



The Good Fight

Julianna Keyes

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"If you're looking for a gritty story with a lot of heat (and I mean a lot) and real characters, I'd definitely recommend Time Served."—DearAuthor.com

Julianna Keyes returns to the wrong side of the tracks in this third installment of her wildly popular Time Served series

I was born a fighter. You had to be, to survive in Camden. Lucky for me, I loved it. The thrill, the pain, the glory. Until one night things went too far and I almost lost my ticket out.

So I swore off fighting. Never again. No matter how much I wanted it.

I went to college. Got a degree. A job on Wall Street. Yet I still wasn't smart enough to stay away. So now I'm back. And it's just as bad as I remember.

Enter Dr. Susan Jones, superstar neurosurgeon. She's brilliant, she's sexy and she's a pain in my ass. I can't get enough and she's too busy for a relationship. She wants to hook up, get off, go home. She doesn't have time for a thug from Camden. But she keeps coming back.

This place brings out the worst in people. Every day it threatens the project I'm working on, the plans I'm making. Every day it drags me down just a little more, until the hands I vowed to keep clean start itching to get dirty.

If I don't start fighting for what I want, I'll wind up with nothing.

I didn't come back to Camden for nothing.

I came back to start something. And when people hurt the things I care about, the gloves come off.

The Good Fight Details

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Author : Julianna Keyes

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From Reader Review The Good Fight for online ebook

Alyssa says

Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog

The Good Fight by Julianna Keyes
Book Three of the Time Served series
Publisher: Carina Press
Publication Date: July 25, 2016
Rating: 4 stars
Source: eARC from NetGalley

Warning: this is an adult book, and for the eyes of mature readers

Summary (from Goodreads):

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I went to college. Got a degree. A job on Wall Street. Yet I still wasn't smart enough to stay away. So now I'm back. And it's just as bad as I remember.

Enter Dr. Susan Jones, superstar neurosurgeon. She's brilliant, she's sexy and she's a pain in my ass. I can't get enough and she's too busy for a relationship. She wants to hook up, get off, go home. She doesn't have time for a thug from Camden. But she keeps coming back.

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What I Liked:

I am a huge fan of Julianna Keyes' books. I loved Time Served, In Her Defense, and Undecided, and The Good Fight did not disappoint me. The books in the Time Served series are all super steamy, scorching hot adult romance novels, and Undecided (currently a standalone) is a super steamy, scorching hot New Adult romance novel. The Good Fight follows Oscar Hall, a character we meet in Time Served.

Oscar has been back in Camden for years, which makes no sense because people are usually trying to get out and stay out of Camden. He used to work in Wall Street, has a ton of money, and decided to move back where it all started. Oscar is an accountant by day, and he works out and sometimes fights at Oreo's gym in Camden. It's coincidence that brings Oscar to the hospital, where he meets Dr. Susan Jones. She intrigues

him from the start, and he intrigues her. Susan is a bit robotic and mechanical, totally absorbed in her work and yet, somewhat cold and apathetic. But Oscar hasn't wanted someone this badly in a long time, and he doesn't back down from a challenge.

This book is written entirely from Oscar's first-person perspective! I was extremely excited when I realized this. I don't know why I didn't expect this, since *Time Served* and *In Her Defense* were both written in solely Rachel's and Caitlin's first-person perspective, respectively. Anyway, I really liked getting into Oscar's head, just Oscar, and not Susan. I'm not sure I would have found Susan very interesting, to be completely honest. Oscar, on the other hand, has always been very interesting.

I can't quite remember how I felt about Oscar in the previous books, but I adored him in this one. He's been struggling with himself, feeling unfulfilled and such. He's decided to buy a building in Camden and rebuild it into something positive for the dying community. He's also a hard-working account, and a good friend. He helps out everyone in any way. He seems rough on the edges, and maybe a little mysterious, but he's such a good guy.

We meet Susan in *In Her Defense* - she's Caitlin's sister. Susan is a top surgeon and workaholic. She's also a little detached, and has no empathy. She has an eleven-year-old daughter and she's finalizing her divorce, but it honestly seems like Susan doesn't care about anything. She's very robotic and wants to do things to be the best, like get an A in this or that. I totally get Oscar's frustrations with her. It's like she's not even human - completely devoid of feeling.

