Paper Walls: Piper 2

**Anti-Diva:** Its 05:11am, do we haaaaaave to talk about this now?

**KB01:** We’ve been talking for 30 minutes already!

**KB01:** NOW you want to plead time?

**Anti-Diva:** Yeah. I’m legit tired and I wanna get some sleep before the sun comes up.

**KB01:** Fine Piper, but you can’t dodge you parents forever.

**Anti-Diva:** \*Your

“Watch me.” Piper Ashton said to her phone a s she sat curled up on the couch with a blanket draped over her body. The dull blue glow of her phone was the only illumination present in the living room and while it wasn’t sufficient to use as a torch to find her back to her room without waking her latest digs mate, it had been more than sufficient in helping her text Keith for the last half an hour since Harrison Grey had departed in all his patched up glory.

**Anti-Diva:** Night Keith

***KB01:*** Morning Piper

It was a great source of irony to Piper that the only useful thing her mother had ever taught to her, other than how not to work with money, came when she was already half way out the door. If Piper were thinking about it critically then she’d say the older woman had finally come to realise the magnitude of badly she had fucked up and that Piper really was going to move to Seacrest.

At the time Piper had taken the fact that her mother wanted to have sit down chat as a sign of her parents’ resignation – if Mother fell then Daddy was soon to follow (which he did) and her freedom would be assured.

Mrs. Ashton had sat her daughter down on the couch and spoken to her. Mother to daughter chats between Piper and her mom were significant, due to their infrequency. Father-to-daughter chats, sister-to-sister chats or even other-daughter-to-mother chats were more likely to occur. To have Piper and Cynthia Ashton on the same couch together and having an honest-to-goodness conversation that didn’t degenerate into fighting and bitching was something to behold.

Both women had conducted themselves appropriately. Neither interrupted the other and neither raised their voice. It was a perfectly civil conversation between a mother and her soon-to-be adult daughter. Piper had expected her to back up her husband’s anti-Seacrest rhetoric but Mrs. Ashton surprised her. She looked at her daughter and said: “… the only thing that's important in this life is the people in it. They are a reflection of who you are and what you have done. Time, money, and things will all pass. Just remember that the true reflection of a person is shown in who they keep around and how they treat them. So when you get to Seacrest, I want you to remember that.”

That was it. There was no apology. There was no ‘we-are-really-sorry-for-costing-you-a-year-of-your-life,’ and no ‘we-are-really-sorry-that-you-have-nothing-to-show-for-it’ but that would be expecting too much. In that moment she had sensed genuine concern in her mother and, with it, genuine affection. In that moment it had been enough. Not enough to quell Piper’s anger or to stop her from leaving but just enough.

As she dissected her mother’s words, Piper thought of the life she’d made for herself since moving down to Seacrest and of the people she had in it. She thought of Keith and, yes, Harrison and the misadventures that the three of them had had over these past two years. She trusted them both and was glad to have them in her life.

Now, huddled under a blanket and feeling the call of sleep, Piper Ashton understood. Despite her best efforts, she may have accidentally made her mother proud with her choice of friends.

***Anti-Diva*:** Let’s meet up for lunch. I wanna hear more about your date.

***KB01*:** Don’t you have a job?

***Anti-Diva*:** Evening shift :)

***KB01:*** Okay. Usual place. 1 pm.

***KB01:*** Now go to sleep!

***Anti-Diva*:** Good morning Keith

***KB01*:** Good night Piper

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Piper Ashton watched her friend walking away from her place, still cradling his bad arm as the night engulfed him. The one valuable thing that she’d learned while living in her parents’ house came back to her. Just before she left for Seacrest, Piper’s mother had sat her down and spoken to her. She had been expecting the older woman to back up Daddy’s anti-Karthan rhetoric but instead she looked at her daughter and said: “… the only thing that's important in this life is the people in it. They are a reflection of who you are and what you have done. Time, money, and things will all pass. Just remember that the true reflection of a person is shown in who they keep around and how they treat them. So when you get to Seacrest, I want you to remember that.”

Okay that wasn’t the whole quote it exactly – the woman hadn’t put it quite as eloquently for one and two it hadn’t been as nearly nice when placed in the context of the entire conversation but it that was the gist of it. Despite herself, though, Piper Ashton smiled.

At the time she had taken it as a sign of her parents’ resignation – if Mother fell then Daddy was soon to follow (which he did) and her freedom would be assured. Now as she dissected it, Piper thought of the life she’d made for herself since moving down to Seacrest and of the people she had it. She thought of her best friends Keith and, yes, Harrison. Now Piper understood that –despite her best efforts- she had probably made the older woman proud.