**The Resort Ambassador**

by ReaderMan

**Chapter 2 - Emi in Hawaii**

**— The Interview —**

Emi landed in Hawaii for the first time and enjoyed all of the exotic differences from the Seattle, WA area. After checking into her hotel in Honolulu she decided to go for a walk around the neighborhood. Everything felt somewhat familiar, but also different in many ways. It was humid but not as hot as Emi had imagined that it would be. She also noticed that most people seem to be either middle-aged or senior citizens.

A little while later, while walking along near the beach she got a call on her cell.

“Hi Emi, this is Becca. How was your flight? Did you get settled into your hotel ok?”, said the woman with who she had talked with during her phone interview the week before.

“Hi Becca, the flight was a bit bumpy but good. The hotel is great! Everyone just assumes that I’m from Japan, which is kind of funny.”

“Yeah, they get a LOT of tourists from Japan here. They are generally treated well because they tend to spend more than your average tourist,” said Becca with a chuckle.

After a pause, Becca continued. “Look, I know the interview is tomorrow but I just can’t wait to meet you. Can I buy you an ice cream or something?”

“That would be wonderful!” said Emi.

A short while later a stunning redheaded woman with short-pant designer ripped jeans and a stylish casual top that showed her jeweled bellybutton walked up to Emi. Her top was thin and her designer black c-cup bra could be clearly seen under it. Her black thong was stylishly up above the low rise jeans. With the exception of no makeup and normal looking hair, Becca looked like a rockstar.

Emi, felt like she was dressed too conservatively despite wearing her everyday Lululemon clothes. She politely offered her hand to Becca.

Becca shook her hand vigorously, and then pulled Emi in for a big hug. She was a couple of inches taller than Emi’s 5’7″ height.

Holding Emi out by the shoulders, Becca beamed with a friendly unguarded smile that made Emi instantly like her.

After an ice cream and some casual conversation about Hawaii and good places to eat, the conversation swayed back to the interview.

“I looked at your GitHub account in detail last week, and your code samples are really impressive. Also, your personal apps in the iOS and Android app stores are amazing, did you collaborate with anyone on those?” Becca asked.

“No, I did those alone,” Emi stated while playing with the rim of her cup.

“What about the UX and graphic design? Did you use a template or were you inspired by some other apps?” Becca probed.

“No my best friend is a UX/designer/illustrator and he taught me quite a lot about UX and graphic design. It’s my new side hobby actually.” Emi explained.

“Unbelievable! I think that you are probably overqualified for this position, that makes me a bit worried about how much you will cost,” Becca said with some concern in her voice. “But we can talk about that later. So your best friend is male, but I guess that makes sense in the tech world,” Becca said as she took a quick sip of her coffee.

Emi just smiled politely.

“Currently, we are rushing to finish up a tough job here in Hawaii. It will probably take us at least three more months to complete. Then I have a new gig lined up at a brand new Resort. But I’m afraid that we might lose that deal if I don’t close it soon. The Resort job will also be challenging and so that’s why I wanted to bring in a heavyweight. I want to go in there with both guns blazing!” Becca said in an animated manner than made Emi laugh.

Emi hadn’t met the rest of the team yet, but she already felt good about the job. She realized that she wanted it so bad that it almost scared her.

“So why did you leave your old job?” Becca asked casually.

Emi froze for a moment. “Um, I was just looking for a change mostly.”

“A change?” Becca probed. “Did anything happen that made you want to leave?”

Mr. Woo strikes again, Emi thought bitterly as she struggled to keep a poker face. Time passed uncomfortably as Emi struggled to come up with a reasonable answer.

Suddenly Emi decided to forget the whole thing. She stood up quickly almost spilling her coffee. “I’m sorry…” she started to say with a grim face.

“That’s alright Emi. You don’t have to go into any details.” Becca interrupted, looking at Emi carefully.

“Congratulations, this job is yours… if you want it.” Becca suddenly decided.

Emi was surprised and then overwhelmed with relief.

“Usually we grill someone on the whiteboard but somehow I don’t think we need to do that with you,” Becca added.

Becca stood up and hugged Emi deeply. “Welcome to the family,” she said softly into Emi’s ear. “You have just landed the coolest software developer job on the planet.”

Emi hugged her in return. She was so happy that her eyes started to water.

“You are so adorable, ” Becca said, taking out two tissue papers from her trendy hip-hugging bag. She gave one to Emi while she dabbed at her own watering eyes.

Emotionally pent up, Emi finally laughed and did the same.

Soon after they both happily agreed to a generous salary worthy of Emi’s prowess, and both were quite happy as Emi signed the digital offer, on Becca’s iPhone, with just her finger.

Becca told Emi to enjoy the rest of the day as they needed to get her started the next day if possible. Then she turned and strutted away confidently showing off most of her left butt cheek through an alarmingly large rip in her designer pants.

**— Meeting the Crew —**

The next morning, Emi was emailed some developer setup information from someone named Sam.

