Janice and Julie go to the Beach

**Dormouse**

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The south of England was having a rare heatwave. Julie was lazing in front of the television set, nursing a cold drink and trying not to think how hot it was when Janice, her housemate, came into the room wearing a brief white bikini.

“Get your bikini on,” she said, “we’re going to the beach. It’s too hot to wear any more clothes.” As Julie wasn’t wearing any clothes already, she felt having to put on so much as a bikini was a bad thing, but the beach did sound an inviting idea.

They climbed into Janice’s car and set off for the coast. They knew a secluded beach where nobody minded if they shed their bikinis to catch the sun. They parked the car in a dirt car park with a café at one end of it and walked to the beach. The walked some distance till the car park was just visible and there were few people about, laid their towels on the sand and removed their costumes. At first, there were only a few people around, and most of them weren’t wearing clothes, either, including the obligatory fat man you always seem to see at such places.

But the beach wasn’t so secluded that in the course of an hour, three old men came past walking their dogs, and a group of young boys started playing a game of football only a few yards from where they laid. Julie was sure that one of them surreptitiously pointed a mobile phone at them while he didn’t think they were looking. Julie pointed this out to Janice and wondered which website their picture would be appearing on.

As the afternoon drew to a close, they got dressed, picked up their towels and headed back to the car. At one end of the car park was the café and it seemed like a good idea to get a drink. They walked over to it.

On the door was a notice: “No swimming costumes to be worn on these premises.” Janice turned to Julie and grinned and Julie grinned back.

“I’m game if you are,” Julie said.

They stripped off their bikinis, wrapped them up in their towels for safe-keeping, and put the towels down on a near-by bench. Then they boldly walked into the café. It was empty apart from a middle-aged man behind the counter who looked up without even a glimmer of surprise.

“Two cokes, please,” Janice asked. The man fetched them and rang up the price on his cash register.

“Bet this doesn’t happen very often,” Janice said, as she handed over the money from her bag.

“On the contrary,” he replied, “it happens at least once a week every summer since I put that sign up.”

Janice was crestfallen. She had thought it was such an original idea.

“In fact,” the man continued, “it’s become such a regular occurrence that I’ve put in high-quality security cameras.” He indicated a camera mounted in the far corner of the shop. “I put the videos on the internet and charge people to watch them. Extra income is always useful.”

The girls realised they’d been had, waved at the camera and sat down to drink their drinks.

“We could always put on a show for the cameras.” Janice suggested. She got up and tried to interest Julie in dancing in front of the camera, but it was too hot for such exercise. They finished their drinks in silence, still alone in the café with the proprietor.

But when they got up and left the café, there was a further shock in store for them. Their towels and bikinis had gone from the bench on which they’d left them. They dashed back inside.

“Our stuff’s been stolen” Janice cried to the proprietor.

“Not my fault, Miss” he replied. “Didn’t you see the notice out there: ‘All property left at the owner’s risk’?”

They hadn’t, of course. They realised that the proprietor must have had an accomplice who had sneaked round and stolen their clothes whilst they’d been drinking their drinks. They hadn’t been looking towards the door. They hadn’t seen anyone else in the café, but there was obviously a room behind the counter where there could be someone hiding, and a back door that allowed them to come round the front and take whatever was left on the bench.

“What are we going to do?” Julie asked, with a sinking feeling in her stomach. It had seemed such a clever joke when they started it.

“Not my problem,” he said. “You came in like that, you left like that. After that, it’s up to you.”

Not wishing to make a fuss when they were so vulnerable, they went back and sat in the car. The leather upholstery was painfully hot on their skin where it had been absorbing the sun’s rays all afternoon.

“Well, I guess we’ve no option,” said Janice, putting the key in the ignition. “I bet he’s got an accomplice who sneaked round and stole our stuff while we were in there. But I don’t want to go back and confront him. Suppose he called the police. It’d be only his word against ours, and the police wouldn’t take kindly to us running around like this.”

She looked down at the fuel gauge and continued.

“And further bad news. I was planning to stop for petrol on the way back. We’ll never make it home, otherwise.”

“In that case,” said Julie, “you can fill her up whilst I watch. Wish I had a camera with me.”

They hadn’t gone far along the road home when they passed a petrol station. Janice hadn’t realised how self-conscious she could feel until she got out of the car next to the open road to fill up with petrol. As she was going to the pump, a car passed and she heard a horn toot and a shout of “Hello, darling!”

When the tank was full, she went back to the car to get her bag and said to Julie, “You’re coming with me to pay - safety in numbers.”

Reluctantly, Julie got out of the car. Janice was glad that there was someone to share her discomfort. Being out in the open like this was not the same as being on a secluded beach, no matter how many young boys were playing football near-by.

There was a man behind the counter in the shop where you paid, and he looked up and grinned.

“I know what this looks like,” started Janice as they got to the till.

“You’ve just been to Nigel’s café by the beach, haven’t you?” he replied, before she got chance to explain.

“Why, yes, we have. Is he a friend of yours?”

“We share the same website,” he replied, pointing to the security camera.

The girls turned and faced the camera and gave it a wave. We’re going to be famous to at least one group of people, she thought.

It didn’t seem worth the effort in the still warm late afternoon to run back to the car, and they waved to at least one more car of admirers who drove past. Or maybe it was the same lot as last time, returning for a second look.

Fortunately, the drive back home was uneventful. It being a Sunday, there were few lorries around with cabs so high that drivers could peer down and see their nakedness. The trouble was, Julie was finding she was getting quite turned on by the events of the past hours, and it took every effort to resist winding down the window and sticking her upper torso out into the breeze and shaking her breasts. I’m definitely having a cold shower when I get in, she thought.

Finally, they made it back to their street without incident, and as usual they had to park some distance down the road from their house. This was where it was going to get tricky.

“Damn, Mrs Jenkins is out working in her garden,” Janice said as they saw the familiar figure of their next-door neighbour. “Maybe if we walk briskly, she won’t notice us.”

No such luck. She looked up and saw them.

“Good afternoon, girls,” she said jovially. “Been enjoying the sun I see.”

“Mrs Jenkins, we can explain” started Janice.

“It’s quite all right. I was young myself, you know. I was beginning to think you two were quite unadventurous. Actually, I was beginning to think girls in general are unadventurous compared to what it was like when I was your age. I remember a pop festival, must have been 1970 or ’71, where I didn’t wear a single item of clothing for five days. Of course, I did ruin it all by walking down the village high street afterwards and getting myself arrested. I’d totally forgotten where I’d put my clothes.”

“This nostalgia is all well and good,” said Janice, looking around nervously, “but we’re standing in the middle of the street stark naked and we really want to get under cover.” She could see curtains flicking open all down the street.

“Oh, let them look,” Mrs Jenkins said. “It’s what this street needs, a bit of excitement like this. I’ve a good mind to strip off and join you.”

The girls hurried off before Mrs Jenkins could make good her offer, and reached the safety of their house. When they got inside, they hugged each other.

“Well, that was more excitement than I’d planned for the afternoon,” Janice said. “But it was rather fun. Maybe we should do it again someday.”

Julie said nothing.