

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

by Tami Brothers

What am I doing here? Stephanie muttered to herself as she stepped through the rotating doors of the Hilton. After all, she was a lawyer. She worked sixty plus hours a week. She hardly had time to bathe, let alone embark on this crazy idea.

What was she thinking?

If it hadn't been for that damn doctor and his meddling, she wouldn't be here at all. Who had time to write?

As she came upon the crowded sign-in table, immediately her doubts began to scream their protests in her head. Making a quick left turn, she headed for the women's bathroom hoping to take a moment to work up her courtroom courage before heading into the lion's den. Dropping her bag onto the make-up counter, she took a good look at herself in the mirror. It was something she rarely did because she usually didn't like what she saw.

The long work hours this past month had left some dark circles under her eyes, luckily hidden with carefully applied makeup. Running a hand down the front of her Donna Karen blouse, she was thankful that the designer outfit camouflaged the fifteen pounds she'd lost in the past six months.

Which brought her back to the reason she was here in the first place. As her eyes met her own troubled stare in the reflection of the mirror, she saw what no one else saw. Failure.

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Unlike many of the women here today, she didn’t have a burning desire to write. She loved her fast-paced job and excelled at it. But in one area of her life, she had failed miserably. For the past two years, she and her husband had been trying to have a baby, with no luck.

Her gynecologist told her to get completely out of her comfort zone in order to de-stress. It was his twisted idea that writing was the THE thing she needed to do. He’d even gone so far as to find this writer’s group for her.

Which didn’t explain why she was here, AGAIN. After all, she’d promised to give it a good five months. February should have been her last meeting. And in all reality, after listening to her friends go over the pages they had brought in to critique, she’d felt like a complete fraud.

She’d decided then it would be her last meeting. But when she’d heard Carmen Greene speak to the group that day about how GRW was more than a writer’s group, how it was a community of friends and an organization of relationships; she realized she’d made friendships she wasn’t ready to give up.

In the cutthroat business of law, no one knew who their friends were. She didn’t know who she could trust to tell her deepest secrets to; or who wouldn’t stab her in the back for that next case. Until Carmen talked about the comradery she had found in the women at a Georgia Romance Writers meeting, Stephanie hadn’t realized how much she

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had been able to relate to her new friends. Each had their own set of problems, but they didn’t judge each other. Instead, they relished the idea of sharing those problems and each took it upon herself to try to find a solution to help the other people. That’s what brought her back today.

With a fortifying breath to build up her courage, Stephanie lifted her bag as the door to the bathroom opened. She caught herself smiling at the perky redhead who walked in. “Hey Debbie.”

“Stephanie! You made it.” The tiny woman threw her arms around her neck. “We were all hoping you were just running late.”

Stephanie had purposely skipped their usual before-the-meeting critique session. “Sorry about that. Had some things to finish up.”

“No problem. I’m just glad ya made it.” The look on Debbie’s face turned serious. “I wanted to tell ya how much I loved the article you e-mailed us last week. You really touched me with the struggles ya’ll have been going through with this baby thing. I’d never thought about the stress of not being able to get pregnant and how it affects a relationship like that.”

Stephanie felt the heat rise to her face as Debbie talked about the 2,500-word story she’d typed up late one night on the spur of the moment. Putting those two years of frustration into words had been so freeing, even surprising. And she’d actually e-mailed it to the five women in her group. “Yeah, well...”

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“Everyone has talked about nothing else today. You really touched us with your struggles.”

Stephanie had to blink back tears at those heart-felt words, although she’d written the story only for herself. The acknowledgment felt pretty good. “Thank you.”

Debbie smiled. “No problem. Wait for me and I’ll walk to the conference room with you.”

Stephanie stood in small lobby of the bathroom and mentally thanked Carmen Greene for her words of inspiration last month. If she didn’t get anything else out of the experience, these friends she had made were enough. For now anyways.