Emi spent some time setting up her machine and then joined their Slack group. It was still early, so she decided to go for a run.

A while later Emi’s watch buzzed. She stopped running and read the message.

“We are dying to meet you Emi. Can you meet us at Coffee Shop 831 in an hour?” slacked Hanna.

“Sounds great. I’ll see you there,” Emi replied, verbally. Her voice was transformed into text and she hit the send button.

Later Emi arrived at the small coffee shop somewhat early. Not a fancy place, but it seemed quite homey. This might be a nice place to get some work done she thought. She walked in and immediately felt the air conditioner cool her skin. The smell of freshly baked goods was in the air.

Her new co-workers were not there yet. There were just two elderly couples having a grand conversation with tea and pastries.

Out in the back, however, there were more tables. She spotted two young women sitting outside with laptops. A shop-girl was cleaning a table beside them, partially blocking Emi’s view.

The two girls looked smart.

One had blond hair in a bun, the other smaller girl looked to be half Asian. They were both looking at the same computer and seemed to be deeply engrossed. They did not notice Emi standing there, probably because the cleaning girl was blocking their view.

Not sure if this was them or not, Emi stood there somewhat awkwardly as they chatted excitedly about what sounded to be some type of new style tennis rackets. This must be my co-workers, she thought, as she heard the french blonde call the other one ‘Sam’.

Great, Emi thought, I don’t know anything about Tennis.

The blonde, who must be Hannah, had a slight French accent and her light summer dress had faint blue flowers and butterflies all over it. She had a pale blemish free skin. A cute upturned nose of the style that other girls go to the plastic surgeon hoping to achieve. Her hair had little wisps hanging down with a youthful shine and natural highlights created by the tropical sun. Her gentle blue eyes were clearly visible, as her sunglasses were sitting up upon her head. She seemed deeply approachable and friendly. The back of her laptop showed dozens of stickers from all around the world.

Sam had short black hair and her eyes were obscured by little round sunglasses that barely covered her eyes. She was wearing a black tank top and punk-like oversized red shorts. On her shoulder was a tattoo of a computer chip. The back of her laptop had “Las Tres Amigas” written in big bold black letters.

“Well if it isn’t super-girl,” said Sam, apparently recognizing Emi and realizing that she was watching them.

“Emi!” gushed Hannah. She quickly got up to shake hands enthusiastically, with a smile. The other girl remained seated.

“I’m Hannah. This little monster is Sam,” she said gesturing back towards Sam.

Sam raised her hand, wiggling some fingers.

“Aren’t you a bit early?” Sam asked, her head slightly tilted.

Emi didn’t like that she couldn’t see her eyes. “I…” she started, but Hannah cut her off.

“Don’t mind her Emi, she’s not from this planet. Let’s get you a drink,” she said, dragging her back into the shop.

The rest of the morning went well as the three girls settled in and enjoyed getting to know each other and the current project on hand.

Sam turned out to be somewhat friendly and was also the team lead. She was in charge of security, tools and backend servers, and any other low-level techie stuff.

Hannah’s specialty was graphic design and user experience, UX for short. She is also an amazing web programmer.

Becca ran the show. She had a bachelor’s in business and paid everyone’s salary. She is also an elite front-end iOS developer and programmed all the jazzy user-facing stuff that Hannah designs. Becca however, never acted like she is anything more than just another programmer.

Apparently, all three girls used to be tech leads themselves. After joining forces, they became a truly elite team, often slicing through the competition, usually larger teams, like a hot knife through butter.

The only thing that seemed less than ideal was that Sam and Hannah loved playing tennis together. But that was okay as Emi really enjoyed her solo runs in this new exotic location. The rest of the job couldn’t have been any better. It often felt like being paid top dollar to be on vacation, especially since everyone there, including herself, loved what they did every day.

A week later, the four of them were working in the shade by the beach and enjoying some cool drinks.

“Sweet! Fold up, we are rolling out,” Becca announced excitedly.

“What are we? Autobots?” Sam deadpanned, without looking up.

Everyone ignored Becca and continued working.

“I’m serious guys, I have a cool surprise for everyone. Our client is treating us to something special,” Becca said, trying again to get their attention.

Emi and Hannah finally looked up and then closed their MacBook Pros.

Sam looked to be deep into something and held a finger up, indicating one minute, please.

“What is it, Becca?” Hannah asked with an expectant smile.

“A surprise,” Becca said mysteriously.

Three minutes later Sam closed her laptop and they packed up and left, everyone following Becca.

After a short walk down a few streets, Becca stopped and turned to face the crew. “Our client, thanking us for all our hard work and for being way ahead of schedule, is showing their gratitude in the form of complimentary DESIGNER swimwear!” Becca said as she waved enthusiastically to the store across the street.

