

*Honey Blond Chica 2*  
Michele Serros

Like the original *Honey Blond Chica*, *Honey Blond Chica 2* is a wonderfully entertaining story featuring a very authentic fifteen-year-old Latina. Evie's world—from her Flojo and non-Flojo friends, to her slightly stuffy parents, to her home in the exclusive Rancho Estates, to her carefree Cali lifestyle—is glamorous but also believable. Evie might be spoiled, but she is immensely likeable: She's innocent but often self-assured, and she is always a lot of fun. Spanish is used liberally throughout the book, but in a way that is easy to grasp for non-Spanish speakers. The references to *charreadas*, Frida and Diego, and *quinceañeras* are accessible and give this book an added cultural dimension. And the use of teen slang seems effortless.

While the second *Honey Blond* book boasts a very strong voice overall, there are some ways this book can be improved in terms of plot and in terms of fluidity of language (which will surely be improved in the next draft). Although the style is light-hearted and could remain that way, this book might attract a wider audience if it offered some kind of deeper message about friendship or another issue important to Evie/most teens. Here are some suggestions on how to bring *Honey Blond 2* to the next level, listed in order of theme:

Chapter 1/Fender-bender

Considering the description of Evie's family in book one, it's surprising that Evie would need to take her housekeeper's car out for a joy ride. Did her parents take their car out? Does this family really have only one car? Also, why would Evie ask permission to take out Lindsay's car if she has easy access to the keys? And finally, while it's not in Evie's nature to repent too much about a small car accident, why is it that the accident doesn't really come up again during the course of the book? When Evie texts Raquel and Dee Dee the "Emergency in Rio Estates" distress signal and the three of them meet in Dee Dee's bedroom, she doesn't actually mention the accident—only the fact that her birthday party might be cancelled if she doesn't get her grades up. Should Evie at least make some kind of hyperbolic statement about how she'll probably never drive again?

Chapter 1/Backstory

Readers find out early on that Dee Dee and Raquel are now Evie's best friends, but it would be helpful to know a little bit more about how they become friends again. On p.5, rather than focus on what Raquel's ex Jose is doing now, why not explain more about how the two broke up—how Jose hooked up with Dee Dee's friend Alejandra and tried to hook up with Evie—and how Dee Dee realized that Alejandra isn't a true friend, but that Evie and Raquel are. Could the course of Evie, Dee Dee and Raquel's friendship in book one be recapped? Should a brief sentence or two be added about how each of the girls has changed since the Jose-Alejandra hook-up, since it affects each of them in different ways? As of now, Alejandra isn't mentioned until p.40, even though she's the main reason Dee Dee and Evie leave the Sangro crowd and re-establish their friendship.

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### Chapter 1/Sangro-Flojo culture

Since Evie's decision regarding which clique she's belongs to—Flojos or Sangros—is the main theme of book one, could difference between the Sangro and Flojo cultures be explained in chapter one of book two? Are Evie, Dee Dee and Raquel now Flojos—or do they really not belong to any clique, other than their own? What happened to the Sangro crowd? Does Dee Dee make a conscious decision to drop her Sangro friends? To be called Dee Dee and not Dela anymore (as she wanted to be called in book one)? Is Evie glad not to be called Evelina? *now Dee Dee*

Once the Flojo culture is explained, it might be helpful to better describe how Evie chooses to incorporate it (or not incorporate it) into her lifestyle. It's curious that flojos are mentioned much more often in this book than in book one. After all, Evie often mentions what flojos she is wearing, and she prides herself “in the orderly fashion she maintained with her flojos. All of them (eleven pairs in all) were lined on her closet floor based on price, color, glued jewels, in that order” (p.92). And when she goes out on her “date” with Alex, she “even made the bold decision against wearing flojos (gasp) and slipped on some borrowed espadrilles...” (p.131). Evie's flojo collection is definitely interesting—but if Evie, Dee Dee and Raquel no longer consider themselves true Flojos (especially with Jose out of the picture and Dee Dee in the picture) why would the flojos Evie wears be mentioned at all? Should Evie instead be shown to have a variety of different kinds of shoes that suit her personality, some of which are flojos? *- Flojo at heart.*

### Evie's love interests *earlier*

It's not until p.11 that Evie's boyfriend Alex is mentioned—but perhaps he should be mentioned earlier. Could Evie think about calling Alex/mention that Alex is out surfing before she calls her girlfriends? Also, as of now, when Evie mentions to Dee Dee that Alex is her bud, it sounds like she's either complaining about the relationship or that trouble is brewing—even though Evie provides a good explanation about how important friendship is to a relationship. Should book two begin with a more positive description of Evie and Alex's relationship, especially since book one ends with their relationship just getting started, and fans of book one will want to hear more about it in book two?

