

The next afternoon all the girls are in Dee Dee's room.

DESCRIBE ROOM

It's a lazy Saturday afternoon and they are still lounging in their pajamas, enjoying the comforts of Maldita (iPod), Laguna Beach (TiVo) and Elephant Eye's (DiVoured).

"I can't believe I ate three Eyes," Evie let out a long belch, less out of necessity but more to shock the room.

Dee Dee crinkled her nose and waved her hand in front of her face. "Evie, gross! How can I work under these conditions?"

Along with spiral notebooks, loose papers and a few school books, Dee Dee was sprawled out across her **chenille bedspread**. She was re-doing Evie's Spanish homework. That was one of the perks of having Dee Dee back from Mexico. Not only did Evie get another best friend, but a best friend who had similar enough handwriting and superior conjugation skills to whip through Spanish II.

"Hey, Denise," Dee Dee asked Charlene who was on the carpet painting her toenails. "Would I use *por* or *para* in this sentence?" She read the sentence outloud.

Charlene answered off the top of her head, no pause, no guessing, no nada. Okay, Dee Dee was a best friend with connections.

Evie was looking at some of the many framed photos of Dee Dee and Rocio on

Dee Dee's dresser. There was one in particular that interested her, where Dee Dee was wearing a black knee length skirt and heels. Rocio was in a slacks and a sport coat. They both looked very grown up in the picture and were posing on the steps of a fancy building.

"Where was this taken at?" she asked Dee Dee.

"Which one?" Dee Dee looked up.

Evie held the picture up.

"Oh, that was at Bellas Artes. We had just seen a ballet. I can't remember the name of it."

"It was probably El Flor de Xochimitlco," Alejandra said knowingly. "That's *always* there."

"So," Evie asked, still looking at the photo. "How did you and Rocio hook up?"

It was still on Evie's mind, all the topics that had been brought up from the day and night before, about being pretty enough, feminine enough, not having a boyfriend. Raquel who had the male attention a priority, but now with Dee Dee back, and spending the evening with the Sangros, she was feeling a bit out of the loop.

"What do you mean by hook up?" Dee Dee didn't look up from Evie's homework.

Best friend and yes, a diligent cheater, too!

"She means," Charlene said. "When did you first fuck him."

"Oh, *that*," Dee Dee smiled coyly and looked over at the same photo. "It was right away and then all the time. I think we even did it that night, at Bellas Artes."

“If I know you,” Denise said. “You did it in the bathroom, in the men’s bathroom.”

“Yeah,” Fabby added. “Right in the stall.”

“No,” Alejandra added. “Right on top of the urinal. SPANISH and all.”

Gross!” Dee Dee wrinkled her nose again.

If I know you? How well did Denise think she knew Dee Dee? Evie was the older, long time friend and this was all news to her – Dee Dee’s supposed sexual exploits.

“No, but really,” Dee Dee got up from her bed, stretched her shoulders. “It was love, right away. That’s how you know it’s real. We practically finish each other’s sentences. Also, he comes from a great family.”

“That seems really important, huh? In Mexico, I mean,” Evie asked. “Family.”

“It is to me.” Fabby interrupted. “I don’t want to be dating someone from a (DEROGATORY SPANISH WORD).”

“You know,” Evie thought outloud. “I don’t even think Raquel’s even met Jose’s parents and they’ve been going out for over a year.”

“Well, I’d keep her hidden.” Alejandra smirked. “Jose’s too good for her. I don’t know why he’s so into her.”

Evie suddenly felt awkward. *Why* did she say that about Raquel? She didn’t want to start capping on her, or even on Jose, for that matter, especially in front to the Sangros. They were, still in a way, her friends.

“I know what he sees in her,” Charlene started. “Or should I say, what he *feels* in her.”

The Sangros laugh.

“That’s cold,” Evie frowned. She wanted to change the subject. What was this anyway? *Mean Girls, Mexicana Style?*

“No, it’s not,” Alejandra said. “It’s warm. At least mine is. Very, very warm, sometimes sticky, too.”

“Ay,” Denise laughed. “Que mala!”

“Ally,” Dee Dee looked at Alejandra. “We don’t wanna hear about your purple taco.”

“How do *you* know it’s purple?”

More laughter.

HOW DOES EVIE FEEL?

“So, Evie,” Dee Dee had turned over to her back. Her tone suggested she had something on her mind. “Have you thought about a touch up?”

Evie looked down at her toes. She was hoping no one had noticed. The chips of blue paint from last night were now specks. God, what chips did she leave floating in Dee Dee’s pool? “Yeah, I guess I am in need of a paint job.”

