

To: Lynn Weingarten/Alloy

From: Jennifer Klonsky/Simon & Schuster

Re: HBC2 revision

Date: 11/10/06

No longer than 20 pages

"Not so organized"

Michele is really talented and does an amazing job with dialogue and slang (how cute is the chapter title "Text Mex and Other Southwest Catastrophes"?), and she really knows how to create believable characters that can appeal different kinds of audiences. However, she's just not a careful writer. She can create cute chapter titles—but the one mentioned above is the only chapter that is titled. One of her chapters (chapter 5) is 30 pages long, and it doesn't look like she included a chapter 6 at all. She added a lot of background information from *HBC1*, but it's crammed into the first chapter. And yes, she addressed many of our suggestions, but not necessarily in a smooth way. -5

Given these concerns, here are the things we think she should work on:

\*Chapter 1 writing & themes

-Could the first paragraph be simpler? The peeing example just isn't necessary.

-Again, it's great that background information has been added about the friendship between the girls and the Flojo clique—but can it spread out over the first three chapters? This way, Evie's phone conversations with Raquel and Dee Dee won't need to be quite so lengthy (as of now, they're unrealistically long).

Maybe the bit about Raquel on p.15 could be moved to chapter 2 or 3, for example? Also, could background information about Evie's dad's bakery and the party Vicki throws for Dee Dee's family be clarified? It needs to be mentioned early in the story, but again, not necessarily in the first chapter. 23

-It's also helpful that there is now a better explanation of the Flojo/Sangro cultures, but this theme should be carried through to the end of the book. What does Evie decide about her identity by the end? Maybe


relationships and what she wants/doesn't out of them in the future might make her earlier behavior more convincing.

Alex:

We agree that things are a bit too tidy with Alex. What makes him go back to Evie so easily? What makes Evie take him back so easily? The gift Alex gives her is adorable! Clearly Alex talked to Dee Dee about what to get Evie, so are we to assume Dee Dee explained to him how much Evie likes him? Is this what makes Alex treat Evie so well? Instead of transforming Alex into this incredibly chivalrous guy, maybe Evie can simply realize that she likes him the way he is—that he will always want to surf and hang with Mondo, but that she wants to be with him, regardless. Or else, maybe like Dee Dee and Sabrina (and Raquel, in a way), Evie needs a break from boyfriends? Or, maybe Evie needs time to figure out what she wants from Alex?

Evie-Dee Dee-Raquel friendship:

Although it would be helpful to add more tender moments between the three friends, it would also be helpful to show how they grow apart and then become friends again. Raquel's life has been spiraling out of control for some time, but in most of the scenes with the three of them, Evie and Dee Dee act like nothing is happening. When Raquel doesn't show up for the hula rehearsal, are Evie and Dee Dee mad? Why or why not? Raquel calls Evie as Evie's getting ready for her date but pretends like everything is fine. Has Evie already forgiven her? When Raquel finally apologizes (p.141), what is Evie thinking?

Similarly, when the three have a frostie together after Evie's awful date, and Raquel makes a scene, Dee Dee dis-invites her from her party for Rocio. But how does Evie feel? Does she forgive Raquel again? The following week, after Evie and Alex have their big fight, the three girls chat as if nothing has happened. How can this be? Interestingly, Raquel's actually the more sensitive friend in this scene, convincing Dee Dee that Evie doesn't need a date to her party because she and Dee Dee will be there. 

How does Raquel suddenly become so loyal? And how does Dee Dee feel toward Raquel now? Closer? Still concerned about her drinking problem? Convinced that she's cured?

The only scene in which it's clear that Raquel has a drug/alcohol problem is the kitchen scene near the end of the book—and Evie calls her on it. Why now? Does it really just now dawn on Evie that her friend is in trouble? If she and Dee Dee had really noticed something was wrong, as she claims, why didn't they say something earlier? Was Evie too preoccupied with herself before? What is Dee Dee thinking all this time? Why does she want to talk to Raquel after the scene she makes, at all?

And if Dee Dee is feeling distanced from Raquel toward the end of the story, why does she want to go visit her before she leaves for Isla del Mar? And why is she so willing to go visit her during Evie's birthday party? Does Evie need to convince Dee Dee to go? It seems that Evie is quick to forgive Raquel throughout the book—what makes Dee Dee forgive her, too? And how do all of them feel about their friendship?

Overall, the style of this book is wonderful—but many scenes still need to be clarified or simplified, and the bigger themes need to be carried through more carefully.