

A Beginning

Suffocating, Jacqueline did not have time to wait for the elevator but ran down the steps and out of the building. Biting November wind blasted her face when she violently pushed the twenty five foot high glass door open. She was not in a hurry to get *to* a specific destination, but to get away *from* her prison. . Without being tired, she continued intense thought about only one thing as the bright sun blinded her eyes while the wind cleared her head. She thanked God for her father. . . and their life-changing conversation when she was eight years old.

“How old will I be before I am smart enough to go to college?”

“How old do you think you have to be?”

“Old, like twenty-five or something. That is such a long time and I will be so old. I just want to hurry up.”

“Jacqueline, listen to me.”

Her father was the only one who called her Jacqueline. She closed the encyclopedia without bookmarking the page because this was more important. Her father worked two jobs to support the family and she valued every waking moment she could spend with him so she gave him her undivided attention.

“You don’t have to be a certain age to be smart enough to go to college.”

Her eyes widened, “I don’t?”

“No.”

“Whether you become a doctor, lawyer, schoolteacher, astronaut, or president, whether you go to college or not, whether you are twenty five or sixty five, everything, and I mean **EVERYTHING you want to know is in a book**. Just find the book. When you want to know something, do what you are doing now, and I promise, you will learn everything you need to know. No matter what you do, no matter where you go, always remember, you can find out anything you want to know, just find the right book. Never let somebody say that there is information you don’t have to have. If you want to know **anything**, read! Get the book, study, teach yourself and you will be ready for anything. Okay?”

“Okay, Daddy.”

She crossed Michigan Avenue and started back to the office - relieved. . . and walked back up the steps to the office. The curious and furious toothless lion was waiting. She loved to exert the authority of her position, because it was all she had. If not for her job, she would have been totally useless.

“I could write you up for insubordination. And those write-ups follow you for the rest of your government career.”

While Bertha fumbled in her desk drawer, Jacqueline, still at the file cabinet, reached into her sweater pocket and handed Bertha a pen. Bertha’s eyes got big as she looked up and stuttered.

“Wh-wh-what is this for?”

Jacqueline looked at her with flaming eyes but a smile that dripped ice and asked innocently, “You said you were going to write me up, didn’t you?”

Bertha answered sarcastically, “Yes I *did* and yes I *am*!”

Very calmly, Jacqueline said, “Use my pen.”

“I can’t end up like you. . .I don’t have to explain or justify my decisions to you. . . I will regret some things, but I will never regret not trying. . .don’t you *ever* tell me what I should or should not do with my life. You settled. I won’t.”

It was time for her to move to her next choice and change.

This was the best professional decision she had ever made. The National Business Owners Association embraced her and she them. She brought a lot of ideas and the high level of commitment they required. . .

In an effort to help those members in critical need, that she loved, Jacqueline cut her own throat.

First Computer sent a lot of confidential information to the association office. Jacqueline was the first to see everything. Monday morning when the document came. It detailed the revised minority program. . .Jacqueline faxed the new agreement to meeting attendees. . . and accidentally faxed it to the general fax machine instead of the private one . . .the employees faxed it to a non-minority computer contractor who got angry and her raging boss ran into the office in a rage.

“What have you done!”

“What are you talking about?”

“Did you fax that confidential information.”

“No.”

Bernard went to the fax machine and printed the log sheet.

“Why did you lie, Jackie?”

Her voice choked with the tears streaming down her face, “I was scared!”

“You should be! Why did you send it?”

“I was trying to help. I wanted them to know about the decision right away. They are having major problems.”

“Oh Jackie stop. You don’t know anything about these people. You see them at the conferences and that’s all. You say you care about this organization, but you don’t. If you did, you would *never* put them at risk like that!”

“I do care. I just - ”

“Get out and think about what you did! Take the rest of this week off *without pay*! And take that *little* sign about your business off the door and move your *little* business home! GET OUT!”

Walking down that hallway in the few seconds it took to get to the steps, she made up her mind she would never go back. She had almost no money left . . . She went to the only place she

could to find peace . . .The Detroit River. she was being pushed into her destiny, her real dream. God opened this door. He must have another one already open.

Her last paycheck of \$400.00 came Tuesday. One of her friends died and she had 300 funeral programs to deliver for which she would be paid \$250.00 Saturday. Jacqueline continued her morning habit of praying before she started.

Monday morning, armed with \$650.00 to her name, she went to find her dream. At 9:30, she drove to the prestigious 23 story health insurance headquarters building in Southfield, just north of Detroit.

Between what she learned working various jobs, devouring books, and the fire that was now white hot, Jacqueline was moving forward.

1 DAY TYPING SERVICE SUITE 910

Living her dream was grueling and mentally draining, but she loved every minute. There was a respect that came from others when they learned she had a business versus a job. There was a different self-respect, now that she had her first business instead of a job. She loved the independence and autonomy that freed her from punching a clock. Finally, after three years her bank statement showed \$15,000.00 profit and her credit was perfect after ten years of problems.

Hers was going to be a business that would fill the needs of the people from many areas of life and she would open them around the country. Nothing would go wrong as long as Jacqueline kept her focus.

School was open.

