

## The Crossroads

Polly sat slouched in the darkened corner. There was a quiet comfortable feeling at this time of the early afternoon. Her black hair fell straight from her bent head. She looked down at her stockinged legs, which were crossed in a defensive posture, right over left. A book was open in her lap, the words blurring as tears rolled down her cheeks. Polly angrily wiped them away with her sleeve. She always pulled her sleeves down to cover her hands, a habit from many years of feeling self-conscious; looked at.

Red shoes suddenly appeared before her; laces done up tightly in perfect bows. Polly slowly looked up. A cream pair of cargoes and a bright red shirt weirdly in contrast to the muted lighting in her 'safe space'.

"What's up?", a cheerful voice filtered down to the floor. Polly stared back at the red shoes silently.

"I'm Anna. That book is really good. I read it last month. The second one is even better." Anna slumped down directly in front of Polly, continuing to chatter away about the book. Slowly Polly raised her eyes to look at Anna's face. Anna's hair was curled in a halo around her head, perfectly formed blonde curls. There was a genuine cheerful look emanating from Anna's eyes, a smile forming across her mouth as her eyes met Polly's.

"It's so lovely to find someone my own age here in the library. Usually, I'm just surrounded by the toddler reading circle when I bring my little brother. Do you come here much?" Anna asked, not really giving Polly time to interject.

"Only when I want to be alone", Polly sullenly replied, hoping this cheerful chatterbox would get the hint. Anna continued to smile and held up a book in her right hand, the second of the series.

Really quickly, Anna blurted out, "Well I feel that we could be book buddies! Then you wouldn't need to be alone and neither would I. My therapist thinks that I need to meet someone new to grow as a person. Consider this a favour that you can do for me." Polly continued to stare at her, somewhat flabbergasted by Anna's pronouncement. What on earth was going on here she thought, Anna's voice a constant buzzing in her ears. This was a crossroads for Polly and she knew that she needed to make a choice. An inspired decision to change what would happen moving forward.