

~ To Be...Or Not? ~

by Greek Warrior

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Disclaimer #2: All other characters that appear are made up from my deranged little mind. They're fictitious and aren't meant to resemble anyone.

Sex: Only a kiss.

Language: English, oh you mean bad words! A few.

Note: This story was originally written for a short story contest, unfortunately it wasn't short enough to submit. So I thought I would let you tell me if it was any good. Feed back is most welcome as long as it's constructive criticism or unadulterated praise, I can wish can't I? I can be contacted at XWPScribe@aol.com. But please be nice. Thanks for reading.

The tall dark-haired woman entered her cubical and placed her briefcase on the desk before sitting down. She had accepted her current job, Assistant Vice-President in charge of Operations, even though it had meant she had to move from her home in Virginia. The only person she left behind, that she would miss, was her mother. She had a few friends, they were more acquaintances really, from her old job and the gym she had frequented, but nobody that she would keep in touch with or vice versa. She had been somewhat of a loner since her college days, which weren't that long ago, she was only 29.

So she had taken the job at the investment firm that came with a promotion, a raise and a move south. South to a stereotypical Southern city with old-fashioned beliefs, where she had been told point-blank by the head of the company that if she wanted to climb the corporate ladder she would be expected to conform to their standards. She had wondered what she had gotten herself into when she found that their standards basically meant a modern day Southern Belle, which translated to dresses and skirts at work. It also meant that she was required to be able to do her job without a hitch but in anything else she was to be a weak female that depended on her man. She was also told by the 'over paid chair warmer', she had dubbed the old goat that after their meeting, that her family would be expected at all company functions. When she reminded him that she wasn't married and had no children, she was rewarded with 'Of course you don't have little ones if you don't have a husband'. She briefly wondered if anyone had ever explained conception to him.

He had folded his pudgy fingers together over his pudgy stomach, leaned back in his leather chair and stared at her over his black frame glasses. 'Why not?' He had asked her. 'You're a nice

looking woman. And this company has a reputation to uphold. We can't have the town thinking you're one of them...what do they call themselves...lesbians. If the people think you're one of them, it would lower our standing in the community.'

And that was the problem, Victoria thought as she reached over and turned on her computer, she was one of 'them lesbians'. She grabbed her mug and headed for the break-room while waiting for her computer to cough-up her login screen. Thankfully it was still early and the room was empty. She leaned her hip against the counter and watched the coffeemaker turn plain water into the elixir of life; at least it was as far as Vic was concerned. She filled her mug and returned to her office, which was basically a slightly larger corner cubical with higher partitions than the other cubicles that occupied the floor.

She was in-charge of the operations area that included two managers with a staff of 12 employees each. Their group shared the 6th floor of the building with the administrators and their assistants that managed the investment firm's accounts.

After several swallows of the hot black liquid, she checked her e-mail and her daily calendar. 'Shit, I forgot about that stupid meeting.' "And it's only Wednesday." She complained with a sigh.

"You talking to yourself again, Victoria?" Tammy appeared in the entrance to Vic's office and smiled. "You've been here less than two months. It usually takes at least three or four to justify that." Tammy was an assistant/secretary/gopher to the three officers in Operations. She was in her mid-thirties, five feet two inches tall and maybe 80 pounds wringing wet. She had thick dark straight hair that ended at her collar and a very light complexion. Her parents had moved to the US before she was born. But she reminded Vic of a prefect replica of a china doll, until she opened her mouth that is. It was rather disconcerting to hear a pronounced Southern drawl coming from the petite oriental looking woman.

"I have a meeting this afternoon with admin." Vic lamented.

"Ah." Tammy sat in the chair that faced Vic's desk. "I suppose that includes the three M's?"

The three M's were administrator's named Mark, Mike and Manny. That being one reason some people gave them the title. Other's thought of them as 'The Three Musketeers' since they rarely parted each other's company. There were a few people on the 6th floor, mostly the younger women that had been hit on by the trio, who referred to the three as mediocre, moronic and misguided, hence another reason for the title.

And being true to form, they had started after Vic like a pack of dogs in heat. She had politely turned them down each time they had approached her. When they continued to pursue her, she had become less polite and more forceful in declining their invitations. Lately she had heard their whispered remarks that she must be queer since she wouldn't go out with any of them. Most people ignored them, Vic just hoped that they didn't get back to her homophobic boss.

