you hungry?"

Going inside LJ was shocked as Allie quickly grabbed her hand. "Want to come see my Barbie's?" Her green eyes were looking up in hope.

A feeling of fear coursed through LJ. Of all the dangers she had faced in her life nothing scared her like the thought of this child. "Hmm, why don't I help your Mom first then we can take a look."

"Allie, why don't you go wash up for dinner." Kylie gently touched her daughter's shoulder. "Then after dinner you can bring one doll down to show our guest."

Allie was all smiles. "Okay, Mommy."

"Sorry about that...I think she likes you. Do you want anything to drink?" Kylie was smiling. "Come on in and have a seat, dinner will be ready as soon as I put it on the table."

LJ didn't quite know what to do; being social was not one of her strong points. Taking a deep breath she spoke. "Would you like some help?"

"Sure come on, I can always use some help."

The food was wonderful. It had been longer than she could remember when she actually had a decent meal. She listened to the endless chatter of Allie and was surprised when she found it rather amusing instead of irritating.

She was not prepared, however, for the child grabbing her hand once dinner was over. "Come on." Starting for the stairs and her Barbie collection.

"Allie, I don't think Dr. Evans wants..."

"It's okay, I don't mind." LJ headed up the stairs wondering, *what the hell are Barbie's?*

Barbie, LJ found out, was a skinny, busty blonde clothes hog that always stood on her toes. Allie was animated as she put on a fashion show of the latest Barbie fashions.

"Allie, what do you say we go down and keep your mother company?"

The child's face lit up. "Mommy needs my company, she gets lonely and sometimes she cries. Will you carry me?" She asked hopefully.

"Sure I will." Picking the child up in her arms she headed down the stairs. LJ was feeling somewhat disturbed by the thought of Kylie crying.

"Looks like you two had a good time with the Barbie's." Kylie said as she smiled.

"Mommy, she is a really good Barbie player. Can she come back and play with me again?"

"We'll see pumpkin." Kylie bent down and gave the child a kiss and a hug. "Now why don't you get ready for bed then I will tuck you in."

"But, Mommy..." The child began to whine.

"No, butts, Allie, you know the rules. Now go and get ready for bed."

"Okay." Allie pulled a pathetic face as she headed back up the stairs only to turn around and say, "Will you tuck me in too?" She appeared pitiful as she looked at LJ.

"Sure I will, Allie." A feeling of warmth coursed through LJ.

LJ sat on the sofa with Kylie and for the first time in weeks she felt relaxed. This was just what she needed. Leaning forward to get her coffee cup she touched Kylie's hand when they both had the same idea. Moving her lips towards the quivering ones in front of her they kissed.

LJ found herself becoming lost in the kisses. Kylie felt so wonderful in her arms and she desperately needed to feel close to the blonde. She wanted this more than she ever wanted anything else. Then she heard the words...

"Make love to me...please." Kylie's raspy voice cried out.

Falling deeper into the kisses LJ began to move her hands over the trembling body. *How I want her* she thought as the kisses intensified. A little voice invaded her thoughts and suddenly she pulled back and said. "I can't."

"Yes, please, yes." A muffled, intense voice cried.

Everything inside LJ wanted to stay and make love to this woman but she knew it was wrong. Getting up she moved away from Kylie trying to make some distance between them. "I can't, I just can't."

"But you could with that singer? What is wrong with me? If it is because I work for you, I'll quit." It was clear Kylie didn't understand.

"You don't understand, the singer means nothing to me. You deserve better and I can't give it to you." She desperately tried to explain as her body was crying out to take the woman to bed.

"That isn't good enough. Why, LJ, why?"

"Kylie, you are asking me to climb to the top of Kukulcan's Pyramid and I am telling you I don't have any feet but you still want me to climb the 365 steps. I just can't, don't you see that?"

"All I can see is that you don't want me." She was crying and LJ hated herself for allowing things to get so out of hand.

LJ sat back down, took the blonde's hand and gazed into the watery green eyes. "Kylie, you are not a one night stand...you're forever and I just can't give you that."

Pulling Kylie close to her and holding her tight LJ closed her eyes as she wondered what she would do now. To do as her mind and her body wanted, she would have to totally commit to Kylie...if she did that, she would have to let go of the past and Holly. Could she do that? She needed time...

[Continued in Part 3](#)

Feedback is always appreciated

Please let me know what you think. Thank you. eorielly@yahoo.com

END OF PART Two

[The Athenaeum's Scroll Archive](#)

Part Three

Their Story

Carefully disengaging herself from the sleeping woman, LJ placed a woolen blanket over her. Picking up the coffee cups she took them to the kitchen where she rinsed them and put them in the dishwasher. Then she checked the doors to make sure they were locked. Next, she went upstairs to check on Allie, who had kicked her

covers off. Gently pulling the blankets back up LJ bent down and placed a soft kiss on her cheek. "Sleep well, little one." She whispered as she left the room.

Back downstairs she stood beside the couch and watched Kylie sleeping. "I wish I could give you what you want." Was spoken softly as she bent down and kissed her lightly on the lips. Standing there for a moment longer she sighed before heading for the door.

Her heart was heavy as she stepped into her truck. She hesitated before putting the key in the ignition wondering why she was doing this. *It would be so easy to stay. Why am I so afraid?* No answers came as she started her vehicle and headed home to her lonely apartment. Once she was there she stripped and crawled into bed falling asleep immediately as the physical, mental and emotional exhaustion finally claimed her.

* * *

Sometime in the middle of the night Kylie awoke with a start. Looking around her she wondered why she was on the couch. Then she gently touched her lips as she recalled how wonderful LJ's kisses felt. Getting up she folded the blanket and headed upstairs where she stripped and crawled into her large lonely bed. The next thing she knew her alarm was going off and it was time to face the day.

