

days?"

great
yes "I guess," Evie felt weird. It was one thing for her to lie to her mother, but awkward to see someone else do it, especially, Dee Dee. "So, are we going to the Alejandra's dorm? Are we gonna hang out there?"

"No." Dee Dee started to back out of the Gomezes drive way. "Didn't you hear Ally? Weren't you paying attention? She wants to celebrate, something special."

"Which is?"

"You'll see." Dee Dee smiled slyly as she pulled out onto Camino del Rio.

The next thing Evie knew, they were soon on Ventura Road, the main highway leading into Ojai, but as they got near Villanova, they passed right by it.

"Now this is getting exciting," Evie looked over her shoulder as her school passed her by. "What's with all the secrecy?"

"Just be patient," Dee Dee said. "It's gonna be fun. I've only went one time before with the girls and it was for a birthday. We didn't stay the night."

"We're staying the night, *there?*" Evie asked. "Wait, where are we going? I thought we had to be in the dorm 9 pm?"

"Evie...." Dee Dee said. "You are naïve as your mother."

Dee Dee turned off the highway and onto a residential road. It was lined with Eucalyptus trees and single story ranch style homes. Evie knew the road. It lead right to the Ojai Valley Inn, her mother's favorite place to get worked over and that's where she stopped her Beetle and put it in neutral.

"We're staying *here?*" Evie asked.

“Yup,” Dee Dee smiled.

The Ojai Valley Inn was one of the ritziest hotels and spas in the county. Presidents, dignitaries from all over the world and, more important, celebrities stayed at the Inn. It was supposedly the hideaway for the infamous secret rendezvous between (), killed their careers and her marriage.

A Ken doll looking valet ~~come~~ up and took the keys to Dee Dee’s Beetle.

“Good Evening, ladies” he greeted. “Welcome to the Ojai Valley Inn. “ He gave Dee Dee a ticket. “Will you be needing any help with your luggage?”

“Oh, no,” Dee Dee said. “We are still waiting for more from our party.”

DESCRIBE GUESTS AT INN

Bougainvillea.

“Dee Dee,” Evie looked around. “This place is for high rollers. I came here for my cousin’s wedding and rooms were expensive. My dad had a fit.”

“Yeah, it is pricey,” Dee Dee agreed. “Specially the Presidential Suite.”

“The Presidential Suite?”

“Yeah, it’s over five grand.”

“*What?*” Evie balked.

But Dee Dee didn’t respond. She saw Alejandra and waved her over.

“Hola, chicas,” Alejandra kissed both Dee Dee and Evie on their cheeks. “We just got here, too.”

“Yeah,” Denise said. “Basilio went to get another golf cart for us.”

“Golf cart?” Evie asked. “Are we gonna play golf?”

“Oh, there he is,” Alejandra looked over. “Hola Basilio. Que onda, chulo?”

Chulo?

Basilio was an old man, small, wrinkled, and missing a front tooth as well as half of his grey hair. He had pulled up in a golf cart, followed by another one behind him. It was driven by a another man, in his early thirties.

“Bueno, bueno,” Basilio rubbed his hands together in excited nervousness. He looked over at the blonde team of valet parkers.

“You have the room for us?” Alejandra asked.

“Si, si,” He wiped his forehead. “Pero, we can’t have any problems. Like last time.”

“Now, Basilio,” Alejandra gave him a sideways glance and put her arm around him. He came up to her breasts. “What have I told you? That was not my fault and I told you my father would pay for it and didn’t he? Didn’t he pay for the entire hot tub?”

“Si, si, I know. Pero, mis jefes,” He looked over again at the main entrance of the Inn. “I can’t have any problems.”

“Oh, Basilio,” Alejandra smoothed the few strands of his hair that lay across his furrowed brow. “Am I a trouble maker? Do I cause problems? Should I just go home now?”

Basilio looked alarmed. “Ay, no. No, here, follow me. I have your room ready.”

“El Suite Presidente?”

“Si, claro.”

He got in a golf cart and Alejandra and Denise and Fabby got on with him.

“Come on,” Charlene said to Dee Dee and Evie, as she got on the second cart.