“No,” Denise laughed when she saw Evie looking at her feet. “She means your hair.”

“My hair?” Evie touched her head and looked at herself in Dee Dee’s vanity mirror. Her hair had been blue for a few weeks and she had a good amount of black roots showing, but with all the Raquel and Flojo drama she hadn’t really thought about her appearance. She turned her head from side to side. “I hadn’t really noticed.”

“Well, it’s *very* noticeable,” Alejandra got up from the bed and went over to Evie. She looked at her through the mirror. “How about not just a touch up but something

something more decent?

is this too much?

good detail but awkward

completely cool and *en la moda*?"

"*En la moda*?" Evie asked. "I can tell you right off I am *not* getting braid extensions."

"No," Alejandra smirked. "We're are not talking those cheap touristo trenzas you get in Acapulco." She fluffed the top of Evie's hair. "But what if you went with a different color, right Dela?"

"Like *what*?" Evie was suspicious.

"Some highlights?" Dee Dee offered cheerfully.

"No." Evie pulled her head away from both Alejandra and Dee Dee. "No way," At Villanova, highlights were the bona fide mark of a Sangro. It was one thing getting to know the Sangros, getting to accept the Sangros, but to look like one of them. No way. Raquel would have a fit. "I'm *not* going blonde. You gotta be kidding."

"Not really blonde," Dee Dee assured her. "We could dye your hair back to brown, a light brown and give you some highlights, just like a half crown and overall, it would look --"

"Blonde," Evie said matter of factly.

"But just not blonde," Alejandra tried to persuade her. Like those bland blanquitas at the Pacific View mall, mas exciting. You're a surfer, right? Don't you want to be blonde?"

"Like blonde supposedly defines a surfer?" Evie said. "Alejandra, OG wave riders were brunettes. Besides, blonde stands for everything I am against."

"Oh?" Dee Dee raised an eyebrow. "And blue stands for everything you are for?"

all this is good stuff

Just then, Graciela tapped at the side of Dee Dee's bedroom doorway. "Dela," she asked. "*Estas ocupadas?*"

"No, *ama*," Dee Dee called out. "*Entre.*"

Graciela walked in, looking through her purse. All the Sangros looked up and said hello in Spanish. Evie joined in.

"I'm leaving on errands," Graciela said. "*Necesitas algo?*"

"Are you going to Longs?" Dee Dee asked.

"Longs?" Graciela asked. "What do you need from Longs?"

"Just a **One Day Response**," Dee Dee said nonchalantly, patting her stomach.

"Un pregnancy kit,"

"*Mande?!*" Graciela looked up from her purse, her eyes and mouth stretched wide in horror.

"Ha!" Dee Dee laughed. "Just messing!"

"Ay," Graciela playfully slapped Dee Dee's arm. "*Que mala!*"

The whole room giggled and again and this time Evie joined in.

"No," Dee Dee continued. "We just need hair color." She looked at Evie defiantly. "Right, Evie?"

"Dela..." Evie started.

"Come on, Evie," Alejandra joined in. "You'll look great...*un taco de ojo!*"

"A taco de *what?*"

"Ay," Graciela clicked her tongue and looked over Evie's blue mop. "*Porque, no?*"

"See," Dee Dee chimed. "Gracie knows. She used to own a beauty

First Response

funny but
is this
the kind
of relationship
they
have?

shop, right in the heart of D.F., right, Gracie?"

"Graciela," she corrected Dee Dee said as if she's had to a million times.

"You are *not* coloring my hair," Evie said as if she had to correct Dee Dee a million times.

"Yeah," Dee Dee moved away from the mirror. "I guess Raquel wouldn't like it."

"It has nothing to do with Raquel," Evie turned to Dee Dee. "This is *my* hair."

"Okay, okay," Dee Dee said. "I'll drop it. Never mind 'ama," she told Graciela.

"We don't need anything."

As Graciela left the room, Dee Dee looked Evie over one more time. "I really wish you'd rethink it."

"Well, I won't, thank you," Evie was adamant. She joined Charlene on the carpet and started to go through Dee Dee's supply of nail polish. There were as many as twelve shades of pink. The least she could do is cover up her tacky toes and she finally decided on Peyton Pink.

Dee Dee went back to her bed and reached down under it. "Hey, I have something for you."

"For me?" Evie looked up.

"Yeah."

"Dela, you ain't gonna bribe me."

"No, (SPANISH-SILLY)," Dee Dee said. "I was gonna give this to you next month, for your birthday, but I want you to have it now." She pulled out a small flat wrapped package.