“Pick out any suit you like, and it’s yours free. The place is packed with top designer brands, many of them upwards of five hundred dollars each. Take your pick. I happen to adore the Luis line, so take a look at those suits, but you are free to choose whatever you like,” Becca said. Not waiting for any replies Becca turned and crossed the street quickly before the light changed.

“Wait for me!” shouted Hannah, also hurrying to make the light.

Sam and I just looked at each other, they were stuck waiting for the next light.

“I guess we have to pick-up some swimwear,” Sam said, without any enthusiasm at all.

“Yeah, I guess we do,” Emi agreed.

Emi looked at the side of Sam’s reluctant face as she looked at the store across the street. They were still waiting for the light to change.

Emi understood her hesitancy. Like herself, Sam was also not a beach bathing suit person. Growing up, Emi was always around guys who were quite crude about girls in Bikinis and it didn’t help that her brothers were the same way. Evan wasn’t bad, but his eyes tended to follow bikinis like a magnet, so she never felt like going to the beach with him.

Emi wasn’t really the swimmer type. Plus she didn’t really like exposing too much skin. Her Japanese complexion preferred shade. Otherwise, she risked getting sun spots and aging too quickly. It was enough that she ran every day, that was about as much UV as she wanted to absorb. She also liked running at sunrise and sunset (when possible) to reduce the amount of UV. The last thing she needed was a fancy bathing suit, but it would be disappointing to the client and to Becca to turn down such a valuable gift. They both knew that and so they had to go swimwear shopping, unfortunately.

The light changed and they started walking towards the store.

“I’ve never bought swimwear before,” admitted Emi.

“I did once, it’s not a big deal,” Sam said.

“Well this is DESIGNER swimwear; maybe this could be fun,” Emi offered optimistically.

“Yeah, I’m sure it will be a hoot,” Sam deadpanned.

They entered the store and to their mutual horror, everything in the store was as skimpy as hell. All four girls split up, each hunting down the perfect swimsuit.

Emi tried on various revealing suits, although they all looked classy, none of them seemed suitable to wear in public. She also noticed that the curtains in the changing rooms didn’t close all the way, which bothered her every time she tried to close the curtain.

Hannah looked at Emi with some confusion. “Why are you trying that suit on?  If I had your athletic butt, I’d buy this.” Emi looked down at the black suit Hannah had just handed her. The label read ‘J’Adore Victoria’s Secret Topless Bikini.’

“Topless…” Emi gasped.

“No silly, it’s just a fancy bikini that LOOKS like a once piece. You will probably look like a supermodel in that. Here, go try it on!” Hannah insisted as she shoved Emi into a changing room.

Emi tried it on. She was no supermodel, but Hannah was right. It did make her look good. Plus the backside, while very revealing, wasn’t a g-string. That was it’s biggest selling feature as far as Emi was concerned. This whole shopping business was stressful, she thought while stepping out to show Hannah.

Hannah looked Emi over carefully. “Yes, a supermodel,” she concluded seriously.

Emi just smiled and shook her head.

“Oh wow, what is that Sam? A crochet suit?” Hannah blurted suddenly stepping past Emi to get a close look.

Sam looked at herself in the mirror. “Yeah, I think I like this one. Comparatively speaking. It covers half my ass and totally looks different. I like different,” Sam said.

Hannah snorted a laugh. “Yes, that is true,” She agreed. “That’s a nice suit, Sam. It’s hot and sexy with all those wide gapped knitted holes fairly close to your kitty,” she said as she poked her finger in one of them.

“Hey, Back off creme puff!” Sam growled angrily.

Hannah ignored Sam’s outburst. “It looks great Sam. Definitely a keeper,” she said with a big smile.

After waiting a bit more for Becca, all four of them finally held a suit in their hands, ready to go to the cashier.

“Before this job concludes, I want a team picture in these hot suits to remember this particular job and also to remember when Emi joined the team in Hawaii,” Becca announced.

Emi and Sam gave each other a brief look.

“You can decide if you want to do that now, here in the store or outside on the beach this week sometime,” said Becca.

“Team picture!” Hannah hooted!!

Sam shrugged. “Might as well get it over with now,” she said walking into the changing room.

Emi nodded agreement and did the same. She suspected that Sam shared her feeling of not wanting to parade around outside, in public, in such skimpy suits.

A few minutes later Sam cracked a joke. “I think there is something stuck up my butt, oh wait, it’s just my new bathing suit,” she deadpanned. “At this price, you would think that you would at least get a full bathing suit,” she complained.

Emi smiled. The joke was lost on Hannah and Becca who were in a world of their own, posing and twisting and showing their naked butts to each other. It was quite a sight. Emi smiled politely as she and Sam patiently waited for the two divas to calm down.

Sam folded her arms and took in the butt-spectacle before her. “How obscene,” she deadpanned.

Emi couldn’t help but smile in agreement.

“What does the label say?” Becca asked Hannah as she looked at the multi-colored suit that looked like a piece of abstract art. It had no sides at all the way up to her breasts. There was a little tie piece, like a string belt, around her waist, presumably to keep her crotch from showing if she bent over.