Also, while it makes sense that Evie eventually develops feelings for someone else (Arturo) in book two, it might disappoint readers a little bit that Evie and Alex don't seem to end up together in this book. It takes the entire book one for Evie and Alex to get together in the first place, and when they do, they seem perfect for one another. Will surfing remain Alex's priority until the end of book two? Will the last thing Alex says to Evie be that she's a slut?? Will they become friends again? If Evie ends up with Arturo, will the surfer hook of both the *Honey Blond* books be lost—and is this intentional?

### Horse reserve

In many ways, it's great that the *Honey Blond 2* moves away from the ocean setting to a horse reserve setting. It gives the Southern California locale more depth, as if to point out that there is more to this area than just beaches. It also gives Evie's character more depth, showing that she can do more than sleep, wear flojos, and surf.

But overall, it seems like too much emphasis is placed on Evie's volunteer work at the Southern California Horse Reserve. And at 25 pages in length, the first chapter about the reserve (chapter 5) is much too long. It's great that Evie seems to learn from her work there and eventually considers becoming a *charrita*. But why is there so much information about Josephina (who seems slightly over the top Valley and unlikeable) and Emily Strange Girl/Ana if these characters don't end up playing much of a role in the story's conclusion? If Evie ends up with Arturo in the end, will there be a scene about Josephina's jealousy? Will Josephina be the one to get Dee Dee into Las Patronas? Will Ana end up hooking up with Jose or have some stronger connection to him than being at the same school as him? If not, it seems like Josephina and Ana could be given much more minor roles in the book.

It's also odd that Evie would need to work as many hours as she does just to get some extra credit for her civics class/boost her quality check. Her description of her civics teacher on p.89 is convincing, but wouldn't she (or her parents or one of her friends) consider finding a tutor for a few hours a week, rather than put in fifteen hours a week at a horse reserve?

#### Evie-Dee Dee-Raquel friendship

Rather than focus so much on Evie's work at the horse reserve, perhaps this story can shed more light on the dynamic between Evie, Dee Dee and Raquel, as their friendship is what the intended audience for this book will want to hear about more than anything else. Evie seems to simply accept that Raquel is changing, but how does Dee Dee feel about Raquel? Readers learn that Dee Dee purposely doesn't invite Raquel to her dinner for Roccio. But how does Dee Dee go from avoiding her "best, best friend" to wanting to take a piece of cake to her at Isla del Mar? When Evie wonders where Raquel fit in between Dee Dee's "two favorite people in the whole world" (p.170), readers will wonder the same thing. On this same note, how does Raquel feel about her friendship with both Evie and Dee Dee in the end? Does Raquel forgive Evie when Kitty discovers the two of them talking late at night? Is Raquel still in touch with Davey Mitchell? Does she forgive Jose? Readers learn that Dee Dee makes a big life decision to stay in California, become a Patrona, and risk losing Rocio—but how do Evie and Raquel ultimately change and grow?

#### Sabrina

When readers first learn that Sabrina is going through a difficult situation, it seems that the lesson will be that Sabrina is not as perfect as Evie once thought. But as time passes and readers still don't know what Sabrina's problem is, they might be suspicious that she's going through more than just a break-up, especially when "Sabrina bowed her head into her mother's chest. Her mouth creased downward at the sides and soon small tears percolated from the corners of her eyes. Her whole body began to tremble" (p.99). Readers might continue to get suspicious when Evie overhears her sister talking to her therapist on the phone. If it turns out that Sabrina has a bigger problem than a break-up, will her situation be too heavy for this novel? Alternatively, if Sabrina's problem turns out to be just the break-up, will readers be disappointed that her secret isn't more shocking? Perhaps details about Sabrina's problem should be revealed sooner rather than

later so as to not leave readers in the dark, or leave them with a disappointing conclusion to a suspenseful subplot.

