

**BLOW
OUT
SUMMER**



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By
Denise Ann Stock



Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.

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ISBN: 978-1-62857-082-3

Book Design by Julius Kiskis

21 22 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 1 2 3 4 5



DEDICATION

In memory of my brother Art.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This story and its characters are all fiction. There are real places and true events for effect only. Any resemblance to actual people is entirely coincidental.

The ideas and stories used to create this book came from many friends and acquaintances. The stories told to me over the years inspired me to write this novel. I would love to list each person's name in the acknowledgement, but it would take an entire book to list them all. I am grateful to each and every one of you.

Thank you to Stacey Dobson for use of her picture of the pier.



INTRODUCTION

It was one wild summer of parties, fun, romance, and illegal drug trafficking. The local surfers found themselves in the mix of it all. Surfing in Huntington Beach, the conditions looked clean on the north side of the pier. Wave height was five to six feet, fairly walled and glassy, on any given day.

I did not realize the depth of the illicit activity going on in this beach town. If they were doing what I thought they were doing, there was a lot of weed brought from Newport to Huntington Beach each week. I couldn't help but wonder where it was coming from—Mexico, Baja, or South America. I was not sure, but I would guess those boxes contained several pounds of marijuana each, and we had never picked up less than three boxes.

I found myself in love, in lust, in a summer where there were no boundaries. I and my friends hung out at the beach with the Local Boys. “Where in the hell did you find him, Dee Dee? He is such a fox,” she asked way too loud.

I said in a hushed voice, “I found him on the beach. Do you have to talk so loud the whole beach can hear?” We all started laughing. I couldn't believe I said I found him.

I needed this time to rethink my own path. I was actually

looking forward to school and some normalcy. I was a part of some bad things this summer. I also had a great time but I was just lucky things did not go south on me as they did for those guys living in the apartment behind Jaycee. I counted my blessing on that.



CHAPTER 1

I awoke to the smell of the fresh ocean breeze blowing through my bedroom window. My head felt as though it might explode. *Wow, what happened? Oh, it is coming back to me now. The summer kick-off party.* We started at Cindy's house with a keg of beer, and a lot of tequila. Then a handful of us went out to the beach to finish off the last bottle of tequila. Shelly and I snuck into my house sometime between three and four in the morning. We tried hard not to wake my parents. Mom was a buyer for a large department store, and Dad was career military. Every morning they woke up at five. Like clockwork, every night they went to bed by eight.

Obviously, I still lived at home in my father's house. I know it sounds terrible, having to sneak around. Some things are better left alone. My parents seeing me on my tequila drunken fest was just not something any of us needed. Nor would I have liked the wrath of Mom that would be inevitable if she saw us wasted sneaking into my room. Besides, I honestly hated to hurt them. I knew they would think they failed me as parents. I loved my parents, and I did not want that. I was turning twenty-one soon. This would not be an issue in a few months.



As I dragged myself out of bed, I reached over and gave Shelly a gentle shake. I saw that it was a beautiful day. The sun was shining in through my bedroom window. “What is all over these sheets?” I asked.

“It feels just awful,” Shelly said. I looked over at Shelly she looked back at me.

“I cannot believe it. I have sand all over my feet and the sheets.” We both howled with laughter.

“So do I.” Shelly laughed.

“Talk about being out of it,” I continued to laugh. “I do not remember the ride home, or climbing into bed with sandy feet.”

“We were both pretty out of it.” Shelly looked at the ceiling, stretching out her long legs. “The main thing I remember about last night is that when we were walking down towards the water the ground kept coming up and hitting me in the face!” she said to her chagrin.

“We were stupid drunk. We kept falling in the sand,” I reminded her.

Shelly said, “I like my version of what happened better.”

“I am sure you would, Shelly,” I chuckle. “I do remember Gerry trying to cozy up close to you all night.”

She rolled her eyes. “He has been doing that since we were kids. He cannot take a hint!”

Poor guy, I think to myself, he has liked Shelly since the eighth grade.

“I guess you cannot blame a guy for trying,” I told her.

“I just have no interest, but he is cute,” she explained, folding her arms across her chest.

We had a mess to clean up before we went anywhere that day. Mom would have a fit. We also needed to hit the beach. I had a need for the waves. That cold water would help lift the cobwebs from my mind, and remove the fog I was in right now.



Hopefully, I would start feeling better. First, though, I would make us something to eat. “I’ll go downstairs and whip us up some breakfast,” I told her.

“I am all for breakfast,” Shelly said as she slowly sat up.

I looked over my shoulder. “I will meet you downstairs,” I told her as I headed down to the kitchen.

Shelly and I had been friends since the first grade. Her parents built a house in this neighborhood the same year my parents did. We both started school the same day. We sat in the back of the classroom, as all the new kids in the class did. We whispered back and forth the first day of school and have been friends ever since.

She was a cheerleader in high school, and I played many different sports—volleyball, tennis, gymnastics, and softball to name a few. She never dated anyone from high school. I always went out with the jocks. She said, “They are all immature,” and always went for older guys. She had a brief interlude with a man in his mid-twenties that she met her senior year. He belonged to the Hessians Motorcycle Gang. That did not last long, for obvious reasons. That was a whole different story in itself.

We had never been able to agree on the subject of men. She had always had a different perspective on who was cool. Guys that I thought were cool she thought were not. That was OK. We got along well. It certainly made dating easy, as we never liked the same guys.

My cure for a hangover was a fried egg sandwich, a glass of orange juice, and four aspirin. That usually worked. After a shower, we headed to the beach. My truck was a Chevy Suburban my Uncle Pete gave me. He, my Aunt Elaine, and my cousin Cindy lived in a house they built in the same neighborhood around the corner from us back in the sixties. Their home was one of the first ones built in this housing track. The area was



a brand new development of three and four bedroom mostly ranch-style houses. We had a two story, and hers was a large single story.

My uncle giving me the old truck did not go over well with my father. They bought a new one to pull their new camping trailer last year. My cousin did not like it, so they asked me if I would like to have it. “You do not appreciate anything you do not work for!” Dad said.

“But I do, in a major way. I would never have expected something this great. The fact that they just gave it to me. I loved them before, now I love them even more. It is the coolest thing on wheels. It is large enough for me and eight friends to hit the beach with eight surfboards on the surfboard rack on top if needed. Oh, yes, I appreciate it alright!” I tried to tell him.

It looked like there were offshore winds blowing. This day could not get any better. We had Led Zeppelin’s “Stairway to Heaven” blasting on the radio. Shelly and I sang along. We both sang in the choir in elementary school. Neither of us could carry a tune now. As we got closer to the beach, it looked as if it was going to be ideal conditions for surfing. I was right about the offshore wind. There was a clear blue sky—not a cloud to be seen anywhere. Shelly was not into surfing or athletics. She preferred to lounge on the beach. She knew all the regulars we called “Local Boys.”

I started surfing at about twelve years old. I mentioned to my father that I was interested. That weekend, he came home from a swap meet with a Chuck Dent long board. “I do not know if this is any good, but I thought you could try it out,” he said.

“You did good. Thank you so much.” He probably would never know how happy he made me that day. I used it every chance I got.

I learned how to surf on it pretty quickly. The day I turned



fourteen we went down to Main Street, and Dad told me to go pick out any surfboard I wanted for my birthday. I had my eye on this lime green twin fin in Dick Brewer's Surf Shop, so I dragged my dad in there to see if they still had it. Yes, it was there, my dad was willing to pay the price, and the rest was history.

I did not have that surfboard anymore. It was one of the best birthday gifts I ever received. I broke it in half on an unusually large swell one morning on the south side of the pier. I remember as if it were yesterday. I got hammered by the waves that day. When I finally finished getting tossed around by a monster wave and made it into shore, I noticed I only had half a board attached to my leash. The other half washed in to shore on waves that tried to crush me. It was not the first board I lost that way and it would not be the last. Some days were treacherous out there. I had my boards custom made these days. The Main Street area had many surf shops that would make your board to order.

All the guys that we usually hung out with were already out there. The conditions looked clean on the north side of the pier. Wave height was five to six feet, fairly walled and glassy. It looked like Mike, Jimmy, Steve, and the others got an early start on me. Drinking tequila all night did not bother them. I thought I would be passing on the tequila shots next time. Maybe I should give up hard alcohol altogether. Then again, maybe not.

These guys out there today were serious surfers and highly territorial. They did not take to anyone from out of town particularly well. The locals referred to them as "inland goons." Around here, all surfers had to earn the right to these perfect sets. After all, this was the surf capital of the world: Huntington Beach, California.

Huntington Beach dominated the other beaches, with over eight miles of uninterrupted beach that stretched from Seal Beach to Newport Beach. It was unreal. It had been a terrific place to



grow up and was the best place in the U.S. to surf. There was a cement bike path that started in Sunset and went all the way to Newport. It overflowed with skateboarders, roller skaters, and bicycles. Shelly and I had ridden bikes all the way from one end to the other. The last time we rode we were too tired to ride bikes all the way back, so we hitched a ride with a dude driving a truck. We threw the bikes in the back, and he dropped us in Sunset hours later. It was an excellent beach trip nonetheless.

The waves were fairly consistent any time of the year. Here in Huntington the waves were between three to five feet most of the time. Certain weather conditions could change that, and we enjoyed larger swells during those random periods. There were beaches in Northern California that had large swells year round.

The waves at the pier broke outside, where the water is deep, and there was no chance of hitting the sand when you fell off your board. This was unlike the shore break at Sunset beach, which meant the wave broke right on the beach. Anyone experiencing this would have gnarly sand scars for days. They were similar to road rash.

I did not start surfing at the pier until I had surfed for a few years. When I was just learning I stuck to the cliffs. It was a popular surf spot at the end of Golden West Street. My friend's dad surfed, and we went there in the evenings after dinner. I never considered surfing at the pier when I was new to surfing. People up on the pier had a bird's eye view of the surfers below, and any mistakes they might make while they were out there. I was afraid of looking like a fool.

I finally got my nerve up one day and drove on down to the pier. I waxed up my board and paddled out. At first, the surfers were unwelcoming. They were all horrible that first day. They shouted some rude comments to me. I hollered nasty things at them which I will not repeat. I grew up in Huntington. This was



my town. This was my beach too. *Geez, my parents paid taxes here for over twenty years.* I did not mention the taxes. I would have sounded like a goon.

I sat there sizing up the waves and waited my turn. It looked for a while like I was not going to get my chance. I finally got up enough courage to take off on the next swell. I hollered “Right!” But some goofy looking, long haired guy cut me off. I stayed with him, and rode the wave in behind him. I had to prove my right to be here. I could not let these guys think they were better than me.

He started yelling at me, something about “you dropped in on me kook,” but thank goodness, a friend of mine, Billy, whom I have known since high school, recognized me and came over. “Nice ride, Dee Dee. I heard you surfed. I have never seen you, and you were looking pretty decent out there. How’s it going, Don?” he said casually. “This is a friend of mine. She is local.” Don did not say much.

“Hi, Billy. Thanks. I have been surfing at the cliffs. I just thought I would check the waves out here today.” I gave him a dazzling smile. I hoped it would help.

He introduced me to the tall goofy guy. His name was Don Summers, and apparently he was a champion professional surfer that I dropped in on. Oops! We became friends from that incident. Everyone started calling me “Lil D.” The surf pro Don they called “Big D.” The “Local Boys” accepted me as a surfer. They welcomed me at the pier from that day forward.

I also learned which ones were professionals. They learned who I was. I gave them respect where it was due, and I earned the respect from them as a local and a decent surfer. One had to know the pecking order. I could hold my own on the waves. I thought I had earned my right to be there. Many of the dudes I surfed with knew me for years. We went back to elementary



school. There were many, though, that I met from surfing at the pier. A few of my friends would be trying to go pro this year. I could not wait to see who would make it.

It did not take long for me to be popular with these guys at the beach. I was five-four, 105 pounds, with waist length blonde hair. I had aqua colored eyes. They said that I was a fox. I guess I could be compared to worse than a cute, little animal. "As if." I had no romantic interest in any of them.

There were lots of hot looking candidates to date, but I preferred men with an I.Q. above a shoe size, and vocabulary of more than "That's gnarly, bro" and "Rad, dude," and who knew me by something other than "Babe" or "Babelini." What could I say? Shelly and I were an unusual pair when we went somewhere together. She was five feet, nine inches tall, with long, honey brown hair and beautiful brown eyes. She was part American Indian, so she had that dark olive skin. I was fair skinned and her opposite. She was extremely popular with the local boys.

I was out with my dudes ripping up the waves for a while. I honestly did not have it in me today. Steve and Jimmy gave me a hard time about being a lightweight.

"Sorry, guys, I guess I am," I told them as I paddled for the shore.

I heard Mike laughing. "Hey, Dee Dee, you want a shot?" he yelled, paddling in my direction.

