**Everybody Wins**

by oopsy daisy

**Part 1**

Thomas was excited about the trip to the lake. No parents, just his cousins and some friends. This would be the second year that his cousin Melanie would be in charge and that made it even better. Before that, the weekend had always been supervised by one of his father’s teaching assistants and that was a mixed bag at best. At any rate, Melanie wasn’t nearly as concerned with his father’s rules as a TA who depended on him for their grades, recommendations, and paychecks!

Thomas’s father was an economics professor at a small college and this early summer va-cation was something that he had come up with years ago. Sure it was mainly about swimming, camping and just hanging out, but he had added an economic component.

Each kid was given a certain amount of money at the start of the week, which they then had to use for everything from food and supplies to movies and whatever else came up.

They could also use it to, say, acquire the best room in the cabin, purchase someone else’s bag of cookies or pay someone to make dinner. You could make money if you could convince others to pay you for services. This was not restricted to the house. You could get paid by a neighboring cabin to cut their grass or weed their garden and then live like a king…till the money dried out.

Bartering was not only allowed but also encouraged so that every meal did not necessari-ly become a fiscal orgy, but could be as simple as “you cook, I’ll clean.”

Thomas had yet to win this little competition, but hoped to do better this year. For one thing, he was not bringing a friend. Last summer, Luke had been a disaster. Luke certain-ly didn’t care about winning, the “friends” rarely did. He spent his money carelessly, and encouraged Thomas to do the same. When his money ran out, he would pester Thomas to loan him funds or just buy him stuff. Even worse, Luke flirted with Melanie all the time and Thomas hated that!

Melanie was 18, the oldest cousin. She was a high school senior, head cheerleader, home coming queen and beautiful. Thomas was infatuated with her. She was perfect and had always taken care of him when his other two cousins gave him a hard time. She never won the competition either, because of her kind heart. She had probably given Luke more money than Thomas had last summer. He was thrilled to learn that Melanie was also not bringing a friend this year. In his mind, that meant that they could spend a lot more time together.

Melanie was glad to be getting away. Her idyllic high school years had soured right at the finish line. At prom she found her boyfriend making out with one of her best friends. Turns out they had been carrying on behind her back for months and everyone but Mela-nie seemed to know about it. Totally humiliating. So then she had started dating this older guy she had met at a yoga class. On their third date they ran into his wife. HIS WIFE!! She had had no idea. Again, total humiliation. Suddenly, men were not her favorite spe-cies.

And she was wait-listed at State. That too was embarrassing. "We aren’t talking about Harvard here,” her uncle had teased. Her guidance councilor had explained, dripping with condescension, that they had probably filled their quota of cheerleaders and Homecoming Queens and were looking for girls who were maybe a little more interesting.

So, a week at the lake to sulk and have a pity party sounded pretty good right about now. She’d let the other kids do what they wanted, just so long as they left her and her gallon of Chocolate Mint alone. She was not thrilled to learn that Thomas was also not bringing a friend. He would probably want to follow her around like a sick puppy and she was not in the mood. Besides, he was of the male species, the enemy.

Teresa was definitely bringing a friend. She was bringing Laura, because Laura had proved to be very useful last year. Teresa was the middle cousin. She was 17, like Thom-as. That was about all that they had in common. He was the golden boy, adored by his parents, and on his way to being adored by the world, well the socially conservative part of it anyway. Thomas, like his dad, felt that women were very definitely the weaker, less intelligent sex. He won everything he participated in, except for the “Econ challenge” as her Uncle called it. She had won this little money thing every year and planned to again this year. She won, because she was shrewd and maybe cheated a little when it suited. But come on, what student of economics doesn't know that cheating is part of the game!

It gave her so much satisfaction to see the disappointment on both Thomas' and his fa-ther's face every year when she won.

Finally there was Meghan, Meg. She had just turned fifteen and would also be bringing a friend, Rachel. It was always tricky for the girls to decide whom to ask. Whomever you asked was sort of automatically viewed as your best friend. For Teresa, this was easy, she didn’t have that many friends and she had been tight with Laura for years. Meg, however, was part of a close group of girls and to just ask one was tricky. She had asked her mom if she could bring two friends since Melanie wasn’t bringing anyone, but that idea was shot down. Deciding between Vivian and Rachel had been hard, kind of like choosing between the angel on one shoulder or the devil on the other. But in the end two things tilted her decision towards Rachel. Teresa had been giving her a hard time lately about being such a goody goody and Meg didn’t like that. Also, she was suddenly very into boys and loved to talk about them all the time, something that embarrassed Vivian, but Rachel loved. She was just sorry that Thomas, her older cousin wasn’t bringing a friend, making him the only boy on the trip.

Thomas’s cousins lived between his town and the site of their cottage, so his parents would traditionally drive up the night before, have dinner with everyone and then drive back home leaving Thomas behind. Dinner was par for the course, mostly Thomas’s dad holding court about all of his achievements since the last time the families had been to-gether. He also lectured his sister on all the things she was doing wrong and quizzed the girls on political events. Thomas joined in here, chiding his cousins and his aunt for not being better informed.

After dinner, Thomas’s parents got ready to leave. His dad asked if maybe there was something Thomas needed before they left.

“Oh right, my bag!”

“Yes, your bag. Now son, you’re on your own from here on out. You can’t be careless and expect to win the econ challenge!”

Teresa let out a derisive snort and was shot a dirty look by her older sister. Her mother, however, covered her mouth to hide a secret smile.

Thomas walked with his parents back to the car, endured another lecture from his father and retrieved his bag.

When he walked back in the house, the only one left about was his aunt.

“Where is everyone" he asked.

“Well they’ve all gone up to their rooms. You’ve got a big day tomorrow and I know

Melanie wants to get an early start, so you should head up as well."

“Okay, goodnight Aunt Margaret.”

“Goodnight Thomas, and don’t let those girls take advantage of you up there.”

“Don’t worry, I can handle them.”

“Well, that makes one of us," she said.

Thomas knocked on Melanie’s door and when she said come in, he did.

“Just wanted to say goodnight.”

“Okay, goodnight.”

Thomas just stood there.

“Anything else Thomas?”

“Um no. So we’re leaving early tomorrow?”

“Yes.”

“Um okay. G’night.”

With that Thomas left, closing the door behind him.

Melanie just shook her head.

Across the hall, Laura asked Teresa “isn’t he going to say goodnight to us?”

