

COLLEAGUES

Written by

Remi Bryan

INT. LIBRARY - MORNING - 1955

CAROL, a young woman who is the spitting image of 1955 walks in through the backdoor of the local library.

Carol has on a short sleeved white sweater with a dark red skirt, and red chunky heels. She has her blonde hair pulled into a ponytail and maroon glasses that match her lipstick.

She walks up beside the library desk when she sees her boss CHARLES, an older gentleman, behind the library desk talking to someone.

CHARLES

Now Joan, that's about all you need to know. If you have any questions just ask one of the other librarians.

Charles turns around looking for another employee and sees Carol.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Ah! Carol, just the gal I was looking for!

Carol smiles sheepishly and walks up beside Charles.

Now she can see JOAN, a young woman dressed in a short sleeved baby blue sweater and darker blue skirt. Her curly brown hair pinned up.

Carol and Joan shake hands.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Carol here will be able to answer any questions you have. Have a good first day.

Charles walks away leaving the two girls alone. Joan immediately turns to the desk and looks for something to do.

Carol sidles up beside Joan. Joining her in sorting index cards of the new books.

CAROL

You look familiar, are you from around here?

Joan smiles still looking down at the cards.

JOAN

I am. I also come in here a lot-

Carol gasps.

CAROL
 (Whispering excitedly)
 That's where I know you! You're
 always the reason I can't check out
 Jane Austen.

Joan laughs a little louder than she probably should,
 immediately looking up to see if she disturbed anyone.

CAROL (CONT'D)
 Don't worry, there's barely anyone
 in here this early.

Joan points out a YOUNG MAN who is not being subtle with
 staring at them. He realizes he's been caught and smiles.

He comes up to the counter and starts to talk to Carol.

Carol tunes him out immediately, his small talk fading into
 the background as she stares at Joan who has walked over to a
 shelf just behind the young man.

Joan has morning sunlight shining around her as she looks at
 the books on the return cart.

YOUNG MAN
 Miss Carol?

The young man has hooked a finger under Carol's chin to get
 her attention. Carol smiles awkwardly, now looking at him.
 It's obvious she would rather be looking elsewhere.

INT. BEHIND LIBRARY DESK - NOON

Carol and Joan sit behind the library desk about a chair
 width apart. Joan is quietly reading a book while Carol spins
 back and forth in her chair while filing her nails.

Carol looks over at Joan, admiring the way her hair is
 falling around her face.

Carol now slides her chair over to be beside Joan.

CAROL
 Whatcha reading?

Joan startles for a second before smirking.

JOAN
 My usual.

Carol lifts one side of the book to see the cover. It's a Jane Austen novel.

Carol chuckles and lowers the book back down.

CAROL
I should've known. You can't quit Austen if you tried.

JOAN
I read other books!

An OLDER WOMAN sat reading at a table glares at the two girls.

Joan mouths "sorry."

CAROL
(whispering)
Oh yeah? What other books?

Joan rolls her eyes and smiles. She reaches around for something before looking frustrated.

CAROL (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

JOAN
I think I forgot to bring a bookmark.

CAROL
Oh...

Carol looks at the thin nail file in her hand and places it in the crease of Joan's book, and closes it.

CAROL (CONT'D)
There, all fixed.

Joan and Carol look at each other and Joan blushes.

Carol smiles and moves her chair back to it's rightful place.

Joan looks at the book. Running her finger over the file sticking out from between the pages, she smiles to herself.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Carol and Joan are sat across from each other at a table.

Carol is eating fruit and reading a magazine while Joan tries to eat spaghetti away from her book whilst still reading.

It's an silly display that makes Carol raise her eyebrow at Joan. Joan doesn't notice.

Carol sees that Joan has pasta sauce on the corner of her lips so she takes a napkin from the dispenser on the table and slides it across to Joan.

Joan looks down at the napkin and puts it on her lap.

JOAN
(Mouth full)
Thank you.

