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THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO VERSIONS OF EDITS IN THIS FOLDER. WE LEAVE IT TO THE RESEARCHER TO DETERMINE THE CORRECT SETS.

But Raquel was her best friend and best friends thrive on doling out advice at any hour, right? But early or not, first things first. To even make a call, Evie would have to get her phone back. Her mother had snatched it away the minute she laid down her two week sentence and there was no way she was gonna risk going downstairs to make a call from the kitchen phone. No reason to shock anyone, just yet.

Evie got up from her bed, walked over to her door and cautiously looked down the hallway. She could hear Lindsay, the Gomez's housekeeper, listing to El Mercadito on her radio in the kitchen downstairs, but other than that, the house was quiet. Evie knew her father must've already left for one of his bakeries and her mother was probably still doing her morning laps in the pool. It was the perfect time to sneak in her parent's room and retrieve her phone.

Evie crossed the hall to her parent's bedroom. Vicki and Ruben Gomez' bedroom had that typical parental feel to it; characterless, functional and intimidating. As soon as Evie entered she felt like an intruder, more so when she saw the framed family portrait on her mother's night stand. It projected a seemingly successful family: big smiles, straight postures and skin tanned by the California sun. Who could want more in a family? In a life? Evie remembered the exact day the photo was taken just two years earlier, before her sister Sabrina left for Stanford. The photo was of her father, Ruben (laid back, easy going); mother, Vicki (uptight, control freak); Sabrina (sister, obviously smart); Ernesto Molesto, (Yappy Pomeranian, now deceased) and of herself (head full of hair, long and lovely). It was a harsh reminder of Evie's former self. She looked at the picture and sighed. She had definitely taken her hair for granted. She rubbed the back of her head. *Damn.*

Just like she suspected, Evie found her phone ~~was~~ in her mother's night stand drawer. Small, sleek, and covered with a pattern of hibiscus flowers, it looked almost foreign to her. Could two weeks really have made a difference? She took the phone, flipped the family photo downward and went back to her room. As soon as she got back to her futon bed, she rolled back on and punched speed dial to Raquel second she turned her phone back on. Hello life!

"Hullo?" A gravely voice answered on the other end. It was evident that Raquel, as probably all the other Flojos, had been out the night before. Evie couldn't help but feel jealous. It seemed like forever since she had been out with her fellow Flojos.

"Hey, it's me," Evie said.

"Heeey," Raquel stretched and Evie could sense a smile on the other end. "So you got your phone back."

"Uh huh," Evie said. "My first day of freedom. I'm a liberated woman."

"*Woman?*" Raquel teased, her voice still hoarse. "Is there something I don't know? Was this whole being grounded thing just a ploy so you could keep private time with some boy?"

"Boy?" Evie teased back. "I don't *think* so. Maybe a *man*." She looked at herself again at the mirrors and grimaced. "So... what did you guys do last night?"

"Nothing," Raquel let out one of her famous moose sized yawns. "Jose and I just kicked it here. We watched Fuel all night. *Boring.*"

"Oh," Evie tried to sound unaffected. "That's cool." Evie pushed down her blanket with her feet and stretched up to yank her ceiling fan cord down. South Cali



mornings get hella hot fast and thank God she gave in and got the fan her mother wanted for all the bedrooms.

That Raquel had a somewhat uneventful evening, Evie thought, was actually very cool. She couldn't help but feel shamelessly relieved that her friends weren't out having fun when she couldn't be. Plus, it meant that they'd still be in to going out that night. Sometimes whenever all the Flojos partied too much they skip a second night of extra curricular activity; choosing to just chill by a pool or in front of someone's Plasma TV. Pools and Plasmas. The combo seems to be a selling point for sedentary options in Spanish Hills. Each Flojo household had either one or both.

one  
more  
draft to  
make  
this  
electric

The Flojos have been friends since the beginning last year, Freshman year. Evie has actually known Raquel since they were both little kids but when Raquel hooked up with Jose, his friends, Mondo and Steve, were automatically included in the package. There were few students at Villanova Preparatory High School like them, kids who had the letters Z or X or Q in their names, (Read: Mexican). That is, unless you counted the Sangronas, the tight clique of snooty girls from Mexico City and Evie did *not* want to count them into anything. It was actually the Sangronas who inspired Evie and Raquel to call themselves The Flojos, after the name brand of flip flops they all wear. The Sangronas couldn't believe that anyone, especially someone with Mexican parents, would want "lazy" stamped on their sandals and so when Cristina, the plump Sangrona with the big mole on her neck questioned it, Raquel insisted that she, Evie, Jose, Mondo and Steve take the tag Flojo as their own.

cont.

I  
think  
this  
works.

The Sangronas were the antithesis of the Flojos. First of all, they were resident students at Villanova, which meant they lived on campus, unlike The Flojos who drove in

every day from Spanish Hills. Also, the Sangronas proudly (and loudly) claimed Mexico as their home; meaning they were born there and that in addition to their gold cards, they carried green ones.

Actually Evie's didn't have a gold card. She was lucky that her parent's even gave her a lousy cell phone. Among the Flojos, Evie's father was the only one who'd made a lucrative career, slinging pan dulce and her mother **insisted** that they shouldn't take her great Grandma Pia's pan dulce recipes granted. If it wasn't for her and Evie's father's hard work, they wouldn't be where they are now; in a big ol' house with a swimming pool in the back and non Japanese cars in the front. Besides, Vicki Gomez says, the Gomez family wasn't rich, but merely "comfortable." But to Evie, there is rich and there is poor, and being poor is definitely not comfortable. Besides, Evie thought, what does her mother know about hard work? Once the family's bakery chains took off, Vicki Gomez no longer has to lift a finger, except when it's to point to which Isabella Fiore bag or Via Spigas she wants the sales clerk to ring up.

"So," Evie finally said to Rachel. "I chopped off my hair,"

"Huh?" Raquel asked.

"My hair," Evie repeated. "It's gone."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, I hacked it off. All of it and..." Evie paused for dramatic flair. "I dyed it blue."

"What?"

"Yeah." Evie felt surprising proud and a bit smug. She had initially wanted to call Raquel for help, support. But now she liked the idea that she did something so radical, on

her own and without the consultation of her best friend. It was so unlike her. But it was the start of the sophomore year, she figured, she was no longer the timid freshman everyone barely knew last year. It was fall, time for change. She might even be so bold to request an extra half hour to her curfew. Well, maybe in time.

"So what are you, like all punk rock now?" Raquel laughed, her voice still deep and groggy. "You gonna be all Brody and sport some safety pin through your lip?"

Evie laughed, but suddenly felt uncomfortable. She hadn't thought that her new look was gonna make her look punk rock. At least she didn't get a tattoo. That's so Lollapalooza '98. But punk rock? No. That's the last thing she wanted to be. She didn't even think of that.

And *that's* exactly what her mother wanted her to do. To think. More. When she showed up past her curfew last month, her mother remained surprisingly calm, but it was still very clear how upset she was.

"Do you know what is was like for your father and me to be waiting here? Waiting and wondering where you were?" her mother steamed coolly. "You didn't couldn't even call."

~~When~~ Evie protested that her phone, as well as well as Raquel's, kept losing a signal in the hills, her mother wouldn't have any of it. "Well, since your phone is of no use to you anyway, maybe two weeks without it won't make a difference. Maybe that time will give you some time to think about your actions."

And two long dreadful weeks alone in the ~~chilly~~ Gomez Penitentiary did give Evie plenty of time to think. *Plen-tee*. She thought about how her mother was such a nazi about time and punctuality. She thought, a lot, about moving away, up north and even



going to a public high school in the Bay Area. She could live with her sister Sabrina and even though she was in that lame sorority ("What are you talking about?" Sabrina would always defend. "00 is the most prestigious Latina sorority in the country!"), Evie would be a good six hour car ride from Spanish Hills. Let's see her mother try to keep tabs on that. But Evie quickly gave up the idea once she remembered how friggin' cold the ocean gets up in Nor Cal. No matter where she lived, Evie still wanted to surf and no wetsuit was gonna keep her ~~that~~ warm. *in that ocean.*

"So your mom must've freaked," Raquel said.

"No, not really," Evie looked at herself in her mirrors again, still trying to sound nonchalant.

"That's 'cause she hasn't seen it yet," Raquel guessed right. "Huh?"

"Well, not yet, but...." Evie wanted to change the subject. "So, hey what time are you guys picking me up?"

"Um," Raquel yawned again. "I guess around 8ish. Mondo's driving."

"As long as I get home by 12:30," Evie reminded Raquel. "No later. I mean, not even three minutes late into the drive way, I gotta be *in* this house by half past."

"That's if your mom doesn't freak out over your hair." Raquel cleared her throat. "~~We all know how she can get.~~" *spell out numbers below 100*

"Not even," Evie surprised at herself for defending her mother. "It's really no big deal, Raquel."

But as Raquel spoke, Evie did begin to worry. What would her mother say about her hair? She was known to have the Gomez Fury, an unstoppable wrath of anger that

*good-  
some,  
tension  
albeit  
simple*

ignited when something doesn't go her way. But she wouldn't keep Evie from going out, would she?

Just then someone knocked on her bedroom. Evie sunk into her futon and quickly covered her head with a loose sheet. Well, she thought, she would soon find out just how strong the Gomez Fury could get.

"Evelina?"

*Whew.*

It was actually Lindsay, asking from the hallway. "Are you awake?" she asked.