“No, Teresa said, “we are not goddess material.

“Well I don’t think I like that, said Laura. “Nope, I don’t like that one bit.

Rachel walked into Meg’s room after brushing her teeth.

“Just passed your cousin in the hall. He’s kinda cute. Have you ever seen him naked?”

Meg giggled and said, “No, I don’t think so.”

Rachel put her hand on her hip and pointed her toothbrush at Meg.

“Don’t think so! I would think you would remember if you had!”

“ Yeah” Megan giggled again, “I guess I would.”

“Well let’s see what we can do about that this week”, Rachel said as she crawled into bed and turned out the light.

As Meg lay there, she thought to herself, yep, I’m bringing the right person.

The next morning was predictably chaotic as everyone took shifts showering, packing and eating breakfast.

Thomas came down for breakfast and was greeted by Teresa, Laura, Meg and Rachel.

“Shower is free,” he said.

“Who hasn’t showered yet?” Margaret asked.

“Me,” said Rachel.

“Well you better get a move on. Meg, go show your guest where everything is.”

The two girls headed upstairs.

Meg showed Rachel where the towels were and then headed back to her room.

A few minutes later Rachel reappeared still dressed with a bundle in her hands.

"What is that?" Meg asked.

"His underwear," said Rachel.

"What!" Screamed Meg.

"Yeah," said Rachel a little breathless, "I took them out of his bag, I figure this will help us in our quest. Where can we hide them?"

"Rachel no, we can’t do that!"

"I already did."

"Well put them back!"

“What is going on? What are those?"

With that, both girls turned and saw Teresa standing in the doorway.

"Are those Thomas’s underpants?"

"Yes, but Rachel was just about to put them back," Meg said.

"The hell she is," said Teresa. "Quick give them to me. I’ll hide them."

As she walked out, she smiled and said, "Meg, I like your new friend."

Teresa buried Thomas’s undies deep in a drawer in the back of her closet,

and headed back downstairs. She got about halfway down the stairs when inspiration struck. Back upstairs she went. First to Melanie’s room, she had joined the rest for breakfast, then to Thomas’ room and finally back to hers.

This trip was looking better and better.

**Part 2**

The drive was uneventful. Just as Melanie had feared, Thomas rode shotgun and pestered her the whole way. Teresa and Laura were no help in the back. Their conversations seemed to consist of a lot of Teresa whispering and Laura “NO WAYing.” And Meg and Rachel in the way back were even worse.

As they pulled in to the little town, Melanie decided to shut Thomas up by playing tour guide for Rachel, since she was the only one who had never been here. “So Rachel, this is the town that we use for groceries and other supplies. It has a cute little bookstore, but the video store is long gone. It’s about ten miles from the cottages, so we kind of like to plan out our trips so we don’t waste time or gas. The cottages dot the lake and are grouped to-gether in pairs, threes and up depending on their size. Since ours has four bedrooms, it’s one of the bigger ones, so we just have two neighbors. One is owned by the State Col-lege...”

“…that you didn’t get into” shot Teresa.

“...Where I am wait listed, and they've been known to accept people as late as July."

Yeah right, said Teresa.

"...and the other cottage is owned by the Ferguson’s but they won't be up this week. It's always possible that neither one will be occupied.”

After a few more minutes of driving, they pulled up to their cottage.

As they piled out of the mini van, Melanie announced, “okay, let’s figure out who gets which room. The four bedrooms were all upstairs, the two in the middle faced the lake and the ones on either side faced the two other cabins.

"Well," Teresa said, "since you and Thomas are solo, you should get the smaller rooms on the ends."

"Seems only fair," said Meg. "C’mon Rachel I’ll show you to our room."

Melanie was used to having one of the bigger rooms with the view, but she decided to let it go. She called after Meg. “Remember, first we do general clean up, put sheets on the beds, unpack and then we’ll go swimming. And remember to hoist the family flag."

"Family flag?" Asked Rachel.

"Yeah," sighed Meg, we are kind of weird family I guess."

Thomas headed to his room. The first thing he did was look out the window to see if any-one was next door. He saw a car parked out front, so he knew the house was occupied. His father swore to him that one year the state cheerleaders had stayed there, but every year he had come up, the house had either been empty or in use by a professor or two and their families.

He got his bed made and then went to see if there were any other chores that needed to be done. He swept off the back porch, took the cover off of the grill and then headed up stairs to change into his swimsuit.

Teresa and Laura watched as Thomas walked into his room and then started to laugh as they changed into their suits. Meg and Rachel were already downstairs encouraging eve-ryone else to hurry up.

Melanie wrapped a beach towel over her suit and was about to head downstairs when she heard the laughter coming from Teresa’s room.

“What’s so funny," she asked, walking into their room.

“Oh nothing," said Laura, looking at Teresa, "we uh, just heard Thomas cussing, and we thought it was funny.”

Melanie headed to Thomas’s room to see what was up.

Thomas hadn’t bothered to close his door because he hadn’t found his suit yet.

Damn it, I know I packed it! Where is it? He rooted around again and felt something strange. He pulled it out and it was a pair of women’s underwear. He just stared at them.

He was dumfounded. Were they his moms? Did she wear underwear like this!?

“Thomas, everything okay?”

At the sound of Melanie’s voice Thomas jumped and immediately stuffed the underwear back into his bag.

Teresa and Laura walked out of their room and crept towards Thomas’s room, signaling for Meg and Rachel to come up.

"I, I can’t find my suit. I was sure that I packed it, but I guess I didn’t."

"God Thomas, you’re just like Teresa. You have to dump everything out before you just give up."

And before he could stop her, she dumped his bag on the bed and started rooting through his stuff.

"What the hell is this? What the hell is MY UNDERWEAR doing in your bag?"

Thomas felt dizzy. All he could think was that he had touched Melanie’s underwear.

"You little pervert!"

"No I didn’t…"

"You didn’t what, they are right here, on your bed, because they fell out of your bag."

“Whoa! That is sick.”

Both Melanie and Thomas turned to see the other four girls crowded in the doorway.

Melanie stormed out of the room got about halfway down the hall and then came back and said "and if you don’t have a damn swimsuit then you can just swim in your under-wear."

And then she looked at his bed and back at Thomas. "Where is your underwear?"

"Holy crap," Thomas said, realizing for the first time that he didn’t have any.

"Good grief Thomas," said Melanie, shaking her head and walking back out.

