**Summer at Cache Lake**

**Chapter 201: Last Day, continued

“**Never thought I’d catch you two together,” he remarked, kicking his board so that it popped effortlessly up into his hand. “You’re not going to gang up on me, I hope.” **“**Now why would we do that?” asked Nicole with an infectious smile. **“**I think we should. Why not,” Jill shrugged, looking over at Nicole. **“**Now, now. Don’t make me wish I hadn’t said that,” replied Tyler. “I was just joking. Certainly not wanting to start anything.” **“**I should probably be going,” said Jill. Even though Tyler had just gotten there, she was feeling like a third wheel. **“**Please don’t,” said Nicole. “We can hang out while Tyler does his thing.”Jill thought about that. Nicole was surprisingly easy going and friendly. She could see why Tyler liked her. **“**Nah, I should be going. But would it be okay if I talked with Tyler . . . in private?” she asked. **“**Be my guest. Just don’t steal him from me.” She smiled and then turned and wandered away to give them some space. **“**I like her,” said Jill. “I remember her, but just barely. If you’d mentioned that she was a redhead, it might have clicked. She’s really nice.” **“**I think so. And we have fun together.”Jill smiled and nodded. “You told her that we talked, but not that I . . . you know…” Crossing her arms in front of herself, she pretended to grab the hem of her shirt and, lifting her arms overhead, whip it off.Tyler chuckled. “No, no . . . didn’t tell her about that.” **“**Thanks,” said Jill nodding appreciatively. She was glad. “I’d hoped that could stay just between you and me. However, you did say that you tend to tell her everything.” **“**I do. But I guess I avoid making things awkward for her.” **“**Are you in love with her?”Tyler looked away without replying. **“**Because if you are, you need to tell her.” Jill couldn’t believe she was giving him relationship advice. She mostly wanted him to break up with her; however, she knew that it was entirely up to him – and she wanted to play fair.Jill continued, “I was in love with you. I’m talking about back in February . . . I should have told you. If you really care for this girl . . . be honest with her.” **“**I am. I just…” His voice trailed off. **“**And she doesn’t know about my naked sprint into Stanton . . . to save my brother and Ryan . . . but you do, I’m assuming?” **“**I do. I watched some videos on the web,” he admitted. “Amazing. And I thought I had you all figured out. Seems there’s a lot I don’t know.”Jill just smiled. She liked the idea of being a bit mysterious. She wanted him to be curious enough to want to find out more. “Well, thanks for not trying to make me look bad.” **“**I would never do that.” **“**I’m glad to hear it.” **“**You and I . . . we’re kindred spirits. I sense that we’re still very close . . . in spite of what happened. I hope we can hang onto that,” Tyler said. He looked very sincere. **“**So do I,” said Jill. “I’ll say goodbye to Nicole, and then I’ll be on my way. I still have some packing to do . . . fly out tomorrow.” **“**Jill, please keep in touch,” he stressed. There was a lot of warmth in his voice. **“**Sure,” she agreed. “And do something for me. Treat this one as she deserves. If you love her, tell her.”A few minutes later, Jill was walking home. She still had half her shake, but it was no longer thick.That night in bed, Jill reviewed all she had learned about Tyler and Nicole. Tyler was destined to start college in a long distance relationship. She wanted it to work for them, but then again, she didn’t. She was still in love with him and speaking with him and meeting Nicole and learning what she was like had only reinforced her emotions. Tyler was a good soul. He was obviously drawn to women based on much more than physical appearance, not that Nicole wasn’t attractive. However, she certainly was no beauty. And Tyler really did seem to care about other people. He was the kind of guy that a girl wanted by her side. He was loyal and supportive.Before climbing into bed, she had moved his photo into her suitcase. Before seeing him again, she had decided that he was part of her past and that she’d leave the photo behind in Holden. In the end, she’d decided to take it. She knew she wouldn’t display it in her dorm room. That might lead to misunderstandings. She was going to college single. People needed to be aware of that; otherwise, she might not get asked out.She was already awake when her alarm sounded the next morning. She hopped out of bed and into the shower. An hour later, they were on their way to the airport, her parents in front, she and David in the back. Suddenly she had so much to talk about with David. She couldn’t believe she was starting college without him. They’d spent the summer together, and yet, it seemed as if they’d hardly talked about what lay just ahead for each of them. They decided to talk every day, video calls if possible.And before she knew it, Jill was on the plane. Given that Holden was a small regional airport, Jill had a long trip ahead of her. It involved a connection with a two-hour layover.She pulled out her diary, and before starting to write, she found herself reading through the list that she had worked on at Cache Lake. It was the list of traits that she thought were the most desirable in a man, in a potential husband.Studying it, she experienced an epiphany of sorts. At that moment in time, she’d been in love with Tyler but doing everything possible to ignore that small detail. She’d been forcing herself to think about potential mates as one might consider the purchase of a new car: Did it have enough seats? Did it have enough horsepower? Did it get good fuel economy?By finally admitting to herself that she was in love, she’d learned just how irrelevant all the details on her list really were. The heart had the final say – possibly the initial say as well. She might be able to find someone who met all the criteria on her list, but not be able to fall in love with him. Love was different; it was at times quite illogical.Tyler did possess many of the ‘ideal traits’ from her list, but that had little to do with why she’d fallen in love with him. When she thought of him, she thought of his unruly curls, his smile, and the dimple on his chin. None of those things were on her list. They didn’t belong there. They weren’t why she loved him. She loved him because she did – plain and simple.As she considered all that she’d learned, she suddenly realized that she was experiencing a dialectic process much like Marx had described in The Communist Manifesto. Her list of character attributes had been a ‘Thesis’ – her starting point. The idea that it was irrelevant – that whom one fell in love with was entirely a matter of the heart – that represented an ‘Antithesis’ – the mechanism for change. By comparing and contrasting these two alternates, she’d achieved a measure of progress. A ‘Synthesis’ would ultimately result. Jill smiled. She was applying what she had learned. She was really looking forward to intellectual discussions, in and out of class, about all that she’d read!She turned to the first available blank page and started writing. Even though where she was at that point in time, might be considered a ‘Synthesis’ by Marx, it was really just the next ‘Thesis.’ It was her new starting point. College would challenge her and she’d continue to progress. She was surprised that she was finding value in what Karl Marx had written even though the communist aspects didn’t speak to her.After she’d captured her thoughts in her diary, she pulled out the last book that she needed to read for her Humanities Core class. It was ‘Walden’ by Henry David Thoreau. She read it a few years earlier for a high school class. She’d decided to read it again so that it would be fresh in her mind; however, she’d left it for the end thinking that reading it again might not be absolutely necessary if she ran out of time.Like Franklin’s Autobiography, it was a fairly easy read. She’d gotten the tough stuff out of the way early.She read right through her layover, finishing shortly before touchdown in California. She pulled out her diary and made a short entry to that effect. She was very proud of what she had achieved. She’d set a goal, and by the simple process of making continual steady progress, she’d accomplished it. And what was more, she’d done so in a way that had meshed nicely with the rest of her summer. She’d avoided being an ‘all work and no play’ girl.