Both carts puttled slowly down the narrow strip of asphalt, a private employee's road. They passed the main restaurant, one of the pools, the tennis courts and the traditional Chumash Indian sweat house. They finally they reached last building.DESCRIBE

Basilio got off the cart and walked up the stairs. All the girls followed.

"*Mira*," he handed Alejandra a set of plastic cards. "Here are the keys. Two extra for your sisters." He looked over at Fabby and Charlene.

"Oh, you are a doll," Alejandra cooed. "Too sweet for words SPANISH.. Oh, one last thing,

"Si?" he asked.

"This time, can you make *sure* you keep the buckets of **champagne coming**? Last time we had to wait.

"Okay, si."

"And a late check out," Charlene added as she flopped on a sofa. "We don't wanna be rushed out of here tomorrow."

DESCRIPTION OF THE SUITE

Alejandra went over to the main sliding glass door and opened it. It led out unto a balcony. Below was a view of the Inn's golf course and the Ojai Valley.

Fabby picked up the cordless phone. "I'm gonna get me an in-room massage and a Pixie Tangerine body scrub."

"We're already in October," Denise opened up the liquor cabinet. "They don't have the Pixie Tangerine."

"Oh, so what do they have?" Fabby asked.

"Melon Pumpkin," Alejandra answered as if having to know all the Inn's information had become a chore for her.

So," Evie asked. "How did you get this hook up Basilio?"

"I told him my family was from Zacatecas," Alejandra said. "Just like his family."

"Your family's from Zacatecas?" Evie asked. "I didn't know that."

"Hell no," Alejandra frowned. "We're from D.F., *puro*."

"Alejandra tells whomever she meets--" Denise started.

"or whomever she needs something from," Fabby interrupted.

. "-- that her family comes from the same part of Mexico that they're from,"

Denise finished.

"Are you serious?" Evie asked.

"It works all the time," Alejandra said matter of factly.

"Even if they're Chinese?"

"Yeah," Alejandra smirked. Exactly. But yeah, you know how it is. We all like to feel like one big happy brown family!" She opened the door and looked down the stairs.

"Where the fuck is that Basilio? I want the champagne already."

I love this scene

Not sure I get it...

Basilio is sneaking them in?

Seems a little unrealistic...

THEY HAVE A PARTY IN THE ROOM/DESCRIBE

Denise pulls out some pot.

"Yeah," she said. "Mondo Mota"

"Mondo Corral has the best mota," Alejandra pulled out a water pipe. "No?"

"Mondo?" Evie asked. "You get this from Mondo?"

"Yeah," Charlene said. "Everybody does."

Evie wondered if Raquel knew that Mondo dealt business with the Sangros. Well, business is business, and dealers don't discriminate. She was sure the Sangros had the money to burn.

**EVIE SMOKES POT. GIRLS GIGGLING. THE ROOM WAS SPACIOUS.
LUXURIOUS**

Everyone get sleeps and starts to crash. Evie and Charlene take one bed together.

Now, don't you try anything," Charlene teases.

They were falling asleep on the plush king sized bed, when Evie noticed her cell phnone. The pink light on it was blinking. God, she hoped it wasn't her mother. She flipped opened her phone and saw it was Alex. He had sent her a text message. What, more guilt tripping about her not going surfing?

U up? He had written.

She wrote back. Ys.

Srry abot 2nte. U mad? Alex typed.

She responded: No, nt really.

How can i make it up 2 u?

Evie was confused. What?

i wnt 2 make it up 2 u, Alex texted again.

No worries, She texted back. No problema.

Why
would
she be
mad?

Yr not mad at me?

Why was he so concerned? Evie wondered. But before she could text him back, he sent her another message

Cnt sleep Whr r u?

She didn't know what to text back. She wasn't sure if she should tell him he was at the Ojai Valley Inn with the Sangros. Ever since he had asked her what was up with her "changes," she wasn't so sure she wanted to tell him all the different things she had been doing. Especially because the one thing they were supposed to do, go surfing, had yet to happen. She typed back.

Just chillin. Whr r u?

He texted back: In bed.