I yelled back at him as the waves took me further into shore. "Very funny, Mike! Very funny."

I thought I would hang out on the beach with Shelly. The rush of the surf certainly helped to clear my head, but getting in after three in the morning left me exhausted. As usual, I saw Shelly surrounded by some potential boys of summer. She always was the center of their attention. I walked up and put my board down. I dried off a little and talked to some of the guys about the south side of the pier swells, and if anyone righteous would be playing



at the Golden Bear this summer, and whom they thought was going pro this year.

I needed some money out of my car to get something to eat. I was starving again. Must have been the hangover. All I wanted was food today. Shelly was too busy laughing it up with the guys to go with me. “You go. I’ll stay right here,” she said as she gave me a sly smile. When we were young, we always did everything together. That was all changing. We were becoming independent of each other. So I took off by myself.

As I was walking toward the stairs, I heard a loud whistle coming from up on the pier. I only knew of one person that could whistle that loud. It was Ian. I had been asking around about him. He was friends with many people I knew. We had known each other since I was in junior high. We saw each other around town. It was on my agenda for this summer to get to know him better. Then he showed up just like that? How opportunistic for me.

I heard through the grapevine he might like me. We never had the timing right. I always had a boyfriend, or he had a girlfriend. There was no time like the present to set things straight. I looked up, and yes, he was smiling down at me and waving. “What’s happening?” he yelled down at me.

“Not much,” I said. “What brings you down to the beach?”

He gave me a smile and said, “You.” That was all I needed to hear. It was exactly what I was hoping he would say. My stomach did a crazy flip flop. Did I have a crush?

“Will you walk with me to my car?” I yelled.

“Sure. I will meet you at the top of the stairs,” he hollered, grinning. I ran up the stairs, and he was waiting there. He was checking me out. He was not obvious, but I saw him having a hard time not looking. I smiled and kept walking toward the street. He was looking at my butt. I could feel it. I turned around and looked at him, giving him my brightest smile.



“Are you leaving?” he asked. He looked disappointed.

“No, I need some money out of my car. I want to get lunch.”

“Do you like Seventeenth Street Deli?” he asked.

“I love it,” I said. He kept staring at me, although I acted like I did not notice, and look out towards the beach. I got a close look at him. In my opinion, he was undeniably a stone fox. Not only was he good looking, but I thought his life was fascinating. I heard about the things he and his friends had done, and the places that they had been. He is about six foot two, with a tall, slim build, dark curly hair, and a lopsided smile. He certainly had a strange effect on the girls I went to school with. He seemed to have a way with the ladies. He was remarkably subtle about it. He kept a low profile.

He was not a surfer. I had seen him on occasion skateboarding with mutual friends, but not lately. School kept him pretty busy. He just finished his second year of college pre med. He was going into his third year this fall. His father was a doctor, and he would be the fifth Dr. Connor in the family. It was quite remarkable that there had been five Ian Connors in the world.

He and his friends were silver spoon kids. All of their parents were wealthy, and they were seriously spoiled. They got their first cars (brand new) on their sixteenth birthdays. Usually, they were BMW, Mercedes, Land Rover, or Porsche. They grew up in Huntington Harbor, which was all manmade harbors and peninsulas, and largely waterfront properties created back in 1960, for \$200 million. It was where many of Southern California’s wealthy families built their homes. About a quarter of the population of kids I went to school with grew up in those homes. This area was supremely expensive.

Some kids went to private schools and some went to public school with the rest of us. In the end, we all hung out in the same places. They were all OK for rich kids.



Ian's best friend was Dewey. He also lived in the Harbor. His father owned one of the largest construction companies in Southern California. He also bred and raced thoroughbreds. Ah, the life.

He was one of the mellowest guys I knew. He was a large, thick guy, and a little taller than Ian. He had straight blond hair that was always in his deep blue eyes. Nothing got him riled. He drove a Land Rover. His first car was a Jaguar SJX. I heard he smashed it up on Pacific Coast Highway (also known as the PCH) not too long ago. Well, he did not destroy it himself. I heard he let some girl drive it that he picked up at a party, and she wrecked it. That was just what I heard. Lesson learned, poor Dewey.

Ian's first car was a Mercedes Benz. Ian did not like it. It looked too much like a family car for him at the time. He traded it for a van. My dad hated seeing any man coming to pick me up in a van. I hoped that he would be seeing Ian's in front of the house a lot this summer.

Ian was looking for me, and Jimmy, a mutual friend who would more than likely go pro this year, told him that he should find me here because of the offshore wind. We had a lunch date at Seventeenth Street Deli. I could not wait. My favorite was turkey, avocado, and sprouts on whole wheat. Yum! Ian and I got my board, and I asked Shelly if she wanted anything. She said she would eat something later. "Can you find your own way home?" I asked.

"Sure, go on," she said, giving me that knowing smile. I was sure any one of her admirers would be happy to give her a ride.

She kept smiling and waved as Ian, and I left. We would see each other tonight at Adam's. We all went to school with Adam. Shelly hollered, "Don't forget about tonight!" It was party time again. That was just what I did not need. I hated to miss out on anything fun. I tried to make an appearance at most of them. I



put all my stuff in my Suburban and locked it up. I would have to come back for it later.

There was a line of customers at the Seventeen Street Deli, so we made small talk while we waited. It was a popular sandwich shop for beach goers. We asked each other the usual questions. “Are you seeing anyone? How was school?” There was a need to catch up, to get up to speed. We hung around the same people, went to the same parties with the same crowd. I knew all the girls he had dated. He knew the guys that I had gone out with. There were no first date jitters or awkward silences.

We finally came up to order the sandwiches. Ian took me to a nearby park off Main Street to eat them. Nice touch.

“I hope you do not mind me taking you away from your friends,” Ian said.

“No, this is great,” I said. *Nice first impression*, I thought to myself. There was no one at the park. It was warm and sunny. The sandwiches were delicious. I could eat at Seventeenth Street Deli every day, and meeting up with Ian made it that much better.

We hung out a while. “So how is school going?” I asked.

“Good. I have met some cool people there,” Ian said. “What about you? Have you been doing anything exciting? Working, going to school?” he asked. I told him about quitting my job for the summer to hang out, and about going back to school in the fall. We finished the sandwiches and then walked back to the van. Ian took my hand as we walked.

We stood there talking for about a half hour before he took me back to my car. He told me that he planned on going out tonight.

“Will you be at Adam’s tonight?” he asked.

“Yes, Shelly and I were going to make an appearance,” I said.

“Why not let me pick you up, and we can go together?” he asked.

Hmm, so much for going with Shelly, I thought as I nodded my head yes to Ian. “OK.” I smiled up at him.



So now not only would Shelly have to find a ride home from the beach, I had decided to ditch our plans and go with Ian to the party. I must tell her I was sorry. She would be a good sport about the whole thing. She knew that I liked Ian, and I planned to talk to him at the next social event if we ran into him.

She probably was making plans long before I told her what I was doing. She knew me so well. I would change my plans for her if she needed me to. I wanted to take a short nap before he picked me up when I got home. That would hopefully revive me. So I went home and got into bed for a quick nap. It seemed like I just closed my eyes, and then it was time to get up again. Ian was out front, already coming to pick me up.

It was not just the two of us either. He had Dewey in the van. Ian and Dewey wanted to go down to Newport Beach first. No big deal. I climbed into the front seat of the van as Dewey moved to the back. No one seemed to be worried about getting pulled over in this town. They all operated vehicles with open containers of beer or alcohol everywhere they went. As we discussed what we wanted to drink tonight, Dewey was saying that the beer stop would have to wait until after we took him back home.

Fine with me. I thought that was odd from what I knew of these guys. I asked Dewey what he had been doing lately. "I have not seen you around."

"I have been working with my dad. My brothers and I are all working for him," he said. "The family business has its advantages. The good thing is I have a job guaranteed. The bad thing is I have a job guaranteed." We all laughed at Dewey's terrific sense of humor. I was sure working for his dad was highly profitable. He and his brothers would one day own the family business. They were all set for life. *Poor bastards*, I laughed to myself. How sarcastic I had become.



We pulled up in front of some expensive looking townhouses. I was sure someone with a lot of money lived here. This was a part of Newport that I had always liked. It was close to the ocean. I had heard that some movie stars lived out here among the other wealthy people. I loved Newport. It had beautiful homes as well as excellent places to shop on the main drag. The little cafés on the PCH had excellent food and were fun places to sit and people watch. It was cool to just drive around Newport looking at the sites.

We were making a pit stop at some guy's house named Chase. I had to wait in the van. This seemed a little strange, but oh, well, the guy might be one of those Newport snobs and I obviously was not one of them. I would just enjoy the night air and maybe listen to some tunes. The sky was so clear that I could see thousands of stars. The air had that same natural sea smell I had at home. I tipped my head back and looked up at the stars, taking deep breaths and enjoying the quiet.

They had been in there a long time. I turned on the radio and listened to some songs. It had been at least forty-five minutes. "Guys! What is taking so long?" I said out loud. I was sitting out here all alone, and I was bored. I wondered what was keeping them. I started getting annoyed thinking about what they were doing.

Finally, after another ten more minutes, they came out. They were loading four large speaker boxes in the back of the van. Geez, we drove all the way out here to pick up speakers. Ian hopped in and gave me an embarrassed smile. "Sorry, Luv. I did not think we would be in there that long." He glared at Dewey, who gave me a sheepish grin.

"Sorry, Dee," he said.

"It's cool," I said casually. I was not thinking that. I was thinking, *The speakers could have waited.* I did not say anything. Besides, we were already on the road heading back to



Huntington. We would be dropping the speakers and Dewey off at his house. We would talk to him later at Adam's. I noticed that Ian gave me a pet name, "Luv." This was only our first night out. Very interesting.

There was a decent crowd here tonight. Most of the people were friends, and there were some unknown guests. I saw that one of Ian's girlfriends was here, and she was staring at me. At least, I thought she was a girlfriend. I was sure I would find out about her eventually. It smelled like cannabis to me. They tapped the keg, and the party was in full swing. I thought I would be going easy on the brew tonight. I overdid it last night in a major way. Shelly had not arrived yet. I probably should have called her when I was heading out to make sure she was still coming. Tequila night did not seem to affect her at all.

Yes, I said cannabis. Someone also brought some Hawaiian weed. It had a distinct smell (though there were probably a half a dozen different kinds in this crowd). The majority of people I knew and hung out with smoked pot. I did not like it. I never have. It just made me hungry and tired. That was all I needed, something that would help add extra pounds on my thighs. So I just stayed away from it. It did not bother me that others partook. I knew a lot of professionals that smoked. Not my parents, though!

Mom was of the opinion that after smoking pot people would flip out and jump out the window of a ten story building. At least, that was what she always told me. So I made sure the first time I tried it I was in a place that was only one story. Needless to say, I did not jump out the window. I did eat a half box of Ding Dongs, drank two sixteen ounce Dr. Peppers, and slept for hours. First and last time I experienced that high.

No one here seemed to want to jump out the window either. Most of the people here were mellow. Everyone was talking about what they were doing this summer—backpacking through



Europe, hiking in the mountains, and many would be surfing all summer up and down the coast of California. Some were planning to venture into Mexico. I heard Rosarita Beach had some serious surf. Rosarita Beach was just south of the border in Baja California, Mexico. It sounded like fun.

I was going to have to go on some of these road trips. I wondered if Ian would like to travel together. Shelly finally showed up, and of course she had a new man with her. He seemed pretty cool, and friendly. We would see how it went—summer love and all that. He was not one of the guys from the beach, but he looked like someone I had met. I had seen him around. I thought he lived in Ian’s neighborhood. She introduced him to me.

“What is up with you and Keith? I don’t think I have met him before,” I whispered.

“We have been talking off and on for the past month. He has asked me out a few times. But I always have something going on. When you ditched me for Ian, I decided to give him a call and see if he wanted to come to this party.”

We all just hung out in the kitchen, talking about this and that. We were watching the people coming and going. I could not help but notice how many people were going into the bathroom in groups of two or three. I knew drinking beer sent people into the bathroom over and over again. It seemed strange to see groups going into the bathroom then coming out all amped up. They were talking fast, about nothing. Very interesting. We would have to see what that was all about. Shelly whispered, “They are on drugs.”

“Well, no kidding,” I laughed at her. She just made a funny face at me. There was a lot going on at this party. We should check it out, find out what they were up to. At some point, Ian drifted off into the crowd.



The girl that I was talking about earlier, the one giving me some serious looks, was walking toward us. She reminded me of Carole King. It was her smile. She was pretty. Her name was Tina. Shelly knew her and her brother. She told me that Ian had said my name when they were alone together. This was an amusing fact.

I would not have shared that information. I would die before admitting that to anyone. Shelly and I felt embarrassed for Tina. The three of us experienced a bit of awkward silence. Shelly asked Tina about her brother Luke. “I used to see him a lot, around town. Now, not so much,” Shelly said.