“Lila Nikole Keliedoscope Monokini Brazilian Cut” Hannah read the tag proudly. It was obvious she was happy with the suit. It looked hot as hell on her.

Becca’s suit was similar, but all black and also had a complex set of 6 spiderweb-like double string pieces that were each connected with a small elegant gold looking button. It fit Becca perfectly. Daring, bold and classy all at the same time.

“That suit looks like something a rockstar might wear while performing on the beach! I love it,” Hannah gushed as she looked very closely at all parts of Becca’s barely covered body.

Finally, they were finished with the swimsuit comparisons and Becca casually asked Sam and Emi to do a spin.

“Absolutely not! Can we get on with the picture, Emi and I have some server stuff that we need to get back to,” Sam complained.

“Alright… fine,” Becca relented. She walked away to find a staff member to take a group picture.

Hannah smiled at Sam and Emi as if they were two cute teen girls, too shy, in their first bathing suits. It was amazing how much Hannah’s expressive face could convey with that simple annoying expression. Emi noticed that Sam wasn’t pleased with Hannah’s beaming smile as well.

Next, they all stood together, arms entwined with each other’s shoulders. Sam, Emi, Becca, and Hannah. After a few shots on Becca’s iPhone, she took the phone from the girl and said, “Nope, something is not good, can you take a few more? Hold the button down for speed shutter ok?” Becca instructed the shop girl.

Becca then jumped back and grabbed a hat off the wall. She was now standing behind Emi and Sam who were still facing forward stiffly.

“After this, I’ll treat everyone at the bakery across the street. They have fabulous HOT BUNNS,” Becca said as she re-inserted herself back into the lineup.

Emi felt her face heat up and Sam’s shoulder stiffen.

Hannah giggled.

The sales clerk took a lot of rapid-fire pictures and then showed them to Becca.

“Purrrrefect!” Becca gushed as she flipped through the photos. Hannah was also trying to look at them.

Emi and Sam quickly got changed back into their clothes and came back out to see Becca and Hannah still looking at the phone, their exposed butts still on display.

Later in the bakery, Becca and Hannah were still gushing over the photos. Sam rolled her eyes. Emi had to admit, some of the photos did look good. They were four unusually good looking girls she thought.

Later a plate of hot buns was brought to the table. Becca had a large smile on her face. Hannah made some big eyes and tried to suppress her laughter. The shop girl looked around and at herself in confusion and then everyone burst out laughing.

A week later, Becca appeared beside Emi just as she was stretching before a run. The sun was rising and started to fill the sky with color.

“Mind if I join you today?” she asked.

“Uh, sure!” Emi said, as they finished up stretching and started on the run.

“I wanted to let you know that I have talked it over with the girls and we have successfully voted for you to be the new lead,” Becca said.

“Oh no,” Emi said.

“What is it?”

“I don’t think that’s appropriate for a few reasons,” said Emi.

“How so?”

“First, I doubt Sam wants this. She’s has been an excellent lead for you girls for the last couple years. Also, I have been paying attention and everyone’s skill level is slightly above mine. You’re a jazzier front-end specialist, Hannah’s a better designer, and Sam is more knowledgeable as a server specialist. It would be a mistake to put me in lead,” Emi concluded.

“That’s all true, but what you don’t know is that our output has more than doubled since you have joined. You are the only one who can do everything, plus you’re twice as fast as everyone, plus you can do Android as well. You as our tech lead is a no-brainer Emi because you are the only one who deeply understands what everyone on the team is doing, at all times,” Becca gasped as they ran along the seawall.

“I don’t know any more than you do about web development. Only Hannah does that,” said Emi.

“That’s irrelevant. We are a mobile-shop, not a web-shop.”

“I still think it’s too soon. I’ve barely shown what I can do yet. This could demotivate the others or at least get Sam down. She earned her position through hard work over a long period of time. Do you really want to risk messing up the successful team vibe that you have right now? Also, I haven’t lead a single thing. I’ve only assisted everyone. How about I be the lead assistant?” Emi laughed.

“Look I have a big client coming next week. I want to sign the papers for the biggest job that we have ever taken, and frankly, I want to project confidence to the clients. Sam is not really a people person. I want you there with me Emi, by my side, as our technical lead,” said Becca in a serious tone. “Let me worry about Sam. Tell me you will accept this. Ok? What do you say?” Becca asked.

It didn’t sound like a question. It felt more like an order. “You’re the boss,” Emi sighed, agreeing to something she was uncomfortable with.

“No Emi. YOU are the boss now,” Becca insisted. “I’m just our deal maker and one of your devs,” she said, smiling.

Emi tried to smile back.

“Don’t be so down. It comes with a pay raise you know,” Becca said with a grin.

Emi could not imagine getting any more money. She was already making almost double what Mr. Woo had been paying her. This must be really important for Becca, she thought.