The drive to work was filled with confusing thoughts of LJ, her job and how she would once again face the woman. Walking down the hallway towards the workroom she noticed the door to the tombs and LJ's office was closed. In the several months she had worked there she could never recall a time when access to the room was not allowed.

Entering the workroom she found several notes about different pieces she had been working on that LJ had left...

K,

You will need to rework this piece. Note the right side is not fitting correctly. I think you should try to visualize the whole piece and realize it may not all be here.

LJ

K,

This is good work. Go to section 15A next.

U

Lost in her work Kylie didn't notice the time until her stomach began to rumble. A look of disappointment crossed her face as she saw it was past noon. Then her heart picked up a beat as she heard footsteps coming into the room. Looking up her face fell as a deliveryman came into view.

"You Wilcox?" the young man asked.

"Yes, who are you?" Kylie knew but so hoped she was wrong.

"Got a delivery here for you. Tuna on whole wheat with a side salad." He said as he handed her the bag then just stood there waiting.

"I didn't order that." Kylie informed the boy.

"Sure you did and it's been paid for." He replied as a quizzical look came across his face. "You are K. Wilcox, aren't you?"

Kylie's heart was crying as she realized what was going on. "Yes, I'm K. Wilcox." She said as she pulled a bill out of her pocket and handed it to him.

"Thank you, ma'am" He said as he turned to leave.

So, this is how it will be. Kylie thought as she placed the bag on a chair. She was no longer hungry.

* * *

LJ's heart was hammering as she heard Kylie's footstep going down the hall at the end of the day. She knew what she had to do as she ignored the ache in her heart. Distance from the blonde was needed and to LJ that meant complete isolation if she was to survive. *Survive to be alone*, her mind said to her, *are you sure that is what you want?* Maybe not what she wanted, but what must be done.

Waiting for another half hour LJ finally opened her door and strode down to the workroom. Her heart dropped some as she noticed the unopened bag resting on a chair. That could only mean Kylie hadn't eaten. Walking over to the table she noted

the work accomplished and that which had begun. Sitting at the table she began piecing together what looked like a vase of some sort. Several hours later she wrote a few notes for Kylie then picked up the bag and left.

Driving around aimlessly LJ found herself on Kylie's street parked in front of her house. She saw the warm glow of the lights and imagined Kylie and Allie inside laughing as they played Barbie's. Her mind drifted back to the night before as she recalled Allie's words...*she gets lonely and sometimes she cries*. A wayward thought crossed her mind, *is Kylie crying now because of me?*

Once again she looked at the house, and in the deepest recesses of her soul she longed to be there. A house and someone inside that loved her was a dream she held deep inside refusing to let it emerge. Putting her truck in gear she headed off down the street unaware that Kylie had been watching.

* * *

Sitting on the couch with tears cascading down her cheeks Kylie heard the sound of a truck. Her heart quickened as she thought maybe, just maybe, LJ was there. Peeking out of the window by the door she saw the familiar truck parked across the street. The light was poor but she could make out the silhouette of a woman. *Is she going to come to the door?* She thought hopefully. However, after ten minutes she saw the truck pull away and she was crestfallen. Tears once again rolled down her cheeks as she turned away.

"Mommy, why are you crying?" Allie stood on the stairs watching her mother.

Kylie looked up at her wonderful loving child. "Mommy is just sad right now, Sweetie."

Allie scrambled down the stairs and went to her mother. Snuggling she gave her mother a big hug and kiss. "I love you, Mommy, please don't be sad."

Kylie hugged her child close to her as the tears increased. "Thank you, pumpkin, I needed that. What do you say we go to bed early tonight?"

"Want me to stay with you, Mommy?"

Drying her tears Kylie answered, "Yes, I would like that very much. I love you, Allie, did you know that?"

Allie grasped her mother's hand as they turned out the lights and went upstairs. "You're the best mommy in the world."

* * *

The standoff was into its second week as both women withdrew into themselves. LJ was surprised to find a note under the door when she arrived for work.

LJ,
I have personal business to attend to and will not be in today. Dock me if you want.
K

LJ was reeling as her mind went into panic mode. *Is she interviewing for another job? Is she leaving me?* That thought sent an ache through her heart as she tried to reconcile what was happening. Turning, she walked hurriedly down the hall to the workroom and opened Kylie's locker. Her belongings were still there which brought a momentary relief to her.

Going over to the worktable she was amazed at the amount of work that was done. Scrunching her eyebrows together she wondered if the woman had spent the night. Picking up the object on the table LJ held it up to her cheek.

Closing her eyes she fantasized about Kylie sitting there putting this piece together. By holding it close to her it was as if she was touching the blonde. A sense of great sadness filled her being as she finally began to let the feelings she had for Kylie surface.

Kylie was leaving her, she was certain of that. She had no one to blame but herself. Turning she left the room still holding the relic in her hand...still holding on to Kylie.

* * *

At eleven thirty in the morning the restaurant was not very crowded as Linda waited for Kylie. She was surprised when her old friend called and asked if she

would have lunch with her. *Don't you have to work?* She asked. Only to receive a flippant reply...*not tomorrow.*

A blonde woman, she didn't recognize, was walking towards her. It wasn't until she was almost to the table when she realized it was Kylie. She looked awful to say the least. Her face was drawn and her eyes appeared to be sunken in. At the very least she must have lost ten or fifteen pounds...she was as thin as a rail.

"Kylie, what's wrong, has something happened?" Linda said with great concern for her friend.