Tina got quiet for some reason. Staring off, she finally replied, “Oh, he is around. He keeps busy with things.” I expected her to say what things and where he was. No, she just kept looking around the room. I also thought she would leave, but she stood with us, not talking to Shelly or me. I had hoped she would wander off. I decided I would go mingle when I saw Ian’s head bobbing towards us.

He walked up and stood next to me. Tina said hi to Ian and gave him a white, toothy smile. “What’s happening Tina?” he said, and he smiled back at her.

“Not much,” she said, still flashing her white teeth. Then her smile just dropped and she quickly walked off. It must have been the fact that Ian put his hand on the middle of my back right after he joined us. She gave us all a glare before she turned away, and what sounded like a snarl at me. I could be mistaken.

Shelly made another face and said, “Now that was weird.”

“She thinks we are together because we hung out a few times,” Ian said.

“You’re not?” I asked. “Shelly knows her,” I added.

“No, just friends,” he said. Then he looked over at Shelly. I was not sure what that look was for.



Shelly laughed and said, “I think you had better let her know. From what I just saw, she has not a clue.” We looked over and Tina was giving me the evil eye. I felt sorry for her. Shelly thought it was hilarious. Shelly sometimes enjoyed seeing people bent out of shape. Everything was funny to her. I had to admit I thought it was funny. She laughed hysterically for a few seconds. She was making snorting sounds behind her hand. Once Shelly got going, it was contagious. I could not help but laugh as well.

Ian did not look as casual as he was trying to act about this situation. Shelly also found this particularly amusing. So there was more laughter. Shelly whispered, “Ian is so cute. I like the two of you together, but you obviously have some competition to deal with.” I looked up at Ian. He did not say anything, and I wondered if he heard her. Then I looked across the room at Tina, who continued to watch Ian. There might be more to that friendship between Tina and Ian than met the eye. It looked to me that she had unresolved feelings for him.

I enjoyed myself, but after a couple hours I am ready to go home. Ian was ready to go too, thank goodness, and we said goodbye to everyone. It looked to me like Keith was ready to call it a night too. Shelly and I hugged before we headed out to the cars. “I am sorry to be the party pooper,” I apologized.

I liked Keith. We had some lengthy conversation and he talked and laughed with everyone, but he seemed a little distant. I thought maybe he did not fit in here. My guess was they would probably be leaving too.

Ian did not seem to mind leaving and drove me home. We hung out in front of the house for a while, making plans to get together again. He told me about some ideas he had. “We can do the usual movie, have some dinner if you like, and there are parties coming up all summer, not to mention some road trips if you are interested.” He told me about the many different places



we would go together.

For some reason unknown to me, he already had my phone number. He had to have gotten it from one of my friends. I wondered if he was going to move on me. Yep, he did. It was a toe-curling kiss. Wow, that was pleasantly surprising. Then, as fast as it started it ended, and he hopped out of the van, smiling to himself as he walked around to let me out. Always a gentleman, I see. How refreshing.

We walked up to the door and kissed one more time. The porch light kept going off and coming back on for some reason. It ruined a romantic moment. We said goodnight, and I opened my front door only to find my dad standing on the other side with his hand on the light switch. “Oh, you’re home early,” he said, somewhat sheepishly. Did my dad actually look embarrassed?

“Yeah, maybe, but you are really up late,” I said.

“Is that a new friend?” he asked. He did not look happy about it.

“No, we have been friends for years. I have known Ian since I was around thirteen. We are probably going to be hanging out together some this summer,” I told him.

He walked off mumbling something about “boyfriends with vans being a bad combination.” I loved that man. He grumbled a lot, but I knew it was his way of caring for me, and he worried about me all the time.

I grabbed a snack and went up to my room. Oh, man, I had forgotten about the sand. It was too late to vacuum. I’d just have to shake it off on the floor and vacuum tomorrow after the folks left for work. Ahhhh, sleep. That is all I needed.

I listened to some Led Zeppelin (“Going to California”) using my headphones. I did not want to disturb my folks with that “awful music.” I could not help but think about my night with Ian. I thought we would have fun hanging out. He would



have to go back to school in the fall. So it would just be a summer fling. Perfect by my standards.

I quit my job at the mall right before summer. For me, college started in the fall. I would be studying Business Communication and Journalism. I had not decided on a career path. I did have some ideas. I would graduate in four years with my bachelor's degree. In high school, I found that I was exceptionally skilled at public speaking. This was funny because up until the seventh grade I was extremely shy.

I should have started college last fall. Instead, I modeled for about six months. The money was excellent, and I traveled to Hawaii, Tahiti, and a few Polynesian Islands for on location shoots. The problem I had with it was the fact that it was all so commercialized. I was a Southern California surfer girl. That was where the surfing interest in me ended.

I never did any surfing shots. I just stood on the sand and ran on the beach. They took shots of me lounging on large rocks, or on expensive imported furniture. I splashed around in the water in extremely provocative poses. I burned out on the career in modeling and came home. My parents never liked my modeling bathing suits, so they were both overjoyed. My father thought it was cheap and degrading. Truth be told, I felt that way in the end. Dad helped me to invest my earnings for the future, and was ready to put the whole thing behind us. He had never mentioned it since.

To get back in school, I had to beg and write a long essay on why I should be able to keep my scholarship—not to mention I had to go before the dean at Long Beach State. All that groveling paid off, though, and I had my scholarship and would start school in the fall.

So my plan was to blow it all out this summer. I had saved most of my money all year from working at the mall in a



department store just so I could have a fun summer, maybe try some new things, and go different places. I had three months to do it all before I got serious and worked on growing up. My folks were all for me growing up. I was the youngest of three kids and the last one living at home.

My brother was a cop with two kids. My sister was a stay at home mom with three kids. My brother Mike lived in Norco, California, on several acres of land with three horses and a Great Dane. My sister Kathy lived in Costa Mesa, not far from the South Coast Plaza Mall, where she perfected her shopping skills. She was the queen of her home. She lived in a house that was worthy of a magazine cover. We were a pretty close family. I thought that I was an afterthought, as my brother is two years older than my sister but my sister is seven years older than me.

We liked to all get together on Sundays whenever possible. Sunday dinner was a zoo with everyone at the house, with kids screaming and running and playing. We all loved Sundays watching football, talking over what was going on in life. Some things I preferred not discussing, like the large group doing drugs or smoking weed at the party I went to last night. That would not go well for me if my brother knew, and I would never hear the end of it. Would he believe in being guilty by association? I wondered if my sister smoked pot. Being home all day with three kids, she needed a little something. She had a nine month old, a two year old, and a four year old. No way. She was extremely conservative. We looked a lot alike. I was more adventurous than my sister.

Everyone had plans to travel this summer. My folks were going on a Caribbean cruise. They took weekend trips periodically. My brother, his wife, and his kids would be going camping for two weeks in the desert. My sister and her crew would be going back east to see my brother-in-law's family for



two weeks. I believed they were in Maryland. I had not planned that far. I wanted to be spontaneous, play it by ear. I wanted to go camping, traveling, and I still liked the idea of going surfing down in Baja.

When my sister, brother, and I were younger we took family trips every summer. We even went skiing one winter. My parents never left the ski lodge that trip. They did not like the cold, so that was why we only did that one winter. Mike and I, however, still go skiing together. We all enjoyed the time we spent together on those trips. We went to Hawaii. We went on an Alaskan cruise and many trips to Mexico. The tradition of family vacations still lived on—they were just planning separate vacations. Life was ever changing. The kids were now parents, and the parents were now grandparents.

One of the things Shelly and I planned to do before summer started was a charity event. Shelly and I signed up for a walkathon. This event was a fund-raiser where sponsors paid for every mile walked. The walk was twenty miles. They did this event every year.

This would be the first time we would be joining the walkers. We planned out the night before what we would be taking and wearing. It was going to be hot. We intended to keep it simple. We would layer clothes down to bathing suits. That way we could take off the layers as the day warmed up. It would be chilly early in the morning when it started.

There was a large turnout for the walk. Thousands of people were participating. This was a memorable event. The walkathon was in Anaheim. The walk would start on Lincoln Avenue. The journey took us around the city, and we finished at Pearson Park, not far from where we started. They had water stops, and we would have a designated place to stop for lunch. The first five miles were OK. At the ten mile check point, we had lunch.



We got a lot of encouragement from people who lived along the road. Many people turned on their sprinklers for us to walk through to cool off. It felt as if we are in a parade with everyone cheering. I was enjoying myself. When we finally reached the ten mile marker, many people were dropping like flies.

I did not want too long of a break. We needed to keep our leg muscles warmed up, so we did not stiffen up. I learned that playing in sports my whole life. After a short break and some food, we got back on the course. My muscles were starting to ache. Shelly felt it too. We were not going to quit, though, even if we had to drag each other across the finish line. There would be no wimping out. Before we started the walk, Shelly and I shook hands on it.

Somewhere along the road, Shelly picked up this good looking Marine who wanted to meet her. He walked the last ten miles in cowboy boots. Amazing that he would do that to talk to her.

When we finally reached the fifteen mile marker, there was much excitement. They were hollering for us to “go go go.” It was getting really hard at this point. We drank some water that they provided for us as we continued on towards the finish line. Mr. Marine did not seem to be bothered by any of it. He walked on smiling and talking. I do not think he ever broke a sweat.

The starting group had dropped to less than half. All of us who were walking were trying to motivate each other. We were starting to feel like a team. We did not know each other, but we continued to offer words of encouragement. We had come this far. We could not stop now. We were singing songs, trying not to think of sore muscles.

The buzz we all felt seeing the finish line was unbelievable. There were some people who finished ahead of us, but the fact that we finished was so terrific! The crowd of people at the finish line was enormous. They were yelling and cheering.



After all the hugs and pats on the back, we made our way back to my car. Shelly said her goodbyes to Mr. Marine. She let him down softly without giving him her number, as was her way with the men.

“What an incredible experience,” I said.

“I cannot believe we finished a twenty mile walkathon,” Shelly said breathlessly. We truly felt happy. It was for a terrific cause.

I told her, “I want to do it next year.”

Shelly said, “Sorry, Dee Dee. I am going to have to think about that.”

I laughed. “You have a whole year to think about it. All I want to do is go home and take a shower.”

“Drive on,” Shelly commanded. We both started laughing. We were both lobster red. I at least should be used to being in the sun. We finally pulled up in front of my house and ordered a Hawaiian pizza. I did not want to go anywhere or do anything but lay in front of the TV. All in all, it was a fantastic experience. I thought to myself, *Maybe we will make it again next year.*

I heard there would be some real jamming concerts this summer. I wanted to go to as many as possible. Shelly and I went to the California Jam last year. I remember it well: April 6, 1974. We did a lot of planning for that event. We took a large cooler full of food and drinks. We spent the day before frying chicken. To my surprise, it came out pretty tasty. We used Shelly’s mom’s recipe. We took fruit and beer and spent an hour rolling joints of Columbian Gold that we hid in a cigarette pack, to sneak into the concert. I still did not know why we spent so much time rolling joints. I did not like weed. Shelly was on the fence.

The groups playing were Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Deep Purple, Earth, Wind and Fire, the Eagles, Rare Earth, Seals & Crofts, and Black Sabbath. There were some others that I cannot think of right now, but it was totally rad. We got in line early



during the day to wait for the night show. We sat around partying with complete strangers all day. We were feeling no pain.

A little after noon they started letting people through the gates. We had to walk a long time before we got to the concert area. There was a massive stage, and we were not far from it. There were enormous speakers probably forty yards behind us. Then there were thousands of people beyond them. We made a pact not to wander off or go anywhere alone because we would never find each other. I had never experienced anything with a crowd of this magnitude.

We ate and shared all our things with the people around us. Everyone was passing around joints, beer, and wine. We were in a peaceful group. The crowd in the back was pretty rough. The drunken brawls were breaking out early. I was not sure they acted that way because they were so far from the stage, or maybe because that was their normal concert behavior.

We had to walk for miles to the outhouses. We made it back just as the show was starting. Emerson, Lake & Palmer was blaring out of the speakers. “Welcome back my friends, to the show that never ends, come inside, come inside...”

This got the crowd on its feet, screaming. The rest of the night was one fantastic band after another. It rocked early into the morning. We never wanted that show to end. It was fun and what a show. There was a lot that went on that we did not see. People got sick from heat stroke. There were cases of alcohol poisoning. The people who put on the show had tents set up for these kinds of problems and handled them well because we were oblivious to any problems.

We read in the paper later that it was a record breaking crowd of 250,000 fans. They held it at the Ontario Motor Speedway. One of the craziest parts of the show was when Keith Palmer was playing a piano suspended fifty feet above the stage, and



it was spinning end over end. There was a small fire when the pyrotechnics had a malfunction, and caught part of the stage on fire. At the end, Ritchie Blackmore threw a bunch of guitars out into the audience. No one who went will ever forget that concert. I knew Shelly and I never would. We had a blast.