Carol rolls her eyes, grabs another napkin from the dispenser and leans across the table.

Carol gently grabs Joan's chin getting Joan to face her. She looks at Carol with a mix of amazement and confusion as she gently wipes off the sauce on her face.

When Carol is finished she gives a quick smile, grabs what was left of her meal, and walks out of the room.

She walks past a calendar reading "June 1955."

DISSOLVE TO:

The calendar now reads "October 1955."

Joan walks in front of the calendar now wearing a pale orange sweater and an orange wool felt cloche hat. She walks towards the back door.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

Carol sits at a table close to the back door of the library. She's wearing a leather jacket, her legs are crossed, one foot lightly taps in the air as she smokes a cigarette.

She's staring off obviously lost in thought when the door behind her opens, Joan walks out and sits across the table from Carol. It's more comfortable between the two.

Carol silently pulls out a pack of cigarettes from the pocket on the jacket, flipping the top open and offering Joan one.

JOAN
Oh, I shouldn't do that anymore.
I've been told it's unattractive.

Carol raises an eyebrow still holding out the pack.

Joan reaches into a pocket on her skirt and pulls out a pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes. Putting one between her lips

JOAN (CONT'D)

And you know I don't smoke Camels.

Carol laughs putting her pack back into her jacket.

CAROL

Where ever did you get a skirt with pockets?

JOAN

I added them myself. Got tired of carrying around a handbag.

Carol nods taking a drag from her cigarette. She notices Joan hasn't actually lit the cigarette between her lips.

CAROL

You need a light there?

JOAN

(Chuckling)

If you'd be so kind.

Carol takes a zippo lighter out from her jacket and clicks it open. Joan leans over the table to light her cigarette on the flame. Carol's eyes widen as she blushes at Joan's confidence.

Joan takes a drag and blows the smoke up into the air before sitting back down in her chair.

Carol clicks the lighter closed and looks to Joan, seemingly unaware of the effect she has on Carol.

CAROL

Did you get the return books sorted?

JOAN

Yes of course.

CAROL

Sorted on the shelf? Or did you sort them in the cart again?

Joan smiles and takes a drag of her cigarette. Carol laughs.

Carol goes to say more but JOAN'S FRIENDS call out Joan's name off screen.

JOAN

Sorry, that's my friends, I told
them I'd meet them for lunch.

Joan stands up and walks off to join her friends, a group of women around their age. The women look to Carol and make scowl, whispering something to Joan that Carol can't hear.

Joan nods, gets into the car with her friends, and actively doesn't look back at Carol.

Carol watches, self conscious now, she takes a drag from her cigarette, and stubs it out on the ground under her heel.

INT. BEHIND LIBRARY DESK - DAY

Carol is sitting absent mindedly reading a magazine, her jacket now folded under the desk and hidden away, when Joan storms past her covering her face.

Joan goes into the bathroom slamming the door behind her.

INT. LIBRARY BATHROOM - DAY

Carol opens the door slowly and Joan looks up to meet her eyes.

She is stood in front of the bathroom mirror, her hat now dejected on the floor.

Her hair is in disarray, her makeup is smeared, her mascara streams down her cheeks as she cries.

Carol immediately rushes to Joan's side.

CAROL

My God! What happened?!

JOAN

I-I'm not entirely sure.

Joan sniffles while Carol grabs a paper towel from a dispenser and wets it with water before trying to wipe away the smeared makeup.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I didn't- They didn't- I don't know-

Carol grabs Joan's shoulders.

CAROL

Joan! Calm down.

Joan takes a shaky breath.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Now...what happened?

Joan takes another breath before explaining.

JOAN
There's a man that's been
interested in me for a while
and...he's supposed to ask me out
today.

A wave of sadness and jealousy washes across Carol's face but she pushes it away.

CAROL
I don't see the issue.