"What, no hello, how ya doin?" Kylie knew she looked drawn but didn't realize how bad it must be until she saw the look of shock and horror on her friend's face.

"Hi, Kylie, how are you? No, don't tell me, I can see how you are and it is not good!"

Kylie flopped down into a chair next to Linda. Her sad eyes gazed at her friend for a long time. "Not doing too well, Linda. Not well at all." She finally said before lowering her eyes in an attempt to stop the tears from flowing.

Holding her friend's hand, Linda asked. "Want to go somewhere else and talk about it?" Her heart was aching for Kylie.

Shaking her head Kylie whispered, "No, in public I will force myself to hold it together."

Just then the waitress came to the table and asked if Kylie would like a drink. "She will have a cup of tea, and we both will have the quiche special." Linda answered then turned back to her friend.

Kylie smiled at her friend who always knew the right time to take charge. "Thank you, I don't think I can handle the decision on what to drink or eat."

"From the looks of it, you haven't been eating at all. Now, tell me, what is going on. Is it Allie or your parents...are they sick?"

The reply was a negative shake of the head as an errant tear escaped.

Linda's mind was in overdrive trying to think of what was going on. "You're coming up to the anniversary of Ted's passing, has that got you down?" She was sure that couldn't be it as months ago Kylie had confided in her about the marriage being mediocre at best. Not that Kylie didn't love him, she did but in her own way.

Again the reply was a shake of the head.

Squeezing the hand tighter Linda said. "Then what is it, Kylie? Please tell me."

Kylie lifted her head. "You know, when I called you I thought it would be so easy to tell you everything, but right now I can't seem to find the words."

Linda cocked her head. "Why not start at the beginning."

"My biggest fear is you will no longer be my friend."

Linda puzzled over the comment. "We have been through a lot over the last twenty-four years. I can't think of anything you could say that would change how I feel about you, Kylie."

A sarcastic laugh was heard. "Don't be so sure about that, Linda. I just may shock you." Suddenly Kylie wasn't feeling sad but angry.

As she watched the expression change on her face Linda had a thought. "Are you having an affair with a married man and he won't leave his wife for you."

Kylie growled at her friend. "Why does everyone always reduce things to a cheap tawdry affair? If it was that simple don't you think I would tell you, Linda?" Her anger was growing and unfortunately her friend was her target.

Linda held up her hand. "Whoa, settle down, I am not the enemy, Kylie."

Just then the waitress returned with their lunch giving the women some much-needed breathing room. After she left their eyes met and Linda could see the pain in the green ones across from her.

"Please, trust me." Linda said her voice filled with compassion and understanding. "It will stay just between the two of us." And in a loving but strong voice spoke,

"And don't think for a minute that whatever you have to tell me that I am your judge and jury. Far from it! You know me better than that."

For a long time Kylie just stared at her friend as she fought with herself about the wisdom of what she was about to do. Finally she spoke. "I'm in love." She whispered.

Eyeing her friend, Linda thought, *if this is love I want no part of it.* "With who?"

"My boss."

"And that is a problem because..."

Kylie looked intently at her friend knowing her next statement would say it all. "I came on to her and she turned me down." There she said it.

Linda nodded her head then the full impact of what Kylie said hit her. "You're in love with a woman!" She exclaimed before realizing it. "Are you more upset because of the gender or the fact you were turned down?"

Leave it to Linda to get right down to the core of the problem. "Upset about loving a woman? No, it seems rather natural to me. My heart is breaking Linda and I don't know how to stop it." Tears were slowly coursing their way down her cheeks.

Moving to a different chair so she could be right next to her friend, Linda put her arm around Kylie. "Why don't you tell me everything and see if we can come up with an answer for you."

A half smile appeared on the tear stained face. "I would like that."

Kylie finished her story with, "that was two weeks ago and she hasn't spoken or seen me since."

Linda shook her head and smiled. "Have you attempted to see or speak to her?"

Eyebrows scrunched as Kylie spoke. "Don't you think she made it quite clear she didn't want that?"

Taking Kylie's hand Linda squeezed it. "Kylie, you are my friend and I love you dearly." A hand went up to lift her friend's face. "Why are you making her mind up for her? Did she at any time say *don't see me or speak to me?*"

"No, but..."

"No buts about it, Kylie, give this doctor of yours a chance to tell you. Go talk with her; tell her how you feel and how much you hurt. If she doesn't know you can't blame her for how she acts. Just as you can't decide what she's thinking."

Sighing deeply Kylie mulled the words over in her mind. *I don't really know what LJ is thinking or feeling. By silently agreeing to the no contact did I send a message to LJ that I don't care and am happy with the way things are?* "Linda, you are right, I haven't given her a chance." Kylie sat there thinking a bit longer before she spoke again. "Linda, do you mind if I go now? I have someone very important I need to see." A brilliant smile crossed her face.

Linda couldn't help but respond to the smiling face. "You go ahead. Will you let me know what happens, either way?" She asked.

Getting up Kylie smiled. "You'll be the first one I call." Then she bent down and gave her friend a hug. "Thank you, I owe you for this." She turned to leave but stopped then turned back to the table. "Guess it would be nice if I paid." She said laughing as she put twenty dollars on the table.

Linda laughed. "You're too much. Go on now and find your answers."

Kylie hurried out of the restaurant on her way to LJ Evans and she knew, her future.

* * *

LJ sat at her desk in the lonely room. All around her were shelves filled with antiquities telling the story of the past. But, she wasn't in the past; she was here in the now.

Rob's words echoed in her mind...*did it ever occur to you that you have spent so much time with the dead that you have forgotten how to be human?* He was right;

she had pushed everything away leaving her alone and lonely. Even her parents and brothers wanted nothing to do with her...

