

The weather was fair; ~~and the her environment surroundings~~ ~~was were~~ calm; ~~calm~~ enough for Kayla to hear the rhythm of her own heartbeat as she perused the court's ~~surrounding~~. The little red buds in the nearby gardens reminded her of her high school prom. Her date had given her a bouquet of the same red rosebuds. ~~How was it that in~~ the five years since; no one ~~else~~ had given her ~~a flower-s?~~

**Commented [WU1]:** Suggested word change. Environment sounds a bit too scientific to my ears for a romance

**Commented [WU2]:** Question form might make it sound a bit softer, less like complaining?

She admired the green grass that covered a good part of the surrounding area. Barely a month after winter had faded away, all the frozen vegetation had sprung back to life. She imagined sitting on a blanket on that well-groomed grass for a picnic with a lover. Her heart ached a bit ~~as at~~ the thought ~~of a lover crossed her mind.~~

**Commented [WU3]:** Redundant. More mysterious to let the reason for the heartache remain unsaid

~~She Kayla~~ wondered when she would find her special one. She had always found slightly older men attractive but had never been fortunate enough to be in a relationship with one who was still single. The few older men that had shown interest in her were married and she detested ~~having~~ affairs ~~with married men~~. She hated the idea of destroying another woman's marriage.

The sight of the journalists and cameramen that had gathered at the entrance of the court building distracted her from her thoughts. Her attention was drawn to the magnificent structure that loomed ahead. The building housed many courtrooms within which many legal battles had been fought ~~and won or lost in the past~~. Kayla imagined the joy on the faces of the attorneys and clients who had won. She also ~~imagined~~ ~~pictured~~ the ~~looks on the~~ faces of those who had ~~lost and she shook her head in pity~~. Today wasn't going to be any different; some would come out smiling while some would come out crying or frowning ~~and probably being or even~~ led away in handcuffs. She shook her head ~~again~~ at the irony of life. ~~Whatever happened, e~~One thing ~~Kayla~~ was sure ~~of, though~~ – her boss would come out smiling.

**Commented [WU4]:** Maybe let's just keep the second headshake two lines down ?

Her phone rang. She pressed it to her ear and listened attentively.

"You can now approach the building," the caller said.

"Sure," she replied and hung up. She adjusted her army green skirt and straightened her white long sleeve shirt. She also adjusted her reading glasses impulsively although she knew they were well-fitted on her dark brown eyes.

She walked briskly towards the court building ~~and knew that in a matter of minutes, her boss would be out.~~ ~~She and~~ ascended the well-lit staircase that led to the largest courtroom.

**Commented [WU5]:** Consider removing to make it tighter

As she ~~had~~ predicted, Cashel Conor and several other attorneys walked towards the door. Kayla looked on in admiration. She didn't need to be told that as usual, judgment had been passed in favor of Cashel's client. His stride intrigued her. He walked with the strength of an athlete. Kayla watched him pull off his black robe and grey horse-hair wig.

For the umpteenth time since she had started working for him, she couldn't take her eyes off his unique physical appearance. His short brown hair was parted on the left side, still as neat as it had been when she had first seen him that morning. His tall and well-built frame made him stand out from the other attorneys.

"Congratulations sir," Kayla said as she collected his robe, wig and files from him.

He faced her with a smile. “Thank you, Kayla.” His blue eyes sparkled through his slim, long face as he smiled, just as they had when Kayla had first met him on her sixteenth birthday dinner. ~~God, she could get lost in those eyes.~~ That had been shortly after she and her mom had left their home in Nigeria to join her dad in Dublin. Now, with just a few weeks to her twenty-fourth birthday, it felt like little had changed.

Commented [WU6]: Just a suggestion!

Commented [WU7R6]:

They began walking down the stairs. ~~At the main entrance of the court building,~~ Cashel’s security men were ~~on-posted at the main entrance to the court building the ground to make sure to ensure~~ that the crowd of journalists ~~at the entrance of the building~~ didn’t obstruct ~~his movement~~him. As expected, they struggled to get him to say a word or two about the recently concluded case. Cashel signaled to his security officers to allow him a few moments with the press.

