

Solomon's Choice

by Kathryn M. Sharon

Anya's hazel eyes twinkled as she pored over DBP Pharmaceuticals latest sales numbers in her small, windowless office in downtown Oakland. Since becoming a senior manager, her team had produced year-over-year double-digit increases.

As Anya packed up before heading out for Labor Day weekend, there was a loud knock on her door. She smoothed the green linen dress on her willowy frame, as the overhead light reflected off her caramel skin and chiseled features framed by brown locs.

"Come in," she said, annoyed by the intrusion. The door opened and a hulking, middle-aged man with ruddy skin walked in and closed the door. "Hi Doug," she said flatly.

"Anya," boomed SVP Doug Wasserman, "You've been producing big numbers for our hypertension unit and we need you to scale those results. We're offering you the Senior Director role at our Southern Division in Richland, Mississippi."

Anya's heart skipped at hearing the news. "Wow. That's great news," she said.

Tousling his unruly mane, Doug continued, "Here's the offer letter. I need an answer by Tuesday." He then left.

After getting laid off from three newspaper jobs, Anya stumbled into the job at DBP, where she progressed from sales rep to manager to senior manager in six years. After getting passed over for a promotion, Anya restructured her team, revamped her sales strategy, and earned an MBA.

Conflicting thoughts flooded her mind as she furiously texted her ex: "CALL ME." Within minutes, Marcus called. "Hey, Anya, is everything okay?"

"I just got a promotion!" Anya exclaimed.

"Congratulations, bae! I mean An..." Marcus stammered, before she clipped his words.

"I've busted my ass for this moment, BUT it's in Mississippi," she whined.

What she left unsaid was, "What kind of life could a sexually fluid woman like myself hope for in a small, Bible-Belt town?"

After three years of marriage, Marcus knew when to let her vent. "Do a cost benefit analysis, A. That's what you do best."

Anya huffed, "The analysis will have to wait because my cousin Carol's in town from New York, and we're getting together tonight for dinner."

"Cool. Tell Carol I said 'hi'," Marcus remarked. With that, Anya grabbed her bags and jetted onto bustling Broadway for a power walk to her condo at the marina.

Once home, Anya peeled off her dress, and relaxed on her chaise with a glass of Chardonnay, before heading to dinner.

Anya and Carol are 39-year-old first cousins who were raised like sisters in Brooklyn. Like yin and yang, Anya is gregarious, driven, and fashion-forward, and Carol is plain, bookish, and reserved.

Wearing a black mini dress, Anya, stepped into Gee's Supper Club which was jumping with live music. She eyed Carol in her signature tortoise glasses and micro braids. The two hugged each other hard. Feeling celebratory, Anya ordered a bottle of Prosecco.

"You look great," Anya remarked," as she admired Carol's beige pantsuit. "So, are you in Cali for a religious event?" she asked.

Carol broke into a smile, "Actually, I'm interviewing for a Senior Pastor position at a church in East Oakland.

Anya squealed, "It would be great to live in the same city again. I also have job news to share. I was offered a Senior Director role with DBP's Southern Office. It's a growing market.

"I have 72 hours to make this Solomon's Choice of whether to stay in my beloved Oakland or take this awesome opportunity."

Carol cleared her throat and twisted her mouth. "A, I'm happy that you're being recognized, but there is no Solomon's Choice. DBP is derisively called Dead Black People for a reason. They've been profiting off the suffering of our skinfolk for years. I know you want to get ahead sis, but not like this."

Anya was stunned. "Sometimes the best reply is no reply," she thought, before hastily paying the check. The two then departed without eating dinner.

"She's just jealous," Anya fumed as she walked home and reflected on the offer.

Time had flown quickly and Anya couldn't believe it was already late October. She had been invited to a Halloween party and decided to dress up as Robin Hood. But it wouldn't be a late night. Tomorrow at 11 she has a job interview for a director position at the Geist Foundation, which has one of the largest endowments in the country. As Anya adjusted her tights, Carol came out of the guest bedroom dressed as the Flying Nun. The two looked at each other and burst into laughter.