

Chapter 6

Because Mommy Says So

April 6, Friday noon

Giselle Fowler walked away from the outdoor restaurant with composure and grace. Her long shiny blond hair flowed and fluttered in the light breeze. Her long legs carried her slightly overweight body quickly to her car. It was parked down the street and out of eye shot of the restaurant where John remained seated. When she reached the car she reached into her little red purse which matched her shoes and suit, and pulled out her car keys. After fumbling with the keys, she quickly opened the door, slid inside the small car, and closed the door. As soon as the door closed tears began to flow from her hazel eyes, down her rosy cheeks, and onto her small chin. Some tears eventually dropped from her chin onto the front of her dress and down her cleavage which she always managed to show.

“Look at me. All grown up and crying like I did in high school,” she scorned herself.

“Will you ever grow up? It’s just a relationship with one boy. You don’t have to cry after every break up, do you Giselle? Be stronger than that for crying out loud. Women can’t afford to be emotional and weak in today’s world.” In her head Giselle heard her mother ask her the same questions and make the same point that she did when she was still alive.

Giselle did her best to listen to the mother in her head and stop the tears. She did so the tried and true way, by analyzing and tearing down the cause of her pain, in this case that was John. “What did I ever see in him? Why did I want him? What did he have that could make me happy for the rest of my life? Why did I even fantasize that he would be a good husband? What was I thinking? I wasn’t even in love with him. He isn’t worth the tears. It was a mistake going out with him this long.”

“Your mistakes are causing you to run out of time,” her mind’s mother told her. “You’re past your prime; next month you’ll be twenty-five. You’re way over weight, your cheeks sag, your breasts sag, and your hips are way too big. They’ve always been big. And it takes ten times longer to get ready in the morning than it did only a few years ago. Girl, you’re over the hill. Your chances of getting a good man are almost gone,” her mind mother so unkindly warned her.

In reply Giselle thought, “I don’t want to get just one man. I’m not looking for Mr. Right. I’m not looking to get married anytime soon. I’m looking to rise up the corporate ladder, maybe even to the top. There’s no time to get a man and marry.”

“The top is impossible for you,” her mother retorted. “No matter how much women’s lives and chances have improved, the odds of making it to the top are still less for a woman than it is for a man, even if he has less than half the abilities that you... I have.”

This familiar mental argument which resulted from the real thing in her past had caused Giselle to pull herself together enough to start the car and begin the drive back to the office. After she had parked her car in the building’s parking lot she looked at herself in the mirror. The tears had smeared the rouge on her cheeks; so she reapplied some to her face. She looked down

Of Seeds

to see that the tears that had landed on her outfit had dried up without leaving any stains. She pushed up her breasts and exited the car. "Time to find a real candidate," she told herself. Giselle wanted to convince the mother in her head that she had indeed grown up.

"That's it. Use everything Mother Nature has given you," her mother spoke approvingly.

As Giselle entered the building the mother inside her saw through her act just as her real mother always did, "You can't fool me young lady. I know what's really inside you." Her self confidence was cut down at the self realization; but not to the point where she lost her just regained composure and grace. She made her way to her desk, grab what she needed for the first afternoon meeting and made her way down the hall keeping an eye out for the newbie. He was nowhere to be seen.

Giselle made it through the afternoon by keeping the hope that she could break away from the everlasting meetings long enough to see the office newbie before the end of the day. Perhaps she could find a way to convince him to ask her out. However, there was no sign of him through the afternoon.

As the last meeting dragged on, Giselle stared out the window watching birds play in a small water fountain. They distracted her thoughts. The water fountain was six feet round and about one foot deep. In the middle was a collection of four cement flamingoes with their backs to each other. Their beaks were pointed up and out allowing water to be sprayed out of their beaks and into the fountain.

As Giselle watched the live birds playing and washing in the water she saw a group of people leaving the building. She noticed that the newbie was among them. Her hope to talk to him would not be fulfilled today. "So much for wishing on a shooting star," she told herself.