### Final message

As laid-back and fun-loving as this book (or Evie) is, it seems like it should leave readers with some kind of message. Book one seemed to focus on identity—how friendship is more important than being part of a clique. Will this book end on a similar note? It seems as though the Evie-Dee Dee-Raquel friendship will remain intact, seeing that Evie leaves her much-awaited sixteenth birthday party to go with Dee Dee and be with Raquel. How does their friendship change—or not change—by the end of the book? Will Evie and Sabrina end up becoming more than just sisters and develop their own friendship? Lindsay praises Evie for being a go-getter—does this compliment set the stage for Evie to mature and play a big sister role to Sabrina?

Also, how will the Flojo-Sangro-horse reserve theme come to a conclusion? Will Evie still be serious about becoming a *charrita* (since she wears a *charreada* outfit to her birthday party) at the very end of the book—or is this a passing interest that “changed like channels like the TV remote” (p.115)? If Evie ends up committed to horse-riding, then the surfing hook of the book might be lost—again, is this intentional? If Evie is shown to have learned something about herself and come into her own by the end of the book, then the horse-riding theme will be acceptable to even those readers who crave a surf-themed book.

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### Chapter-by-chapter notes

#### Chapter 1

p.1 (top) Is the call of nature example a little odd, even for Evie?

p.1 (middle) Could the first paragraph be reworked a little so that it's more clear, especially the last sentence and the sentence that begins “It wasn't just any ‘ol ring...”

p.2 (middle) State here, after Raquel sleepily answers the phone, that it's 1:00 in the afternoon (rather than on the next page).

p.5 (middle) This is the perfect place to add more back story, not only about Jose, but also about some of the other secondary characters from book one.

p.6 (top) Evie's “grand decision to get out of bed” is cute!

p.8 (top) When Raquel and Evie are described as the flip flop wearing Flojos and Dee Dee is described as being “the super cosmopolitan chica,” it sounds as though Raquel and Evie are very much alike and in the same “clique” and that Dee Dee is in a different “clique,” and this is not the case. Wouldn't it be better to show how each girl maintains her individuality and is still part of the same group?

create  
two  
own  
cliques?

p.9 (top) State here that Dee Dee and Rocio are still together, especially for fans of the first book who will want to know their status right away.

p.10 (top) Isn't it awkward to talk about Evie's reputation as a surfer flojo chick—especially when the entire first book was about Evie questioning being in this clique and wanting to be a Sangro instead?

#### Chapter 2

- p.20 (bottom) – Description of Grandma Pama unclear...does it mean she gives them money to make up for the fact that she's not around?
- p.24 (top) - Great background information on Sabrina
- p.25 (bottom) – Would she really have no idea how badly she was doing in her classes?
- p.30 (top) – Since Evie doesn't have a driver's license and just got into an accident, does Raquel pick up Evie and drive her to Dee Dee's house?
- p.31 (top) - If Evie is such good friends with Dee Dee, wouldn't she know that Dee Dee loves to write?
- p.31 (top) - Remind readers what D.F. stands for here and a few other times in the book?
- p.31 (middle) - Is it odd to note that both Raquel and Evie “had heard enough about Rocio, Dee Dee's long lost love,” just after establishing how deep their friendship is?
- p.33 (top) - Again, Raquel drives Evie home, correct?

### Chapter 3

- p.37 (bottom) - Is it necessary to directly mention that Mondo is a pot dealer? Would it be better to mention this later in the book, in passing?
- p.38 (top) - Again, it would be helpful to explain what happened to the Flojo clique—and how Evie and Raquel are or aren't a part of it today.
- p.40 (bottom) - Again, mention Alejandra much earlier in book.
- p.42 (middle) - The use of “claro” here and throughout the book works great.

### Chapter 4

- p.47 (bottom) - What is Mr. A-H's administrative title? What does A-H stand for?

### Chapter 5

- pp.51-54 - The scene with “Tight Across the Ass” and “Big Bulge” is funny—but does it need to be so long if these jocks don't end up coming to Evie's party? Also, do the nicknames sound like nicknames Evie would come up with? And if she doesn't much care for jocks, why does she wonder if she's “died and gone to heaven (54)?”
- pp.60-61 - Again, since Evie introduces herself as “Evelina,” readers of the first book will wonder why Dee Dee no longer goes by “Dela.”
- p.61 – Consider deleting from “She didn't need major experience...” to “...would not cut it.”? Not sure we need this, and slows down the pace.
- p.62 (middle) – It's probably not necessary to add more information about the history of the reserve—Evie would probably fall asleep during it, anyway.
- p.65 (middle) - No need to repeat that Jose was kicked out of Villanova for his bad grades (or to talk about Jose too much, as he doesn't make an appearance in this book at all).
- p.66 (middle) - It is a little surprising that Evie can wear flip flops to school—state that Villanova students are permitted to wear flojos earlier in book?
- p.68 (top) – Is Evie seeing this list, or imagining what the woman is writing?
- p.69 - Is the scene about Chamuco necessary? It's interesting but perhaps makes this chapter too long.
- p.72 - Great description of Evie unwinding
- p.73 - Will Aya make an appearance in the book? If not, delete the mention of her?

