

My Encounter With The Office Grapevine

"No one's that nice, there's something there we've got to figure out."

And so the group began its quest to find what I'm about.

"I hear she's on the radio – so what's she doing here?"

"I hear she's rich." "I hear she's poor." "I know there's something there."

"And what's with all those clothes she wears – like that expensive suit?"

"Unmarried and with diamonds? She must be a prostitute."

"But what about her boyfriend? Have you seen his private jet?"

"I hear he is some big shot from the international set."

"She works too hard – she doesn't even gossip. She's no fun."

"She smiles too much." "She's too polite." "I wonder what she's done."

"I think it's pretty obvious she's having an affair."

"I hear she's with the CIA." "I know there's something there."

"But what if she's just different – and a private person, too?"

"Oh please, don't dare defend her or we'll have to turn on you."

"Be quiet, here she comes – we don't want her to overhear."

"It's Friday. She's not wearing jeans." "I doubt she owns a pair."

"You're so dressed up on casual day," chief gossip said to me,
Then turned and rolled her eyes for all within her clique to see.

"I hear they're going to fire her," she bragged as I walked past.

"We finally wore the bosses down. I knew she wouldn't last."

All noted my embarrassment: my face had turned bright red.

The grapevine had defeated me. Ashamed, I quickly fled.

But after a brief moment, I regained my self-respect,

Then strode right back to face this pack in manner quite direct.

"I heard what you just said," I told the gossip, standing tall.

"It doesn't make you big to try to make another small."

"I'd never put down anyone," she huffed. "That's so unfair."

Then, she produced, from her right eye, a calculated tear.

It worked. The others rallied to support their wounded mate.

All glared at me with outrage and obligatory hate.

The gossip thanked her loyal flock for playing by her rules,

Then turned to me, aside, and said, "Can you believe these fools?"

"Take note of what has happened here," I said to all concerned.

"Whatever gossip you send out will always be returned.

When you stand by while rumors fly and harmful lies abound,

The group will do the same to you when your turn comes around."

"The ones who spread false stories meant to hurt my reputation

Feel threatened, and will likewise damage yours – no hesitation.

Their envy needs a target – it was my turn, I suppose.

But you are next, that's how it works – and on and on it goes."

For those who were pretending when you had nice things to say...

I knew it all along but chose to like you anyway.

But those of you who dared to stand up for me once or twice...

Please know how much respect I have for what is TRULY nice.

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*Judi Paparelli.*