**Back to School - Whitebriar Academy**

by LeahR

**Part Three - Mixing it Up**

Jessie tried to follow what Mrs McCort was saying, but something about math just seemed to short circuit her brain. She did pick up on "Tutoring will be available." Mrs McCort said that there would be a tutoring program for anyone who needed help and that details would be on her teacher page.

Next period, in study hall, she checked Mrs McCort's page, but the link to tutoring just said 'Under Construction.' She decided to wait till tutoring was available and not spend too much time on algebra on her own. Instead, she looked at the list of extracurricular activities on Mister Baumhart's page.

She didn't think she could stand 'Future Teachers Club,' so that was out. She didn't even know what some of the activities on the list were. Some had hyperlinks to more information, some didn't. Adventurer's Club? No. Anime Club? Yuck! Botany Club? Ditto. Choir/Glee Club? Maybe. She could sing a little and would just be a face in the crowd. She'd reserve that one as a possibility in case she couldn't think of anything better.

Scanning the rest of the list didn't yield anything more promising, but she decided she would wait and see. She had till Monday to decide anyway. She looked back at the homepage and saw in flashing text that there was a Sophomore Class announcement. She clicked on it. Next week Friday night there was going to be a 'Sophomore Class Mixer,' a dance. Jessie liked to dance, but she really didn't care to socialize with a bunch of teenagers.

Study Hall was over, so she closed her tablet and walked with Ashlee to Music appreciation. Room 100 was right next to the auditorium, so they had a few minutes to talk. Ashlee seemed excited. "I talked to Spencer," she said.

"Who?"

"Spencer! The guy that likes you!"

"He CAN'T like me, Ashlee."

"Why not? Is Marty right? Are you, you know, into girls?"

"I'm not 'into' girls, or boys either, Ashlee."

"Come on! What's wrong with him? He's cute. And," Ashlee added conspiratorially, "He's a star on the football team! He already told me he's gonna ask you to dance at the mixer."

"I'm not going."

"Yes you are!"

"No, I'm not."

"Yes, you are!" Ashlee said, adding just as Miss Pierce started class, "It's mandatory!"

Great! Well, it was still over a week away, maybe she'd be out of here by then.

Music Appreciation seemed like an easy class. They would listen to a piece of music, then Miss Pierce would expound on it. The first day they had listened to several small samples of what they would study. Classical, rock, even rap were all part of the course.

Today they were starting on the baroque period, with Pachelbel's Canon the current topic, though Miss Pierce insisted that they know the 'correct' name, Canon and Gigue for 3 violins and basso continuo. She also played for them the 'gigue,' or jig, which Jessie had never heard. It was much livelier than the canon, and helped move the class along quickly.

Soon the school day was over and they were headed back to the dorms. Ashlee pulled her aside, to sit on one of the benches set here and there in the park-like space between the school building and the dorms. "So, why don't you like Spencer?"

"Why do you keep asking me this stuff, Ashlee? I said I don't wanna talk about it."

"I promised Spencer I could get you to dance with him. Are you sure it's not 'cause you like girls?"

"I'm sure Ashlee, and why do you keep asking me THAT? Do you like girls?"

"No. I mean, I dunno. I never kissed a girl or anything. Wanna kiss me so I can find out?"

"No!" Jessie shouted, and instantly saw a hurt look on Ashlee's face. "No, Ashlee. I didn't mean it like that. You're very pretty and I like you. If I did like girls, you would be one I'd kiss in a minute. Your hair is so soft looking and such a pretty red, and... You don't wear contacts do you?"

Ashlee shook her head.

"Your eyes then, are the most beautiful green I've ever seen on anyone, I just don't want to kiss anybody right now. Look, I'll make you a deal. You can tell Spencer I'll dance with him. I'll dance every dance all night long with him if he wants, but that's all I'm gonna do, okay? Nothing more. Then, if I do that, you have to promise not to ask me about this kind of stuff anymore."

Ashlee brightened a little. "I'll tell him!"

Jessie started to get up but Ashlee grabbed her arm. "Wait! That's not the main thing I wanted to ask you!"

"Then what?"

"Did you pick any extracurricular activities?"

"I dunno, Ash. I thought maybe Glee Club. Why?"

"Because Cheerleaders are having tryouts next week, but I don't wanna go by myself."

"Ashlee, I don't wanna be a cheerleader."

"Why not? The reason they're having tryouts is they don't have enough flyers, and you're so small, you'd be perfect for that!"

"I can't do that Ashlee!"

"Why not? I seen you stretchin' in gym! You got flexibility, Jessie!"

"I just dunno. I just can't Ashlee. Besides, you're not much taller than me, you can do it."

"All right. I just thought I'd ask."

Ashlee started to get up but Jessie sighed. "Ashlee. If I just go to the tryouts with you, will that be enough? I just can't be a cheerleader."

"But you'd go tryout with me?"

"Sure Ashlee."

