

~ Spring Training ~  
~ (Fielders Choice Part Two) ~

by Mavis Applewater  
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A special thank you goes out to my beta reader Mountain Girl.

As always this is for Heather.

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Part One

*St. Louis, Missouri 1953*

Bobbie was waiting outside the stadium feeling terrible. The Sirens had come so close only to be knocked out of the playoffs by one run. "They should have started Cherish instead of Betty," the depressed third basewoman grumbled under her breath as she signed autographs for the fans.

"My thoughts exactly," a booming voice concurred with her. Bobbie took a hard swallow as the large farmer approached her.

"Mr. Goodie sir," she stammered suddenly feeling very nervous around Cherish's father.

"Now why is it you are always so skittish around me?" He teased her with a knowing stare. *'Oh crap, I really like him, but if he finds out what I've been doing with his baby girl this man is going to skin me alive,'* she thought fearfully.

"My little Cherish would have been all over that ball," Jude Goodie boasted proudly. "But that doesn't mean I'm not taking you girls out for a steak dinner. You deserve it."

"Thank you sir," she gulped in response. Her stress ebbed slightly when she spied a familiar figure standing behind him.

"He's right, Goodie would have caught that ball with her eyes closed," the dirty blonde agreed with him.

"Mr. Goodie, this is Stella Swanson. She plays for the Muskegon Belles," Bobbie quickly introduced them as she prayed for Cherish to hurry up and join them.

"Nice to meet you Sir, your daughter is a fine ballplayer," Stella complimented him.

"What brings you to St. Louis?" Bobbie inquired curious as to why the short stop was so far from home. "And should we be talking?"

"Seasons over for both of us," Stella quickly inserted letting Bobbie know they weren't violating one of the precious rules of conduct. "I'm just here to watch Roxie kick your behind and do a little scouting."

"What?" Bobbie gasped with surprise. "They cut you? But you did great this season."

"They cut the team," Stella grimly informed her former teammate.

"No," Bobbie blanched.

"It is true, I have to try out for next season," Stella sighed.

"That's not right," Mr. Goodie blustered. "And why are you worried about talking to one another?"

"One of the rules of conduct," Bobbie grumbled. "To promote a healthy rivalry between clubs, members of different clubs aren't permitted to fraternize during the season," she explained as Mr. Goodie rolled his eyes. Bobbie had to agree with him. "I can't believe the Belles folded. That only leaves six teams," Bobbie thought with horror. Now that Muskegon folded it looked as if the league truly was coming to an end. It had been coming with all the added exhibition games and salary cuts due to lack of ticket sales.

"So what are your plans for the off season?" Stella quickly inquired sensing that Bobbie feared the future.

"Uhm, I was going to head back to Pittsburgh," she explained not missing the disappointed look on Mr. Goodie's face. "I worked for this guy last year and he said I could come back; it all depends," her voice trailed off not wanting to elaborate that she would go wherever she and Cherish could find work. The blonde's father had already expressed his disappointment that Cherish wasn't returning home during the off-season. Their time together would be short since Cherish had to try out for the up coming season. The news that another team had folded meant more players would be vying for spots on the few remaining teams. Cherish was new to the league and could, in all likelihood, be cut in favor for a more seasoned player.

"Daddy?" Cherish's exuberant voice broke through Bobbie's dismay. She smiled as she watched father and daughter hugging one another. She blinked with surprise when she felt Stella tugging on her elbow pulling her aside.

"Now what has your knickers in a twist?" Stella whispered gleefully. "I know losing today had to hurt but you seem kind of afraid of your teammate's dad. What gives? You're not bugging her are you?" Stella offered with a conspiratorial whisper. "Oh my, you are!" She blurted out.

"Ssh," Bobbie hissed.

"You and the little farm girl?" Stella whispered gleefully. "Oh be careful Cahill. Her Daddy is big guy; he looks like he could hurt you."

"I know," Bobbie fumed. "So keep your voice down Swanie I really want to live long enough to make to next season, if there is one."

"Bobbie," Cherish softly greeted her. The brunette's eyes widened not missing the way the little blonde was sizing up Stella.

"Cherish this is Stella Swanson," she quickly introduced them.

"Swanie," the dirty blonde corrected as she shook the smaller woman's hand.

"The shortstop from the Belles?" Cherished beamed brightly. "You used to play for the Sirens too."

"A few years ago," Stella nodded with a smile. "Not to worry, I don't bat from that side of the plate. Good game ladies, I have to catch up with my sister. You remember my sister don't you Bobbie?"

"I remember Roxanne," Bobbie fumed feeling her ire growing. She fully understood that Stella was just giving her a good ribbing and normally it wouldn't bother her. Yet, with Cherish and the blonde's father standing right there Bobbie suddenly felt very uneasy.

"Nice meeting you," Cherish quickly interjected, as Bobbie grew tenser.

"A pleasure," Stella earnestly responded. "I'll be seeing you at tryouts."

"Huh?" Cherish inquired with a curious tilt of her head.

"The Belles folded," Bobbie grimly explained.

"Oh?" Cherish responded with a hard swallow as they waved goodbye to Stella. "Coach needs to see you," the blonde quietly informed the tall brunette. Bobbie nodded her head and turned to make her way back to the stadium when she felt Cherish's hand on her arm. "Just out of curiosity what side of the plate does Roxanne play?"

"Coach is waiting," Bobbie blurted out quickly before racing off to the stadium. Bobbie's heart was racing as she tore into the stadium. Roxanne Swanson was Stella's kid sister and someone whose company Bobbie had enjoyed on more than one occasion. When Stella found out she tackled Bobbie and hung her upside down from the bleachers threatening to tan her hide if she even looked at the captivating catcher again. Thankfully Roxanne stepped in explaining that neither she nor Bobbie was serious about one another. What really saved Bobbie's life was when both Swanson sisters were traded to different teams.

Bobbie's mood darkened even further when she approached the dugout and found Coach Williams and several of the veteran players with glum looks on their faces. Not surprisingly Betty was sitting off in a far corner. Everyone knew that the platinum blonde had missed an easy catch allowing the tie breaking run to slip past her. It would have been two runs if Bobbie hadn't snagged the ball. It didn't help when Betty struck out in the bottom of the ninth. Being knocked out of the playoffs because of one run was a bitter pill to swallow.

"I wish we had let you beat the snot out of Betty," Brenda whispered bitterly.

"I don't think this is about losing the playoffs," Bobbie mumbled. "Muskegon folded."

"What?" Brenda blurted out startling everyone.

"Thank you Cahill I didn't know how to start," Coach Williams glumly began. "The Belles folded. There are only six teams left in the league. With sales down recruiting new players is going to be harder. With so many teams disbanding it doesn't look good. There are a lot of good players looking to stay in the league. We are staying," he asserted as everyone blew out a sigh of relief. "But, and this isn't coming from me, with so many players looking to stay no one's spot is secure for next season. Despite today's loss I expect to see all of you back next season. The boss' will be deciding who gets invited to the tryouts. I'll be in touch with everyone letting them know if they are invited or not. I'm sorry about this. I'm not sorry about this season all of you played your best and I couldn't be prouder."

They exchanged sullen goodbyes with one another and the coach and finally Mrs. Griswold before grabbing up their gear and walking out of the stadium for what could be the last time. Bobbie tried to be happy during dinner, yet between losing and knowing that her spot wasn't secure she found it hard to enjoy the lavish steak dinner Mr. Goodie had bought her.

"Cherish, darling you have a little something on your face why don't you go freshen up?" Mr. Goodie suddenly suggested.

"Oh okay," Cherish blinked with confusion as she stood to go to the ladies room. Bobbie automatically stood to escort her as her father did the same.

"Why don't you stay Bobbie?" He politely requested in a tone that informed the brunette it was not really a request but a demand.

"Daddy?" Cherish chimed with a cautioning tone.

"Now darling, Bobbie has barely touched her dinner and I just want to have a little chat with her," he innocently explained as Bobbie felt her stomach clench. The knots in her stomach tightened as Cherish complied with her father's request and bounced off to the ladies room.

Bobbie began to twist her napkin furiously as the tall, blonde man glared over at her. "I like that I make you nervous," he finally offered with a rakish grin.

"Do you now?" Bobbie grunted suddenly fearing for her life. She was well aware of the fact that this kindly farmer could have her arrested for what she was doing with his daughter. The only thing that kept her from fleeing at that very moment was the fact that she was in love with Cherish and would gladly face a firing squad for the endearing blonde.

"I really like you Bobbie," he suddenly offered gently. "It is only natural for a father to enjoy the fact that someone who is *close* to his daughter be just a little afraid of him."

"Good to know," Bobbie blinked with surprise. "You two are so much alike," she added thoughtfully. "Charming, sweet, truly good people and a lot smarter than people think you are."

"Thank you," he laughed. "I adore my baby girl and I don't want to step on your toes, but why Pittsburgh?"

"Work," Bobbie answered honestly. "I been saving since I joined the league but I still have to work during the off season. I know you want Cherish to come home during the break, I just don't," her voice trailed off knowing that despite how understanding Mr. Goodie appeared to be it probably wouldn't be wise for her to confess that she couldn't stand being separated from Cherish even for a few months.

"If work is the only reason, would you consider perhaps working somewhere other than Pittsburgh?" He offered sincerely. "Say at a small college in Kansas where you'd have free room and board on a farm? Can you type?"

"Of course I can type," she sputtered trying to understand what he was offering. "Wait, are you saying you've lined up a job for me?"

"Yes," he shyly confessed. "Again, I'm not trying to step on your toes. I just want to spend time with my daughter. Tryouts and spring training are just a few months off. I know that the both of you are going to make the team again, you're too good not to. This way you can live at the farm; we have a huge field where the two of you can train. Plus if you wanted to you could take a couple of night classes at the college for free. Cherish told me you dropped out during your second year."

"Yes I did," Bobbie bristled.

"No offense," he quickly apologized. "If I had a chance to play pro ball I would have done the

same. When Cherish told me that she had a tryout I was walking on air. I told her that school could wait. I'm just so proud of her."

"Adopt me," Bobbie gushed as she smiled over at the kindly man.

"I'm trying to," he laughed. "Just think about it."

"There is nothing to think about," Bobbie agreed. "I know Cherish wants to spend time with you, the only reason we were heading for Pittsburgh was so we could find jobs and a place to live, and this way Cherish could take some classes so yes. My only question is why didn't you ask Cherish?"

"Cause she would have accused me of interfering, which I am," he warmly explained. "Oh just one more thing," he carefully began.

Bobbie held her breath waiting for him to explain that she would be sleeping in the barn and nowhere near Cherish. "You do know that ball players aren't the only ones who head South for training, if by chance you run into a certain clown I wouldn't object to you partaking in a little batting practice," he gleefully offered as Bobbie choked.

"I swear I'll never get use to that story," Bobbie choked out.

"Try walking in my boots." Jude sighed as he rolled his dark green eyes.

"Now just what are the two of you conspiring?" Cherish gleefully inquired as she took her seat. "And there was nothing on my face."

"Your father asked me to beat up a clown," Bobbie shrugged.

"Daddy?" Cherish squeaked. "You didn't say yes did you?"

"Of course I did," Bobbie laughed.

"Bobbie Cahill that isn't very nice," Cherish admonished her. "Now tell me what else the two of you have brewing?"

"Your going back to Kansas," Bobbie began to explain. She quickly shrunk back when she caught the fiery look in her lover's eyes. "Let me rephrase that; we are going to Kansas, your father arranged a job for me and a chance for the both of us to take some classes. We can train for tryouts and, why are you so mad?"

"Daddy, go freshen up," Cherish politely yet sternly informed her father. Bobbie was stunned at how the large man gulped with fear before complying with his daughter's request.

"I'm in trouble," Bobbie muttered under her breath.

"Not at all," Cherish offered pleasantly. The brunette wasn't fooled by the blonde's comforting tone the angry glare in her lover's eyes spoke volumes. "I was just curious as to when or if you were going to ask me what I wanted?"

"I swear he just sprung it on me while you were in the powder room," Bobbie defended her actions. "I thought you would like the idea so I said yes," she pleaded her case as the blonde chewed on her bottom lip. "Damn it Cherish," she fussed.

"Language," Cherish objected.

"I'm sorry," Bobbie quickly apologized. "Cherish I'm sorry I accepted your father's offer. I only did so because I thought it would make you happy to go home and take some classes so you don't fall behind. If that isn't what you want then just say so."

"Oh no it sounds terrific," Cherish confessed. "I'd love to show you the farm and spend our time off back home, and you having a job and going to school as well is a great idea. There is just one thing that concerns me."

"What is it?" Bobbie implored in a frantic tone.

"The farm house is really big with a lot of bedrooms," Cherish whispered the last part.

"Oh," Bobbie gulped as she realized what was troubling Cherish.

"Daddy seems to like you a lot and I think he knows that I'm sweet on you," Cherish prattled on. "I just don't know how we are going to explain that I have no intention of sleeping in a separate room."

"I'm not asking him," Bobbie argued not missing the pleading look in her lover's eyes. "I just hate to think that you'd give up spending time with your Dad and school just so we can work in some factory and live in a flop house."

"Do you want to sleep apart?" Cherish curiously inquired.

"Never," Bobbie vowed. "I think you're right, I'm pretty sure your Dad knows about us. But there is a difference between knowing and knowing. What do you want to do?"

"I don't know," Cherish sighed. "I mean I could talk to him, but if he says no I'm afraid that I'll lose him."

"I won't let that happen," Bobbie asserted as she clasped her hand over the smaller woman's squeezing it quickly before removing it before prying eyes saw the intimate contact. "Look he's coming back, why don't we accept the offer and worry about the sleeping arrangements when we get to Kansas. For tonight how about we just enjoy a nice dinner with your Dad before going back to the boarding house, the team is probably raising quite a ruckus by now."

