

Author's Notes: I had planned on this being a story that was similar in length to most of the Gethsemane stories ("Closing Time" notwithstanding as it chronicles all three Bob-White girls' freshman experiences). Then it grew into something else when I did NaNo. The five related stories I had planned to write during NaNo never materialized—*this* story became my *whole* NaNo. So, then I planned to divide it into three parts, and each one would be a Jixemitri Special Anniversary CWP (the required elements and non-required carryovers retroactively added). Umm, yeah, it's too long for that plan. So, now that the monster is now being divided into lots of parts, more CWPs must be involved. So, this has now become a Jixemitri Fallin' for Niagara CWP #2.8. Once again, many, many thanks to Susan! And happy birthday, sweetie! :)

Basic Chemistry
Part Four: Brain Chemistry
by Dana

"To think is to practice brain chemistry."
—Deepak Chopra

Following her study session, Honey decided to try to read the book that Trixie had given her as a gag gift last Christmas. She'd been so busy that she hadn't had a chance to do more than read the introduction. She did have to admit that some of her enthusiasm for reading the book might have been dampened by the title—*Niagara Falls Confidential: Murder, Mayhem, & Madness in the Honeymoon Capitol of the World!* Every time Honey looked at the cover, she rolled her eyes over the exclamation point in the title.

She had only read about three pages before her cell phone rang, and the display indicated that it was Dan. It was with a small amount of trepidation that the honey-haired girl answered the phone, reflecting that Dan had no idea how she was feeling about Brian these days. Despite her nervousness, however, she was able to sound normal when she answered the call with a bright, "Hi, sweetie!"

"Hi, babe," Dan said, and Honey had to admit that she felt her insides melt a little at the sound of his voice. No one, not even Brian, made her feel that way. "Where you at? Home or out?"

"Home. I assume you're on your way to your last class. Having a good day?" she asked.

"Now that I've got you on the line," he said, and Honey could hear his smile over the phone. "What do you want to do tonight? Romantic, candlelit dinner at your place and then some snuggling in front of the television with a DVD that we won't watch?"

Honey smiled at Dan's wickedness, which she loved, but she also recognized that she couldn't be alone with him. At least, not until she had talked to Brian. She felt that she needed to sort out her feelings and talk to Brian before she mentioned anything to Dan. If they spent an cozy evening together, she wasn't sure that she wouldn't blurt out her feelings and jumbled thoughts before she had a chance to talk to Brian and get his take on things.

“There’s that new movie,” Honey blurted, trying to think of anything they could do that involved a public place.

Dan sounded confused. “What new movie? I didn’t know there was a new movie out you wanted to see. Plus, if it just came out today, the crowds will be horrendous.”

“No, it’s not *that* new,” Honey said, trying to think fast. After a pause, she said, “I can’t think of the title right now,”—which was mostly the truth, as she couldn’t think of *any* plausible title right then—“but it’s that one with that girl.” Honey closed her eyes and prayed that years of listening to Trixie-and-Honey speak would keep Dan from being suspicious at the vagaries of that comment.

“That one with that girl? Oh, *that* one! I know *exactly* what you’re talking about,” he teased, clearly unsuspecting.

“You know…” Honey began, holding her breath and banking on the fact that Dan knew as little about new movies as she did. After all, neither one of them was really into movies. Their movie excursions while Honey had been in high school had been more for the Cameo’s balcony than any love of film. She decided to go for broke then and released her breath, as well as a rush of words. “It takes place in the Alps, with that girl who lives with goats and then goes to boarding school in Zürich and doesn’t fit in at first because she tells all of these stories about her goats and there’s this awful storm and half the city has a power outage and…” Honey trailed off, realizing that not only was she babbling, but that she didn’t like lying to Dan, however innocuous it might seem.

“Goats?” Dan asked, listening to Honey’s description of the movie and never considering that she was making anything up. Stranger things had come out of Hollywood, after all. As unsuspecting as he was, Dan *was* torn. If Honey wanted to go see a movie, he wanted to oblige, but he firmly reminded himself of the reason that he wanted to spend a quiet evening at home in the first place—he wanted to sit down and talk to Honey in a private place about her relationship with and feelings about Brian. “I don’t think I want to go to a crowded movie theater, though. I want a nice night in with my favorite girl.”

Honey closed her eyes briefly at Dan’s words and then quickly opened them. She wanted that too, but… “Okay, if that’s what you want,” she finally said, and then she could have kicked herself for how negative she had just sounded.