Later that Evening Emi opened Slack and switched to her ‘old buddies’ group. So far the group only included Evan, Doug, and Mathew – her old crew.

“Hey guys, how are things?” slacked Emi.

“We miss you soooo much.” slacked Mathew.

“Hard work, but we are surviving. Derrick was good timing.” slacked Doug.

“It’s ABOUT TIME you said hello,” slacked Evan.

“I miss you guys,” she slacked.

“Where are you? What’s going on with you? Everything ok?” Evan slacked privately.

“I’m in Hawaii now, working with an all-female crew. It’s fun and different,” she slacked to everyone.

“I’m good. I was just promoted to lead today,” She slacked privately to Evan.

“Lead? Awesome! What took you so long? haha…” he slacked back privately.

“Gotta go, talk later guys. Take care!” she slacked publicly.

Everyone slacked her goodbye.

**— The Negotiation —**

Another week went by without much fan-fair. The girls just settled into the work making excellent progress. The Hawaii job was destined to be completed in record time.

Becca mentioned that they usually rented office space for bigger jobs, but sometimes voting to be roving cafe nomads for a month or so. The benefit was twofold. They get to see more of the city by working two four-hour-shifts in two different cafes, each day. Plus everything they drank or ate was on Becca. The downside was that it was easy to eat and drink too much, which the girls wanted to avoid.

An hour later, Emi came back with a tray of muffins for the girls. They were at a cafe that they have been working at on Tuesday mornings recently, and the muffins there were fabulous.

“Watch out,” warned Sam. “Becca has gone bonkers. She actually suggested that we all meet the new potential clients for the most epic of all jobs in the history of the world… get this… in our slutty new swimwear,” Sam laughed.

“They are not slutty Sam,” Hannah looked offended.

Ignoring Hannah, Sam continued “I told her ‘for sure; when pigs fly!’ Then Becca changed her mind and said just the two of you are going,” Sam pointed at Emi.

“Then Becca changed her mind AGAIN and said we are all going but with casual shorts. I tell you, she has LOST HER MIND,” Sam emphasized.

“Becca’s just under pressure, it is a big deal,” said Hannah.

“No kidding she’s under pressure. Then Becca changed her mind AGAIN and said that it’s definitely going to be just her and Emi. I’m just giving Emi a heads-up that Becca is looking for her,” Sam said, grinning wildly.

Emi looked at her buzzing Apple Watch and then turned pale. Becca wanted her on the beach with her swimwear under her shorts, pronto, code red, immediately. No time to spare.

“Better hurry up Emi, and don’t forget your swimwear and shorts,” laughed Sam as she picked up a muffin.

Emi ran to her hotel and did as requested. This was important for Becca and the crew, but she wasn’t confident that she would agree to take off her shorts. She wondered, what kind of business meeting was this?

She slipped off all her clothes and removed her bra and panties. Quickly she pulled on her swimwear that didn’t cover her butt enough and pulled her shorts up over it. Laughing she then grabbed the separate top and covered her naked breasts. Next, she pulled on her running shoes and then ran to the beach.

It was an odd feeling, running without a bra. The lack of support felt slightly indecent.

On the beach, Becca was trying to drag a big table out onto the sand. She stopped and suddenly waved for Emi frantically to come over to her.

Emi quickly ran over and helped her carry the table.

“Is this how you usually do business deals?” Emi asked.

Looking distracted, Becca glanced quickly at her watch. “What? No… I just want this one to be perfect…” she said as she pulled the table with Emi.

Eventually, they stopped dragging the table when they reached a palm tree.

Becca looked up at the tree. “Do you think twenty minutes later the shade of this tree will still cover our table?”

Using her hand to keep the sun out of her eyes, Emi tried to calculate the sun’s trajectory. Finally saying, “I don’t know. Can’t we just move the table again, when we are closer to the meeting time?”

“I don’t want us looking like idiots, moving a table on the sand when he is walking towards us,” Becca replied. She then spoke into her phone. “No, wait until I text you. Then you can send someone out for our drinks.”

They both sat down.

“A swimsuit meeting IS a bit weird,” Becca admitted. “Look at this email,” she held out her phone.

Emi read Mr. Lim’s email suggesting a casual meeting on the sand with swimwear.

“See? I’m not as crazy as I look,” Becca smiled. “It wasn’t my idea.”

Emi didn’t smile. She didn’t like being part of something important when she felt powerless to do anything helpful.

“Relax,” Becca said, guessing Emi’s concerns. “This will likely be quick and easy. The deal is practically done. Usually, at this stage, the closing the deal part, the client likes to sneak in one last tiny concession since they know we are hungry for the deal.”

Emi didn’t feel relaxed. “What kind of concessions?” Emi asked.

“Usually it’s an extra feature in an app, or a bonus change request that doesn’t cost them anything. Stuff like that,” Becca informed, but she noticed that Emi was still uneasy.