And yet, the two of them together are fireworks and dynamite. Susan is blunt and bold and has no filter - probably because she really doesn't think about what she says. Susan says what she wants and expects to get what she wants, and she's met her match in Oscar, who isn't chasing after her. In the end, they each do a little bit of chasing. They both make mistakes and they both have to apologize.

So I liked the progress of their relationship. I didn't love Susan like I loved Rachel (in *Time Served*), and I think I even like Caitlin (in *In Her Defense*) more than I liked Susan, but I really like Oscar and I liked seeing Oscar and Susan fit together. Oscar humbles Susan, and vice versa.

The chemistry between them is seriously on fire. I don't think this book was as hot as the other two books in the series, but still, very scorching. Keyes has a way of writing very different and very unique steamy scenes, unique and different between books, as well as unique and different from other authors' steamy scenes in general.

This book is all about Oscar and how he changes and handles certain situations, and then changes some more. Oscar has demons in his past that he has to deal with, but nothing that really dragged the story down and detracted from the story, the character growth, the romance. Susan has her own personal problems, and I liked seeing some life breathed into her.

Slight side note - the cameo from Dean (our hero in *Time Served*)! Love! That was such a sweet scene. No Caitlin/Eli cameo, unfortunately. Or Rachel, for that matter.

Overall, I was really happy with this book. Not a favorite in the series (hard to beat *Time Served*, to be honest), but probably my second favorite? It's a tie between this one and *In Her Defense*. If this is the end to the *Time Served* series, then I'm quite content!

What I Did Not Like:

There is nothing huge that I did not like, though there is one thing that is bothering me. I don't want to go into details for fear of spoiling things, but there is a point in the book in which there is a newspaper article

and a miscommunication, and basically Oscar doesn't get the credit he rightfully deserves. There was no real resolution to this part of the plot. I expected this part of the story to circle back and reappear, or at least get resolved concretely. It never did. I wanted to see Oscar get his credit, and it never happens. This is a small complaint, in the grand scheme of the story, but it felt very important. Especially since this affected both Oscar and Susan.

Would I Recommend It:

If you've read any of Keyes' adult books, I would recommend this one! All of the books in the Time Served series are VERY different from Undecided, which is a much more lighthearted book (it's also New Adult). So, if you're not an adult romance reader, or if you've only read Undecided, don't go expecting something like Undecided. Keyes's adult romance novels are very raw, gritty, primal, intense, and very steamy. Like, thirteen out of ten flames kind of hot. I highly recommend this book (and series) if you enjoy hot hot hot adult romance novels! There is no love triangle and it's not erotica, so don't worry if you're not into those types of things.

Rating:

4 stars. Another great story by Keyes! And this one was really unique to me, because it was written in the male's POV, which I found very intriguing and refreshing. No dual POV, no female POV. Like I said before, if this is the end of the series, then I am satisfied! I hope not though. Jade and Wyatt have me curious...

new_user says

Couldn't bring myself to care about Dr. Jones. She didn't want a relationship, resisted it every step of the way, wouldn't open up, was rude and cold, and all I thought of her was, why bother? It's ironic because I've read many books with the roles reversed... But I guess those guys are at least a bit warmer. Susan is ice, robotic. Still great writing.

Tracie Payne says

So it was good, but I dunno, I felt like the characters were just too dramatic. Not knowing really why for a good part of the book has something to do with it I guess. I find a town completely in disarray hard to picture. Some of his inner thoughts and actions just had me scratching my head wondering "what's the big deal?" And the h was so cold and hard to relate too. I loved the first two books a ton, but this one just fell short.

Maria Rose says

The Good Fight by Julianna Keyes is the third story in her Time Served series. I really enjoyed the first one of this series, somehow missed the second (I'll fix that soon) and dived in eagerly into this one.