Her negativity only confirmed Dan’s suspicions about her feelings for about Brian. Her favorite Friday night activity usually was watching television cuddled together on her couch. “Well, if you don’t want to do that, then we don’t have to…” his voice trailed off. Despite the fact that he wanted to pull her to him and hold on to her with all of his might and never let go, the last thing he was going to do was be too forceful and pressure her.

“It’s not that I don’t want to, Dan,” Honey assured him, and that *was* the truth. She did want to be with him, but she just didn’t want to accidentally blurt anything out. Dan knew her so well that he would probably be able to pick up that something was wrong if they had an intimate evening at her apartment.

Unless Dan already knows, her mind whispered. You are pretty obvious.

She ignored the persistent little voice and continued, "Come on over. Suddenly, the thought of battling the crowds at the movie exhausts me."

"Okay," Dan said, trying to ignore the niggling of doubt that tickled the back of his brain. "Do you want me to stop and get some food? Chinese or something? I kind of feel like steamed pork dumplings."

"Chinese sounds good," Honey said.

"Okay," Dan said, relieved that she had agreed to forego a movie that night. He promised himself that he would treat her to a matinee the next afternoon. "I still have one more class today, as you know, but after I'm finished, I'll head over to your apartment building and stop by that Chinese place around the corner and get some food. You want the sesame chicken again?"

"No, the orange chicken combo dinner this time."

"Brown rice instead of fried rice and a spring roll instead of the egg roll?"

Honey affirmed that Dan was correct, thinking how well he knew her. Brian wouldn't know to substitute brown rice or a spring roll. "I think I also want some egg drop soup. A pint, please. Unless you want some, too?"

"I'll decide when I get there. I'll get a quart if I do. I'll see you in a while, bearing Chinese food."

"Sounds good, sweetie," Honey said and hit the end button on her cell phone. Without closing the clamshell cover, she hit the speed dial for Angela, who picked up on the fourth ring.

"Hello?" she answered, sounding a little breathless.

"Hi, Angela, it's Honey. Everything okay?"

"Yep, just doing some aerobics, but I'm more than ready for a break."

"Aerobics? In your little apartment?"

"It was either that or watch Newt Gingrich or some documentary about crabs... Everything all right?"

"Yeah, mostly," Honey said, not surprised that Angela had honed in that something was up considering they had just seen each other a bit ago and normally didn't talk on the phone all that much. "I just was thinking about what you said earlier, and I called Brian. We're getting together tomorrow. I led him to believe that I needed more help with chem, but I'm actually beginning to understand it on my own, thanks to his help the other day." Honey paused and then continued, "The thing is, I'm not sure that he wants to see *me*."

"Oh?" was all Angela said, knowing that it would be enough.

“Yeah,” Honey said. “He started talking about how he hadn’t visited any of the Bob-White’s places, and he seemed to feel real guilty. I mean, it’s no big deal. We’re all in different places, you know? Then he said that he wanted to come to my place because he had never seen it, and that made him feel especially guilty because we lived so close. He seemed to think that it was unexcusable, which is ridiculous. So, even though I want him to want to be here because he wants to be with me, I can’t help but feel that he wants to be in my apartment because he has some weird cosmic check-off list, you know? I mean, if that’s what he wants, fine, but that’s not what it’s about for me. You know, just seeing a friend’s home because I think I need to feel close to them. It’s about seeing a *friend*, you know?”

Angela loved her lab partner, she did, but even six months of listening to her hadn’t prepared her for this nonstop speech. How did Honey say so many words without taking a single breath? The girl must have the lung capacity of an ox. “So, why’d you decide to talk to Brian so quickly?”

“I guess mostly ‘cause I am so sick of having this hanging over my head. I want to get it out in the open. But I need to talk to Brian before I talk to Dan, and I don’t know how much longer I can keep hiding this from him.”

“It’ll be okay,” Angela reassured her friend. “Why do you think it’ll be so bad if Dan knows what you’re thinking before you talk to Brian? Everything you’ve ever said and that I’ve seen between you says he knows you better than anyone. I think it’s actually Dan you should talk to first.”

“Maybe,” Honey said thoughtfully, as she considered Angela’s words. Truthfully, they weren’t so far off from what she was thinking herself. “To tell you the truth, I don’t know why I’m being so stubborn about talking to Brian before Dan. I guess maybe I’m hoping that my talk with Brian will fizzle, and there’ll be nothing for me to even tell Dan!”