**Chapter 202: California**As she waited for her turn to disembark, Jill looked over some information that she’d received that related to getting to campus. As so many freshmen were arriving at the airport in short order, the college was providing buses. After she’d received her checked suitcase, all she had to do was to go to the south end of the terminal. From there, she’d be able to catch a bus that would take her directly to the school.As things worked out, she was one of the last allowed on the bus that was loading. One of the few available seats was next to a rather awkward looking boy who couldn’t bring himself to meet her gaze as she said ‘hi’ and sat down. His name turned out to be Henry. She tried for a while to draw him out of his shell, but he’d answer her questions in as few words as possible. Try as she might, she couldn’t get him talking. She ended up just sitting there, listening to snippets of the conversations taking place around her. That turned out to be rather interesting. The variety of people on the bus seemed to be much greater than had been represented at Holden High.Once they’d unloaded and had again gotten their luggage, Jill pulled out her map and charted a course for Colina Vista. She had to go straight there; she had too much stuff with her to do anything else.The weather was beautiful, but she was hungry. It had been a long day. She was hoping to drop her things in her room and make it down to the cafeteria for dinner before it closed. If she didn’t make it, she’d have to walk into town.Pausing before entering Colina Vista, she took a deep breath. The air was fragrant, delightfully betraying what she already knew: the ocean was close. Looking around, Jill gave thought to being on her own. It was a good feeling. She considered all the personal growth that she’d experience in her new home. She’d apply all that she’d learned that summer. It would be her springboard. She was a strong, self-assured woman, and she’d learn to avoid the pitfalls that being more confident might lead to.It was an exciting moment in her life but also an important one. She’d be working hard, studying a lot. She’d be making friends, and she’d keep her clothes on in order to ensure that she fit in. That was important to her. At one time, she hadn’t fit in due to how shy she had been. Over the summer, that had been stood on its head. Now she had what amounted to essentially the opposite problem. And yet she felt reasonably sure that she could keep a lid on it. After gathering her wits, she turned and entered the building.Shortly thereafter, Jill was walking down a hall one floor up, looking for room 221. She was very excited to meet her new roommate - her first college roommate! But she was a bit stressed about it as well. She hoped that they’d hit it off, but she knew that it might end up being difficult. Initially, rooming with someone named Sanaa Maraj from New York had sounded ideal. However, the more she’d thought about it, the more anxious she’d become. Likely they’d have next to nothing in common. What if they didn’t end up being very compatible?The door to 221 stood open. Glancing in, she saw a dark-skinned girl of average stature. She was facing away. She had long dark frizzy hair. It was combed down such that it angled out to her shoulders."Hi, I'm Jill," she said, pulling her luggage into the room. "Are you . . . Sanna?" She asked, speaking the name tentatively. She was unsure how to pronounce it.She saw a warm smile spread across the girl’s face as she turned. "Jill! Yes, Sanaa Maraj," she said in a cheery tone as she stepped toward her, her arm extended straight in greeting. "I’ve been on pins and needles waiting to meet you.” **“**Me too!” said Jill, feeling somewhat relieved. Sanaa’s manner and her smile seemed genuinely friendly. Jill felt the anxiety she had been experiencing begin to drain out of her system. First impressions told her that things were going to be okay. Jill had been expecting that she’d be other than Caucasian, possibly of Middle Eastern extraction given her last name; she was black. She’d never had a close friend who was African American, but that was only because there were so few blacks in Holden. **“**Sanaa . . . am I saying that right?” she asked.Sanaa smiled. “You’re trying too hard. Just say ‘Sauna’ . . . like a steam bath . . .and draw out the final vowel. Sanaa.” **“**Sanaa,” said Jill. **“**Perfect!”Jill nodded. “I love your hair.” **“**It’s actually much more trouble than it’s worth. I’d trade it in a heartbeat for straight hair like yours.”Jill laughed. She’d always thought that her hair had nothing going for it. “I haven’t met many people from New York, and I also haven’t known many African Americans. I grew up in a small town . . . there just weren’t many. I’m sure it won’t be an issue.” It didn’t seem like a very good way to start a conversation, but she’d felt the need to say that, hoping that it might help avoid misunderstandings down the road. **“**I expect not,” said Sanaa, but she walked past Jill and closed the door. “I’m hoping you won’t mind helping me keep that a secret.” **“**Keep what a secret?” Jill asked. She certainly wasn’t planning on sharing her secrets with Sanaa. **“**Well, the email you received said I was from New York, right? I’m not really from New York.” **“**You’re not?” **“**No. And I is noh African American.”Jill was puzzled. She didn’t know what to make of this girl. She was obviously African American. Did she not like the term? Was it not politically correct? Jill looked her up and down. She had a large bust and a good sized booty to match. Jill smiled to herself, realizing that she was again comparing her own small bust with that of a much more endowed woman. Why did it always seem as if everyone had bigger tits!? **“**I’s ah Trini,” Sanaa announced proudly. **“**A Trini?” Jill asked. She’d never heard of a Trini, but Sanaa definitely had a strong accent – all of a sudden. “The email said ‘Ozone Park, New York.’” **“**De’s right,” said Sanaa. “De’s where I go to high school. Quite a few Trinis livin in Queens. I’s livin dere wid muh aunt . . . move in to go to school. But here at college, I doh want to be know as noh New Yorker.” **“**Okay. I’ll forget what I know,” said Jill. “You’re a Trini! What’s a Trini?”The black girl laughed. “I didn’t think you’d know.”Jill laughed. Sanaa had switched her accent off just as easily as she had switched it on. “Should I?” she asked. **“**In Queens, everyone knows the term.” **“**Never been to Queens.” **“**Someone from Trinidad. Trinbagonian is another term.” **“**That’s a mouthful. Let’s go with Trini.” **“**Perfect! Trini’s my preference.” **“**So . . . Trinidad. I should know where that is.” **“**I didn’t know if you would. I’d never heard of Holden. I looked it up on the web. It’s apparently a car made in Australia.”Jill laughed. “That’s what we’re known for, our cars.”Sanaa laughed. She seemed to know there was no connection. “Trinidad is an island just off the coast of Venezuela. So . . . Caribbean.” **“**Part of Venezuela?” **“**No. The two islands, Trinidad and Tobago, form their own nation.” **“**What’s it called?” **“**The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.” **“**Should have guessed,” said Jill nodding. “But then, the Caribbean is in the Americas, so . . . aren’t you an African American?” **“**By some definitions, certainly. However, in the states that seems to mean someone who is a US citizen. I’m not. So I’m an Afro-Trinbagonian.” **“**Af-ro-trin-ba-go-¬nian,” said Jill, breaking the term down to store it in her memory. **“**So? You’ll keep my secret?” she asked. “You don’t want to know me . . . when de mark buss.” **“**You sound Jamaican!” exclaimed Jill. **“**I’s noh Jamaican!” said Sanaa. She acted upset. **“**My mistake,” said Jill. “Forget I said that. Remember, I grew up a long way from the Caribbean. Never been there.” **“**So will you keep my secret?” she asked. **“**That you’re not from New York? That you’re not African American?” **“**Exactly,” said Sanaa. **“**Sure, I won’t tell anyone that you’re from New York. Not if you keep my secrets.” **“**I’ll keep your secrets. Absolutely!” **“**Don’t worry. I don’t have any secrets.” **“**Well, if you come up with some, I’ll help you keep them,” said Sanaa.Jill studied her smile. For some reason, it made Jill feel that she could be trusted. She knew she'd be holding back. No one at college would be finding out her secrets, certainly not her new roommate!"If I do, I’ll let you know. But I'm hungry. Have you eaten?” Jill asked.A minute later, she and Sanaa were walking together towards the cafeteria.As freshmen, they were on campus two days before the continuing students were to arrive. There were quite a number of activities for them to attend, many of them mandatory, such as meetings with their Resident Advisor and their Student Advisor; however, many were optional. Jill thought that she and Sanaa might end up doing a lot together. Both of them had arrived not knowing another soul on campus. **“**I’ve figured out one of your secrets,” said Sanaa at one point during dinner. **“**Oh, you have?” **“**You don’t like bras.”Jill laughed. “Hardly a secret,” she replied, looking down at her stiff nipples. They were poking through her shirt. **“**I guess not,” chuckled Sanaa. **“**I don’t need a bra,” said Jill. “I’m not exactly happy about that, but I’ve gotten used to it. It’s who I am. I’m tall. I’m skinny. I’m flat. C’est la vie.” **“**I like you,” said Sanaa. “Many girls have hang-ups . . . especially when it comes to boobs. It’s a shame.” **“**I used to be that way,” said Jill. “But I’ve found that there are more important things to spend time thinking about.” **“**I like you,” she repeated.Jill just smiled. She liked Sanaa as well. And she liked herself. **“**Mostly, I don’t wear bras because I find them uncomfortable. Once you start going without, it’s really hard to go back.” Jill had decided to stress the comfort angle if and when the topic came up. In that manner, she hoped to avoid the slippery slope that might culminate with her mentioning her enjoyment of being topless or even nude.She needed to steer a wide path around any such discussions. But while she wouldn’t be able to go topless or nude, she didn’t have to go back to wearing bras. That could be her one indulgence. It wasn’t much, but it was all she had to work with.While they ate, they filled each other in on their past. Jill talked about growing up in Holden and playing basketball. She also described Cache Lake and mentioned spending her summers hiking and swimming.Sanaa wanted to see pictures, and Jill wanted to show her some. However, she had a problem. She had nude photos intermingled in with the photos that could be shown. She didn’t dare unlock her phone and start showing images until she’d moved the naked ones into a separate folder. **“**I know a secret you can keep for me,” said Jill. **“**I’m all ears,” Sanaa replied. **“**I’ve got a twin . . . a twin brother named David. College will be our first extended time apart. We’re very close.” **“**Why is that a secret?” **“**I’ve just never really had a separate identity. I’ve always been ‘one of the Wahlund twins.’ Here, I’d like to be myself. I’d like to test out being ‘Jill Wahlund’ rather than half of ‘David and Jill.’ I don’t actually care if people know, but if nothing is said, no one will presume that I have a twin.” **“**They won’t,” Sanaa agreed. **“**I’ll probably be talking to him daily, so he might be a bit hard to keep secret . . . at least from you.” **“**If you’re always talking to the same guy, people might assume you’re in a long-distance relationship.”Jill laughed. “Maybe it would be better for people to know that he’s my twin rather than assume that I’m talking to a boyfriend.”From there, Jill started asking questions about Trinidad. Based on Sanaa’s answers, her island home sounded quite different from what she might have imagined. Sanaa spoke lovingly of Trinidad but described it as an oil-rich island. She said her father worked in the asphalt industry. **“**Asphalt industry?” Jill asked in surprise. “I’ve been picturing beaches and palm trees.” **“**Oh we have those,” said Sanaa. “However, people in the travel industry tell tourists that the beaches on Tobago are nicer . . . and maybe they are, but Trinidad itself has some wonderful beaches.”She brought up a map on her phone and pointed out a few places. She then showed Jill some beach images. Jill was instantly thinking that she’d have to find a way to visit Sanaa at some point, maybe as soon as Christmas break. Snow in Holden versus a tropical beach – it seemed like a no-brainer.Jill wanted to ask about nude beaches, but she knew not to. She couldn’t show the slightest bit of interest in nudity. In that regard, she needed to go back to being the girl she’d been prior to her most recent summer at Cache Lake. She needed to do everything she could to make sure she didn’t stand out.Returning to Two West, Jill and Sanaa introduced themselves to the two girls moving into the room directly across from theirs. Their names were Erica and Harper; both of them were from California. Jill listened quietly as Sanaa told them that she was from an island in the Caribbean, that she was a ‘Trini.’ All she had to do was turn on her island accent and there was no doubt. Jill was glad for her. She would get her wish; no one was going to think that she was from New York.Jill left the conversation feeling quite glad that she had been paired with Sanaa. In comparison, Erica and Harper seemed rather ordinary. But that wasn’t the real reason. To Jill, it seemed as if she and Sanaa had a lot in common. On the face of it, they had nothing in common; however, personality-wise, they seemed to click. Possibly some of it had to do with how they were both outsiders – new to California.