Thomas followed the rest of them down to the lake but wasn’t about to strip down to his underwear and swim. He could just swim in his shorts if it came to that. He couldn’t be-lieve that he had forgotten both his underwear and his swimsuit. He groaned thinking about his father discovering them still on his bed back home.

Now he’d have to buy some, using money he could ill afford to spend.

"I can’t believe he didn’t just assume that you did it," said Laura as they treaded water out in the lake.

“I know," Teresa said, "he’s just not wired that way. Same with Melanie, she saw the un-derwear fall out of his bag, so he must of put them in there. She’s a very literal person."

"I’m a little disappointed that he’s not out here in his underwear," said Laura.

"Oh who cares," said Teresa. "Besides, he’s way to shy for that. Still, I hate to see his torment come to an end."

Just then Meg and Rachel swam over.

"I’m a little disappointed that he’s not out here in his underwear," said Rachel.

Laura and Teresa laughed and explained why that was funny.

“Look at him sitting there on the pier, feet dangling in the water looking all morose,” said Laura. “Let’s go push him in!”

"I’m game," said Rachel.

"No wait," said Teresa, "try to make it seem like an accident."

Melanie had swum out towards the middle of the lake and was taking a breather before she headed back. She saw Laura and Rachel sitting on either side of Thomas on the pier.

"Well they are nicer than I am," thought Melanie. "I say he’s getting what he deserves."

Thomas sat between the two girls enjoying the attention. He was a little nervous, what with both of them in bikinis. Right now, as they patted his bare leg and rubbed their hands on his back and arms telling him things would be okay, he was kinda glad he wasn’t in a bathing suit. Then Rachel stood up and said she was getting back in.

Laura said that she was going to sit with Thomas a little longer.

When Teresa saw Rachel stand up, she knew that was her cue. She called out for Laura to get back in. Laura said no. They went back and forth for a few minutes and then Meg called out to Rachel, “push her in!”

All of a sudden, Rachel was pushing Laura who screamed, turned and grabbed Thomas’s arm and let gravity do the rest. Well, gravity and a little extra help from Rachel.

When Thomas bounced up, it took him a second to take in what had happened. Teresa and Meg were laughing and clapping and Rachel was just standing there grinning at him.

At that point he remembered that most of his money was in his pocket. He shot a hand down into his pocket and was relieved to feel that it was still there.

He lumbered out of the water, intent on just heading back to the cabin, but Laura came out after him and grabbed his arm. “I’m so sorry, she said. “It was an accident. You have to believe me.”

Of course, I do, he said.

“Idiot,” she thought. “Well look at you, you might as well swim now.”

I can’t he said and pulled out his soggy money. I’ve got to take this back to the cabin.

Laura laughed at the sight of the money, but then turned earnest.

"Thomas, by the time you run up there, put your money away and come back, we’ll be getting out. Just leave the money in your shorts and the shorts on that table with your shirt and come join us.”

She could tell he was weighing the options so she piled on. "Besides, if we do chicken fights like last summer, you’ll have Melanie on your shoulders instead of Luke, and you know how Teresa likes to try and rip her top off."

She could see she had won. "C’mon please."

"Okay," he said. "But you go on ahead."

She knew he was shy and didn’t want to push it, so she ran back into the water.

Just thinking about Melanie on his shoulders, and possibly topless had made him hard.

Watching Laura run back into the water didn’t help.

He peeled off his shirt and was reaching for his zipper when he noticed that they were all staring at him. Granted, they were pretty far out, but he was afraid the erection might still be obvious, not to mention he’d be in his underwear.

You guys need to turn around. Teresa was about to protest, but then something caught

her eye. “Oh this is just too perfect," she said. Then Laura saw and laughed. Meg and Ra-chel both gasped.

Melanie saw as well and called out urgently, "THOMAS there are…"

But Teresa cut her off. "Melanie! Remember, he stole your underwear."

“You’re right," said Melanie.

"What?" called out Thomas.

"I was just saying that we’ll turn around so that you feel more comfortable."

"Thanks," he called out.

Melanie, felt bad for a second as she turned around, but then a little smile crept onto her face.

The other girls turned around as well, all except Teresa.

They are still too far away, she thought, I’ve got to stall him.

"Teresa," he groaned exasperated.

"Right," she said and turned around, and then turned right back.

"TERESA!"

"Oh sorry," she said. "I thought you were already in."

"Listen, why don’t you sing 'Mary had a little lamb' and that way we’ll know not to turn around until you are done."

"Yeah right," he said.

"C’mon, I’ll pay you ten bucks."

"Done!" he called out. God knows he was going to need every penny he could get.

"Start singing and I’ll turn around," she said.

And he did, loudly!

Just as Teresa had hoped, the singing got the attention of the group of girls walking down the road, but kept Thomas from hearing their approach. Their attention was now com-pletely focused on this boy singing at the top of his lungs pulling down his shorts.

Thomas couldn’t believe he was doing this. The singing actually worked to calm him down a bit, but as soon as he pulled his shorts down, he had trouble catching his breath

And his voice cracked.

He heard laughter and jumped and turned around. Standing there staring at him were six gorgeous girls. They looked down at his crotch and started to laugh even harder.

Look how cute it is said one of them. Oh look how red he’s getting.

What’s the matter baby, cat got your tongue?

He heard splashing behind him and turned to see that everyone had turned around and were coming out of the water. It was when he saw Melanie covering a smile as she looked at his erection that he just started running. As he took off he heard everyone laughing and calling after him, “Run Forrest Run!” He thought he could still hear it even after he got back to the cabin. He was hyperventilating and had to lie down for a while before the room quit spinning.

Cheerleaders, he thought between gasps. Just my luck, this summer it’s cheerleaders.

**Part 3**

After a few minutes, Thomas got up and peeled off his wet underwear, his only pair. It was only then, when he grabbed a clean pair of shorts and a tee shirt that he realized he had left his clothes, HIS MONEY, down at the lake.

There was no way he could go back. He was too embarrassed. Surely Melanie would bring them back for him. Melanie, oh God, she had seen him erect in his underwear and laughed at him.

Miserably, he grabbed his wet underwear and took it out to the deck and laid it on the railing to dry.

Thomas was in his room when the girls finally came back.

“Thomas,” one of them called out. “Are you decent?”

That got everyone laughing.

When he didn’t answer, Teresa called out.

