

*This excerpt gives you a good example of the relationship between Skye and Dani (her Mom). It takes place at their nightly bedtime story time when Dani has spent the day in L.A. dealing with publishers. One of them, a nice publisher that Dani can always drop in on, suggests that Dani and Skye should think about moving to Nashville, Tennessee. This is how Dani gets that conversation going.*

## **2 - LaLa Land**

My mom goes to LaLa Land every Friday. For those who don't understand the language of cool, LaLa Land means LA, and for those who are even more clueless, LA stands for Los Angeles, which is a big city in southern California. Mom and I live in San Clemente which is roughly between LaLa Land and San Diego. It doesn't really matter though because all of southern California is just asphalt with some sand at the beaches. Mom calls it LaLa Land because she's not a big fan. She says everyone there acts like they're movie stars. Even the servers at the restaurants. She says you don't run into many normal people there unless you run into a movie star. I know that doesn't make sense, but she said the easiest way to explain it is that everyone is trying to be discovered except the movie stars. They want to be left alone.

Anyway, every Friday my mom heads to LaLa Land to meet with as many music publishers as she got lined up during the week. She drops me off at school, then heads north. My grandpa picks me up after school and hangs with me until mommy gets home.

So as I'm sure you've already guessed, Friday night bedtime stories are the best. We even put on our jammies earlier than a school night because I can't wait to hear all about mommy's adventures in LaLa Land. (Okay, I'll admit that does sound kind of nerdy, but I don't care. It's my diary, not yours.)

To be honest, most of the stories from LaLa Land are not very positive. She gets disappointed a lot because she doesn't feel the people she meets give her much to work with. She tells me it's really important not to take a rejection at face value. She says she always asks them what they think she needs to work on to get better. It shows them that she is serious, and it also puts the pressure on them to do more than just shove her out the door. (I'm getting my yellow marker for this because if I'm going to be a writer, I need to remember stuff like this.)

Sadly, she says, the response is mostly lame and gives her nothing to work with, so she usually comes home with a lot of rejections and no homework to work on.

Mom says it's really important to have a good sense of humor. She also says you only need one publisher to say yes - it's not a popularity contest, after all. She leans in closer to me like she doesn't want anyone else to hear even though it's just the two of us, and tells me " You know, sometimes I'm not there more than five minutes before I'm thinking 'I hope this guy hates my songs, because he's kind of a jerk' ... now I don't want to hear you calling people jerks, but between you and me, I think there are a lot of them in the music business."

We laugh a lot.



Mommy was acting weird tonight when she got home from LaLa Land. She wasn't in a bad mood or anything, she just seemed to have something on her mind. I'm a little concerned about Friday night bedtime stories. Maybe she got some bad news. But heck, she always gets bad news in LaLa Land and usually just laughs it off.

As we get into our jammies, I'm the first to jump into bed. Mommy walks in

with a smile, a pillow and holding a piece of paper.

“Get out from the covers, grab your pillow and get down on the floor with me, girl. We need to talk,” she says as she throws her pillow down and unfolds what seems to be a big map.

As we settle on the floor, we are staring at a map of the United States.

“Do you know where we live?” she asks.

“Mom, really. I’m in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade you know.” I say rolling my eyes.

“I know, honey, just humor me here and show me San Clemente”

It takes a second, but I find it and point to it.

“That’s right, “ she says, “Now can you show me where Nashville, Tennessee is?”

I look at mommy with a look as if she just fed me a sour lemon, then I look down at the map, “In all the years I’ve been on this planet, why would I have any need to know where.... “ I look over to her again, “Where did you say?”

“Nashville, Tennessee.”

I look back at the map,” I remember that Tennessee is one of those skinny states in the middle.... there it is... now lets see... ah-ha, there’s Nashville!”

“That’s right!” Mom says

I am desperate to get this conversation into something that makes sense, “Mommy, why did you make me waste our bedtime story time looking at a map for a place called Nashville Tennessee?”

“You know that one publisher I’ve told you about that’s really nice and tells me to drop in any time I’m in LaLa Land?”

“Yea. His name is Jerry, right ?”

“That’s the one. I stopped by his office today and he took me out for a snack.”

I interrupt Mom, “OOO, what did you have?” I ask with excitement.

“That’s not the point.”

I interrupt her again, “It could be. If he got you a liver sandwich, maybe he’s trying to kill you. But if he got you a grilled cheese sandwich, maybe he’s about to make you a Rock Star.”

Mom laughs, “No, girl. Be quiet and listen, would you?”

“Okay. Sorry... did they have onion rings?”

“ANYWAY .... He was telling me that you and I should think about moving to Nashville, Tennessee.”

WOW.

I can’t believe she just left it there hanging like that. She looks like she’s waiting for me to say something.

“Oooooo...Kkkkkkkk..... And you said?”

“I told him we’d look into it.”

“Mom. Did you say something bad to him that makes him want you to move far away from him?”

Mom laughs, “No you silly girl. He actually made a lot of sense when he was telling me about Nashville.”

“Have you ever been there?”

“No”

“Do you have a job there?”

“Well of course not. I’d have to get one lined up before we leave, certainly.”

“Do they have kids there?”

Mom laughs again, “Of course they do. There’s probably not that much difference between San Clemente and Nashville.”

“How do you know, you’ve never been there.”

“Look sweetie, I know it’s a big decision for us, but we don’t have to decide tonight. I just think he made enough sense for us to take a good look at it. He really does think my music would be a nice fit in Nashville, that’s all. I think it’s worth looking into.”

“Okay. I really do want you to get your dream, so if Nashville can help your music, I guess it’s worth checking out.”

Mommy smiles and gives me a big hug, “That’s all I’m asking for kiddo. Heck, we might even find out that Nashville has the most awesome sauce taco truck in the world!” as she grabs me and starts tickling me.

“Mom, I’m eleven and a half years old, please!” I scream as she’s getting a bit carried away as the tickle monster.

“Haha ... The tickle gene doesn’t fade away until your 52, so you better get use to it, kiddo.”