"Hey," Charlene teased. "What about me? I'm the one with the birthday next

week.”

“Oooh,” Evie eyed the package. “Seriously, I can open it now?”

“Yeah,” Dee Dee handed it to her. “You know it’s not like you haven’t been blonde before.”

“Huh?” Evie was confused.

The Sangros huddled around Evie as she started to unwrap the foil paper. It was a picture frame. Another picture of Dee Dee and Rocio? But when she flipped the frame over, it was actually a color photo of Dee Dee and her, when they were young girls.

“Is that you?” Denise asked.

Evie immediately covered her mouth. “Oh my God!” She laughed. “This is so funny. I totally remember this day!”

The photo was of her and Dee Dee, ^{both 9} ~~two nine~~ year olds in costume for the Marina Park Beauty Contest. Just about every girl, including the two of them, dressed as the Coppertone Girl. They all sported blonde wigs, pulled into pigtails and tied with blue ribbons. Dee Dee and Evie each wore a two-piece blue bathing suit and one of the girls, Evie remembered, even had a little stuffed animal, a small black dog, attached to the back of her bathing bottoms to reveal a “tan line”.

“I still don’t understand why we didn’t win.” Dee Dee smirked as she looked at the picture. “I mean, our tans were for real and they gave first place to a *gabacha*!”

Evie laughed and continue to look at the photo. She actually looked cute in the blonde wig. Then she looked at Dee Dee who had gone back to doing her homework. Dee Dee *was* a really good friend, she thought. A very good friend. She then looked her own hair in Dee Dee’s vanity mirror. Blonde? Nah. Then she looked at herself again. Oh,

what's a few highlights really gonna do anyway? Raquel ^{will} ~~would~~ *freak*, that's for sure.

Besides, Evie thought, wasn't it every girl's dream to not only *have* a warm, purple taco, but to be a taco de ojo, as well?

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The next morning, Monday, when Evie got up, she startled herself in her bathroom mirror. She had forgotten about what she did the night before. Her hair. She leaned over the bathroom sink and squinted. Was that Charo squinting back at her? She was... *blonde*. But not just any old blonde as Dee Dee pointed out, *Honey Blonde*.

"Oooh," Alejandra had *raved* when Dee Dee and Charlene were done blow drying Evie's hair the night before. "I wish I done my *pelo* this shade. Que cool!"

But now, the morning after, neither Dee Dee, Charlene or Alejandra was around to fluff her ego. Evie looked herself over and wondered if she truly looked so *que cool*. She tilted her head from side to side and grimaced. Never mind Sangro stripes, she was blonde, all blonde, a one hundred percent Honey Blonde chica. Maybe it was too early in the morning and too early in the process to embrace change?

As she came out of her bathroom, she could hear that Monday morning life had started as usual for the Gomez household. *El Mercadito* was on the kitchen radio and she could hear her mother downstairs, talking to Lindsay. This was going to be her mother's first chance to see Evie. Last night, after Dee Dee had dropped her off at home, she went straight to her room. Thankfully her mother and father were catching up on their *TiVo*. But what would her mother say this morning?

"Well," she yawned. "Here goes nada." She threw on some sweat pants and

headed down to the kitchen.

Lindsay, pulling pan dulce out from the toaster oven, was the first to see Evie. Her face **changed** to a composite of surprise and confusion. "Evelina!"

"Hey, Linds," Evie said ~~as confidently~~ as she could as took over a stool at the counter.

Evie's mother was still in her pool robe, her hair wet from her morning swim. She looked over at Evie. "Evie!"

Here it comes -- the Gomez fury.

But to Evie's surprise, her mother's initial shock was not followed with criticism, but rather curiosity. "When did you fix your hair?" Moved away from the coffee maker to look over Evie.

"Oh," Evie timidly fluffed the top with her fingers. "Last night at Dee Dee's." Then quickly added. "It was her idea."

"I like it." Her mother sipped coffee from her mug. "Dee Dee did it? I'm impressed."

Which were the golden words? Evie wondered. 'Dee Dee did it' or "It was Dee Dee's idea?" Nonetheless, ~~Dee Dee seemed to be the gold child who could do no wrong.~~

She would definitely make a note of that. *Dee Dee thought it would okay to go to the party in L.A. and then get a hotel room in Malibu so we wouldn't have to drive home drunk on the Pacific Coast Highway.*

"You know," Evie's mother smoothed her own damp hair. "I used to be blonde."

"I remember Dad saying that." Evie yawned again. "I don't think I've seen any pictures of you with blonde hair."