Oscar 'Oz' Hall has been to hell and back. As a young man, he grew up on the gritty streets of Camden, and like most of his friends got into trouble. One fight too many and his best friend suffered a paralyzing injury for which he feels responsible, changing Oscar's life and hustling him out of town. He got his college degree,

became a successful businessman on Wall Street and yet never could get his roots out of his head. Returning to Camden he's running his accounting business and thinking of ways to improve the lives of those around him. A good friend has a restaurant and rooftop garden nearby in Chicago, and Oz has a dream of providing fresh produce to his community if he can only figure out how to go about it. A freak minor accident lands him in the ER, and into the hands of Dr. Susan Jones. Her cold manner mixed with her hot body are a turn on for him, and he finds a way to connect with her outside of the hospital. One thing leads to another and soon they are having a hot and steamy affair. But do two people from opposite sides of the tracks, with such different temperaments, really have a chance?

It's rare to find a character like Susan as the heroine of a contemporary romance. She's really not overly likable at the start and for most of the story, but she grows on you. And you know what? That's kind of refreshing really because that's life. Sometimes people rub you the wrong way at first, and yet over time, as you learn more about them and what makes them tick, they can become important people in your life. Susan comes across as cold and unemotional, with a blunt bedside manner. While she's very attractive physically, her social skills definitely leave something to be desired. But there are reasons for this. She's a very accomplished surgeon. Her job relies on her not being attached to a patient, but on keeping her emotions out of the operating room. The problem is she's just a little too good at it. Partly this is due to the necessity of the job. But part of it is also due to her upbringing and coming in second just one too many times to her sister. And her marriage – it started out good but became its own kind of emotional torment with some of the things that happened between her and her ex-bordering on abuse. For these reasons, Susan's first encounters with Oz are detached – they are very sexy, but it's clear she's keeping her emotions under lock and key. Also, the story is told entirely from Oz's point of view so we never get into Susan's head, we just get his take and his outlook on what is happening between them.

Oz is the opposite – he thinks too much, he fights too much, he feels too much. Since the fight that paralyzed his friend he's felt guilty about it, but it hasn't stopped the urge to get out his frustrations in the boxing ring. He lost his mother and two sisters in a car accident while in college and the unfairness of this still impacts him. While he mostly spars with willing partners, he worries about what might happen should his anger be given full reign. But at heart, Oz is a decent guy. He cares about his receptionist Jade, a young woman with a tough life of her own. He cares about his community. His dream to make a safe place for kids and start a shared garden might never have gotten off the ground without Susan. Because she challenged him then made sure he took steps in the right direction to make it a reality.

But make no mistake, this relationship between Susan and Oz is not easy. Her lack of empathy means she does things without thinking of what they might mean to others. And when she inadvertently hurts Oz as a result, he's quick to fight back with words and actions of his own. They don't have the healthiest relationship at the start. And they continue to make mistakes, even as the sex between them gets hotter and messier. Yet they are both moving in the direction of a happy ending despite the ups and downs. Sometimes it seems that they'll never get there, but they do, and it's quite a satisfying end to this unconventional relationship. I think my favorite thing about this story is how flawed the characters are and yet they recognize and accept these flaws in each other and it doesn't diminish their feelings. They go through enough rocky times in their courtship that you definitely feel they deserve their happy ending. 4 stars for a gritty, realistic and thoroughly entertaining story.

Note: a copy of this story was provided by the publisher via NetGalley for review.

This review appears as a blog post at: <https://straightshootinbookreviews.co...>

Faith89 says

Netgalley copy

This is book three in the series but can be read a stand alone The story seemed dirty and dreary. The town where most of the story happens is dreary. Oscar's life is dreary. The gym is dreary. Yet there is a smidgen of hope throughout the story. It was kind of hard to like these characters. They both were kind of hard to get to know. Oscar, because he was closed off after the a couple of tragedies in his youth. He used fighting to express his feelings. He reacted a lot before thinking thing through. He seemed a little naive about some things considering he grew up in Camden and became a wall street hotshot. Susan was a surgeon. She had a lard time expressing her feelings. She actually was kind of funny in some scenes. It was like feelings were foreign to her. Over all the story was good. The the little bit of green hope won out in the end.

RachelW (BamaGal) says

Shaky start, but ultimately a really good story. Even expecting the gritty read and the realistic character portrayal that Keyes is known for; I still had a bit of a hard time getting into the book at first. Oscar (Oz) was fine, I rather liked him. Susan was much harder to warm up to. Even well into the book she was in many ways a flawed, almost unlikable character. Susan is the sister of Caitlin Dufresne (from the last book 'In Her Defense'). In that book, she was the ice queen Surgeon mother of little Dorrie of the terribly bad softball team; the mother who couldn't seem to ever manage to make it to her own child's ball games.