"I like that idea," Cherish responded with a shy smile and a slight drawl. "You're right as always."

"Yeah," Bobbie laughed. "I'm positively hen pecked and everyone knows it."

Mr. Goodie's return cut off any comment his impish daughter might have offered. She simply gave the tall brunette a confident smile. Bobbie had never seen anyone, as Cherish would put it, bust a gut before, but when they told Jude Goodie that they would return to Kansas the brunette felt certain that the man was going to literally explode.

The only disagreement came when Bobbie flat out refused his offer to fly them to Kansas in order to spare the girls from the long train trip. She knew it was her pride and the chance to be alone with Cherish that kept her from accepting. She also felt a need to prove to Mr. Goodie that she wasn't a slacker and could look after his daughter.

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True to Bobbie's prediction the boarding house was alive with the sounds of a full-blown bash. Despite all outward appearances of frivolity there was a somber feeling lingering over the girls. It didn't surprise Bobbie between losing the game and the news that none of them were secured a spot next season, it was hard to be joyous. Still this was the last day of Cherish's first season and Bobbie was going to try her damndest to make the night special.

"Watch out Betty's in a mood," Brenda cautioned them as they joined the party.

"Gee I wonder why?" Bobbie snickered the memory of watching the ball bounce from the blonde's glove replayed in her mind.

"No small wonder," Cherish piped in. "Any of us could have made that error. I swear if I had to listen to all the snide comments about it I'd be madder than a wet hen."

"That and knowing that she has to go back to Saskatchewan for the winter," Bobbie jested receiving a glare from her lover.

"Fine," Cherish nodded. "I'm going to talk to her."

"Hold on," Bobbie cautioned the smaller woman. "She's had it in for you all season, trust me you are the last person she wants to see right now. Frankly I wouldn't put it past her to try and pull some stunt."

"Then come with me and wish her well," Cherish brightly encouraged.

"Huh?" Bobbie choked out as Cherish sauntered off.

"She is amazing," Brenda noted thoughtfully.

"That she is," Bobbie concurred as she watched the perky blonde approach the irate Betty.

"Honestly if Betty had pulled half the crap on me she tried with Cherish I would have cleaned her clock," Brenda confessed.

"I hate to say it but Cherish is right," Bobbie glumly accepted. "All day Betty's had to listen to everyone bitching about how Cherish should have been the starter. It couldn't help that Cherish started for most of the playoff games," the brunette conceded as she watched Betty eyeing Cherish in a malicious manner as she kept her hands folded across her chest. Bobbie took a cleansing breath and crossed the room to join them and, of course, step in if Betty decided to get snotty. Even though she agreed with Cherish's assessment she still possessed an overwhelming desire to stuff Betty's head in a toilet.

"Shake her hand," Bobbie insisted as she spied Betty glaring down at Cherish's offer to shake her hand and wish her well. Betty still resisted as Cherish withdrew her hand with a smile still plastered on her face.

"I hope you enjoy the off season and I look forward to seeing you next season," Cherish graciously offered as everyone watched the scene amazed at the blonde's politeness before walking away.

"That's it," Bobbie fumed as she threw up her hands. "You and I are going to have a little talk," she surged as she wagged her finger at the irate woman.

"Shove it Bobbie," Betty sneered.

"Ladies," Mrs. Griswold said as she suddenly appeared beside them.

"Not to worry Grizzie all I want to do is talk," Bobbie reassured the older woman. "Outside, now," Bobbie's tone left no room for debate. Betty shrugged and followed the brunette out onto the porch and away from their fellow teammates most of whom were watching from the parlor window.

"So, what, you going to defend your girlfriend?" Betty snidely challenged her. "The two of you make me sick."

"Really?" Bobbie fumed as she fought to keep her anger in check knowing that one wrong word could lead to both her and Cherish being kicked out of the league. She took a deep breath as they stepped out onto the lawn. "Why now?"

"What?" Betty asked in confusion.

"After being teammates for how many years all of a sudden I'm the enemy," Bobbie continued fighting to find some way to get through to the woman who prior to this season had been a friend. "I was there on third, Millie was right there playing shortstop all of us let that runner get by. I'm sorry that you're the one taking shit over it. It was one bad play, we had a good season."

Bobbie held her breath as they stood there in the darkness as an uncomfortable silence loomed over them. She watched as Betty's face scrunched up and tears filled her eyes. "Cherish had a good season," Betty finally spat out. "It just popped out of my damn glove. I had it we could have won the pennant and I dropped the damn ball."

"It happens," Bobbie reassured her as she took a shy step closer as the tears finally fell from Betty's eyes. Bobbie had the sinking feeling that the woman's sorrow had been building up all season.

"It happened to me all season," Betty choked out. "I just couldn't get out of my slump and I don't know why."

"So, in the off season you work harder and we'll be back here next season," Bobbie encouraged knowing that Betty just needed to get her confidence back. She still wasn't ready to forgive her surly attitude where Cherish was concerned, but it was a start. "Like I said we've been teammates for a long time, hate to see it end like this. Slumps happen; we've all been there just next time talk to someone instead of taking it out on some kid."

"She's just so damn perky," Betty grumbled as Bobbie gave her a hug.

"Trust me I've noticed," Bobbie laughed.

"We had bets going that you were going to stuff her in her locker," Betty sniffed as Bobbie laughed harder. "It was a good season," Betty finally conceded as she hugged the brunette and they headed back towards the party.

"Next season will be even better," Bobbie vowed as they stepped inside and were warmly greeted by their teammates. In the back of Bobbie's mind she couldn't help wondering if either of them would be returning for another season.

"You handled that very well Roberta," Mrs. Griswold commended her as the brunette blushed.

"Yeah, well," Bobbie stammered embarrassed by the compliment.

"Cahill?" Penny called out.

"Finally off the telephone," the brunette teased her friend.

"Season is over," Penny sighed heavily. "I want to see my man," she added gleefully as Bobbie snickered. "Tell me what I just heard isn't true, your spending the off season in Kansas?"

"Yeah," Bobbie squeaked.

"Why?" Penny sputtered. "Never mind, I think I know why. Just watch out for those twisters Dorothy."

"That isn't funny," Cherish piped in as a couple of other players agreed. "Trust me there isn't an emerald city waiting for you after a tornado just a lot of destruction."

"Speaking of destruction," Bobbie cut in. "Oh Grizzie, am I still champ for violating the Rules of Conduct?" Out of the fifteen rules of conduct, Bobbie was notorious for breaking rule number three. Mrs. Griswold normally only fined the girls twice a third offense meant suspension, so the kindly chaperone usually let it slide. She did keep a mental tally of each and every infraction.

"Bobbie?" Cherish gasped.

"Your roomie has been reigning queen for breaking rule number three every season she's been in the league," Penny merrily explained.

"Number three?" Cherish blinked with surprise. "You smoke and drink in public?"

"No," Bobbie scoffed. "The last part of rule three."

"Oh, that would be the use of obscene language," Cherish noted gleefully. "I have cautioned you about that."

"You've cautioned everyone about that," Bobbie corrected her smiling as she caught the gleam in the blonde's emerald eyes.

"Sadly Roberta you have been dethroned," Mrs. Griswold offered in a deadpan tone. "Betty has successfully topped the list this year although Susan did give you a run for your money by hiking up her skirt almost every game."

"Finally, I win something," Betty quipped as the crew laughed.

"Ladies, this season was a pleasure for me and I look forward to seeing all of you back next season," Mrs. Griswold offered. "Now I know that most of you will be departing in the next couple of days just remember the rules still apply even though your season is complete."

"End of season," Brenda cheered. "And just what does that mean ladies?"

"No more lipstick, a drink and a smoke," everyone except Cherish chanted.

"Or not," Bobbie choked as she caught Cherish's narrow gaze.

"Tell me you don't smoke?" The blonde pleaded.

"Doesn't everyone?" Bobbie questioned.

"No," Cherish sighed. "It is un-lady like and unhealthy."

"What do you mean unhealthy?" Bobbie argued. "Everyone does it."

"Bobbie, there have been studies on mice proving that it can be harmful," Cherish asserted. "I was reading about it during my last semester."

"Really?" Bobbie sputtered knowing that she really did feel and play better during the season when she wasn't allowed anywhere near tobacco.

"Hey Cahill," Penny beckoned her in a hushed whisper.

"What gives?" Bobbie eagerly responded eager to escape her lover's upcoming lecture regarding the evils of smoking.

"End of season for the rookie," Penny beamed as Bobbie cringed. "The girls were wondering if we were going to give her a send off? Come on Cahill it is a tradition."

"Oh I don't know," Bobbie began slowly.

"Bobbie what is going on?" Cherish curiously inquired as she approached the duo.

"We were just talking about tonight," Penny boasted.

"Penny I don't think," Bobbie began.

"The party is quite enjoyable," Cherish clueless continued.

"I'm not talking about this square fair," Penny snickered. "We have a little tradition for the last night of everyone's rookie season."

"Really?" Cherish beamed with interest.

"Cherish, I don't think," Bobbie began knowing that this was going to be a really bad idea.

"Bobbie if it is a tradition," Cherish innocently cut her off. "What is it?"

"First we have to wait until Grizzie goes to bed," Penny offered with a conspiratorial whisper.

"Oh?" Cherish stammered.

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Later that evening Bobbie and the others snuck a very drunken Cherish back into the boarding house. "I knew this was a bad idea," she grumbled as they crept up the staircase while she supported the blonde's body with one hand and keeping the other clamped tightly over Cherish's mouth in an effort to keep her from bursting out in song once again.

Everyone froze in place when the floor creaked loudly just outside of Mrs. Griswold's room. Bobbie swore she could hear everyone's heart pounding as they listened to the silence. Once they were convinced that their beloved chaperone was either asleep or ignoring their transgression they hurried the drunken blonde to her room. Cherish released a yelp as the team dropped her on the bed.

"Who would think two beers could cause this much damage?" Bobbie whispered as she watched her lover's eyes rolling back.

"Maybe it was the whiskey?" Brenda theorized her eyes widening when she realized what she had said and Bobbie glared down at her.

"The what?" Bobbie hissed as her teammates scattered quickly each offering best wishes and a fun off-season. "I'm going to kill them," she vowed as her lover moaned.

"I don't feel so good," Cherish groaned from her bed.

"No small wonder," Bobbie sighed as she pondered the possibility that the blonde was going to be sick. She darted out of the room and retrieved a bucket from the linen closet just in case. She almost burst out in laughter when she spied Cherish half hanging off the bed. "Oh baby why did you drink whiskey?" She asked the groaning blonde as she knelt beside the bed and began to undress the smaller woman.

"I didn't," Cherish slurred looking up with a slightly unfocused gaze. "I just had those two beers neither of which I finished," the blonde tried to explain. "I slipped them to you," she continued with a hiccup. "After that all I drank was pop."

"Laced with Jack Daniels," Bobbie groaned in disgust. Her original plans for the evening were resting up for the next game, but when they lost all she was looking forward to was sneaking upstairs and spending time alone with Cherish. "Well getting drunk and playing swizzle stick baseball is a tradition," the brunette concluded with a weary sigh as she tucked Cherish under the covers.

"I won though," Cherish giggled as Bobbie slipped out of her clothes and climbed in next to the drunken blonde.

"Yes you did," Bobbie laughed recalling how Cherish swept the other players in the drinking game that required skill with a swizzle stick, alcohol and a bowl of maraschino cherries.

"I popped the cherry on the very first pitch," Cherish gleefully slurred. "Why do they call it that, I thought that meant,"

"It does," Bobbie cut her off as she cradled the blonde in her arms and massaged her scalp. "And where did you learn that?"

"Wild Kat," Cherish giggled.

"You and those books," Bobbie snickered as she felt Cherish's body melting against her own. "Speaking of which we got rid of all of them didn't we?"

"Yes," Cherish sighed as her hands began to wander.

"Oh no you don't," Bobbie giggled as she captured Cherish's wandering hands. "You, young lady, are drunk and I don't make a habit of taking advantage of a lady."

"Why haven't you?" Cherish softly asked as her breathing grew heavier alerting Bobbie that the blonde was about to pass out.

"Why haven't I what?" Bobbie asked in confusion.

"My cherry," Cherish yawned.

"Because I want it to be special," Bobbie tried to explain. *'I was hoping for tonight,'* she silently confessed.

"You are so sweet," Cherish swooned as she hugged the brunette tighter. "I hope you won't be bored in Kansas."

"Not with you around," Bobbie chuckled. "I have a feeling that even in Kansas you're a trouble magnet," the brunette's comment was greeted by a loud snore. "And thank you for not up chucking," she laughed as she caressed her lover's back.

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The following morning Bobbie crept out of bed leaving the still comatose Cherish in bed, though she did have the foresight to put a nightgown on the younger woman just in case someone stopped in to see how she was fairing. Bobbie then dressed herself and headed down to the kitchen.

"So that leaves, Rockford, Ft. Wayne, South Bend, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and us," Penny was saying as Bobbie entered the kitchen.

"How are we going to get a full season out of that?" Millie gripped.

"More of those silly exhibition games," Sally concluded. "Hey Cahill how is the rookie?"

"I should spank the lot of you," Bobbie growled before she noticed Mrs. Griswold standing behind her.

"I hope young Cherish is fairing better than you did on your rookie night Roberta," Mrs. Griswold offered with a smirk as she handed the brunette a large glass filled with a nasty smelling concoction.

"You mean when I crawled into breakfast on my hands and knees?" Bobbie playfully quipped.

"Yes, that would be the morning I am referring to," Mrs. Griswold grumbled. "I believe you said it was food poisoning. Take that to Cherish, to help with her food poisoning."

"Bad steak I swear," Bobbie lied as the chaperone gave her a stern look. "Why Grizzie you are positively giddy today, new Doris Day movie out?"

"Roberta," the older woman scolded her.