**Chapter 203: Sanaa**Back in their room, Jill asked if they might take a selfie together. She wanted to send a few people texts letting them know that she’d made it, and she wanted to mention her new roommate. She would say that she was from Trinidad; that seemed to be something that Sanaa was particularly proud of. She also wanted to capture the positive vibes of the moment – for herself.To her relief, Sanaa wanted to do the same. They tried selfies with the view out the window as the background. That was much too backlit, so they ended up with images taken in front of an empty bulletin board. Jill picked one of those photos, deciding that it was symbolic of that point in her life. She was starting over with a clean slate. In college, she’d make friends and together, they’d make memories. And over time, her bulletin board would fill up.Just as she’d done during her visit with Austin, Jill sent Britt and Jenna a text that read, ‘Guess who I’m with today!’ She immediately followed that up with the photo and a caption, “My new roommate Sanaa. She’s a Trini. From Trinidad.”Glancing over, she saw Sanaa sitting on her bed, presumably doing the same thing. She tried to imagine what people in Trinidad and Queens might think of Sanaa’s new roommate. **“**Is she nice?” came a reply from Jenna. **“**Very, but I’ve only just started to get to know her,” Jill repliedJill’s phone rang. It was Britt. It was nice to hear her voice; however, the conversation ended up being a bit awkward. Britt started asking her questions that she couldn’t answer in Sanaa’s presence.She seemed stuck in the past. She wanted to know more about Austin and his nude drawing. In fact, everything she asked had something to do with nudity. Finally, sensing that Jill couldn’t talk about such topics, she gave up and asked a few basic questions about her college and her dorm room. She then asked for Jill’s mailing address hinting that she wanted to send her something. Jill said that she’d text it to her once she’d had the opportunity to verify it. Pledging to talk again soon, they said goodbye and hung up.Neither Jill nor Sanaa knew their mailing address, so they decided to walk down the hall and meet their R.A. Fortunately, her door was open as she too was busy moving in. **“**Come in girls,” said a blonde with straight shoulder length hair and a broad smile when Jill and Sanaa stopped in the hall just outside her door. “My name is Mackenzie, but call me ‘Mack’ . . . like the truck. What room are you girls in?” Based on Jill’s reply, she pulled out a clipboard and found them on the list. “Sanaa Miraj and Jill Wahlund . . . room 221,” she read.Sanaa peered over her shoulder. Apparently noticing that she was listed as being from New York, she initiated a conversation such as she’d had earlier with Jill, asking Mack to ‘keep her secret.’ **“**No problem, mon,” the blonde replied, attempting to imitate Sanaa’s island accent. “You’re from Trinidad!”Sanaa smiled as she watched Mack scribble out ‘Ozone Park, NY’ and write in ‘Trinidad.’ Jill studied Sanaa; she seemed to be very happy. In fact, she seemed to always be happy. She was a very cheerful person. Jill found herself hoping that some of that would rub off. In her opinion, she was often a bit too introspective – even to the point of being melancholy at times.Jill and Sanaa learned that everyone in Colina Vista had a mailbox down on the ground floor, and Mack wrote out Jill’s address on a slip of paper and handed it to her.Mack then introduced them to the Two East R.A., Hailey. Resident Advisors were given single rooms; however, the layout was such that the rooms were side-by-side and had a door such that they were adjoining. Mack’s room faced Two West, and Hailey’s faced Two East. They’d decided to close off Hailey’s door and use her room as a bedroom. What was essentially Mack’s room would be their living room. In that way, they wouldn’t exactly have singles. Instead, they’d have a two-room suite. The only downside was that those in Two East would have to walk around the stairwell and knock on Mack’s door to find Hailey, but it was something that the college allowed.Mack informed them that everyone in Colina Vista would be meeting with their respective R.A. in their hall’s lounge at ten a.m. the next morning. From there, Jill and Sanaa walked downstairs to see if they could find their mailboxes. After locating and looking around the small post office lobby, Jill sent a text containing her mailing address to Britt and Jenna. While she was at it, she sent it to her parents and David as well.A short time later, they were back in their room unpacking. Jill decided to call David – to catch up and to introduce Sanaa. Sanaa liked the idea, so Jill initiated a video call. **“**Hey, Tarzan! How’s college life?” David asked as his face appeared on her screen. **“**Umm . . . David . . . you’re on speaker,” Jill said. She looked over at Sanaa nervously.She had a puzzled expression on her face. “Tarzan?” she asked. **“**Hey, David. Called to introduce Sanaa.” She was attempting to change the subject as quickly as possible. **“**Hi, Sanaa,” said David as Jill angled the phone so that they could see one another. “Jill sent me a selfie earlier . . . said you were from Trinidad. That’s the extent of what I know.” **“**Not much more to know.” **“**That’s not true,” Jill interjected. “Much more to her than meets the eye. It’s just that I’ve been sworn to secrecy.” **“**But no one keeps secrets from their twin,” said David. **“**And you’re so wrong!” **“**Are you telling her your secrets?” he asked. **“**Don’t even go there, Pocket!” she scolded. **“**What?” **“**You know. Now be good!” **“**Oh, you know you have nothing to worry about . . . from me. Just don’t let her talk to Ryan. Not that it matters. She’ll find out all your secrets . . . they’ll come out . . . maybe not right away.” **“**I’ve already been entrusted with one secret,” said Sanaa. “Can I tell him, Jill?”Jill shrugged. “Sure.” **“**I’m supposed to keep you a secret!”David laughed. “Me . . . a secret?” **“**That I have a twin,” Jill explained. “I just want to find out what it’s like to be treated like a normal person, that’s all.” **“**Twins are normal people. Aren’t we?” **“**You know what I mean,” Jill snapped.David laughed. “My sister . . . she’s so funny.”From there the conversation bounced around, Jill and Sanaa informing David about the various things that they’d been doing. **“**So . . . Tarzan?” Sanaa asked as soon as they had ended the call.Jill had been hoping that she’d forgotten that. “So what do you think of David?” she asked. **“**I think he is someone who calls you ‘Tarzan.’”Jill bit her lip and looked away. She couldn’t think of a way to erase Sanaa’s memory. “Can’t we just leave that be?” she asked. **“**Is that your nickname? Tarzan? I’ve never heard of a girl being called Tarzan. I’ve never heard of anyone being called Tarzan . . . other than Tarzan.”Jill ignored her. Maybe if she gave her the cold-shoulder treatment, she’d drop it.For at least a minute, there was an uneasy quiet in their room. Sanaa studied Jill while Jill tried to pretend that she wasn’t being stared at. **“**Mack . . . now that sounds like a guy’s name,” Sanaa observed, bringing up their R.A. “I think it’s a cute nickname . . . masculine, but cute.” She paused, giving Jill ample time to respond. When she didn’t, she continued, “People have always just called me ‘Sanaa.’ I’ve never really had a nickname . . . maybe because my name is so short.”Jill could tell that Sanaa wasn’t going to drop it. “My name is only one syllable. It doesn’t get any shorter than that,” she remarked. **“**So why do people call you Tarzan?” Again Jill didn’t respond, so she asked, “And why did you call him Pocket?” **“**Because I was getting mad!” said Jill, finally breaking her silence. **“**If Tarzan is strange, then Pocket is even stranger.” **“**You wouldn’t understand.” **“**Try me.” **“**It’s a twin thing. I’ve always called him Pocket.” **“**And he’s always called you Tarzan? Just David . . . or everybody?” **“**Okay, I’ll level with you,” she said at long last. “Tarzan is new. Lately, it’s what my friends have been calling me. Like Mack, it has a masculine ring to it, right?” **“**It does,” Sanaa agreed.She surprised herself by what she was saying; however, making a big deal out of it had seemed as if it was destined to be counterproductive. Maybe downplaying it would work better. But did it matter? After all, being called Tarzan had really grown on her.Back in Holden, it had signified the naked girl in the news videos; however, at college, it wouldn’t mean anything more than a man in a loincloth who could communicate with jungle animals. Might it be harmless? She was unsure, but she had needed to tell Sanaa something. Everyone had been calling her Tarzan during the slumber party at Amber’s. Because of that and, of course, everything else that had happened, she’d bonded with the name. **“**So . . . Tarzan?” asked Sanaa, obviously giving the matter a lot of thought. “Why Tarzan?” **“**You know…” said Jill, not really knowing what to say. But she pumped out her chest and started beating on it, simultaneously doing her yell at something less than half volume. Given that their door was closed, she didn’t think that anyone else would hear. Their window was open, but they were on the second floor.Sanaa laughed. “Okay, I’ll call you Tarzan.” **“**Umm . . . or Jill,” she replied. “Yeah . . . better just call me Jill.” **“**Naw . . . Tarzan. You seem to like the name. You said that’s what your friends call you. Can’t I be your friend?” **“**You ARE my friend. I think we’re going to be best friends.” **“**Good . . . Tarzan it is!” she replied cheerfully. “Tarzan and Sanaa . . . has a nice ring to it, don’t you think?”Jill laughed. She was having second thoughts about letting her call her Tarzan, but it seemed as if Sanaa might take it as an insult if she asked her not to. “Fine. But just you, okay? Everyone else can call me Jill.” **“**But you’ll have other friends here. What’s different about friends at home and friends at college?” **“**It’s just different, okay?” She didn’t know how to explain, given that she couldn’t tell her the truth – and she realized that she was only making it worse by continuing to talk about it. She should have lied and told her that only David called her ‘Tarzan’ and only she called him ‘Pocket.’ That they were special twin’s nicknames.Later that night, after the two girls were in their beds and had turned off the light, the topic of conversation shifted to boys. Jill learned that Sanaa had dated in New York, but had not found the boys there to be much to her liking. According to her, Trini boys were much happier and quite a bit more relaxed, much less competitive and argumentative – in short, more fun to be around.Jill found that easy to believe. In a way, Sanaa seemed to be describing herself. She seemed to be all of those things: happy, friendly, laid-back.Jill ended up taking Sanaa into her confidence and telling her about Tyler. She told her about the good times beginning with the ice blocking leading up to their first kiss, and then she told her about the breakup. She even mentioned Tyler’s ‘I can feel bottom’ comment as well as her reaction. It surprised her to be talking about that. It wasn’t something she’d ever told Dani or Amber. Sanaa seemed to be listening attentively. The few comments that she made were understanding and supportive. Above all, Jill had the impression that she wasn’t going to be judged.Jill then ended up describing how she’d just recently gotten over feeling hurt, deciding that he’d just been telling the truth – that she did, in fact, have very small breasts – that he hadn’t meant anything mean by what he’d said. She even told her about reestablishing communication with him, even attempting to put their relationship back together. She talked about the shock of learning that he had a new girlfriend. She carefully left out any and all mention of taking off her shirt and placing his hands on her breasts – her attempt to travel back and fix the mistake she had come to regret.Sanaa was full of empathy which made Jill happy with having shared as much as she had. Jill was definitely feeling as if she’d won the roommate lottery. If there was anything wrong with Sanaa, she hadn’t yet found it. At Sanaa’s insistence, she promised to show her a picture of Tyler the next day.Upon waking, Jill noticed that Sanaa was already up and dressed. She was reading quietly at her desk. “I guess I’m still on East Coast time, Tarzan,” she said upon noticing that Jill was stirring. “I’ve been up for a while now. The showers are nice . . . if that’s how you start your day. Not a lot of privacy, but nice and warm.”Remembering their conversation about Tyler, Jill pulled out his photo. They talked about it briefly as Jill got her stuff together to walk down to the showers.Sanaa smiled as she studied the picture. “He’s cute!” **“**I just love his dimple,” replied Jill, pointing it out. **“**You’re still in love with him, aren’t you?” **“**Probably. But he’s moving on, so I need to. Hopefully, there’s a guy for me out there somewhere.” Jill was gazing wistfully out the window. **“**Every bread have a cheese,” said Sanaa, slipping seamlessly into her island accent.Jill looked at her curiously. **“**An old Trini saying . . . means, there’s someone for everyone.” **“**Every bread have a cheese,” Jill replied, attempting to mimic the accent.Sanaa laughed, seemingly enjoying Jill’s attempt. **“**So, is the girl the bread or the cheese?” Jill asked. **“**Mos probly de bread,” said Sanaa with a smile. “De cheese go inside.” **“**Every hotdog have a bun,” said Jill still attempting the Trini accent. “De weenie go inside.” Jill was glad to see Sanaa laughing good-naturedly at her attempt at humor, however lame. **“**We eats a lot of hotdogs in New York,” she remarked. “In Trinidad . . . not so much.” Jill was impressed. Sanaa could do a decent Yew Yorker accent as well.Sanaa waited for her while she showered, and then the two girls headed down to breakfast together.