She was in her freshman year at the university when she met and fell in love with Holly Brown. Their love dominated her entire being and she was anxious to have her family meet Holly.

LJ called her parents and invited them to come and visit her and the special person in her life. Her mother was happy beyond words that her willful daughter had at last been tamed and joyfully agreed to the visit.

Several weeks later they arrived at the university dorm room she and Holly shared. Knocking lightly on the door her mother was eager to see her only daughter whom she had missed dearly. The door opened to reveal a rather tall girl with fire red hair and a face full of freckles.

"Oh, I am sorry, I was looking for my daughter. I must have the wrong room." Cathy Evans said.

The girl smiled broadly. "Are you Mr. and Mrs. Evans?"

"Yes, we are, young lady. Do you know where our daughter is?" Ed Evans asked.

Holding her hand out she said, "Hi, I'm Holly Brown, LJ's roommate. She should be back shortly. Please come on in."

It wasn't long after that LJ arrived glad to see her parents. After hugging her mom and dad she went over to Holly and put her arm around her. "Mom, Dad, this is Holly, the love of my life." LJ was beaming, as she looked her lover in the eyes.

Never had it occurred to LJ that her parents would object, but they did. Her mother collapsed in a fit of crying as her father went ballistic. "This is unnatural and no daughter of mine will be labeled a freak!" He shouted as her mother cried, "Lucinda Jane, this can't be." Before she turned her face away from her daughter.

LJ was clearly confused by their actions. "But, I love her, she makes me happy. How is that wrong?" Holly slipped out of LJ's arms and headed for the door until she was captured. "Please stay, I need you."

"This will end right now young lady. You will withdraw from the university and come home with your mother and me!" Her father ordered.

"I will not! You can't make me." LJ countered as she had a death grip on Holly's fingers.

"You will or you are no longer our daughter." He threatened.

"Then you have no daughter. Now get out!" She growled.

Her mother was now clutching her. "Please Lucinda Jane don't do this, I'm begging you." Her body was shaking with the tears.

LJ went to the door and opened it wide ignoring all the other students standing there listening. "GET OUT NOW." She screamed as she glared at her parents.

Ed grabbed his wife's arm and escorted her out of the room sneering at Holly as he passed her. "You've made your bed, little girl, now you sleep in it." He hissed as they left.

She called her mother when Holly died but was greeted with coldness instead of sympathy. She recalled her mother saying something like *good* or *I'm glad* she really didn't remember. She sent them an announcement of her doctorate but they never acknowledged that either so she just gave up trying. Only her Grandma Rhodes came and hugged her close.

"My dear, I am so proud of you." The old woman said as she hugged her granddaughter.

"Gran, thank you for coming, it means a lot to me." LJ bent down and hugged the tiny woman back as she breathed in the scent of Lilly of the Valley, her Gran's favorite perfume.

"I take it your parents did not come." The woman's voice was filled with anger.

"No, they haven't spoken to me in years, why would they come now." LJ said with sadness in her voice.

"It's horrible what your parents are doing to you." Gran said as she hugged her granddaughter again.

LJ stepped back from the woman who she adored. "I took a path they didn't want to take. Simple as that."

"For heavens sake, love is love. And, I told them that too and how shameful they were to disown you like that." Marion Rhodes was becoming agitated.

"Gran, it is okay. Heck, I've got you, the best Gran ever. How can I lose?" LJ said smiling at the small frail woman.

"You will never be without, Lucinda Jane, I have seen to that."

"Gran, you are wonderful. I need nothing but you." Smiling at the old woman, LJ placed an arm in hers. "What do you say I take my favorite girl out to dinner?"

Shortly after that, her grandmother died, leaving her all alone in the world and sealing her fate with her parents forever. Her grandmother left everything to her, which her parents contested and lost. Kylie tried to touch and love her, but she threw it away. *How very lonely I am.* She placed her hands over her face and hung her head as all the sadness and loneliness of the years gone by welled up inside her. Her sobs soon turned into a wail for the loss of Holly, her family and Kylie too. The pain of all the years came to the surface as she realized that she was so very alone.

* * *

Kylie parked her car glad to see the familiar old truck still parked there. She almost ran into the building then skipped down the stairs. Arriving at the closed black door she heard what could only be described as intensive sobs and moans,

much like the wailing of someone who has lost someone dear to them. Slowly she opened the door and listened again. Someone is crying. LJ? Quietly she walked inside and took the well-known path to LJ's desk. She stopped when she saw the woman she loved hunched over on the floor.

Rushing over, Kylie knelt down. "Oh, LJ. What's wrong?"

Looking up, LJ saw the green compassionate eyes looking at her with concern. She was helpless in trying to shut this wonderful woman out anymore. "I'm all alone." She cried out.

Sitting on the floor Kylie engulfed LJ in her arms kissing her head. "You're not alone, I'm here." Then she began to rock them gently letting LJ cry. "I love you, LJ." She whispered as she hugged her closer.

It wasn't clear how long they sat there before LJ's tears finally began to subside. Lifting her head, her red, swollen eyes stung as she tried to focus on the amazing woman by her side. "I thought I'd lost you." Her raspy voice said as tears began to fall again.

Kylie bent her head and kissed the watery eyes. "I'm not going anywhere." She said as her lips gently kissed LJ's.

"I'm not sure what I can offer you, Kylie; I feel so lost and empty. Will that be enough for you?" Her blue eyes were searching the green ones.

The answer was a brilliant smile followed by a hug. "What do you say we play this by ear and see what happens? I would like to get to know you as a friend too."