"Yeah, I'm sure." She growled. "You don't think they'd miss an opportunity to harass me, do you." It wasn't a question.

"Why don't you report them?" Tammy asked sympathetically.

"Because they haven't really done anything. Just start rumors and whisper behind my back. They're just being irritating little assholes." She shrugged her shoulders. "I have wondered though, where you've been hiding all the Southern Gentlemen that you're supposed to be famous for."

"Same place all good men are found." The assistant paused dramatically. "At home with their wives or in gay bars." She laughed at her bosses surprised expression.

"Thanks, Tammy, I needed a good laugh."

"Glad I could help." She started to stand but hesitated. "You know, most people couldn't care less about you preferences whatever they may be, me being one of them." Tammy held up her hand to stop the interruption. "But there's more and more speculation going around about you. And that small closed minded bunch can make your life miserable."

"What's your point?" Vic tried to rein-in her temper.

Tammy sighed. "Just that it might make your life easier if you show up at the company picnic next month with a date. Whether it's pretend or not." She watched the parade of emotions cross Victoria's face. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said anything. But I can see that this...crap, is starting to take a toll on you." She had debated with herself long and hard before deciding to say something. The fact that she liked her boss and wanted to help had made her try.

"No, it's okay." Vic rubbed her eyes and sighed. "You're trying to look out for me and I appreciate that. I just wish they'd find something or someone else to amuse themselves with." She looked at the small woman sitting on the other side of her desk. "I really don't think I'm interesting enough to warrant this kind of attention." She stated honestly.

"You're a young, beautiful and intelligent woman that seems to prefer to be alone, or rather without a man, so some people are going to talk and wonder, unfortunately." Tammy was beginning to wonder what it was that Vic saw each time she looked into a mirror, because it was definitely not the same thing that Tammy saw when she looked at the attractive woman sitting across from her now.

Vic propped her elbows on her desk and her chin in her hands. "Why, Tammy, you better be careful." She smirked. "Someone might hear you." She lowered her voice. "And think you're hitting on me." She chuckled at the blush on the, always in control, woman's face. "It might worry Walter."

Tammy recovered and leaned forward. "You be careful, missy." She shook her finger at her boss. "It might surprise you, what Walter let's me get away with." Walter being the assistant's husband of 10 years.

"Okay, okay." Vic raised her hands in surrender. "I don't think I want to know."

"Think about what I said, please?" Tammy asked in a more serious tone.

"I can't guarantee anything." Vic answered.

"Good enough." Tammy stood. "I better get back to work."

It was just after five o'clock and Vic was sitting at the receptionist's desk, leaving her a message, when she noticed a pair of legs stop in front of her.

"Where's Nora?" A female voice asked. "She didn't finally quit did she? She's always threatening to." The tone was tinged with laughter.

"No, she..." Vic looked up to see sparkling green eyes and a friendly smile. "had to leave early." She finished after a slight pause. "Can I help you?" She asked the young woman whom she assumed worked for The Hermes Messenger Service, considering the stupid little wings on the sides of the bike helmet she wore. Of course the rest of the woman's attire of tight black bicycle shorts that barely covered two well-developed thighs, a matching black and bright orange jersey, those half gloves that the bicyclists wore and a large pouch slung over her neck and shoulder kind of gave away her profession also. Vic could see straight, collar length, blonde hair with bangs that were peaking out from under the helmet. She guessed that the woman would be about half a foot shorter than her own six-foot height.

Catherine was stunned by the deep resonating voice that answered her and then by the ice blue eyes that looked deeply into hers. She took in the high cheekbones and the tanned face; of course anyone in the south that spent time outdoors in the summer had a tan. "Uh...yeah." Catherine mentally shook her head. "I've got a delivery for a...Victoria Richardson."

"That's me." Vic said as she reached out and took the manila envelope. She signed her name, thanked the woman and watched with undisguised interest as the messenger walked back to the elevators.

Unknown to Vic, Mark had watched to short meeting with a sneer growing across his face. 'Well, well Ms Richardson, maybe my presumption about you hasn't been as far-fetched as people think. Maybe it's time to expose you for what you really are.' He turned around and headed back towards his soon to be partners in crime.

Catherine stopped her bike outside the deli on Montgomery Street and chained it to the lamppost. She had received instructions for a pick-up along with a caution from Ralph, the dispatcher, telling her to be careful. He said that she had been asked for specifically and that the package would be given to her from one of the customers that would be waiting for her. She stopped just inside the door and took off her sunglasses. She slowly made her way over to a table with three twenty-something guys that were waving to her. "You have a pick-up for me?" She asked them warily.