**Chapter 204: An Excursion**At their ten a.m. R.A. meeting in the Two West lounge, Jill and Sanaa found seats on a giant couch next to Erica and Harper. Mack introduced herself and had each girl stand up and do the same, giving their name and where they were from. Jill watched with amusement as Sanaa introduced herself using her full-on Trini accent, but it made complete sense. If she didn’t want to be connected with New York, then she’d certainly accomplished that. There were a few other foreign students in Two West, but no one that seemed to have the flair that Sanaa did.Mack went over all kinds of details, including the mailboxes; they hadn’t needed to go by her room the night before. And everything she covered, from how to use the washing machines to rules about leaving the kitchen clean, was included in a reference handout that had been passed out.The afternoon was set aside for fun. There were a large number of recreational activities available, all of them seemingly designed around helping the new students broaden their horizons and make connections within their class. Jill and Sanaa decided to stick together, hopefully picking something that interested them both.The choices were displayed on tables around a big central courtyard. The school had arranged for upperclassmen to man the tables and lead the outings. Jill had been noticing with interest the hills that surrounded the valley, so she investigated several hikes that were being offered. Sensing Sanaa’s disinterest in going hiking, she started following the Trini from table to table.In short order, they found themselves signing up for the last two slots for a sea kayak adventure. Jill was very glad that they had chanced upon it when they did as a limited number of kayaks meant that they could only accommodate a relatively small group of students.About an hour later, after changing into swimsuits and packing what they had been told to bring, they headed back out into the sunshine. Jill, a map of the campus in hand, was charting a course to a specified parking lot where they were to rendezvous with the rest of the group to be loaded into school vans.Jill was getting a little worried about what Sanaa had in mind. As they walked along, she was talking about helping Jill by being her matchmaker. She sounded determined to find her a ‘cheese’ so that, like Tyler, she could move on. Jill was trying to dissuade her; however, Sanaa would just smile and laugh.As they arrived at the vans, Sanaa’s gregarious demeanor shifted into overdrive. She was instantly talking to everyone, meeting people and learning their names but not only their names. Just her presence seemed to put everyone at ease and get them talking. She was not only introducing herself but Jill as well. Sanaa was being a bit aggressive for Jill’s taste; however, everyone seemed to take to her and, by association, Jill as well.Jill felt quite plain next to the vivacious Trini with her island accent; however, she could tell that she was being noticed. There were quite a number of cute guys in the group of forty or so students, and a few of them definitely had an interested look about them as they introduced themselves and chatted with her in Sanaa’s shadow.The hot air rising up from the pavement made the parking lot unbearably warm. Glancing around, Jill noticed that a good number of the girls had taken off their shirts and were in just bikini tops. Jill hadn’t wanted to keep her shirt on, but she’d waited. She needed to make sure that she didn’t stand out. As that point had been reached, she took her shirt off and shoved it into her duffle.The underwire cups of her bikini were not nearly as comfortable as bare would have been; however, being topless was out of the question. She stood straight, concentrating on her posture. She knew that the way a woman carried herself added markedly to her appeal. Glancing around at some of the other women, she quickly realized that she probably had the smallest breasts in the group. However, she was probably the tallest girl, and she had a beautiful tan. All in all, she was feeling rather attractive.As she and Sanaa found seats in the middle of a van, she realized just how much fun she was having. Had it not been for the confidence she had gained over the summer, she’d still have her shirt on, and had it not been for her outgoing roommate, she’d probably have taken a window seat in the back of the van so that she could stare out the window on the short drive to the ocean. In short, she was meeting people and nothing about it was awkward. **“**Thank you, Sanaa,” she whispered into her ear during a lull in the conversation. **“**For what, Tarzan?” she asked.Jill looked tentatively around. A few people had overheard. They were studying her curiously. **“**Did she say, Tarzan?” asked a dark-haired girl seated just behind them. **“**It’s her nickname,” said Sanaa with a shrug.Jill turned and gave her a light elbow to the ribs to express her displeasure. “Sanaa!” **“**How did you come by that nickname?” the girl behind them asked. **“**Just wait until you see her loincloth,” Sanaa replied, pointing down at Jill’s shorts.Jill noticed the guys in the seats just ahead of her turn and look down at them. **“**Sorry, guys. No loincloth,” she said, shaking her head.She thought she detected a look of mild disappointment in their eyes as they continued to study her. She was going to have to give Sanaa a talking to. The last thing she needed was everyone calling her Tarzan.Once they were standing on the beach next to their assigned two-person kayak, Jill unsnapped her shorts and started sliding them down her legs. She was well aware that she had the full attention of the guys around them. Had they really have been thinking that she might be wearing a loincloth? **“**Sorry, guys. Just a bikini,” she remarked to the two disappointed looking guys who had been assigned to the boat next to theirs.They laughed. **“**But she’d look great in a loincloth, don’t you think?” Sanaa asked. **“**Looks great in a bikini,” said the blond who had introduced himself as Dylan.Jill blushed. She didn’t think she’d ever grow used to hearing random comments about her body from the opposite sex. **“**Right!” said Sanaa, acting as if she was in full agreement. “And she’s available.”Jill punched her shoulder. “Stop it!” Turning to the guys, she added, “She’s available.” **“**Now, stop that,” said Sanaa.The guys laughed. Sanaa didn’t seem to appreciate a dose of her own medicine.Glancing around at the other members of the group, Jill was surprised to see that a number of the girls had on bikini bottoms that were much skimpier than her own, a few of them wearing the style that had only a small string passing between the butt cheeks such that it couldn’t even be seen. It wasn’t a style that had caught on in Holden.She resolved then and there to go bikini shopping. Even though there weren’t going to be circumstances under which she’d be able to be nude, it looked as if she wouldn’t stand out if her butt came out of hiding on the beach. Before putting on their life jackets, she and Sanaa both went about applying sunscreen, helping each other with their backs.A short time later, they were out on the water in their bright blue kayak. Jill had taken the rear seat, placing her in charge of piloting the vessel. That had made sense given her experience in and around the water.Dylan’s companion was a guy named Owen. For whatever reason, they kept their kayak close to Jill and Sanaa’s as the group worked their way north along the coast, the four of them chatting, mostly about the kayaks and their natural surroundings. Sanaa was particularly impressed with how different the coastline was in comparison to that of Trinidad.A little over a mile from their starting point, they came to a gap in the cliffs. The group leaders directed everyone into a large cove. To Jill’s surprise, there was a hidden beach. It seemed to be an oasis of sorts, accessible only from the water. They all pulled their kayaks up onto the sandy beach, and their guides opened up coolers of fruit and refreshments.After enjoying quite a few juicy orange sections, Jill found herself wandering up the beach looking for shells and sea glass. Dylan tagged along, keeping her company. She learned that he was from Texas and planning to study zoology. She found herself enjoying his company as well as the ocean breeze.That evening in her bed, after Sanaa had fallen asleep, Jill started thinking about him. He’d seemed quite interested in her and he had been behaving as if he might ask her out. In the end, he hadn’t. In fact, he hadn’t even asked for her phone number. As far as she knew, he didn’t even know what dorm she was in. It was somewhat disappointing. He’d seemed interested when in fact he must not have been. But it didn’t matter. She’d enjoyed talking with him, but just as with Nick and Kyle, she hadn’t felt a spark. Might her feeling for Tyler still be to blame? But even so, she’d decided to say ‘yes’ if he’d asked her out.Inevitably, her thoughts shifted to Tyler. Even though she knew that she needed to forget about him, her heart was not cooperating. Forgetting about a person one was in love with was much easier said than done.The next day started off in similar fashion. Sanaa was up and dressed when Jill woke up, and together they walked down to the cafeteria. Their morning was booked up with an S.A meeting and various presentations that also centered around academics. They were doing what Dylan and Owen had said they had done the day before. Everyone in Colina Vista walked to a certain large auditorium for the first session of the day.The first speaker talked about what it took to be successful in college. The primary takeaway seemed to be that college was a lot harder and much less forgiving than high school. She suggested that it would be necessary to devote three hours of study for every hour of class time. Jill was having a hard time paying attention; it was all stuff she had heard before.There were even skits in which older students modeled various responses to the opportunities and challenges of college and then experienced the outcomes. For example, there was the student who was so excited to be away from home that he partied almost every night. He inevitably flunked out.The skits were somewhat amusing, but Jill felt as if they were being talked down to. Putting the message into skit format seemed more suitable for communicating to children, not adults, to her mind. And yet she knew that a certain number of her fellow freshmen were destined to make that exact mistake; they’d party when they should be studying, and then unacceptably low grades would result in them dropping out.Jill had been expecting that the afternoon might be similar to the day before, that they’d have the chance to choose and take part in another outing. At least, that was what she had been hoping. Looking at the schedule, she saw that it was not to be. They were to all go to a gymnasium where all the various groups on campus would have tables set up with information. Participation in extracurricular activities was being strongly encouraged.And while that was taking place, everyone was supposed to stop by the Student Union and have their photo taken for their student ID. Jill and Sanaa had again been planning to do everything together; however, the picture schedule was divided up into time slots based on last name. They’d have to do that separately. Just as she was supposed to, Jill wandered around to get an idea of all the groups present on campus; the variety was beyond what she had imagined. She didn’t engage in serious conversation with any of them. For whatever reason, she was not in a ‘joining’ mood. On a whim, she looked to see if any nudist groups were represented. There didn’t seem to be.At one point, she’d caught a glimpse of Mack. She saw her talking to the people at the Outdoor Program table. She took a moment to watch her. It seemed strange, for she obviously wasn’t working behind the table. Instead, she appeared to be asking questions; however, she wasn’t a freshman. The next time Jill looked, she had disappeared.Jill walked over to the same table and picked up some information. She knew that eventually, she’d want to go on some hikes in the area. As she didn’t have transportation, she’d need to go with a group. Completely alone she might be able to hike naked – as Britt had suggested; however, with a group that was out of the question. But she’d adjust. She loved hiking; she didn’t need to be nude to have a good time.That evening, the school had arranged an outdoor concert featuring a number of local bands. Jill decided to wear an open-back sundress of a style that had to be worn braless. It had been one of her sale rack ‘finds’ the day she’d gone shopping with Amber. There was very little to it, so it was perfect for a warm evening. It was a halter style dress that, in addition to being open-back, featured a deep plunge that went way down between her breasts.It was exactly the kind of dress that she never would have considered wearing prior to that summer because it was wide open across the flat center of her chest, her complete lack of cleavage being featured most prominently. It was the kind of dress that a woman with large boobs wouldn’t dare wear, not without a lot of tape to hold things in place; however, it looked awesome on a girl with a slender figure like Jill’s – or at least that was her opinion – the reason she had bought it.At the last moment before heading out, while Sanaa was facing away, Jill slipped off her panties and put them back in her dresser drawer. She couldn’t be naked, but without panties, she might feel naked – or nearly so.Enjoying the breeze on her freshly shaven lady lips, Jill walked to the concert with Sanaa as well as the two Californians from across the hall, Erica and Harper. The upperclassmen were arriving, so the campus was a hive of activity, many of the roads clogged with cars. Colina Vista, as it was a freshman dorm, had been the exception.

**Chapter 205: Evening Fun**At the concert, Jill hung with Sanaa. She found it interesting to observe the guys, and there were plenty of them, that Sanaa attracted. And yet she wasn’t surprised; Sanaa oozed sex appeal – her wild hair, her big booty, and her infectious smile. In comparison, Jill felt like a beanpole, or possibly a little like a runway model according to what Ryan had been saying that summer – especially in her dress of choice. She tried to focus on smiling. At the very least, she didn’t want to be wearing the bored, pouty expression that supermodels were known for.Jill found herself getting asked to dance more than she might have imagined. That made it fun – to see that there were guys that might take an interest in a girl whose lack of breast tissue was the first thing that one would notice dressed as she was. She was still adjusting to the concept.Part of what made the dancing fun was the risk that she was taking given how short and loose the skirt portion of her dress was. One gust or one quick spin and the crowd would be treated to bald beaver. She was in fear of that happening, but the possibility that it might, kept her dancing. Part of her even hoped it would happen, but only accidentally. She couldn’t flash on purpose, but even if it was entirely not her fault, she knew that she would be viewed as complicit, given that she had come to the concert bare under the dress.The responsible young woman inside her head kept berating her for playing with fire. She knew she shouldn’t be doing it, especially not at college, and yet she knew that she was probably not the only girl there with a shaved puss and no panties under her dress or skirt. It kept her nerves on edge, enjoyably so, knowing that she was constantly just one little shake or wiggle away from making a young man’s dream come true.She was having trouble keeping track of Sanaa. The process of one or the other of them occasionally being asked to dance meant that they were inevitably being split up. However, each time, Jill would eventually find her. Sanaa had worn a flowing black dress that showed off her abundant cleavage, and she had on a gold chain belt and matching gold shoes and necklace. Each time they’d reunite, they’d hug and introduce whomever they were with. That was indeed difficult, given how loud the music was. Conversation was only really possible by yelling.As the next day was the first day of classes, Jill and Sanaa decided to leave the concert before it got really late. “After joy is sorrow,” had been Sanaa’s reasoning.As they walked back to Colina Vista, Jill was realizing that she’d had fun but less than she might have imagined. She’d met people, enjoyed the music, and done her share of dancing; however, due to the loud music, all the personal interaction had been extremely superficial. She’d learned a few names, but little more than that.As they walked along, she and Sanaa discussed that aspect of the evening. Jill learned that she and Sanaa differed in that regard. Sanaa thought that it had been a great evening; whereas, Jill was left with an empty feeling. She much preferred socializing in small groups under circumstances that allowed conversation. She found herself thinking back to her many campfires during the summer as well as the “slumber party” at Amber’s.The next morning was Wednesday, the first day of classes. Jill was glad that Labor Day weekend had fallen such that the first week of classes was only three days long. It seemed like a good way to ease into the rigors of college.She and Sanaa had breakfast together, but then Sanaa had to hurry off to a nine o’clock class. Jill didn’t have a class on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays until eleven, so she walked to the bookstore. She’d ordered her textbooks online, so she needed to pick them up, at least those that weren’t e-books.After receiving her bag, she wandered around the bookstore browsing. She walked over to look at the piles of books for the freshman core humanities course – the one class that everyone had to take. There were a number of students examining and discussing them. She stood there for a few minutes eavesdropping. Largely, she caught snippets that revolved around the unreasonably large amount of reading that the college was expecting of them.What she overheard made Jill feel very good about the disciplined manner in which she prepared herself for the coming semester. She hadn’t needed to order any of the Core books from the college bookstore. She already owned more than half of them; the others had been library books.Looking around at the other students in the bookstore, she realized that she didn’t know a single person. No one even looked familiar. She’d been enjoying getting to know Sanaa, but it was apparent that she would have to start broadening her circle.She took her books back to the dorm and then pulled out her diary to write down a few thoughts about her first couple of days in California. She found herself focusing on the ‘fun’ events: the sea kayaking and the concert. While she did mention where they had taken place and what had happened, she made an effort to focus on her thoughts. She’d learned that such entries were more interesting to read at a later date. What she’d been thinking at the time gave her insight into the person she had been at that point in her life. That was more interesting than a basic listing of who, what, when and where.Finishing her entry, she pulled out her Astronomy textbook and flipped through it, mostly examining the photos and illustrations. Her eleven o’clock class, her first college class, was Astronomy 101. She was rather excited that she’d gotten into the class; it had been her first choice. She’d always loved sleeping under the stars, gazing up at them with wonder and awe. How exciting it was to be on the cusp of learning all about the night sky! She couldn’t really see herself majoring in astronomy, but she certainly felt as if knowing more about the universe would add to her enjoyment of life.A short time later, she was wandering the halls of the science building looking for the classroom. She was early, and the room was nearly empty when she entered. There were four long row-desks that went all the way across the room in large arcs. She decided to take one of the best seats in the house – in the approximate middle of the room – something she’d never done in high school. There, she had always sat on the periphery, typically near the back.The room was largely white and had seating for approximately fifty students. Up front, there were whiteboards and large projection computer screens.A few minutes later, a girl with black hair entered the room. Approaching along the same row, she asked Jill if she could take the seat next to her. **“**Please do,” said Jill with a smile. **“**You’re Tarzan, aren’t you?” the girl asked as she sat down.Jill didn’t know what to say. She was quite surprised. **“**I’m Mia. I was on the kayaking outing. We didn’t exactly meet, but I saw you there.”Jill nodded. “I had a lot of fun on that trip. I don’t live anywhere near the ocean, so it was a new experience for me.” She hesitated. She didn’t really want people calling her Tarzan, but trying to dissuade them might not work. “I’m Jill, by the way. I’d prefer being called, Jill.”Mia smiled. “No problem. Jill it is.”They chatted for a few minutes as the room filled up around them. Jill learned that Mia’s mother worked for the college, so she received a sizable tuition discount. Because of that, she hadn’t been able to consider going away to college. She lived at home, making her a ‘townie.’ Townies were common at some of the larger universities in California, but rare at Jill’s college.At that point, the professor came in and introduced herself. She was an older, slender woman, her long grey hair pulled up in a low-maintenance bun. Her name was Dr. Chapman. Jill liked her immediately. She had a soft-spoken, humble manner about her, and yet it was more than apparent that she was an exceedingly intelligent, confident woman.The lecture ended up being quite interesting, covering the early history of astronomy. Jill learned that astronomy or astrology, as it had originally been called, was presumed to have its origins with prehistoric man noticing that the sun’s location in the constellations could be used to determine when crops should be planted. She also learned how ‘astronomy’ had branched off from ‘astrology’ which had become a pseudoscience based loosely on observed celestial phenomena.Jill’s afternoon class, the Humanities Core course, was held in a large auditorium. It seemed more like a theater than a classroom. The padded seats were very much like those found in a movie theater except that they had small desks that folded down into the armrests. Jill again chose a centrally located seat just a few rows back from the stage.The class began with the introduction of three professors who would teach the various sections. Dr. Torres seemed to be the lead professor. Once the introductions were complete and a syllabus was being distributed, Dr. Torres brought up a list of the books they would be reading on two large screens, one on each side of the stage.He asked for a show of hands as to how many had not yet read a single one of the books. Jill glanced around. Almost half the class appeared to fall into that category.He then asked who had read one or more of the books. Jill raised her hand. As she again glanced around, she saw that she was in the majority; just over half of the students had a hand up. From there, the professor asked them to keep their hands raised if they qualified as he went up the scale; two or more, three or more, etc.As the professor said, “two or more,” Jill realized that she would have been putting her hand down had she not made the decision to read during the summer. When the professor got to “eight or more,” the halfway point, Jill again turned in her seat to look around. There were still more than a dozen hands in the air, but not many more.When he said, “all but one,” she again looked around. There was just one other hand in the air, a girl near the back. However, at the point where he said, “Okay, who has read every book on the list?” Jill saw that person lower her hand. Hers was the only hand still in the air. She felt as if everyone were staring at her. She squirmed uncomfortably, but she was only responding to the professor’s inquiry honestly; she had read every book.Dr. Torres asked her name. She had to say it twice as she hadn’t spoken up the first time.He looked down at the podium, obviously making a note. “Wonderful, Jill. Please come up and speak with me after class.”At that moment, a voice from somewhere behind her called out, “Get a life, Jill!”Jill’s face flushed in embarrassment as she turned. The auditorium erupted in laughter, as her eyes fell upon a guy with a square face and dishwater-blonde hair. Unlike everyone else, he wasn’t laughing. He had a guilty look on his face.As their eyes met, he raised his hands, one of them pointing to the left, the other to the right. He was obviously trying to shift the blame onto someone else, anyone else. The crowd continued to laugh as the two of them stared at one another. **“**That’s enough! That’s enough!” Dr. Torres said into the microphone. “Jill will have the last laugh when grades are posted at the end of the term.”Jill tried to smile, but it was difficult. She mostly wanted to crawl under her seat and disappear. Why had she been so stupid? Why had she kept her hand up? Her goal of fitting in again seemed elusive. Suddenly, everyone in the room knew her name, and not exactly in the most favorable light. Everyone probably thought that she was a very dull girl, that she had spent her entire summer doing nothing but reading – or possibly her entire life to that point.She’d done a lot more than simply read. If they only knew! She was glad they didn’t, but suddenly everyone in the class, hundreds of her fellow students, knew of her as the boring girl who needed to ‘get a life.’ She was mad at herself for having been honest, but more than that, she was mad at the boy with the square face. What a rude thing to say! And on the first day when everyone was just getting to know one another. First impressions were very durable.After class, Jill did approach the professor to introduce herself. They had a brief conversation. He asked her a few questions about the books, such as which were her favorites and why. It occurred to her that he might be trying to determine if she’d really read them or not; however, in the end, she decided that he was genuinely interested in her as well as in her opinions.Jill blushed again when she saw the professor looking at her chest. Due in part to the air-conditioning, her nipples were rock hard. Being true to herself, she was following through with her plan to remain braless. Surely, the nipples poking through the thin cloth of her lightweight top indicated that she wasn’t as boring as the square-faced boy had joked. As she said goodbye to the professor, he commented on how she was on track to be not only successful in college, but also life in general. She smiled and thanked him.As she headed up the aisle, she saw that the heckler was waiting for her near the auditorium exit. **“**Hi Jill,” he said, attempting to initiate a conversation.She would have nothing of it. She glared at him angrily as she strode by. **“**Jill, Jill,” he called out after her, but she didn’t look back. She didn’t have anything to say to him. Ideally being well prepared for class should have resulted in a positive experience. Instead, his childish remark had made her the laughing stock of the class.Thanks to him, a large segment of the freshman class now knew of her as, ‘the boring girl who needed to get a life.’ The only saving grace seemed to be that they knew of her as Jill, not Tarzan. She was glad that she had done the reading, and she was glad that the professor thought highly of her, but she didn’t like being made fun of.