Si, si. Lindsay." Evie answered, relieved. "Come in," she called out. "Hey," she told Raquel, "I gotta go."

"Yeah, yeah," Raquel yawned again and she threw in one last jab. "Good luck...*Blue Bonnet.*"

Evie flipped her cell phone shut and tossed it onto her carpet.

"Oh," Lindsay said as came in her room and saw Evie in bed. "You're still sleeping,"

"No, I'm awake." Evie answered, "I'm just laying here."

Lindsay looked around Evie's room and sighed. "Ay, Evelina. This is not good. Let me clean in here today. It would make your mother so happy."

"Lindsay, I really don't *care* what makes my mother happy."



"Okay, then it would make me happy." Lindsay straightened up her scattered pile of Amoeba catalogues and copies of *SG*. "If there is nothing to clean, then there is no work and I have no job. Do you want me to lose my job?"

"Oh, Lindsay," Evie rolled her eyes. "*Please*. You always do this."

Lindsay smiled sheepishly and asked, "Ay," Lindsay's expression changed.

"What did you do to that poor girl?"

Lindsay was referring to *Blue Crush* movie poster above Evie's bed. Raquel had snagged it from Hollywood Video for her and Evie was gonna toss the thing, but when Raquel drew a **cow ring**, unibrow and facial hair on Kate Bosworth's face and then put an elaborate red heart around Michelle Rodriquez, she thought it was funny and decided to keep it. Even though Sanoe's the only real surfer in the movie, Evie felt you just gotta give props to Michelle Rodriquez.

Evie turned to look up at the poster and when she did, the sheet slipped downward, exposing her bright blue head.

"Ay!" Lindsay held one hand to her chest. "Evelina, what did you do? Your hair."

"Oh, I cut it." Evie tried to sound matter of fact.

"Yes, I see that." Lindsay's face remained shocked. "But the color. It's...does your mother know?"

"Well," Evie tousled her hair nervously. "She's always going on about money and how hard it is to some by. So she should be happy that I saved her a hundred bucks to do my own hair."

Lindsay's eyes widened. "*You* pay a *hundred* dollars to have your hair done?"

Evie immediately felt embarrassed. The look on Lindsay's face made her realize how frivolous it seemed pay someone a hundred bucks to take a pair of scissors to a head of hair. That kind of bank was a lot to Lindsay, who sent most of her earnings to help her family in Mexico.

"Well," Evie started to explain. "It's not just for a cut. I mean, I get it washed, and they give it a blow dry, style it. Plus, I always get a one on one consultation, a lot of times with Viggo, he's the owner of the salon." But the more she spoke, the more Evie knew how VH1 Diva it all sounded.

"Ay, dios." Lindsay went on about Evie's new look. "I just can't imagine what your mother will think."

"Think about what?" Vicki Gomez asked as she entered Evie's bedroom. Even so early in the morning, Evie's mother looked so effortlessly stylish in her black one piece and a plush white towel wrapped around her wet hair. There was no time to duck and cover. Evie was caught in her full blue glory.

"Oh my god!" Vicki Gomez covered her mouth. "Evie! What the hell did you do to your hair?"

Evie didn't even have a chance to explain. The Gomez fury was just igniting. "Did you forget that school photos are next week?" Vicki Gomez towered over Evie with her hands on her hips. She began inspected her hair as if she was a veterinarian searching for fleas on a dog. "Do you expect your father and me to fork over four hundred to document *this*?"

Evie looked over at Lindsay. *Yes, Lindsay, I'm afraid we also drop a few hundred for some measly school photos. Oh, but it does include wallet sized.*

*funnel.*  
*sort of heavy*  
*on the money*

“What the hell were you thinking?” Vicki Gomez was furious. “I have a good mind to ground you a month for this stunt!”

“*What?*” Evie pulled away from her mother. She was horrified at the thought. “Why? Just because *I* wanted to do something different to *my* hair?”

“No, because you did this purposely to piss me off. That’s just the problem, Evie. You don’t think of other people and how your actions may affect them.” She looked over Evie’s bed. “Oh, great. Look.” She pulled the pillow out from under Evie. “You stained the pillow. Did you even think to rinse your hair out or put down a towel?” She looked down and around the bed. “Oh my God! Look, look at the carpet!”

Evie looked down and sure enough there was a trail of small blue blotches across her peach colored carpet. It ran from her bathroom to her bed. She hadn’t noticed it before.

“Don’t worry, Senora Vicki,” Lindsay said as she looked over the stains. “I can get it out. It’s still fresh.”

“We are gonna see what your father says about this,” Vicki Gomez ignored Lindsay and continued to rant. “Do *not* make any plans this evening until he gets home and we can discuss this.”

“You mean *tonight*?” Evie **asked**.

“Yes, *tonight*.” Evie’s mother kneeled down and rubbed the stained carpet with her fingers.

“But I already made plans and Dad usually stays late on Saturdays. I told you I was going out with —”



"Evie, you are just going to have to wait." She stood back up. She gave Lindsay the pillow, asked her in Spanish to work on it immediately and then huffed out of Evie's room. Lindsay followed in silence.

Evie was on the verge of tears. The thought of not seeing her friends that night was unthinkable. And what about her mother's threat? She would *die* if she got grounded again. But for an entire *month*? No. *No* way.

She leaned over her bed and grabbed her cell phone from the floor. She speed dialed her dad at his main bakery.

"Gomez Panaderia." It sounded like Stephanie, the assistant manager, who answered but Evie was too upset to be sure.

"This is Evie," she tried to keep her voice from breaking. "Can I speak to my dad?"

"Oh, hi Evie." It was Stephanie. "Sure, hold on."

As Stephanie called out for Evie's father, she tried to regain her composure. Her dad would listen, she thought. He was a reasonable man, more than her mother, that's for sure. She could not live through another night in lockdown. She *would* go crazy. Who knows what she would do. Cut herself her own tattoo?

feels very  
after  
school  
special  
time

3

According to Vicki Gomez's Handbook of Rules and Regulations there were conditions and penalties for curfew (12:30 am, unless otherwise arranged), poor grades (no going out at all until a minimum B average is maintained), and boys in the house

feels over  
the  
top  
right

Evie fights for her own cause →

Mom lets  
her have  
it out  
about  
curfew

*fix huge*  
(absolutely, under any conditions, can they be in Evie's bedroom) but there was nothing in the rule book about cutting one's hair and dying it blue. Evie's father agreed. There was no rule, no violation, therefore no punishment.

*chapter  
breaks  
need  
to be  
organized  
more  
seriously*

*Chapter Break*  
"Ay Vicki," Ruben Gomez clicked his tongue at his wife over the phone. "The color's not permanent and the hair will grow back. What teenager doesn't experiment with change? Remember when we were dating and you wanted to look Teena Marie? Remember how angry your mother was when you had your hair cut and dyed blonde? Remember?"

And so Evie Gomez was sprung. She actually wanted to click her heels (if she knew how) as waited on the front porch to be picked up by her fellow Flojos. She was so exited to finally be out of her mother's clutches and to be far, far away from the suffocating gates of Spanish Hills. But as time passed and 8:00 turned to 8:30 and 8:30 turned into 9 pm, she grew impatient and then angry as she paced back and forth across the porch. Where the hell was that Mondo? By the time his convertible pulled up in the Gomez's driveway, Evie was ready to blow a fuse.

*would there be more of these chapters?*

*messy  
used  
time-wise*

"Why are you always so late?" She snapped as she walked toward his car. "I've got a curfew, remember? You're dipping into my night."

"Oh, you know Mondo," Jose started to explain as he got out of the front seat and took over the back with Raquel. "He ain't called Fed Mex for nothing."

"That's right," Mondo smiled unapologetically into the rearview mirror. "When you absolutely, positively gotta be there...an hour late." He looked at Evie and finally noticed her hair through the darkness. "Whoa, what did you do with your hair?"

Jose looked up at Evie and laughed. "Hey, yeah. Blues Clues!"

*funny*

"More like Blues Clueless" Mondo laughed as Evie got into the front seat. "So why'd you mangle your mane? It looked good before."

"You guys, shut up already," Raquel looked Evie over from the back seat. "Evie, don't even listen to them. You can't help it you screwed up your hair. Don't even worry. We'll take it to Viggo tomorrow and he'll fix it. He'll fix it up real good."

Evie snapped on her seat belt, propped her feet on the dash and said nothing. So, these were her so-called friends she was just dying to be out with?

more elaborate in her writing

When they pulled up to the party Mondo killed his convertible's ignition and told everyone, "Okay, just 'cause I drove does *not* make me the designated driver. Steve should already be here and you guys can get a lift back from him, if need be."

"Dude," Jose complained from the back seat. "We all can't go back with Steve. He's got his truck."

"Yeah, a truck with a nice wide flat bed." Mondo reached under his feet and lifted the floor mat to retrieve a rolled up baggie.

"Nice friend," Evie smirked.

"I am a nice friend," Mondo said. "So nice that I am giving you an advance warning."

"About what?" Evie asked.

"That it's a possibility you ain't gonna have a ride back to Spanish Hills."

The party was an after hours gig at Pacifica Abalone Farm. Pacifica is near Bard Beach, a sketchy area that's far in distance and even farther in attitude from Spanish Hills. Evie's parent's would die if they knew she went to parties out that way. (need more?)