"Yes we do." The one she found out later was named Mike answered. "But we also have a proposition for you. Nothing illegal." He assured her when he saw her shake her head.

"We just want you to help us play a practical joke on one of our colleagues." The one called Manny told her. The three men took turns explaining that she would pretend to be gay and interested in Victoria, the woman that she had delivered the envelope to yesterday. All she, Catherine, had to do was to get Victoria in a compromising position so they could get a couple of photos. When Catherine had declined, saying that she didn't want 'compromising' photos of her circulating they decided that the two women sharing a passionate kiss would be enough of a joke. She agreed only after they had assured her that no one would be hurt. Them paying her also helped her make up her mind. After all, the messenger business didn't tend to pay a whole lot of money. They left most of the details up to Catherine; they just insisted that she complete the job before the 4th of July weekend. It seems that they wanted the pictures ready by then so that they could play their 'joke' at their company picnic.

Catherine spent the rest of the afternoon considering how she was supposed to get the woman interested in her. The joke players had given her the opportunity to meet the woman again, the package she picked up earlier was to be delivered to Manny that afternoon and Mike would be sure to have Victoria in the reception area when Catherine was to deliver the package. Mark had given her some background information on Victoria and Catherine thought she might be able to use the fact that the woman was new to the area to her advantage.

It was a few minutes to five when Catherine stepped into the elevator and pressed the button for the 6th floor. She took a few deep breaths to calm her nerves, glad that the car was empty. As she exited, she noticed Mike had fulfilled his part of the bargain. Victoria was standing with her arms crossed in front of her chest; her head tilted slightly to one side, looking very perturbed at the man standing in front of her.

"Hi, Nora."

"Hello, Cath. You need me to sign for that?"

"Are we done?" Catherine heard the frustration in the deep voice of the woman that had become her target.

"Yes." Mike turned toward Catherine and winked as he walked away.

"Excuse me." Catherine called out before Victoria could leave. "I know this sounds like a pick-up line in a bar, but I kept thinking after I saw you yesterday that I know you from somewhere."

"I doubt it." Vic's foul mood evaporating at the sight of the blonde. "I haven't been here that long."

"New to the area, huh?" Knowing the truth full well. "I'm not the welcoming committee but why don't you let me buy you a cup of coffee, it'll give me a chance to figure out why you're seem so familiar." She saw the hesitation. "Please?"

"Sure, sounds good." Victoria had known she was sunk when she saw that pleading smile develop across the young woman's face. "When?"

"How about I meet you at the coffee shop on 11th Avenue in thirty minutes?" She would have time to swing by her apartment and do a quick shower and change, barely.

"Make it forty-five." Victoria called out after the retreating figure.

"Great, see you then." She shouted as the elevator doors closed.

'Oh god, I'm in trouble.' Vic thought as she headed back to her desk. She sat staring out her window at the clear blue sky wondering how Catherine, she had to ask Nora the young woman's name, had gotten past her emotional defenses so easily. She hadn't reached any conclusions when she realized she would have to hurry unless she wanted to be late.

"Sorry." Vic said as she sat down at the small table.

"I just got here myself. I'm Catherine, by the way, or Cath for short. You go by Victoria?"

"Yeah, but most people just call me Vic."

They ordered, then settled into a comfortable getting to know each other talk. Most of what Victoria told Catherine about herself was what she already knew. Catherine saw no reason to lie to her companion so she explained that she had been taking a few English and math classes at the local college until she figured out what she wanted to major in. Her family lived in town; her father was a Baptist preacher, her mother a typical minister's wife, she had an older sister who was married with one kid, a younger brother who just finished his first year of college, not the same one she attended. Before they knew it, the waitress was telling them it was seven o'clock, closing time.

"I need to head back to work to get my car." Vic said but neither of them made any motion to part. "Can I give you a ride home?"

"Sure." Catherine was surprised that she was reluctant to leave Victoria's company. She gave the older woman directions to her apartment, which was actually a large house that had been

converted into small one and two bedroom units, in order to take advantage of the closeness to the campus.

Vic stopped in front of the house, at the curb. "I enjoyed our talk." She said, putting the SUV, a congratulation present from her mother for the new job, into park but leaving the engine running.