"Right," Bobbie sighed as her shoulders slumped. "I'll just see if Cherish has returned to the world of the living."

When Bobbie returned to her room she found Cherish cradling her head in her hands while she repeatedly asked just why people enjoy drinking. After a heated debate the blonde finally drank the smelly concoction Mrs. Griswold had prepared. Just after the blonde drank the last drop she dashed off towards the bathroom. Bobbie pounded on the door furiously as she listened to the sounds of her lover wrenching.

"Are you alright?" She asked once Cherish finally emerged from the bathroom.

"Strangely enough, I feel better," Cherish groaned.

"Grizzie should patent that stuff," Bobbie noted thoughtfully. "Look why don't you climb back into bed and I will go to the train station and buy our tickets for tomorrow?"

"Thank you," Cherish meekly accepted hanging onto the wall as she staggered back to their room.

Bobbie caught a lift to the station with Sally and some of the other girls who were leaving. She walked back to the boarding house enjoying the sudden coolness in the air. The house seemed strangely quiet now that most of the girls had left. Bobbie normally didn't stick around after the last night. Her usual routine involved hopping the first train out of Missouri and looking for work and adventure.

She changed over the past season she could feel it. She smiled understanding why she had changed. "I was hoping that she would be a good influence on you," Mrs. Griswold said as Bobbie climbed the stairs.

"How do you know it isn't the other way around?" She taunted the older woman who simply rolled her eyes. "Then again Cherish did get you to crack the first smile of the season."

"Six months on a farm in Kansas I never thought I'd see the day," Mrs. Griswold sighed.

"You and me both," Bobbie laughed. "We're leaving in the morning, see ya next season."

"Count on it," Mrs. Griswold smiled.

"Another smile this has been a banner season," Bobbie teased before rushing upstairs.

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Two nights later as the train chugged closer to Kansas Bobbie was trying to focus on her paperback and ignore Cherish's persistent commentary. "Because I don't want to," she finally flared as she slammed the book down and sat up on the bed they had been sharing. She almost slammed her head on the upper berth the porter opened every night even though they didn't need it. Bobbie hated the games and tricks they had to play for the benefit of the outside world almost as she hated the topic of conversation Cherish had been focused on since they left Missouri.

"Maybe you could just send them a letter letting them know that you are alright and where you will be?" Cherish persisted.

"Because they don't give a damn," Bobbie finally shouted the bitterness seeping through her body. "They have barely spoken to me since I dropped out of college."

"I'm sorry," Cherish quietly responded as she sat down next to the irate brunette. "I didn't realize."

"I didn't mean to yell," Bobbie apologized. "Cherish your father is an amazing man, and even though your mother left, she still keeps in touch with you. I spent my life trapped in a small town just outside of Boston trying to live up to my parent's expectations. I worked my butt off to get into college and they wouldn't let me go to the school I wanted to. They sent me to a glorified charm school instead; the only purpose they saw for me going to college was to snag a husband. Thank God the school had a decent softball team."

"Wait they didn't care if you did well in college?" Cherish sputtered.

"No, I was only expected to keep up my grades long enough to stay in school until I got engaged," Bobbie tried to explain.

"That is ridiculous," Cherish spat out.

"No shit," Bobbie laughed.

"Language," the blonde chastised her. "I don't understand why it was okay for you to quit school for a man, but not so you could do something that very few men or woman are good enough to do."

"Now you see why we don't get along," Bobbie tried to explain. "If I had stayed back home they wouldn't have stopped trying to marry me off. I think if I actually earned my degree it would have made them mad. My mother will probably break out in song when the league splits up."

"You don't deserve that," Cherish sighed heavily as she took Bobbie by the hand. "Promise me that you'll at least send them a Christmas card."

"Why?" Bobbie sputtered.

"When was the last time they heard from you?" Cherish pressed.

"Couple years," Bobbie shrugged.

"One Christmas card," Cherish pleaded. "They might want to know how and where you are. If not it will be their loss."

"As long as I have you, I don't need anyone else," Bobbie reasoned as she wrapped the smaller woman in her arms. "Fine, I'll send them a Christmas card this year."

"Now would you do just one more thing for me?" Cherish innocently inquired as she leaned over and snatched the paperback from Bobbie's grasp.

"What?" The brunette curiously inquired.

"That," Cherish blushed as she pointed out a very risqué paragraph.

"Oh my," Bobbie choked out her eyes widening as she read the paragraph. Her stomach fluttered with excitement at the very thought of taking Cherish in such a manner. "You know," she began as she licked her lips while snatching the paperback from Cherish's tiny hands. She tossed it on the floor as her lover wrapped her arms around her body. "When I first met you I had no idea there was such a tempest brewing behind that innocent smile of yours."

Cherish captured her in a searing kiss and lowered her down on the bunk. Bobbie ran her hands along her lover's body as Cherish deepened the kiss. "Make me yours," the blonde whispered hotly in the brunette's ear. "It's time," she asserted as her hands ran up along Bobbie's nightgown.

Bobbie's body arched as she felt Cherish's nimble fingers capturing her nipples. She released a terse moan as she rolled the smaller woman on to her side. She inhaled sharply as Cherish captured her in a smoldering gaze. "I love you," she whispered for the first time as she slowly lifted the hem of her lover's nightgown. Cherish trembled beside her as Bobbie slowly undressed the smaller woman.

"You don't know how long I've been waiting to hear you say that," Cherish whispered as she cupped the brunette's face in her hands. "I fell in love with you the first moment I saw you," the blonde choked out before stealing a promising kiss.

Bobbie became lost in the softness of Cherish's lips as her calloused fingers glided along the blonde's naked body. She moaned softly as Cherish began to undress her kissing every inch of her newly exposed flesh as she removed the brunette's nightgown. Bobbie murmured softly as her lover nestled her smaller body between her thighs. Over the past few months Cherish had

proven to be a very quick and eager study when it came to sharing her passion.

Bobbie glanced down her naked form and watched as her lover's head dipped between her legs. She moaned softly as she felt Cherish's tongue greet her passion. "I love doing this," Cherish murmured with delight before she quickly began feasting up the taller woman.

"I love when you do it, Baby," Bobbie sighed happily as she fought to keep her eyes open. "So good," she murmured as she felt Cherish's tongue gliding along her throbbing sex. Her hips thrust forward as she pressed her desire harder against her young lover's eager mouth. Bobbie clung to the bedding as her body began to rock urgently against Cherish's touch. Her head fell back as the blonde suckled her greedily.

The sounds of the train chugging along were drowned out by her cries of pleasure. Her eyes snapped shut as Cherish continued to taste all that she had to offer. Bobbie's body was on fire as she felt Cherish's fingers slipping inside of her. Soon the blonde's mouth and fingers were moving in perfect unison as Bobbie lost all sense of reality.

Her body fell over the edge repeatedly until she finally collapsed on the tiny bed. As her breathing calmed she glanced down to find a pair of mischievous emerald eyes gleaming up at her. "Definitely imp," she sputtered as her lover snickered with pleasure. She released a soft moan as Cherish kissed and tasted her way up the brunette's body. She captured the smaller woman in a warm embrace and rolled her onto her side.

Bobbie's stomach fluttered as Cherish wrapped her legs around the brunette's body painting the taller woman's flesh with her passion. "I'll be gentle," Bobbie promised before kissing her lover deeply while her hands caressed Cherish's soft inviting flesh. The softness of the blonde's breasts pressed against her body as she slipped her hand between Cherish's thighs moaning at the overflowing passion that greeted her touch. She parted the blonde's slick folds with her fingers and slowly began to stroke her throbbing clit. Cherish moaned into the warmth of her mouth as she ground against Bobbie's firm body.

Bobbie's fingers danced lightly against the pulsating nub before slipping deeper into the blonde's wetness. Cherish ground harder against her as Bobbie pressed her fingers against the opening of the blonde's warm wet center. Bobbie teased her slowly before slipping a single digit inside of her lover.

She stopped when she felt the barrier of Cherish's innocence greeting her touch. Cherish's hips continued to sway urging Bobbie to take what was already hers. Bobbie kept kissing the blonde allowing Cherish's body to become accustomed to her touch. Her lips drifted to the curve of Cherish's soft supple neck. She teased the creamy white flesh with her tongue as she slipped deeper inside of the younger woman. She paused as she felt Cherish's body suddenly tense.

Keeping her fingers still her kisses drifted lower until her tongue was flickering against one of the blonde's nipples. She suckled the rose colored bud into her mouth teasing her lover as she felt the smaller woman's body relaxing. Bobbie had never been a teacher before and she was terrified that she might hurt her lover. Suckling her lover harder she slowly slipped deeper inside the

blonde. Once again she felt Cherish's body tensing.

She rolled the smaller woman onto her back while teasing her clit with the pad of her thumb. Cherish moaned softly as Bobbie began to kiss her way down the young athlete's body. Cherish was panting heavily as Bobbie nestled her larger frame between the blonde's quivering thighs. She parted Cherish with her tongue slowly licking her throbbing clit as she felt the blonde's heels digging into her back.

She drew Cherish closer suckling her eagerly as she felt her lover's body thrusting against her touch. As Cherish became lost in the throes of passion Bobbie gently broke the barrier. Cherish's body tightened as she winced with pain. Bobbie licked her lover slowly keeping her finger still as Cherish's body once again began to sway against her touch. She sighed with relief as her finger began to glide deeper inside Cherish's tight body.

Once she felt her lover's body eagerly accepting her touch she glided in and out of the smaller woman while suckling her clit. As Cherish fell deeper into a passionate haze, Bobbie slipped another digit inside of her wetness. Cherish's body rocked wildly against her touch as the blonde cried out with pleasure. Bobbie's touch remained tender as she gently guided her lover over the edge. She fought to hold the blonde's body steady as Cherish exploded against her.

She kissed Cherish's firm stomach as she stilled her touch allowing the last waves of passion to slip from the blonde's trembling body. She sighed with relief as she glanced up to find Cherish smiling down at her. "Are you okay?" She tentatively asked.

"I'm great," Cherish murmured happily.

"I didn't hurt you did I?" Bobbie sheepishly inquired as she licked the wetness from her lover's thighs.

"A little," Cherish confessed with a wrinkle of her nose and a soft sigh. "You are an amazing lover, Bobbie Cahill. Now can we do what it said in that naughty book you were reading?" Cherish requested with a blush.

Bobbie chuckled wryly as her fingers slipped from her lover's warmth. "Roll over," the brunette brightly requested feeling giddy as her lover quickly complied with her request. She kissed Cherish's shoulders as she nestled her body on top of the smaller woman. She moaned as she pressed her wetness against her lover's firm backside.

Their hips swayed sensually as Bobbie buried her passion inside of the blonde's body. Bobbie's body was on fire as their bodies danced together. She bit down on her bottom lip as Cherish lifted her body. Bobbie licked her way down the blonde's spine while slipping her fingers between her lover's thighs. Cherish cried out as her hips jerked backward greeting Bobbie's touch.

Bobbie pumped her hips against her lover's firm flesh as she slipped inside Cherish. She rode urgently against the blonde's backside as she plunged in and out of her wetness. Bobbie grunted

with displeasure as her head once again bumped into the upper berth. She ignored the pain as she felt her body nearing the edge. They cried out as one as they climaxed together their bodies still trembling as they collapsed.

They cuddled together the only regret Bobbie felt was that in just a few short hours they would be arriving in Topeka. "Think we scared the other passengers?" Cherish murmured softly as she nestled closer to the brunette.

"The hell with them," Bobbie laughed. "This is the first time we haven't had to inhale a pillow. What no lecture on my language."

"Tomorrow," Cherish sighed contently as she began to kiss the nape of Bobbie's neck.

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"Where are the cows?" Bobbie asked as they unloaded their bags from the taxi. She had been looking ever since they arrived at the station. So far all she had seen was a lot of flat land.

"What cows?" Cherish asked in confusion as she paid the driver.

"This is a farm isn't it?" Bobbie sputtered as she looked around the large estate. "Where are the cows?"

"This is Kansas," Cherish laughed. "We don't have cows on our farm."

"Oh," Bobbie pouted as they gathered up their bags and climbed up onto the large wrap around porch. "What cha' got?"

"Corn," Cherish dryly informed her as Bobbie looked across the sprawling landscape.

"Where?" Bobbie questioned.

"Come back in a couple of months," Cherish laughed once again. "We have pigs," she brightly offered.

"Pigs?" Bobbie said, as she scrunched her brow not certain she liked the idea.

"Come on," Cherish laughed once again as she waved for Bobbie to put her bags down. Bobbie conceded as she followed Cherish to a large structure behind the house. "There you go city girl," she offered as she walked her over to a pen filled with large pigs.

"Oh," Bobbie frowned until she spied one tiny little piglet saunter up to the fence. "Oh," she squealed. "Look at that one he is so cute."

"Oh no," Cherish blanched. "Bobbie don't."

"What?" Bobbie shrugged as she knelt down to get a closer look at the little cutie. "What is his name?"

"We don't name them," Cherish stammered as she tried to pull Bobbie to her feet.

"Why not?" Bobbie whined unable to tear her gaze from the adorable creature.

"Honey, I learned a painful lesson at a very young age," Cherish tenderly began as she managed to get the taller woman to her feet. "If you're going to name them it better be pork chop or dinner."

"No!" Bobbie shouted out in horror.

"You're here," Jude Goodie shouted as he raced over to the both of them. Bobbie didn't turn to greet him instead she kept a watchful eye on the little piglet who had stolen her heart.

"Surprise," Cherish gushed as her father twirled her around. "We thought we'd come a day early."

"It is so good to have the both of you here," he prattled on. "What's wrong?"

"I need your help Daddy," Cherish sighed heavily. "She's trying to name one of the piglets."

"It had better be bacon," Jude teased.

"No," Bobbie whined once again.

"Oh no," Jude gulped.