WJ  
about word- yes. ✓  
VERY important



"Okay, okay," Raquel said, irritated. "Enough of the transport details." She opened her door and grabbed her corduroy jacket from under her. "I'll take the friggin' bus back home if I have to. Let's just party already!"

"Uh," Jose hesitated and eyed the baggie in Mondo's hand. "Why don't you and Evie go on ahead?" he said. "We'll catch up."

"What?" Raquel glared at Jose.

"Just go ahead," he said again.

"Yeah," Mondo agreed, looking at Raquel through the rearview mirror. "You and Evie can go."

"Jose," Raquel started. "We came together and now you're gonna stay here and party with good stuff without me?"

"Oh, this ain't no simple 'good stuff.'" Mondo dangled the baggie in front of Raquel's face. "This mota's *mean* and definitely not to be wasted on mere baby players." He looked over at Evie. "No offense, Blues Clues."

"No offense taken, *Mondo*," Evie glared at him

Jose  
It's moments like this when he plays the superior that Evie so badly wants bring up the time when she and Steve took him out to C Street. After watching Boring House, or whatever that lame surf reality show was called, he was all about wanting to surf. God, he was so pathetic, she remembered; the way he clung on to that foam top rental for dear life. Then when some minor white water knocked him down and the board *tapped* the side of his face (Evie knows, 'cause she witnessed the whole thing) he panicked, big time. "Oh my God!" he cried. "My nose! Am I bleeding? I'm a bleeding?" And he had the nerve to call Evie a baby player?

put in scene  
yes

*that way?* "Jose!" Raquel was becoming livid. "Are you gonna let Mondo talk to me ~~this~~ *1562*

"What way?" Jose asked, oblivious. *why hold?*

"Dude," Mondo **laughed and clapped his hands together**. "Are you, like, already high?"

"Aargh!" Raquel punched Jose's arm. "You two deserve each other!" She started to get out of the car. "Come on, Evie." She turned back to Jose. "And Jose, you better be no later than twenty minutes. Twenty minutes, Jose or I will kick your ass."

Kicking Jose's *ass* is definitely a threat Raquel could carry out. With her broad shoulders and big back (with a mouth to match, says Mondo) Jose and Mondo *don't* call her Rocky for nothing. **Raquel practically looms over all the other Flojos and is** *was* *Tense!* **someone** Evie wouldn't want on her bad side, that's for sure.

As soon as Raquel and Evie got out of the car, Raquel grabbed Evie's arm and announced that they had to immediately find Steve. She pulled out her cell phone with her free hand and hit speed dial.

"Yeah, we just got here," Raquel told Steve on the other end. "No, we're coming from Bard. Yeah...okay. Meet us now, Steve. *Now.*"

A few minutes later, Steve appeared juggling three plastic cups filled with beer. He handed one to each of them.

*0* "Hey," he looked at Evie and smiled. "Your hair."

"I know...it looks stupid." Evie thought she might as well beat people to the punch. *looks good.*

"No, it's cute. Sorta punk rock pixie."

"What took you so long?" Raquel snapped as she took one of the beers.

“Whoa, Raquel,” Steve said. “If you’re gonna be like this all evening, you can find yourself another escort. And let me tell you, with this crowd, you’re gonna need one.”

“She is *not* in a good mood,” Evie nudged Steve.

“So, what else is new?” He took a drink of his beer and looked around. “Where’s Jose and Mondo?”

“They’re back at Mondo’s car,” Raquel said. “Having a private party of their own.”

“And you didn’t stay?” Steve asked, surprised.

“*We*,” Raquel said, “weren’t invited.”

“That’s weird,” Steve frowned. “But hey, you guys gotta check out this band they have. They’re like some cheesy ‘80s throwback, but they definitely aren’t clued in.”

Raquel and Evie started to follow Steve through the farm and down towards the beach. It was a typical fall evening in California. The Santa Ana winds were already making their presence and there was that unexplainable relaxed residue of summer still in the air. Evie was glad she decided on her pink board shorts and suede pink Flojo flip flops. Even though they didn’t really match with her hair.

“The party’s right after those,” Steve pointed toward some water filters, just about 50 yards ahead of them.

“What’s in these things?” Raquel stopped to stoop over one of the low concrete tanks.

“Abalone spawn!” Steve deepened his voice. “Some very evil stuff.”



"No, really," Evie started to put her hand in the bubbling seawater. Even in the dark she could make out hundreds of rough, brown, quarter sized abalone shells, clinging to the tank's walls. "What are they doing in here?"

"Evie!" Raquel shrieked, slapping her hand away. "Don't put your hand in there!"

"Yeah, Evie," Steve laughed. "Like the oil from your hand you might taint the water and ruin the experience for future visitors."

"Steve, quit being a jerk," Raquel said.

"Don't freak out, Raquel," Steve said. "It's just baby abalone. These tanks are like a little nursery for them." He looked into the tanks. "But check it out, it takes like five years just to get one abalone, full sized."

"Five years?" Raquel said. "Damn, they must crank some bank here! I should get Jose to cultivate *this* instead."

Steve was over reacting about Raquel and Evie needing an escort at the party. But that's the way Steve was, always playing up his namesake, Caballero. He wasn't as fine as Mondo who was tall and had a mop of black ringlets and he wasn't as funny as Jose, but Steve, well, he was just nice. Nice and very reliable.

The crowd was sketchy, but far from threatening. It's funny how people might think of a California beach party and picture a bunch of fit, golden tanned teenagers running around a bon fire, and this scene couldn't have been farther from that Hollywood façade. They were hard beach partiers who have done their time: either in the joint, in rehab or too many unemployed days on the beach. Everyone was old, like, in their 30s, at least, but they could have actually been older, it was sorta hard to tell, the way their sun

fried skin hung from their arms and over their raggedy cut offs. After scanning the crowd, Evie made up her mind to definitely add a few more notches to her SPF and lay off the beer. Definitely.

“Whoa, check out that dude,” Steve pointed out some guy whose ink job of street script sagged on his rubbery back. “You think that once said something?”

“Yeah, like ‘basura blanca’ (white trash) ?” Evie surprised herself by her own cattiness.

“You know what?” Steve squinted his eyes and laughed. “I think it *does* say that.”

“I gotta take a piss,” Raquel announced. “Where’s the bathrooms?”

“They’re way over on the other side, pass the main processing house,” Steve pointed with his chin. “You gotta go *now*?”

“When you gotta go, you gotta go.” Raquel grabbed Evie’s arm again. “Come on, Evie,”

“We’ll be just be a sec,” Evie promised Steve. “We’ll meet you by the band.”

“Wow,” Evie **said** as she and Raquel passed the processing house. “These groovers haven’t been informed that summer vacation’s been over, for years. This sure isn’t no A list crowd.”

“Yeah, we’re talking more like AA,” Raquel said. “*Sheeyet*, maybe this *is* an AA meet up.” She looked at her plastic cup. “What is this crap? O’Douls?”

When they finally found the Port-o-Potty, Raquel **rattled** the plastic door and called out to the person inside. “Dude, come on! You got a line out here!”

Border

When the door finally opened, Evie looked up and couldn't believe who stepped out of the outhouse. It was Alejandra de los Santos, La Head Sangrona at Villanova High.

"What are *you* doing here?" Raquel was taken aback.

"What am *I* doing here?" Alejandra carefully stepped down from the elevated outhouse in her platform boots. *Boots? At the beach?* "My second cousin Gabby owns this farm. He *is* Pacifica Abalone."

"So?" Raquel squinted at her. "You still didn't answer my question."

"Raquel, I've been coming to his parties for years." Alejandra sounded bored as she took her last high heel step onto the sand. She ran her white tipped nails through her layered blonde hair. "I've never seen *you* here before."

This is where Evie got nervous. Truth is she and Raquel, all the Flojos, weren't actually, officially, invited to the party. Jose had snagged a flyer via his Kinkos connection downtown and that flyer, like so many he gets for **parties** below Spanish Hills, led them to Pacifica.

"Hey," Raquel hissed. "Shouldn't you be home watching *Sabado Gigante* or something?"

"You know what?" Alejandra awkwardly yanked up her low riding jeans and put her hands on her hips. "I think my cousin Gabby would love to meet you. Why don't you and your little Blueberry stay here, by the toilets and I'll be right back, with him." She pushed by Evie and Raquel. "*Excuse me.*"

"Ugh!" Raquel fanned the air in an exaggerated manner. "**Does she have on enough Mango mousse or what?**"

"Why did you do that?" Evie snapped at Raquel as soon as Alejandra huffed off. "You're gonna get us kicked out!"

"Nah," Raquel drank more beer calmly. "If it's the Gabby I'm thinking of, which I'm sure it is, he ain't gonna kick us out. I partied with a Gabby who said he had some kind of fish farm out this way. This must be the same guy. **Besides**, first rate dope's thicker than some second rate, second cousin."

I think  
they  
should  
escalate!  
no ball



She stepped up to the outhouse and shut the door behind her. The last thing Evie wanted was to get booted from the party. It was her first night out in a long time. She didn't care if the beer was flat or if the band, as according to Steve, sucked or even that there were more Sangronas most likely **hovering** around. Anywhere was better than leaving.

"Evie! Evie!"

*Oh man*, Evie thought as she heard her name being called out. *What now?*

6

Evie turned around and saw Stacy Harris and Katie Castillo coming up toward her. Katie was holding up Stacy, who was completely tanked.

"Oh *my* god," Stacy exclaimed. "Evie! I thought that was you!"