LJ closed her eyes and took a deep breath before she rested her head on Kylie's shoulder. "I would like that too."

* * *

Two months later...

The door jerked open and the child squealed. "LJ." and flung herself at the woman.

Picking the young child up, LJ kissed her cheek. "Hi, Squirt, are you ready to go?"

The child wrapped her arms around the tall woman's neck and hugged her. "I love you, LJ." And, was rewarded with an even bigger hug.

LJ looked up as her eyes captured the green eyed blonde standing in the hallway with the goofiest grin she had ever seen. "Well, I love you too, Allie, and your mommy." She said as a broad smile came to her face.

She gently put the child down and then walked towards the object of her desires. Enfolding her in a warm embrace she whispered. "How's my girl doing today?"

Kylie snuggled closer so she could feel all of LJ. "Wonderful, now that you're here."

LJ kissed the blonde head and was about to kiss her lips when an insistent tug on her jeans made her stop. Looking down at the precious child she smiled. "May I help you?" She said as she released Kylie and bent down to the child's level.

"When are we going to see the horses, LJ? You promised we could go today. My bags are all packed." Allie never forgot anything LJ told her. She adored the tall woman whom she called her best friend.

LJ chuckled. "Well, Squirt, if we can get your mom to put her shoes on we can go now."

Kylie was laughing. "I seem to have a problem with that, I can't find them. Pumpkin, will you run upstairs and look for me?" She said looking down at the small child and the tall woman.

Turning to LJ, Allie said, "Wait right her for me, k?"

Smiling, LJ's eyes drifted to Kylie's. "I'm not going anywhere."

Allie took off running as LJ stood up and embraced Kylie. "I've missed you." She said as she bent to kiss the red lips.

"Mmm, how did you sleep last night?" Kylie replied as she kissed LJ again.

The kiss began to intensify as they heard Allie start back down the stairs. "Mommy." She shouted. "I have your shoes, now can we see the horses?"

The embrace ended with LJ winking and saying with a smile, "We'll finish this later."

* * *

Rhodes End was a thousand acre ranch that LJ's grandmother left to her. Every time she drove up the driveway she would recall the small, sweet woman who always loved her no matter what. The main house was painted white with green shutters. The front porch had a swing and several rocking chairs that looked like they had seen many days. Off to one side were two additional houses and several smaller buildings. As with all ranches, the obligatory rusty old car and tractor set inside a fence along with newer equipment. Behind the main house sat a huge barn also painted white and green. Trees dotted the area along with a beautiful flower garden.

"Oh, LJ, this place is wonderful!" Kylie exclaimed as she got out of the truck. "That barn is magnificent, can we go inside?" She was like a child in a candy store, as she looked around in awe.

"Where are the horses, LJ, where?" Allie squealed as she stood close to the tall woman holding her hand.

A feeling of warmth coursed through LJ's body as she stood there on her property holding the hand of this delightful child. Her eyes drifted to the small blonde with green eyes and her heart filled with love.

Squatting down, LJ smiled. "Tell you what, Squirt, why don't you and your mom look around for a little bit while I talk to Ben. Then we can go see the horses."

She was rewarded with a gigantic hug that almost knocked her to the ground. Steadying herself she saw the caretaker Ben Morgan coming her way. "Go on now, Allie. I will be right back."

Allie ran with delight to her mother. LJ watched as the child jumped up and down talking animatedly. Smiling she turned to Ben. "Hi, is the house ready?" She asked

as the smile left her face. The cool, hard exterior only came down for the two Wilcox girls and no one else.

"Yep, everything is in order. I need to go into town for feed and won't be back till late. Is there anything else you need before I go?" Ben asked.

The man was in his early sixties although he looked much younger. He had been with LJ's grandmother and stayed on after her death as caretaker. He loved Rhodes End and took very good care of the place, something LJ was grateful for.

"Could you take the suitcases out of the truck and put them in the house for me while I show my guests around?" The tone of her voice was cool, but respectful.

"Sure will, Missy." Ben remembered LJ from years ago...a strange child who would rather dig in the dirt than play with the other kids. He was glad to see her here with someone...as his heart always went out to the sad, lonely woman.

"Thanks." Then she turned only to come back around. "Ben, which pasture do you think the horses are in?"

"I saw them up on the north ridge earlier this morning." He replied as he was lifting two suitcases out of the truck.

"Great. Thanks, see you later." Then she strode towards the barn and her two ladies.

* * *

Driving over the rough terrain was an adventure in itself. The three passengers of the truck bounced up and down with each rut they crossed. Looking somewhat like school kids on a bus.

Allie loved every minute, laughing and babbling to anyone who would listen. As they neared the ridge, five or so horses came into view. "LJ, there they are! The horses, we've found the horses." She screamed with eagerness.

Both LJ and Kylie couldn't help but laugh at the child's unabashed enthusiasm for the wonders of life.

As the truck closed in on the horses they looked up and were obviously unimpressed as they immediately went back to eating the grass. Finally the truck stopped. "Roll down your window and I will call them over and then we can give them treats." LJ suggested.

Whistling to them, three of the horses came towards the truck. "Hold the treat with your hand flat, Kylie, otherwise they will think your fingers are treats too." LJ laughed as she saw a look of horror cross the blonde's face.

"You're kidding right?" she replied looking into the amused blue eyes.

Laughing more LJ looked adoringly towards the woman. "Nope, afraid not. Just put it in the palm of your hand and they will take it."

Cautiously Kylie held her hand out the window as the first horse, a pinto, came up to the truck. Seeing the treat he pressed his lips against Kylie's hand and took the treat. "That felt so weird." She said laughing as Allie was scrambling across her in an attempt to get at the horse.