I eventually began to warm up to her, albeit with a setback when she does something horrible to Oz. The story was not overly angst; just a realistic portrayal of two people trying to get together and keep it together in the frightening dating dance that people today go through. It made me terribly glad that I've been married forever and don't have to deal with the horrors of dating in today's singles scene.

In the end, I rather enjoyed *The Good Fight*; and that is an apt title, as the couple fought the good fight to make their relationship work even through some terribly rough and bumpy patches. Julianne Keyes has found her niche in writing these kinds of romances; and her writing style reminds me a great deal of Cara McKenna.

Courtney says

Another winner from Julianna Keyes! What I loved most about this book was the fact that it's told entirely from the male POV, Oscar, but we definitely know and learn all about his heroine, Dr. Susan Jones who may start as a really unlikeable character - self-absorbed, selfish, arrogant. A lot of things we in romance see more often associated with the male heroes. Theirs isn't the easiest path to their HEA, but the bumps and bruises were emotional and well-worth the ending.

Talltree says

I've read jerk H's but this one had a jerk h and the H was a masochist for going back for more. IMO this HEA won't last or if it does, its an unhealthy relationship. Also since this was in the H's pov found it very hard to understand or like the h.

3 stars.

Kini says

I LOVED this book. I have added it to my DIK collection on my kindle. You can find my full review at a href="<http://smexybooks.com/2016/07/review-...>

Heather Stanton says

Who doesn't love a good opposites attract romance? It's one of my favorite tropes in fiction, so it's a good possibility I was predestined to like this book. With a hero who is as comfortable throwing punches in the ring as he is behind a desk and a neurosurgeon heroine, I snatched it up and enjoyed it immensely.

Though he's a little rough around the edges, Oscar "Oz" Hall is a renaissance man who lives in a shabby town badly in need of renovation and revitalization. He's not afraid to fight, but he's intelligent, health conscious, and civic-minded. While shopping for fresh produce in a neighboring city, an unfortunate incident with a watermelon cart sends him to the emergency room for x-rays.

Susan Jones has lost a bet and is forced to cover the shift of another doctor in the ER when Oz arrives on the scene. He likes the unflappable, efficient doctor despite the less than warm, fuzzy vibes she emits, and instinctively knows any advances he might make toward her will be met with resistance. Hence, he hatches a plan to woo her gradually.

Told entirely from Oz's point of view, The Good Fight focuses on his drive to create a rooftop garden and community space for his economically depressed town. Though she's at first reluctant, Susan joins Oz in helping to renovate an abandoned building and turn it into a community center. Their scenes together feel organic and allow the sexual tension between them to build. Oz wants Susan badly, but her emotional walls are high and she makes it clear anything more than a physical relationship is unwelcome.

Full review available at <https://allaboutromance.com/book-revi...>

MBR says

Book 3 in the Time Served series was a novel experience for me. This was my first time reading a book told in the first person totally from the hero's point of view.

34 year old Oscar Hall is the one who managed to get away from the shit hole that is pretty much Camden where he grew up. Years later, having had the success he had sought back then, Oscar returns, wanting to give back something to the community that is pretty much wasting away.

Oscar meets the formidable Dr. Susan Dufresne Jones by chance at the hospital where she works. The

interest on Oscar's part is immediate, perhaps because Susan gives off the "nothing amuses me" vibe rather effortlessly. However, things don't work out as smoothly as Oscar envisions it for him and Susan. Though off to a rocky start, Susan and Oscar work things out by taking one day at a time, while at the same time Oscar sees to his dreams of building something that could give back to the people of Camden.

Miscommunication, the fact that both Oscar and Susan try to keep a lot of things bottled up, and most of all mistakes that both Susan and Oscar makes in the course of their relationship tests the strength of the bond that forges between them. A bond that is often seen to be rather fragile, but stands firm in many a storm it weathers through.