**Chapter 206: Cory or Geoffrey**

That evening in the cafeteria, Jill was again having dinner with Sanaa when the same boy – the ‘Get a Life, Jill’ boy – appeared at their table. He had a tray in hand and pointed at the seat across from her indicating a desire to sit down.

“No! Certainly not!” said Jill, squinting angrily at him. The wound was still fresh.

To her disappointment, he sat down anyway. Jill got up and picked up her tray. “Let’s find somewhere else to eat, Sanaa,” she said, walking away.

She took a seat at an empty table. To her disappointment, Sanaa had not followed. She was sitting with the guy from her Core class and they were talking. She pulled out her phone and sent Sanaa a text. “He’s an asshole.” From there, she flipped over to another app, continuing to stare at her phone while doing her best to ignore the world around her.

A few minutes later, Sanaa was sitting down next to her. Looking up, Jill saw that the dishwater-blond jerk was with her.

“Jill, this is Cory,” Sanaa said.

Jill started to calmly gather her things, intending to again move to another table. Sanaa could get to know him, but she wasn’t about to.

“He wasn’t the one who said that,” continued Sanaa. “Just hear him out.”

Jill hesitated. She hadn’t exactly seen his lips moving, but she had been quite sure at the time. And he’d certainly had a guilty expression on his face. “It was him,” she said. “And thanks to him, I’m the laughing stock of the class.”

“I know you think it was me,” he said. “But it wasn’t. It was my roommate, Geoffrey . . . the guy next to me. Didn’t you see him laughing?”

Jill scowled and shook her head in disbelief as she stood up. She wasn’t buying it. Everyone had been laughing – everyone but him.

“Sit back down,” Sanaa encouraged.

Reluctantly, Jill did just that, in deference to Sanaa’s request. Even though she suspected the boy was lying, she believed in fair play.

“As a matter of fact, I’ve read all fifteen books, too.”

Jill rolled her eyes. “You expect me to believe that? And even if you have, it doesn’t excuse rude behavior.”

“It was Geoffrey.”

Jill scowled. “I didn’t see your hand in the air.”

“I had it up. Took it down early.”

“Issues with honesty?”

“Not so much that. I sensed where things were going. I prefer to stay under the radar, if you know what I mean. Don’t get me wrong. I respect you for being so fearless . . . I’ve never been comfortable in crowds. And like I said, it was Geoffrey. He’ll probably admit it . . . if you ask him. I’m sure he’s proud of how he got everyone laughing. But I wasn’t laughing . . . hit too close to home.”

“Okay, sit down,” said Jill. She’d decided that it would be a simple matter to find out if he were lying, at least as far as the books were concerned. “I quite liked Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” she said, changing the subject.

“I did, too,” he replied without hesitation.

“Do you recall the woman who attempted to cross the river, jumping from ice block to ice block?”

“Eliza!” he replied.

“Eliza,” she nodded. She hadn’t been able to recall the woman’s name. She’d read that book relatively early in the summer.

“Oh, my God, that scene stays with you. Jumping from one block of floating ice to another in her desperate attempt to escape to Ohio. Her feet bleeding on the ice . . . all while carrying an infant . . . what was his name?”

“Harry?” Jill asked. She wasn’t sure.

“Exactly . . . Little Harry!” said Cory, nodding.

Jill was surprised. He seemed to remember the book at least as well as she did. But just because he’d read one of them, did not mean that he’d read them all. She was starting to believe that he might be telling the truth, but she brought up more of the books to be sure: Oedipus Rex, Giants in the Earth, and Siddhartha. By discussing random things from each book, she quickly determined that he had indeed read them. That was certainly an unanticipated turn of events.

“Even if you aren’t lying about having read the books, how do I know that you aren’t lying about being the asshole?”

“First off, I’d never say that. Making fun of you for being intelligent enough to look up and read the books? That would be the same as making fun of myself. I’d like to imagine that I have a life, even if I do spend a lot of time reading.”

“Me, too. I read the books this summer, but it certainly wasn’t all I did.”

“What else did you do?” he asked.

Jill knew to sidestep that issue. Even though she’d decided that nudity wasn’t going to make a liar out of her, the last thing she was going to do was to bring it up. “I did a lot of hiking,” she replied quietly.

“You’re kidding. Me, too!”

Jill laughed. “Whatever I say, are you going to say you did it too?”

“I really did do a lot of hiking,” he said in a defensive tone. “I’m from Elko. Elko, Nevada. This summer, I spent a lot of time in the Rubies.”

“The Rubies?” she asked.

“The Ruby Mountains.” He opened his phone and started flipping through his pictures, showing a number of them to her and Sanaa. He did have some nice photos of lovely mountain scenery, a number of selfies mixed in. He was clearly not lying about the hiking either.

“Where do you hike? Do you have some photos?” he asked.

Jill picked up her phone but hesitated. She did have a lot of photos from her summer in the mountains. “Another time, maybe,” she said. She still hadn’t taken the time to move the naked photos into a separate folder.

“Come on, Jill,” Sanaa encouraged. Jill remembered putting her off the last time the topic had come up.

“Okay,” she relinquished. She thought that she could make it work. If she was careful, she’d be able to keep them from seeing any of the nude photos.

She unlocked her phone and found an image of Cache Lake taken from way up on Cornice Ridge. She showed it to both Sanaa and Cory. Recalling the time that Ryan had stolen it from her hand only to look through her photos, she maintained a death grip on her phone. She couldn’t even allow them to touch. If one of them swiped across the screen, it might bring up an image that she couldn’t let anyone see. Fortunately, they seemed cognizant of her level of stress and kept their hands well away from her phone.

Jill explained about spending summers camped on the eastern shore, essentially alone, but not far from her grandparents’ Airstream trailer. She brought up David and Ryan, even telling them that she’d been ‘one of the guys’ that summer; however, she didn’t mention that being ‘one of the guys’ had entailed being topless. Her secret seemed safe. Who would ever jump to that conclusion?

She then showed them pictures of Snow Lake and Sharp Tooth, but at that point, she put her phone in her pocket. She breathed a sigh of relief. She’d pulled off showing a few photos without a mishap. She made a mental note to get her nude images into a password protected folder before the next opportunity to show photos.

Before they went their separate ways, Jill learned that Cory’s room was in Three West. In other words, on the floor just above theirs. Colina Vista was a co-ed dorm; however, each floor was single-gender. Floors two and four were girls’ floors; floors one and three were guys’ floors.

“Some comments seem to really tick you off,” Sanaa remarked once they were back in their room. “The ‘I can feel bottom’ comment, for example. I guess I get that. You’re sensitive when it comes to your breasts. A lot of girls are. But ‘get a life?’ Why get all bent out of shape about that?”

Jill took a long moment to ponder the question. “I didn’t like being singled out as the most boring person in class . . . out of several hundred . . . not the first day . . . not when I don’t know a single person.”

“Are you boring? Is that something you’re sensitive about?”

“Am I boring?” Jill asked, redirecting the question. Certainly, Sanaa had gotten to know her well enough to have her own opinion.

“Not at all! So why not just laugh along with everyone?”

“You weren’t there. Maybe that would have worked for you. I’m not you.” Jill didn’t see any point in discussing it further. It had been traumatic. And life would go on.

She pulled out her astronomy textbook to do the reading listed on the syllabus. The chapter focused on heliocentrism as opposed to geocentrism. It looked as if Dr. Chapman would again be lecturing on the history of astronomy.

Glancing over, Jill saw that Sanaa was starting The Republic by Plato. She needed to read the entire book by Friday. Jill smiled. She realized that she was going to feel smug every time she saw someone reading one of the Core books.