As usual, Kayla stepped aside to watch him speak. Despite the numerous microphones that were pushed towards his mouth, she couldn’t hear what he was saying. ~~His voice was loud enough for someone standing a few meters away to hear but Kayla still couldn’t grasp what he was saying.~~ She was too engrossed in her admiration of him. She ~~in awe~~ looked ~~with thinly disguised awe~~ at the successful senior advocate who had never lost a ~~single~~ case. At the age of forty-two, he had already made a big impact in the legal and business worlds. Having handled his files and confidential documents for a year now, Kayla knew that Cashel was success personified.

Commented [WU8]: Redundant. Consider removing

Commented [WU9]: Redundant with ‘never’

Not only did he excel in his law practice, he also excelled in all his other businesses. Aside from being a successful lawyer, Cashel was also a successful real estate guru and importer. Everything about him inspired Kayla and spurred her to ~~striving~~ ~~strive~~ for excellence in her ~~daily endeavors~~own life. The past year had been the most fulfilling year of her life.

Cashel ended his brief interview and began to walk towards the car. Kayla hurried beside him.

His men opened the back door of his SUV with black-tinted windows. He got into the car first while Kayla and the men in black suits entered last. ~~The~~ car drove towards Cashel’s office complex.

As soon as they arrived, Kayla smiled. She knew what would follow next. She followed Cashel quietly into his office. It was large enough to accommodate fifteen people at the same time. Kayla watched him exhale deeply as he sat on his office sofa. She knew he was relieved that the case had finally come to an end. He took off his black jacket and threw it on the opposite sofa. Kayla quickly picked it up and hung it on his coat rack.

“Kayla,” he called.

She hurried towards him.

“Please get me some water.”

“Yes sir.” She hurried into her office which was adjacent to his. She returned with a bottle of water and a glass. She poured the liquid into the glass and watched him gulp it down.

“More please,” he said as he stretched the glass towards her.

She poured the remaining water for him. He gulped it again, ~~but at a slower~~ ~~rate~~this time. He handed the glass over to her.

“Please gather the other staff. Bring two bottles of champagne and some glasses.”

Within minutes, Cashel’s staff ~~were around~~ were gathered into his office. Kayla knew it was customary for Cashel to celebrate his successes, both big and small. She returned with the drinks and handed them to Cashel. She gave a glass to each staff member and watched Cashel pop the corks. ~~He poured a glass each for the staff.~~

~~Let’s toast!~~ “To more wins,” he said and lifted up his glass.

“To more wins,” they replied in unison and began to clink glasses with each other. They drank and chatted happily among themselves until they were done ~~with drinking~~.

“All right guys,” Cashel said. “Thank you all for coming over. You can now carry on with your duties.”

“You’re welcome sir,” the oldest member of staff said. They began to walk out until Cashel and Kayla were left alone in their office.

Kayla cleared glasses and went to put them away in the store. She knew that she had only a short while left to run such petty office errands. In a few days’ time, a new office assistant would be starting to replace the one who had just left and Kayla would be free to focus on her confidential secretarial job.

Minutes later, she returned to Cashel’s office to find him relaxing on one of the sofas. He was watching the golf on the television. As soon as he saw Kayla, he paused the television ~~and gave her instructions~~.

“Kayla, could you please remove the confidential files from my briefcase and file them properly?”

“Sure,” Kayla replied and set to work immediately. As she went about working, she’d occasionally throw a quick glance at Cashel and back to the documents ~~and to~~ marvel ~~at~~ how he could put so much trust in her.

She knew that his legal opponents and enemies would give anything ~~just~~ to get ~~a~~ hold off some of his confidential files. She imagined what he’d do to her if she ever gave him away. *He’d send you straight to the gallows*, an inner voice told her. She shrugged and continued to sort the files.

Several times she glanced at the television screen, then quickly brought her attention back to her work. Each time she glanced at the television screen, she’d glance at Cashel too to be sure he didn’t notice she was getting distracted. But she was too late – Cashel’s eyes were following her ~~around~~ the room. What she didn’t know was why a small smile kept playing at the corner of his lips.

She finished arranging the files and put them away in the right cabinets. Every cabinet had a lock and a central password. She then put away some of the textbooks that Cashel had consulted while preparing for the final hearing of the recently concluded case.