The Good Fight is not a story that just looks into the romance and the relationship that grows to life between Oscar and Susan. Rather, it focuses on Oscar's relationships with various other secondary characters, the ups and downs that he goes through while trying to build his dream into a reality that is sustainable and long-lasting, and his own shortcomings when it comes to trusting his ability to hold onto and be worthy of someone like Susan.

I loved the whole mess that was Oscar's life as it was portrayed through his inner thoughts. It was messy. It was real. That was what I connected with most and I wouldn't have had it any other way. I loved the friendship that was between Oscar and 24 year old Jade Romero, who puts up a false sense of bravado for the rest of the world to see. I would love to see whether Jade gets her own story, preferably with Wyatt, the man who does not get along at all with Jade, someone who is able to charm any man out of his pants and then some.

While I loved the novelty of the experience of reading a book solely told from the male lead's perspective, I felt that when it came to a character such as Susan, without knowing how she saw things through that logical and direct to the point sort of brain of hers, proved to be the reason why I failed to connect with her on an emotional level. Don't get me wrong, I loved the ending that took place a year after the story takes place, which gave me all warm fuzzies on the inside and showed to me that the bond between Oscar and Susan was one that was very real.

Susan I believe, was the character that got shortchanged because her story is the one that sits on the backburner, simmering and calling for attention where little if at all was given. I wanted to see Susan emerge out of that cold and logical shell of hers long enough to realize that there was more to life than being in a constant state of competition with ones own self to achieve more, to be better. That there was a daughter who required her love, understanding, empathy and kindness so that she might grow up and embody the same characteristics that Susan could teach her.

While there were bits and pieces of Susan's interactions and difficulties when it came to dealing with her 11 year old daughter, whom we met in the 2nd book of the series In Her Defense, I would have loved to see that take centre stage in the story, be it even for a little while so that readers would have been able to see a warmer side to Susan, a character who comes off cold at first and began to thaw towards the end of the book.

I would have thought that given that this novel was totally told from a male perspective, that there would be more sex scenes involved of the kind that would make for a panty melting read. But, contrary to that notion, I found that the sex scenes were more toned down than the previous two books in the series. Not that the ones that were included were any less hot or potent. But perhaps owing to the fact that I had some difficulties in connecting with Susan on an emotional level, I found myself a bit removed from what was happening in the bedroom until towards the latter part of the story where Susan broke out with a gut wrenching confession of the difficult times she had had with trying to make her previous marriage work, a marriage that had already been doomed to failure.

It is a testament to Julianna's talent that even with all the issues I had that I managed to enjoy the story that

unfolded. Perhaps it was because through Oscar's life, the reader gets to experience a wide range of diverse characters, and get to see something fresh develop and burgeon to life right in front of your eyes. The whole concept of cultivating produce inside the confines of a building is an idea that is being explored quite fervently across the world, and to read about it and feel as if you were a part of the experience, that was one of the best aspects of this story.

Recommended for fans of stories that feature characters who are real enough to make mistakes and wise enough to own up and learn from them. Makes for great reading!

Rating = 4/5

For more reviews and quotes, please visit, www.maldivianbookreviewer.com

juviasft says

What I liked the most about this book was the author willingness to write unusual characters and not even likeable ones. Often, in romance, all the characters are too 'perfect', too good to be unlikeable or to not be forgiven when 'they do something wrong'. On this book I felt the characters easy to relate to, so that was a huge plus for me.

However, after Oz finds a way to achieve his dream, the plot felt a little stuck. On the one hand, I liked reading their slow romance with all the problems they had to get over to be together, because, above all things, it felt real, it felt like it could happen to some random person from the real world. It's not often authors write about problems the couple might have ('because they're perfect for each other') and if they do, it becomes 'obvious' whose side you should chose. In addition, both characters are too willing to work on them and as if it were some sort of magic, three chapters later the problem is solved. Just like that.

On the other hand, sometimes the story was going nowhere and that romance felt a little lost. Oz doesn't really act like someone who has million dollars, a college degree and 34 years old. And Susan's daughter is... insufferable.

The problem with Oz business is 'fixed' quickly towards the end and there wasn't an obvious explanation as to why Susan was the way she was. And their relationship felt a little weird on the second part of the book.

I liked the book, I enjoyed it. But I liked the first part better.

