

Mister Words Novel Sample 2

Amber's Jetta rocketed up the 15 South onramp, merging with traffic just ahead of two sluggish convoys of semis commandeering both lanes. She looked in her rearview mirror as Baker, California receded in the distance.

"That's gotta be my pet peeve about road trips. You got one truck going 50 and another one who wants to go 51 decides he's gotta pass and they end up blocking both lanes for twenty miles. Like snails trying to lap each other in a track meet."

Justin laughed. "My pet peeve? You're doing 80 and some guy doing a 110 zooms up on your tail acting like you're driving like an old fart or something." He opened the wrapper of his second Macho Burrito from their Del Taco run in Baker. Amber had ordered a soft chicken taco and an ice tea, no sugar. Clearly the woman didn't know that on the road, massive amounts of junk food were a requirement.

She glanced over at Justin as he bit in to the delicious, sticky mess. "Look at you. Must've skipped breakfast, huh?"

Justin wiped his mouth with a napkin. "This is healthy, it's got lettuce on it!" He looked out the window for a moment. "Besides, sometimes eating calms me down."

"So you're really nervous about this audition, huh?"

Justin took a pull on his 64-ounce Coke, too big for the Jetta's cupholders. "Making it big in music, playing my *own* music has been my dream since I was a kid. You ready for this? In junior high, I used to imagine Nikki Sixx calling me, inviting me to join the band."

Amber laughed. "Oh, yeah? For me it was the producers of 90210!" Then, in character, she continued. "Amber? We're looking for an unknown teenager with virtually no talent to be

the new star of the show. Oh, you have to like signing autographs, going to parties and making 50 grand a week.”

“Look at us. Lifestyles of the Poor and Wannabes.”

“Hey, speak for yourself, pal. I’m not gonna be a waitress my whole life.”

“What’s your dream?”

“You really wanna know?”

“Not really, but we got 200 miles to go and I got nothing else to do.”

She playfully swatted at him. “I want to work in radio. I know it’s not exactly a thriving business these days what with Sirius and XM and iPods and mega-corporations with their computer-generated playlists. But I have a cousin who works in sales at an FM station in L.A. She says once I get my degree, she can help get me an intern gig. It’d be a dream job for me. Part of the music business, but making a steady income, having something resembling a normal life.”

“That’s cool.”

“Yeah, it is. Hey, once I’m in, maybe I’ll be able to help you get your stuff on the air. You know, after you’re invited to join the band tomorrow.”

“Make a promise like that, you better be able to keep it.”

A mutual smile as Amber passed a Chevy Suburban laden with mountain bikes and suitcases. “So you never answered my question.”

“What question was that?”

“If you were really nervous about this tryout.”

Justin nodded. “A chance like this comes along once a lifetime, if you’re lucky. Yeah, I’m nervous.”

“You shouldn’t be. You’re great.”

Justin nodded. “Try telling that to the two thousand voices in my head.”