"Me too." Catherine replied honestly. "Hey, why don't I show you around? We could have dinner tomorrow night and plan some stuff to do this weekend?"

Victoria almost said no but changed her mind at the hopeful expression on Catherine's face. "You sure you don't have plans? I'd hate to impose."

"No plans. Pick me up here, at seven?" They agreed and Catherine watched until the taillights disappeared around the corner, before she headed towards the front door, her thoughts confused. Was she glad that her plans were coming together with little effort or was she happy because she found her 'target' likeable and attractive? 'Don't go there Cath, you don't need that kind of trouble.'

During the next several weeks, Vic's late nights at work or lonely ones at home changed. She and Catherine were almost always together. And even though their time together was strictly platonic, they seemed to find ways to sit close or touch frequently. Catherine had even kissed her goodnight last night. It was just a peck on the cheek but it tingled long after the young woman left the car.

Tonight they had planned on an early home cooked dinner and a movie. Victoria had given Catherine a key to her place and explained that she had never really used the kitchen but she guessed everything she needed was there. Vic had been clock watching all afternoon, at a quarter to five she called it quits and headed home.

"You're here early, I didn't expect you for another 30 minutes or so." The blonde was standing in Victoria's kitchen, stirring the contents of a large pot every so often.

"Sneaked out." She explained. "That smells great." Victoria leaned over Catherine's shoulder. "What is it?"

"It's just spaghetti sauce." She grinned. "You really don't cook, do you?"

"Uh, no." She shrugged her shoulders. "Mom loved it and it use to drive her crazy trying to teach me. But I was more interested in sneaking down to the shooting range or trying to get into the guy's ballgame. I remember one time I came home with my arm in a sling, I had separated my shoulder playing football. She had a fit but I think that was the day she finally gave up."

Catherine shook her head. "Typical tomboy. I guess growing-up on army bases kinda enforced that trait. Is your father still in the service?" She watched the change cross her friend's face, from

open to closed in a heartbeat. "Vic?" Catherine mentally kicked herself. She knew Victoria didn't like to talk about certain parts of her past. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have brought it up." Her deadline for the photos was this Friday night and she wondered if she sub-consciously was trying to fail.

"No, I started it." Vic took several deep breaths to get her emotions under control. "Let me change clothes and then we can have dinner. Then we can talk, if you want to." She decided that there were a few things that Catherine should know about.

After cleaning up the dishes, the two women sat down in the living room. Catherine watched as Victoria swirled the Chianti that remained in her wineglass before taking a sip. "You know you really don't have to tell me anything."

Victoria smiled at her friend that was sitting in the recliner that was angled towards the couch that she was on. "There is one thing that you need to know. This hasn't been something that I've had to worry about for the last ten years, but it seems to matter to some people here." She looked down at the wineglass in her hand before meeting Catherine's gaze again. "I'm gay." She said simply and waited for a reaction, be it good or bad.

There were several long seconds of silence. "And?" Cath inquired.

"You're okay with that?"

"Sure, I mean, I don't think I should judge you or anybody else and it's nobody's business who you or I love." She leaned forward and took Vic's hand in hers.

"I'm glad because I kinda like you." Victoria rubbed her thumb across Catherine's fingers that were holding hers. "I just wish everyone else would follow that philosophy."

"Have you had problems?" Cath was suddenly nervous. Was the practical joke she was helping with something more?

"Yes." She tipped her glass to her lips and drained it. "Ten years ago, I was nineteen and just finished my first year of college. I had a relationship with another student. Both our families lived south of Richmond so we started commuting together, Virginia State was about 40 or 50 miles away, and both our fathers were friends at the base. She admitted that she was gay and that she was interested in me. Not long after that we started sleeping together. That summer her father found out and she was scared of what he might do, so she told him that I had seduced her and I threatened her that I'd tell her father it was all her idea if she told anyone."

"Oh God." Catherine turned pale.

"Yeah, well, both our fathers were career army and stanch republicans too. They thought the 'don't ask, don't tell' policy was just for show. They believed in the 'force them out any way they can' policy. So when her father called my father, let's just say it wasn't a friendly father daughter chat we had that night." Victoria looked down at their clasped hands and noticed hers were

shaking, remembering her mother's frantic trip to the hospital while she was lying across the back seat, fading in and out of consciousness. Her entire body shook remembering her father beating her and her younger brother being too terrified to do anything other than run from the room.

"I'm so sorry, I can't imagine being betrayed like that." She squeezed the trembling hands.