Ezinwanyi says

I was looking for that tension and angst from Undecided and I didn't find it here. Still this author is a good writer because both characters were compelling protagonists. Oscar Hall uses boxing to cope with the tragedy that took his loved ones from him when he trip to the emergency road brought Dr. Susan Jones into this life. Susan Jones was a brilliant surgeon who needed someone to see past the mask she hid behind. This book was a process of emotional maturity for both characters.

I was really excited to read this book because I loved Undecided by this same author. Unfortunately, this one lacked the emotional depth and character building that I had expected. **I loved Oscar "Oz" Hall because he was sweet, thoughtful and hardworking.**

Dr. Susan Jones was a disconcerting character.

I had a hard time really understanding and being interested in her journey. She was emotionally detached from almost everything except her work ambitions. At first, I thought that perhaps Susan had Asperger's Syndrome and thus she lacked the ability to connect with others. However, the author never really took the heroine's narrative that way. Instead, the heroine was portrayed as someone who coped by shutting down emotionally.

Susan was almost inhuman and robotic even with her daughter and I couldn't help feeling that Oz could do better. There was so many times he described her actions as "mechanical" that I couldn't even enjoy their sex scenes.

The chemistry and attraction didn't work for me so I had wished that either Oz would find someone else or that Susan's ice princess veneer would melt. Susan thawed, but not early enough to engage me. But I did like that she forced Oz to work harder at everything. Susan kept him unbalanced and that was the key for Oz to find Oscar again. Had the author introduced Susan's past might have made her more relate-able earlier. I also wanted to know more Jade and Rian. I hope they get their own HEAs soon.

**Special Thanks to the author for the e-arc given in exchange for an honest review.*

Wollstonecraft homegirl says

I don't know about this, so I'll go with 3 stars. Ultimately, so much promise, and then I was left disappointed.

I appreciate, very much, Keyes's commitment to writing unusual and not necessarily likeable characters. She's trying to find romance in unusual places and often between unusual people. There's something to be said for that. I often have difficulty identifying with contemporary romance. Everyone is a bit too shiny [happy people laughing]. Not so with Keyes.

I was really looking forward to Susan's book. She's a cold, driven, successful doctor, with no personal life and one failed marriage and a child she doesn't relate to very well. To take her and make her into the heroine was going to be a challenge. Then we pair her with Oz. The fighter from the rough town who managed to get to College and Wall Street and then decides to go back to try and help the place he left. Ultimately though, he's still fighting, he's still not sure how to fit.

For the first 40% of this I was hooked. It's all from Oz's (first person) perspective. He meets Susan and is attracted to her aloof, cold personality. He cares not one jot that she's not wearing make-up and that she's direct to the point of rudeness. He pursues her, and she pursues him and they have hot sex (Keyes is very, very good at writing sex and this book is no different in that respect). Oz starts work on a project in Camden and Susan helps.

Once that's happened though, Keyes seems a bit lost as to what to do next. Both characters become rather petulant. Oz does not behave like someone or think like a 34 year old with a College degree and millions of dollars in the bank from his time on Wall Street, he lapses into an almost teenage mind-set. Oz's whole characterisation in the second half seemed to go off the boil. There was this thing about him being a fighter, but knowing when to stop and him not being able to stop when he was in Camden even though it hurt people. It was all over the shop. There's an easy explanation for Susan's difficulties that wasn't flagged or subtly introduced. There's a subplot with Oz's business that seemed almost bizarre towards the end and then is resolved very easily.

Perhaps worse of all, amidst all of that, the romance gets lost. The attraction was there. The sex was there. But things were so fractious and, at times, weird between Susan and Oz in this second half that their relationship felt strained and I didn't buy that they really wanted to be with one another.

I sound very down on this. I read it through. I enjoyed it. I will read the next book, which I hope is about Jade and Wyatt. But I felt like this book could have been more, particularly given how engaged I was to begin with.

Heather andrews says

I really liked Susan, girl got some balls, "he shrugs. "You're not twenty-one anymore. If you were effing those girls, there's no way you'd have the energy to drive to Chicago after to see me." My mouth falls open. "But if you decide to eff them, save yourself the trip and stay in Camden, because I'm not interested in being your second choice." Oscar was a good man but it was Susan who was more entertaining in this book, I really liked her.