I knew that Chicago and the Beach Boys were doing an outdoor concert. I would have to check them out. Maybe the Eagles and Elton John would be in concert. I would like to see Neil Young and America or Yes. They all would be fun.

There was probably no chance Led Zeppelin would be in town. They already played here not too long ago. We would have to wait and see who came. Many bands play at the Los Angeles Forum and the Long Beach Arena. I had been to both, and they had incredible sound from nearly any seat in the building. We had seen some shows in San Diego. I would enjoy going again.



CHAPTER 2

Well, this was a perfect summer so far. I had been surfing almost every day. Sometimes I went down and watched the guys skateboard. Skateboarding was relatively new around here. Street surfing, some were calling it. They were getting some of the same action on cement drainage ditches.

It was a pretty cool thing to do when there were no waves. I saw Ian out there too. He was a goofy foot, meaning that he was a lefty and he led with his right foot. Ian and I had been hanging out a lot lately. I did not have a skateboard and the guys did not seem to mind lending me theirs. I was not as talented as some of them were, but I was not terrible either. They liked the fact that I could hang with them.

I had not eaten it yet, for now, and I did not look like an idiot in front of them. They spent a lot of time driving around finding concrete drainage ditches with concaves and bowls. The biggest attraction was the ditches that surrounded many of the housing developments. The area around the drain pipe with its smooth cement U shape was just right for tricks. The dudes could be seen out there on any given day.

Shelly had been hanging with Keith pretty regularly. That



was the new guy she took to Adam's party. They went to the Highway 39 Drive-in to see the movie *Jaws* with Ian and me. I thought, Great. Now every time I am out in the water with my feet dangling, waiting on a decent wave, that music will be echoing in my head. "Dun nunt, dun nunt, dun nunt." No, seeing it did not scare me out of the water, but I did think about what was under the water a lot more than I ever did before.

There were a bunch of us that were going to go camping off the Ortega Highway at Casper's Regional Park. It was still in Orange County, so it was convenient, but it still had enough wilderness that it gave the feeling of being far away from the city. Ortega was a scenic highway that ran from Orange County to Palm Desert. I had been on various day trips to Ortega. Shelly and Keith begged off. They must have had other plans.

There was an area off the highway where you could watch hang gliders. They were something to see—nothing that I wanted to consider just yet. People took off from a hilly area, jumping into the wind attached to these bright colored parasails. They used the thermals and soared high over Lake Elsinore. It looked so peaceful, sailing up over the hills. The bright colors of so many gliders in the sky was a spectacular sight to see. We sat on the side of the highway and enjoyed watching for a while. Then the guys started getting antsy to get to the campground.

So it was. On to the campgrounds. We had two vans full of people and Dewey's Land Rover. We had a keg, and there was a lot of food. We were all set. My friend Lisa and her twin sister Lena were with me. It bummed me out that Shelly had plans and could not come. The guys included Ian, Wade, Billy, Fred, Dewey, Jimmy, and Mike.

We had reservations, thank goodness. The campground was packed with campers. We were getting in pretty late as we had to wait for Wade and Fred to get off work. They were both



surfboard shapers down off of Main Street. Summer was always a busy time for them.

The sun was setting, so we had better set up camp. I was glad to be here away from town. Tomorrow we would do some hiking and maybe take a dip in the stream that ran down the rocks behind the campground. Tonight was going to be sitting around, talking, and just enjoying the outdoors by a fire. It was not cold. There was an unspoken rule—no camping without having a fire. We had tents set up, and of course both vans had sleepers. Ian and I would be in his. Unless one of my friends hooked up with Wade, they would be in the tent.

For me, this scene was romantic. Ian had his arm around me, speaking quietly into my ear. “I am so into you. I hope this summer is just the beginning of something good between us.” I was a little leery. I had had a long relationship in high school that went down the tubes, not knowing why after three years that it was over. It was the typical high school sweetheart story. I had the same boyfriend from the summer before my sophomore year to my senior. He broke up with me five days before prom. I had to ask a guy friend of mine to go with me so I would not waste a totally cool prom dress. I purchased the tickets months before, and I did not want to look like a fool. Everyone knew I got dumped at school. My ex-boyfriend did not show up at prom, thank goodness. The whole ordeal made me feel forever ruined as far as relationships went. I never wanted to go through that pain or humiliation again.

So I did not say anything to Ian. I just smiled and looked into his eyes. I hoped he understood. I had feelings for him. I was just not sure where this would go. Everyone was laughing it up and having a fantastic time. After a little weed and some pleasant conversation, we were all ready to hit the sack. We all agreed to get an early start in the morning and hike up the trails. Ian took



my hand and led me to his van. There was a lot of hollering at us and goofy remarks were made as we took off into the dark. Ian laughed, “Our friends are morons.”

As I mentioned before, Ian was a true gentleman, and we just slept together in the true sense of the word. Nothing happened. We talked for a while and then slept. It was exceptionally polite and comforting to know he had some restraint. Most of the guys I had gone out with were not as considerate. He was a meticulous guy. There was a bucket of water by the side of the van to wash our feet. There was a towel hanging by the door to dry our feet before we got in the van. The van was small but organized. It had a place for everything and everything was in its place. That sounded a lot like a quirk of my dad.

I woke up to him whistling. *How do you wake up in such a happy mood?* I wondered. He had the bucket stowed away as well as the towel. There was a bouquet of fresh flowers in a vase on the mini refrigerator, some yellow daisies and a white flower that I was not sure of the name. How thoughtful. “Do I smell bacon?”

“Yes, do you eat eggs? Dewey scrambled up enough for an army,” Ian said. I thought that we girls were going to be doing all the cooking and cleaning. This was my kind of vacation. All I had to do was find a place to wash my face and sit down to eat. Everything was delicious. There was something in the eggs I could not put my finger on, some spice. I had never thought to put spices in my scrambled eggs. I loved trying new foods. I let Dewey know that he was quite the chef. He gave me a shy smile.

It was a good thing I never wore a lot of makeup, because the facilities were clearly lacking. The mirror in the restroom was old and worn. I could not see my reflection, not to mention the lighting was poor. It appeared there were no electrical outlets available to blow dry my hair. Oh, well. I would make do with putting my hair up in a ponytail and be glad I had my facial



scrub. Lisa and Lena were serious campers, so all of this was second nature to them. “No frills weekend,” they laughed.

Before the morning hike, I saw the guys walking up to the highway with skateboards. The rest of us followed to see what they were up to. There was a steep incline out in front of the campground and the guys were doing a little downhill racing. “Oh, man, this is scary,” I said to Lena.

They took their flip flops off their feet and put them on their hands to use as brakes as they tried to slow down around the curve. Watching them come racing by, squatting down on the skateboards, was scary. “Holy shit,” Wade said as Billy came flying down the highway. He went off the road into some trees. He got some serious air time. Then he disappeared over the side.

We all went running over there thinking the worst. He probably broke something, and we would have to pack up camp and head into the nearest hospital. As we got to the edge, where we knew he went off, we saw him down about five feet below, dusting himself off. He said, “Did you see that? That was rad, man.”

He seemed to have come out of that OK. We all checked him out to make sure. He got scratched up coming through the tree limbs and there was some blood on his knees and elbows. He just wiped them off with his shirt, and we all started talking about how crazy that looked and how it scared us. Billy was pumped up about it. He thought he was the raddest skateboarder alive. Lena and Lisa were giving him hugs and congratulating him on not killing himself. “Don’t encourage him,” I yelled over at them. Everyone kept laughing. I thought they were ignoring me.

We all agreed it was time to do something a little less dangerous. We would not want someone to break something. In this group of guys, that was a common occurrence for most of them. That would end this camping trip real quick. No one wanted to do that. It was an opportune time to go on the hike.



We were walking up the trails, and the view was beautiful. There were enormous redwoods. The path was rocky with steep cliffs on one side. We heard water coming down a stream from somewhere up ahead. There were waterfalls and spring water pools here and there as we passed.

We walked and climbed rocks most of the day. The others in the group broke off and found a place in the sun to bake for a while. Ian and I went further up the path. We saw a flat rock. It was just off the trail. We stopped to rest there in the hot sun. There was a pool of water behind it, just right to take a dip. The water was cold. It ran off from a waterfall further on up. It was snow melt off. Jumping right in was a bit of a jolt, but before long we were used to it, and it felt so refreshing. We laid out our towels and laid there in silence, staring at the sky. There was beautiful scenery spanning out in every direction. There were mountains and rocky terrain off to the east. We just lie there shoulder to shoulder, taking in the beautiful view.

We talked about going back to school in the fall. He would be going back to the University of California, Irvine and eventually interning at Irvine University Medical Center. I smiled over at him. I was going to California Long Beach State University. I had a scholarship for tennis. I had been playing since I was a kid. I had titles from playing for the Junior American Tennis Association and the high school varsity team. I did not plan on pursuing a tennis career, but it was paying for my education so I could not complain. Ian did not need a scholarship, and we both knew why. We did not talk about that for long.

I asked him, "What are your plans for this summer?"

He said, "I want to be hanging out together. Whatever I do, I hope you are with me. We always have something to do, someplace to go. I am counting on us going all these places together." He also told me this little story about how he saw me and Shelly



riding on the bike path in Sunset Beach. His grandparents were visiting from Chicago, and he told his grandmother, “I saw the girl I am going to marry today, Grandma!”

I was not sure if that was creepy or cool. I could hear my mother saying, “Isn’t that sweet, dear.” We started feeling burnt out and decided to head back to the campsite. We would see if we could find the others on the way back down. It did not take long. They were loud, obnoxious, and all seemed to be having fun. I saw Lena and Lisa in the middle.

This was the first time I had introduced my friends to Ian’s. It seemed to be going well so far. Lisa and Lena were splashing around, and all of the gang was jumping off a large boulder into a large pond (more run off from the waterfall). I sure hoped that hole was deep enough. I would have hated if someone got hurt. We joined in for some of the fun. The boulder was about twenty feet high. Fred said he dove down to see how deep the pond was and he assured us he could not reach the bottom.

We climbed the rock and got ready to jump. We stood there looking down at the water. “Don’t be an ass Clown. Jump already, Ian,” Wade yelled, laughing at us and making rude comments the whole time we were up there. Ian jumped and I jumped right after him. It was a nice rush. The jump from that height was exciting. Sometimes when you jump from too high, it was like hitting a cement foundation instead of water.

We all enjoyed swimming in the cold water. We stayed up there swimming for hours until we all started getting hungry again. The filling breakfast we had was wearing off. So down the path we went, not like a normal group of hikers. We were loud and boisterous. We had the guys tripping each other, or pulling on tree limbs so they would hit the next person on the trail in the face. Wade was scaring Lisa with a lizard. “Hey, Lisa, you go camping all the time. Why freak over a little lizard?”



Lisa, rolling her eyes, said, “I don’t mind seeing them on the rocks. I just do not like them crammed in my face!” Wade just laughed and put the little lizard back on a rock. I did not know for sure, but I thought there might be something going on between those two.

When we got back into camp, everyone started pitching in to make the next meal. Wade and Fred both said, “We got it. We’re making dinner tonight.” They were making mushroom burgers. They made these humongous hamburgers with mushrooms and Swiss cheese. It sounded good. All we would have to do is set out the chips and fixings. I would slice the onions and tomatoes. Lisa and Lena put out place settings on the park bench for us to eat at with plates, cups, and napkins.

I had not had to do much of anything so far to help out on this trip. It did not take long before the meat on the grill started sizzling. “I can smell the burgers cooking. I am starving. I think the guys must be. They seem to be drooling,” I said to Wade and Fred. They did not comment. They just continued creating their masterpiece dinner.

It was going to be a beautiful sunset. The sky was colorful, with purples, reds, and oranges. Maybe tonight would be the night with Ian. I looked at him and smiled to myself. He was so good looking. I might have mentioned that before. He noticed me looking at him and he smiled. I heard him whistling softly to himself.

Dewey was tapping the keg they brought. This should be a terrific party night. The guys were all telling tall tales of surfing accidents and radical waves they had ridden. They all had traveled a lot and had the opportunity to surf other continents. No one had surfed Australia yet, and Jimmy said, “I will be going there in the winter.”

I jokingly yelled, “Can I come?”



Jimmy laughed. “Sure. I wouldn’t mind.” He smiled and then pointed at Ian. “Wow, man, look at Ian. He looks pissed. I don’t think he likes the idea of us going anywhere.” We all looked at Ian. He had a scowl on his face. I kissed him as everyone else made jokes about Ian and I. As always, their banter included lewd comments and sordid innuendos.