“Do you really think that’s going to happen?” Angela asked, trying to keep her voice neutral so that Honey didn’t hear how doubtful she really was about that possibility.

Honey sighed deeply. “No,” she said glumly. “But a girl can always hope, right?”

Angela chuckled. “Of course, a girl can always hope,” she conceded. “But what does your gut say is going to happen when you talk to Brian?”

“I don’t know,” Honey wailed. “My stomach feels perpetually churny and like a gazillion butterflies are flying around in there, so it’s a little hard to tell if my gut’s saying anything.”

“Okay, well, I don’t think that the situation warrants you to be so stressed. You need to calm down and get control of before you give yourself an ulcer,” Angela admonished her friend. “You don’t need any health issues,” she added, pronouncing the last word as “iss-ooze” like their least favorite professor.

“I know,” Honey groaned, not even reacting to the joke that she and her lab partner had shared since the second week of school.

This is bad, Angela thought fleetingly when Honey didn't take the bait.

Honey continued, "Trust me. All of the pep talks I've given myself don't help. I've tried, really."

"I'm sure you have."

"So, what's the next step?" Honey asked, trying to turn her attention to more positive things.

"Think about talking to Dan tonight. Why would that be so bad?" Angela asked.

Honey, who was staring out the window at the Italian slate mosaic that adorned the building across the street, closed her eyes and thought for several moments while Angela sat patiently on the other end of the line. Finally, she admitted in a small voice, "I guess my worst fear is that he'll get really angry with me and break up with me on the spot."

"And do you really believe that that's going to happen?" Angela asked gently.

Honey opened her eyes. "No, not really. But it's scary."

"Yeah, it *is* scary, but I think I know Dan. He's not that guy. Dan's my hero," she joked.

Honey smiled. "He's my hero, too. And I *know* he's not that guy. I mean, I know that with my mind." Honey paused. "But fear is a funny thing."

"I know it is," Angela admitted as she picked up her Twist o' the Mist floaty pen and turned it upside down and then right-side up. "Okay, what's the next worse thing that can happen?"

Honey drew in a deep breath. "That I'll hurt him," she said in a shaky voice barely above a whisper. "That's the worst. That I will hurt someone that I care for very, very deeply."

"That's definitely a legitimate fear, and it *may* happen. But he may also see your confusion for what it is and not be hurt at all," the other girl pointed out.

"I don't know about that," Honey said in a doubtful tone.

"Hey, we're just throwing out possibilities. And he may understand, Honey. You don't know. After all, wasn't he one of the ones who originally thought that you and Brian would end up together?" Angela asked, even though she already knew the answer.

"Yes," Honey admitted.

"So, do you think maybe this is something that occurred to him a long time ago that might happen someday?" Angela continued in that calming voice. Honey could see why she wanted to be a counselor for troubled youth. She had a real talent and passion for it. Angela had brought up a point that made perfect sense that Honey had never even considered. Dan, being

Dan, probably *had* been thinking about this possibility for quite a while. Why had she not realized that before?

“You know, that does make a lot of sense,” Honey admitted, feeling a little bit better that she might not be blindsiding Dan with some out-of-the-blue revelation.

“I know it does, sweetie,” Angela said with a chuckle. “*I* said it.”

Honey laughed at her friend’s joke and then asked, “So, you really think I ought to talk to him about this tonight? Before I talk to Brian tomorrow?”

“Are you going to have to explain that you made a lunch date with Brian instead of Dan? Or is Dan likely to assume that you guys will be eating lunch together?” Angela wanted to know.

“I think I’m going to have to explain it,” Honey said slowly as she considered her friend’s questions. “You think it’s better if I explain everything instead of just blowing him off for lunch and making him worry and wonder?”

“Don’t you?” Angela returned pointedly.

“Yes,” Honey responded promptly. After a pause, she said, “Okay, you’re right. I’ll talk to him tonight.”

Angela sighed in relief on her end, glad that Honey was beginning to step outside of her fear and realize that things were probably not as bad as she thought. The two friends chatted for a few moments longer before saying good-bye.