“I know how you feel, Emi, look at my hands,” Becca held out her hands, they were shaking a bit. “So here’s the deal, I will do the talking. You will not. No speaking unless I ask you a question, okay?”

Emi nodded.

“Also, if things get hairy, for whatever reason, and I look like I am starting to get riled up, then you can be my cooler, okay?”

“Cooler?” Emi asked.

“Yeah, just touch my leg and I’ll get the signal and calm down, hopefully. You see, it is sometimes common with negotiations to get a little mind-gamey. One side will push buttons that they think will yield some sort of advantage or they’ll slowly push us towards something we don’t want.”

“We have to try not to let that happen or get emotional. Anger is the worst. It pushes both sides apart, and further away from a deal. The last thing that you want to do, when negotiating an important deal, is – introduce anger,” Becca said.

Emi nodded. She appreciated the info.

“Ideally, you want to keep cool and propose something that is win-win, with your side getting a bit more than their side, naturally,” she smiled.

“I admire your experience with these things,” Emi said.

“Hah, that’s just negotiating 101. I hardly know much. Look, my hands are still shaking. I may have an MBA but most of my life has been schooling, I’ve hardly been out in the world. I just really lucked out with our team and now here we are.” Becca adjusted her chair and then got up and adjusted the other chairs.

“This is a deal that could involve a slew of quality apps over the next couple years at a prime rate. Deals don’t get any better than this. It feels like my whole life has come down to this one moment, so I’m kind of jittery,” Becca admitted.

“I still admire you.”

“I’m nothing Emi. If you want to admire someone, consider Ruth Banks. She’s the most powerful woman that I have ever met. She is kind of my dark hero,” Becca said as she again checked her watch.

“What does she do?” Emi asked.

“Marketing – for the rich and powerful,” Becca answered.

“Crap, he will be here in like five minutes,” Becca panicked. She pulled down her shorts and sat back down. Her exposed butt sat on the seat as she put the shorts into her bag.

“I thought…” Emi started, she was worried that she also had to take off her shorts.

“Oh sorry Emi, I keep forgetting that you are shy,” Becca said while checking her phone. She looked out across the sand and then back at Emi and seemed to be considering something. She looked like she was thinking a dozen different things at once.

“Do you want me to…” Emi started, looking around. She really didn’t want to expose her butt.

Becca looked panicked for a second, and then a calm seemed to overtake her as she smiled at Emi. “You know what, it’s totally my fault for pushing that kind of swimwear on you girls. Let’s just leave the shorts on, ok?” Becca said as she pulled her shorts back on.

Emi was deeply relieved.

“Here, let’s just move the table a bit more under the shade,” Becca said gently.

A moment later Emi started to feel bad as she realized that she had failed to support Becca’s original plan. The feeling was growing stronger by the second. She felt ashamed of herself, of her weakness, and for letting Becca down at the most important time in her life. Suddenly Emi stood up and grabbed her shorts.

“Sit down! There he is,” Becca said excitedly. “Oh shit, look at that, he’s wearing a BUSINESS SUIT for chrissakes!” Becca blurted out excitedly. She turned and looked at Emi.

Emi looked at Becca, regretfully, disappointed in herself.

“Your damn shyness saved the day girl!” Becca beamed, “We would have looked stupid in just swimwear with Mr. Lim in a business suit. I’m going to have to treat you out to dinner after this ok?” Becca grinned.

Emi nodded and smiled with some relief.

Mr. Lim was trudging steadily over the sand towards them. His young Asian female assistant was following behind him. She was carrying his briefcase and seemed to be having some difficulty keeping up in the sand.

He was tall for an Asian, good looking too, around 30 or so years old perhaps. His suit looked expensive and Emi wondered why he would want to have a meeting in the sand in such expensive-looking clothes.

Emi was worried about Becca, but she also had confidence in her. She tended to idolize strong women and Becca was one of her heroes. Emi hoped that she could be useful. She silently thanked that gods for the shorts fiasco were no longer an issue.

Lim continued to plow through the sand. He seemed unbothered with the dust cloud that he was creating, unbothered that it was spreading over other people as well. An elderly couple tried to cover their cups as he stormed past, a great cloud of dust in his wake. His assistant awkwardly doing her best to stay out of the cloud as well. She was well dressed for an assistant, very formal. Mr. Lim must only hire the very best assistants, Emi thought.

Finally, he reached the table and held out his hand to Emi.

Emi grabbed it and shook firmly. He then sat down and began fumbling with something in his jacket when Becca, still standing, cleared her throat.

“I”m Becca Falcon, this is my lead developer Emi Yoshida,” she stated formally, holding out her hand for a handshake. Becca stood there awkwardly, her arm out.

Mr. Lim slowly, reluctantly, got up and shook Becca’s hand while looking down at her shorts. He looked disappointed. His assistant was sitting and seemed to be taking notes.

Becca smiled. She sat down and took out her pen from her bag and placed it on the table. She then covertly tapped her phone to signal the waitress.