Cashel’s office was ~~less office than more or less like a~~ library. A greater part of the office comprised of cabinets and shelves. When Kayla had first begun working for him, she had wondered why he didn’t create a separate room, a library of sorts, for the books. It was later that

**Commented [WU10]:** Consider removing. Redundant/obvious..?

**Commented [WU11]:** Suggestion: tighter, snappier dialogue

**Commented [WU12]:** Would ‘work’ or sth more informal be better suited?

she ~~got to understand~~understood that he cherished his books as much as he cherished his job. He wanted the books placed where he could easily find them whenever he wanted to refer to them.

Within a few minutes, Kayla was done with the arrangement and got ready to leave. She picked up her cell phone absentmindedly, her eyes still fixed on the television. Suddenly, her phone slipped out of her hands and she struggled to ~~get a~~hold on to it. The phone fell in Cashel's direction and he quickly grabbed it.

She looked at him with gratitude.

"Thank you, sir."

His blue eyes sparkled as he looked at her. She sensed amusement from the look on his face.

"You should be more careful next time," he said and handed over the phone to her. She took the phone from him and surveyed it as if it were some treasure that she had ~~just just been unearthed~~found.

"Thank you once again. I'll be more careful next time," she said and looked down in shame before looking up at his face again. "I ~~was got~~ a bit carried away by the game."

"I noticed that," he said and looked at her in a way that suggested ~~that~~he was impressed with ~~the fact that she was interested~~her interest in sports. "Do you play golf?"

"Golf?" she asked full-spiritedly.

He nodded.

"No, I don't. But I'm a great admirer of the game and its players."

"So, you admire me?" he asked cunningly.

Kayla looked away in her bid to hide her smile. She hoped he wouldn't require an answer but her hope was dashed when ~~he made a~~his facial expression ~~that~~told her ~~that~~he was ~~waiting for her~~reply.

"Of course I do admire you," she said and quickly added, "I mean, I admire a lot of things about you," she said, and hoped that ~~that~~would settle it.

Cashel nodded in satisfaction.

"So, what games do you play then?"

Kayla smiled. "I'm a good table tennis player. I've never lost a single game," she said with all the pride she could exude.

"But you have lost a double game," he said. At first, Kayla didn't understand ~~what he was saying~~. ~~Suddenly~~Then, the joke made sense to her and they burst out in laughter together. She liked his sense of humor.

"I bet you don't play better than me," he said.

**Commented [WU13]:** I thought a simpler word was more appropriate for the moment full of electric chemistry!

Kayla found his assertion amusing. “Sir, I have never lost a game,” she repeated.

“That could be true,” he said with a shrug. “Possibly because you have never played someone who has never lost a game either.”

“Why do I feel like this is a challenge?” she asked, in a deliberate attempt not to sound ~~too~~ ~~informa~~~~f~~~~lirtatious~~. He was still her boss, after all.

**Commented [WU14]:** Just a suggestion. Time we throw the audience a bone eh?

“It became a challenge when you boasted about your past victories,” he said and threw a quick glance at the television screen that was currently showing something else. “How about a game of table tennis tomorrow afternoon at Ivory’s Games?”

Kayla smiled. She figured it could be the break she needed from her weekend routine of reading romance~~ce~~~~te~~ novels and watching horror movies.

“That sounds great.”

Cashel smiled too. “Very well then. Let’s meet at Ivory’s Games at 1:00 pm. Come prepared to lose.”

Kayla burst into laughter and quickly restrained herself, remembering that she was still talking to her ~~boss~~~~superior~~.

“I’m sorry about that.” She apologized.

“There’s no need for that,” he replied casually. “I get such reactions all the time.”

Kayla nodded.

“What will my prize be?” she asked.

“You mean, what will the winner – being me – go home with?” he replied and they both laughed. “Seriously, you speak with so much faith, Kayla.”

“That’s because I have so much of it in myself.”

“All right, here’s the deal,” he said looking more serious. “If you win, I’ll teach you how to play golf and if I win...” He stopped talking.

Kayla looked ~~at him~~ curiously at him to continue.

“If I win, I’d get a kiss from you. Deal?”

Kayla’s curiosity gave way to surprise. She stared at him with her mouth wide open. She finally closed it after a few moments of surprise at the fact that a man of his standing would be interested in kissing a girl like her. Kissing her boss wasn’t something she was willing to do any time soon. She was about to ask for a change in prize terms when it dawned on her that she may not need to kiss him after all. She was going to win ~~the~~ ~~this~~ game ~~anyways~~.

“Deal,” she said.