In bed? This made Evie a bit surprised. Like under the covers, *in bed?* And if so, what was he wearing? Boxers? Briefs? Naked? Evie didn't know what to write back. She felt strangely excited. Alex was her friend, but it seemed, at least to her, he was flirting with her. It's so hard to tell with text messaging, but she knew for one thing, he was in bed and he was thinking of her. Not in a crass, icky Mondo kind of way, but...well, it seemed, just nice.

He texted again. U still there?

She was obviously taking too long. She wanted to write something back. Fun and cute. But all she could think of was a simple: Ys

Thout u fell asleep, he wrote.

She wrote back: No.

This
text
stuff
is
great

No? Can't she be a little bit more creative?

Alex: I dn't like fighting w u

Evie: Me 2.

Alex: Wish u were going tmorrw

Evie: Me 2, srly.

The feeling across Evie's chest felt stronger, warmer and more tingling. He wished he could be with her. He wants to be with her...tomorrow. Wait, was she reading too much into his messages? Had he ever been this way with her before? She tried to think. Alex has always been super nice and sweet to her, but he's that way with everyone. He's that way, she noticed with Dee. Sigh. She felt a bit nasaus. Maybe she was reading too much into his words.

Alex: I'll call after DP

Evie: O K

Alex: Sleep sweet...Evelina.

Sleep sweet? Alex had never, ever, said anything like that to her. And he called her by her proper name! That had to mean something, at least in Mexico. Was he just hiding behind the security of a text messaging? Behind the safety of the simple numbers and letters from his cell phone? Had he been drinking? Most likely not. He doesn't before he goes surfing.

Evie's stomach was light and her mouth felt dry. Alex? Could she be with Alex? She started to think about him. **Examples.**

Wow, Alex *could* be the one. Her first one. How about that? Evie felt like her whole face was going to crack with excitement.

She turned to her other side, making sure not to wake up Charlene and held her cell phone in her hands, The back screen lit up, creating a dark pink glow in the darkness of her covers. She went through their message history, reading and re-reading what he had typed.

Wish u were gng tmrw

I want to mke it up 2 u,

In bed.

Bed. She wasn't imagining it.. She reread his last text.

Sleep sweet.

She snapped her phone shut and held it close her chest. She would sleep sweet.

Alex *was* into her and maybe, yes, she could be into him too.

*What happened
the rest of
the night? * * **

The next day Alex phoned, just as promised. It was in the afternoon, right after Dee Dee had dropped her off after their night at the Ojai Inn. Evie's cell rang as she was going up the steps to her house.

*other stuff
too? Instead?*

"Hey," she said, holding the phone between her left cheek and left shoulder. She was juggling her Weekender and a plastic bag full of body salts, candles and soaps from the Inn's gift shop. Basilio didn't have pull with the gift shop, but Dee Dee had pull with her father's credit card.

"Hello?" Alex asked. Just his voice excited her. How did that suddenly happen?

"Alex?"

"I can't hear you," he said. "You keep fading in and out."

Great. After checking and rechecking her phone all morning and afternoon he finally calls and he can't even hear her.

"Let me call you from the house line," she told him as she started to unlock her front door.

"Okay,"

Evie went inside and ran upstairs to her room. She shut the door behind her

"Evie, are you home?" It was her mother.

"Yeah, mom. I'll be right out." She threw her **bags** on the carpet and searched for her cordless phone.

"Did you have fun?" Her mother was now coming down the hall.

"Uh huh," Evie said.

"Evie," her mother stood on the other side of the closed door. "Why are you being so evasive? Did you color your hair again?"

"No, You can come in. I'm just looking for my phone."

Her mother came in and notice the bag from the Ojai Inn. "What is all this?"

Shit.

"Oh," She tried to sound nonchalant. "Dee Dee gave it to me."

"Dee Dee?"

"Yeah, she went there with Graciela and...it was just a lot that she didn't want."

Wow," mother looked over the items. "That was very generous of her. You know this mud is from the Dead Sea, from Israel. It's very expensive." She held up the jar and looked at it.

"Uh huh."

show her picking it up.....