Emi didn’t like the looks of this. It was definitely not a good start.

Becca started to say something but he upheld his hand, while fumbling with something in his jacket pocket.

Mr. Lim opened up a gold cigarette case, taking out a smoke. He put it in his mouth and then put away the case and took out a gem-studded lighter and proceeded to light his cigarette in a grand manner. He took his time, looking out at the sea and taking a deep drag before releasing a cloud of smoke that luckily went back behind himself.

If the situation wasn’t so serious and tense, Emi might have laughed at the over the top actions. He seemed like a cheap actor or a spoiled rich person with little experience.

After what seemed like ages, he finally spoke. “All right, let’s get on with this,” as if he was waiting for them. He had a slight Filipino accent, which seemed odd for a Chinese looking person.

Becca pulled out a sheet of paper and started going over details. Emi was surprised by how much work there was. They needed multiple apps of high quality for staff, guests, management, security, marketing and also a major update and a UI makeover for an Apple watch app.

Mr. Lim looked up from the paper. “There is just one detail that we haven’t covered, something that I’d like to talk about face to face,” he said, looking at Becca while glancing at Emi from time to time. His assistant was still taking notes.

“The resort that we are building is a naturist resort. Do you know what that means?” he asked.

“Yes, of course,” Becca said confidently. “Your guests prefer to be without clothing,” she answered.

“How do you feel about that?” he asked. His assistant was looking back and forth between Becca and Emi.

“Ahh, fine …of course. People should be free to do whatever they prefer,” Becca answered warmly.

“The reason I asked for bathing suits was to see if there were any hints or issues about exposing skin,” he said, bringing his cigarette up to his face. “People who tend to enjoy the beach tend to be more open-minded about these things,” he stated. He took a long drag and held it for a bit before exhaling.

The smoke flew into Becca’s face.

Emi didn’t like where this was going. She looked and saw that Becca was a pillar of confidence and showing no signs of weakness whatsoever.

“Ouch, crap!” Everyone turned to see a teen waitress hopping on one foot for a moment before resuming her walk towards them.

Mr. Lim continued, “We interviewed a number of teams for this job, and found that some had an issue with the nudity. We want to be dead clear that this will not be an issue.”

The gum-chewing waitress arrived and popped a bubble, sniffed a bit and rubbed her ringed nose. “Drinks?” she asked.

“I will have a martini,” Mr. Lim announced without looking at the teen.

“No can do. No alcohol on the beach is allowed,” she said with a bored tone in her voice.

Can this get any worse, thought Emi?

“We will have four non-alcoholic Martinis. That’s all,” Becca instructed, obviously trying to get rid of the young server.

“We have no issue with how people want to dress, none at all. Why would we?” Becca continued, “Last year we even created an app for the pride parade here in Hawaii. I’m sure you will find no issues with our elite team of professionals. Being an all-female team, we have the benefit of exceptional open-mindedness,” Becca said.

Mr. Lim’s assistant smiled and wrote down some more notes, but he himself was not so amused.

Becca looked at him firmly but friendly. “Look we have been hashing this out for weeks now. You know that our team can deliver at top speed and quality. Let’s close this deal so we can get started on making your apps,” Becca suggested.

Mr. Lim seemed to consider her words for a moment. Then he took another drag of his smoke and looked out at the water for a moment.

Emi thought him to be quite the character.

“Woah!” yelled the waitress from far away as she tried to walk awkwardly on the sand with four martinis’s on a tray.

Mr. Lim’s assistant got up and ran towards her in the sand.

Mr. Lim watched her go and then looked at Becca. “So as I was saying, we need to know if you can be comfortable nude, working nude, being nude 24 hours a day,” he said, with a crooked smile.

Emi froze. She was stunned. This is crazy, she thought. A bunch of images ran through her head as she tried to make sense of it all.

Emi sensed Becca looking at her.

Becca turned at looked at Mr. Lim, she almost said something then stopped. The light in her eyes seemed to dim. She looked like she was starting to give up and lose confidence.

Emi felt horrible. Maybe this was partly her fault.

Incredulously, Mr. Lim continued, “Before we proceed with signing the deal, I need a sign of confidence that you will be comfortable on the resort. Please pull down your tops for a moment and expose your tits fully to me. After you do that it will be a done deal,” he said seriously.

Becca stood up and slammed her hands really hard on the table.

Emi jumped.

Becca looked Mr. Lim in the face, hovering just above him, looking down. “Are you kidding me?” she growled, fury in her eyes.

“Tell me again Mr. Lim, exactly WHAT do you want us to do?” she yelled.

Emi tapped her leg gently, under the table.

Becca shifted but kept looking at him.

“I… it was just a suggestion,” he amended.

Emi felt the blood drain from her face. She wasn’t going to fail Becca again. It was one thing to be shy about swimwear. It was another thing to lose the deal because of her. She started to fumble with her shoulder straps for a moment but stopped… she still couldn’t do it!