"Bobbie that is why we raise them," Cherish carefully explained. "You do know that is how bacon is made don't you?"

"I know that," Bobbie huffed. "Promise me you won't kill him."

"Not this season," Jude tried to reason as Bobbie cast a murderous gaze in his direction. "Oops," he gulped. "Why don't I get you gals settled into your rooms?" He quickly suggested as he urged Cherish to guide Bobbie away from the pen.

"No need, we'll just settle in my old room," Cherish threw out casually as both Bobbie and Jude stumbled.

"Uhm Cherish," Jude began slowly as he stroked his chin. Bobbie's eyes widened fearfully as she noticed that the large man was trembling while dear sweet Cherish stood her ground.

"We better hurry so I can start dinner before Bobbie picks out a name for her new friend," Cherish asserted as Bobbie's jaw dropped. Bobbie watched as Jude's jaw also dropped as his

daughter hooked her arm in his and dragged him towards the large house. Bobbie just stood there dumbfounded. "Hurry up Bobbie I'm in the mood to do some home cooking," she called after the stunned blonde.

"Unbelievable," she blew out as she stumbled after the blonde.

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Bobbie discovered that settling into life in Kansas was surprisingly easy with the exception of her first day on the farm. All throughout that day and night she failed to escape the murderous gaze Jude Goodie kept casting in her direction. She couldn't blame the man, Cherish had bulldozed over all of his suggestions that Bobbie reside in one of the spare bedrooms. Cherish did agree to move another bed into her bedroom, but she remained vague about when that event would occur.

Jude relaxed after the first night, still months later he eagerly offered to move a second bed into the room, only to have his suggestion brushed off by his only child. Bobbie was still amazed at how well Cherish handled the situation; then again she was quite certain the enigmatic blonde had the brunette and her beloved father wrapped around her finger.

Other than the obvious discomfort Jude and Bobbie shared over the sleeping arrangements things were peaceful on the farm. Bobbie was enjoying her job at the small college and the couple of classes she took at night. Cherish excelled in her studies, granted they weren't going to get the blonde into med school, but they would help her keep up-to-date so when the day came for her to return full time she would be prepared.

Bobbie was enjoying her job, classes and training in the open fields, on the colder days Jude had set up a practice space in one of the barns. Jude as it turned out had one hell of an arm himself and loved working with the girls. He seemed proud of the both of them after each practice session.

Jude and Bobbie were relaxing in front of the television watching I Love Lucy one evening while Cherish was studying at the kitchen table. "I just love her wackiness," Jude laughed.

"Me too," Bobbie sighed happily as she watched her lover pouring over some textbook. "Oh you mean Lucy," she quickly amended prompting Jude to erupt into a gale of hearty laughter. "Yeah she's kooky alright," Bobbie continued as she glanced over at the grandfather clock in the hallway. She furrowed her brow as she noted how long Cherish had been studying. She excused herself and made her way into the large kitchen and sat beside the blonde who seemed to be enthralled by whatever she was reading.

"Dexi nubi what?" She stammered as she glanced over at the journal.

"Deoxyribonucleic acid," Cherish politely corrected her as she set the journal aside. "DNA," the blonde elaborated.

"Doesn't sound like something I want to catch," Bobbie offered completely perplexed by what Cherish had just said.

"You already have it," Cherish laughed. "We all do, according to the studies it makes us who we are," Bobbie simply blinked as she stared blankly back at her lover.

"It is like an individual game plan for everyone's genetic make up," Cherish further explained.

"Oh," Bobbie nodded with sudden understanding. "Nifty," she said with a smile as a small pig nuzzled up against her leg. "Hey Sherman," she smiled as she gave the snorting pig a scratch behind his ear.

"Never should have let you name him," Cherish sighed.

"I don't know what bugs your father more the fact that we keep putting off a second bed in our room or that I liberated Sherman from the pig pen," Bobbie whispered.

"I think it is the bed," Cherish sighed as she doodled some notes in her notebook.

"How much more do you have to do?" Bobbie inquired as she tapped the pile of textbooks spread out in front of the blonde. "You practiced all day and have been studying for hours."

"Am I neglecting you?" Cherish asked with genuine concern.

"No," Bobbie reassured her. "You've been pulling a lot of late nights and getting very little sleep, I'm worried about you."

She watched as Cherish scrunched up her face and put down her pencil. "They haven't called yet," she timidly offered.

"They haven't called me either," Bobbie reassured her while placing her hand on the blonde shoulder and rubbing it gently.

"I got a letter from Millie they called her last month," Cherish nervously offered.

"They'll call us," Bobbie asserted. "Staying up all night and wearing yourself ragged isn't going to make the call come any quicker."

"What if we end up on different teams?" Cherish whined in exasperation.

"Hey, lets just get to the tryouts first," Bobbie comforted the overwrought blonde. "We've talked about being separated before we knew about the cuts, it won't change things between us. Are you going to promise me not to stay up all night again?"

"I promise," Cherish finally agreed with a slight sigh of relief. "You missed the last part of Lucy."

"I'm sure Ricky forgave her," Bobbie laughed. "I have to let Sherman out; if he gets into the trash again your father is going to make me do extra laps in the morning. Come on buddy," she called after the pig that followed right behind her.

"Is she going to stay up all night again," Jude softly inquired as Bobbie led the pig towards the front door.

"She promised she wouldn't," Bobbie reassured him.

"Hey Sherman," he cuddled the snorting beast. "Fetch me my pipe?" The pig just stared up at him. "I swear I'm going to teach him to do that by the time you girls come home after next season."

"No smoking," Cherish shouted from the kitchen. "Try teaching him to fetch your slippers."

"I couldn't send her to law school," Jude grumbled as Bobbie snickered. On more than one occasion she had crossed paths with the farmer late at night while each of them had snuck out behind the barn to smoke.

"Can he really learn to do those things?" Bobbie skeptically asked.

"Pigs are very smart animals," Jude acknowledged as Sherman grunted. "Be nice she saved your life you little porker," he scolded the indignant pig. "I'm going for a stroll," he announced as he got up and shut off the television. "Catch you later?"

"I promised I wouldn't," Bobbie grumbled as she recalled the lengthy lecture she endured the last time she snuck back into the house smelling like an ashtray. Jude simply laughed as he snuck out the backdoor.

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A few days later Bobbie had just finished changing out of her work clothes. One of the things she enjoyed about living on the farm was being able to wear jeans when she was off duty. During the season, the players weren't allowed to wear pants at anytime. Cherish would be home from school in about an hour, so Bobbie decided to head out to the field and hit a few balls before Cherish got home.

When she saw the old Chevy chugging up the long road to the house she didn't pay attention. The Goodies were very popular with their neighbors and had a constant stream of visitors. Everyone was nice; the only one who ruffled Bobbie's feathers was the infamous Alma Sue. She calmed after she discovered the annoying woman was visiting with her husband and Cherish began to make inquiries regarding the younger Swanson sister.

Bobbie set the bucket of balls by her feet and began hitting, assuming that Jude would greet the visitor or workman. She hit a long fly ball as she felt someone approaching from behind her. "Coach?" She stammered with surprise. "What the hell are you doing in Kansas?"

"I could ask you the same thing," he laughed in response. "I wanted to talk to you."

"In person?" Bobbie glumly questioned. "This can't be good."

"Relax Cahill," he smiled brightly. "As far as I'm concerned for you tryouts are a formality. You'll be starting at third next season. I'm here to tell you that and to talk to you about the season, not all of the girls will be invited back."

"Cherish?" Bobbie flared feeling a sudden surge of anger.

"I'd be an idiot to allow Goodie to slip through my fingers," he quickly reassured her. "Although the Chicks and the Blue Sox are interested in her. We'll see what happens at tryouts, the boss agrees that we need her. I'm hoping to put her in Betty's spot."

"Betty's not coming back?" Bobbie sighed deeply.

"No," he admitted with a frown. "The scouts checked her out last month. She's doing better but she's still in a slump. I was passing through checking out a new girl I heard about in Lawrence. I thought I'd drop in see how you're doing, let you know you'll be back and to ask for your help."

"My help?" Bobbie almost laughed.

"The last couple of seasons, you and Brenda have been unofficial leaders for the team," he began slowly. "There will be some new faces and some of the older players will be gone, it will be a new team. I need you to help me try and pull the team together. This could be our last season and I'm counting on you."

"You know I'll do whatever I can," Bobbie promised. "It will be strange having a lot of new faces, but we can do it."

"I could just kick Max Carey's butt," Coach grumbled. "After he stepped down two years ago the league lost its momentum. Maybe we can get that back."

"I hope so," Bobbie agreed. "How much time you got? Care to pitch a few to me?"

"Gladly," he eagerly accepted as he snatched up the bucket of balls and jogged out into the field.

He pitched a steady stream of balls at her pleased as she hit her mark almost every pitch. "Nice," she heard from behind her as she sent on sailing across the field. She smiled as she turned to find Cherish standing beside her. "Can anyone play and should I be nervous that coach is here?"

"We're going to tryouts," Bobbie gleefully informed the blonde. She released a gush of air as Cherish leapt into her arms.

"Enough of that," Coach yelled out. "Step up to the plate Goodie."

"Yes sir," the blonde readily agreed as she took the bat from Bobbie. "Too heavy," she gripped as she took her stance.

"You just had to out do me," Bobbie grumbled as she watched the ball sailing off into oblivion.

Bobbie stepped aside as Cherish continued hammering each pitch as her father approached.

"Whose that?" Jude inquired.

"Coach Williams," Bobbie smiled.

"Good news?" Jude eagerly inquired.

"We going to tryouts and he's said that both of us will be back on the team next season," Bobbie happily informed him. "In fact he wants Cherish to start at second."

"That's my girl," Jude boasted.

"The only problem is a couple of other teams want her," Bobbie quietly informed him.

"Doesn't she get a say?" He bustled.

"No," Bobbie sighed. "She's an amazing ballplayer it's not surprising another team would want to snatch her up."

"It would break her heart being separated from you," Jude wisely noted as they watched the blonde powerhouse knocking balls across the field. "I'm not picking those up."

"You think we could teach Sherman?" Bobbie offered hopefully.

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Christmas was fast approaching and true to her word Bobbie sent a card to her parents wishing them a happy holiday and informing them of her whereabouts. She hadn't expected them to reply; yet it hurt just the same when she failed to hear from them. One night she and Cherish were returning from the movies. "That was a good movie," Cherish sighed. "It just broke my heart when that little boy begged Shane to come back."

"It was a good flick," Bobbie agreed as she shrugged off her coat.

"Hey girls," Jude greeted them. "Have a good time?"

"Yes sir," Bobbie brightly responded.

"Bobbie, you had a telephone call," Jude offered as Cherish prattled on about the movie.

"Someone named William."

"Coach?" She said with confusion.

"Sounded too young," Jude offered loudly to be heard over his daughter's ranting.

"Probably someone from the league," Bobbie shrugged once again as Sherman nuzzled her leg. "Hey there's my baby," she cooed as the telephone rang out. Cherish answered the telephone.

"Bobbie it is for you," the blonde offered in a perplexed tone. "William?"

"My mystery man," Bobbie quipped as she gave Sherman one last pat before sauntering into the kitchen. Jude stepped out of the room to give her some privacy, Cherish on the other hand got comfortable by sitting on the kitchen counter. Bobbie quirked her eyebrows at the smaller woman before she turning her attention to the telephone call. "Hello?"

"What are you doing in Kansas?" He asked in a mystified tone.

"Billy!" She screamed with delight.

"Ouch," he whimpered from her exuberant response as Cherish watched her carefully.

"It is my brother," Bobbie explained to her inquisitive lover. "How are you?"

"I'm good, but I have to ask what are you doing in Kansas?" He teased. "Learn to milk a cow yet?"

"They don't have cows," she explained.

"I thought Mom said you were living on a farm?" He questioned. "No cows?"

"That's what I said," Bobbie chuckled.

"What is it with you and cows?" Cherish questioned as she rolled her eyes.

"In Massachusetts farms have cows, and horses and chickens and other stuff," Bobbie tried to explain.

"Cherish Eunice Goodie get in here and let the girl talk to her brother," Jude demanded.

"Eunice?" Bobbie beamed.

"Daddy," Cherish snapped as she slumped off of the counter.

"Who is Eunice?" Billy inquired eagerly.

"Never you mind," Bobbie scolded him. "Tell me how you are doing?"

"Great, the job is good," Billy prattled on. "Again what are you doing in the middle of nowhere?"

"Believe it or not Kansas has a lot going on," Bobbie explained. "I'm working in the Dean's office at a small college and taking some classes. I have tryouts in a couple of months."

"Tryouts?" He questioned.

"Just some scuttlebutt in the league," Bobbie quickly explained. "Coach said I don't have to worry about my spot. After that spring training and a new season with the Sirens."

"I still can't believe you were knocked out of the playoffs by one run," Billy grumbled. "You were robbed Sis."

"How did you know about that?" Bobbie questioned.

"I've been following my famous sister's career," he boasted. "So has Dad. He's bored the stuffing out of the guys at the office about how well you're doing."

"Really?" Bobbie choked out.

"Yeah really," Billy asserted. "I know the folks stink when it comes to you, but they are proud in their own way. In fact it was Mom's idea that I track you down so she could find out what you are up to. Actually I think they would love it if you came home for Christmas."

"What?" Bobbie sputtered in disbelief. "Then why don't they ask me?"

"I don't know," Billy sighed. "I take it you have plans."

"Yeah," Bobbie grumbled.

"Eunice?" Billy taunted.

"Cherish," Bobbie corrected him. "And keep that to yourself. Just when did you figure that out?"

"Years ago Bobbie," he confided. "Don't worry I won't tell mom or dad. They had kittens when you dropped out of school; I don't think they really want to know about this."

"So you're okay with it?" Bobbie tentatively inquired.

"Don't really understand it," Billy conceded. "But if she's half as pretty as she sounds I'm jealous."

