

33 Hillside Drive

The sun approached the horizon slowly. Gold and orange splashed across the New Jersey sky like a brilliant watercolor and sunshine danced its way across the deck of the Ross's pool. It was the summer of 1978. My name is Becca and I was nineteen years old. I sat in the woven green and white lawn chair at the side of the pool and pretended not to watch them. Despite the warm, balmy breeze stroking my skin and the cool calm I wore on my face, my stomach betrayed the sick sinking depression I felt. He was slipping away from me. Yes... I was sure of it now, I was losing him.

Nicole and Kevin seemed to be having a great time. Nikki splashed and tossed the red, yellow, and white beach ball at Kevin's clean-cut head. He laughed and dunked her recently coiffed hairdo deep in the crystal blue water. The Ross's were a wealthy older couple we all knew through our parents. Both of their children were in their 30's, (old, by our standards at the time, but not so much so now) married and with children of their own. The couple missed having young people around and had given us carte blanche to swim in their beautiful pool whenever we wanted to that summer. They left a key in an old metal milk box next to the gate leading into their expansive and beautifully landscaped backyard. The pool house had everything we needed, towels, floats, beach balls, you name it, but we all chose to bring our own towels, not wanting to cause them any additional trouble.

Kevin certainly looked good in his tangerine-colored swimming trunks. The sun had tanned his high yellow complexion to a deep golden brown. He had the chiseled features of a Greek statue, wide heavy lashed brown eyes, and full lips. The muscles in his arms glistened as he pulled his 6'2" self out of the pool and proceeded over to the umbrella covered patio table to pour himself a cold drink. He smiled as he walked toward me. A football player in high school,

his stomach was tight and cold water dripped from his pecs. Yes indeed, Kevin was good looking, and he knew it. I sensed the three of us were in a bit of a conundrum. It looked to me as if Nikki was falling in love with Kevin. I believed at the time that I was in love with Kevin. Kevin was in love with himself and the attention that being loved brought him. He stood over me now and purposely dripped water onto my lap. I flinched as droplets of cold water fell onto my warm skin. I laughed and waved him away.

“Stop, you’re getting me all wet!”

“Why don’t you come back in, we can play some volleyball?”

“Naaah, you two go ahead, I want to get a little more sun before it goes down.”

“Okaaaaay,” he said as he dove head-first, back into the pool.

I wasn’t paying much attention at first as Nicole batted her eyes and pouted and flirted with Kevin. She was young, what we used to refer to as jailbait, I didn’t take her seriously. It was becoming increasingly obvious that I had underestimated her. I viewed Kevin as a smart young man and thought he was looking to have a relationship with a fly young woman, me. Looking at him now, I could see I was wrong again, because he was perfectly enchanted by Nikki. Yes “enchanted” was the right word. And Nikki was still a girl.

I took a long hard look at her. She was short, (about 5’4”), with an hourglass figure. She was busty, with a tiny waistline. She had wide brown eyes, a cute little button nose, a medium brown complexion that had turned a sun kissed bronze and pixyish good looks. She wore her chin length, dyed, auburn hair relaxed and cut into a bob. I had to give it to her, she was an attention getter and whatever attention her looks didn’t get her, her mouth did. I on the other hand was outgoing when in the company of friends and people I knew well, but otherwise tended to be

somewhat reserved. I'm an introvert, and according to Myers Briggs now know I am an ISTJ, Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging. A common personality type among men. At this moment in time, this knowledge would not have helped me at all. When I sensed someone vying for the spotlight, (especially regarding the opposite sex) I tended to let them have it, preferring to be pursued vs. the one doing the pursuing. This strategy had always worked well for me in the past and was in line with my personality. In my limited experience, men seemed to want the woman that wasn't part of their harem, the indifferent and slightly unattainable one. Not this man.

I looked down at my own long shapely legs stretched out in front of me. I was tall in comparison to Nikki. I stood about 5'7" and my hair was naturally very curly. Today I had brushed the front smooth from my hairline and tamed the light and dark brown curls that had developed natural highlights, (compliments of plenty of summer sunshine) with a royal blue, white and yellow chiffon scarf, worn as a tight headband. This allowed the curls to run wild in the back, as they tumbled to just above my shoulders. I also was busty but slim, with a nice figure and had inherited the high cheekbones and almond shaped eyes of my Tuscarora Indian ancestors. I was pretty. I wore a yellow halter top with white shorts and a pair of white flip flops which complimented my light golden tan nicely. Sitting there, at the side of the Ross's swimming pool I felt anything but pretty. I felt too smart, too tall, too serious, too everything.

What I really needed to do, was figure out what I wanted, where I fit, and if I fit. I needed to think. What do I do next, pull out all the stops, my feminine wiles, and manipulating bag of tricks? Did I even care for him that much or was this more about winning and losing? I mean yes, he was cute and funny and a great dance partner, but he was also stubborn, self-centered, competitive, and very much a chauvinist. I felt a little silly for a moment, Kevin was 20 almost 21 years old, Nicole had just turned 16. I took a deep breath. I relaxed, I'm such a drama queen, I

laughed to myself. I'm overreacting to the attention he's giving her because I'm jealous...of a 16-year-old! I shook my head and glanced up from my book. I slid my large tortoise shell sunglasses down a bit on my nose as I leveled my gaze over the frames piercingly at them. My stomach was in knots, and I had an uneasy feeling that my intuition was dead on.