### Chapter 6

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p.77 (first paragraph) – Delete?

p.84 (bottom) - Great chapter ending—but those readers not familiar with the first book might be confused about Sangro culture unless it's explained at the beginning of the book.

#### Chapter 7

p.88 (middle) - The texts exchanged between Evie and Alex here and throughout the book are adorable.

#### Chapter 8

p.95 – how have 3 hours gone by?

#### Chapter 9

p.100 – Mention that it's now okay for Evie to leave the house?

p.100-101 - Should Raquel and Dee Dee come up with some off-the-wall theories about Sabrina's depression?

#### Chapter 10

p.106-110 - Again, should this scene at the horse reserve be shortened?

p.115 - Explain who drove home?

#### Chapter 11

p.124 (bottom) - When Arturo explains how performance horses get killed if they are injured, would it be helpful to mention Barbaro as an example, as this horse made headlines?

p.127 (top) - Evie's thoughts about first names that end in "A" is hilarious!

#### Chapter 12-13

pp.132-133 - This scene in which Evie overhears Sabrina on the phone is powerful—and hysterical. It makes perfect sense that it would affect Evie and cause her to ask Dee Dee if she's spoiled—and make her react when Mondo mentions the word later that evening. Will Sabrina's accusations about Evie be resolved by the end of the book?

- Evie's "date" with Alex is well-executed and hysterical (even though it goes badly for Evie).

p.143 (top) – it hasn't been that long since she cut her hair...was there really enough time for it to have grown long again?

#### Chapter 14-15

Evie and Alex's fight is also well written—and believable.

#### Chapter 20

p.207 - Evie's thoughts on Sabrina are definitely needed here to set the scene for Evie's change of heart toward her sister.

p.208 – The introduction of what's going on with Raquel seems a bit confusing ("Evie didn't find out about Raquel's problem the usual way..."). Can this paragraph be more

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direct? Maybe something more like, "Evie's mother put down her breakfast and took Evie's hand" and maybe Evie can be annoyed/wonder what could be up?  
p.209 (middle) - "Kitty and Charlie" instead of "Vicky and Charlie," correct?  
p.212 (bottom) When Arturo tells Evie that he doesn't "do text," should Evie react? It's clear throughout the book that she enjoys texting.

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Chapter 20-21

A lot of time passes between the end of ch 20 and the beginning of ch 21. Can 21 fill in more detail about what's transpired? It was a bit jarring.

Final thoughts:

Please watch for moments where Evie crosses the line between typically self-centered teenager to almost unlikably self-centered. Examples: the car accident (Evie lies, inconveniences Lindsay, who takes the blame, Evie has no remorse, only annoyance about having to pay the bill. On that note, please take a second look at the interactions between Lindsay and Evie. Could Lindsay discipline Evie in addition to covering for her? As is, Lindsay seems almost too powerless, and their dynamic underscores Evie's selfishness and makes her seem particularly spoiled); Sabrina (Evie shouldn't be expected to be a caretaker, and she's right to feel annoyed that she's bound to the house upon Sabrina's return, but she should show some interest in what's going on with her sister since she's obviously acting completely not like herself...could she try to reach out to her soon after her return?).

Throughout: please fix the many spots where the narration slips into present-tense...the entire narrative should be past tense.

While we recognize this is a first draft, the amount of repetition, typos, unfinished sentences/descriptions and the like was plentiful. We are hoping for a more polished ms in the next go-round.

Watch for overuse of the word "actually".

Watch for slips in point of view. This is Evie's story, and though it's a third-person narration we are privy to Evie's thoughts only.

Examples: page 9, "Dee Dee didn't want Evie thinking there were other reasons why she couldn't drive Jumile."; page 48, "Mrs. Harrisosn weaved her hands in the air, expressing a dramatic flair she hoped Evie would capture on paper."

We look forward to reading the revised version, as well as the conclusion of the book. You're off to a terrific start!!