"Snot bag," Bobbie laughed suddenly proud of her little brother. "Look, I want to stay here for the holiday, but you know it is a long season, maybe you could fly out for a game? It has been a long time."

"Too long," Billy agreed. "Can you get me good seats?"

"You know it," Bobbie promised.

Later that evening Bobbie climbed into bed her lover was already nestled beneath the quilted comforter. "Thank you," Bobbie softly offered as she tucked the blanket around the both of them.

"For?" Cherish encouraged as she nestled against the brunette's body.

"For insisting I send a card back home for the holidays," Bobbie elaborated as she ran her fingers through Cherish's long blonde hair. "I assume you heard my conversation with my brother."

"Are you accusing me of eavesdropping?" Cherish gaped innocently.

"As a matter of fact I am Eunice," Bobbie snickered.

"I knew you'd give me a hard time about that," Cherish sighed. "Just what is it about my name you find so amusing Miss Cahill?"

"Everything," Bobbie confessed with a light laugh.

"Why?" Cherish huffed indignantly. "And just what is your middle name Roberta?"

"Faith," Bobbie smartly retorted as Cherish grumbled.

"You're no fun at all," Cherish grunted.

"That's not what you said last night," Bobbie sighed happily.

"Last night you were positively charming," Cherish purred in agreement. "Getting back to your telephone call I take it things went well. I think it was nice of you to ask your brother to come see a game."

"I knew you were listening," Bobbie huffed as she began to caress her lover's back.

"Are you sure you don't want to go home for the holidays?" Cherish inquired her voice trembling slightly.

"I am home," Bobbie asserted. "My home is wherever you are, and I know if my parents knew the truth about me they would never speak to me again." Bobbie's heart sank knowing it was the truth. Despite the handful of people who seemed to accept what she and Cherish shared the majority of people would hate them for it even those who claimed to be their friends. *'Plus what if one of us doesn't make the team or we are separated, I'm not wasting a chance to spend every moment possible with you,'* she silently vowed. "Now I have a question for you dear, sweet, innocent Miss Goodie?" Bobbie smirked as she slipped from her lover's embrace and reached

under the bed. "Can you tell just why it is I found these hiding under your bed?"

"I forgot about those," Cherish giggled and blushed as Bobbie plopped a stack of lingerie magazines on top of the blonde. "I use to pour over those almost every day before I left for school."

"Shopping for pretty undies were we?" Bobbie teased the younger woman whose face was now a deep shade of scarlet. "You don't own any of these do you?" She inquired with a sudden eagerness her stomach fluttering as she pictured the blonde clad in the sexy panties displayed in the catalog.

"Heavens no," Cherish gasped as her face turned a darker shade of red. "I just liked looking at the pictures," she confessed in a hushed whisper. "I just didn't understand why."

"And now?" Bobbie taunted the embarrassed younger woman.

"Roberta Faith you are positively shameless," Cherish huffed as she tried to hide under the blankets.

"And you wouldn't have me any other way," Bobbie growled as she followed after her retreating lover. Cherish giggled as Bobbie buried her body under the covers and began to tickle the smaller woman. Cherish's giggling quickly turned to soft inviting moans as Bobbie's fingers began to caress the smaller woman's body while she stole soft tempting kisses. "We have to be quiet," Bobbie reminded her lover whose moans were growing louder as Bobbie slipped her hand between the blonde's thighs. Cherish whimpered in agreement knowing that even though her father's bedroom was on the other side of the house the slightest creak echoed throughout the large farmhouse.

Bobbie moaned softly as she slipped her knee between the blonde's thighs and Cherish mirrored her actions. Their bodies rocked slowly against one another as their tongues softly explored the warmth of their lover's mouth. The bed creaked as their bodies began to sway urgently against the other. Bobbie could feel her lover's desire glistening against her thigh as she pressed her clit harder against Cherish's firm flesh.

Bobbie was amazed how quickly her young lover could bring her to the brink; all too soon screams of ecstasy were being swallowed by their lover's kiss.

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Christmas was a joyous event for the normally stoic brunette. The feeling of truly being a part of a warm and loving family was something completely foreign to the athlete. Spending it at the farmhouse surrounded by a gaggle of Goodies simply amazed Bobbie. The only rough spot was some of the gifts she and Cherish exchanged; Jude seemed uncomfortable at the more personal gifts that screamed they were given out of love and not friendship. Still the farmer went out of his way to make Bobbie feel like a member of the family. The large, older man's discomfort ebbed when he had to endure watching Cherish open gifts from her mother and as he put it *the*

*clown.*

On New Years Eve Jude went off to a party downtown while the girls opted to stay in for a quiet evening. Neither woman missed the way Jude primped himself. "I think he's sweet on the Widow Jenkins," Cherish offered with a knowing whisper as they sent the nervous man on his way.

They felt a sense of relief once they had the house to themselves. They snuggled by the fire simply holding one another while looking at the lights on the Christmas tree. The only disruption to their bliss was the occasional snort the sleeping Sherman released.

Bobbie sighed contently as her lover sat between her legs the blonde's back pressing into her body. "Happy?" Cherish questioned softly as she caressed the calloused hands that were rubbing her stomach.

"More than you can imagine," Bobbie confessed as she pondered how much her life had changed in the past year. She snuggled closer to the source of her bliss.

"I have another present for you." Cherish said in a timid voice that was so soft Bobbie had almost didn't hear the blonde's voice.

"Christmas is over," Bobbie curiously responded as her lover slipped from her embrace.

"It is just a little something," Cherish coyly supplied as she stood. "Meet me upstairs in about ten minutes."

"Okay?" Bobbie responded as she furrowed her brow while watching her lover stumble slightly as she mounted the old wooden staircase. "Now what has she got brewing?" She asked the slumbering pig. Feeling anxious the brunette tapped her fingers nervously against her chin until she decided that enough time had passed and raced upstairs.

She flung open the door to their bedroom, only to discover a very nervous looking Cherish clad in a bathrobe as she sat on the bed and brushed out her long blonde hair. Bobbie noticed a small package with festive wrapping paper sitting in front of her lover.

"Okay," she repeated as she closed the bedroom door and crossed the room. The bed creaked as she sat down and she couldn't help noticing that Cherish was blushing as she picked up the package. She gave the blonde an inquisitive look before opening the gift. Bobbie tossed the paper on the floor as she snapped open the brown paper box inside. The brunette's jaw dropped once she pushed aside the tissue paper and discovered what was lurking inside. Bobbie swallowed hard before she lifted the lacy bra and skimpy panties from the box.

She held the items up mesmerized by the possibilities that awaited her. "Please tell me these are for you to wear?" She pleaded as her mouth watered.

"No, Miss Cahill those are for you," Cherish explained her voice quivering slightly as she

knocked the packaging from the bed and slid up against the plump pillows resting against the headboard.

"They are so soft," Bobbie marveled as her fingers caressed the silk. "Oh," she smirked as her lover's eyes watched her every move. "So, you want me to model for you?" She taunted the blonde as Cherish's eyes darkened with a foreboding desire. "Cherish?" She prodded as her lover nestled deeper against the pillows getting comfortable for the show. "My goodness you certainly have come out of your shell," Bobbie sighed feeling slightly nervous as she placed the sexy lingerie down on the bed.

She could feel her body warming as Cherish held her in a fiery gaze while she unbuttoned her sweater and cast it aside. Bobbie's knees threatened to buckle as she continued undressing for her lover tossing off her blouse and bra quickly followed by her Capri pants and underwear.

"I'm curious about something," Bobbie began as she licked her lips while slipping into the white silk undergarments.

"Yes," Cherish panted her gaze never wavering from Bobbie's body.

"That bathrobe you are wearing is tied very tightly," Bobbie gleefully noted as she tied the laces of the bra. "You wouldn't be hiding something now would you?"

"I felt positively shameless when I placed the order from that catalogue," Cherish stammered as her hand slipped to the knot on her robe.

"Show me?" Bobbie demanded with a needy pant. "Oh my God," she groaned as the robe slipped from Cherish's body revealing a black satin corset and skimpy lace panties. "You are beautiful," she added in admiration as her heart pounded against her chest. For the first few months Bobbie had known Cherish she treated the woman who was only a couple years younger than herself like a child, now seeing her dressed in the alluring lingerie Bobbie knew she would never think of the blonde beauty as anything less than the beautiful woman that she was.

"Come here," Cherish beckoned her. Bobbie felt helpless to resist as she climbed up along the mattress her eyes trying to drink in every inch of the vision lying before her.

"Tell me," she panted as she kissed her lover's creamy white shoulders. "When you would lock yourself in your bedroom and look at those catalogues what did you do?"

"I Uhm," Cherish squeaked in response as Bobbie trailed her tongue along the blonde's shoulders.

"Tell me," Bobbie urged as she met Cherish's smoldering gaze before dipping her tongue along the valley of the blonde's firm full breasts. "Tell me?" Bobbie hotly repeated as she felt her lover trembling beneath her. She glanced up her heart swelling as she caught the shy look in her lover's gaze. She clasped the smaller woman's hand and brought Cherish's tiny fingers to her lips. "You could show me," Bobbie offered as she kissed and licked each digit as her lover moaned softly.

Cherish's breathing had become labored as she gave Bobbie a pleading look. The brunette smiled down at her lover reassuring her as she lowered the blonde's hand to her own breast. Cherish's body arched in response as Bobbie guided the blonde to caress her breast. "How did you know?" Cherish gasped as she teased her own nipple through the corset.

"Everyone does it," Bobbie reassured the naïve woman as she nestled beside Cherish her body humming with desire as she watched Cherish touching herself. She could see the nervousness in the blonde's eyes as Cherish's touch drifted down along the silk laces that held the corset to her nimble body. Bobbie nuzzled the blonde's neck "You're so beautiful," she whispered hotly in Cherish ear pleased when her lover trembled in response.

Bobbie bit down on her lip as Cherish's fingers brushed against the lace barrier of her panties. Bobbie's own hands began to wander against her quivering flesh. Cherish inhaled sharply as she watched Bobbie cupping her breasts. "Everyone does it," Bobbie murmured as she felt her nipples hardening from her touch as Cherish's fingers slipped inside her panties. "Do you have any idea how many nights I had to wait for hours for you to fall asleep?" She gasped as she watched the blonde's hand moving inside of her lacy panties.

"I think I do," Cherish panted as she watched one of Bobbie's hands slipping down the front of her body.

"Is that why you took such a long time complying with the washing routine?" Bobbie groaned as she realized just what her sweet innocent roommate had really been doing all of those nights she prayed for the girl to just go to sleep so she could pleasure herself.

"Between you and those naughty books I couldn't help myself," Cherish groaned out her confession as Bobbie's stomach fluttered with desire. Her crystal blue eyes darkening as she watched her lover's hand moving beneath the lacy garment. Knowing that Cherish was stroking her throbbing clit drove the brunette insane with desire. She released a deep growl as she slipped her fingers inside her panties surprised by the overflowing wetness that greeted her touch.

They nestled closer together their bodies brushing as they kissed while watching the other touching themselves. Bobbie slipped inside her center as their bodies melted together each stroking themselves harder as they became lost in their passion. Their tongues teased the others as each used their free hand to cup and caress their lover's breasts.

Bobbie cried out as she felt Cherish gripping her body and rolling her onto her back. "Don't stop," Cherish pleaded as she straddled Bobbie's body and began to lower the brunette's underwear. Bobbie plunged deeper inside of herself as she watched Cherish's hand slip back beneath the lace panties she was wearing. Their bodies gyrated furiously as they drove their bodies into frenzy.

Bobbie's cry of ecstasy was muffled as Cherish savagely attacked her lips, kissing her deeply as the brunette's body shuddered. Her climax continued to rip through her as she felt Cherish grinding against her the blonde still stroking her clit furiously. Bobbie wrapped her trembling

legs around Cherish's waist as the blonde plunged deeper inside of herself until she joined the brunette screaming out Bobbie's name as her body erupted in ecstasy.

Neither of them could move as their bodies convulsed releasing the last waves of passion. "Sweet Jesus," Cherish finally panted while her body still trembled against Bobbie's.

"Hmm," Bobbie sighed as she slipped from the warm wetness and wrapped her arms around Cherish's body. She brushed back a lock of blonde hair from her lover's sweaty brow and kissed her tenderly. "Happy New Year," Bobbie offered softly as Cherish murmured happily in response. Bobbie moaned deeply as she felt Cherish's hands caressing her still sensitive flesh. "1954 is going to be a very good year," Bobbie whispered with delight as she felt Cherish capturing one of her lips with her teeth.

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### *Chicago 1954*

Wriggley Field was, to Bobbie, one of her favorite places on Earth. She smiled each time she stepped out onto the field. She didn't doubt by the way she was treated that her spot was indeed secure. The only things troubling her were the few faces of her teammates that were absent that and having to attend Charm School again. Those disappointments paled in comparison to being placed in a room with someone other than Cherish. Bobbie was furious when they were given their room assignments when they checked into the Belmont Hotel. She tried to argue that since they roomed together in St. Louis it only made sense. Her pleas went unanswered. Instead of sharing quality time with her lover she was forced to share a room with Gretchen Snodgrass who was all of seventeen and snored like a moose in heat.

"Cahill," Brenda called after her as she tried to sneak across the field and talk to Cherish who was just finishing up for the day. It was the last day of tryouts and Bobbie was confident that both she and Cherish would be heading to spring training in a couple of days. Being separated from her lover for the past week was driving her insane. "Cahill?" Brenda repeated in a harsher tone as Bobbie quickened her pace.

"What?" Bobbie flared as she spun around and glared at the pitcher.

"A moment of your time?" Brenda fumed.

"Fine," Bobbie growled as she kept a watchful eye on Cherish.

"They're posting the teams tomorrow," Brenda began slowly.