Honey stared at her phone a minute, remembering a telephone conversation that she had had with Di the previous fall. Diana had called her asking for advice about some unexpected feelings that she was having that would impact her relationship with Mart, and Honey had helped her through it. Now that Di was on the other side, maybe she would have some words of wisdom for Honey. She checked her watch and figured that if Di wasn’t at dinner, she might be in her room. She quickly dialed Di’s number and got Brooke, Di’s roommate.

“Hi, Brooke,” Honey said cheerfully. “It’s Honey. How’s it goin’?”

“Hi, Honey,” Brooke greeted her. “It’s goin’ okay. How’re things for you in the Big Apple?”

“Chemistry is kicking my butt, but other than that, things are going fairly well,” Honey said.

“Ugh. Don’t even mention chemistry to me!” Brooke exclaimed. “You want to talk to Di? She’s next door, but I can go get her.”

“If you don’t mind, Brooke, that would be great,” Honey said.

“No problem!”

A minute or two later, Di's voice came on the line. "Honey? How are you?"

"Good. How're you doing?"

"Really well. I've been spending a lot of time in one of the studios working on a sculpture for my Intro to Sculpture class. It's really hard, but it's a lot of fun," Di said.

"I'm glad you're enjoying your classes so much," Honey said.

"Me, too. This is so much better than high school!" Even in her enthusiasm, Di could sense the unsaid sentiments in Honey's statement. "Aren't you enjoying your classes?"

"Mostly," Honey said. "Chemistry's even more tough this semester than last semester. I'm not really enjoying it very much right now."

"That's too bad," Di sympathized.

"Yeah, I had to get Brian's help with the organic part of it," Honey explained.

"Well, it's a good thing that you had someone who could tutor you. I know that Trixie missed Brian's help a lot after he left for Columbia."

"Yeah, I guess it's a good thing," Honey hedged.

Again, Di recognized the undercurrents that Honey wasn't saying. "It's not a good thing?"

"Well..." Honey began and then stopped. Sometimes, it was so much easier talking to Angela because she wasn't one of the seven Bob-Whites.

"Brian didn't help you?" Di asked.

"Oh, no, he helped me," Honey said immediately. "He helped me a lot."

"Then what isn't..." Suddenly, a thought struck Di. "Oh my God! Did...did something *happen* between you two?"

"No!" Honey exclaimed, and Di was glad to hear the vehement denial.

"Then what's going on?" Di demanded. Usually she was more patient, but Honey's attitude had her as curious as Trixie.

Honey sighed. Of course, Di, the sensitive Bob-White, would hone in on her thoughts right away. "Well, spending time with him brought up...feelings," she admitted.

"Feelings? What kind of feelings?" Di asked cautiously. *And are they the kind of feelings that could break up the Bob-Whites?* she added to herself.

“Confusing ones,” Honey stated. “I keep thinking about how I always thought that we would get together and how disappointed I was when he started dating someone else at college. Hanging out with him the other day reminded me of how much fun we used to have together, and how comfortable it is to spend time with him. And I’m wondering if the feelings I used to have for him were really real, and if they are real, if they’ve ever really gone away.”

“Are you attracted to him?” Di asked.

Honey thought for a moment. Brian *was* very handsome. He was also smart, caring, kind, responsible, and dedicated. All traits that she loved. But *was* she attracted to him? She thought about how she felt when he looked at her or the moments the other day that they had laughed together. She then remembered her giddiness of just a bit ago when Brian had agreed to meet her for lunch.

“Maybe a little,” she finally said.

“Oh, boy,” Di said.

“Yeah, tell me about it,” Honey returned, her voice rueful. “I don’t want to hurt Dan, but I don’t know if I can just shove this down, either. It’ll always be between us if I don’t deal with it.”

“You’re right about that. Do you remember what you told me last fall when I was thinking about shoving down my feelings? You said that feelings aren’t right or wrong, and it’s what you do with them that counts. You said to follow my heart and be true to myself. And even though it killed me to hurt Mart, I realized that you were right. If I shoved my feelings down, it would have come between us anyway.”

“I talk too much.”

Di smiled. “No, you don’t. You were right. And you need to do the same thing. At the very least, you need to figure out exactly what it is that you feel for Brian and talk to Dan about it. ASAP. Dan’s an observer, and he’s bound to notice something’s up. It’ll be far worse if you don’t talk about it.” Di’s advice was very similar to Angela’s.

“I know, and I’ve decided to talk to Dan about it—tonight—even though I don’t really know what *I’m* feeling yet. I guess I just wanted some moral support.”