“They know nothing about us,” I whispered to Ian. He shook his head and said nothing.

I ate my fill. Everything was delicious. We cleared all the dinner clutter, and then got comfortable with Solo cups of beer. The mushrooms on my burger were a little dry. I didn’t want to say anything, but the texture was similar to straw. They were nothing like what I had ever had before. Lena was over with Dewey, Billy, Wade, Ian, Fred, and Jimmy, smoking a joint. Lisa and I were not into it, so we continued to sip our beers, talking casually about the guys and their qualities (or lack thereof).

There was music playing in the background. It was Steely Dan, one of my favorites. “Ricky, don’t lose that number. You don’t want to call nobody else...” Lisa and I sang along.

I looked over at Lisa. “Isn’t it extremely bright out for this time of night?”

She agreed and said she was feeling a little nauseated. She also said, “I don’t know about you, but when I look at the leaves on the tree, they seem to change colors.” I looked up and then back at Lisa. I had to agree with her.

I didn’t know why, but that struck me as uproariously funny. I laughed so hard my cheeks hurt and my eyes were watering. It seemed like everyone was laughing about anything and everything. Lisa pointed up at the trees and mentioned the different colors. I saw them too. Lisa and I were both seeing trails of color with every movement of our arms. We both pointed at the trees a few times just to make sure we were seeing what we



thought we were seeing. We both agreed that it was very strange.

The night seemed to go by pretty quickly. It must have been because we were all enjoying ourselves, drinking beer, and laughing. Everything made me laugh for some reason. I felt so dog-gone funny.

The Marines camping in the park alongside us told us they were up from Camp Pendleton. I did not remember when it happened, but sometime during the night they became part of our group. They were drinking beer and telling jokes and laughing right along with us. They told some tales from their world travels. The guys all got into the fighting stories. It seemed they all had been in a scrap or two in their lifetimes.

Ian kept coming by with a concerned look on his face, asking me if I was OK. I said, "Sure, ass clown. Why do you keep asking me that?" I laughed right in his face. He walked away, and I kept laughing for some reason. I did not know why I called him that. It sure as hell was funny at the time. Everyone in our camp was laughing and rolling on the ground. We had put down a lot of beer because that keg was almost empty. We were all having a marvelous time. I knew the Marines were too.

Then, all of a sudden, out of the dark forest this burly biker dude jumped in the middle of our camp and shouted, "SHUT THE FUCK UP! SOME OF US WOULD LIKE TO GET SOME SLEEP! IT IS FOUR IN THE MORNING AND WE GOTTA RIDE OUT EARLY!" We all got real quiet and sat there staring at him. No one said a word. He finally stomped off, and we could not help ourselves. We all started laughing again. "Bwaaaaaa ha-ha ha-ha." I mean, laughing hard. The truth finally came out: the fellas took it upon themselves to sneak magic (hallucinogenic) mushrooms on the hamburgers. We were all high and hallucinating.

Well, that explained a lot of things. Lisa was getting a little



paranoid at some points and was listening to the radio. America singing about “alligator lizards in the air” was not helping. Lena, Lisa, and I walked to the restroom. I gave the flashlight to Lisa. She hung on to it the rest of the night. She walked everyone to the restroom so she would not have to hand it over. Lena was OK with the whole thing. I thought she had done this before. She was enjoying herself. I saw her on the other side of camp, talking non-stop to the guys and smoking dope all night.

Ian also seemed a little paranoid a few times during the night. When it was over, the sensation was odd, like stepping off a fast train. It was just over. Ian promised there would be no side effects, as it was all natural. Leave it to Ian to have knowledge about the effects of the mushrooms running through the body. Once it left the system, there were no lasting effects. It completely left the system.

“Whereas with acid, flashbacks and adverse effects last long after the high wears off,” he told me. I wanted to try new things this summer, and I got what I asked for. This was not necessarily what I had in mind, but I had to admit it was a new experience. It was one I would never forget.

We all eventually dropped off to sleep a little after 4:30. We woke up around eleven in the morning. I was not feeling well at all. We packed up and headed back to Huntington Beach. Lisa and Lena said they had a blast and hoped to do it again sometime.

We pulled into a McDonald’s for breakfast. They stopped serving breakfast an hour before. All I wanted was a sausage biscuit and coffee. Ian wanted pancakes. That was not going to happen. It looked like it was a cheeseburger for everyone.

I said to him, “Although I had a good time, I don’t think doing mushrooms is something I will want to do again.”

He agreed. “I don’t think I will either. Dee Dee, are you mad? You do realize that I was a victim in this the same as you.”



“No. I am not mad,” I said. “That was a crazy thing to do to us. They had no idea how we were going to react to something like that. I like to pick and choose my own drugs, if you know what I mean.” That was not terribly funny (when had I started including drugs in my everyday life?), but we laughed about it, and ate the food while driving back up the freeway.

I had to throw in for good measure, “You guys know my brother Mike is a cop, don’t you?”

Ian looked over nervously. “Why do you say that? Are you thinking about telling him?” he asked.

“He would have spazzed out on me. I would never tell him anything I do, or have done. I just was wondering. What if I freaked out?”

“But you didn’t,” he reminded me.

“Oh, just forget it. You are right. Nothing happened, and it is something I will chalk off as an experience. I did it and survived.” I laughed.

He dropped me off at my house. I told him to call me later. He looked at me funny. He looked as if I might not ever talk to him again.

My parents’ cruise had finally arrived and my parents were packing for their trip. They had their suitcases neatly by the door. They were so organized. My mom said from the doorway of her bedroom to me in the hall, “You will have to get up at five in the morning to take us out to Los Angeles Airport. We fly to Miami and get on a ship for the cruise the next day.”

“I do not know why you just cannot leave the car in the long term parking,” I said.

“You know how your father is,” she replied.

My dad drove a Cadillac, and he did not want anything to happen to it. It was his baby. “Yes, I know how Dad is,” I said as I went by her to my room. I threw my bags in the corner and



went to see what kind of food they had.

I would have the house all to myself so the drive would be worth it. Ah, peace and quiet—not that my parents annoyed me anyway. They pretty much let me do my own thing. They only asked that I tell them in advance if I would be joining them for dinner, or if I was staying at a friend's house overnight, so they did not worry when I did not come home. What it came down to was a co-existence where we were all coming and going. We all got along well. It was all so civilized.

There would be no Sunday dinner at the Walker house tonight. I saw they got Lee Chee's Cantonese carry out. Well, alright now. I thought I would help myself to some of that and go in my room and watch TV. I would be going to sleep early tonight. Five in the morning would be coming around quick.

I did not get out to L.A. much. There was just nothing about Los Angeles that interested me. The traffic was light this time of the morning. We were just ahead of the morning rush hour. I left them at the curbside, waving goodbye as I pulled out of the no parking zone. I knew they were going to have a fantastic trip. It was much needed for both of them. They both worked hard, and were so dedicated to their careers. I thought they needed this trip. They only took a long vacation once a year.

I just wanted to go home and sleep some more. I started down the 405 freeway and headed towards home. The sun was coming up. The sky was beautiful. It was going to be another bright, sunny day in Southern California.

People drove crazy on this stretch of the freeway. I accelerated from zero to seventy-five just to get on the freeway and merge into traffic. If I wanted to change lanes, I had to indicate left, and then change lanes to the right when I saw an open spot. No one would allow me to get over. It was cut-throat driving. Like I said before, these people drove crazy. Hey, it was California. That in



itself explained it.

I made it home incident free. I did not want to do anything today but relax and hang out around the house. Maybe I would call Shelly later to see if she wanted to hang out with me. I had not had a chance to talk to her about my weekend camping experience. I would like to hear what she did with Keith this weekend. I would call her.

“I cannot believe you did mushrooms without me!” she said. “What was it like? Did you have fun? Did it scare any of you? Did you and Ian do it?”

“Sorry,” I replied, “I didn’t know it was on the menu. The guys surprised us all with it. We had fun. I wish you could have been there. I am sure, no, we did not do it!” I went into detail about everything. I told her about the hike, and how there were mushrooms on the burgers and we ate them for dinner. I also told her about the antics of the Marines that joined the party in every way, minus the mushrooms. I was sure Marines did not do mushrooms.

I went on to tell her how Lisa attached herself to the flashlight. We got a laugh out of that. I told her about how over the top Ian was about me. I was not sure how I felt about him and me and us yet. “Do you think it’s all an act to get me in the sack?” I asked.

“What are you, stupid? He already had you in the sack and didn’t take advantage of you,” she said. “If it were me, I would latch on to that guy. I think he is perfect for you.” Then she warned me, “You better watch out. That Tina girl is just waiting to get her hands on him.” That made me laugh.

“Shelly, you could be right,” I told her. “So what about you and Keith?”

She went into her weekend with Keith. They went out to eat at the Warehouse in Newport Beach, and “the food was just m-a-r-v-e-l-o-u-s,” she said in a crazy dramatic voice. I could tell she



enjoyed herself. “We went to a small gathering at the beach. I met his family,” she told me. She was not with him on Saturday night, as she had something to do with her mom. No, they did not do it either. She was going out with him again on Friday night. He had a friend that had a beach house in Dana Point.

She told me Ian and Keith grew up together. They lived down the street from each other. He knew someone in Dana Point. Keith and Shelly planned on going to hang out there. Ian hung out with someone who had a house on the cliffs off Dana Point. There would be a party. We would see if Ian and I heard about it by Friday.

The rest of the week was quiet. I surfed in the morning, and Shelly and I hung at my house at night. Like roommates, we were eating pizza and watching TV. Ian came by one night and hung out for a while. Shelly certainly liked him and reminded me how he was the one for me, often. He brought over some Italian sub sandwiches. How sweet of him. We all enjoyed them. The sandwiches were tasty.

We all sat around and talked for a few hours. I was not sure how, but Shelly and Ian knew each other. They talked a lot and had much in common. I liked him, I did. He was smart, funny, and he liked me. I dug hanging out with him. It made things better that my best friend liked him too. There would be no problems when we all hung out this summer.

He did come on a little strong. He said he knew what he wanted in life and went after it. Shelly thought that he was in love. “Come on, Shelly. It is a little early for that,” I claimed after he left. Besides, I was not ready for that just yet. Slow it down there, big boy. Let’s just see how things go. I did love the good night kisses! I would be riding on those until we saw each other again. I closed the door. Shelly gave me that look, mimicking reeling in a fishing pole. She told me I am hooked on



Ian. I wondered.

By the end of the week, I found that my hunch was right. We were all going to Dana Point to party. Some would stay the night. We also made that trip to Newport again. I was beginning to wonder about the speaker boxes. We picked up four again and dropped them off at Dewey's. He said he would be coming to Mick's party later. Now I knew this time I smelled the distinct smell of skunk weed. I thought I smelled something a few times before. Today it was surprisingly strong. There was no doubt in my mind.

If they were doing what I thought they were doing, there was a lot of weed being brought from Newport to Huntington Beach each week. I couldn't help but wonder where it is coming from. Mexico? South America perhaps? I was not sure, but I guessed those boxes contained several pounds of marijuana each, and we had never picked up less than three boxes. Something else I had to wonder about: these guys come from wealthy families.

They could not smoke that much, so they must be selling it. Why? They certainly did not need the money. I had to admit getting away with cruising up and down the Pacific Coast Highway with this much pot was exciting. I was going to have to confront Ian. I would like to know what exactly was going on. Also, the possibility of going to jail was in the back of my mind. If they wanted me to ride with them, they should level with me. I would get in just as much trouble if we ever got caught. I hated to think of that part of it, so I changed my train of thought.

The waves were blown out and choppy today. It was not worth going out so, I cruised back home. The beach was just getting crowded. I would go home before the masses loaded up the beach. I stopped at Taco Bell on the way home for a combo burrito and ate it in the car on the way home. I know, what a beast. Sometimes I just could not wait.



What could I say? I probably should have put some time in at the tennis courts. I would practice tomorrow. I had to call and reserve a court when I get home.

Friday night rolled around. Ian was there, picking me up at eight. We cruised out to Dana Point. This place was “the kind!” The house was four bedrooms, built right into the rocks. There was a wooden deck that spanned the back of the house and was hanging out over the ocean. What amazing architecture. It was truly spectacular. The view from up there was also spectacular! Beach as far as the eye could see in either direction.

It was up on the cliff so privacy was not an issue. The beach house belonged to Mick’s parents. As long as they had no plans to use it, he got full access. I would have loved to have a place like this to throw parties. The noise would not bother anyone because the houses were facing the water and not real close to one another. There were also vacant lots on both sides of this property. It was secluded, so there was no problem with us disturbing any neighbors.