"No kidding," Bobbie snapped indignantly.

"Coach asked me to have a word with you," Brenda carefully began.

"What?" Bobbie stammered. "I was cut?"

"No, you're the Sirens starting third baseman and clean up hitter," Brenda quickly reassured her. Bobbie blew out a sigh of relief as Brenda's gaze suddenly drifted off.

"What is it?" She asked fearfully. "Who's on second?" She demanded.

"Millie," Brenda sheepishly replied.

"Millie is our shortstop," Bobbie argued.

"Not any more," Brenda slowly continued. "That would be Swanie."

"And what position is Cherish playing?" She pressed her eyes narrowing with anger.

"Outfield," Brenda sheepishly supplied.

"Geez, you had me worried," Bobbie blew out. "Okay it is only her second season so she isn't starting she will."

"For the Daisies," Brenda grimly explained as Bobbie felt her heart shatter.

"No," Bobbie whimpered as her world spun out of control. Her heart was breaking at the thought of Cherish being sent to Ft. Wayne. "But Coach said,"

"I know," Brenda cut her off. "Bobbie, the rumors, the way the two of you look at one another then the fit you threw over the room assignments these things get noticed. Just be thankful that the both of you are so pretty that the boys in charge refuse to believe the gossip. But it didn't look good. Coach is going to work out a trade later in the season, but for now she's going to Ft. Wayne. So how do you want to handle this, you want to tell her, you want me to tell her or just wait until they post the roster tomorrow."

"I'll tell her," Bobbie choked out. "And stay away from your room for at least two hours."

"What?" Brenda sputtered.

"Cherish is your roommate, give us a little time okay?" Bobbie pleaded.

"Alright," Brenda sighed. "I'm sorry about this Bobbie it isn't fair."

"Never is," Bobbie conceded as she numbly began to walk across the field as she mentally tried to prepare herself for one of the worst moments of her young life.

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After taking Cherish back to the Belmont she sat the blonde down for a long talk. They cried before making love and vowing that no matter what their feelings wouldn't change. Bobbie felt

devastated. It broke her heart seeing Cherish at Spring Training and not being allowed speak to her. During the fourth game of training the two did exchange words after Cherish slid into third base and Bobbie swore at the umpire that she had tagged the blonde.

"You were so out," Bobbie muttered under her breath after Coach told her to shrug it off.

"No I wasn't," Cherish merrily quipped.

"Bite me," Bobbie grumbled as she snuck a peek at the blonde's backside.

"I wish I could," Cherish sighed heavily. "I miss you."

"I miss you too," Bobbie whispered in response. "You were still out."

"I would love to debate the issue with you further but right now," Cherish beamed as they heard the crack of the bat. "I need to go home," Cherish boasted before speeding off.

"Son of," Bobbie cursed as she raced after the ball while the blonde tore down the third base line cautioning her about her language as she tagged home plate. Bobbie tried to return the favor when she hit a solid pitch across the field. She cursed once again as she rounded the bases only to see Cherish catching the ball.

"I wish she was still on our team," Penny grumbled as Bobbie stomped into the dugout muttering a string of expletives under her breath.

"Roberta," Mrs. Griswold cautioned the irate athlete.

"Sorry," Bobbie scowled as she flopped down onto the bench. "You know I don't mind her playing so well, but does she have to be so damn perky about it," she whispered to Swanie.

"My sister is the same way," the dirty blonde grunted in agreement. "I was the one who taught her how to catch and now the little stinker gloats every time her team whops mine. It is just wrong I tell you."

By the top of the ninth inning the Sirens managed to pull it together and tie the score. Sadly Cherish, once again, managed to hit a double. Bobbie scowled over at second base. Silently she was proud of the way the blonde was playing but she had to at least make it look good this was, after all, a game. When Cherish advanced to third Bobbie could feel her body humming as she stood closely to the smaller woman. "Any chance you can sneak off tonight?" She whispered to the blonde.

"I have plans," Cherish grimly muttered.

"Oh," Bobbie scowled as her heart dropped.

"I'm going to the circus," Cherish elaborated softly so their conversation couldn't be over heard.

"Visiting Mom," Bobbie quipped.

"Yes, how did you know?" Cherish innocently inquired as Bobbie blinked with surprise. She had been joking not even thinking that Cherish was actually going to visit her mother. "Ever been to the circus?" Cherish whispered as they watched the batter at the plate fumbling.

"Yes," Bobbie responded in confusion the crack of the bat breaking her from her pondering. Her focus turned to getting hands on the ball and keeping Cherish on third base. The outfielder missed the cut off man and Cherish raced to home plate scoring the go ahead run. "Crap," Bobbie scowled forgetting about her brief conversation with Cherish.

Later in the locker room she and the other veterans on the team tried to cheer up the other players. With all the replacements Bobbie felt as if she was working with an entirely new club. "One run," Bobbie tried to reassure Cindy, who was her new roommate after they had showered and dressed. "Hey it is only spring training," she called out to her fellow teammates. "We just need to learn to work together."

"We need Goodie back," Penny grumbled. "She was on fire today."

"She's a good player," Brenda agreed. "But we are just as good," the pitcher prattled on as Bobbie gathered up her gear. She snatched up the flier that fell out of her locker.

"And sneaky too," Bobbie said softly as she studied the colorful flier announcing a preview for Ringling Brothers that evening.

"What's that?" Swanie inquired as she peered over Bobbie's shoulder. "The circus?"

"I wonder if Grizzie would let me go," she pondered quietly.

"Where?" Penny inquired as Bobbie handed her the flier. "We have a game tomorrow and you want to go to the circus?" Suddenly Penny's eyes widened with understanding. "I think I'm craving cotton candy."

"Have the two of you lost your minds?" Brenda sputtered. "We just lost and you want to go watch a bunch of clowns? Wait clowns, oh I have to see this."

"I did promise someone I'd do a little batting practice," Bobbie smirked. "Think Grizzie would go for it?"

Half the team was gaping at them while the other half, who had been at the infamous dinner gathering last season, was already conspiring to sneak out if Mrs. Griswold said no. "Ladies, the bus is waiting," Mrs. Griswold sternly announced as Bobbie stuffed the flier in her shirt. "Roberta a moment of your time?"

"Oh no," Bobbie grumbled as the rest of the team filed out of the locker room. "What's up

Grizzie need some fashion advice?" She taunted the grim looking woman. "Ooops," Bobbie stammered with a hard swallow as Mrs. Griswold flashed a bunch of tickets. "What are those?"

"I had a sudden itch to go to the circus this evening and, low and behold, some tickets fell into my lap," Mrs. Griswold casually supplied. "We need to be discreet."

"Yes, Ma'am," Bobbie gleefully responded as her head bobbed up and down. "Brenda and Penny would be cool."

"We can't stay long," Mrs. Griswold cautioned her.

"Thank you," Bobbie blew out with relief.

"Hurry along," Mrs. Griswold chided her. "Oh Roberta I think you should know, Betty didn't take not be invited back very well."

"She shot her mouth off," Bobbie fumed. "I ought to,"

"Let it go," Mrs. Griswold scolded her. "And don't say anything about this evening it will be a very quick trip. I do so love the circus all those acrobats," the chaperone sighed happily as she ushered Bobbie out of the locker room.

That night the four of them were sitting in the larger humid tent watching the show. Actually the others were watching the show oooying and ahing while Bobbie frantically scanned the crowd seeking out a certain spunky blonde.

"Roberta," Mrs. Griswold nudged her. "Those peanuts they sell are quite delightful."

"They're okay," Bobbie shrugged as she continued to scan the large crowd as Brenda asked if she knew which one was Bebop?

"Would you be so kind and fetch me some more?" The chaperone nudged her again.

"There is guy selling them right there," Bobbie fussed as she pointed to the vender working his way up the rows of people.

"I prefer the ones from outside," Mrs. Griswold persisted.

"What?" Bobbie groaned.

"Cahill," Brenda cut in. "Go get the peanuts," she hissed. "And hurry frankly the elephant stench is killing me. We have to get back before anyone notices we took off tonight."

"Huh?"

"Go!" The others shouted in unison as they forced the tall brunette to her feet.

Bobbie was completely bewildered as she stumbled out of the tent. Her heart leapt as she felt a hand grasp her arm and drag her behind the tent. They stood there behind the tent hidden from prying eyes, Bobbie's body melting as Cherish kissed her senseless. "How did you arrange this?" Bobbie sighed happily as she cradled her lover in her arms.

"I may have mentioned in passing when I said hello to Mrs. Griswold that I was visiting my Mama," Cherish innocently explained.

"And a few passes along with a flier and a recommendation for me to get peanuts in the middle of the show," Bobbie snickered as the pieces fell into place. "You are so smart," she praised the smaller woman who was burrowing her face into Bobbie's chest. "Is there somewhere we can go?"

"No time," Cherish whimpered as she clung to the taller woman. "Sorry about winning today."

"No, you're not," Bobbie laughed as she ran her fingers through Cherish's long golden locks. "That is how the game is played."

"You're right I'm not sorry," Cherish beamed. "I miss you; I just wish they'd trade me back."

"Maybe," Bobbie tried to reassure the blonde but in her heart she knew if Betty spewed half the crap she was afraid she did there wasn't a chance in hell that Cherish would be returning to the Sirens that season. "How is your mother?" She quickly inquired in an effort to change the subject.

"Not happy," Cherish fumed. "I don't understand it. She's traveled the world met all sorts of interesting folks and she's upset that I'm playing baseball and sweet on you."

"Go figure," Bobbie huffed in agreement as she heard the sounds of her teammates. "This isn't fair to you," she sighed heavily.

"Don't you even start," Cherish chastised her. "It is just one season, then we can be together. I don't want to hear any nonsense about letting go for my own good, understood Roberta Faith?"

"Yes, Ma'am," Bobbie blew out with relief.

"Good now kiss me," Cherish demanded.

Bobbie moaned softly as she claimed her lover's warm, soft inviting lips. They quickly became lost in the passionate encounter until they heard Brenda calling after them. "I love you," Bobbie whimpered as she reluctantly released Cherish from her arms.

"I love you too," Cherish responded teary eyed. "I'll write and call you ever chance I get."

"This is going to be the longest season in my life," Bobbie muttered sadly after finally saying

goodbye to her lover and catching up with the others so they could sneak back to the hotel. Once they returned, thankfully without notice, Bobbie thanked Mrs. Griswold and vowed to be on her best behavior that season. As she drifted off to sleep she wondered not for the first time if there ever was a Mr. Griswold?

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The 1954 season for the St. Louis Sirens was a struggle and by the time they finally began working as a team their part of the season was over. Bobbie hated that they had failed to make it to the playoffs. Cherish and the Ft. Wayne Daisies made it to the World Series and Bobbie couldn't have been prouder. The only bright spot for Bobbie was seeing her lover excelling and the few stolen moments they shared, and her brother and parents surprising her at one of the games. Her parents didn't miss the opportunity to try and convince the brunette to give up the game she loved and come home. Billy was somewhat supportive, although he seemed accepting that his sister marched to the beat of a different drummer he didn't want to hear about Cherish.

Bobbie accepted the indifference just as she always did and focused on the off-season and returning to Kansas. She had been worried that she wouldn't be invited to return to the farm until the day Jude Goodie showed up at a game in Rockford just to watch her play. He took her out for dinner caught her up on all the new tricks Sherman had learned, and how he built a batting cage in one of the barns so she and Cherish could practice anytime they wanted to.

She wasn't surprised when he arrived at her last game of the season. He congratulated her and her teammates on the win which didn't help them at that point they were too far behind to play in the post season. He made arrangements for them to travel so they could go to the series and watch Cherish.

"Second year in the league and she makes it to the series," Bobbie blew out proudly as Jude puffed his chest. "Five seasons and I never made it. I just bet the owners of the Sirens are kicking themselves for letting her go. She was great this season."

"She was," Jude readily agreed as they waited outside the stadium. "I'm willing to bet the farm that next year I'll see both my girls in the series," Jude proudly exclaimed, as Bobbie got a little misty eyed at the endearing comment.

"There she is," Bobbie shouted as she bounced on the heels of her feet. Her heart dropped slightly as she caught the frown the blonde was sporting. "Hey how do you feel?" She asked as Cherish hugged both her lover and her father.

"Like I just lost the world series," Cherish sighed dejectedly. "Kalamazoo played great," she muttered.

"No, no, no," Bobbie chastised her. "You played great this season and you made it to the series no second guessing what happened today, alright?"

"Yes," Cherish shrugged as they hugged her tighter. "I'm just happy that we're going home."

Bobbie's heart soared as she realized that she was truly going home. "Have you heard anything about next season?" She asked as they gathered up the blonde's gear.

"Just that my spot is secure and no tryouts for me this time around," Bobbie quickly explained as she and Jude helped Cherish into the taxi.

"I don't have to go either," Cherish explained.

"So, Ft. Wayne is keeping you?" Jude grumbled.

"As far as I know," Cherish supplied. "Can we stop at the boarding house tonight? I want to check out and go home."

"Anything for my little champion," Jude vowed.

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Bobbie, once again, found settling into life on the farm surprisingly easy. She returned to the college for work and classes and really felt good about everything. She learned more about the farm and raising corn once again surprised by how much she enjoyed it. She began to work with Jude learning the day-to-day operation of his not so little farm while she and Cherish practiced preparing for the following season.

The only dark spot was the fact that when the season began she and Cherish would be separated. Not being able to see Cherish every day had been sheer torture for the brunette and although she couldn't be certain she felt it affected her game. She began to wonder how the married women in the league handled being away from the husband's and children for so long. Once again Bobbie deduced that, all and all, it was a small price to pay for the game they loved.

Bobbie walked out of the barn on afternoon shaking off the cold air after practicing. She had worked at the college earlier that day, went to class and then looked over the books for Jude. She decided to treat herself to a little workout. During her workout she realized that she was beginning to know more about operating the farm than her lover did. She cocked her head as she approached the farmhouse and spied a strange woman lurking about on the porch.