"C’mon it’s time to make dinner. If you don’t help you have to pay."

That got his attention, he needed his other shorts, he needed his money.

He took a deep breath and opened his door. They were all peering up at him from the

down stairs living area and broke into applause as he descended the stairs.

“Where are my shorts,” Thomas asked.

"Umm, you are wearing them," said Teresa.

"No, my other ones, the ones I was wearing at the lake."

All the girls just shrugged.

"All of my money was in them!"

"Well," said Laura, "those other girls must have taken them, they probably got mixed up with their stuff. Maybe you should go ask them."

Thomas turned red at the thought of the other girls and Rachel said what he was thinking,

"Ah, too embarrassed to face them?”

"I’ll go for you," said Teresa, "for 10 bucks."

"I can’t afford that," said Thomas, "almost all of my money was in those shorts!"

"Wait," said Melanie helpfully, "don’t you owe Thomas ten dollars for his singing."

Teresa shot her a withering look.

"Okay," said Teresa, "I’ll go, but then we are even."

"No," said Thomas, "I don’t trust you. Pay the ten to Meg. Meg you go and ask them."

"Cool," said Meg, happy to have a part in all this.

Everyone but Meg set about the task of making dinner and talking about the evening’s plans. After they ate, they would make a run into town for more groceries, as they had only brought enough for tonight’s meal.

Meg came back a few minutes later empty handed. She told Thomas that the girls assured her that they didn’t have his shorts, but she thought they might be lying.

Thomas just groaned.

"Don’t worry," said Rachel, "if they’ve got them, we’ll figure out a way to get them back." With that she patted Thomas on the back and winked at everyone else.

The other girls did have the shorts. After Thomas had run off, the girls got to talking with their new neighbors who were indeed cheerleaders from State. They had been down for a few days and would be leaving soon. Melanie was both excited, and because of her wait list status, a little embarrassed to be talking to these girls. The good news was that Thom-as’ humiliation seemed to be the highlight of their trip so far and they were eager to con-tribute to his further humiliation, especially after they were told about his theft of Mela-nie’s underwear and other assorted crimes that they just made up. Normally Melanie would have chided the other girls for lying, but these stories seemed to bond the two groups together and Melanie was all for that, especially after she learned that one of these girls, Jan, was also the head cheerleader.

They gave Jan the shorts, after Teresa had pocketed the damp money, and made a plan that they would put into action the next day.

After dinner, Teresa and Laura sat on the deck laughing about the day’s events, wonder-ing how to further Thomas’ torment.

"He is so funny, said Laura, you can tell that he is just miserable with out his underwear." "Yeah," said Teresa, "it doesn’t help that you keep staring at his crotch."

"I know," Laura said, "I bet he can’t wait to get these back on," holding up Thomas' now dry underwear by two fingers. She then lazily dropped them off the deck into the dirt.

Teresa walked over and looked at them and casually poured the remains of her drink on them. Laura laughed and did the same with hers. They then clinked glasses and walked inside.

Thomas came out later to check on his sole pair of underwear. With the way his luck had been going, he was not all that surprised to see that they had fallen off the railing and by the looks of it, were still wet.

Later that night the group headed into town to buy groceries. The last of Thomas’ money went fast. The girls all bought candy as well and marshmallows for roasting. Thomas looked longingly at the clothing store across the street. If he got his money back, that would be his first stop.

When they got back, Melanie, Teresa and Laura went over and hung out with the cheer-leaders. Thomas was coyly invited but quickly turned them down. He did ask them to keep an eye out for his shorts.

Thomas, Meg and Rachel toasted marshmallows out on the deck. As much as he needed friends, Thomas just couldn't help being condescending to the point that Rachel was not sorry for what they had done and looked forward to more. As a matter of fact, after a lec-ture about how she would want to comport herself to get into a good college, Rachel started collecting roasted marshmallows on a paper plate and bided her time. Sure enough, the next time Thomas got up she smeared them all over his white plastic chair. She could almost hear the squish when he sat back down.

Suppressing a laugh, Rachel said goodnight and signaled for Meg to follow her so that she could tell her what she had done.

When Thomas got up a few minutes later, he could sense something was wrong. He felt behind him and his hand came back sticky. Oh God, someone must have dropped a marshmallow on the chair and he had sat on it. Head bowed, he headed up to his room and stripped out of his shorts. He then put on his last clean pair and headed to the bath-room. He washed the marshmallow off as best he could and then draped them on the shower railing to dry. He was about to leave when he thought better of it (what would Teresa do if she found them there) and grabbed the trunks. Then he remembered the un-derwear down in the dirt and decided he would rinse them and leave both items on the deck, just not on the railing, to dry.

When Melanie, Teresa and Laura came back, everyone else had gone to bed. They decid-ed to sit out on the deck before retiring. Laura sat down on the offending chair and curs-ed. “What the..oh crap!” They then saw Thomas’ shorts next to his underwear and sort of pieced together what must have happened.

“Does Thomas not remember that raccoons live in these woods?” Melanie asked.

“Well, I doubt marshmallow gives off much of a sent,” replied Laura.

“No but chicken does," said Teresa, leaping up and heading towards the kitchen.

She came back with some scraps from dinner and put them in the pockets of Thomas’ shorts. For good measure she put a small chicken bite in his undies as well.

Thomas woke up to the sound of pouring rain. “Crap,” he thought and raced downstairs to retrieve his clothes. He immediately spied his shorts, not where he had left them, but more central and close to the rail. “Raccoons,” he thought, “they must have smelled the marshmallow.” He groaned as he picked them up or rather what was left of them. They had been ripped to shreds. He now looked around for the underwear, but it was nowhere to be seen. He ran from side to side and spotted them out in the yard. He clamored down, muttering, “no, no, no,” but sure enough the crotch had been ripped open and they were stained. He flung them further out into the yard and yelled in frustration.

He was startled when he heard a voice asking him what he was doing out in the rain.

It came from one of the big rooms upstairs, but he couldn’t tell which and he wasn’t sure who it was. It didn’t matter. He suddenly realized that he was out in the rain soaked to the bone in his little pajama pants and a t-shirt. He needed to get back to his room before an-yone saw him.

He pulled open the sliding glass door and had taken about ten steps towards the stairs when he heard a voice behind him.

"What are you doing?"

He turned and saw Melanie in her robe with a cup of coffee in her hand. He must have raced right by her when he went out.