Later, while trying to fall asleep, Jill found herself thinking about Cory. Her first impression of him had been horrendously bad. However, she now realized that she’d been mistaken. She’d jumped to the conclusion that he’d been the guilty party because he hadn’t been laughing like everyone else. Supposedly, as she had, he’d taken the remark personally. It seemed plausible.

She’d been surprised by how much she and Cory had ended up having in common. A similar pattern of thought had resulted in them both downloading the book list. From there, they’d both gone to the effort to obtain the books and do the reading.

Like her, he wasn’t from California. As far as she knew, Elko and Holden were probably somewhat similar. He’d spent the summer hiking and reading. She’d spent the summer hiking and reading. All in all, the number of coincidences was uncanny. Fortunately, he didn’t have a twin sister. Or did he? She hadn’t thought to ask. She chuckled to herself at the thought, but considering that, she realized that there was at least one more thing that they had in common. They had both chosen the same college.

But were there any differences? In class, she’d held her hand up while he had taken his down. And yet, she now realized that if she had the chance to do it over, she’d do exactly as he had done. That seemed more like a similarity than a difference. They both seemed to be somewhat introverted.

But then Jill remembered the old adage that opposites attract. But if that were really the case, why did she find herself liking the guy? Would she really be more attracted to someone who hadn’t bothered to do any reading in advance? Probably not, she decided. She did respect Cory for having done the reading. It showed discipline.

On top of that, an interest in the outdoors had been on the list that she’d put together that summer. As a matter of fact, many traits on her list described herself. Maybe she would be most attracted to someone who was very much like herself. She fell asleep thinking about Cory. He didn’t look at all like Tyler, and yet he was rather cute – not gorgeous, but certainly handsome.

**Chapter 207: A Phone Call**

The next morning, she and Sanaa again went down to breakfast together. They both had nine o’clock classes. She found her eyes searching the dining hall for Cory. Jill tried to tell herself that it wasn’t what she was doing, but she knew otherwise. She did her best to keep Sanaa from noticing, but it didn’t really matter. If asked, she’d probably admit to having the beginnings of a crush on the boy – but only to Sanaa. However, she didn’t seem to notice and Cory was nowhere to be seen.

Jill had two classes before lunch. Her Tuesday-Thursday morning schedule was Psychology 101 followed by History 203, Medieval Europe. It was unlikely that many freshmen would be in the history class, but it didn’t have any prerequisites and it was open to freshmen. She’d had so much U.S. History, that she’d chosen a class that focused not only on a different continent but on entirely different centuries as well.

At lunchtime, Jill found herself again scanning the cafeteria; however, Cory was nowhere to be seen.

Jill had one afternoon class, but it was just a one credit P.E. class – Ice Skating. She was pretty excited about it. She’d considered taking Rock Climbing and knew that she would eventually; however, when she’d seen that Ice Skating was offered, she’d known instantly what she wanted to do. Who’d ever heard of being able to take Ice Skating in college? She certainly hadn’t. What an amazing opportunity! She hadn’t done much skating, but the course description had specifically stated, ‘…prior skating experience not required.’

As the class was not until three p.m., Jill decided to bite the bullet and give the police sergeant a call. She’d promised, and she was quickly running out of week.

Sanaa had a one o’clock class, so after she had left the room, Jill located the officer’s card where she’d taped it into her diary. Trying to not give the matter too much thought, she dialed the number.

She had a little difficulty getting through the automated answering system but finally reached a live person. Gathering her courage, she asked for the sergeant.

“May I ask who is calling?” the woman replied.

“Jill Wahlund.” Her throat was instantly bone dry.

“Yes, he’s expecting your call. However, he’ll need to call you back. Can he reach you at this number . . . it should be within the next ten to fifteen minutes.”

“That will be fine,” she said before hanging up.

Jill got a drink of water and then twiddled her thumbs, fretting while she waited. She didn’t know why she was so worried, but then again, she had no idea what the officer wanted to talk about. She was relatively sure that the conversation wasn’t going to be about how hot she looked naked, nor was he going to be telling her that he liked her tight little butt or her cute shaved pussy – even her itty bitty titties weren’t going to be mentioned. However, considering those possibilities, however unlikely, made her smile. He had surely noticed those things even though he hadn’t stared. But she was very glad that the conversation would not be about those things, about her female body. That would be downright creepy. And he wasn’t creepy. He was kind and he had come across as knowledgeable, almost wise.

It had been very nice of him to let her go; however, he was a police officer – and police officers were scary – and she’d been caught red-handed – butt naked. She shivered, again rubbing her wrists as thoughts of the handcuffs returned.

“Jill Wahlund?” the sergeant asked when she answered the phone a few minutes later.

“Yes, this is Jill,” she replied, doing her best to sound as dressed as she could.

“Thank you for calling.”

“No problem. I told you I would.” Jill realized that she was trembling.

“Yes, I appreciate it.”

“What did you want to talk about?” she asked, trying to cut to the chase and keep her voice from betraying how nervous she was.

“You can relax. I just wanted the opportunity to share a few thoughts with you . . . give you a little advice. First off, I need to inform you that this is a recorded line . . . department policy.”

“That’s fine,” Jill remarked, not knowing if her agreement was needed or not.

“Great. I’d like it if you took notes, but you don’t have to. Frankly, you don’t even have to talk to me. Hopefully, you want to hear me out. I decided not to take you down to the station that night. I thought it might be a traumatic experience for a young woman, especially considering that you were naked, but I did have a few reservations about not doing so. Letting a person go completely unpunished might represent a disservice for some people. Certain individuals probably benefit from having their hand slapped. I’m not saying that I think that you are that sort of person.

“My sense is that you are an intelligent girl, so I decided to spare you the humiliation. That said, I do think that you need to mend your ways. As you realize, I had seen the news reports covering the rescue of your brother, so I did have some background.”

Jill had taken out a notepad, but he hadn’t yet said anything that represented new information.

“It is my hope to inspire you to use good judgment in the future . . . with regards to how you decide to live your life. In addition to this country’s laws relating to indecent exposure and lewd behavior, it’s a dangerous world out there, cameras everywhere. And there is the possibility of sexual assault and battery – maybe not a huge risk – but I fear that the world will treat you harshly if something happens.”

Jill gulped as he continued, “Rescuing your brother and the other guy . . . that was certainly heroic. Running around a park naked . . . not so much. If something happens, there will be those that say that you were ‘asking’ for it. Indeed, that comes up in instances in which skirts are short or necklines are low. Given that, just imagine how it might be in the complete absence of clothing. And women can be the worst. Not all of them . . . but some of them can certainly be very harsh when it comes to judging other women.”

“I left Holden for college. I’m in California now,” Jill interjected. “I had a crazy summer, but it’s over. Time to buckle down and study. I’m back to being the well-behaved girl I used to be. I mean, I’m not going to be doing anything like that again . . . going out naked.” It took her a lot of guts to say that because it had required a verbal admission of what she had done. But there was no denying it.

“I’m glad to hear you say that,” he replied. Jill didn’t exactly like what he was saying, but she respected him for going to the effort to tell her what he felt she needed to hear – and for doing it via phone so that Amber and Dani weren’t party to the conversation. He was talking to her much like a caring father might. His voice sounded official, but she could tell that he was a kind soul.

“Well, that’s most of what I wanted to tell you.” He paused and Jill had the feeling that he was looking over his notes.

She glanced down at her own notepad. There were just a few words on it. It read, “Good judgment. Dangerous world. Asking for it.”

He continued, “Just so that you are aware, if you are taken into a station nude, you will be photographed by a female officer. Those photos will become part of your permanent record. In most jurisdictions, reporters will be able to gain access . . . under public records laws, of course. You might not want that to happen.”

Jill swallowed hard. She knew that she had taken a risk when she’d headed out with Dani and Amber that night, but she hadn’t known exactly what that risk might be. It all seemed much scarier now that she was having it all spelled out for her.

“Thank you, Officer,” she replied.

“Next time, you might encounter a less sympathetic law enforcement officer. The cuffs might stay on.”

“I understand. Thank you.” She was trying to sound as sincere as she felt, and she wanted him to think that she was taking his advice to heart.

He again thanked her for calling and suggested that she call again if she had any questions or one day needed advice. He sounded as if he thought he’d never hear from her again, but the offer was there.

Jill hung up, feeling both frightened and grateful. The conversation had gone much as she might have imagined, and yet it had been eye-opening. Here was a police officer that seemed more interested in helping people live law-abiding lives rather than simply putting them behind bars.

Jill got herself a glass of water for her dry throat and then sat back down to think. She really did want to avoid trouble. That had to be job one. However, more and more, it seemed as if her clothes had a mind of their own. It seemed as if it had been that way since the night her panties had tied themselves to the signpost at the bridge. Of course, she had been the one doing the tying, but they had been egging her on.

And now she’d gone quite a few days without being naked other than in the shower. She hadn’t even slept naked since landing in California. Nor had she had an orgasm. It was good and it was bad. Realizing that Sanaa was in class, gave her pause. She had the room to herself. An orgasm seemed like something that she could take care of in the time available. Considering that, she realized that her conversation with the sergeant hadn’t exactly put her in the mood. She’d have to find a way to satisfy her need for an orgasm to relieve the urge to go naked – but it would have to wait.

Because she didn’t know how long it would take to get to the ice rink, Jill left her room early. That ended up being fortunate because, on the way, she checked her mailbox. For the first time, there was something in it – a pink slip indicating that she had a package. Exciting – her first piece of mail, and it was a package!

She went to the window and was given a red, white and blue Priority box. It was from Britt and Jenna! It was rather heavy for its size – probably a care package, she decided. She wanted to open it immediately but that would eat into the time she had allotted for getting to the ice rink. She raced the box up to her room and then set out again.

**Chapter 208: Ice Skating**

As the rink wasn’t on campus, she had to take a bus into town. She knew taking public transportation wouldn’t be too difficult, and yet there were details to figure out.

As she boarded the bus, she was thinking that the box from Britt and Jenna couldn’t have come at a better time. The phone call with the police sergeant had been very sobering – like a glass of ice-cold water in the face. The package had brightened her mood and given her something different to think about. She expected it was just an assortment of treats, but even that sounded fun – like a Christmas stocking or an Easter basket full of goodies!

The ice skating class also seemed as it if would be good for her psyche. She needed to get her mind off the idea of having nude photos in her police record and how women might say she’d been asking for it if one day she were to be sexually assaulted. Those were very distressing thoughts. It was more than clear that the officer was right; she needed to stick with her plan and keep her clothes on. Braless still seemed okay, but the concert needed to be her last pantiless foray on campus. She’d gotten away with it, but she knew herself all too well; nudity was a slippery slope – at least for her, it was.

Skating seemed like it was destined to be every bit as much fun as Jill had imagined. It took the class of about thirty more than twenty minutes to check out skates and get out onto the ice, but from there it was almost like a party. Everyone was laughing, grabbing each other for support – in short, struggling to keep their feet under them.

Jill was less wobbly than some, so she ended up allowing a blonde girl to hold on to her. Jill learned that her name was Kayla. She held tightly to Jill, with both hands. Jill couldn’t keep herself from laughing as she tried to steady the girl and keep her own butt up off the ice. She imagined them both going down and landing in a pile, one on top of the other.

There were a number of people who didn’t seem to be having any difficulty, but they were definitely the minority. They were the solemn few. None of them looked to be having nearly as much fun as those who were having trouble staying on their feet and those who were assisting them. Jill hadn’t realized that figure skating might be a contact sport, but it was turning out to be that way as the group all made their way across the ice to the ‘boards.’ That was the term the instructor was using for the wall around the rink.

Everyone seemed to be in an ideal mood for making friends. Jill was delighted about that; however, she’d already recognized one person even though she hadn’t yet spoken to him: Dylan, the guy with whom she had walked on the beach during the kayak excursion. He was in the class. He was among those that seemed to know how to skate.

She had been starting to think that she might never see him again, even though it had been less than a week. Looking over at him while helping Kayla to the boards, she recalled deciding that she’d go out with him if he asked. Was she going to end up dating someone in her ice skating class? That seemed romantic – they could learn couples skating. She forced that notion back out of her head. She might mess up if she let her thoughts get ahead of her reality.