"Hey there?" Bobbie called out to the tiny woman who was trying to peer in the parlor window.

"Who are you?" The woman briskly demanded.

"I, Uhm, is there something I can help you with?" Bobbie asked as she crossed her arms defiantly across her chest.

"Where is Jude?" The snotty woman demanded, once again, ignoring Bobbie's question.

"He went into town," Bobbie explained trying to keep her ire in check. '*Geez, Jude's taste in women has dropped,*' she mentally noted. Normally the few ladies the farmer escorted were

sweet and charming but this one kept looking at Bobbie like she was something stuck to her shoe. "Can I help you?" She repeated in a harsher tone. "Miss?"

"Mrs.," the small blonde corrected her. "Mrs. Goodie," she added bitterly before storming off.

"A pleasure to meet you," Bobbie sneered as she watched the woman march down the long road that led away from the farm. "Must be a relative," Bobbie deduced before ducking into the house for a much-needed shower.

After she washed the dirt from her weary body she almost tripped over Sherman who dropped a baseball at her feet as she emerged from the bathroom. "Good boy," she complimented the pig with a playful scratch behind his ear. She stood and started to head downstairs so she could start dinner. Sherman followed after her once again almost tripping her as he dropped the ball at her feet. "Sherman, bubby I think it is great that you love playing with baseballs as much as I do, but I'm going end up taking a header down the staircase if you keep dropping that ball under my feet," she tried to reason with the snorting beast. Sherman responded to her explanation by nudging the ball closer to her with his snout. Bobbie laughed at his antics as he kept nudging the ball closer eager for her approval. "Okay," she finally conceded as she, once again, bent down and picked up the ball. She assumed that her freshly clean body was about to be soiled again since her little buddy wanted to play.

Bobbie blinked with surprise as she felt the rough twine tied around the ball. "What the hell?" She muttered while she stood unwrapping the string as she discovered a note attached to the ball. She looked down at Sherman and could have sworn the pig was smiling as she unfolded the note. "Class was canceled, Daddy is in town meet me in the bedroom," she read aloud her heart hammering against her chest as she read the note that was written in Cherish's flowing handwriting a second time. "Thank you," she choked out as she looked down at the proud pig and tore off towards the bedroom.

Bobbie released a tiny whimper as she threw open the door and discovered her lover awaiting her arrival beneath the covers. Bobbie swallowed hard knowing that beneath the blankets Cherish was naked. "Took you long enough," Cherish scolded the trembling brunette.

"Sorry," Bobbie stammered as she felt her face turning red while she closed the door behind them. "I thought Sherman wanted to play," she meekly confessed as her crystal blue eyes remained riveted to the sight of Cherish lounging happily in their bed.

"No," Cherish sighed happily as she threw back the blankets revealing her naked body. "I want to play," Bobbie released a sharp squeak as her eyes raked up and down the beautiful woman sprawled out before her awaiting her touch. "I've been thinking about you all day long," Cherish confessed with a whimper as Bobbie began to shed her robe.

Bobbie's heart was racing as she spied the blonde patch of hair that was already glistening with desire. The brunette climbed up on the bed kissing the blonde's calves as the musky aroma of Cherish's desire filled her senses. "Have long have you been waiting?" Bobbie murmured as her lover moaned with pleasure. "And how did you entertain yourself while you were waiting?"

Bobbie growled as she licked the wetness from the inside of Cherish's quivering thighs.

"Bobbie, I," Cherish stammered as Bobbie captured the blonde's wrist and suckled her tiny fingers in her mouth. She moaned, as she tasted the blonde's passion greeting her tongue. Bobbie was on fire from the knowledge that while she was bathing Cherish was touching herself. Visions of Cherish sprawled across the bed while her nimble fingers danced against her throbbing clit sent a jolt through Bobbie.

Cherish cried out as Bobbie dove into the blonde's passion and began feasting upon her overflowing desire. She cupped the blonde's firm backside drawing her closer as she curled her tongue and plunged it deep inside of her lover's warmth. "I need to touch you," Cherish cried out as Bobbie's tongue thrust in and out of her center.

Bobbie growled with an aching need as her tongue slipped from the warmth. She massaged Cherish's cheeks not willing to abandon the taste of her lover's desire. Cherish's hips rocked against her touch while Bobbie's tongue took long strokes up along the blonde's throbbing sex. It was too much for Bobbie to resist; she captured the pulsating bundle between her lips and suckled her lover urgently as Cherish's body ground urgently against her.

Bobbie fought to hold on as she felt Cherish's tiny hands tugging on her hair as she sent the smaller woman spiraling over the edge. Bobbie clung tightly to the smaller woman unwilling to yield as she feasted eagerly upon Cherish's passion. She wanted all of the blonde even as Cherish's body surrendered collapsing against Bobbie's knowing touch. Bobbie murmured happily as she drank in the last of the blonde's essence.

"Foul," Cherish panted as Bobbie kissed and tasted her way up along the blonde's trembling body. "I want to touch you," Cherish whimpered as Bobbie straddled the smaller woman. Bobbie sighed with delight as she felt Cherish's hands gliding up along the curves of her body. "I was studying in the library this morning," Cherish absently began as her fingers brushed along the swell of Bobbie's breasts evoking another moan from the leggy brunette. Bobbie bit down on her bottom lip as Cherish's tiny hands cupped her breasts. She fought to control her breathing having long ago realized her young lover's fondness for her bosom. "I couldn't focus," Cherish continued her voice never rising above a breathy whisper. "All I could think about was touching you and my stomach kept flip flopping," Cherish expanded as her tiny fingers brushed against Bobbie's nipple eliciting a sharp gasp.

Bobbie's hips rocked in response as Cherish teased the rose colored buds urging them to pucker against her touch. Bobbie released a yelp as her body hit the mattress, she was unaware just when Cherish had gained the upper hand and flipped her over. "I keep forgetting how strong you are," Bobbie groaned as she felt her lover turning her over.

Bobbie cried out as she felt Cherish's naked flesh pressing against her back as the blonde covered her body with her own. All of the blood in her body rushed to her throbbing clit as she pressed her face into the mattress. Cherish's nipples pressed into her back as the blonde ground her wetness inside of the brunette. Bobbie clutched the bed sheets tightly as she felt Cherish's hips rocking against her exposed form.

Bobbie was unable to resist and her hips arched against Cherish's touch. Her body quivered as her mind reeled from the knowledge that dear, sweet, innocent Cherish was behind her riding and taking her with a wild frenzy. Bobbie's mind suddenly clouded devoid of all thought and reason as her body erupted in ecstasy. Bobbie was on cloud nine as her body took control, collapsing as the blonde's touch suddenly departed. Bobbie was completely unaware of the world around her until she realized that her body was now covered with a blanket instead of Cherish. She shook her head in an effort to clear her vision, her eyes widening with horror at the sight of Cherish standing in the doorway of their bedroom clad only in a sheet, as the woman who had been lurking around the farm earlier screamed at the blonde.

Bobbie bolted out of the bed only slightly mindful enough to keep the blanket wrapped around her body as she rushed to save her lover from the screaming woman. Bobbie's reaction was too late Cherish had already shoved the woman from the bedroom and slammed the door shut. "Who the hell was that?" Bobbie barked out as the blonde slumped against the door holding her hand to her chest.

Bobbie could see that Cherish's heart was racing as the blonde struggled to control her breathing. "My mother," Cherish choked out as tears spilled from her eyes. Bobbie ignored the horrific implications of what she had just learned and wrapped the blonde up in a loving embrace. Bobbie held Cherish tightly allowing the younger woman to expel her pain. Bobbie guided Cherish over to the bed cradling her in her arms as she rocked the whimpering woman tenderly.

"Time to face the music," Cherish grimly stated after she had finally calmed down and they cleaned up and dressed in a more appropriate manner.

"I'll be right by your side," Bobbie vowed as she wrapped her arm around the blonde's shoulder in a protective manner.

"I just don't understand what she is doing here," Cherish sighed as they took the first tentative step out of their bedroom. "I didn't think the circus was in Kansas. Even when it is she never comes to the farm."

"Interesting," Bobbie noted thoughtfully as they began to descend the staircase. Just as she began to ponder the situation Jude's voice raised in anger greeted them. Both she and Cherish flinched as they stepped into the foyer. Bobbie had never heard Jude raise his voice and the angry tone startled her as they carefully approached his study.

"Myra what in tar nation are you talking about?" The farmer angrily demanded. "You haven't set foot in this house in over thirteen years and now you break in and start making demands? Cherish is an adult."

"Just what did you do to my daughter?" Myra Goodie screamed her accusation at the irate man. "She's been corrupted. What are people going to say?"

"Mama," Cherish broke in her face flushed with anger. "No disrespect Mama but you left us, I

don't think Bobbie living here has caused nearly the tongue wagging you did when you ran off and joined the circus."

Bobbie's heart swelled with pride as the blonde stood toe to toe with her mother. Bobbie couldn't understand just where Myra got the nerve to be judging anyone? The woman walked out on her husband and nine year old daughter and now she felt she had a right to control Cherish's life.

"Cherish what did this woman do to lead you into such deprivation?" Myra pleaded. "I am so disappointed in you Cherish."

"I love and respect her," Bobbie growled. "Sorry if the concept bothers you. I know this is none of my business, but your daughter is a professional athlete who, at the end of her career, will be a doctor. And despite not having her mother around to help raise her she is one of the kindest, dearest souls I have ever met. Forgive me for asking but just what about that disappoints you? Sorry Mr. Goodie," she apologized quickly realizing that she had just stepped into an argument that, for all intents and purposes, was none of her business. She just couldn't hold her tongue and allow anyone, not even Cherish's mother, to treat her in such a degrading manner.

"This is your home," Jude encouraged her. "You have nothing to apologize for, in fact you're on roll go right ahead."

"Bobbie," Cherish cut her off before she could speak. "I'm sorry, but you do have a very unique way of expressing yourself perhaps Mama and I should take a little stroll before things get out of hand."

*'Too late,'* Bobbie mentally grumbled as she contemplated flushing Mrs. Goodie's head.

"Cherish, I do believe that you and Bobbie are on kitchen duty this evening," Jude began thoughtfully while Cherish huffed and Bobbie scrunched her brow. "Your Mama and I are going to have a little chat. Now don't be giving me that look young lady dinner isn't going to make itself," he scolded her in a tender tone.

Cherish nodded before guiding Bobbie into the kitchen. The brunette asked if her lover was all right, only to receive a polite response. Despite Cherish's reassurance and outwardly calm demeanor the fire in her eyes spoke volumes, the blonde was pissed off. Bobbie was thankful for one thing at the moment in time, Cherish's anger wasn't directed at her. Neither of the blonde's parents were treating her like an adult, it was a mistake Bobbie had made in past.

Just after they put the finishing touches on the simple meal Bobbie wrapped her arms around the smaller woman. "Just remember the both of them love you dearly," she whispered softly as Cherish clenched her jaw. "Let your father handle this, he was married to the woman."

"Still is," Cherish grumbled as she began to relax into Bobbie's embrace.

"Beg pardon?" Bobbie squeaked surprised that Jude hadn't divorced the woman who had abandoned him and his child.

"I did try to talk to him about it once," Cherish sighed. "He doesn't want to discuss it, divorce isn't something that is very popular in my family. She threatened to call the police," the blonde spat out in a bitter tone.

"Wait she is the one that left?" Bobbie stammered in confusion.

"On you," Cherish corrected as Bobbie's body tightened. "Earlier when I kicked her out of the bedroom, she said she was going to call the sheriff and have you locked up."

"Charming," Bobbie grunted trying to at least appear to be calm all the while fearing that the sheriff would show up and drag her off in chains. *'Let Jude handle it,'* Bobbie mentally reassured herself as she tried to distract Cherish with idle chatter.

Dinner that evening was a somber affair the only one who was animated was Sherman who kept trying gain the attention of the three humans that he counted on for amusement. Later that evening Bobbie sent Cherish off to the kitchen to study so she could sneak off and share a cigarette and some much needed conversation with Jude behind the barn.

"If Cherish asks you didn't get those from me," Jude jested as he handed the brunette the pack of Lucky's and a box of matches.

"Should I leave?" Bobbie offered already planning to hit the road rather than have her presence cause any trouble for the Goodie family.

"This is your home," Jude grunted at her suggestion. "Myra isn't going to stir up any trouble; I've made sure of that."

"You paid her off," Bobbie sighed. "What happened Bebob find a new playmate?"

"Near as I can figure, yup," Jude confirmed. "She thought I'd just take her back," he added with a scowl. "You don't need to worry about a thing, Bobbie. As far as anyone in town is concerned everyone just thinks of you as a member of my family, which is what you are, and the sheriff isn't coming for you. Myra's probably half way to California by now. The only thing you need to worry about is practicing for next season and what Cherish is going to do to you when she smells smoke on your sweater. Do you want to leave?"

"No," Bobbie firmly asserted. "I just don't want either of you to get hurt because I'm here."

"People see what they want to see," Jude shrugged. "All I see is what you said today, you are someone who loves and respects my daughter and one hell of a ball player."

Bobbie almost choked on her cigarette. "Thank you," she coughed as she snubbed out the smoke. "I guess I better head in, I have work in the morning," she said with a smile as she handed him the pack of smokes. "I finished the books like you asked; I'll be by your office after my class if you need anything."

"Good night," he nodded with a warm smile.

"Good night," she echoed before turning to leave.

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*St. Louis, Missouri 1955*

The off-season, after Myra Goodie's infamous visit, turned into pure bliss for Bobbie Cahill. Just as it had been the year before. Everyone relaxed into a routine and breathed a heavy sigh of relief when Cherish received a postcard from her mother informing her that all was forgiven and Myra was now traveling as the assistant to a magician named Marco the Marvelous. Bobbie shook her head when she heard the news, deciding that there was something seriously wrong with Myra Goodie. The only dark spot was when Cherish had to leave for spring training a week ahead of Bobbie.