“You’ve got it, Hon,” Di said fervently. “I never would have been able to get through my break up with Mart without all of *your* moral support, and that of the other Bob-Whites. You know we’re all here for you, no matter what.”

“Even if I shatter us into bits?” Honey asked.

“You’re not going to do that. Remember what you said to me last fall? You said that we were Bob-Whites, and we’d always be friends, no matter what.”

“I talk too much,” Honey said again, this time with a grin.

Di laughed, happy to hear the smile in her friend's voice. "Yeah, sometimes I really just wish I could get you to shut up." The two girls shared a giggle, and then Di said, "Dan won't break up with you. He's not that guy. He'll just be glad—" Di stopped at Honey's giggle. "What? What'd I say?"

"I was talking about this to my lab partner earlier, and when I said that I was afraid Dan would break up with me, she said, 'He's not that guy.' You're channeling each other!"

Di laughed. "Well, your lab partner obviously has good sense! So, after you get the talk out of the way tonight, when are you going to talk to Brian?"

"We're having lunch together tomorrow," Honey admitted.

"Wow. You don't mess around, do you? What are you going to say to Brian if you're not sure what you feel?"

"I don't know. I guess just try to get the elephant out of the room. I mean, it has felt weird between us ever since he started dating, and it's gotten even weirder since he started dating Lexi. You know, because he's so serious about her. And as much as I know that he *is* serious about Lexi, I still get these...vibes...from him. I don't know how else to put it. So, I just thought we could talk about that—not necessarily talk about getting together or anything drastic. I just think we need to address the situation since it's been going on for a few years now."

"Sounds reasonable," Di said. "Oops, hang on a second." Honey heard indistinct chatter in the background and then Di say, "All right, thanks!" before Di returned. "Sorry about that," she apologized. "The gang is heading to dinner in a few minutes, but I don't want to leave you hanging if you need me."

"No, no. Go eat with your friends. I'll be fine," Honey reassured her.

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely! We were basically done talking anyway, and Dan's going to be here soon. As long as you promise to send me good thoughts while you're out this evening, I'll let you off the hook...this time."

Di laughed. "I promise! Good luck, Hon."

"Thanks, Di. Have fun at dinner!"

After the two girls had hung up, Honey decided to take a quick shower, knowing that the hot water would ease her tensions. Just as she was finished getting dressed, she heard the ringing of her phone and assumed that it was Dan calling her to tell her that he was close to her building.

Sure enough, when she answered the phone, it was Dan reporting that he was just leaving the Chinese place and would be at her apartment building soon. After promising to head down to the lobby to sign him in, she hung up, and that was when panic set in. Realizing that her boyfriend was so close and the hour of truth would soon be upon her, the butterflies that had

been fluttering around her stomach for the last few days returned with such a force that she actually thought she was going to be sick.

She closed her eyes and breathed very slowly, remembering Angela and Diana's words of wisdom and encouragement. She could do this. She opened her eyes, and although she could still feel adrenaline coursing through her, at least she didn't feel like she was going to vomit any moment. She threw on a pair of battered mocs that she kept by the door just for when she had to leave her apartment to sign someone in and headed down to the lobby to meet Dan. She had to wait quite a while for the elevator, and when she entered the lobby, she was relieved to see that Dan wasn't waiting for her. She hated to keep him waiting. In less than a minute, however, her boyfriend entered the building. As he stepped through the lobby doors, the wind outside followed him in, whipping his longish, black hair around his face in an appealing way. His chiseled cheeks were stained slightly red from a chilly breeze outside, and the black leather jacket that he wore—a stylish, bomber type with no gang graffiti painted on the back of it—made him look incredibly sexy. He looked like the typical bad boy that every girl wanted, one she could tame and try to turn good. Except, in Dan's case, he already *was* good, with a good heart and a strong moral compass. Honey knew that she was with a man who had the whole package and fleetingly wondered why she was even thinking about Brian Belden at all.

Dan spotted her and headed toward her with a smile. She returned the smile and hurried forward to meet him, greeting him with a quick kiss. The two headed for the security desk to sign Dan in. The security guard that was on duty at the security desk recognized Dan and waved a greeting. After Dan was signed in and the two had exchanged pleasantries with the guard, they headed toward the elevators. Honey took one of the steaming, fragrant brown paper bags Dan carried as the two waited for an elevator to arrive.