Evie's <sup>girl</sup> known Stacy and Katie since middle school. Stacy was *guera*, 100 percent pure white girl, complete with naturally blonde hair, green eyes and a neck that turned bright red at the first hint of sun. But like a lot of kids at Mesa Union, she was down with brown. Or at least with all the boys she chased after. Evie was cool with Stacy. She never went after the boys **she crushed hard on.**

"Hey Stacy...." Evie started.

"Oh *my* God, Evie." She balanced herself on Evie's shoulder and planted a sloppy Vodkiss on her cheek. "Look at you. Your hair!"

"Oh yeah," Evie began. "I just--"

"So guess what my boyfriend told me?" Stacy blurted.

"Uh, your boyfriend?" Evie asked.

"Oh, you know him. Raymond Gonzalez? 'Member? He was an eighth grader back when we were in sixth?"

"You mean Gayman?" Evie asked, confused.

Comps with scene

Alexandra  
lets them know  
DP is coming  
not staying

"Oh, yeah!" She laughed. "Member how everyone said he was a fag? Well, I can tell you he definitely is! I should know. He's my boyfriend now."

"Oh, so what did he tell you?" Evie asked.

"That Dee Dee's coming back," Stacy said.

"Dee Dee?"

"Yes, *Deeeee Deeeee*." Stacy drew out each syllable.

When Evie heard the name Dee Dee, she felt like her stomach just dropped five stories down. *Hard*. Dee Dee had been Evie's best friend when she was a little kid.

Raquel was her bestfriend now, but Dee Dee ~~is~~, *was*, someone Evie was *very* close with.

Evie was close to both her and her mother. She hated to admit, but Dee Dee's mother was

like, *many* times, the mother Evie wished she did have. Mrs. De la Fuente didn't put on

heirs as Vicki Gomez so often did. Plus, Mrs. De la Fuente was always home, always

around to talk. She wasn't running around chasing charities. But when Mrs. De la Fuente

died, Dee Dee moved away and cut off all contact with Evie. She never wrote Evie back,

didn't answer her emails or return her calls. And to this day, Evie still ~~doesn't~~ *had* understand

exactly what happened.

"Evie, did you hear me?" Tracy gave her a nudge. "What, are you buzzing?"

"Me? No. No, I'm listening."

"So, anyway," Stacy went on. "Raymond goes to Cal State Channel Islands and he told me that Dee Dee's dad is gonna be the new dean there."

"*What?*" Evie asked.

"Yeah, that's what Raymond said. Right, Katie? Didn't he say that?"

"Yeah," Katie said. "That what he said. Starting next semester,"

"I dunno, Stacy," Evie said. "I don't mean to doubt Gay-, I mean, Raymond, but Dee Dee's and I, we were tight. I think she would have at least called me." As I was saying this I felt foolish.

"Well, I'm just telling you what Gay, ha ha ha," Stacy laughed. "Now you got me saying it! No, wait, what was I saying?"

"That Dee Dee's moving back to California," Katie prodded her.

"Yeah, right," Stacy remembered. "I'm just telling you what Raymond told me."

The Port-o-Potty door opened and Raquel stepped out. She was still zipping up her jeans.

Stacy looked up. "Raquel! Raquel Diaz! Oh *my* God. Remember me? Stacy Harris?"

"Oh, yeah. Of course. You're Gayman's girl." She threw Evie a sideways glance. "How could I *not* hear all the commotion from the crapper?"

"Oh Raquel..." Stacy laughed again. "You're so funny."

Raquel pulled out a pack of cigarettes from the front pocket of her jacket.

"*Raaaw- quel!*" Stacy exclaimed. "You shouldn't smoke!"

"Why not?" Raquel lit up directly in front of her face.

"Because it's, it's so bad for you," Stacy slurred. "The younger you start, the worse."

"Really?" Raquel asked. "Can it also make you annoying? 'Cause you must've started at three packs a day as a kid."

"Oh, Raquel!" Stacy laughed. "You are *so* funny! Isn't she funny, Katie?"

"*Very* funny," Katie agreed.

feels  
to be



Stacy looked up at the outhouse. "Well, looks like it's my turn to use the pah-  
*teeee!* So, we'll see you guys later. Right, Katie?"

"Right," Katie repeated.

"Okay, 'bye Evie!" Stacy called out. "Bye Raquel!" Katie helped her struggle up  
the two low steps that led up to the outhouse and they both went in, together.



"So did you hear what Stacy said?" Evie asked Raquel as we started walking  
away from the Port-o-Potty. "About Dee Dee?"

"Yeah," Raquel took a drag off her cigarette. "That just blows my mind. How  
come we didn't know? I mean, doesn't your dad keep in touch with Dee Dee's dad?"

"Yeah." Evie suddenly felt defensive. "But so does your dad."

"Well, we get Christmas cards," Raquel said. "Some card you just know they  
bought in stack of five hundred with a pre-printed signature."

"So that's what we've been relegated to?" Evie asked. "Recipients of a mass  
Christmas card list?"

Evie's heart sank. This was not the kind of evening she had expected. She brought  
her cup to her mouth and tapped the last trail of foam into her mouth.

"Yeah, and I thought you were, like, best friends," Raquel continued.

“We were,” Evie said. “I mean all three of us were.”

“Yeah, but you and Dee were always tighter,” Raquel pointed out. “If anything, I would’ve have thought she’d call you right away.”

“Yeah, I guess.”

“So…” Raquel put out her cigarette. “You wanna go check out the band?”

Evie threw her cup on the ground. “Nah, not really,” She crossed her arms. Even though the Santa Anas had kicked up a warmer, heavier gust, she suddenly felt cold.

“How ‘bout more beer?”

Raquel made a face. “It’s so watered down,”

“Yeah, typical keg quality.” Evie looked around. She didn’t know what to do. She didn’t want to leave the party but she sure as hell didn’t wanna stand around talking with Raquel. She was making her feel worse.

“You know what?” Evie asked.

“What?” Raquel asked.

“Let’s go back to Mondo’s car.”

“Mondo’s *car*?” Raquel raised one eyebrow. “You wanna go back with Mondo and Jose?”

“Yeah,” Evie said. “What, you don’t think they’ll let us hang with ‘em?”

“No, I’m just saying that Mondo and Jose, they ain’t just ‘hanging out.’ Know what I mean?”

“Of course I know what you mean,” Evie snapped. “I’m not an idiot, Raquel.”

“I’m not saying you are. It’s just -”

“You know Raquel?” Evie interrupted. “I’m really upset about Dee Dee and it doesn’t even seem like you care. Doesn’t it piss you off that her dad gets a new job here

and she's moving back and she's must've known for some time. I mean, you just don't make a move like this and not know in advance. And he didn't even call one of us? Not even a lousy email? We have to hear about it from drunk ol' Stacy Harris!"

"Evie," Both of Raquel's eyebrows were now raised. "Why you all freaking out? We don't even know if all of this is true."

"I'm not 'all freaking out,' Raquel," Evie tried to sound calmer. "What's so wrong that I just wanna kick back with Jose and Mondo? I mean, they're my friends too. Is there a problem that I wanna have a better time than I am having now?"

"No, there's no problem at all," Raquel answered coolly. "I didn't realize that you were having such a lousy time, that's all."

"Well, yeah, I am. It's my first night out in weeks and I was all looking forward to being out with **what** I thought were my friends and now I gotta hear all this about Dee Dee and – " Evie stopped herself. Maybe she was getting a little ahead of herself. Maybe all this about Dee Dee wasn't even true. "You know what?" She told Raquel. "Let's just go back to Mondo's car."

"I ain't stopping you." Raquel inhaled uncomfortably.

"Okay, then" Evie said. "Let's just go already."

And for once, it was she who grabbed Raquel by the arm and demanded that she follow.

## 8

The next morning, while Evie was still sleeping, her mother busted into her bedroom.



“E-vie!” she accented the second syllable aggressively. She started opening Evie’s white wooden shutters but flinched when her finger came up covered in dust. “Eyeew! Evie, Get up. Lindsay’s coming in here to clean.””

“*Mom,*” Evie rolled over to her side and covered her eyes from the light. Her head was throbbing and it didn’t help that her mother was talking so loud. “Why do you have to break out with the light and negativity so early?”

“Early?” She crossed Evie’s room “ It’s already past eleven and Lindsay’s gotta leave early today.

“Mom, *no,*” Evie whined. “I do not need Lindsay coming in here shuffling through all my stuff. I can look after my own room.”

“No, you can’t.” She went into Evie’s bathroom and looked around. “Our agreement was that if you kept your room up, Lindsay wouldn’t need to come in.”

“We don’t even need Lindsay at all. It’s *so* bourgie lame to have a housekeeper, anyway.”

“It’s also embarrassing to have an dirty house.” Vicki Gomez was getting irritated. “Maybe if you did your part, we wouldn’t have - ugh!” She picked up a ball of surf wax from the carpet. It had collected stray hairs and God knows what along the way. “What *is* this?”

“Mom, stop!”

Evie’s cell phone rang. Saved by the bell, or in this case, a beeping rendition of **Chic’s “Funkytown.”**

"Evie," her mother started as she leaned over to get her phone from her pile of last night's clothes. "I don't want your friends calling your cell when you're home. When you start paying--"

"Mom," She found her phone and saw it was Raquel. "It's free week-end minutes and --" She flipped it open. "Hello?"

"Hey, it's me."