Tyrone Perkins was, six feet three, 250 pounds, very fair skinned, not particularly handsome, quite charming and knew how to pick the right women. Tyrone treated each woman differently. But one thing he did with all of them, was destroy them mentally, sexually, emotionally and financially. He had no reason but loved how he felt after he finished. Jacqueline was holding the brush but Tyrone was going to paint the picture. He was going to use her weaknesses to drain her strength.

“I don’t know why you are not married. Any woman who can cook like this, looks like you, is as sweet and as smart as you, what is wrong with these men?”

“I guess I just picked the wrong men,” thinking, ‘God answered my prayers! Someone is paying attention to me, at last.’

“I worked all my life taking care of my family and I just can’t get a break. . . My daughter just got out of juvenile and has nowhere to live. She can’t stay with her mother because she has cancer. If I don’t get a place for her she will go back because she can’t stay out of trouble. .I found a flat and put down the security deposit, but was \$500.00 short for the first month’s rent. If I don’t come up with the money by Monday, I will lose the \$700.00 I already gave her. . . I need a good woman in my corner.”

She went to the bedroom and got her checkbook.

“I don’t like to see you like that. I’ll loan you the money and you can pay me back when you can.”

“This is good now. You can cash it in the morning.”

“I’ll pay you back in 30 days. I promise.”

“I know you will. Now we can enjoy the movie.”

“I’m leaving.”

Walking to his car, he mentally high-fived himself. No promises, no sex and he had already fooled his way into her checkbook. He even went further and made her feel guilty about her well-deserved success. How dumb could she be? It was time for another class.

“You know I’m falling in love with you.”

Tyrone knew she was not rich in praise. He told her how smart she was and even went to church with her. Once. Then like a full grown boa constrictor he bit her, then slowly and patiently started squeezing the life out of her.

The boa constrictor wraps around its victim and every time the victim takes a breath, the boa squeezes tighter. The victim actually helps the snake kill them. Every single time Jacqueline tried to take a deep breath to think clearer, he squeezed tighter.

Jacqueline would PROVE her love for him.

Jacqueline would PROVE she was the best woman.

Jacqueline would PROVE that she could give it all and require very little in return.

Tyrone PROVED that he was in charge of her.

Tyrone PROVED that he did not love Jacqueline.

Tyrone PROVED that anyone can be broken.

He came over to get some money at 3:00 Sunday afternoon. . . He walked to her and pulled her to him catching her off guard. Her mind was on speaking at church and giving him the money. He forcefully untied her robe.

“No, not now. Please”

“I’m not waiting anymore. I want you. Now!”

He came out of the bedroom, pulling his pants back on and went into the dining room. Miraculously, she found enough strength to get up and pull her gown and robe down. He would be gone in seconds so it would not be long. At the table, he had already picked up her wallet and was opening it.

She took it from him and said, “No, this is yours. The fifty.”

As though nothing happened, he answered, “You can’t do better than that?”

“No.”

“Yeah right.”

A major change was coming.

It would cost her more than any human being should have to pay for success.

But it was her price.

He beat her.

He kicked her.

He tortured her.

He left her for dead. . . And he never touched her.

Her bleeding business started hemorrhaging.

She called the bank expecting a \$7,500.00 balance.

“Your current balance is negative \$2,216.42.”

She screamed. Deadly obsession for Tyrone cost Jacqueline. Everything.

An eviction notice was on the office door.

“Why did you take all of my money out of the bank without asking me?”

“You don’t question what I do. That was not *your* money. That was *our* money.”

“I lost everything. I gave it ALL TO YOU!”

“That is what you are *supposed* to do.”

Tyrone started mutilating Jacqueline’s mind, self-confidence, and her spirit. . .

“I need to beat you. I just don’t have time!”

“I wish you would. It would not hurt so bad. Those scars would heal. But what you have done to me never will. This pain will be with me for the rest of my life.”

She wanted to cry but there were no more tears left.

Jacqueline had a visitor that had not been around for many years. But the torture she was living was too much. Her other lover came back just for her.

‘Come spend a little time with me baby. You know I would never do anything to hurt you.’

‘I want to be with you just for a little while.’

‘Come on baby. You will be fine. You know you need me. Nobody will love you like I will. I know exactly what you need. I am your perfect lover.’

‘Let me open my arms to drown you in sleep and pity even though you should be praying and fighting back. Just lay with me and escape for a little while. I’m holding your mind.’

‘Oh yes. You are right, I don’t have to do anything!’

This was a good place. Her friend would never hurt her.

‘It was good that you stopped praying. God does not hear you anymore.’

‘No. God does not listen to or love me anymore. He never will again.’

‘Darling. . . stay here with me. I am the only one who really loves you.’

Her pain was beyond enduring.

Her lover's name was depression.

This was the *only* thing to do.

She would not have to face anybody again.

Her lover was right. She was building up everybody else until she was poured out with nothing left. She was dead inside.

His lovemaking felt so good that what was supposed to be a visit for a few hours, ended up being all weekend. She tried to go to work. She got dressed, but he called her back.

'Darling, you are not strong enough to go to work. Stay here with me. They don't care about you. But I'm going to get my friend if you stay.'

'I will stay.'

Fully dressed, she curled up on the floor next to her bed and begged for her lover to hold her tighter while bringing his friend.

His friend was suicide.

She sat on the side of the bed, picked up the glass of water, and one at a time, started taking the pills and peacefully, calmly, happily, easily and slowly, started her journey.

Never to return to this living hell.