Mortified, he stammered, “I was just going upstairs,” and turned to go.

"Thomas, your feet are caked with mud, you can’t go upstairs like that. Look at what you have already tracked in here! Wait there while I grab you some paper towels to clean your feet."

While Thomas stood there, the other girls wandered out of their bedrooms.

Rachel was still rubbing sleep from her eyes, but was thrilled by what she saw.

His butt was so cute the way it clung to his pj shorts. It really looked like two oval holes had been cut out of either side.

Melanie handed him some towels and he quickly started to wipe off his right foot, stand-ing stork like. When he shifted to his left foot, he lost his balance and started to hop a bit to regain control, failed and flopped right into Laura’s arms.

“Whoa, big fella, I got ya.”

Thomas quickly pulled away and cleaned off his other foot.

“Now go through those away and grab some others and wipe up the mess you made com-ing in,” ordered Melanie.

"I’ll do it after I shower," he promised.

"No," she said, "you will do it now!"

“Go Melanie,” said Teresa.

Thomas wanted to protest, but the four girls were blocking the stairs and he shuddered to think what they might do if he tried to run for it. So he walked over to the kitchen, grabbed the role of paper towels, came back and got on his hands and knees and set to work.

When he finished, their was an awkward moment when Thomas didn’t know if he was supposed to wait for inspection and the girls didn’t know what to do or say either.

Melanie finally broke the silence by saying, “good job sweetie, why don’t you go take that shower now.”

As he sidled past the girls on his way up the stairs, Laura repeated, “good job sweetie,”

And gave him a playful swat and squeeze on his butt cheek.

**Part 4**

After Thomas finished his shower, he dried off and wrapped himself in the towel.

He realized that he would have to walk back to his room in this state, but he really had no choice. This time he did leave his wet clothes in the bathroom, wishing he had done this before.

He was surprised not to see anyone about as he made the short walk back to his room.

As he opened the door he immediately saw the pair of Melanie’s panties on his bed.

He also sighed as he saw that the bag that had held his one remaining pair of shorts was empty. His first thought was maybe it hadn't been such a good idea to leave his t shirt and pajamas in the bathroom and headed back to get them. Too late, they had joined the ranks of the missing.

So, he did a quick inventory. He had this towel, Melanie's panties and one pair of shorts...next door somewhere!

"Very funny," he called out. "Can I have my clothes back now?"

Silence.

"Melanie?"

Silence.

And then he heard them. They were all on the front porch.

He walked over and cracked open the front door. "Hey" he said trying to sound confident,

"Can I have my clothes back?

"What clothes?" asked Teresa.

"C'mon," he almost whispered, losing what little confidence he had mustered.

After some financial negotiating putting Thomas even deeper in a hole, he was told where his clothes were.

He sighed, and walked to the edge of the porch and looked up. Yes, the family flag was gone, replaced by what few clothes he had left.

Teresa took him by the elbow and guided him towards the flag pole with Laura close be-hind. "Now what you are going to want to do, is give the rope a really good tug, because of the knot we placed in it way up there close to the hole it has to pass through."

"And when I yank on it really hard, you guys are counting on my towel falling to the ground."

Teresa looked crestfallen. "Damn, Laura, he's on to us."

Thomas tried to pull the rope with one hand and hold the towel with the other, but could-n't get the knot through the hole.

He offered Teresa $10 dollars to pull the rope for him. She asked for $20, but Laura jumped in and offered to do it for $15.

Thomas was relieved that he had dodged this bullet and would soon have his clothes back. He took a step back and raised his right hand to shield his eyes so that he could see the knot.

Laura's first couple of attempts failed, but with everyone including Thomas yelling "one, two, three," her next tug got the knot through the hole.

And then it happened.

As his clothes started to come down, his towel was pulled off his body and headed up the flagpole. Teresa had hooked a clasp to his towel while Thomas was distracted. As the clothes and towel meet about ten feet above the ground, Laura stopped pulling and started tying off the rope, wrapping the rope around the pole and through itself, creating even more knots, making it really hard to unwind.

Thomas was stunned. His mind just sort of froze.

The first thing to penetrate was the laughter. Laura, was laughing so hard she was sort of yell laughing. Teresa was jumping up and down screaming yes, yes, yes!

Meg and Rachel stood on the porch, mouth's agape and Melanie had her hand to her mouth hiding her smile, but shaking with quiet laughter.

But there was more laughter. Thomas turned and saw that all the cheerleaders were out on their porch laughing as well.

Thomas didn't even try to cover himself as much as he would have wanted to, because he knew he would need both hands to get the rope untangled. Actually, he could have used five or six hands. When he realized he wasn't going to get this done, he decided to retreat into the house, but the girls were way ahead of him and piled into the cottage and slammed the door behind them...and turned the lock.

Thomas was about to just start running, when the girls from the other cottage started to call out. "Yoohoo. Hey baby, look what we have for you."

Thomas looked over and saw that Jan, the head cheerleader was waving his shorts from yesterday.

Thomas hesitated. He was starting to get how things worked. As desperate as he was for these shorts, he knew that it couldn't be as simple as walking over and getting them.

He was right.

It looked good for a moment, he walked up to Jan who was holding out the shorts at arms length, but pulled them back as he extended his arm.

"You know," she said, these are mighty precious cargo, I'd sure hate to see you drop them, you'd better use two hands."

Thomas sighed. He had managed to cover himself with at least one hand during most of this ordeal, but even that was being taken away from him. He looked from girl to girl and saw no sympathy, only unabashed delight.

He pulled his hand away and raised it up next to the other as if waiting to catch some-thing falling from the sky. Jan just smiled at him and said "it's such a shame that we are leaving today. I feel like we are only just getting to know each other. Don't you wish we had more time, Thomas?"

"Sh sure," said Thomas, thinking the opposite.

"Oh Tommy, what I could do with you if I had a week! This (and here she gestured at Thomas' naked state) would seem like a walk in the park."

Suddenly she kissed him on the cheek and whispered into his ear, "I'll see if I can't make that happen."

Jan then started to walk away.

"Hey," Thomas called out, "what about my shorts!?"

Jan whirled around and gave Thomas such a stare, that he looked down at the ground and without even realizing it, covered himself once again as if he were about to be kicked.

She then turned her back on him and casually tossed his shorts to her flock and said "make him earn them back girls," as she walked back inside.

One of the girls strode up to him and said, "hi, I'm Candi and I'll be teaching you the cheers you need to learn to get your shorts back."

