

## CHAPTER II.

Andy Clifford put the phone receiver down. His face turned pale. He bowed his head atop his messy desk, which was covered with scattered advertisements of flashy cellphones. Andy instinctively reached for his plastic cup full of water. A few sips later he rubbed his eyes. In front of him, his computer monitor read: “*Telecommando makes a Brazilian acquisition – telecom company’s stock rises to new highs,*” but Andy was no longer interested in the headline and shut down the monitor. With shaking hands he grabbed his cellphone, which looked just like the phone on the posters, and pressed a pre-programmed number.

“Brighter Day Pharmaceuticals, Kelly Lofton speaking.”

“Listen, baby...”

“Hey, I saw your company bought something in Brazil,” interrupted Kelly.

“Kelly, my roommate was in a car accident last night.”

“What?” Kelly was stunned. “Is Nico okay?”

“He’s in critical condition, in an Atlanta hospital. His boss was driving; apparently lost control of the car . . . he didn’t make it.”

“Jesus...”

“I just got the call here at the office. I’ll book the next flight to Atlanta. Why don’t you come with me?”

“Andy, I’d love to, but we’re in the middle of a new product launch. I have meetings with doctors all day...”

“I know, I know,” sighed Andy.

“I’m swamped. I just can’t take time off work.”

Andy was briefly silent.

“Alright, the white girl stays in New York,” he said.

“Baby, I’ll \_\_\_\_ you. Go and take \_\_\_\_ Nico.”

“Hello? Kelly, can you hear me? Hello? I think I’m losing you ...”

Kelly’s voice was barely coming through.

“Andy, \_\_\_\_\_ breaking up!” said Kelly. “See you \_\_\_\_\_ back in \_\_\_\_ York!”

“Baby, do you hear me? Hello? Are you still there?”

Nothing but silence. Andy cursed the latest Telecommando cellphone that he’d given his girlfriend a few weeks ago. He tapped the redial button, but his call went straight to Kelly’s voicemail. Andy cast a cold stare at the mobile phone ads that lay scattered around his desk.