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Wednesday ended with Jessie having avoided, except for Mr Baumhart's fingertip whacking, being beaten. She also managed to stay out of trouble on Thursday, reminding herself to keep a low profile, which caused her to wonder why she had ever agreed to cheerleader tryouts. How low profile was that? Of course, she told herself, she wasn't going to actually BE a cheerleader, just tryout to keep Ashlee company.

Friday ended the first week of school. Jessie spent so much time trying to adapt, to stay out of trouble, that she found herself thinking more and more like a student, and a teenager, and less like the adult she knew she was.

Like Ashlee told her, she did catch Spencer looking at her from time to time, and a few times he caught her looking at him. One of those times, she couldn't help but smile at him and he grinned back. Once she saw Ashlee talking with him and they both were glancing her way during the conversation. She wished she hadn't told Ashlee it was okay to tell him she would dance with him.

Later, Ashlee told her, "He really likes you, Jess!"

"Why me? I'm not that pretty."

"Sure you are! You don't give yourself credit. Besides, he said he likes petite girls, and you sure are that! And, he said you look 'sophisticated,' whatever that's supposed to mean. I told him how many times you been spanked, and he said he'd like to spank you too, on your 'cute little ass.'"

Jessie felt herself flush. "Jeez Ashlee! Why did you tell him that? Anyway, that's NOT gonna happen! I said I'd dance with him, but that's it!"

The school day ended, and with it the week. When Jessie got back to her dorm room, she found that one of her roommates had already left, having been picked up by her parents for a weekend at home. A second one was packed and waiting to be picked up. Pam was going to be picked up tomorrow but would be here tonight. "Aren't you going home?" she asked Jessie.

"I dunno. It's up to my aunt, I guess, but I haven't heard anything."

As if on cue, a matron came and told Jessie that "Your mother is here."

"Should I bring anything?" Jessie asked.

"I don't think so."

Jessie went with the matron, knowing that it must be Aunt Becca, but not disputing the girl's perception that it might be her mother.

She had learned that there were two types of matrons. Senior matrons, who were supervisors and could discipline students, and junior matrons, like this one, who were basically just housekeepers. The senior matrons wore green and white uniforms, while the junior ones wore all white.

This matron was probably younger than Jessie herself, and she realized she hadn't considered trying to talk to one of these junior matrons. Maybe one of them would be able to help her. She decided this wasn't time for that however, as she was hoping that Aunt Becca was going to take her home for the weekend, which she hoped she could make permanent.

Aunt Becca was waiting in the same room where Jessie had last met her. She had a couple of boxes and bags with her, which made Jessie realize that she probably wasn't here to pick her up. The matron left them alone, and Jessie said, "Hello, Becca."

"Aunt Becca," Becca corrected her.

Jessie said nothing and Aunt Becca said, "Come on, honey. Don't be like that! I have good news."

Really? The only good news that Jessie could think of was that Becca was going to tell the truth, but it didn't look like that was going to happen so she kept silent.

"Well," said Becca, "I really thought you'd be more cooperative by now Jessie. Especially after that glowing report I got from Amanda."

Amanda? Aunt Becca and the principal were on a first name basis now?

"She said you've been a very good girl the last couple of days. She even suggested relaxing some of your restrictions. I was almost convinced. Don't make me tell her she was wrong. Don't make me tell her we need to be even more restrictive."

Relaxing the restrictions? Jessie realized she wasn't doing herself any good by being stubborn, so she said, "Okay, 'Aunt' Becca."

"There, was that so hard? Now, Amanda tells me there is a little dance next week, and I want you to look nice so I brought you some things." From one of the bags she took out a makeup kit. "She said you're allowed to wear some makeup to the dance as long as it is not overdone, so I bought you this." The kit had mostly subdued, neutral tones, and almost colorless lip gloss but it was something.

Aunt Becca said, "It's a good thing I remembered your sizes from when we went shopping." She opened a box and took out a pair of black pumps. Jessie usually wore shoes with a bit of a heel to give herself at least a little more height. Now of course, she was limited to the saddle shoes she wore to class, and the sneakers she wore for gym. The pumps were sort of cute, with a double ruffle on the toe box, but she was disappointed to see that they had only a very small heel.

Next Aunt Becca got a garment bag that had been hanging on the door. It bore the name of the exclusive dress shop that Jessie had been to with Becca in the past, but had never felt able to afford anything. Becca opened it to reveal a cherry-red cocktail dress. It was strapless, and had ruffles on the bodice and a bubble skirt. It was a cute little dress, Jessie decided, but it was very tiny. It didn't look like the skirt would come even halfway down her thighs.

"Aunt Becca, isn't it a little short?"

"Nonsense! That's the way the girls wear them. The saleslady said this dress was very popular last prom season."

"It's not a prom Aunt Becca, it's just a stupid little mixer."

"Well, you're going to look nice anyway. You'll be the prettiest girl there. The boys will all want to dance with you!"

"Great Aunt Becca! Just what I want, a bunch of teenage boys drooling all over me!"

"You want to be popular, don't you?"

"Aunt Becca, I don't even wanna be here! Please just take me home!"