Becca looked at Emi.

Emi took a deep breath and tried to summon more strength, her fingers still on the straps.

“Don’t do that Emi,” Becca said to her. “It’s not up to you,” she sighed, sitting back down.

“Mr. Lim, my team doesn’t operate that way. I’m sure that over half my team wouldn’t agree to such terms. I’m afraid that you have just lost a deal to land the best mobile team in the Pacific. Thanks for your time, and have a good flight home,” she said professionally.

“Emi, I’m going to go for a swim now. Can you mind my bag please?” she asked, no longer paying any mind to Mr. Lim.

“Uh, sure,” Emi answered, still stunned about what had happened.

Becca took off her shorts and walked casually to the water.

Mr. Lim watched her go, staring at her ass as she walked away.

Emi hated him. He was a useless lech.

Becca dived into the water and started swimming out to sea.

They both watched Becca for a bit and then the drinks finally arrived.

“Where is Becca?” the assistant asked. “What was that yelling?”

“She turned the deal down and then left,” he said.

“You got to be friggin kidding me! It was a done deal. What happened, you moron! You said something stupid didn’t you?” she yelled at him, fury in her young face.

He started to take a long drag of his cigarette and she slapped it out of his mouth and splashed a drink on his face. “Get out of my sight! That was the last time. You’re done Xio!”

He took off his wet coat, swung it over his shoulder and started to walk off as if he was still a big shot.

“Moron!” the young woman shouted after him. She was obviously the one in charge.

“Emi, where is Becca? What exactly did he say?” the young woman asked, still looking angrily at the departing Mr. Lim.

“She went for a swim,” Emi answered, not sure what was going on. “He told us to show him our naked breasts to prove we can work in the nude,” she said timidly, still stunned and shocked at what she just said. It was too unbelievable to even say out loud.

The girl gasped in disgust, and then looked angrily at the departing man. “He is my moron cousin. I sometimes like to use him to front my business deals as people often don’t take a young female seriously,” she sighed.

“He actually wasn’t bad when dealing with men, but he’s a womanizer and just had to screw this up,” she spat disgustedly.

“So… the job …doesn’t require nudity?” Emi stuttered.

“Oh my god, no! Not at all, sheesh! That’s crazy,” the girl laughed with a slight Filipino accent.

“May I ask who you are?” Emi asked timidly.

“I’m Su-Ning, the resort owner,” she said. “I apologize deeply for my stupid cousin,” she said sincerely. She took out an envelope. “Will you give this to Becca for me?” she asked.

Stunned, Emi took the envelope.

Thinking for a moment, Su-Ning then took out a checkbook and started filling in a check. “Also, give this to her, please. Tell her this is for the two of you and represents only my apology for my moron cousin. I shouldn’t have left you two alone with him,” she explained.

“This is yours even if she doesn’t decide to take the job,” Su-Ning said, “but I really want her to take the job. Convince her for me Emi, promise me that you will try to win her over for me. If you do, I will be in your debt,” Su-Ning pleaded.

Overwhelmed, Emi could only nod.

Su-Ning then turned and stormed off after her cousin.

Emi looked down at the check. It was for five thousand dollars and had “My deepest apologies!” written on it.

Emi sat down at the desk, alone, and waited for Becca to return. She took a deep breath, sighing. She was glad that she was just a programmer.

She carefully put the envelope and check into her bag, looking out again to the sea.

As Emi scanned the horizon, a soft wind played with her hair. She could not see Becca. Where had she gone?

The table had three full non-alcoholic martinis on it, so she picked one up. She took a sip. In the distance, she caught sight of Becca swimming back. With a somewhat shaky hand, she put the drink back down on the table.

After a few minutes, Becca emerged from the water. Just the sight of her started to make Emi choke up. She looked like a goddess rising from the sea.

A minute later, looking composed but wearing a sad smile, Becca walked up to Emi.

Emi could not speak, so she went to her and broke her no hugging rule.

Becca hugged her back, deeply and unreservedly. “Hey kiddo,” she said softly into Emi’s ear. “It’s no big deal.”

Emi almost cried. She broke the hug suddenly, stepped back and picked up her bag. She took out the check and envelope and handed them to Becca.

“What’s this?” Becca asked.

Emi filled Becca in on what had happened at the table.

Becca sat down at the table, stunned. “That bastard,” she laughed. “He really tried to pull a fast one. Good thing I shut him down, huh?”

Emi nodded emphatically, with big eyes.

Becca opened the envelope and saw a signed deal and her shoulders slumped in relief. Then she looked at the check and with a big smile and rose her hand for a high five.

Emi high fived her.

“You just earned your first bonus!” Becca said as she hugged Emi once again.

Later Becca treated everyone to dinner and drinks, sharing the crazy story with Hannah and Sam to much surprise and laughter.

Two weeks later, the four of them were flying above the Pacific.