The brunette bounced into the boarding house that had been her home away from home for going on six seasons. "Grizzie don't you look fetching?" Bobbie taunted the chaperone that simply raised her eyebrows. "So, am I back in the shoebox with Cindy again?"

"No, Roberta you've been moved to a larger room," Mrs. Griswold dryly informed her. "The last one on the right you'll be sharing with the second base player."

"Millie," Bobbie sighed. "Man she snores worse than that Snodgrass kid, thank the heavens she wasn't picked up by the Sirens. So, why the switch or did you finally succumb to my charms?"

"There was a trade at the last moment," Mrs. Griswold sighed as Bobbie raced up the staircase. "A lady walks."

"Yes, Ma'am," Bobbie snickered as she lugged her suitcase upstairs. "Penny?"

"Hey Cahill," Penny greeted her. "Good to see you."

"Back at ya'," Bobbie offered. "So who was traded?"

"I don't know," Penny shrugged. "Gotta go."

Bobbie cocked her head as she watched Penny racing off. "This should be good," Bobbie noted as she sauntered down the hallway and burst into her new room. She dropped her bags on the floor when she found her roommate lounging on one of the beds reading a paperback minus a cover. "Shit!" She exclaimed as she kicked the door shut.

"Language," Cherish chastised her as she set the book down. "I swear if it takes me fifty years I am going to teach you to talk like a lady. I don't know if I can endure sharing a room with a potty

mouth, perhaps I should ask to switch with Swanie?"

"The hell you will," Bobbie growled playfully as she climbed up onto the bed and snatched up the paperback. "What is it with you and pirate stories?"

"Behave Roberta Faith," Cherish scolded her as she snatched back the book.

"And if I don't?" Bobbie snickered as she nestled beside her lover.

"I'll just have to think of a suitable punishment," Cherish theorized. "Surprised to see me?"

"Very," Bobbie smiled. "So, Millie was traded?"

"Millie is getting married," Cherish explained. "Ft. Wayne really wanted to sign this kid from Dayton and I wanted to come back to St. Louis."

"I didn't think Millie and Roger were that serious," Bobbie stated as she caressed the blonde's thigh. "She didn't mention it during spring training."

"It was rather a quick decision," Cherish hedged.

"Oh?" Bobbie gasped suddenly understanding Millie's sudden interest in getting married and leaving the league.

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Bobbie snapped the ball to Swanie and watched as the shortstop sent it flying to first base. "Yes, three up, three down," she boasted as she followed her teammates into the dugout.

"Goodie on deck," Coach Williams called out as Penny headed to home plate.

Bobbie watched as she readied her own bat, as she tried to calm herself. The Sirens had a one run lead over the Chicks with just two innings left if they held on they would be in the World Series. It had been a great season for the Sirens thanks to the team finally pulling together and Cherish returning. Everything seemed to click and they stayed on top for almost the entire season.

Bobbie could almost taste victory as she stepped into the batter's box. Penny was on first and Cherish was down by two strikes. She smiled broadly as her lover hit a solid line drive. A man on first and second and Bobbie could feel her body humming as she stepped up to the plate. She let the first two pitches pass knowing they weren't worth chasing. Thankfully the umpire was paying attention as Bobbie was up by two balls. She watched the pitcher release the ball smiling as she watched it, she had it and she knew it. As her bat cracked she didn't bother looking up, she knew the ball was sailing out of the park.

"Nothing like going up by five runs," Swanie whooped happily as Bobbie tagged home plate.

The joy was short lived when at the bottom of the ninth the Chicks managed to close the gap

back to one run. Bobbie's heart was hammering there were runners on first and second but they had two outs. She cursed as the batter hit a solid hit she followed its path ready to cut off the lead runner when she spied the ball landing squaring in Cherish's glove. "Ready to go to the series?" Cherish brightly asked as she handed her lover the ball.

"I've been waiting my whole life," Bobbie beamed brightly as Cherish was engulfed by her teammates.

Jude treated his girls and the rest of the team to a celebration dinner that night so grand that none of the women would ever forget.

What happened a week later was also something none of them would ever forget. The series was split three and three between the St. Louis Sirens and the Rockford Peaches. It was the last game and it all came down to this one moment in time win, lose or draw. At the bottom of the ninth the Sirens were down by three runs. Bobbie felt uneasy as she stepped up to the plate. She looked across the field down by two outs the bases were loaded and it was all up to Bobbie Cahill. She took a cleansing breath and readied her bat, swinging at a pitch she was certain she could nail. "Strike one," the umpire called out as Bobbie missed. She blew out a terse breath and willed her hands to stop shaking as she took her stance. She bit her tongue to keep from cursing as, "Strike two," was announced from behind her as the catcher snickered.

"I am not going out like this," Bobbie muttered as she swore she could see Cherish's emerald eyes twinkling over at her.

"Hurry up I have a party to get to," the catcher tried taunting her.

"Funny so do I," Bobbie grinned as she stepped back up to the plate her focus locked on her lover. She held her bat high her gaze slipping to the pitcher, her bat shattering as it made contact.

"No," the catcher cried as they watched the ball sailing over the fence.

"Sorry kid," Bobbie beamed as she cast the shattered remains of her bat aside and raced around the bases. Bobbie couldn't breathe after she tagged home her team engulfed her. The party in the locker room was pandemonium delaying the team's departure. "A grand slam!" Jude cried out as they stepped out of the stadium for what turned out to be the last time. "Bottom of the ninth, bases loaded, two out, two strikes and my kid hit's a grand slam," he shouted for all to hear as he hugged both her and Cherish.

"That's funny I could have sworn she was my kid?" A familiar voice laughed as he stepped out from behind Jude.

"Dad?" Bobbie gulped with surprise. "What are you doing here?"

"My daughter just won the World Series; did you think I'd miss that?" Robert Cahill said with surprise. "Your mother threw a fit and the boss threatened to fire me but I just had to be here."

"He's been here for the whole series," Jude supplied. "Made me promise not to tell you."

"You two know one another?" Bobbie gaped still trying to grasp the concept that her father was there and had seen her win the World Series.

"Jude sent me the tickets," Robert Cahill confessed. "I didn't want you to know because it might upset you. Roberta you were amazing and you too young lady."

"Cherish Goodie," the blonde beamed as she introduced herself. "There is going to be a big party tonight will you join us Mr. Cahill?"

"Oh I'll be there," he laughed heartily.

The party was an affair to remember as the Sirens celebrated until dawn the only dim spot was the constant worrying they did at the end of each season as they pondered if there would be another season. This year the fears were true and before the following season could begin the league was disbanded forgotten by everyone except the women who sacrificed everything just to play the game.

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*Kansas, 2004*

"B.J.?" Bobbie greeted her nephew as he stepped out of his car followed by a lanky teenager. "Now this is a surprise," she exclaimed as she pondered just how long it had been since she had seen her brother's oldest child.

"It is good to see you Aunt Bobbie," B.J., offered as he hugged her tightly. "I apologize for not getting out here more often."

"Well there's a bit of a distance between Boston and here so I guess I can forgive you," the older woman laughed. "Now tell me this isn't little Lisa?"

"Grown a bit since the last time you saw her?" He boasted as he stood proudly behind his daughter who was kicking at the gravel. For the life of her Lisa couldn't understand why her normally sane father had dragged her to the middle of nowhere.

"Hi Aunt Bobbie," Lisa politely greeted the woman. She hadn't seen the elderly woman in a very long time but she had always liked her.

"Lisa has some big news," B.J. prattled on as Bobbie studied the girl. "She has a tryout for Stanford."

"When?" Bobbie eagerly inquired ignoring the grumbling woman perched in her wheelchair on the front porch.

"Three weeks," B.J. brightly supplied. "Only thing is she doesn't understand why I think she should stay here during that time," he added coyly.

"Never been to Coopers Town?" Bobbie gasped.

"Yes," Lisa supplied thinking it was a silly question.

"Is that Myra?" B.J. inquired about the elderly woman on the porch.

"Yes," Bobbie grunted as she picked up Lisa's gear bag which B.J. had left on the ground. "She turned up when Jude passed on looking for a payoff," Bobbie snickered. "Jude was a good man and smart as a whip," she continued as she extracted an aluminum bat and some balls from the bag. "He left the house and property to Cherish and the business to me. Of course I haven't run the farm in years, these days I just lease the property. Myra hasn't anywhere to go, so we took her in. What position do you play?"

"Pitcher," Lisa responded curiously as Bobbie strolled out to one of the fields.

"Well come on and show me what you got?" Bobbie demanded as her nephew laughed.

"Who is Myra?" The lanky teenager inquired as she followed after her father and aunt.

"She and Uncle Jude were married, from what I've heard she left when your Aunt Cherish was just a girl," B.J. tried to explain.

"Charming," Lisa snorted.

"Go on out there and show your Aunt what you've got," B.J. nudged the girl who was still befuddled by his actions.

"Fine," she huffed as she walked over to the middle of the field. "I've got the biggest tryout in my life and my Dad wants me to throw balls at an old lady."

"An old lady with really good hearing," Bobbie shouted as she took her stance.

"Nice stance," Lisa noted as she gently tossed the ball frowning as her Aunt set the bat down before the ball reached her.

"Why don't you just walk it over here?" Bobbie scolded her. "Want to try that again?"

"Yes, Ma'am," Lisa sighed this time she put everything into her pitch and was stunned when the elderly woman actually caught a piece of it sending it foul.

"Strike one to me," Bobbie snickered. "She's got a good arm, B.J., needs some work. Try again."

Lisa was fuming at the woman's assessment and this time she pitched hard and fast certain that

she would knock the wind out of her Aunt's sails. She ducked as the ball came screaming back at her. "Oh my freaking God," Lisa shouted amazed by what had just happened. "That was amazing," she shouted as she raced over to her Aunt.

"Still have the barn set up with batting cages?" B.J asked.

"Batting cages, pitching machines and a bunch of new stuff," Bobbie explained ignoring the gaping teenager. "We're still working with the kids from the local schools. Close your mouth young lady you'll catch flies. She has no idea does she?"

"No, I should have told her," B.J apologized. "I thought Dad would have."

"Billy?" Bobbie grunted as she led them back towards the house using the bat as a cane. "I love my brother dearly and he has tried to stay in touch, but this is the same man who tells everyone that Cherish is a distant cousin."

"She isn't?" Lisa shook her head in confusion as they stepped up onto the porch. "But Grandpa said she was?"

"Billy's an ass," Bobbie snorted with disgust before looking around quickly hoping her slip of the tongue hadn't been overheard. "Lisa, sweet child, Cherish is my lover."

"What?" Lisa choked as Myra grumbled.

"That's right you old bat," Bobbie fussed. "Lover," she repeated slowly as B.J laughed heartily.

"Stop it Bobbie," she heard shouted from inside the house.

"You're in luck Doc Goodie is in," Bobbie smirked. "I met Cherish during her rookie season for the St. Louis Sirens."

"Aunt Cherish was in the All American Girls Baseball League?" Lisa shouted as if she had just won the lottery.

"Oh now you're impressed," Bobbie snickered as Cherish stepped out onto the porch.

"Imagine how she's going to react when you tell her how you won the '55 series," Cherish chimed in. "Don't get comfortable I want to see your arm kid."

"Roberta Cahill?" Lisa stammered as Cherish led her back out into the field. "The grand slam at the bottom of ninth that was my aunt?"

"None other," Cherish informed her. "Now, give me a good pitch," the white haired woman demanded as she readied the bat she had stolen from her lover. Lisa was floored as Cherish knocked her first pitch across the field.

"You just had to out do me," Bobbie grumbled when they returned to the porch. "Not a word out of you old woman or I'm unlocking your brakes again," she threatened Myra.

"Stop picking on Mama," Cherish threatened as she handed Bobbie the bat. "Why don't we get these kids settled in? The coach from the college likes to bring her girls out for practice and I'm willing to bet she'll work with you."

"Thank you," Lisa stammered. "Do you have any pictures from when you played?"

"Jude filled a room full with pictures, trophies and everything even my old high school stuff," Bobbie snickered.

"Come on inside and we'll show you," the country doctor encouraged. "Now let's get going before Bobbie tries to roll Mama off the porch again."

"That was an accident," Bobbie protested.

"And this coach will work with me?" Lisa prattled on as they entered the large farmhouse.

"Well since Doc Goodie brought her into this world, I'd say the chances are good," Bobbie laughed.

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"I am exhausted," Bobbie yawned as she stepped into her bedroom. "Who knew that kid could ask so many questions?"

"She's got a good arm," Cherish noted as she set the book she was reading aside. "Everyone tucked in?"

"Snug as a bug," Bobbie quipped as she shed her robe and joined her lover on the bed. "Now why did I think you were reading a medical journal?" She laughed as she scanned the racy novel her lover had been reading. "This woman is a pervert," she expanded gasping when Cherish began caressing her thigh.

"I like what they are printing these days," Cherish murmured softly as she nuzzled her lover's neck. "Remember those cheesy books they were writing when we first met?"

"Oh yeah," Bobbie sighed happily knowing that her lover was in a frisky mood. "Fifty some odd years and you still drive me crazy."

They began kissing tenderly, "We have to be quiet," Cherish cautioned her between heated kisses as their bodies swayed gently.

The kisses deepened as their bodies took control their rhythm grew frantic until they released muffled cries into the warmth of the others mouth. "I love you," Cherish sighed happily as she caressed her lover's hips.

"And I love you too, Cherish Eunice Goodie," Bobbie boldly proclaimed as she wrapped her lover up in a tender embrace.

The End.

Send comments to [findingmavis@comcast.net](mailto:findingmavis@comcast.net)

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