It seemed like everyone I knew came tonight, from the Local Boys to the harbor socialites. There was an excellent selection of liquor in the bar. The keg was set up in the kitchen, and food was on the formal dining room table. I was going to stay away from the alcohol tonight. I still felt queasy thinking of tequila. We made our way through the crowd, saying hi to each person we passed. It was taking longer to get to the kitchen than I expected. There was a sizeable crowd. Keith was not going to dig it, and I thought he and Shelly would not stay long.

There were lots of people out on the back deck. All I could say was, “I hope that deck holds.” Ian laughed at me as he filled each of our cups with beer from the tap. “Did I mention I am afraid of heights?” I said nervously as we walked out onto the deck.

He put his arm around me, kissed my neck, and whispered,



“I will protect you.” I had to admit that kiss on the neck took my mind off of the fact that we were 100 feet above the rocky shore below. He rubbed my back, trying to help me relax.

I wanted to talk about the transporting weed. I did not feel like talking in this big group of friends. We could always talk about it later. I did not know if the topic would make him mad either. I wondered if he would think I was nosy, and that it was none of my business what they did. I did not say anything, and we partied into the night with our friends.

I saw Dewey come in, but he headed for the back where the bedrooms were. He nodded to Ian but didn’t come over to hang out. I was sure we would run into him later. Shelly and Keith were not here either, but it was still early. We were standing out on the deck with some other couples, talking about this and that. I could not help but wish I had been here earlier to watch the sun go down. What a gorgeous sky up here at night.

There were people doing shots—Alabama slammers, Crown Royal, and of course my nemesis, Jose Quervo tequila. The crowd was also getting loud, as usual. It was hard to hear over the music, and the other people were trying to talk above the music, making it even louder. Dewey was out mingling with some friends. The weather was mild, not too hot, and even with all the people it felt quite comfortable to me, but he appeared to be sweating. Ian told me Dewey would like us to join him in the back bedroom. OK, but I found that to be a strange request. I hoped Ian was not into any kinky stuff. I would need to go home right now if that was the case. He took my hand. I walked slowly behind him down the hall. I wondered what exactly it was we were planning to do back here. He smiled back at me. “Come on Luv,” he whispered.

When we walked into the master bedroom, I saw that there was a framed picture with a glass cover on the bed. It used to



be hanging on the wall. That in itself was unusual. What got my attention was the large white pile of powder in the middle. They both looked to see my reaction. I showed no emotion at all. I did not want to look naive. I was not sure how to act.

Dewey asked if I would like a line.

“What is it?” I asked.

“It is Peruvian flake, the finest flake out there. Have you ever tried cocaine?” he asked.

I quickly responded, “No.” Ian and Dewey both snorted up a line.

“Why not try just a little? If you don’t like it, don’t do anymore,” Dewey said.

“I do not know,” I said.

“No pressure, but you might like it,” Dewey said. “It just makes you feel euphoric. Nothing like the mushrooms we had.”

Ian said, “Most of the people here are already doing it. Dewey brought some for many of your friends. I think you will like it.”

No one seemed to be acting crazy like when we were camping, and it was not hallucinogenic, so what the heck? Might as well try it. “Just a little,” I said. They were OK with that and put it out for me. After they give me instructions on how to get it up my nose, it was my turn. It burned going up. Then my nose went numb. *Not too bad*, I thought to myself.

We all walked back out to the living room and joined the party. I honestly did not think I felt any different. However, I could not stop talking and downing beers. So was everyone else. I did not look or feel out of place. Everyone in the house was on cocaine. After several hours of loud music, more lines of cocaine, and a lot of beer, people started to go home.

We planned to stay the night. We did not want to drive all that way back to Huntington after drinking all night. It looked



like we were not the only ones. We took a room in the back with twin beds. As we were going in, Mick said, "I am running out of places for people to sleep. You two will have to bunk with Davey and Kim."

So the four of us were in this kid's room with twin beds, two to a bed. We knew them but had never been close friends. Oh, well. We just went with the flow. They didn't want a night in jail either. We were feeling a little strange at first, looking at each other. Davey made the first step and picked a bed. He patted it and motioned for Kim. We took the other one.

We settled in, and it was undeniably cozy. I fell asleep quickly. From what Ian said, I was lucky I did. Ian said he had a hard time falling asleep being that close to me all night. After a few hours, Davey and Kim started getting down. He had to listen to them bump and grind all night. Gross. What a bummer, dude, but better you than me. I got a bad visual thinking about it.

I woke up at around eight in the morning. I didn't sleep long when I was not in my own bed. I did not feel too shabby. No real hangover. That surprised me. I was a little sluggish but nothing some coffee would not cure. Ian was asleep now. I tiptoed out to the kitchen. No one was up. I looked around and found the coffee. I saw some cinnamon bagels too, so I toasted up one and added some butter. I took that and my coffee out on the patio deck. Dewey was out there. "She survives," he said.

"Yes, I am feeling exceptional. There is some coffee in there," I told him.

"No. No thanks. I don't care for coffee," Dewey said. "I'm going to take off. Tell Ian to call me." I told him I would, and he left. He sure led an unusual life. He always had someplace to go. Dewey was so cute. I watched him pick up his things and walk out the door. There was something to be said for rich, good



looking guys.

I sat and enjoyed the view. It was still. The only sound was waves crashing on the rocks in distance, and I thought that was soothing. Early mornings were peaceful. I could get used to this. I would love to go for a walk on the beach. It was a long way down around the neighborhood and out to the beach access. So I would have to do it some other time. I started hearing people waking up and leaving. Davey and Kim snuck out without saying a word. I was not aware at the time what they did. Ian did not tell me until the drive home. I wondered if they thought we might have heard them last night? Duh.

Ian came out a few minutes later. He said he acted like he was asleep while they got dressed and left. He didn't want to make Kim uncomfortable. Well, it was too late to worry about making someone uncomfortable. Anyway, he was ready to head out. He had some things he needed to do today.

I wished I would have brought extra clothes. We were both feeling a little dirty. I told him he needed to call Dewey on the way home. "Yeah, no problem. Thanks," he said. "So what did you think?" he asked.

"About what?" I asked.

"The coke. Did you like it?" he said. "You looked as if you did."

"It was alright," I admitted. "I had a fun time."

I tried to figure out a way to broach the subject of trafficking marijuana up and down the coast. I hated to start the day off with questions and the third degree. I needed to find out what was up with the speaker boxes. So I casually asked him if he sold weed.

"I knew something was up. I can read you pretty well. You got so quiet back there, I thought maybe you were upset about doing the coke," he said.

"Oh, no, that is not it at all." I looked over at him.

Then he told me, "I sometimes get weed now and then for



close friends. It is Dewey's gig for the most part. Same with the coke. I get that for friends too. I like to partake in a few lines occasionally, but Dewey supplies it. I would never go to anyone but Dewey. He gets it from a friend and sells it to only his friends. You would be surprised who buys it from him."

He reached across and put his hand on my knee the rest of the way home. I scooted a little closer to him.

I said, "I am not surprised, after last night. Everyone seemed to be into it. Why does he sell drugs? He certainly does not need the money."

Ian told me he did it because he liked it. "He has something everybody wants. He makes some money that his dad can't hold over his head. The way Dewey looks at it, there is a lot of demand, and he is the supplier. It is his own business. That is why he is going to Newport so much. Besides, he just digs it."

"I'll say it is a big business. He is going through pounds of the stuff," I said.

He looked over at me with this mysterious smile and said, "You do not know the half of it."

"What about the cocaine?" I asked. "It looks like there is a lot of demand for that as well."

He told me casually, "Not as much of a demand for coke as the weed. It is expensive, but he still is turning a lot of it every week. It is catching on and will be at the same level of sales soon." He assured me Dewey had it handled. I could not help but wonder if anyone could have that sort of thing handled.

"It all sounds scary to me. He could go to jail for a long time with the amount he is carrying."

Ian just shrugged his shoulders. "To each his own. He digs being the go-to person. I am sure he has thought about the consequences."

I gave him a stern look and said, "You both better be careful."



You are not taking this seriously.”

Ian laughed. “He knows what he is doing. He has to be smart about it. He has to be extra careful whom he talks to about it, and he never talks about it to strangers,” he warned.

Ian went on to tell me about Dewey’s family social circles. “Dewey’s family knows a lot of celebs, doctors, lawyers... the list is unbelievable. He has people coming to him from all walks of life. It keeps him pretty busy. Not to mention the money he is making.”

“What about his parents?” I asked.

“They don’t know anything. He plans to keep it that way.” He then looked over at me. “Speaking of money, some of us are going to the horse races in Los Alamitos one night next week. They race quarter horses. Would you like to come with us?” he asked.

“Yes. I have never been. It sounds fun. Call me and let me know when.” The rest of the ride was just chit chat about nothing. I had a lot to ingest as it was. We pulled up to the house. I gave him a quick hug and jumped out. “Talk to you later,” I said, running to the front door.

I needed to call Shelly after a taking shower and getting into some fresh clothes. I wondered where she and Keith were last night. I was sure they would be there, at least to make an appearance. They pulled a no-show. Once I was comfortable on the couch, I dialed her number. She told me Keith found out there was going to be a crowd, and backed out. He did not like crowds. I thought he wanted alone time with her. They hung out at his house. His mom went to Carmel for a few days.

Carmel was a quaint little cultural beach town. The story about it was that it was a colony established by authors and artists back in the early 1900s. It was in northern California, a beautiful town by the sea, with beautiful beaches, art galleries, and small town shops as well as theaters for performing arts. I



would not mind visiting. I could use some culture now and then.

Shelly said she and Keith had a terrific time together. She liked him more than any guy she had ever known. She went on to tell me they had sex. I did not ask, or want to know, but since she told me, I made her go into detail about where and when. Women were like that—we told each other everything. If she wanted me to know about her night, I might as well know all the details. She had to go because he would be picking her up to go back to his house for the rest of the weekend. And she told her mom she was staying at my house, just in case it ever came up. I knew she should not be telling stories to her mom at this point in our lives. This was an issue one just does not go into with one's mother.

Keith and Shelly seemed to be hitting it off quite well. She was missing a lot of stuff. I did not tell her all the things that happened last night—that Ian and Dewey appeared to be major weed dealers. Maybe I shouldn't tell her. But what if she found out and I did not tell her? Would she be mad? We kept no secrets from each other. I was going to have to find time to tell her everything that had been going on.

I had no plans with Ian tonight. Last night was enough for one weekend, and we would be going to the races one night this week. I thought I would just veg out in front of the TV. I was sure there was something in the kitchen to whip up for dinner. As I opened the refrigerator door, the doorbell rang. I was not expecting anyone. I opened the door and there was Lena. She was fighting with her mom and wanted to stay the night. "Do you mind? I can't stand another scene with my mother."

I said, "Sure, you are always welcome here."

Her family lived on the other side of the block from me. We walked back and forth between homes all the time. Lena and Lisa had been spending the night since we were kids, so sure, why not. "I was going to sit around here all by myself anyway," I said.



Having someone with me sounded much better. I shared my experiences last night and the fact that I did cocaine. She did not act shocked. That surprised me. She said that she had been wanting to try it and asked if she could come next time. I did not see there being a next time, but if there was, for sure Lena would be there.

She looked at me with eyes of wisdom. “There will be a next time. I guarantee it.”

“Right,” I said, wondering myself if there would be.

Lena was a fresh-faced girl with dark curly hair, taller than me. She had brown eyes, with long dark lashes, and a sprinkle of freckles across her nose. She did not like the freckles. I thought they were the cutest thing about her. They gave her a look of innocence. We both knew she was far from it. She was a year younger than I was but had knowledge of things beyond her years—like the pot smoking. She was smoking before I even knew what it was. She always knew the scoop on someone before any of the rest of us. She knew who was doing who. Not to mention, she could consume some alcohol.

I told her I was just about to get something to eat. I led the way into the kitchen. I was sure we could find something to eat. That was another thing about Lena. She had some strange eating habits. Who would have chocolate pudding, a slice of ham, and some chopped onions in a flour tortilla and call it dinner? Whatever floats your boat. I heated up a hot dog with mustard and put some potato chips on a plate. We sat at the breakfast bar.

Now what should we do? “That movie *The Omen* is at the Westminster Theater,” she told me, so we decided to go to see it. Man, was that ever scary. I came out of the theater with the hair standing up on my arms. “That movie gave me the willies,” she said, shaking.

“I don’t want to think about it anymore. I hate anything that



has to do with the devil.”

It was dark in the parking lot as we walked to the car. That movie gave me the creeps. We walked shoulder to shoulder, keeping an eye out for anything scary.

I said, “Let’s do something fun to get our mind off that movie.” She suggested Baskin Robbins for ice cream. The problem with that was that there were little boys in there, and the little boy in the movie killed everybody.

So we skipped going into Baskin Robbins. We headed to Ralph’s grocery and got some chocolate mint ice cream to bring back to the house. We could not get back home fast enough. We were finally safe at last, back in my driveway. We went through the house locking doors and windows.

