

A Day in the Life of an Un-Published Writer Carol's Story

by Tami Brothers

“Mom! I can't find the toothpaste. Did you buy any?”

“It's in the medicine cabinet above the sink.” Carol listened to her fourteen-year-old son grumble under his breath until he located the tube. When she heard the water come on, she turned back to the corrections she needed to make on her manuscript.

Page 15 - Up the sexual tension between the hero and heroin in this scene. With all this hatred between the two of them, I'm not rooting for a relationship.

“Of course you're not. That's the point.”

With a frustrated groan, Carol slumped back in her office chair. Rubbing her eyes with her fingers, she had to wonder why she was doing this to herself. After all, her time would be better spent on something that offered a paycheck.

“What did you say, Mom?”

Carol pulled her hands from her face and looked up at her seventeen-year-old son. A smile creased her lips as she took in the fast food uniform he wore so proudly.

“Nothing sweetie. You headed to work?”

“Yeah. I won't be back until after ten tonight. They have me closing.”

The smile slipped from her lips. “Uhh. It is a school night, isn't it?”

“Yeah, but Scott has a date and asked if I could switch shifts with him.”

“That's not the point. When you took this job, I told you it couldn't interfere with school.”

A Day in the Life – Carol’s Story (page 2)

“I know, Mom. It’s just this one time. No big deal. I finished my calculus and the rough draft of my term paper already.” When she continued to frown, he leaned up against the doorframe in a pose that was eerily similar to his dad’s. “Come on, Mom. I need the money. Prom is a month away and I have to put a deposit down on my tux.”

“We all could use some extra money, but school comes first.”

“This won’t happen again without your permission. I promise. Okay?”

Carol sighed in resignation. “Okay. But make sure you’re home by 10:30. No later.”

“Of course. Love ya.” With a quick kiss on the cheek, he flew out of the room.

She listened to the sound of the front door closing, then stared down at the manuscript with unseeing eyes. Her life was out of control and had been for almost a year. Her ex was late with the child support. Again. She’d been turned down by more than 30 different jobs because of her rusty secretarial skills. That’s what a decade and a half as a stay-at-home mom will do to them. Now, she was stuck with the grueling job of washing dishes at a local truck stop because it had been the only ‘day’ job she could find.

To top it off, she’d had to sell the house she’d won in the divorce to get out from under the mortgage. Now the four of them were stuck in this small three-bedroom apartment and still, she barely made enough to put food on the table. Let alone help her son rent a tux for his senior prom. It just wasn’t worth it.

“Mom?”

A Day in the Life – Carol’s Story (page 3)

“In here.” Carol forced the smile back onto her face and turned towards the door as her twelve-year-old daughter made her way into her office/bedroom.

“Can you look at this for me when you finish with your edits?”

“Sure. What is it?”

“Nothing much. Just a story I’ve been playing around with.”

Carol frowned as her daughter handed her a notebook. Flipping open the cover, she read the title, “Better Than Before,” By Cassie Jones. She flipped through the pages and found it full of neatly written words. “Cass, I didn’t know you were writing a story.”

“It’s nothing. I was just playing around.”

“What’s it about?” When her daughter fidgeted in front of her, she glanced back up.

“It’s about a family going through a divorce. And . . . how things got better once all the fighting stopped.”

Carol raised her eyebrows. “Wow. Heavy stuff.”

“Yeah. Can you look at it for me? I want to get a writers opinion on it.”

“Sure. I’ll look at it. But I’m not an expert or anything.”

“I know. But you are a writer. You’ve almost finished two whole books. You go to classes and meetings all the time. It’s ‘like,’ your job.”

Carol blinked rapidly to stop the tears that wanted to fall. “Thanks sweetie. I’ll get it back to you in the morning. Okay?”

A Day in the Life – Carol’s Story (page 4)

“Thanks Mom.” With a quick hug, she disappeared back into the living room.

Carol sat there for a few minutes soaking up the words of wisdom her daughter had just dished out. The girl was right after all. She’d been studying this craft for more than two years now. She’d given a lot of blood, sweat, and tears for this dream. So what if she wasn’t making any money. It was all a learning experience that would one day lead to that higher goal.

Turning back to the written critique she’d received from a published author at the April meeting, she tilted her head as she read the blunt words. Maybe she could tone down the bickering and up the heat a bit. It wouldn’t change the story all that much. It might even take the bitterness out of her heroine.

With a smile that wasn’t forced, she clicked the file open on her computer. She had two days until the May meeting and she wanted to make sure she had this ready to pass onto her critique partners.

Reading through the summary once more, she shrugged her shoulders. It could work. Yeah. If she made that change, she could tweak the ending and it could possibly lead into another story with the heroine’s brother.

Yeah. She could do this. After all, she was a writer and this was, *‘like, her job.’*