Giselle left the office after the meeting was over without saying a word to anyone. She stopped by her desk, picked up her purse, and headed out the door. The drive home was as stressful as always. "Just another cruddy thing to do on an otherwise cruddy day," she told herself as she drove down Maple Drive.

Signaling to turn left and onto the avenue where the duplex that she lived in was located, Birdhouse Avenue, Giselle felt somewhat relieved. "Just a little bit longer, then I can relax and forget about the day," she consoled herself. Then her mind's mother sarcastically added, "How can you forget a day like this? Will you ever forget today? Probably not."

The terrible events of the day passed through Giselle's mind. That was followed by all the bad things that ever happened to her in her life. After she reviewed her life, she once again relived the bad events of the day.

Giselle thought, "Why is it so easy to remember all the bad things that happen in our lives, even those that had happened years ago? Why is it so hard for us to remember the good things that happen to us even a few days ago? Why are we more fatalistic than optimistic? Why are we depressed more than we are happy? Why is the grass always greener on the other side of the fence?" Giselle had often wondered these things. She wondered why she and everyone she knew were like this.

Of Seeds

As a young teen age girl Giselle had concluded from studying her middle school classmates from afar that she was one of the few people who thought this way. "Negative over positive, darkness over light, this was not the norm," she told herself.

However, a few years later, after talking to her high school friends and her mother about this Giselle began to see that most everyone had the same thought pattern that she did. "One of the advantages you can gain over another person," her mother told her, "is to realize that people are more negative and insecure than they appear to be. All people are negative thinkers, not positive thinkers."

Although Giselle came to see this as true, neither her mother nor her friends could tell her why people were this way. Not until recently in her life did someone give Giselle an answer to this universal human truth. Giselle was told, "Mankind apart from God is unsettled, unthankful, and restless. We are unthankful because we do not understand. We do not understand because we do not accept. We do not accept because we do not have faith. We do not have faith because we are afraid. We are afraid because we know that we are proud and stubborn. Pride leads to unsettled, unthankful and restless people. Such people are negative." This explanation was given to Giselle by her upstairs neighbor a year ago. Giselle's upstairs neighbor was Uhura Lincoln.

Giselle's self pity distracted her to the point to where she did not notice that she had cut short the left hand turn onto the avenue that she lived on. A horn snapped her out of her dazed state, but not before she sideswiped the car sitting in the left hand turn lane. This was the car that had blown its horn at her. A ripping noise was heard as her rear driver side panel caught the bumper of the car seated at the intersection. The shock and the stress broke down all the composure that was left in her. Tears again began to flow down Giselle's cheeks.

"What are you, fucking blind lady?" a man in his mid fifties yelled as he stepped out of the car. The man's hands were over his dark black haired head and snapping back and forth. He was walking to the front driver side of his car to get a good look at the bumper. When he had leaned over to get a closer look, the white old T-shirt that he was wearing popped out of the old pair of jeans he was wearing. Thus some of his back and crack were revealed. The man didn't notice nor care that Giselle sat in her car wiping the tears from her cheeks as he straightened up and continued, "Where the hell did you learn how to drive? You better not damn well have damaged my car. It took me five years to restore this beaut' and I not going to take it kindly if some dame hurt it."

Fear that this might turn into some road rage incident, Giselle thought that it was best to stay in her car and not say anything until the man calmed down. She reached into her purse for her cell phone and dialed 911 and she said to her self, "All men are heartless jerks."

"Lark County Emergency Services. How may I assist you?" a lady calmly said on the phone.

"I'd like to report an auto accident at the corner of Birdhouse and Maple," Giselle answered. She had regained her composure enough to answer calmly and clearly.

"Has anyone been hurt?"

"No."

Of Seeds

“Is an ambulance needed?”

“No. Everyone is fine,” Giselle had started to answer the operator when the owner of the other car reached into her window, tore the cell phone out of her left hand, and closed it. In shock and fear Giselle leaned toward the center of her car.