The instructor introduced herself as ‘Nicole.’ Jill decided that she wouldn’t hold that against her; even though, it was exceedingly unfortunate. She was destined to be reminded of the redhead who had captured Tyler’s heart every time she heard the name. Why did the two of them have to have the same name?

Jill was surprised that Nicole had introduced herself giving only her first name. She was also surprised by how young she was. She looked to be about twenty-five. She obviously wasn’t a college professor, but what had she been expecting? It was a P.E. class.

From her brief introduction, Jill learned that Nicole had spent her entire youth skating – something like a decade competing – however, it had not been her destiny to become a champion. By teaching, she was able to remain involved in the sport. She was obviously quite good, Jill realized, based on what she was saying and the small amount of skating that Jill had witnessed; however, she’d certainly gotten heavy. To Jill’s eye, she was likely thirty or more pounds above what must have been her competition weight. However, she was still very attractive; she had a sweet, engaging smile and a happy twinkle in her eye. Her face was quite round and she had extremely short blond hair.

As it was their first class, Nicole demonstrated the basics of straight-line skating: balancing with the weight mostly on one foot while pushing diagonally with the other blade angled and then gliding. She also demonstrated stopping and even how to fall safely. Everyone laughed at the suggestion that someone falling might be able to control their trajectory.

Two at a time, she had them skate across the rink. Nicole watched carefully, giving them pointers. It meant a lot of time standing while waiting for one’s turn, but it made sense. They were supposed to be holding onto the boards so that they could watch their classmates to gain an understanding of what proper and improper form looked like.

Jill was delighted that Dylan seemed so glad to see her, but one thing she wasn’t happy about was that he called her ‘Tarzan’ as he approached. Fortunately, he hadn’t said it very loud. She told him in no uncertain terms that her name was ‘Jill.’ She knew it was probably too late to get ‘Tarzan’ back in the bottle, but she had to at least try.

Jill noticed him staring at her chest, but she shifted her eyes over to those skating to allow him to look. Her nipples were almost painfully hard. They were attempting to cut holes in her top. For some reason, she hadn’t considered how cold it would be inside the rink; however, she was in good company. Only about half the class had brought a sweater or the like to wear over their shirt. Everyone else was in short sleeves, dressed for the temperature outside.

Most of the class ended up on the same bus on the way back to school. Glancing around, she decided that a number of them had probably been on the bus she’d taken to class. She realized that she’d been too lost in thought for that to cross her mind at the time.

She chatted with Dylan. He told her that his art class was his early favorite. That seemed surprising given that he’d told her on the kayak trip that he’d probably be majoring in zoology. He was very friendly, but again, as they said goodbye, he did not ask for her number or even what dorm she was in. When they were talking, he seemed interested in getting to know her, and yet he probably wasn’t. She decided not to sweat it.

She was off at college, and, just as she had planned, she had no relationship back home. She was ready to meet some guys and start dating. But it didn’t have to happen right away. Finding someone new would help push Tyler out of her thoughts, but there was really no reason to be in a hurry. It would be much better to find someone she really liked than to start dating the first guy that asked her out.

That evening, while again having dinner with Sanaa, she saw Cory come in with a small group of guys. She waved to him, hoping he’d join them once he’d gotten his food.

Well, look at you!” Sanaa remarked. Slipping into her Trini dialect, she asked, “Cory duh cheese?”

Jill smiled. The idea that she was the bread and Cory might be her cheese was a pleasant thought. “Should the two of us make a sandwich?” Jill asked quietly.

“I think the two of you make a good sandwich!” She smiled warmly at Jill.

To Jill’s delight, Cory, carrying his tray, did come to where they were seated. He had someone with him. “This is Geoffrey, my roommate,” he announced. Jill studied the boy with brown hair and a hint of a mustache.

After they’d all introduced themselves, Geoffrey said, “Sorry about the comment in class yesterday. It seemed funny at the time. Cory tells me that I hurt your feelings. Never my intent.”

“It’s no big deal,” Jill shrugged. Glancing over, she saw Sanaa studying her curiously. “Sanaa tells me I should have just laughed along with everyone else. I’ve decided to take her advice. It was funny and grudges get us nowhere. Please, Geoffrey . . . have a seat.” She purposefully didn’t suggest that Cory should sit down, hoping that it would be funny.

Cory looked surprised but seemed pleased that she had spoken so calmly to his roommate. “What about me? Don’t I get to join you?”

“Depends,” said Sanaa. “Is ya duh cheese?”

Jill turned and punched her in the shoulder. She couldn’t believe that Sanaa was giving away her secret.

“Huh?” he asked. Fortunately, he was oblivious.

“Okay . . . sit down,” said Jill rolling her eyes. She thought that by feigning disinterest, she might keep him from realizing that she had a crush on him. She hoped that it wouldn’t work.

As the four of them ate, they mostly took turns describing their experiences in their Thursday classes. Jill did her best to show a little interest as Cory talked about his biology class, but truth be told, it was an act; she didn’t much like biology. She loved nature, but she didn’t want to know anything about the little organisms that lived in pond water. The slimy world of amoebas and protozoans was a turnoff. She preferred imagining that they didn’t exist. To her, nature was all about the majesty of the giant trees in the forest, the grandeur of the mountains, and the splendor of the stars in the night sky.

Jill spent her time allowing her thoughts to wander as she tried to think of how she might get Cory to notice her. Indeed, he surely had, but he seemed to regard her as a fellow student. She wanted him to notice her as a member of the opposite sex, hopefully, as an attractive female. She glanced down at her stiff nipples poking through her shirt. She had to be oozing feminine vibes. Surely he had noticed that she was braless. Did he not like small breasts? Did he think she looked sleazy? She forced those thoughts back out of her head. She looked good! If he didn’t think so, it was his loss.

“Hey, guys. I got a care package today,” she announced as they were finishing dinner. “At least that’s what I’m pretty sure it is . . . haven’t opened it. Want to come up to our room? I’ll share!”

“I’m so jealous . . . nobody has sent me anything!” said Cory.

Jill just smiled. It was fun to be among the first to receive mail. Actual mail was so much cooler than email.

Sanaa seemed surprised that Jill had asked the guys up to the room, but she didn’t object. They jumped at the invitation. Jill wasn’t surprised. The way to a man’s heart was supposedly through his stomach.

**Chapter 209: Sharing**

A short time later, the four of them were all in room 221. The guys had both taken a seat on Jill’s bed while Sanaa was sitting on her own. Jill was standing at a desk, cutting into the box with a pair of scissors held wide open.

Once the tape was cut, Jill flipped open the flaps. She was delighted to see that it was exactly as she had guessed. She tossed a bag of sour worms to Cory and an oversized candy bar to Geoffrey before handing the box to Sanaa so that she could make her own selection.

Sanaa reached in and poked around, but then a gasp of surprise escaped her lips. She grabbed something from deep inside the box and in one quick motion hid it behind her back.

Jill laughed. “What is it? If it’s something good, you have to share!”

“Tell me a little about your friends,” Sanaa said with a smile. “Britt and Jenna, right?”

“Yep, Britt and Jenna. Why?”

Cory stood up and reached for the box, but Sanaa placed her arms on top of it, holding it tightly to her lap.

“Okay, I’ll just go with the worms,” he said, backing away and sitting back down on Jill’s bed.

“Psst,” said Sanaa, getting Jill’s attention. She shook her head to the side, indicating that she wanted Jill to look behind her.

Jill leaned over to peer behind Sanaa’s back. In shock, she saw what Sanaa had pulled from the box. It was a large flesh-colored dildo, possibly a vibrator, in a clear package. Sanaa laughed as a look of abject horror spread across Jill’s face. “Fuh yah punannie!” she said, her dialect so thick that Jill had no idea what she’d said.

Jill turned on Cory and Geoffrey. “Out! Out! Out!” she yelled, pointing at the door, her face suddenly bright red.

Both boys looked bewildered, acting as if they had no idea what was going on, but they could tell that Jill was dead serious. They scurried for the door which Jill locked behind them.

“Shit! Shit! Shit!” she mumbled, dropping down onto her bed. She placed her elbows on her knees and buried her fingers in her hair.

Sanaa cracked up and threw the sex toy at her. “Saved your butt, didn’t I?”

Jill let out a heavy sigh as she looked at the vein-covered phallus lying next to her leg.

“Well, is it good?” asked Sanaa. “Because if it is then I guess we’ll have to share. That is what you said, right?”

Jill shook her head and started laughing while Sanaa opened the box. From within she drew out a colorful box of condoms and tossed it at Jill. “Now, tell me again who Britt and Jenna are.”

“Lesbians!” said Jill as she considered how close she’d just come to ultimate embarrassment. What if Cory had been the one to discover the dildo in the box? She would have died.

A minute later, Jill had not only the large dildo but also a small egg vibrator and a nice assortment of condoms on the bed next to her; Sanaa kept finding things and tossing them at her. It was funny, and yet, it wasn’t. She couldn’t imagine what Cory and Geoffrey might be thinking; however, it had been her own fault. Of course, Britt would spice up a care package with such things.

Realizing that she ought to do something quickly, she hid everything and went to the door. If she didn’t face Cory right away, she might never be able to.

The boys weren’t in the hallway. She headed down the hall, hoping that they hadn’t gone far. She tried to think of an alternative explanation for what had caused her to react as she had, one that she might be able to tell the guys, but nothing came to her.

Fortunately, they were both in the Two West lounge. Cory started laughing when he saw her peeking cautiously around the corner. Jill pulled her head back and took a deep breath. A second later, she walked into the room, attempting to look as composed as she could manage.

“Well?” said Cory.

Jill tried to smile. She glanced over at Geoffrey. He had a smirk on his face.

“Sorry about that, guys,” she replied. “Lesson learned. Never open a care package from a bunch of lesbians in the company of the opposite sex.”

They both cracked up.

“What was in it?” Cory asked. “…or do we not get to find out?”

Jill considered her options. It seemed rude not to tell them anything. “Some inappropriate . . . things.”

“Things?”

“Umm . . . toys . . . and such.”

“Toys?”

“Alright . . . sex toys . . . but that’s all I’m saying.” Her cheeks were burning.

They again started laughing. Remembering Sanaa’s advice, she started laughing along with them. It was embarrassing, but it was also funny. It would probably end up being one of those moments that she’d think back to years in the future.

After they’d all had a good long laugh, Jill decided to proceed with an idea she’d thought of earlier. “Want to study together, Cory?” she asked. “Everyone else is reading the Plato book as we speak. It will be fresh in their minds. I read it months ago. I don’t want that to end up being a disadvantage. Maybe you and I could sit down and review it together?”

To Jill’s delight, he liked the idea. He ran upstairs to get his copy while she walked back to her room for hers.

Minutes later, the two of them met back in the Two West lounge. Jill had the care package with her – she had promised to share. She’d dumped out the contents in her room and put everything back in one at a time, making sure that everything that went back into the box was G-rated. She was impressed with how quickly she was recovering emotionally. Maybe the shock hadn’t been as bad or as personally devastating as the ‘I can feel bottom’ moment, but it had certainly been traumatizing. However, not many minutes had passed and her heartrate was already well on the way to recovery.

Cory peered eagerly into the box.

“Sorry . . . all the good stuff . . . hidden away,” she said.

He looked disappointed, but he pulled out a candy bar and sat down, opening his book in the process. The two of them did exactly as she had proposed. Jill knew that she needed to be well prepared for class. If everyone had laughed at her for doing the reading, just imagine how they’d laugh if the professor called on her and it seemed as if she hadn’t actually read the book. She needed to continue being the boring girl who’d done all the reading – and didn’t happen to wear bras.

That thought made her smile. Something about shy, skinny Jill Wahlund going to college and proudly showing off her flat chest and her pointy nipples struck her as particularly funny – and particularly bold. She liked the person she had become. Others might not, but what did that matter?

That night, as she and Sanaa were turning off the light, Sanaa remarked, “Did you know that there’s a dildo in Canada?”

Jill laughed. “Did you know that there’s a dildo in California . . . room 221, to be specific?”

“No, I’m serious,” said Sanaa.

“So am I . . . still in the package it came in.”

“I’m talking about a town or city . . . in Canada . . . named Dildo. I’m not sure, but maybe it’s in Newfoundland. Is Newfoundland in Canada?”