"Here horsey, I have a treat too." She held out the treat and the horse took it.

Soon all five horses were around the truck looking for treats. The windshield had horse lip prints all over it and they were beginning to move their heads inside the truck. All three occupants of the truck were laughing, as the horses seemed to want to come inside and join them.

"LJ, it is getting a bit cramped in here." A laughing Kylie said. "I never realized how big their heads were until now, up close and personal." She continued to laugh as she tried desperately to get the horse to back out of the truck. "LJ, help me get this one out."

Allie was squealing with delight, her green eyes flashing as she petted the horses and continued giving treats.

LJ just sat there laughing, as her favorite paint seemed to be leaning in almost to the rider's seat. "We should have a camera, no one would believe this!" She

exclaimed as she started up the truck and moved slowly as the horses withdrew.
"Allie, no more treats. We need to get going."

"But, LJ, can't we stay longer? Pleeese." She was so cute when she had that pitiful face.

"Not right now, Squirt, I'll bring you back out in the morning."

"Really?" Her eyes widened.

"Yes, really." LJ couldn't help but smile at the small child who had stolen her heart.

"What about me?" Kylie protested.

"Well..." LJ paused as she winked at the woman. "What do you think, Squirt, should we let your mom come back with us?"

"Only if she sits in the middle."

Both woman smiled and said in unison. "I can deal with that."

* * *

The inside of the main house was warm and cozy and Kylie suspected it was just as LJ's grandmother left it. An old, deep purple divan dominated the living room along with a piano. There was a recliner, a well-worn overstuffed chair with an ottoman and the walls were filled with family pictures. The kitchen was old, as well, with a beautiful well-worn round oak table. Against one wall was a wooden larder complete with flour and sugar bins.

"Do you come out here much?" Kylie asked.

"No. Now that I am here, I don't know why I haven't. Want to sit out on the porch with me?"

"Sure." She said with a happy smile. "Let me check on Allie first." The child had run and played so hard she fell asleep at dinner. Peeking in on her, Kylie's heart was filled as she saw the sweet face lying there so blissfully happy.

Going out to the porch she saw LJ sitting on the swing with a blanket in her lap.

"Come join me." She said as she motioned Kylie over. Sitting down she smiled as LJ said. "Closer, sit closer and we can use the blanket. It gets cold out here at night."

Moving right next to LJ she leaned her head on her shoulder. "I love this place. It is so peaceful out here."

After smoothing the blanket out over them LJ stretched her legs out and crossed them at the ankles. She then took Kylie's hand and brought it to her lips and kissed it gently. "You know," she began, "I never, thought it was possible to love again after Holly died...certainly never that deeply passionate." She stopped speaking as if she were in another place and time.

Kylie waited patiently. She knew this would be coming...the let down. LJ always said she might not be able to offer her what she needed and deserved. Now, out here on this porch, she would be given the, *I just want to be friends* talk. The very thought sent shivers through her body as a great sense of sadness filled her heart.

LJ felt the shiver. "Is it too cold out here for you?" She asked as she looked into Kylie's eyes and saw the sorrow there. "Kylie, what's the matter? Why are you crying?" The words were said with great compassion and concern. Kylie turned her head away, but LJ took her chin and brought her back. "Please, tell me."

She couldn't stop the tears that began rolling down her cheeks. "You are about to give me the I just want to be friends talk and it breaks my heart."

LJ cocked her head and raised an eyebrow. "That's news to me. Why would you think such a thing?"

Taking a deep breath, Kylie spoke. "You were talking about Holly and your great love for her and how you didn't think you could love like that again. It only stands to reason there isn't room in your heart for anyone else." She then lowered her head.

LJ shook her head. "You know what, Kylie, you are a silly goose who jumps to conclusions."

Her head snapped up as she looked at the woman she adored in puzzlement. "Then why were you waxing so nostalgically about Holly?"

Bending down, LJ kissed Kylie. "A part of me will always love Holly, but that doesn't mean I can't love anyone else. I was going to say...I never considered the possibility of loving another...then you came into my life and that all changed. I love you with more passion and desire than I ever thought I would be capable of."

The tears, now flowing, were ones of joy. "Oh, LJ, I love you so much...my heart aches for you when you're away and it soars to the heavens when you are near."

The kisses began small then erupted into a passion that took both women's breath away. Soon they wanted more, needed more as their bodies were filled with electricity and desire. "Make love with me." Kylie whispered.

"Are you sure that is what you want?" LJ needed to be sure for once they made love there would be no turning back...Kylie was forever.

"Yes, yes."

LJ put an arm under Kylie's legs as she lifted her off the swing and carried her into the house and what would soon be their bed. Almost reverently LJ undressed Kylie, taking great care to be gentle and loving. For a moment she stood there looking at the naked body before her. Gazing into the green eyes she saw love and desire and knew tonight, she would join the living and leave the relics behind.

Sliding her naked body next to Kylie's, her passions increased as she softly ran her fingers over the trembling body. Soon she felt fingers running over her body mirroring her movements. As she bent to kiss the waiting lips, LJ gloried in the absolute, overpowering love she was feeling. It wasn't long before both women responded with more and more passion as their bodies begged for more.

LJ lifted herself up and looked deep into Kylie's eyes asking a question. Kylie smiled back and said *yes*. With that LJ took a hard, extended nipple in her mouth and began to slowly suck. Kylie responded with low moans as she caressed the dark head, wanting more. When LJ lightly bit the nipple Kylie exploded in a series of small orgasms. The only thing LJ wanted was to make Kylie happy and show her how

much she was loved. She moved to the other nipple as her hand stroked the inside of the trembling thighs of her lover. Once again biting the nipple produced orgasms but this time they were stronger and longer. Kylie grabbed her head and pulled her up for a kiss.