“Listen, lady,” the man said in a calm and apologetic voice. “We don’t have to get the police involved do we. We both know it was your fault. My car wasn’t damaged. All the damage is on your car. I’m willing to forget about this if you are.” Then he reached out his hand to give Giselle back her phone, but not enough to make it easy for Giselle to grasp.

“What..? Why..? Who do you..?” Surprised by the man’s sudden change in demeanor and grabbing her phone caused Giselle to stutter as she looked for the right words to say.

Then she heard her mother say inside her mind, “Take action missy. Let this man know who’s in control. Don’t let ass-holes walk all over you. Bullies back down when they see a woman of rage.”

“Give me my phone!” she exclaimed as she reached out to seize it. Then she opened her door and started to wave it at him as she slowly walked toward him. When the door flung open the man stepped back so that it would miss him. Stepping back threw him off balance. In a gesture of submission he threw up his hands as stepped back some more. This caused the front of his T-shirt to come out of his jeans and thus revealed his belly button which sat in the middle of a small pot belly. A minute ago the man was a raving swearing maniac. Now Giselle had transformed him into a rodeo clown, dodging her horns. Giselle was proud of her accomplishment. She was now in full control of this jerk.

“What right do you have to obstruct justice? If I want to call the police, I’m calling the police,” Giselle yelled at him as she took a step toward him. Her eyes were red because of the tears, but to the man it looked like she was in a fit of rage. The anger and frustration that had built up in her all day flashed out of Giselle and toward the T-shirt man like sparks of lightning flashing out of clouds and towards the earth.

In power, rage, and vengeance Giselle threw the phone at the T-shirt man. It whizzed by his head and passed in front of a truck that was driving down the opposing right most lane of Birdhouse Avenue. The truck driver slammed on the brake, turned his head toward Giselle, and looked at her with wide opened eyes. Behind the truck a car’s tires screeched and its horn began to blast. For a brief second Giselle thought she recognized the driver of the car; but it was blocked from her view when a bus pulled along side it and stopped. The bus was in the left lane of the opposing traffic. The bus driver stared at her. With all this attention on her, Giselle now felt in full control of the entire intersection.

Giselle turned to look at her car. A two foot long gash that started from the fender went back to the rubber bumper which was peeled back. Then she looked at T-shirt man’s vintage car’s chrome plated bumper. There was no damage. “Figures that I would get all the damage,” she told herself. Relief came over her when she remembered that she was the cause of the accident. Yet, she decided to not let the man out of her lasso, nor lose control of the intersection. “Better to keep him off guard so that the police don’t come. I don’t need another point on my driving record.”

Of Seeds

"Listen lady," the man started. Giselle turned and glared at the man. She kept a stern look on her face as he continued, "I don't have insurance yet. I'm just taking it for a quick spin. It's my first chance to drive it in nice weather. I couldn't pass it by. I won't bother you for anything if you just let me go on my way. I'm sorry for the way I spoke to you. Please lady?" he begged.

Pride, joy, and relief flushed through her veins as she thought it over, "I have conquered this man. I have conquered this intersection. I have the upper hand and I'm free. I've won. Let him go and then get the hell out of here in case the police show up."

"Alright mister. You can go. Get out of here fast and I won't press charges," she said to him in a harsh voice.

"Press charges? It was your fault lady," he replied.

"Do you want the police to find out you're driving without insurance?" she smartly stated.

"Alright, I'm going."

Both of them got into their cars and drove off.

No more than fifty feet down Birdhouse Avenue what really had happened began to sink in to Giselle. She hadn't won anything. She had caused damage to her car that would take weeks, if not months to pay off. By the time she had parked her car into the duplex that she was living in Giselle came to the point of breaking down.

Giselle had a hard time unlocking the door of the duplex because tears were welling up in her eyes again. As she opened the door a bird began to sign. It was Pelapee, her pet bird. The bird was perched in her cage signing happily to her master.

Giselle did not notice the greeter. She dropped her purse and made her way to her bedroom. She collapsed on the bed, sunk her head in a pillow, and began to cry, cry, cry. Giselle fell asleep in a pillow of tears.