Just then his cousins and their friends reappeared all decked out for a swim.

"What's going on?" Melanie asked.

"We are going to teach your little buddy how to cheer," Candi said. "Why don't you girls go have a nice swim and when you get back we'll have Tommy hear perform and you can decide if he has learned enough to get his shorts back."

The girls all happily marched off towards the lake and Teresa called back "and don't be afraid to spank him if he gets out of line."

"Ooh," one of the other cheerleaders cooed, cracking up the rest of the group.

And for the next two hours, they put Tommy, as he was now called, through his paces.

They worked him hard, but they also took turns teasing him. They enjoyed watching him awkwardly attempt cheers with an erection, which wouldn't last long because of the workout and the humiliation, so they'd start the process over. Jan reappeared and com-plimented Thomas on his commitment.

By the time the girls came back from swimming, he was exhausted. His legs were sore from the high kicks, his balls were tender from all the unrestrained jiggling and his butt was sore and red from Teresa's advice being well heeded.

But he had to put all that behind him, because now it was show time!

First Thomas went through some rudimentary cheers with the other cheerleaders much to the delight of his audience. Then he got to solo, ending with one of the most pathetic splits the girls had ever seen.

"We'll," asked Candi, "did he earn his shorts back, ladies?"

"Oh what the hell," said Teresa, "frankly I think we could all use a break from staring at his junk!"

"Okay then," announced Candi, clothes your eyes and we'll help you get these back on."

And with that she dangled Thomas' shorts in front of him.

Relieved, he closed his eyes and lifted one leg. Immediately, he knew that whatever was being pulled up his leg, was not his shorts. When he opened his eyes he saw that Mela-nie's underwear was just now being pulled up over his butt. "I hope they're worth it," Melanie said. "I believe they are the only bit of clothing that you have now."

Just then Jan announced that it was time for the girls to pack up and get ready to leave. The cheerleaders filed back into their cottage, most giving Thomas a peck on one check and a little slap on the other as they walked by.

Jan turned to Mel and grabbed both her hands and said, "thanks for making this such a great trip, I hope I’ll be able to return the favor someday."

Thomas ran up to his room relieved to finally not be on show. He couldn't relax though.

Underwear on, underwear off, neither state was comfortable. After a while, Meg and Ra-chel came up to tell him that the cheerleaders were getting ready to leave. Thomas let it be known that this was good news as far as he was concerned.

"They want to say good bye," Rachel said. "And they have a gift for you...your shorts."

Thomas raced down the stairs, hoping against hope that he would finally have some sem-blance of clothing again.

"Hurry, Tommy," Candi called out, "Jan is driving and she says we have to get going."

With that the car slowly started to pull away. Candi dangled the shorts out of her window and Thomas ran after them, to the amusement of everyone in the car and his group who laughed as Mel's undies failed to contain his butt cheeks.

As the car began to put real distance between Thomas and his shorts, Candi flung them into the air, where they arced and twirled before falling to the ground.

Thomas, heaving and out of breath, picked up his shorts and dusted them off.

The squad had written all over them. They had treated the shorts like a hallmark card.

Each girl had signed her name, written a little note and, well, it looked like each girl had drawn a picture of his penis. He didn't care. He felt a sense of triumph as he slipped them on, not even noticing Jan's note that read, "with any luck, I'll see you again before the summer is over."

**Part 5**

Thomas had his best night of the trip, luxuriating in his "penis shorts" as they were dubbed. It was not until the next morning that his new dilemma dawned on him.

If he could convince the girls to loan him money for clothes, what would he wear into the store. He didn't have a shirt and the "penis shorts" were not exactly appropriate.

Eventually, it was all sorted out. Thomas would borrow one of Mel's T-shirts (since he obviously enjoyed wearing her clothes) which would almost be long enough to cover the offending artwork on the shorts. Almost.

Once in town, the girls went off to do other shopping since they had plenty of clothes.

Thomas was relieved to be rid of them until he walked into the store and saw too girls his age behind the counter and another one putting out stock. Thomas froze for a moment, started to turn to leave and then remembered that he really had no choice.

That had been a mistake. He had brought attention to himself. “Don't be shy sweetie,” one of them said, “we don't bite.”

The sales girl on the floor, Donna, walked over and asked Thomas if she could help him. Even though the shorts were mostly covered, she zoned right in on them.

"I, I need some shirts and shorts and...," he found he couldn't say underwear.

"I'll say, that shirt looks like a girls shirt, and those shorts. Looks like somebody wrote all over them. And drew something", she said as she lifted up the shirt.

"Oh my gosh," she gasped and giggled,

"Amy, Sarah come look at this."

With that the two girls came out from behind the counter to take a look. They started reading some of the "greetings" until one of the girls noticed Mel's undies peeking out in back and practically gave Thomas a wedgie as she pulled on them to show the other girls. Thomas quickly pulled away and as fast as he possibly could, grabbed three pairs of shorts, three shirts and three pairs of underwear.

Amy rang him up, commenting that the underwear he had picked up was for men and was he sure that was what he wanted. They all laughed as Thomas turned bright red.

"I just need your address sweetie."

"Why," Thomas asked suspiciously.

"Because it is my job to get it," she said, "see," and showed him a sales ledger filled with local addresses. "No address, no sale."

"Fine," Thomas said, giving her the address and his wad of cash.

"Let me just bag those up for you, "Amy said and ducked down to grab a bag and stuff in the clothes.

Thomas had originally planned to change in one of the shops dressing rooms, but now he was eager to get out of there as fast as he could. Amy cinched up the drawstrings on the bag and handed it to Thomas along with his change.

"Bye bye sweetie," they all cooed as Thomas made his hasty exit. He could hear them laughing as he walked away from the store.

"So, Amy," Donna asked, "why did you make him give you his address? You know we only get that from people with Lake Accounts."

"Because, when we realize that we gave him the wrong bag, we're going to need to know where to bring these," she said picking up a bag and dumping the contents of Thomas' purchase onto the counter.

"You mean," gasped Sara...

"Yep," said Amy smiling, "I accidentally gave him the bag that we are holding for Mrs. Cooper’s daughter."

As Thomas left the shop, he saw that the other girls were already in the car waiting for him. We're hungry Teresa said, we wanted to get home and make sandwiches. She had taken his usual seat up front, so he slid in the middle row next to Laura, with Meg and Rachel in the back.