JOAN
I just...I'm not sure what
happened. They told me he was going
to say something and my heart
jumped to my throat and I just...

CAROL
Fell apart?

JOAN
(chuckling)
Yes, that's a way to say it.

CAROL
Well...let's get you fixed up then.

Joan's face lights up for a moment as Carol smiles.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Let me grab my purse.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

--Carol opens her portable make-up kit.

--Carol wipes the running mascara off Joan's cheek.

--Carol brushes Joan's hair.

--Carol puts eyeliner on Joan.

--Carol powders blush onto Joan's cheek.

--Carol gently holds Joan's chin and puts lipstick to her lips.

END MONTAGE

Carol puts the lipstick back into her makeup kit and closes it.

CAROL (CONT'D)

There you are.

Joan looks in the mirror and smiles, she turns around and hugs Carol.

JOAN

Thank you.

They stay together longer than "just friends" would.

CAROL

Of course.

Joan pulls away from Carol and walks back out to the library.

Carol stares at the door her smile fading. She looks to the mirror and looks at the tears bubbling up in her eyes and makes a disgusted face.

A sob escapes her throat but she covers her mouth so no more can come out.

Carol manages to get herself under control and notices Joan had left her hat.

INT. LIBRARY - SUNSET

Carol walks out holding Joan's hat and stops in her tracks seeing Joan talking to a MAN at the library desk.

MAN

You're a real funny girl you know that?

JOAN

So I've been told.

The man gently holds Joan's hand.

MAN

How about I pick you up at 8, and we'll head to Donnie's Diner.

Carol looks down at the hat in her hands, then the watch on her wrist. She looks back to Joan and has a face of determination.

EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Carol is standing at the door of a house with Joan's hat in one hand and a piece of paper in the other. The paper reads 'APPLICATION OF EMPLOYMENT' with Joan's name typed below it, her house address is listed and circled.

Carol looks to the number on the door, it matches the paper. She folds the paper and places it in her jacket pocket.

Carol looks at her watch it reads 7:45, she hesitates for a moment but takes a breath and knocks.

It takes a moment but footsteps approach and Joan opens the door. She's only in a bath robe, a towel wrapped around her head, and her lipstick half put on, still holding the lipstick in her hand.

CAROL

You left your—

Carol is cut off when Joan puts a finger up and gestures off screen.

Carol leans in and sees Joan's parents both reading on the sofa, absorbed in their own world. Carol looks back to Joan and gets the hint she's uncomfortable talking in front of them. In a burst of confidence, Carol grabs Joan's wrist walking her away.

JOAN

(Whispering)

Carol! What is the matter with you!

CAROL

(Whispering)

Hush!

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Carol walks all the way to Joan's backyard and swings Joan to be in front of her.

JOAN

Carol what—

CAROL

No! Look, I'm gonna talk and you're just going to listen.

Joan stays quiet as Carol takes a breath.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Ever since you started working at the library I can't stop thinking about you. Every day, every night I think about you. I think of the way you immerse yourself in books like you're jumping into the ocean. I think of how you sort the books on the book cart before sorting them again on the shelves. I think of how you sew your own pockets, how you are so determined to get people to read Jane Austen. I'm always thinking of your hair, and your clothes and the way your voice sounds. And I'm well aware of the risk but there's a part of me, most of me, that would forever regret it if I don't at least try.

Carol stands for a moment, looking into Joan's eyes hoping to see a response.

Suddenly, Joan drops the lipstick she was once holding and kisses Carol.

Carol seems stunned but quickly leans into the kiss, dropping Joan's hat to the grass, right next to the lipstick.

Joan runs her hand through Carol's hair and Carol pulls her closer.

The two separate and gently bump their foreheads together.

JOAN

I think about you too.

Carol smiles with a sigh of relief her arms still holding on to Joan's waist.

They look around to check if anyone saw, or can see them. They're aware of the risks that come with this relationship.

Joan kisses Carol.

They know the risk is worth it.