"Okay, Evie," her mother said one last time as she finally left the room. "Get up so Lindsay can get in here,"

The invading roar of Lindsay's vacuum cleaner was already getting closer. Evie got up to shut her door, **snapped her shutters** shut and yanked on her ceiling fan cord. Ahh! The breeze felt great. South Cali mornings get hella hot fast and Evie welcomed the breeze. She got back into bed.

repeated

"So I asked my dad about Dee Dee this morning," Raquel said.

"You did?"

"Yeah," she said. "And he confirmed it."

"Confirmed what exactly?" Evie asked.

"That the whole Family De la Fuente is definitely moving back to Spanish Hills," she said.

"*What?* And he knew? Why didn't he say anything? Why didn't he tell you?"

"Oh, you know how ol' Charlie Diaz is," Raquel yawned. "...*with his mind on his money and his mind on...* nothing else. He isn't concerned with long lost family friends. In fact he's actually known for a few days. He got an email from Dee Dee's dad. Oh, but he ain't gonna be dean, he's gonna be president at Channel Islands."

"Oh, well, I'm glad *that's* cleared up," Evie said

"Yeah, and my mom was pissed that he didn't tell us earlier. She wants to have a little welcome back party for them. She says it's the only proper thing to do, especially to introduce Dee Dee's new mom to everybody."

"*New mom?*" Evie repeated. "No, now that is *not* right."

"Well, I dunno. Step mom, then?" Raquel asked. "Does that sound better?"

"I'm really not in the mood for semantics right now," Evie turned to her side and hugged her body pillow.

"How you feeling?" She asked.

"Dissed." Evie answered matter of factly.

"No, I mean, after last night, with Mondo and Jose."

"Oh. Uh, okay, I guess," Evie told her. "I'm just really tired. Like exhausted and my head is killing me."

"That'll wear off," Raquel said. "Just drink lots of water and sleep some more."

"Yeah, like maybe out in the pool house," Evie moaned. "My mom was like a Room Raider at the crack of dawn and now she's got Lindsay ready to take over my room."

"Oh yeah, that reminds me. My mom's gonna be calling your mom about the welcome back gig," Raquel said.

"When's it gonna be?" Evie asked.

"Next Saturday," she said.

"You mean, *this* Saturday?" Evie asked.



"I thought it was too early for semantics," Raquel said. "But yeah, this coming Saturday."

"What kind of party?" Evie was full of questions.

"Not really a party *party*," Raquel said. "It'll probably be just be my parents, your parents and some other golf playing silverheads from the country club." She yawned again. "Just a little something."

Raquel doesn't really care

Then was so much she wanted to know.  
Out on Evie's Emotional POV.  
which is looking

9

But by the following Saturday evening, when Evie arrived with her parents to the Diaz's home earlier than the actual party time, it was evident that the "little something" Kitty Diaz had scheduled was going to be a full blown soiree. She saw two valet parking attendants setting up a station near the Diaz's mail box and there was a caterer lugging in an oversized cast iron comal.

"Oh look, Ruben," Vicki Gomez excitedly nudged her husband. "They're going to have tortillas de maiz! Hand made."

"Kitty's going all out," Evie's father said. "Again."

*Oh, great*, Evie thought to herself. They're gonna have some poor woman patting masa together while all the rich people ooh and ahh that it's just like Olvera Street or something. That God this *one* wasn't her mother's idea.

Vicki Gomez looked Evie over as my father rang the front door bell. "Oh Evie," she said. "I wish you would take care of that hair. This is bad."

"Bad for who?" Evie asked.

"You could have least put on a dress," her mother went on.

"A dress?" Evie asked, surprised. "When have you ever known me to wear a dress?"

"Well, you could have least dressed up a bit."

Evie actually felt she was quite dressed up, being that she practically lives in shorts and flip flops. She was wearing a second hand blouse that she had found at a segunda downtown, cream colored and lacy. It looked perfect with her vintage straight legs and she even put on the pearl stud earrings that her Tia Isabel had given her for 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation. God forbid, Dee Dee think she'd become some kind of grungy skate rat or something.

"Vicki," Evie's father came to her rescue just as Kitty Diaz opened the front door. "Evie looks fine. Let's just drop it."

"Ruben, Vicki!" Kitty hugged Evie's parents lightly as she welcomed them into her house. "How are you? Thank you *so* much for coming early."

"Sure, Kitty," Evie's father said. "We are at your disposal."

"Hello Evie," Mrs. Diaz smiled at Evie. "Oh, look at you. Raquel mentioned you colored your hair. Very creative."

"Thanks." Evie looked up at her mother and gave her a smug little smile.

Kitty Diaz is similar to Evie's mother in appearance and style. Both have no nonsense hair cuts, to convey some kind of career woman image (even though they aren't), minimal make up and they're always wearing some type of day or evening sandal to show off their tanned, well attended to feet. One big difference is that Kitty's smile is welcoming, while Evie felt her mother's smile can be somewhat strained and suspicious.

As soon as Evie and her parents entered the Diaz's foyer Raquel called down from upstairs. "Hey Evie! Come on up. We can hang out before the serious alkie arrive."

"Raquel!" Mrs. Diaz looked up from the foyer and threw her a stern look. "Act right! Remember, this isn't some party just for you and your friends."

"I know, I know," Raquel said. "I was just messin'."

Mrs. Diaz led the Gomez's into the kitchen. "You are *not* going to believe how much this caterer is charging me for the last minute job," she said as they all disappeared into the kitchen. "The cake cutting fee *alone*."

Evie started up the stairs to Raquel's room. "My mom said your mom might need help. Maybe I should ask if she needs anything?"

"What she needs is someone to administer her an elephant tranquilizer." Raquel cupped her hand over her mouth. "And I'm sure she has one somewhere in that panic room of hers." She followed Raquel to her room. "I don't know why my mother always insists on throwing these parties. They always make her so stressed out and bitchy." She turned around and looked over Evie. "By the way, you look great. Excuse me, Miss Teen Vogue."



13 her hair still blue

“Really?” Evie asked. “My mom was just bagging on me about my hair and ‘cause I’m not wearing like a gown or something.”

“Oh,” Raquel **in her low rider jeans and sheer three tiered cami**, lamented.

“My mom’s the same way.”

When they got to her room, Raquel shut the door and then held up a bottle of champagne. “Check it out. Veuve Cliquot. Kitty Diaz is sparing no expense on La familia de la Fuente.” She started to uncork it. “Oh, when I was sneaking it out, I forgot to get glasses. Looks like we’ll have to take swigs. Not very lady like, huh?”

Ironically, the décor in Raquel’s bedroom did make her seem very ladylike. *Like*, a very vain *lady*. She ~~has~~ tons of little mirrors and lots of framed photos of herself on her burgundy colored walls. Black and white photos showcase a pubescent Raquel performing at a ballet recital, a violin recital, a piano recital and, lastly, and funny enough, at the Strawberry Shortcake Look Alike Contest at the Strawberry Festival where despite Kitty Diaz hiring a high priced seamstress to create an incredibly authentic looking costume, Raquel took 4th place,. But the operative words are: “pictures of herself.” There ~~are~~ only two photos of Raquel with other people in her whole room; a snapshot of her and Jose at the Third Street Promenade and one of both both families on a snow trip to Tahoe. Raquel ~~is~~ strategically posed in the front of each photo.

what's over KAU on photo

“Whoa, slow down,” Rachel said as Evie took her first swig of the champagne.

“There’s plenty more of where this came from.”

Evie took a smaller sip before giving Raquel back the bottle. “I just wanna loosen up.” She **flopped** herself on Raquel’s canopied bed. “It’s so *wrong* that Dee Dee’s now in Spanish Hills and still hasn’t called.”

"Have you called her?" Raquel asked.

"No. Have you?" Evie suddenly felt awkward and **conveniently found a loose cuticle that needed dire attention.**

"I don't have her number," Raquel answered, matter of factly.

"Well, she has mine," Evie said. "At least, my parent's. They haven't changed their number in years. She has no excuse."

"Aaah," Raquel took a swig and looked up dreamingly toward her ceiling. "And so the novela between the wayward friend and the forgotten woman left behind continues..."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Nothing, really," Raquel said. "I just think you're obsessing too much about Dee Dee."

*"Obsessing?"* **God, where was Jose when Evie needed a distraction for Raquel?**

"Well, maybe not obsessing." Raquel took another swig from the bottle and passed it back to me. "But maybe you, we, both need to just think forward. Get over the past."

Evie took the bottle from her and rolled her eyes.

"Don't take this wrong, Evie," Raquel said. "But I think you need a man. I was talking to Jose and -"

"You were talking about *me* to Jose?" Evie looked up from the bed at Raquel.

"No, I was just mentioning-" she said.

"I can't believe you are discussing my love life with Jose!"

"Oh, I didn't realize you *had* a love life," Raquel smirked. "When did that start?"

“Oh, so now you’re laughing at me?” Evie took a larger swig from the bottle.

“Raquel, do not be talking about me to Jose. I know he’s, like, the ‘love of your life’ and everything, but there’s gotta be some boundaries.”

“He *is* the love of my life,” Raquel frowned.

“Well, you’d never know it,” Evie said. “The way you two fight all the time.”

“We don’t fight,” Raquel snapped. “Sometimes we disagree on things, sometimes our disagreements get heated, but we aren’t fighting. Besides, you sure aren’t one to judge a relationship. You’ve never even been in one.”