Melanie looked at him from the rear view mirror and asked him why he hadn't changed there.

He told her that he had been in too much of a hurry, but they were able to piece together what had happened with very little elaboration from Thomas.

"Let's see what you got," said Meg, grabbing the bag out of his hands.

"Hey," said Thomas as he made a failed attempt to grab it back.

Frustrated, he just crossed his arms and stared straight ahead. Meg opened the bag and almost gasped, but stopped herself and just said, "well these are boring, Thomas."

"Yeah," he mumbled, "I could do with some boring right now."

Meg then slapped Rachel on the knee and secretly showed her that the bag contained two little skirts a few tops and about 5 pairs of panties. Rachel also managed to bite her lip and not make a sound.

Meg got Teresa's attention and silently held up a pair of the panties.

Teresa then suggested that Melanie might want to check her mirror. When she did, Meg held up the panties and Melanie cracked up.

"What's so funny," asked Thomas.

"Oh nothing," said Melanie, "just thinking of you doing that split yesterday."

And with that, everybody laughed. Well almost everybody.

When they got back to the house, Meg still had Thomas' bag.

When he asked for it, she refused. He lunged for her, but the other girls intervened.

"Look Thomas, we aren't going to drag this out I promise. But have a heart, we haven't seen you naked in like a whole day and after you get this bag, our fun is over for good."

Thomas looked over at the flag-pole and idly wondered when those clothes had disap-peared?

Just like jumping in a cold lake after you have been out for awhile, Thomas did not relish the idea of being naked in front of these girls again.

"Thomas," Teresa shouted, snapping him out of his reverie, "either we make the trade right now or I swear we will burn this bag clothes and all in the barbecue pit. Again, I swear no tricks, we will keep our word."

Each girl solemnly raised their right hands.

Thomas swallowed and peeled off his shorts and panties and handed them to Laura.

To his amazement, Meg immediately handed him his bag.

He used it to cover his crotch and then turned and jogged to the front door and up the stairs to his room, thinking that's the last time anyone will see my naked butt for a long long time...

They are on their way, Caeser, Teresa said to Thomas, referring to Donna, Amy and Sara.

Thomas had been apoplectic after he had dumped the clothes on the bed. He had wrapped himself up in his bed sheet and marched downstairs and accused the girls of having switched bags, but eventually conceded that it must have happened back at the shop.

Teresa volunteered to call and see if his bag was indeed there.

Amy had been very professional and apologetic when Teresa called, but let her guard down when Teresa complimented her on a job well done.

Teresa got Amy up to speed on all that had happened to Thomas and Amy in turn told Teresa about what they had done to him at the shop. Amy told her that they had planned to come out there with the bag, and were just waiting till they got off of work which was more or less now.

"Will he be naked?" Amy asked.

"Well, he's walking around in a sheet right now," Teresa said, 'but I' m sure we'll think of something. We are very big on trades around here."

Thomas heard the car coming down the road and stood anxiously. He didn't know if he should go out to meet them, would that seem over eager, weak? He sat back down and decided to wait for them. Once again, he forgot that he was not really in control.

Mel, Teresa, Laura, Meg and Rachel marched past him on there way out to greet their new guests.

He heard them all introduce themselves and then it sounded like they were getting a brief tour of his humiliations; the flag pole, the cottage next door where naked cheering hap-pened and the path down to the lake and what had happened there.

A little later, the door opened and Teresa said, "stand, Caeser for your guests have ar-rived." She was followed in by Amy, Sara and Donna. "Hi darlin'"Amy said. "We are so sorry about the mix up. We feel just awful, especially now that we've heard about how much you've suffered already. Look at you all wrapped up in your little sheet."

Sara chimed in, "if we can just have the other bag we can sort this all out."

Thomas saw that Donna was indeed holding what he assumed was his bag of clothes.

He had the other bag and suggested a swap.

Melanie chimed in at this point and asked if it was in fact a fair trade.

"Yes," said Thomas, "one bag for one bag."

"We'll," said Donna, "that's true, but we did come all the way out here to return these to you, and that includes gas money!"

"But it was your mistake," Thomas yelled.

"We'll we were so freaked out by your cross-dressing and obscene shorts, that we just got rattled," said Sara.

"How can we even this up Thomas,?" Melanie asked.

Everyone just stood there for a moment.

"Could you guys use a sheet, maybe?" Rachel asked.

Amy smiled and looked thoughtful. "You know, I really could use a sheet."

Thomas said no, but his heart wasn't really in it. After all, he knew he had no power in this negotiation.

Laura walked over to him and started to unwrap the sheet. "Honestly, Thomas,"she said, "I'm starting to get a little tired of seeing your naked little body. But you know what nev-er gets boring, seeing that look of total humiliation in your eyes when others get to see it for the first time." And with that she smiled and pulled the sheet away. At the same mo-ment, Rachel grabbed the other bag out of Thomas' hands and tossed it to Amy.

"We'll now," Amy said, "it doesn't look like you have anything left to trade."

But then Donna said," now now fair is fair and a deal is a deal, so here you go," and she handed Thomas' bag...to Teresa.

The girls said that they had to get back home and headed for the door. "Oh" Amy said, "we almost forgot, we wanted to sign your shorts," and with this she pulled out a sharpie from her back pocket.

"Oh I'm afraid we threw those nasty shorts away, said Melanie, "along with a pair of my underwear," she said, giving Thomas a disgusted look.

"Gosh, said Amy, I'm so disappointed. Aren't you girls? Both Sara and Donna shook their heads in mock sadness.

"That was partially why we were happy to come all this way and bring you your clothes, Thomas," said Donna.

”Oh, that is so sad," said Melanie. "I wonder, well, no it probably wouldn't do."

"What?" asked Amy.

"Well, I was just thinking, what if you just pretended he was still wearing the shorts. You could just write on Thomas as if the shorts were still there."

"I don't know," said Amy, and then she let out a heavy sigh and said, "we'll, I guess it's worth a try."

And with that things happened fast! Amy sat down on the couch and Teresa and Laura grabbed Thomas and pushed/pulled him onto Amy's lap. They held his arms and Meg and Rachel grabbed his feet. Not that they need to hold him very hard. In this position, he would need help just to get up!

But he didn't need help getting it up. Amy was teasing him something awful.

"You mean here," she said, "I should just write right here?"

