

3: Day Three

Tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap- *Sally! Stop it!*

I set the pen down and closed my textbook, pushing it away as the clock ticked its incessant tock. I stood and wandered around the library. I didn't think I could be any more bored.

I wandered back over to the computer and sat down, turning my swivel chair toward the counter that faced the exit. Placing my arm and elbow on the counter-top, I rested my chin in my hand as I stared at the exit. Then I sighed and picked up my pen to doodle on the brown paper of my textbook, adjusting my chin in my hand to see better. Hearts and flowers. Stars and clouds and rainbows. Smiling faces. Spitting faces. Laughing faces. Bunnies' backsides and elephant behinds-

My computer chirped with an incoming instant message.

I straightened and dropped my pen on the counter, blinking at the exit. *Do I dare hope...?* I slowly turned my head toward the computer- "Zell," I said in a hushed exclamation. My stomach and heart lurched. I wheeled closer to the computer and typed in a reply greeting.

BOOYABOY: i h8 ritn tst. so brng.

My lower lip protruded in a slight pout. **BALAMB_LIBRARIAN:** I'm sorry. I'm bored, too. Everyone's in your class. I smiled, resting my arms on the counter in front of the keyboard as I waited for his reply.

BOOYABOY: tel u wat. il snd thm 2 u n go pla outsid.

I giggled. **BALAMB_LIBRARIAN:** Oh no you don't. I want to play, too. You'd have to smuggle me out of the crowd in your duffel bag. *And why can't I talk to him this easily in*

person?

BOOYABOY: i bet i cud. wanna try?

I laughed as I shook my head. **BALAMB_LIBRARIAN:** Wouldn't you get in trouble?

BOOYABOY: prbly. who crs?

My smile faded somewhat. **BALAMB_LIBRARIAN:** *I* do. Just stick it out. I'm sure it won't take too long for them to finish. You're a good teacher.

Wow. Did I just type that? After a few moments of tapping a finger on the keyboard while waiting for a response, I began to gnaw my lower lip. Oh no. I didn't want to 'read' too much into the silence but... had I creeped him out? Did he suspect I liked him? I checked to see if he was still logged in. He was. Oh no. Oh no.

BOOYABOY: y dnt u chng yur log in 2 megafenx insted of blmb libren?

I sighed with relief as I slumped back into my chair. Then I sat up and replied, **BALAMB_LIBRARIAN:** I only use the network when I'm working.

BOOYABOY: u nvr chat outsid wrk or skol?

I flushed and scolded myself furiously for doing so. **BALAMB_LIBRARIAN:** No.

BOOYABOY: wel y dnt u set up yur log in acnt now? thn buz me bck.

My mouth gaped a second. **BALAMB_LIBRARIAN:** Are you serious?

BOOYABOY: did I typ it? of cors! yur log in is borng.

I giggled. **BALAMB_LIBRARIAN:** Okay, okay. Give me a minute.

So I set up my preferences for my network communication within the Garden's system. When it asked for a log in name, I paused for a long moment before typing Megafenix. Then I gave a curt nod and hit enter. I logged into the system and sent Zell an instant message, all the while hoping he had the sound down on his monitor.

BOOYABOY: u shud hv seen thm jump!

I groaned. **MEGAFENIX:** You turned the sound all the way up, didn't you?

BOOYABOY: ^_^

"Zell," I sighed. **MEGAFENIX:** That wasn't very nice. They're taking a test.

BOOYABOY: hey. we had a laf. tenshun sux.

I gave a slight, crooked nod. **MEGAFENIX:** You've got a point. Congratulations. I wish my Instructors would relieve tension like that on test days.

BOOYABOY: man u typ fst! n u spel al the wrds rite 2

I flushed. **MEGAFENIX:** I guess all that time in the library was good for something.

BOOYABOY: ^_^ lol

I sighed, touching the smiley face with a finger. "Why do you have to be the way you are...?"

BOOYABOY: so how long u wrkd ther?

MEGAFENIX: Ever since I started studying here, so about 5 years.

BOOYABOY: 0_0 5 yrs! In the lib?!