Evie knew that she and Raquel were getting into dangerous territory and it was definitely not the night for either one to get pissed off at each other. They needed each other’s support. At least, Evie needed Raquel’s.

“You know, Raquel,” Evie started. “Let’s just drop it.”

“Well, that’s a cop out if I ever heard one,” Raquel smirked.

“No,” Evie said. “It’s just this conversation isn’t really going anywhere.”

“Okay,” she said. “Fine.”

“Fine.” Evie took a drink from the bottle and Raquel stepped into her bathroom. She switched on her flattening iron.

“So... ” Evie awkwardly tried to change the subject. “I wonder what Dee Dee looks like now.”

“Yeah, I wonder,” Raquel answered half heartedly as she came out of the bathroom.

“Hey, remember when the three of us said we were gonna date all brothers, like, from the same family?” Evie handed her the Veuve (SLANG?).



"Of course, I remember," Raquel answered coolly. She took the bottle.

I think there can be a concern for Evie that she and Raquel will get into a fight.

Will they?

Good EMO PDV.

10 — why?

"We said we were gonna find," Evie continued, "like, three guys who were Arab, or Persian, or something."

"Oh yeah," Raquel started to warm up. "And we were gonna have a triple wedding ceremony and then have three houses, one in California, Mexico and one in Bagdad." She drank more champagne. "Sheeet, I'd rather live in Bagdad than ol' backwards Mexico."

Evie laughed. "Yeah, who even came up with that idea?"

"Dee Dee," Raquel said. "Her mom had just taken her to see Aladdin or something."

"Oh God, that's right!" Evie laughed. "Aladdin on Ice or something like that. And then she had that Aladdin birthday party and her mother demanded we all dress up. That was the worst."

"Oh, you loved it," Raquel teased.

"Well, maybe at the time," Evie said.

"Well, if Dee Dee does has a boyfriend," Raquel said, taking a drink. "I betcha she hasn't hooked up with him yet. 'Member at Katie Castillo's sleep over? She was so freaked out just about changing in front of anyone."

Evie didn't say anything. She remembered Katie Castillo's sleep over, very well. And she did remember feeling, as Raquel puts it, "freaked out" just as much, if not maybe more, as Dee Dee. They were all in the sixth grade and the last thing she wanted was to display her flat boyish body to all her female classmates who were already developing curves and, what she discovered that night, patches of womanly body hair. Fortunately, for her, Dee Dee had made a bigger deal about undressing in front of anyone. And while she changed in Katie's bathroom and everyone was goofing on her from the hallway, Evie quickly and silently slipped out of her jeans and tank top and into her PJs without anyone really noticing.

Someone suddenly drummed a light sroll across Raquel's bedroom door.

"Ooh, there's the 'love of my life!'" Raquel looked over at Evie with a smirk.

"Come on in," she called out. "It's open."

Jose strolled in strutting his best pimp limp, with Steve right behind him. "Hey, hey, hey," Jose said. "So this is where the pre-party action is, huh?" He saw the Veuve Cliquot. "Good thinking, Agent 69."

"This is just the beginning." Raquel gloated, "And once everyone gets bombed we'll have the run of the place." She locked her bedroom door.

Jose looked over Raquel. "Damn, Rocky," he whistled low. "You sure know how to rock a fella!"

"You likes?" She twirled around and the sheerness of her tiered cami exposed more than maybe it should have.

"What do you think?" Jose gestured to below his belt. "Check out the Miracle Grow!"

"Jose!" Raquel snapped. "Why do you always have to ruin it?" She went to the bathroom and got her flattening iron. "Damn, I swear!"

"What?" Jose looked after her, then at Steve and Evie, perplexed. "That's a compliment. You want me to say you look ugly?"

"Just act right," Raquel said.

Jose cowered a bit before looking over at Evie. "You look nice too, Blues Clues."

"Oh, gee thanks," Evie said.

"No, really. You look nice. Right, Steve?"

"Oh, yeah," Steve agreed stiffly as he sat down on Raquel's vanity stool. "You look really pretty.."

"Guys, *please* don't over do it."

**If there is one thing Evie couldn't stand is a forced compliment. She heard enough of them when she was at the country club with her mother. Vicki Gomez could be the biggest fake ass there is and Evie could just die whenever she overheard her mother going on about how "ambitious" someone's Chinese lawn looked, because that's the only nice thing she could possibly say.**

*Handwritten notes: "yes" and "couldn't stand to" are written over the text. A large bracket on the right side of the paragraph is labeled "why?"*

Jose took over the window seat in Raquel's room and looked out across the Diaz's backyard. He whistled again. "Check out the fancy spread downtown."

"Didn't my mother just go crazy?" Raquel leaned against her bathroom doorway as she straightened her hair with her flattening iron.

"Yeah," Steve said. "We saw some dude laying out flowers and some of those floating candles in the pool."

"Ooh," Evie went over to the window. "Lemme see."



Jose was right. The Diaz's backyard was pure swank. Their pool was glowing in candle light and multicolored papeles picados hung across the yard from tree to tree.

"Check out the paper cut outs." Raquel said **as if she was reading Evie's mind.**  
"My mom had each papel custom cut. Each one has a little memory from when the De la Fuentes lived here."

"Are you serious?" Steve asked.

"Yeah, there's like little cut out scenes of their first house here in Spanish Hills, from the summers we spent in Cabo and, oh, that one Christmas we spent at Lake Tahoe with them. Remember that Evie? When we went tobogganing?"

"Oh, yeah!" Evie said. "That was fun!"

Hey, can I smoke a little? Jose asked, clearly bored with Evie and Raquel's nostalgic storytelling.

"Jose," Raquel gave him a look. "Quit acting so stupid."

"What?" He pulled out some rolling papers from his front pocket. "Just 'cause I ask a question I'm stupid? 'Member what Mr. Mercer said? There is no such thing as a stupid question, only stupid-"

"Boyfriends?" Raquel finished his sentence. "And don't even get me busted by smoking out in here. If you wanna be high all night, you can just go home now. This is an important night, we don't want any drama. Right, Evie?"

"Right," Evie agreed.

"Well," Mondo opened window and looked out again. "Maybe I'll get one of the bartenders to give me lift home "Say, like maybe that sweet redhead setting up the mini bar?"

*This all needs to be cut down.*

“What redhead?” Steve went over to the window to look out.

“Ugh!” Raquel put her flattening iron on the bathroom counter and went over to Jose to position herself on his lap “Over my dead body.”

Jose wrapped his arms around her waist. “Hey, I got nothing against necrophilia if you don’t.

“My,” Raquel dug her face into his neck, “such a big word for a little boy.”

“Get a room, already.” Steve rolled his eyes. “Oh wait, we *are* in a room, already.”

“Yeah,” Jose pointed his chin towards Evie, still lying on Raquel’s bed. “You think the four of us can all fit in that thing?” He then looked at Evie. “We all know what kind of *partier* Evie can be. Right, Evie? No more green?”

“Jose, *stop*,” Raquel laughed.

Steve wrinkled his brow and looked at Evie. “What’s that suppose to mean?”

“He’s just being stupid,” Evie smiled awkwardly.

“Hey,” Jose said as he started to light up a joint. “I heard that.”

“Good,” Evie said. “I wanted you to.”

“Miss Raquel?” Ana, the Diaz’s housekeeper, timidly tapped on the bedroom door. “Your mother ask if you have boys in your room.”

Raquel was about to speak up, but Jose cupped his hand over her mouth.

“Ay!” Jose called out in an exaggerated high falsetto. “Ay *no*, Ana! Absolutely not. Tell her no!”

Raquel just about *died* in a fit of compressed giggles.

“Miss Raquel?” Ana asked again from the other side of the door. “Are you okay?”

"Ay! Not now, Ana," Jose continued in his super high girly voice. "I'm in my bra and *pan--* tees! Por favor!" He took a short hit off his joint. "Please, please give me some privacy!"

They all cracked up as they heard Ana mumble to herself and walk away.

Evie handed Steve the Vieve and he held it up to eye level. "This is dwindling," he said. "We're gonna have to get more." He took a short swig and handed the bottle back to Evie.

"So how long did Dee Dee live in Mexico?" He asked her.

"Almost four years." She took the last sip from the bottle and that was actually gonna be it for her. Evie was already feeling touched and she definitely wanted to be focused when Dee Dee arrived. "She moved there when she was twelve."

"Man, I'd love to live in Mexico." Steve said. "Like down south, Puerto Escondido."

"Well, Dee Dee didn't live in southern Mexico," Evie said. "She lived in D.F., right in the Mexico City

"Yeah, and you know she was hating it," Raquel added. "Dee Dee was *so* the country mouse."

Someone knocked on the Raquel bedroom door again. This time urgently. It was her mother.

"Raquel," she ordered sternly from the hallway as she jiggled the locked door knob. "Come out and join the rest of the party. We have guests. You are a host and you are being rude."

*Cuts*



"Oh, *shit*." Raquel bolted up from Jose's lap and fanned all of Jose's tell tale smoke out the open window. "I better get out there." She called out to her mother, "Sorry, mom! Evie's just helping me pin my bra straps down. I'll be right out." Then she told Jose and Steve. "You guys wait awhile and then come out and meet us. And you," she looked at Jose, "Stay away from that mini bar."

As Raquel and Evie headed down stairs. Evie suddenly felt self conscious

"Are you sure my hair looks okay?" I asked her.

"Evie, you look fine."