And with that she caressed his right butt check and traced a path with her finger. Thomas moaned and Teresa slapped his other butt cheek and told him to behave.

Amy then wrote, "Thomas it was lovely to see you. Come back soon."

"And now for my drawing" she said.

Thomas could only imagine.

Next was Sara's turn on the left butt cheek and she was even more of a tease than Amy.

"Well where do I get to write," asked Donna? "Oh," she said, as they helped Thomas to his feet. She grabbed Thomas' little helmet and he shuddered and moaned a little bit.

"Don't you dare," Donna said, "at least not until I'm done!"

Donna tried to write something, but between laughing fits and Thomas' jerks, it just looked like black smudges. She finally gave up and took a lipstick and drew a pretty de-cent pair of lips!

The girls then hugged Thomas goodbye and begged him to come back next year.

After they left, Thomas asked for his bag, but didn't put up much of a fight when the girls told him no.

He went up to his room and lay down on his bed and thought about his week so far. He was glad they were heading home tomorrow. He hoped he wouldn't have to ride home naked. A minute later he raised his right hand to his face and saw that it was smeared with black ink and lipstick.

**Part 6**

Melanie was packing up the next morning when the phone rang. It was her mother and she was very excited. "Mel, YOU GOT IN! An admissions officer from State called and said you're in, off the wait list! She said that a current student, a Jan somebody or other, recommended you so strongly that it tipped the scales in your favor.

She said that she had spent a few days with you at the lake and that your leadership and team building abilities were just what she was looking for on her cheer squad."

Melanie squealed with delight and jumped up and down.

"But Mel," her mother said, "then it gets a little weird. She said that this Jan person has invited you and your whole crew to stay in her sorority house the week before freshmen orientation. She was very insistent that Thomas be there. And Mel, I know this sounds strange, but I kind of got the feeling that this was not negotiable."

Melanie let out a sigh and all of her joy of a few moments ago seemed to go with it.

Thomas would of course never agree to go and even if he wanted to his father, who looked down on State, would see no reason to allow him to go.

"Mel," her mother said, "what exactly has been going on up there?"

Melanie let out another sigh, and decided to tell her mother everything.

Melanie knew she had made the right decision when her mother laughed more than she gasped as she related what had indeed been going on.

Her mother, she knew, resented her brother's condescending attitude towards her and her girls and wasn't crazy about the fact that Thomas acted just like him.

"Well," she said, when Melanie was done, "the key is getting Philip (Thomas' father) to think this is a good thing. Talk to Teresa, this is the sort of thing she is good at. Come up with a plan and call me back!"

Before this week, Teresa would have been the last person Melanie would have gone to for advice, mainly because Teresa would simply refuse to help. But the week had brought her closer to Teresa and she hoped Teresa felt the same way.

Indeed she did. Teresa had been impressed that Melanie had joined in, been one of the girls as it were. She loved the notion of another week to torment Thomas at the end of the summer, not to mention hanging out with college boys!

The two girls did come up with a plan, but it involved getting Thomas back to his old haughty self in just a few hours!

They called their mother, who told them that they were brilliant and said she would plant the seed for "operation State!"

Melanie and Teresa included the others in on the plan and they got to it. First thing they did was give Thomas his bag and told him that his torment was officially over.

He was dubious, but this time when he dumped the bag on the bed, it was indeed his clothes. His overnight bag was returned to him along with the pajama bottoms a shirt or two and the stray sock. They told him that they would finish cleaning up if he wanted to take one last walk to the lake. He took them up on this, figuring "out of site" would mean fewer opportunities to be "out of clothes."

The girls took the time to fine tune their plan, but really it was pretty simple, so mostly they reminisced about the last few days and fantasized about what might lay ahead.

When Thomas returned from his walk, the girls had cleaned the cabin and packed up the car.

After they had been on the road a short while, Teresa snapped her fingers and turned to Thomas and said "oh yeah, here is the money that was in the shorts you, um, left down at the lake that first day."

Thomas was too amazed to even say thanks. And then a little later, Melanie told Thomas that they had all been talking and decided that he didn't need to pay any of them back the money he had borrowed. And then a little farther down the road, Meg spoke up. "And Thomas, you won't mention any of this to our Mom, right?"

And there it was, Thomas thought, that's what all this kindness has been about.

Did they really think I would tell anyone about all of this!?

But Thomas liked this new found power, so he said that he couldn't promise anything.

When they pulled into the driveway, everyone came outside, the girl's mom and Thomas' mom and dad.

"Welcome welcome," his dad boomed. "How was the trip? Let's count up the money."

"Oh Philip, honestly can't you give them five minutes to catch their breath," said his sis-ter.

As they walked inside, Thomas' dad put his arm around Thomas' shoulder and said "so, I hear you were quite the ladies man up at the lake."

Thomas was startled by this comment, and confused, because his dad seemed so proud.

Not as proud, however, as he was when all the money was totaled up and Thomas was declared the winner of the Econ challenge. As a matter of fact, Thomas couldn't remem-ber the last time he had seen his father this happy.

"I'll let you in on a little secret sport." Your Aunt goaded me into a little side bet this morning. If Teresa had won again, then your mom and I were going to have to baby sit your nieces for two weeks in July when your Aunt goes to visit friends in San Diego. But since I won, your Aunt will have to take care of you for two weeks in August, while I am prepping for the new school year.

Thomas wasn't particularly happy about this until he remembered how scared the girls were about their mother finding out. Come to think of it, they were probably the ones who told their mother that he had been a real lady's man at the lake. So maybe he could keep them in line in August by threatening to spill the beans if they didn't behave. Shoot, maybe he could even extract a little revenge!

As Thomas and his parents got in their car to leave, all the girls gave Thomas a hug and told him how much they were looking forward to August. If you only knew, he thought.

As his Dad slowly backed out of the driveway, he said to his sister, I'm sure Thomas will help you around the house with whatever you need during those two weeks, so really, in a way, everybody wins."

"You're right about that," and then she walked up to the car and said, "but really it is only for a week. During the second week the kids have all been invited to State for the week to help Melanie."

Well great said Thomas' dad, maybe you can get something going with one of those hot college cheerleaders." And with that he gave Thomas a little wink.

"Oh I think that will definitely happen said his Aunt with a little laugh in her voice.

As they started to drive away, it all started to sink in. Thomas was headed to State. And what had Jan said, "Oh Tommy, what I could do with you if I had a week!"

And now she did...