The kiss was so passionate and long that both women found themselves gasping for breath. LJ noticed tears. "Have I hurt you?" she said as she kissed the tear stained cheeks.

"No." Kylie managed to say. "I have never felt like this before, it is so powerful. I want more LJ, I want all you can give me."

Gently brushing blonde locks, LJ smiled. "We have a lifetime, baby." Then she kissed the waiting lips as her fingers began to lightly stroke Kylie's center. She was very wet and ready but LJ waited taking her lover higher and higher. Fingers slid inside easily as Kylie instantly began moving.

LJ stopped her motion as she gently kissed Kylie. Then she took the small hand and led it down her long body to her own center. For a moment she closed her eyes and tried to control the overwhelming need she felt as the fingers moved through her wetness. Soon they were moving as one in a dance as old as time. Finally both women were panting as they bore down on the other's fingers wanting and needing release. "Now, Kylie, now." LJ moaned in her ear as they both began one explosion of pleasure after another.

Lying in each other's arms, spent, but incredibly happy, they pledged their love for one another. Then they both went silent for a time, lost in their own introspection.

LJ never thought she would be this unbelievably happy ever again. Yet, here she was in the arms of this wonderful woman. Most incredible of all was the unabashed love the woman had for her and she had for Kylie. How could she have not seen how empty her life had been? *Remarkable.*

For Kylie, she found it amazing that for the first time in her life she found what true love was all about. She could have never imagined that her body would react in such a primal way. Even more amazing, was that her passion and desire was for a woman. *Remarkable.*

Slowly, they began to kiss as the passion once again ignited as their bodies again began to dance.

* * *

Several weeks after returning from the country, LJ moved in with Kylie and Allie. At last they were together as a splendidly happy family. LJ adored Allie and became her chief playmate receiving high marks in Barbie play. Often Kylie would stand in the doorway with a goofy smile as she watched the two of them.

It never occurred to Allie that anyone would think it odd that her mother and LJ shared a bed. It was the Wednesday after LJ moved in that Allie spent the day with her grandparents...

"Sweetie, what have you been doing lately?" Allie's grandmother asked.

"I've been playing with LJ." Came the casual answer.

"Who is LJ, Allie? I don't recall that name from your school list." Dorothy Andrews asked her granddaughter.

"LJ is my new friend and she plays with me." Replied Allie.

"Is she new to your school, honey? I will have to add her to the school list."

"No, she lives with us." Allie said off handedly as she concentrated on her coloring.

"Lives with you? Since when?" Dorothy's curiosity was peeked.

Allie looked up and smiled. "Mommy thinks she is her friend, but she really is mine. Please don't tell mommy it would hurt her feelings." Allie pleaded. Her mother had finally stopped crying; replacing it with laughter.

Dorothy patted her granddaughter on the head. "Don't worry I won't tell her." She said smiling as the door opened and her daughter appeared.

"Allie, will you go find grandpa and tell him your mommy is here?" After the child got up and went in search of her other favorite playmate, Dorothy spoke. "Allie tells me you have a woman living in your house. When did this happen?"

Kylie shook her head. *Nothing escapes my mom*, she thought. "I see Allie has been talking about her new playmate." A small laugh escaped as she sat down. "Mom, please sit down. When daddy gets her I would like to speak with you both." Kylie's voice was steady.

"I found him, here he is." Allie said exuberantly as she dragged Carl Andrews into the room.

Carl bent over and gave his daughter a kiss. "Hi, sweetheart, are you two staying for dinner?"

"I'm afraid not, Daddy, but I would like to talk with you and Mom about something, if you have the time."

"For you, always. What's up?"

Kylie motioned for Allie to come to her. Bending over she whispered in the child's ear then gave her a big hug and kiss.

"Okay, Mommy." Allie said as she headed for the front door.

"Where is she going?" Dorothy asked.

"All will be answered soon, Mom. There is something I need to tell you both. Please understand I'm not asking for your blessing or permission, I just want to be honest and upfront with you."

"This all sounds very mysterious, should I be worried? There's something different about you, Kylie. *Glow* is the only word I can think of." Carl smiled at his daughter. He could not deny she was positively radiant.

Dorothy looked intently at her daughter; she now understood the significance of the new resident in her daughter's house. "You're in love, aren't you?"

Green eyes softened as she looked at her mother. "Does it show?"

"Yes, it does, Darling. Are you happy?"

Kylie stared off, a smile crossing her face as a vision of LJ came to mind. Turning back to her parents, she spoke. "I never knew what happiness was until now. I want you to meet LJ..." She was unable to finish as her father interrupted.

"LJ, as in LJ Evans?" Carl looked intently at his daughter. "Isn't Dr. Evans a woman?" His mind was trying to get a handle on what his daughter was telling them. "Are you telling us you are in love with a woman? I think not young lady!"

Dorothy got up and went to her husband. "Look at her, Carl. Have you ever seen her happier? I know I haven't."

"Happiness has nothing to do with it, Dot! She will not be in an unnatural relationship! End of conversation!"

Dorothy saw red as she glared at her husband. "Now you listen to me, Carl Andrews. Our daughter is happy and that fact alone has everything to do with it. The way I see it, she is an adult and can do whatever she wants. Now, we shall welcome LJ into our family as if she were our own. Is that understood?"

Carl hadn't seen his wife act like this very often but he knew there would be no arguing with her. Looking over at Kylie, who despite this turmoil seemed quite serene. "Well, where is she?"