"Fine as in 'hot' fine or fine as 'it'll do' fine?"

"Hot fine," Raquel assured her. "You heard Jose and Steve. They said you looked great."

"They said I looked *nice*. Not fine."

"Oh my God!" Raquel said. "Why would you wanna even look 'hot fine' at all? Are you expecting to get laid? This is a party and when Dee Dee shows up it'll *all* be fine." She put her arm around Evie and smiled. "*Awesome* fine."

Evie recognized a lot of the party guests from the country club as well as from their neighborhood block association. Others seemed to be colleagues of Mr. Diaz's, fellow "Hi Tech Aztecs," as Raquel calls them, who've made their money through computers or some kind of technology. A lot of them held positions and second

Great  
have  
or  
out

11 → good  
Use as example

apartments up north in San Josie or other parts of Silicone Valley, but maintained a primary residence (and from what Raquel also says, a primary spouse) in Spanish Hills.

The Flojos pretty much stuck to themselves. Steve worked on getting more booze while Jose tapped about every platter that came his way.

“What’s with your mom serving all this Mexican food?” Jose asked Raquel as he took a quesadilla triangle off a passing tray.

“What do you mean?” Raquel asked. “What should she be serving?”

“I dunno, but didn’t they just come in from Mexico? Don’t you think they’ve had their fill?”

“You are *not* bagging on my mom.” Raquel insisted.

“No, I’m bagging on her choice of food,” Jose took a bite and immediately made a face. “Ugh. What is this?”

“Jose, don’t be a jerk. It’s a goat cheese quesadilla. Obviously, too much for your Taco Bell palette.”

“Hey,” he warned. “*Don’t* even bag on the Bell.”

Evie couldn’t help but keep glancing at Steve’s wrist watch to check the time. It was already 7:30. The De la Fuentes were half an hour late. Didn’t anyone seem to notice? Evie was sure her mother did.

By eight, after all the appetizers were just about finished and everyone was toasty from an hours worth of free booze, Charlie Diaz made an announcement to the crowd. “Okay, everybody, I just got a call from Frank,” He was pink faced from the heat and excitement. “They’re on their way. They just turned on Camino Coral and will be here any second.”

✓  
“What, ol’ Frank forgot how to get around his old neighborhood?” Someone called out and everyone laughed as if it was the funniest joke in the world.

A few minutes later, everyone heard cheers and shouts. The Del la Fuente’s car finally pulled up into the Diaz’s circular drive-way. Evie immediately felt even more nervous and she went to the downstairs bathroom and discovered that her anxiety was evident. There was two small sweat rings under each of her arms. *Crap*. That’s the problem with vintage pieces, they’re always made from some kind of polyester blend and they make mad stink and sweat. Evie grabbed one of the crisp guest towels hanging from the towel bar and reached under her blouse, patting each armpit dry. She looked for deodorant in the Diaz’s bath cabinet and, to her horror, discovered that Kitty, just like her mom, bought the same Trader Joe’s natural crap. That stuff, obviously, doesn’t do jack. Evie heard more shouts and greets. She quickly rubbed on as much deodorant as she could and went back to join the party.

great

When Evie returned, Frank de la Fuente, Dee Dee’s father, was already standing in the Diaz’s foyer. Next to him was a short, smartly dressed woman. Both were being cooed over by her parents and Raquel’s. Mr. de la Fuente looked a lot from what Evie remembered; the same broad smile and thick bushy eyebrows that were now a bit more gray but he still stepped up in his standard uniform of a classy suit and tie.

“Beinvenidos! Welcome! Welcome!” Evie’s father exclaimed. “Frank, it’s been too long!”

Yes, yes.” Mr. De la Fuente agreed. “Oh, it’s so wonderful to be back! To be home.”

“Look.” Evie’s father pushed her forward as if she was a prop or something.  
“**Here’s** Evie!”



“Oh, Evie!” Mr. De la Fuente took her hands into his, stood back and beamed. “Mi’ja, let me look at you! Such a beautiful young lady you’ve become!” He looked over at Raquel who was standing directly by her side. “Oh, and Raquel, tu tambien! Que bonita! Mira, I want you both to meet my wife, Graciela.”

Graciela was a stout, fair skinned woman with dark eyes and dark hair cut in a short bob. Two large ornate earrings swayed like ship lanterns from her ears.

What Mr. de la Fuente offered in warmth, Graciela definitely cooled down with her ice. Her Brrr Factor was cranked to high as she offered a luke warm hello, surveyed the Diaz’s home and promptly asked. “Is our car going to be safe with those men outside?”

“Oh yes, of course,” Kitty Diaz put her arm around her shoulder. “It’s a company we’ve used for years.”

“Buenos Noches, Graciela,” Evie said in her best Spanish accent. “Soy Evie. Dee Dee and I have been best friends since we were little kids.”

“Yeah,” Raquel added. “We’ve all been friends since we were, like, seven years old.”

“Really?” Graciela looked us over. Evie suddenly felt like piece of cheap jewelry Graciela wouldn’t even bother to try on. “I don’t think Della’s ever mentioned you. What did you say your names were again?”

“Uh, I’m Evie,” Evie started awkwardly. “And this is —”

“Evie?” Graciela asked. “What kind of name is that?”

“Well, my real name is—”

“Where’s Dee Dee?” Raquel interrupted as she looked around Graciela.

“Oh, you know how you girls are,” Mr. De la Fuente said as he leaned over and took his wife’s wrap off. “We could not get her off her cell phone. She has been on that thing since we arrived. She’s going to drive over herself. She’ll be here shortly.”

Oh?” my mother looked over at Kitty Diaz disapprovingly. “Well, I do hope she arrives soon. Kitty ordered a cake especially for —”

“We’re just excited to see our little Dee Dee,” Evie’s father quickly said. “Especially Evie.”

“Dee Dee has her own car?” Evie directed the question to Mr. De la Fuente, but looked over at her mother.

“Oh, of course.” Mr. De la Fuente put his arm around her. “But no worries, mi’ja. She’ll be here soon.”

Evie couldn’t help but feel dissed. Why hadn’t Dee Dee just come with her parents? Why didn’t Graciela know who she was? But most importantly, why hadn’t she put on more deodorant?

GREAT  
CHAPTER

funny

12

By 10 PM, there was still no Dee Dee and the party was already dying down. The singer of the band, ‘un trio’ that Charlie Diaz hired, had **shaken her maraca** one last time and the caterers were gathering up the dessert dishes. In addition to the Veuve Cliquot that Evie had shared upstairs with Raquel, she had sneaked a couple beers from a careless bartender. If anything, she should be feeling good, but instead she was getting more uptight.

“Shouldn’t we call Dee Dee?” Evie asked her mother.

“I asked Frank the same thing,” she answered, clearly annoyed as Evie. “But he assured me that she would be here soon.”

Evie couldn’t believe that Dee Dee was being so inconsiderate on the night of all nights? Evie had circled the Diaz’s Great Room so many times she felt dizzy. She got cornered by Bobby, her father’s partner, talk about the new bakery chains they were opening up in the midwest.

“Can you imagine, Evie?” Bobby went on excitedly. “Gomez Panaderias in the Oklahoma? I mean, we are going to have farmers eating pan dulce that your abuelita’s recipes made famous! We are gonna be rolling *in* dough from rolling *out* dough. Get it?”

“Yeah, Bobby,” Evie said flatly. “I get it. That’s really great.”

Evie felt badly. She’s always liked Bobby, but tonight she could feel herself being rude as much as she tried to sound as enthusiastic about his new ventures with her father. As soon as she left him she went to look for the other Flojos. She hadn’t seen Raquel and Jose in the last half hour or so and was sure that had taken off to hook up back in her room. Steve had probably bailed. Fancy pants blow-outs like this were so not his scene.

When she walked passed the dining room, Evie was relieved to see Jose and Steve. They’d get her mind off Dee Dee’s absence and she immediately walked over toward them. They were chatting it up with some older female guest and a server. Both the woman and the server were laughing and speaking Spanish

As the server left to gather more glasses from other guests, the woman switched to English. “But ay, no,” she insisted to Steve. “Aren’t you ever afraid? What about sharks? And those waves are so big. Tan grande!”



Will be dated and irrelevant?  
Miss USA pageant  
Spanish  
Soap  
Star.

The woman was like in her early twenties and resembled a final contestant you might see on *The Swan*. Her bangs were high and her neckline low. She had on a black (was that lycra?) mini dress and, the piece de resistance, blue colored contacts. Oh, God, whose young thang trophy wife was this? Evie wondered. Steve and Jose, being the jokers they can be, were obviously having fun with her.

"Well, I wouldn't say I'm a *big wave* surfer," Steve said, not noticing Evie had just joined them. "I mean, I'm no Laird Hamilton but -"

"Quien?" The woman asked.

"Oh," Steve waved his hand, playing it off. "He's just some surfer."

Some surfer? That comment confused Evie. What was Steve saying? Laird Hamilton was, like, Steve's idol.

"Yeah," Jose smiled. "We should take you out with us sometime."

"We?" Steve ribbed Jose. "Dude, you barely know how to maneuver a Boogie board." He turned his attention back to the woman. "I can take you out and you'll be totally safe. I used to be a lifeguard."

Steve bringing up his old junior lifeguard summers at the country club pool? What was *that* about?

"But I don't even know how to swim." The woman gave a helpless giggle and tugged on her tight mini that was riding up her thighs.