This was not something we gave much thought to in this neighborhood. We always had all the windows open in the summer so we could enjoy the evening breezes off the coast.

We had never had a crime problem in this part of town. That movie scared us, and we were not taking any chances. She asked me, “Can we sleep with the light on?” in a baby voice. I flipped the hall light switch on and left the door cracked a little. I hurried back to bed.

“I hope I don’t have nightmares,” I said as I crawled into bed.

I thought that Lena would be staying on with me. She had not patched things up with her mom yet. I told her she could come and go as she pleased. My folks were in the Caribbean, but no parties or people in my parents’ house. I had plans and would not be home Wednesday. So for a couple of days we were just seeing each other in passing. She worked not far from the house. I had to squeeze in some tennis time each week. I would lose my swing if I did not practice. I set up time to work with the tennis pro at the country club. I would play for the team at Long Beach State. It was necessary to keep my edge and play well if I wanted



to keep my scholarship.

Wednesday rolled around and I was so happy to see Ian. We had been talking on the phone, but I had not seen him out. I had to admit I looked forward to spending time with him. He and Dewey have been hanging out, he told me. They had both been busy. It must have been the weed business. It seemed to be growing, and they had to go to Newport twice this week—sometimes even three times on other occasions. I thought to myself, *Business is booming in the illegal drug trade.*

We all piled into Ian's van. Los Alamitos was not that far. I knew because we used to go swimming at the naval base right across from the race track when I was a kid. I remembered the signs on the way.

When we got there, Dewey got a program. He told us what he knew about the horses and jockeys, but he never told what horse he was betting on. So we all placed bets at the window downstairs. I lost my first bet, and so did everyone else. We went down to the concession stand. They had these delicious corned beef sandwiches, and more.

Dewey was explaining to me how to bet. It was a little “horse racing for dummies” information that went like this: if you bet to “win,” your horse should come in first. Bet to “place” and your horse should come in first or second, and bet to “show” and your horse should come in first, second, or third. I never knew any of this stuff, so I tried a different strategy on the next race.

Exacta, quinella, are some specialty bets, the trifecta and superfecta. I just wanted to bet to show and see what would happen. We all went to the window and placed our bets and then went back to our seats. Ian and Dewey acted like they had a secret only they knew, laughing to themselves about the exacta. The rest of us did not get the joke. Ian told us, “You would have had to have been there.”



Ian told me later that he and Dewey were making winning tickets with a small razor blade and some glue. This was years ago, and they did not do it anymore, but they had beaten the system for about a year with fake tickets. These were some ballsy guys. They were not afraid of anything.

This was all exciting stuff. I found myself jumping and hollering. Dewey did not. He stood when the race was over. He just smiled. I was hopping all over the place, hollering, “I won, I won.” Dewey and I walked downstairs to the payout line. He won again. This was pretty fun.

We had a terrific time placing bets that night. The whole atmosphere of watching the horses run was so exciting. I was only betting two dollars at a time, so I did not gain much, but winning was fun no matter how much money I spent or won. Pretty soon, everyone was ready to go. From what Ian said, he and Dewey both won a few thousand dollars each. It figured—they did not need it, so of course they won it. “To win big, you have to bet big,” they both told me in unison.

“I don’t care about all that,” I smiled. “It was just fun for me.” I loved picking my winners and going up to place the bets. My winnings for the night were sixty dollars. “Thanks for bringing me. I had a great time.”

We dropped everyone off one by one. They all lived close to each other. Dewey and Ian wanted to go back to Dewey’s and asked me to go with them. I could hang out for a while. We did a quick stop at the liquor store to get some Club Harvey Wall Bangers. This was a premixed alcoholic beverage. They had many flavors, including Mai Tai, which was my favorite.

Dewey’s family’s home was large. The entrance hall was as big as our living room. There were marble floors throughout the house and each room had expensive Persian rugs over the floors. I peeked into a beautiful library to the left. There was a split



staircase that went up to the second level. We walked in, turning on lights. There was a large chandelier hanging down in the foyer over a large table. The table looked like something out of an old castle. It had a large vase with fresh, long stem flowers in it. *I wonder whose job it is to keep the flowers fresh in that vase.*

No one was home, so we went into the family room and turned on the TV. There was glass all across the back overlooking a huge pool. Dewey went up stairs and got some things and came back down. He came back with what he called “Thai sticks.”

They looked like marijuana tied to a little stick about five inches long. He pulled one out, took the green off it, and crumbled it up to put in a rolling paper. He told me, “It is strong, and you might want to go easy.”

“Not a problem. I will not be smoking any.” I thought he was offended, but he did not say anything. He and Ian had no problem finishing it without me.

We sat around talking about the horse races. “We should try Santa Anita. You would like it, Dee Dee. I can show you a few more tips on betting,” Dewey said.

“I would like that. I love the horses,” I said.

He smiled at me. “We will go. Want to do a bump?” Dewey asked.

I did not think I should do any, but they were both into it.

I said, “Why not.” He went to his bedroom and came back out with this gigantic white boulder. He told me he did not want people to know how much he had at the house, but he felt comfortable with me. Ian said I was OK anyway, so he trusted me. I did not know a whole lot about it, but I bet that giant rock weighed a quarter pound. Maybe that was an exaggeration, but it was enormous by any standard. I knew that was a serious felony for all of us. We could be locked up for a long time.

In the back of my mind, I was wondering why they were not



afraid. I was always thinking about felonies when I was around them. Not good. I joined in the conversation and forgot about the ramifications for now.

We did some lines and drank the Harvey Wall Bangers and talked and talked and talked and talked. Next thing I knew, we had done many lines. It was after four in the morning. I felt like running a marathon. They both said that was why I should have smoked the weed. It would take the edge off.

“Yeah, right. I will take a shot of Crown.” Then I told Ian, “I should be getting home.”

I could not believe how quickly the time passed. I did not feel wasted from the alcohol. I was usually a lightweight when it came to anything but beer. Ian and I laughed and talked all the way home. He walked me in, and there was no sign of Lena. I asked him to stay. I showed him the way to my room. He did not speak. He just smiled and followed me up the stairs.

Thank goodness my room was clean. I just did laundry yesterday. I left a message on the table for Lena. She could sleep in the guest room. Tonight I wanted to be with Ian alone and without interruption. I had waited long enough. By the look on Ian’s face, he has waited too long.

He was a very attentive lover. I did not feel nervous with him. He was sweet and took his time with every move. We had known each other for so long that I was unusually comfortable with him. We came together so naturally. It felt as if we had been together forever as a couple. That would be the advantage of being friends for a while before becoming lovers. I was once again majorly surprised by him. I guessed I had been dating Neanderthal jerks. Ian was just so different from anyone I had been with in the past.

When I woke up there was a note on my pillow. He was gone. He had to go home. He would be calling me later. I laid



there and thought of him for a while. I felt safe with him. I was undeniably happy, that was for sure.

My time together with Ian had become routine, almost. Ian came to get me almost every day, so we could hang out. He planned these lovely little picnics in different parks around town. We went to the movies or just walked on the pier holding hands, or he had his arm around me. He told me these fascinating stories. His family belonged to the yacht club and spent a lot of time out on their seventy foot yacht. He told me I should go on one of their weekend trips. I thought I would be nervous around his dad. He was a well know doctor and head of surgeons at the local hospital. Everyone knew him.

We talked about everything. He told me about his past relationships and why they did not work. I told him about mine. I tried to explain how hard it was for me to commit because of being burned once and how it made me skeptical about relationships. I was just not sure what I needed right now. He was being patient. He seemed to understand me.

We put his van to good use in the evenings. We parked down at the beach, watched the sun set, and then had sex in the back. It did not sound romantic, but it truly was. His van was set up with a refrigerator, a sink, and a fold out bed. It had all the comforts of home. It had Hawaiian curtains, a comforter, and pillows. It was very cozy with just the two of us.

We had become inseparable lately. When we were not together, he always left little notes or poems and flowers on my windshield. We talked on the phone for hours at night when we did see each other during the day. We told each other everything we did all day. It seemed silly, but as far as relationships went, this was working for us.

We still saw everyone. We hung out with Dewey some evenings and made the trip with him down to Newport before



heading to the secret spot at the beach. We continued to party. We met up with my friends at the beach. This was nice because Ian did not surf, but he did not mind coming down and hanging out. Everyone knew and liked him. Most of them grew up with Ian. I was sure many of them got their weed from him.

With Ian, it was turning out to be a fantastic summer. I was enjoying every minute of it. There was a group of us going today to the Wedge for bodysurfing. The waves were dangerous. Everyone who surfed liked to bodysurf there. A few risk seekers surfed these giant waves on their boards. Some days they got up to twenty feet. The bad thing was the beach was unusually steep, and the waves broke right where the beach met the ocean. There were only few places along the coast that were like this, and I mentioned before how hard this was on the skin. I was a little nervous when we got there. I couldn't chicken out. So we all ran out and dove under the big waves.

There was a line of people bobbing around out there in the huge swells. I dove under several more swells before they broke while some of the guys had already ridden some in came back.

When I was ready, I started swimming hard. I caught the wave at the right time, and it pushed me toward shore. That was fun, so I headed back out. You couldn't hold a conversation out there because you were either swimming for a wave or diving under it. It was definitely exhausting. We were tossed around out there all day. It was a blast. I was the only girl who went. The guys gave me credit for doing it. I thought they were just being nice. It was not as rough as I thought it would be. No one drowned, in any case.

"I think you are amazing," Ian said to me. "The guys get along with you so well. I think it's because you aren't afraid to try anything."

I looked at him. "It's not a big deal." But he thought it was. For



some reason, what he thought about me was extremely important right now. Normally, I did not care what people thought.

On many occasions, I was the only girl hanging out with this group of guys. They forgot that I was with them and they started going into detail about guy things, like sand down their shorts or jock itch, and I had to remind them that I was not one of the guys. They were constantly talking about the anatomy of a girl walking by. “Gross, guys. I am here with you, remember!” Ian reminded them all the time too.

“Oh, sorry, Dee Dee,” they always said. But they were so comfortable around me that they forgot over and over again. We all laughed. I knew I would have to hit them or elbow them again before the day was over. It was becoming commonplace. I loved these guys anyway. What can I say?

We were all starved and decided to head into Naugles Drive-Thru, a place that specialized in killer burritos. The burritos were the size of footballs and were delicious. We sat around talking about the righteous rides at the Wedge and eating the burritos. We had a blast today, but Ian and I were ready to ditch the guys. We had the same thing on our minds as we said our goodbyes. We couldn’t wait to go back to my house—my bed, to be exact.

We never seemed to tire of being alone with each other. We were in tune to each other’s wants and needs. We got home and spent the rest of the afternoon entwined together on my bed. He completely satisfied me, and by the look on his face I had clearly made him quite happy.



CHAPTER 3

an and I had been hanging out with a lot of different people this summer. We went to high school with Jaycee. She was one of the coolest chicks I knew. She also grew up in Huntington Harbor. Her first car was a convertible Porsche. It was sharp looking, candy apple red. She had since traded it for a classic 1960 convertible Mercedes Benz. She said, “It matches my personality better.” She was a down to earth kind of girl, large boned, and kind of reminded me of a Viking woman. She was very natural, never wearing makeup. She had green eyes and sandy brown hair that was thick and curly, and it reached down to her waist. But come on, Jaycee, a Mercedes is a Mercedes. I didn’t know what it had to do with her personality. I guessed when you had that kind of money the car could match anything you wanted it to.

Her parents gave her an apartment building as a present. She lived in the front. It was something to see. Her part of it was four stories high. The ground floor was a two car garage with internal stairs that led to the second floor, where the living room had a white marble fireplace. The master bedroom and second bedroom were on the third floor. There was a matching white



marble fireplace in the master suite, and on the fourth floor there was a loft where she had an office set up. I loved that area. The room had a deck off to the left that she used for sun bathing. It had a fabulous view. You could see all the way to Sunset Beach. It was quite the show place. It also had a kidney-shaped pool out back and small Jacuzzi for her tenants.

Behind her apartment, there were three more apartments attached above the garages. They were each two bedroom apartments; each one had its own garage. She rented out the other three. It was a startup, her own business of property management. She was responsible for having the grounds kept up, keeping the pool in order, and making any repairs that her tenants might call in. It was an excellent business opportunity. I would have loved to have this set up.

She was always having people over. She told me she did not hang out with me because I was stuck up in high school. "I hated the way you use to flip your long blonde hair around," she said.

"Me stuck up? You have to be kidding. What makes me any different now?" I asked.

"I don't know. You seem more approachable now," she said. I didn't think I was any different.

We got along well for a rich girl that was not stuck up and a surfer girl who people thought was stuck up. It was a weird world. She entertained a lot. She and I hung out during the day sometimes. Any time we went out, she always insisted on me driving her car. Driving her around in a Mercedes all day was alright with me. One of her tenants was two brothers that we all knew too. So now and then we dropped in back there and played cards. They seemed to have a lot of traffic besides us going in and out of that apartment. It made me wonder if they did not have a little illicit business. I wouldn't doubt it.