My cheeks burned. **MEGAFENIX:** It sounds lame, doesn't it?

BOOYABOY: no it dsnt. i just cnt beleve i no som1 hoo actlly styd smwhr lngr thn 2 mnths. u proly hv al the pwr.

Power? **MEGAFENIX:** What do you mean?

BOOYABOY: wat do I meen? cuz yuv ben ther so lng, u can proly do n wrk wenevr u want. rit?

I raised an eyebrow. I'd never thought of it that way. I just worked my scheduled days, tried to cover whenever I could, and did the best job that I could. I stared at the keyboard and had no idea what to type. Did I want to admit that I'd never thought of it? That I apparently didn't have any kind of ambition. That I was fine to be the--

BOOYABOY: u ther?

I blinked, and my throat tightened. **MEGAFENIX:** Yeah.

BOOYABOY: 'sup?

MEGAFENIX: I just never thought about that before.

BOOYABOY: thts ok. yu lik wurkng ther. not evr1 who studes here is like me or squall. u can teach or somthng els.

I smiled a wavering smile at the monitor. He couldn't be much less than perfect.

BOOYABOY: hav u thot of wat u wnt 2 do aftr u pass?

Again, I blinked. **MEGAFENIX:** No.

BOOYABOY: y not?

MEGAFENIX: It never seemed to come up. Sure, my written exams are great, but my field tests? they're pretty sad.

BOOYABOY: mybe cuz u dnt no wat u wnt to do aftr?

My mouth dropped open as I stared at that line of genius and insight. I hadn't even thought that deep into myself. **MEGAFENIX:** You think so?

BOOYABOY: hoo nos? y dnt u gv it a thot or 2 b4 tmorrow?

I leaned slightly to the left, resting my elbow onto the counter as I cupped the side of my face in my hand and lightly scraped the raised letters on the enter button. *What do you want to do, Sally? All these years you've been working here and you haven't ever wondered? You haven't ever thought about it? How come?*

BOOYABOY: ive got it. yur rily gud at the ntwrk sys ther at the lib and ordrng books and mkng sur evrythng is a-ok, so y dnt u try n be netwrk admin for thm or somthng?

I pursed my lips and adjusted my face in my hand. *Hmm. Do I want to be in the library for the rest of my days?* I looked around the place, remembering the good times and the laughs, the organization and the improving I'd done. The comments by Headmaster Cid and some of the students at how easy things were to find. I smiled and straightened.

MEGAFENIX: I'd like that.

BOOYABOY: of cors! u shud do wats ez n fun.

I giggled. **MEGAFENIX:** It has its boring days, too. Remember?

BOOYABOY: wel wat gud is a job if u cnt slack off 1nc in a whil? ^_^

I laughed. **MEGAFENIX:** Now you sound like Selphie.

BOOYABOY: o! i tawkd 2 sef. she tld me a lot, so i thnk i no wat 2 wrk on tmorrow. itl b brutl. just 2 let u no.

I smiled. **MEGAFENIX:** Take it a *little* easy on me. I don't have the world-battle-saving experiences you do.

BOOYABOY: dnt sel yrslf shrt. u cn kick butt if u wrk hrd and pay atnshn.

With you instructing me? Try and get me not to focus! I giggled. **MEGAFENIX:** Okay, but don't expect me to take on T-Rexaur after the first 5 minutes.

BOOYABOY: i giv u a our

I raised an eyebrow. **MEGAFENIX:** That's all?

BOOYABOY: ul c

I gnawed my lower lip. **MEGAFENIX:** So you really think I can pass the Fire Cavern test?

BOOYABOY: of cors. dnt swet it. wel wrk on thngs tmorrow. tak it ez 2day. ul need the rest.

My face warmed with my smile. **MEGAFENIX:** Okay. Thanks again, Zell. I owe you dinner.

BOOYABOY: nah. its on me. thyr brngng ther pprs up. gotta go. c u tmorrow

I nodded. **MEGAFENIX:** Okay.

He logged off. I leaned back in my chair with a sigh and a wistful smile.