"I'm not sure I can blame her. I don't know what I might have done if our positions had been reversed." She had stopped blaming Joanne a while back.

"Are you having trouble from someone here?" She held her breath praying for a negative response.

"Some, just a few people starting rumors and whispering behind my back."

"Oh." Catherine breathed a silent sigh of relief.

"I just hope those three idiots that started all this don't go to my boss with it. I think he's your textbook homophobic and he'd probably with make my life miserable or try to find a legitimate way to fire me." She explained.

"What three idiots?" Catherine swallowed audibly. 'Oh...my...God. I'm in so much trouble. What am I gonna do?'

"Just three jerks, well, Mark more than the other two. When I wouldn't go out with any of them, he seemed to take it personally. Like I insulted his manhood or broke some kind of male masculinity code by rejecting him or something equally stupid." Victoria explained, then noticed the look of panic on her friend's face. "What wrong?"

'Maybe she's exaggerating. After all they said it was a joke, totally harmless. She must be taking it too seriously because of the earlier betrayal. That's got to be it.' Catherine was pulled out of her pondering by Vic's question. "Uh, oh, I can't believe someone would be so despicable." She said shaking her head in irritation. "Down here we'd say that he was lower than a snake's belly." She exaggerated her southern accent to mimic her father. She was trying to alleviate the tension but was surprised by her friend's laughter.

"I've never heard that expression before." Victoria explained her outburst.

That had happened on Wednesday night, it was now Friday, d-day so-to-speak. The 'photo session' was to take place at Victoria's house. Catherine had been instructed to leave the front door unlocked, signal that guys who would be waiting outside and lure Vic into the bedroom where she was to do what ever it took so they could capture 'the moment' on film.

Mark, Mike and Manny had been sitting in the car parked across the street for the past two hours, waiting. "I wish she'd hurry up, I gotta go." Manny whined.

"I told you not to drink all that coffee." Mike said. "Maybe Victoria won't co-operate. Let's just leave, I'm tired and didn't get dinner."

"Shut up and quit yer bitchin. I want my proof so we're staying." Mark loudly stated. "There's the signal. Grab the camera, Mike." They were out of the car and running towards the door.

Mark turned the knob and finding no resistance, slowly pushed the door open. He motioned the other two in behind him after seeing that the coast was clear. They tiptoed down the short hallway, stopping at the open bedroom door. He took a peek around the doorframe seeing the two women standing by the bed with arms around each other and whispered for Mike to get the camera ready. Soft music was playing in the background, covering up the little noise they were making. The three men stepped into the doorway just as Victoria lowered her head to kiss Catherine.

"What the hell is going on? Why are you here and how did you get in?" Victoria yelled when the flash on the camera interrupted them.

Mike and Manny laughed, but Mark sneered. "I've got the proof you're queer and now everybody will know." He turned to look at Catherine who had moved to the other side of the bed, away from the angry Victoria. "Thanks, sweetheart, couldn't have done it without you. Maybe we'll go out sometime."

"Catherine?" Vic looked at the young woman. "All this was a lie? You're helping them?" Victoria's confusion turned to anger. "How could you betray me?" She yelled. Before anyone had time to blink, Vic opened a drawer to the bedside table, pulled out a gun and pointed it at Catherine.

"Wait, Vic, please don't. I'm sorry." Catherine pleaded as she held her hands in front of her body in a feeble attempt to protect herself.

Everything seemed to move in slow motion but it was over in a blink of an eye. Two shots rang out almost deafening the people in the small room. Catherine grabbed her stomach and looked down as a dark red liquid spread across her shirt and hands. She looked up at Victoria with disbelief as she fell to her knees then continued until she was face down on the floor.

Victoria turned towards the three men. She saw fear from Manny as he lost control of his bladder and wet himself. Mark seemed stunned. Mike looked like a deer caught in headlights, his mind told him to run but his body was frozen in place.

Mark stared at Catherine as she fell. Not believing what his panic-stricken brain was telling him. He looked back at Victoria and saw six feet of dark raging anger, poised to strike. When he realized that the three of them were the only thing left to strike at, he turned and fled. His movement seemed to jar the other two into action. They followed a split second behind and barely made it to the car before Mark threw it into gear and punched the accelerator.

He stopped the car a couple of blocks away. "What are you doing? We got to get out of here." Mike asked.