Honey breathed in deeply, an appreciative smile on her face. “Mmmm...this smells really, really good.”

“Good,” Dan said as he smiled at her. If only Honey knew how sexy she was when she looked like that. “I was in the mood for Chinese, and I was really hoping that you were, too.”

“I didn't know I was until I smelled it!” Honey laughed as the elevator arrived, and the two rode up to her apartment, listening to a horrendous Muzak version of Stacy Q's “Two of Hearts.”

As soon as Honey and Dan entered her residence, they got to work getting the meal ready. Honey took the other bag from Dan and headed to the kitchen to get out dishes, silverware, and two cans of soda. She quickly set the table, where she had already placed two tapered candles in simple crystal candle holders. Dan had mentioned a candlelit dinner, and Honey had taken him literally. While she was preparing the dining table, her boyfriend hung up his jacket in the closet next to Honey's yellow rain poncho and then went to wash his hands.

Within minutes, the two were seated at the table and feasting on their Chinese food, the glow of candlelight flickering around them. Dan and Honey enjoyed a romantic dinner with no loaded topics, just the innocuous chatter of two people in love catching up on the events of the day.

After dinner, as Honey and Dan were clearing the dishes, the fire alarm went off. Honey and Dan's eyes met.

"Probably just a false alarm," Dan said.

"Yeah, but what if it's not?"

Dan sighed, hating that his quiet evening with Honey might be wrecked. "I guess we'd better evacuate."

Honey grabbed her laptop case with her laptop and a few other important things, just in case, and Dan also grabbed his own backpack. As they gathered their things, they could hear the hallway commotion of evacuating students. Mostly it was just the usual chatter of a lot of people in a small place, but one student had decided to loudly sing the "Oompa Loompa" song from *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. Honey and Dan looked at each other and grinned.

"There's one way to evacuate a building," Dan joked.

The two left the apartment and joined the throng of students in the hallway. As they passed by another apartment, its door wide open, they heard someone say, "I don't want to evacuate. Is there at least a window I can stick my butt out?"

Honey grinned up at Dan. "And there's another."

An hour later, the two were back up in Honey's apartment, the building having received an all clear after it was discovered that someone had set off the fire alarm by accident.

Dan helped Honey wash the meager amount of dishes that they had used for their Chinese feast, and the two of them put them away together. After the dishes had been put away, Dan reached for the fortune cookies that they had not had a chance to eat before the fire alarm went off. He handed one to Honey and selected one for himself.

Honey watched as Dan cracked open his cookie and withdrew the small scrap of white paper inside. Dan read out loud, "You will need to be patient in love." He looked up at Honey and saw that she looked rather uneasy all of a sudden. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing," Honey said, hoping she sounded normal. "Why do you ask?"

Dan shrugged. "I don't know. You just didn't seem too happy with that fortune."

"Well, I certainly don't ever want to try your patience!" she said with a laugh meant to sound cheerful and unruffled.

Dan didn't comment on the silvery, brittle laugh and instead asked, "What does yours say?"

Honey quickly looked down and pretended to concentrate on cracking open the cookie to hide the apprehension she knew must show on her face. One thing she had learned from past

experience was that she always managed to get a fortune that uncannily reflected whatever was going on in her life at the moment. She planned on talking to Dan about her recent Brian dilemma after dinner, but what if the stupid fortune cookie outed her before she had a chance?

She delicately withdrew the small scrap of paper with her slender fingers. Dan loved looking at those elegant and delicate fingers, and even just watching her handle a fortune cookie was a worthwhile sight. Honey, completely unaware of Dan's thoughts, was desperately wishing that the fortune would be innocuous.

“You have a difficult journey ahead of you.” As she started to toss the paper onto the counter, she realized that there was another scrap of paper behind that one. *Not another one*, she thought with a mental groan. “I've got a second one. ‘An uncomfortable situation will soon be eased.’”

Yep, as always, her fortunes had hit close to home. Getting two at once was a new experience, though.

She looked up, and guilty hazel eyes met troubled dark ones.

“So, you want to talk about it?” Dan asked.

My carryover items were: Newt—in this case Gingrich (#2.1), health issues (SA#5), slate (#2.2), Muzak (#2.3), the balcony of the Cameo (#2.4), seven (mention of the seven Bob-Whites; SA#6), hero (#2.5), power outage (#2.6), crabs (SA#7), bad weather (2.7).