

A Life of My Own- 2

by J. Mykell Collinz

My father is too busy for his own daughter anymore. He used to take me with him on his business rounds, checking on his rental properties, overseeing maintenance workers, collecting rents, visiting with tenants. He wanted me to learn the business, to become the son he always hoped for but never had. I eagerly complied.

I learned so well, when I was only nine years old, he put several properties in my name, allowing me to manage them. Everybody went along with it because my father told them they should. Yet I began to think like him and, before my twelfth birthday, I had doubled the value of my initial assets.

He recently sold the rental properties for a small fortune, which he immediately invested. He also built an investment portfolio for me, and he's allowing me to manage it, theoretically.

I miss the old business but my father wants me to do better in school, to get ready for college. He paid a doctor to examine and analyze me. The doctor recommend medications.

Whenever my father is around, I need to zing him with something bizarre to get his attention.

"One in six, eleven-year-old white boys, who have medical insurance, currently take a stimulant drug, at least during school."

"White boys? Who told you that?"

"I read it somewhere, daddy."

"And you believe everything you read, young lady?"

"They were quoting the Drug Enforcement Administration. Production of prescription stimulants has multiplied beyond belief."

"Beyond belief, yes, a detail worth remembering."

"And this, from a national telephone survey, five million children, plus or minus three percent, biologically and psychometrically untested, show a definitive neurological condition, blending

seamlessly with normal behavior. Opinions vary widely among professionals."

"What? You're making this up. I know what you're trying to do. You want to smoke marijuana instead of taking your prescription medication. I actually don't care about that anymore, whatever works for you. But, I'll tell you this, young lady, they won't tolerate it at your school. They are drug testing all students, starting this year. How will you get around that?"

"I don't want to go there anymore. I wanna do a home schooling."

"That's not going to happen. I have a new business to run, you know that."

"You make enough money, hire me a tutor."

"Is there someone you have in mind?"

"No, but I'm sure we can find someone."

"See, you should have done your homework on this first, before bringing up to me. It shows how unprepared you are."

"I just thought of it while I was talking to you."

"Get back with me when you have something more concrete. I'm late for an appointment. I have to run."

He knows I'm smoking marijuana because I'm pinching it from his stash.

My best girl friend from school, who lives in the same gated community, comes over to my house and visits with me as I toke from a badly rolled, skinny marijuana joint, but she refuses to try it herself. Her brother has a prescription from a doctor to use a stimulant medication and, although she has not been prescribed, she uses his supply to help her study for exams. And she's an all A student.

"Scientific studies show smoking marijuana changes your brain structure."

"Pharmacological, manufactured, synthetic drugs are more likely to do that. And in a negative way. I'm not taking that stimulant medication anymore. I feel better without it, especially when I'm high. Maybe it works for you, not for me. I prefer the natural herb."

"You don't seem any different."

"What did you expect?"

"Aren't you supposed to start giggling and saying stupid stuff."

"Marijuana doesn't do that to me. Not yet anyway. But there's different varieties. And I only smoke a little bit."

"But you'll wanna smoke more and more and eventually you'll become addicted."

"Wrong! Marijuana is not an addictive drug, it's a natural medication, depending upon quality and quantity. Even heroin and cocaine are medications in their natural forms."

"Who told you that?"

"I read it in a book, which you probably won't find in our school library. I found it in our library here at the house. I'm gonna be tutored at home. My father said I could. I'm not going to that school anymore."

"Will you tell the tutor about smoking marijuana? Maybe you can find a tutor who also smokes. You can major in smoking marijuana at college."

"Now I can't stop giggling. Your words are beyond funny, they're also true. I need to find a tutor who has smoked marijuana, who knows what I'm going through. If I can do the school work and get along with everybody, what difference does it make if I smoke marijuana instead of taking my perscription stimulant?"

"Don't ask me, ask your doctor, ask the government, ask the school principle, ask the cops. There must be a good reason. They can't all be wrong."

I'm feeling paranoid. A voice in my head screams: yes, they can all be wrong. But I don't say it to her. Why do I even need to worry about school? I have money, I have a home, I have books to read, a computer, the Internet. All I need a tutor for is to certify my grades. I don't even need that if I don't want to go to college. And I'm not sure I do. I miss the old rental business. I'd go back to that if my father would allow it.