Manny was in the back seat with his arms wrapped around his shaking body. "Do you think she'll come after us?" He asked between chattering teeth.

"We need to go to the police." Mark announced. "Where's the camera?" He turned to Mike. "You did get pictures of the shooting, didn't you?"

"I, um, no I didn't." He admitted. "I was petrified, Mark. You wouldn't have either." He defended himself, but then shrugged in defeat. "I think I dropped the camera in the bedroom, I didn't have it when we ran."

"Damnit, Mike." Mark hit the steering wheel with the palm of his hand. "We don't have any proof now."

"Guys, what are we going to do if she comes after us?" Manny yelled to get their attention.

"She won't come after us." Mark stated. "It was spur of the moment, a crime of passion, type thing." He rubbed his chin, thinking. "But she will have to get rid of the body and when she does, we'll follow her."

"I don't know about this." Mike shook his head. "Why don't we just call the cops now?" Manny was nodding his head in agreement.

"Because by the time they got here she might be gone." Mark had driven the car back to the street Victoria lived on and parked down from the house. They had been there about 15 minutes when the house went dark. A few minutes later the front door opened and they could barely make out a tall figure carrying a bundle over one shoulder. "See." Mark said smugly. He waited until the car left the driveway and turned the corner before he switched on his lights and followed.

Since the traffic was light it wasn't hard to stay behind the pewter colored SUV as it headed south towards the Cedar River. "If she dumps the body in the river it'll take them weeks or months to find it. The current is really swift after all the rain up state." Manny was now caught up in the thrill of the chase.

Mark waited until he was certain Victoria was indeed headed for the river before he opened his cell phone and dialed 911. "They're sending a car to stop her before she gets there." He said as the call ended.

They watched three vehicles, two police cars with their lights flashing one in front of the SUV, the other behind, stop on the shoulder of the road. Mark pulled off behind the three cars and the three men got out to watch the drama unfold.

"Step out of the car and keep your hands above your head." The officer with the sergeant's stripes yelled, while the two policemen in the front car had their weapons drawn and pointed at the SUV as Victoria slowly opened her door.

Victoria placed her hands on the hood of her car as instructed. "What's this about?" She asked after she had been handcuffed and the officers put their guns back into their holsters.

She was ignored as the sergeant peered into the back seat of the SUV. "There's a blanket back here with something under it." He stated to the other officers.

Mark moved closer at the announcement. "We're the ones that called. We saw the whole thing, Officer." Mike and Manny followed him and all three were standing at the back of Victoria's car.

"Saw what?" Victoria asked as if she was in total darkness about what was going on.

"You shot her in cold blood." Mark yelled and pointed his finger at the still handcuffed woman.

Their attention had been focused on Victoria when the sergeant opened the back passenger door. They jerked their heads around at the sound of a voice. "What's the matter?" A definitely feminine voice queried.

"You, you, your dead." Manny pointed a shaky finger at Catherine as she rounded the back of the vehicle to join the crowd. Then he proceeded to faint dead away.

"I saw, you shot, she fell." Mike muttered incoherently as he glanced back and forth between the two women in shock.

One of the policemen removed the handcuffs from Victoria's wrists. She rubbed her wrists and glanced up at Mark. When she was sure no one was looking she winked at him.

Which sent him off the deep end. "You bitch." He screamed and lunged for her only to be stopped by the sergeant.

"Now I want to know what's going on." The sergeant stated as he shoved the irate man back.

"I'm not exactly sure, Officer, but these three have been harassing us because I wouldn't go out with them." Victoria wanted it on record in case Mark decided to try to retaliate in some way. After promising to come down to the station the next day, the two women were finally alone by the side of the road.

"That was priceless." Catherine chuckled. "Did you see the look on Manny's face before he fainted?"

"Yeah, it beat the look on their faces when they thought I had shot you." Vic laughed. "Thanks for warning me about what they had planned."

"My pleasure. I hope they'll leave you alone now." Catherine sighed.

"I think it'll be awhile before they have the nerve to bother anyone." Vic laughed.

"I guess we better take that gun back to the drama department. I just hope that fake blood comes out of my clothes and your rug, Roger assured me it would." Catherine looked up to see a sly smile form on her friend's face.

Victoria wrapped her arms around the smaller woman. "I think there's something we need to finish first."

"What's that?" Catherine wrinkled her brow and circled her arms around Vic's waist.

"This." Victoria said as she leaned down and covered Catherine's lips with her own.

The End