

A FLASH STORY

# MOTOR CITY SHADOWS



*A TIDAL CREEK HEARTS PREQUEL*

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*A Tidal Creek Hearts Prequel*

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# Contents

1	Motor City Shadows: A Tidal Creek Hearts Prequel	1
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## Motor City Shadows: A Tidal Creek Hearts Prequel

**R**eturning from her favorite lunch spot on Campus Martius, Vice President of Development, Summer Raines, entered the Detroit Safe Steps building and walked upstairs to her office.

*The mail runner has already been here, I see, Summer thought as she looked at the pile of mail on her desk. Well, better get to it. Invoice, bill, junk mail, credit card bill, a...She gazed at the return address, twice, just to be sure she was reading it correctly. The Motown Strong Foundation. Summer let her gaze gradually fall upon the address. Ms. Summer Raines...my grant!*

With hands trembling, Summer took her letter opener and slid it through the top of the envelope. Reaching inside, she pulled out a crisply folded letter on stationery paper. Taking a moment to breathe, but with hands still trembling, she briefly ran her fingers over its linen finish. Slowly, Summer opened the letter and began to read. *Dear Ms. Raines: I want to take this opportunity to...*

\* \* \*

“Jacqueline, I have an idea I’d like to propose to you,” said Summer, peeking her head into Jacqueline Foster’s office, the CEO of Detroit Safe Steps.

“Sure. Come right in.”

“Could we please meet off-site? This is a major idea, and I’d like to keep it quiet, at least for now.”

“I understand. Then how about today at lunch? I just had my 12:30 meeting canceled.”

“Sure. That’ll work.”

“Then let’s go to The Dime Store. I enjoy their chef-inspired comfort food. And if we go there around 1, we’ll avoid the lunch rush. That way we can more easily find a quiet table.”

“Sounds delish, Jacqueline. I haven’t been there yet. One-ish will work for me.”

“Well then, let’s do this. Meet me at my office around 1:15, and we’ll go there together.”

\* \* \*

Jacqueline took a forkful of her salmon salad, and gently laid the fork on her plate. “Summer, I’m curious. What’s this big idea you couldn’t tell me in the office?”

Summer swallowed a bite from her pimento cheeseburger, took a sip of water, then stopped for a moment to collect her thoughts.

“Jacqueline, as you know so well, with Detroit experiencing a renaissance, finding affordable housing for the homeless is getting harder.”

Jacqueline nodded, her eyes focused on Summer.

“Now, don’t get me wrong. I’m so glad Detroit is coming back. From the stories you told me...” Summer looked away for a moment, briefly contemplating what Detroit was like not so long before she moved up north.

“I think I may have a solution...at least one we could try.”

“And what is that, Summer?”

“Well, how about finding some vacant property in an old neighborhood, not too far from our office, and building tiny homes there?”

Jacqueline’s eyes grew wide; a smile spread across her face.

“But that’s not all.”

“Not all?”

“No, m’am. The tiny homes are just a start, an anchor. But what if we also rolled into this trial of tiny homes, job training, medical care, financial literacy, GED... a free daycare, even.”

Now Jacqueline’s eyes narrowed slightly, her business brain now activated.

“Summer, it’s a superb idea. But how are we going to fund it all? Plus, seems pretty innovative and ambitious.”

“Well, that’s the beauty of it. Because I recently discovered a local grant source that is looking to fund projects such as I’m proposing. The foundation’s called Motown Strong, and they have funded big grants for similarly ambitious projects.

“Like how much?”

“Like \$1-2M.”

“Oh, my!” Jacqueline Foster sat back in her chair and looked up at the ceiling, taking it all in. “I don’t think our organization has ever received a grant that large from a foundation. At least, not since I’ve been here.”

“Do I have your permission to work up a proposal so you can take it to the Board for their blessing?”

“Why, by all means, Summer! Let’s get this started right away. I know you’ve got this, but if you encounter a roadblock or anything, I’m here to help. Just ask. Thank you, Summer.”

“My pleasure.”

The two women finished their lunches; Jacqueline picked up the check, and they left quickly. There was a lot of work to do.

Energized, Summer walked into the development department where her development director and their shared admin had desks.

“Deb, do you have a minute? I’ve got something to....”

“It’s Deborah,” the development director interrupted. “Not Deb, or Debbie, or Dot. **DEB-O-RAH**, please.”

“Oh, I apologize. I forgot. My mind is whirling right now. Deborah, do you have some time available, preferably this afternoon, to do some quick research on tiny homes, their cost, the typical construction, their...”

“No, I don’t. I’m swamped with making donor calls. Besides, that job sounds like it fits an admin’s job description.”

“You mean Mandy.”

“Yes, of course I mean Mandy. She’s the only admin we have, correct?”

Summer didn’t answer Deborah, only stared in silence.

“Anyway, I’ve got to get going on those calls.”

Summer watched as Deborah raced out of the room. *I really need to talk to her about her attitude, and soon.*

Within three days after her lunch with Jacqueline and with the help of her admin, Mandy, Summer had all the information she needed to craft a proposal for her boss to share with the Board. In seven more days, between routine meetings, paperwork, phone calls, and donor visits, with many a late night, Summer now had a solid draft to hand to Jacqueline.

“My, this is great work, Summer,” said Jacqueline a few days later.

“I didn’t do it alone. Mandy was very helpful in finding all the stats and financials for me.”

“Yes, she did. You’ve got a solid proposal. I just have some recommendations to strengthen it, by making the language tighter and more persuasive. Here you go.”

“Thank you. When would you like to have it back?”

“Can you polish it up in three days? It’s already on the Board’s agenda for the next meeting.”

“Sure thing, Jacqueline. And thanks.”

\* \* \*

*Dear Ms. Raines, I want to congratulate you on Detroit Safe Steps’ reception of the Motor City Homes Innovator Grant sponsored by Motown Strong for this current fiscal year. This grant of \$1.3M will go a long way to...*

Summer dropped the letter onto her desk, smiled, and looked heavenward. *Thank you, God.*