“You’re yanking my chain.”

“Look it up if you don’t believe me. Google ‘Dildo Canada.’”

Jill decided to do just that. She sat up and switched on her phone. “Here it is!” she said in amazement. “Yep, Newfoundland. Those crazy Canadians!” She was quite surprised. She’d been sure that Sanaa had been making it up.

Sanaa laughed. “Girls from Holden! Not so wise when it comes to dildos.”

“Probably just me,” Jill replied. But now she had one, and maybe she’d be giving it a try. However, it had looked scary big.

“And there’s a condom in France,” said Sanaa. Jill decided to google that as well. “Hopefully all those condoms your friends sent you will come in handy.” Jill didn’t reply, but it did seem convenient to have a supply of condoms on hand – just in case.

It had certainly been an interesting day. Before falling asleep, Jill’s thoughts turned to Britt and Jenna. How dare they send a care package with condoms and sex toys mixed in with the treats! Britt had almost disrupted her nascent relationship with Cory! She’d have to let her know how angry she was about what she’d done. However, the more she thought about that, the more she realized that there had been no ill intent. Britt couldn’t have known that she’d open the box in the presence of others – and then let them be the first to look inside. Britt wasn’t to blame.

The next day, Jill walked into Astro shortly before the top of the hour. Mia, her townie friend, was already there. Fortunately, the seat next to her was open. It looked as if she might have been saving it for her.

Dr. Chapman started the class by discussing a contribution of the Egyptians – significant not just to astronomy, but to all of math and science – the degree symbol. The small ubiquitous superscript circle was supposedly a representation of a small sun – one sun or day equals one degree. The Egyptians divided the circle up into 360 degrees, rounding down from 365 such that it would be evenly divisible.

This, in turn, led to how we measure time. In spite of the popularity of the metric system, the 360-degree circle, as well as the 24 hour day, the 60 minute hour, and 60 second minute had withstood the test of time. She talked about how time is still measured in a base twelve system – analogous to the number of inches in a foot. She mentioned that a metric time system had been developed, but had yet to catch on – days of ten hours, hours of one hundred minutes. Jill was surprised; she’d never heard of metric time.

When the class ended fifty minutes later, Jill asked Mia where in town she might go to find a cute bikini. Jill hadn’t forgotten her desire to get something racy. She had no idea when she might next be going to the beach, but it was close and she wanted to be prepared. If some girls wore bikinis that left the butt entirely bare, then she could too – without having to worry that she might stand out.

Mia claimed to know just the place and what was also advantageous was that she had a car! As they both had a few hours before their next class, Jill offered to buy her lunch if she drove. As far as Jill was concerned, that would be a win-win arrangement. She’d benefit from Mia’s knowledge of the surrounding community, and she’d get a break from the cafeteria. The food wasn’t bad, but it wasn’t exactly great either.

They left directly from class. Even though she probably didn’t need to, Jill sent a text to Sanaa so that she would know not to wait for her.

“So bikini shopping or lunch? What do you want to do first?” Mia asked as they walked to her car.

“Lunch,” said Jill. “If you don’t mind.”

Mia laughed. “My friends would want to go bikini shopping on an empty stomach. Everyone feels fat trying on bikinis.”

Jill had never felt fat, so she couldn’t exactly relate. She knew better than to say such things. “But I’m kind of hungry. Not enough protein for breakfast this morning.”

The bikini shop that Mia had in mind was near the beach. There was a fish-n-chips place nearby that Mia recommended, so they headed there. Jill hadn’t selected her college because it was close to the ocean, but it was certainly a nice perk! She was in love with the idea that she could pop out to the beach whenever she wanted.

**Chapter 210: A White Bikini**

The two girls sat at an outdoor picnic table to eat their fish-n-chips. They weren’t right at the beach, but they could see it from where they were, and the ground around the tables was predominantly sand.

“What kind of bikini are you hoping to find?” Mia asked.

Jill had been expecting that question. “Something on the daring side. I’ve worn my current bikini a lot. It’s got some life left in it, but it’s not exactly new. And my mother helped me pick it out.”

Mia laughed. “Enough said. Who wants to wear a bikini that carries their mother’s seal of approval, right?”

It was Jill’s turn to laugh. “Exactly!”

“We’ll find you something teeny-tiny.”

Jill was glad that Mia seemed to understand. She didn’t remember her from the kayak outing, but she had an attractive figure complete with average-sized breasts – much larger than her own. She might have been one of the girls in a thong bikini that day. Jill wished she remembered, but it didn’t really matter and she wasn’t about to ask.

The bikini shop was right off the boardwalk. It was small and looked a lot like a tourist trap, but Mia assured her that it was the favorite of her local friends. It was small but packed to the gills with swimsuits. Glancing around, Jill quickly realized that her problem was going to be narrowing down her selections, not finding a suit that she liked.

Without Jill having to say anything, the saleswoman quickly figured out what type of suit she was looking for and guided her to the appropriate section. Jill found a suit that looked nice and headed for a changing booth, just the one selection in hand.

On the hanger, the bikini bottom had looked like little more than string; however, once on, she found the triangle in front bigger than she had been picturing. Given that she was shaved bare, she didn’t need much in front – just enough to hide her slit.

“Let me see,” she heard Mia say.

Jill stepped through the curtain to show her the suit. It looked a little comical with the disposable try-on panty underneath, especially given that the thong bottom was much smaller, but she believed in being hygienic – for herself as well as the next customer.

From there, she tried on a series of suits, the bottoms growing progressively smaller as she searched for the one she liked best. She knew she wanted the tiniest one of all, but she wasn’t going to buy it. She needed to find the happy medium: a daring suit that wouldn’t be quite the smallest one at the beach on any given day. Fortunately, she’d seen some pretty risqué suits, so she knew it wasn’t going to take a lot of fabric for her to fit in.

For fun, she tried one of the suits on backwards. She pulled it up tight, seating the string firmly in front. The thin hygienic panty slid in between her labia allowing the brightly colored string to disappear. ‘Oh, well,’ she thought, ‘way too racy.’ Even though she didn’t need a fabric panel in back, she had to have one in front.

While looking for the right thong bottom, she was also paying attention to the matching tops. She needed to find the right one to highlight her A-cup beauties. Her current suit was of the underwire style. She had loved it because it had done a decent job of gathering up what little she had and projecting it out from her chest. It had made her appear, at least to her eye, a little bigger on top than she really was. Not that it was really possible.

Jill no longer felt the need to make the attempt. She was flat and there was really no way to hide that fact – certainly not in a string bikini. She found herself looking for essentially the opposite of what she’d been looking for when she’d bought the underwire bikini. This time she wanted one that made her look as flat as possible. She’d come to learn that what she had to sell, wasn’t really about tits. Instead, it was all about the package. She was a slender fit girl, head to toe. Her little breasts were just one component of her lanky but lithe body. Hadn’t Ryan once stated that he considered her shoulders her sexiest feature?

But in searching for the right suit, she’d noticed that her boobs looked more or less the same in all of them. Indeed, the tops were all rather similar. They featured triangles of fabric that were small but plenty big enough to cover her nipples and then some.

In the end, she selected a bright white bikini. She never would have chosen white for Cache Lake; however, it seemed fine for California – ocean beaches and swimming pools. It was unlined, but the fabric wasn’t especially thin. It seemed woven not knit.

The saleswoman assured her that it wouldn’t be transparent when wet, not that Jill had asked. She actually liked the idea of it becoming see-thru under certain circumstances. She could act oblivious, at least initially. She knew she’d blush. And everyone would think that she hadn’t known when she’d bought it. But it was probably best if the suit didn’t get transparent. She really did need to transition back to being a girl who behaved by keeping things covered like other girls did.

After Jill had made her purchase, she slipped the suit back on, this time without the disposable panty. She wanted to see how it looked on her with nothing in between.

“Sun’s out, buns out!” Mia declared.

“Sun’s out, buns out,” Jill repeated quietly. She had only ever heard, ‘Sun’s out, guns out.’ That had been something that Ryan, imagining that he had impressive biceps, had said from time to time. Jill liked this new variation. She knew she was destined to enjoy California and its more liberal attitudes. She’d be able to get away with more and still not stand out!

“I do like that one,” Mia continued. “Your butt is your number one ASSet. Might as well show it off!”

Jill laughed at her pun. “Not my legs?”

“You look great in a thong. Some girls don’t. In your case, it’s impossible to tell where your legs end and your butt begins. Has anyone ever told you that you have the body of a supermodel?”

Jill laughed. “In high school my nickname was Beanpole.”

“And now it’s Tarzan?” Mia asked.

“Well . . . I have been called that,” she admitted. As requested, Mia had been calling her Jill. “But like I told you, at college, I want to be ‘Jill.’”

“Understood,” Mia replied. Jill could tell that she was still curious about the nickname, but she seemed willing to drop the subject.

“About your other suit . . . your current suit,” said Mia.

“Yes?” Jill replied, turning one way and then the other as she continued studying herself in the full-length mirror.

“You say it wasn’t so daring . . . mother approved. And yet, your butt is as tan as your legs. I wear a thong bikini, but my butt is not nearly as dark. And all the tops . . . your other bikini top must be at least as small.”

Jill considered her reply. Mia was right. She’d tried on a lot of bikinis, and no white skin had come out of hiding. She didn’t have any white skin.

Jill raised her top, flashing her breasts at the mirror. “Seamless tan. From tanning nude . . . in my backyard, but only when no one’s home. We have a high fence.”

Mia nodded. “Just as I was guessing.”

Jill was glad to hear that. What she had told Mia was factually correct. She’d spent a fair amount of time naked atop her sleeping bag. What she’d said wasn’t the whole story, but she hadn’t lied.

“Thanks for driving, Mia,” she said as they climbed out of the car back on campus. “See you Monday in Astro, I guess.”

“Sure, but…” Mia’s voice trailed off.

“Yes?”

“It’s just that . . . I live at home. I’ve heard that it’s almost impossible for townies to have a social life. College life is centered on the dorms and all the fun happens on the weekends. And I’ll be sitting at home. I’ve got friends, but they’ve mostly left town.”

“I get it. Let’s exchange phone numbers.”

“Thanks!” Jill could see in her expression that she was hopeful as she listed off her number.

Jill raced off. She had to hurry. She had just enough time to drop things by her room and get what she needed for her 2:30 Humanities Core class.

Her parting conversation with Mia had been food for thought. She’d been consumed with selfish thoughts relating to making friends. However, everyone in the freshman class needed to make friends. By helping others, such as Mia, she’d be helping herself. And she did like Mia – and as the swimsuit shopping trip had proven, Mia had a lot to offer.

Jill walked into the large auditorium thinking that she’d like to sit with Cory; however, she was too late for that to be an option. He was there, but the seats around him were taken. As before, she found a seat a few rows closer to the front.

Jill was guessing that Dr. Torres would call on her right away. Indeed, as far as she knew, hers was the only name that he knew in the entire class. He didn’t disappoint.

“Jill, as I know you’ve read the book, can you speculate as to why this book has stood the test of time? Indeed, it was written circa 380 BCE. Here, 2400 years later, it is required reading on this campus . . . other campuses as well.”

Jill stumbled a bit with her answer right out of the gate, but mostly due to stage fright. She did better, once she got going. In the end, she decided that her response had been decent. She hadn’t wanted it to be particularly exceptional. If her answers were really good, then Dr. Torres was likely to call on her at the start of every class. She hoped to avoid that fate.

Just after class ended, Jill spoke to Cory in the aisle. “Come with me,” she said with a smile.

“And where might we be going?” he asked suspiciously.

“I’d like to introduce you to Dr. Torres. He needs to know what I know . . . that I’m not the only one who has read all the books.”

“So he can call on me?”

“Exactly!”

To her surprise, Cory turned abruptly and walked out of the auditorium. She kicked herself. Why had she done that? It had been so stupid of her. She wanted Cory to like her, not start avoiding her.

She sat back down in one of the seats to think as the auditorium emptied out. Hadn’t she just learned from her conversation with Mia that the best way to have a friend was to be a friend? So why had she encouraged Cory to do something that she should have known he wouldn’t want to do? She needed to ask more questions and give some real thought to what he liked to do and start working that angle. If he wanted to fly under the radar in class, then she needed to respect that.