Soon Allie came into the room holding the hand of a very serious and apprehensive looking woman. "Here she is, Mommy." The little girl said beaming. "Grammy and Grandpa, this is my best friend, LJ."

Dorothy went over to LJ and embraced her. "Welcome to our family." Dorothy said. "Come on in and tell us all about yourself."

Looking over at a smiling Kylie, LJ's shoulders finally relaxed as the warm feeling of love filled her heart. These people had welcomed her into their family as one of their own without recrimination.

"Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, for the warm welcome." Pausing, LJ searched for the right words to say. "I am at a loss for words...I don't know what to say."

Dorothy took her by the arm and led her over to the couch to sit by Kylie. "You can start by calling us Mom and Dad. Now I expect you all to stay for dinner so I can find out all about my new daughter."

Carl cleared his throat, he was not happy at all about the situation. "Yes, welcome to our home, LJ." His words sounded forced and cold. "Hey, Allie, what do you say you come help me in the garden. I think I saw a bunny out there earlier."

After the two had left, Dorothy spoke. "Give him time, he will come around."

* * *

Dinner was finished and Allie and LJ excused themselves to the living room to color. Carl, sitting in his chair, glared at LJ as anger boiled inside of him.

His anger was not lost on LJ, as she looked around the well-decorated room. "Mr. Andrews, I was noticing your arrowhead collection. Did you find them around here?"

Carl looked at the woman in surprise. "Why yes, I found them south of here when I was a kid."

"Do you mind if I take a look at them?"

"Go ahead." He barked, not really wanting the woman touching his collection but what could he do? Dorothy would be on his case if he were rude.

LJ carefully looked at the collection. "Wow, I can't believe it! You actually have a bird arrowhead, don't see many of them...and this one here is pre Columbian, isn't it?"

Getting up Carl went over to LJ. "That one is my pride and joy. When I found it I took it to the university museum for them to look at. They wanted me to donate it...I was twelve and told them no!" He then picked up a spearhead. "What do you make of this one, Doc?"

LJ took the artifact and turned it over and over in her hands. "Definitely native to this part of the country. It is completely tooled, but I am surprised by the size of it. We don't usually see them this big. Hmm, I think this is a rare find."

"Yeah, that is what I thought too. You just don't find anything like this anymore. As a boy, I remember finding them all the time along with fossils in rocks. Now, there is nothing to be found."

"You know, Mr. Andrews, I have a ranch about twenty miles outside of town. You are welcome to come out there and look. My caretaker tells me he finds arrowhead all the time when he is plowing." LJ gave him her most engaging smile.

"Now you listen to me, Missy, my wife said to call us mom and dad and she is the boss." Carl smiled fondly. "If you give me the directions to the ranch, I would like to check those arrowheads out."

"Sure thing, Dad. If you have a map I can show you where my place is and I will draw you a map where the best digs are."

Carl put his arm around her shoulder. "That's what I like, someone who knows the value of a map. Come on into my study...you want a beer, Doc?"

LJ followed him into his study smiling...at last she had parents who loved her for who she was.

* * *

"Kylie." LJ whispered.

"Hmm." Came the sleepy reply.

"I was thinking that maybe you and Allie and me could move out to the farm. It would be a wonderful place to raise children."

Kylie thought she was dreaming, then sat straight up. A glorious smile graced her face as she hugged LJ. "I love you."

LJ laughed. "I'll take that as a *yes*."

"How about, yes, yes, yes! When can we move? That will mean a longer drive to work...what about Allie and school? There is so much to do..." Then it dawned on her. "LJ did you say children?"

LJ pulled Kylie in closer and kissed the top of her head. "Yes, do you mind?"

Green eyes misted over. "Oh, sweetheart, I want that with you. I want you and I to have a family and all live together." Rising up she gently kissed the lips before her. Then she opened her eyes wide. "LJ, we will have to add rooms to the house. Who will be the father? How many shall we have?"

Laughing LJ shook her head. "My love, we can have as many children as you like. We will add on lots of bedrooms and fill them all."

"You're so wonderful, I love you so much. When can we move?" She was like a dog with a bone and had no thought of giving it up.

LJ sat there bemused. How had she gotten to this point? A life partner, a daughter, soon even more children and a farm. "Hmm, Kylie, I'm not really keen on the idea of my having children. Do you mind?"

Wrapping her arms around the beautiful woman Kylie kissed the bare shoulder. "Lover, I can't imagine you pregnant. What do you say I do the baby thing?" Leaning over LJ she opened the drawer to the bedside table and pulled out the phone book.

"Kylie? Who are you calling? The sperm clinic?" A rumble of laughter could be heard as she spoke.

"No, I'm not calling them, just getting the number so I can call in the morning. You know the father has to be tall and have blue eyes and black hair."

Taking the phone book from her lover, LJ tossed it on the floor. Then she took the small blonde into her arms and began kissing her. "What do you say we stop talking and I show you just how much I love you?"

Kylie giggled as she pulled the sheet up over their heads.

Late, into the early hours of the morning, their bodies entwined as hearts, minds and souls were embraced in peace and love.

"LJ?"

"Hmm?"

"I love you."

Then, in the hours just before dawn, LJ Evans smiled, as her heart soared. "I love you too, Baby."

* * *

In life we are presented with possibilities that may lead to happiness. For LJ and Kylie their path, although rough, lead them to find unconditional love. How many times could they have followed another road? Fortunately they did not.

Life is full of possibilities all you need is to be open to them.

Kylie and LJ will have more of their story in 'Fulfillment' to be posted soon.

To view my webpage click [here](#).

Feedback is always appreciated

Please let me know what you think. Thank you. eorielly@yahoo.com