"Now, now. I'm sure a lot of the other girls are homesick too. Just give it time. You'll get used to it."

"I'm not homesick, Aunt Becca. I just don't belong here!"

Aunt Becca addressed that statement by simply ignoring it, and taking more items out of the bag. She gave Jessie a small bottle of her favorite perfume, saying she thought it was what Jessie wore. There was also some underwear, red panties, pantyhose and, surprisingly to Jessie, a strapless, padded bra. With the little bit of padding and the ruffled bodice of the dress, she might actually look like she had boobs, instead of the tiny little tits she had.

"Now," Aunt Becca said, "I want you to be ready by 8:00am tomorrow. You have an appointment to have your hair done."

"You're taking me out?"

"Yes, and you'd better behave yourself if you ever want to go out again."

So Becca left and Jessie took her things back to the dorm room. The dining hall was nearly empty that evening, with many of the students away for the weekend. Jessie didn't see Ashlee, but Marty was there and they ate together, even joined by Pam, who seemed less intimidating to Jessie now.

After dinner Jessie tried to watch a movie in the common area, but she found herself nodding off, so she went back to her room and went to sleep early.

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Even though there was no class, the morning bell still rang at the usual time. Jessie remembered that this was a linen day, so she got dressed and went to breakfast. Since Aunt Becca had said she was taking her out, she wanted to wear what she had worn the first day of school, but she couldn't find any of those things except the shoes, so she wore the 'bunny' lounge pants, a pink t-shirt, and sneakers. It was either that, her school uniform, gym clothes or her new party dress.

With half the students away, there was also less staff. She had to get breakfast from the serving line herself. She choose an omelet with mushrooms and cheese, and a muffin. She couldn't figure out why, maybe it was remembering how good those cookies were the first day, but she found she now actually liked milk.

When she finished it was already after 7:30 so she just went to the residence office to wait for Aunt Becca. She didn't have to wait long and soon they were on the way. Jessie thought about opening the door and jumping out at a traffic light or stop sign. She even put her hand on the door handle at one stop, but the light changed too quickly. Becca saw her though and said, "Don't you dare! I see you touch that handle again, and you'll be in the back seat with the child locks on!"

Becca drove them to a small salon in a tiny strip mall. The front door was locked and bore a sign, 'By Appointment Only.' There was a bell button, and when Becca rang, a man let them in. "Ah," he said to Becca with a slight hint of a French accent. He looked Jessie up and down. "This is she?"

"This is she, Étienne."

He reached out and pinched a bit of Jessie's hair and rubbed it between his fingers. "Yes. She does look young!" He stepped back some, contemplating. "Her hair is very fine, but I will thin it some." He began to walk around behind Jessie. "No!" he said when Jessie turned her head to follow him. "Look straight! Like that!"

He walked slowly all the way around her, stopping when he was again next to Becca. "Yes. She does look maybe eighteen already, but when I am finished, she will look younger. Maybe fourteen, trying to look eighteen. A shag cut, almost to the shoulders, lighten a little, add a bit of red! She will look too hot!"

"Good!" said Aunt Becca. "That sounds perfect! Doesn't it Darling?"

"Let me go cancel my ten o'clock appointment, we won't be rushed that way," he said, and went toward the back of the salon.

"I said, 'It sounds perfect, doesn't it?'"

Jessie looked daggers at Becca, but said, "Yes, Aunt Becca."

"Really honey! You'll be much happier once you just get over it!"

"Sure, Aunt Becca."

Étienne returned. He proceeded to wash, lighten, color and cut Jessie's hair, then apply makeup. When he was finally done, he turned the chair toward Becca, who gasped. "Oh my! Let her see!"

He turned the chair toward the mirror and Jessie saw her teenager self. She did look fourteen, if even that old in fact. She pouted, which enhanced the effect so disturbingly that she decided not to pout anymore, and smiled instead, which seemed to lessen the effect somewhat.

Becca saw the smile and said, "There! See how nice you look!"

Jessie thought she did look nice, even if it wasn't quite the look she wanted, so she agreed. "Yes aunt Becca, it is a nice look."

"Thank Mr Beaudreau."

"Thank you, Mr Beaudreau."

"You are most Welcome, Jessica." He gave her a tube of pomade. "Use this when you blow dry and it will keep looking nice."

They got back in Aunt Becca's car and before starting it, Becca asked, "Is there anything you want me to get you before I take you back?"

"A cell phone?"

"Funny girl. You know you're not allowed cell phones in school."

"Then nothing, I guess."

The drive back was mostly silent though Becca said, "I can hardly wait to see you in that cute dress at the dance. Did you know Amanda invited me to be an extra chaperone?"

Jessie admitted she did not know that.

"She did, when I told her I was worried about your socialization."

"That's great, Aunt Becca. I'm sure you'll be very amused."

"Oh, I'll be amused. Don't you worry your pretty little head about that."

Back at the dorm, Pam had left, so Jessie had the room to herself the rest of the weekend, and nothing to do but contemplate her future.