"Oh, I can help you." Steve shook the ice around in his glass. "I'll have you doing a few basics strokes in no time."

"Yeah," Jose grinned. "I'm *sure* he will."

"You," the woman playfully slapped Jose on his chest, "are gonna give me problems. I can see that already."

Evie was being blatantly ignored and her patience was wearing thin. She finally offered my hand to the woman. "Hello, I'm Evie."

"Evie?" The woman's piercing blue, almost white, eyes penetrated hers. "Evie Gomez?"

"Uh, yeah..." Evie felt

"Ay! Evie!" She held her drink away from herself and wrapped her arms around Evie. She was suffocated by flesh, hair, lots of hair, and, what seemed to be a padded bra, very padded bra. "Evie!" The woman exclaimed. "I've been asking everyone where you've been!"

"Excuse me, but have we met?" Evie knew her dad would kill her if this woman was the wife of some major client and felt Evie was being rude. Had she met her at one of his panaderias and was just zoning out?

"Evie! It's me! Della!"

"Della?"

"Oh." She threw an embarrassed sideways glance over at Jose and Steve. "Okay, Dee Dee?"

"Dee Dee?" Evie looked at this woman and could believe what, who she was seeing. This, this woman was Dee Dee? No. This person's volume was *pumped*. Where was the Dee Dee Evie remembered from childhood?

"Oh my God, Evie," the woman went on. "Look at you! Oh my God. Your hair! You are so crazy with your pelo azul!"

→ should she be freaking about how to choke her already?

She put her arm around Evie and told Jose and Steve, "This little girl is the friend I was telling you about. Right here, little Evie Gomez. Ay, Evie, you are *so* cute. You never got any taller, did you?" She squeezed Evie tightly and then scoffed. "Ay, what kind of hug is this? Don't tell me you've become one of these stiff, rigid Americans? Tell me," she kept her arm around Evie as she directed her question to Jose and Steve. "Why are Americans so stiff?"

"Well, just the men are," Jose smiled slyly. "Depending on the environment, that is."

Dee Dee laughed. "You are so bad!" She then pulled another cigarette from a silver case and placed it to her lips. She waited for someone to light it which Jose promptly did. When did Jose become such a gentleman?

"Um," Evie tried to talk, but her voice came out like a squeak. "Dee Dee, uh..."

"Oh mi'ja," she said. "I'm so sorry I'm late. Don't be mad. I just could *not* get off the phone with mi novio back in D.F. He hates that I am here and he gets so possessive. Ay, I mean, *possessive*. I hope American boys aren't that way." She looked over at Jose and Steve coyly.

"Nah," Steve smirked "We let our women go as far as our leash lets them."

"Ay!" She blew her smoke out of the side of her dark outlined lips and looked at him.. "Now you too?"

"Um, Dee Dee..." Evie tried again.

"No, no," she put one finger over her mouth. "*No one* calls me Dee Dee anymore. *Por favor*." She frowned knowingly at Jose and Steve.

"Evie still goes by Evie," Steve said. "Nobody calls her Evelina."



“Well, we’re gonna work on that,” Dee Dee said.

*Oh really?*

“So Della,” Steve was still all smiles. “I bet you got some funny stories from when you two were kids.”

“Oh, yes, I – “ Della snapped her fingers to get a server’s attention. “Over here,” she called out holding up her glass. “I’m done here.” She turned her attention back to us. “Let me tell you, she was my best, best friend. We did everything together and, oh wait, I want you to meet Graciela, my stepmother.”

“‘Ama!’ she called out. “‘Ama, here is the friend that I was telling you about. This is Evie.”

“Oh, yes, yes,” Graciela looked Evie over again. “I met her earlier this evening. Nice, nice. Very nice.” She turned to Dee Dee. “ Listen mi’ja. Your father and I are getting tired. We are gonna head home.”

“Already ‘Ama?”

“Yes, yes. I’m still not used to this time change and the food.” She put a palm over her abdomen. “It’s not sitting too well with my stomach.”

“Ah,” Jose smiled. “The goat cheese quesadilla? Am I right?”

“Mande?” Graciela looked at him, confused.

“Oh, ‘Ama,” Dee Dee said. “These are my two new friends. This is, uh...” she looked at Steve. “I’m sorry, what is your name again?”

“Uh, Steve,” he reminded her, looking every bit embarrassed.

“Esteban?” Graciela asked.

“No, Steve,” he repeated. “Actually, Steven.”

*Steven?* What was going on with Jose and Steve? So it takes some high hair and a short skirt to turn them into bumbling idiots?

“And I’m Jose.” Jose put his hand out and actually bowed his head a little forward.

“Okay, ‘Ama,” Dee Dee gave her stepmother an air kiss. “I’ll see you later tonight.”

As Graciela de la Fuente started to leave Evie saw Raquel slowly swagger up to us. Oh man, where had *she* been this last hour or so? Somewhere, obviously, that granted her an all access pass to a steady flow of liquor. She was *tanked*.

“Uh, Raquel,” Evie started to warn her.

“Raquel!” Dee Dee smiled widely. “Ay, look at you!”

Raquel looked at her blankly.

“It’s Dee,” Evie started to inform her. “I mean Della. Dee Dee...” What was I even saying?

“Dee Deeee?” Raquel looked directly into Dee Dee’s eyes.

“Yes, it’s me, Della!” Dee Dee exclaimed.

Raquel looked at her and squinted. “Wait, what the fuck happened to your eyes?”

“*What?*” Dee Dee asked.

“Your eyes,” Raquel said again. “Oh, *shee-yat!*” She covered her mouth and tried to keep from laughing. “I feel like I’m talking to a wolf, a **Timber** Wolf! Oh, my mom didn’t tell me she invited Animal Planet.

“*Excuse me?*” Dee Dee fumed.

"Oh, God," Raquel suddenly put her hand on her forehead. "I feel sick. Whoa, whoa...I feel really sick."

"Raquel," Evie said. "Why don't you come with me to the bathroom?"

"It's okay," Jose put his arm around Raquel. "I'll take her."

"But I don't wanna go...we gotta wait for Dee Dee," Raquel whined. "Evie's dear little Dee Dee. Right Evie? Your bestfriend?"

"Oh, shit." Steve looked away.

"What is her problem?" Dee Dee demanded to know.

"Nothing," Evie said. "She's just had too much to drink." And too much drink was definitely bringing out the cattiness in Raquel. Not only was she belittling her friendship with Dee Dee, she was, in a way, *mocking* Evie.

"Ooh, I'm gonna be sick..." Raquel covered her mouth and groaned. "Jose, don't let me get sick."

"Well, baby," Jose led her away towards the downstairs bathroom. "You're gonna have to be sick before you can get better."

"What, so she's like an alcoholic now?" Dee Dee asked.

"No, it's just been a long night," Steve said

"Yeah," Evie came to Raquel's defense. "It's been a long night and we've been all waiting...all night."

"Oh, so it's my fault she's all boracha?" Dee Dee asked.

"No, I'm just saying that we've all been anxious to see you and it's been years and we hadn't even heard from you and now —""

"Wait, don't put it all on me that your friend has a drinking problem."

emo POV here  
- Evie  
Does D.D. have a point?



"*My friend?*" Evie raised her voice. "Dee Dee, I thought Raquel was *our* friend."

"You know Evie," Dee Dee spat. "It's obvious you're having a bad night and I'm not gonna let you ruin this party."

"Ruin it?" Evie bit back. "Dee Dee, this party's been over for hours."

Dee Dee looked at Steve. "Can you take me home?"

Evie looked at Steve. *No, no no.*

"Uh, yeah," Steve said hesitantly. "But I thought you drove here?"

"I did." Dee Dee drowned her cigarette in a nearby glass. "But I just don't feel like driving right now. Isn't there somewhere we can go? Like for a drink or something?"

*Oh, so look who now wants a drink.*

"Well, it's not like Mexico," Steve said. "You gotta be twenty one to drink here."

"Well, let's just go somewhere. Take me to the beach. Show me those waves you were talking about."

"*Now?*" Steve asked.

"Yeah, now." Dee Dee pulled out a compact from her purse and flipped it open. She patted the corners of her eyes with powder as she checked herself in the mirror. "I'm gonna go say good bye to my dad and then I'll be waiting outside." She snapped her compact shut and turned to leave us. She was careful to make sure her eyes did not meet Evie's.

Well," Steve said slowly. "I guess I better take her.

"*What?*" Evie balked. "You are *not* serious."

"Well, what am I supposed to do?" he asked.

What was he *supposed* to do? Evie thought. For one, he could be a good friend, a loyal friend. He could simply tell Dee Dee that he refused to be ordered around by her. He could even lie and claim he couldn't leave the party because he had to stay and help with tidy up. He could, if he was a really, really good friend, he'd see how upsetting all this was for Evie, someone he's known for years, and offer to stay and console her. God, could Steve be so completely clueless?

"So, Evie," Steve asked again, awkwardly. "What do you *want* me to do? I feel like my hands are tied."

"Nothing." Evie told him. "Nothing, Steve. Just go."

~~And, not surprisingly, Steven the gentleman, did go.~~ <sup>Steve</sup> As Evie watched him leave out the front door to meet Dee Dee she thought about him, Dee Dee and even Raquel. What had went wrong with this evening? Her stomach dropped as she sadly calculated how many true friends she felt actually had. **(STILL NOT HAPPY WITH THIS ENDING...ANY SUGGESTIONS?)**

server

But a lot  
loser