

“Don’t call me girl!” Travis muttered, and Kendra had to chuckle at ~~the~~ husky, boyish-looking woman. Athletic looking, ~~and~~ muscled in spite of her ~~shortness~~. Peter-Pan haircut, broad features. Not too much feminine about her. “All right,” Travis went on, doing her deep breathing exercises. “Talk to me.”

**Commented [JK1]:** Not a word per *M-W*. Suggest “lack of height.”

“About what?” Kendra was never one for ~~the~~ small talk, and being requested to talk about anything, drove every idea of what to talk about out of her mind. Except what she didn’t want to talk about.

Travis took a deep breath. “Why have you been avoiding the fireworks?”

“Who says?” Kendra raised her ~~eyes~~-brows, and if she ~~wore~~-~~were~~ wearing glasses, she would be looking over the rims. As it was, she just gave Travis ~~the~~an intimidating glare.

**Commented [JK2]:** Edit for subjunctive verb, OK?

“Peg was surprised as hell that you were coming to the fireworks with me. Said you always avoided them, even went camping to get away. So why’d you come when I asked?”

“Yeah, well.” Peg, her administrative assistant, would be surprised. Kendra didn’t know what to say, didn’t know what to explain. She looked down the hall, wondering when the test results might be in, when they could get out of here. She glanced back at Travis, who was looking at her ~~expectedly~~.

**Commented [JK3]:** Do you mean “expectantly”?

She sighed. If she wanted Travis to be honest in dealing with her phobia, she needed to be honest with Travis. “Fireworks hold bad memories for me,” she said simply. “But it would be worse to let a friend down when she needed something.”