Jaycee had a party coming up. It was her birthday, and it



would be extravagant, I was sure. Her father owned a limousine for family use. It was a big stretch Mercedes. She was sending it around to pick us up for the party. She didn't want us to drink and drive. The party was to be held at the Huntington Harbor Yacht Club. It would be a formal affair. That would be her mom's idea. Jaycee barely wore shoes, let alone formal attire. I couldn't wait to see what she wore. For that matter, what was I going to wear?

Our social circle kept growing. We also had been hanging with one of Shelly's friends Paul. He was a little older than we were; he was in his thirties. I was not sure how she met him, but I thought they dated for a short time and it did not work out. They remained close friends. He liked to barbecue, and he was always inviting people over to swim in the pool at his apartments. We hung out there a lot. He had a mixed crowd that hung with him. His neighbor was a divorcee who moved down here from Boston. They worked together. He had three kids that were spending the summer. One of his sons was my age and the other was a couple years younger. The problem I saw was his daughter. She was fifteen and hanging out with all these older guys while Dad was at work. I said fifteen, but she acted more like twenty-five. She was a cute girl and a little too built for her age. They had been at every barbecue and party we had been. I could only see problems when it came to that girl.

The day at the Wedge we all decided it was time for another camping trip. We were all headed down to Rosarita Beach, in Baja. This would be a surfing and camping trip. I had been wanting to go to Mexico. This was a clean part, not like Tijuana. Rosarita was a surfer getaway because of its excellent surf conditions.

My family went to Mexico a lot when I was a kid. We would stay with a Mexican family that owned a small motel in Ensenada. We went almost every summer. We were close with



that family, and wrote letters during the year and sent Christmas cards. We hadn't been in years. I really missed them.

We were all excited and would be going tomorrow. My bags were packed and by the door. I had gone through everything twice to make sure I hadn't forgotten anything. I was heading back upstairs when someone knocked. Ian was standing there with a Big O pizza. I loved that pizza. He ordered a large with everything on it. He set it on the counter and came over and hugged me. He held me like that for a while. Then the next thing I knew we were heading up to my room. The pizza could be reheated. We rolled around up there enjoying each other for a long time.

We then shared a shower and came down to reheat the pizza in the oven. We talked about the trip a little. He had never been to Rosarita either. I was looking forward to it and wanted to buy some souvenirs, like an oversized straw beach bag and some turquoise jewelry. He didn't care about buying things. He just wanted to go on the camping trip and get out of town for a while.

The pizza was ready, and we ate it in front of the TV. He had all his stuff in the van and planned to stay the night. I ran up and changed into my pajamas. Why, I don't know, because I would not stay in them long. We watched TV in my room and explored each other until exhaustion took over and we fell asleep. Waking up early, we showered together, or tried to. It was more messing around, but we finally got out, got dressed, and headed off to join the gang.

Everyone met at the Mobile gas station, and we caravanned once again to our destination. Traveling down the highway towards Mexico there was a lot to see. It only took a few hours to get down there. We stopped and ate at a roadside taco stand—fish tacos. I had never had them. I was missing out because they were delicious. There were some other meats offered that I could



not identify, so I did not try any of them. I also noticed something hanging up behind the taco vendors that looked to be smoked lizards. I did not think I would be trying that anytime soon.

The terrain here was desert. It was unusual because the beach was on one side and the desert was on the other. They had complete campground facilities. Thank goodness. I thought we would be roughing it. We spent time setting things up. Jimmy got there and ran right out to check the waves. He stayed out for a good hour. The rest of us hung out on shore and planned the meals for each day.

I did want to check out some sites tomorrow. I had to get souvenirs. We brought lots of food, but tonight we would keep it simple with hot dogs and beans. Ian heated them in the can using a fork to move them around over the fire.

“Very ingenious,” I said to him as he lifted the hot can with the fork tines.

“I know, I am brilliant.” He smiled and kissed me as I leaned in to look at dinner. We also brought our own water. It was disastrous to drink the water in Mexico.

There were two new girls with Jimmy and Fred. I guessed I would get to know them eventually. So far they were quiet. Jimmy had a new girl every week. It had become an ongoing joke with the guys. I was afraid she had heard the guys joking about it.

I felt sorry for her. It couldn't be fun being the flavor of the week. She was typical Jimmy. She was a pretty girl with large breasts. Everyone loved Jimmy, especially the girls. Fred was running a close second in having a new girl on each trip. His girl was cute too. He would never reach Jimmy's level. He had not been at it long enough to achieve that status.

After we ate dinner, Ian and I took off down the beach for an evening walk. The sky was a reddish color with some oranges—



just beautiful. We held hands, stopping to kiss occasionally. “I could do this forever,” he said, brushing the hair from my face.

“It is beautiful here,” I said.

“No, I want you and me to be like this together, forever.” He looked at me. I didn’t say anything. This conversation again... and I did not know what to say. “You know you are happy when you are with me. Why do you fight it? You know we are good together,” he told me.

“I know we are good together. I just am not ready to talk about forever. What about school and...” He did not let me continue. He just put his hands in my hair and pulled my face toward his.

“You really know how to ruin a moment, Luv,” he said, and he covered my lips with his. “Don’t talk.” He went back to kissing me, and that ended that little dispute. I couldn’t think let alone fight when he kissed me like that. We left the issue for now, but it would have to be dealt with eventually.

The next few days were a blur of surfing, eating, shopping, and being intensely intimate with Ian. He was incredible. He put flowers in the van for me to wake up to. He made sure I had everything I needed at all times. I, of course, did all I could to make him happy and satisfied.

I felt awful that I had not gotten acquainted with the two girls on this trip, but Ian took up every minute of my time. I said good morning and talked to them when we were all together eating. The rest of the time was for Ian. He watched me surf. He filled every minute with something to do. We talked about everything and anything.

He was good at finding secluded places to take advantage of me. I realized that I could not tell him no. He was talented in seducing me. We laughed in the sun and built sand castles. We played in the surf day and night. It seemed like we had just got



there, and then it was time to go home. What a wonderful trip. It just seemed too short. I loved the trip and told Ian I wanted to see other parts of Mexico. He promised to take me, describing the adventures we would have together.

We drove back singing the songs on the radio: Rod Stewart, Ted Nugent, Led Zeppelin, Bread, the Eagles, and more. We carried on like kids. Ian made me laugh so hard sometimes. Even simple knock-knock jokes were funny. He made up games on the drive also, like counting all the red cars. We played punch bug too.

“Ted Nugent is coming in concert,” Ian told me. “Do you want to go see him?”

“Yes I do.” I was excited. I loved concerts.

“Yes. We need to purchase tickets,” he said. So we discussed Ted for a portion of the drive back. What seemed like a long drive there was a short drive home.

He kissed me in front of my house, and helped me take my stuff up to the door. “I wish we lived together. I think that would be cool,” he said. “I hate dropping you off. We could go home to our own house, and go to bed together.”

I looked at him. “I don’t know...” He stopped me with another kiss. “I know, I know. Don’t say it.” He smiled down at me, shaking his head.

“I will talk to you later, Luv,” he said, and he walked to his van without another word. I stood there wondering what my problem was. I really did like and care about him. He waved as he climbed into his van, and I blew him a kiss. That put a smile on his face as he drove away. I thought he might be mad, but when I spoke to him later on the phone, he never mentioned being upset about anything. He was a very patient person. I was lucky to have found him.

We went to parties every weekend. We hung out off and on



during the week. I surfed, and Ian did whatever he and Dewey did. They kept making their trips to Newport. Sometimes I went, sometimes I did not. On one of the trips Ian got this block that looked like a dry Hershey bar in a rice cloth bag. He later told me it was hashish. A one pound brick. They brought back the usual four to five speaker boxes. They never talked about the cocaine pickups. Dewey usually went there, and now and then Ian went with him. He never saw anyone or met anyone. It was all incognito.

I knew I should accept that Ian was right for me. I really didn't want to date anyone else. I just couldn't say it. I didn't know what was holding me back. I was doing my best to show Ian I cared for him. I would do anything for him. I just wondered if that was enough.

Ian and I were going to Catalina on the ferry for the day tomorrow. I hadn't been to Catalina since I was a kid. It should be fun. There was a chili cook off. The paper read "Culinary Artist of the Chili Kind." The chefs competed for a \$500 prize and bragging rights. I couldn't wait to get there. Ian would stay the night at my house.

We rose before the sun came up. We had coffee on the way over. Well, I did. Ian didn't drink coffee. He sure loaded up on the donuts. "I want to save room for the chili," I told him. He just shrugged.

Catalina was twenty-six miles off the coast of California. It was a small island, twenty-two miles long and only eight miles across. It had three main harbors: Avalon (where the chili cook off was being held), Twin Harbor (at the other end of the island), and Cat Harbor (around the back side of the island). Avalon was a busy harbor, quite the tourist attraction. Yacht owners paid enormous mooring fees for mooring boats in the harbor. I heard Ian's family had a mooring somewhere off Catalina too. We got



off the ferry and walked around the town hand in hand, checking out the sites.

It was really a pretty island, with lots of plants and animals. There were herds of buffalo. Originally, fourteen buffalo were brought to the island for the filming of the movie *The Vanishing American*. I didn't know exactly what happened, but taking the buffalo back was going to be too expensive, so they left them to multiply. The interior of the island was uninhabited, so animals could live in peace here. There were also wild boars, foxes, and squirrels. If you were lucky, you could see sea otters frolicking in the water.

There was a lot of fishing here—commercial, sport fishing for marlin, as well as other deep sea fishing. These waters were full of fish like garibaldi, yellowtail, kelp bass, white sea bass, giant sea bass, leopard sharks, blacksmiths, opal eyes, sheep heads, bat rays, horn sharks, mackerel, bonito, barracuda, herring, anchovies, sardines, and many more. The great white shark had also been found on the west side of the island among the kelp beds. Whales were often spotted on the crossing over to Catalina. There had been killer whales seen on the backside following tuna trawlers. We didn't see any of them today.

No wonder thousands of people came over a year. It was really a lovely place for many different interests. Right now, all I could think about was that chili. So we headed back towards town to find the cook off. I smelled some incredible aromas. It would not be hard to find. We would just follow delicious aromas.

They had every kind of chili you could imagine. There was chili with pinto beans, chili with kidney beans, and chili with no beans. Next there was hot chili, pineapple chili, and green chili, and lamb chili, chili made with ground beef and shredded steak and chicken. Then there was sweet corn chili. One entry was venison chili. It was all marvelous. I liked trying all of



them. There were many flavors I had never heard of. What a fun day. I was not interested in whom the winner was. They were all winners to me. They got out there at the crack of dawn and started chopping, dicing, mixing, and simmering. It was fun, and we enjoyed it. After hours of eating chili, we called it a day.

We got back to the dock and waited for the next ferry on the schedule to head back to Newport. The ride back was pleasant. We were holding hands with the sea breeze blowing in our faces. There were no whale sightings like we hoped. “That was great. I really enjoyed it, Ian,” I said.

He looked me in the eye. “I enjoy any time with you. It doesn’t matter where we are.” He was looking serious. I felt a relationship conversation about to surface.

I moved to the rail. “Look at those big boats. Are they fishing for something?”

Ian sighed and moved next to me at the rail. “Yes, that one right there is a Hatteras sport fisher. They are trolling for marlin.” I could see he wasn’t happy anymore. He acted like he was not upset, standing behind me, with his arms on either side of me, holding the rail with white knuckled hands.

“Pretty fancy boat for fishing,” I said. I knew I sidestepped his conversation. I leaned back into him, trying to reestablish closeness. His body felt a little stiff. There was no doubt in my mind I had gone too far ignoring his attempts to establish our relationship.

“You should see the inside. They have every amenity,” Ian said, looking out at the yacht. He was maintaining his cool. I knew he wanted to say something else, but he held his tongue.

I was not willing to have that talk about being together always. I didn’t know why I was so gun shy when it came to relationships. I guessed I was just not ready. The rest of the ferry ride was casual conversation. I felt like our connection had been



lost, and it was my fault.

The ride home in his van was very quiet. I couldn't blame Ian. He was probably not happy with how I changed the subject on him so abruptly. I asked him if he wanted to come in. He said no, he had to go. I tried to kiss him. He dodged me and walked down the walkway to his van. He was mad at me. I said goodbye and blew a kiss, but he did not look back.

I really did like him, a lot more than I expected. I just was not sure I was ready for exclusiveness. Not that I wanted to see anyone else. I definitely did not. There wasn't even anyone I was interested in at all. So why was I acting like an idiot when it came to talking about my feelings for him or freaking when he started talking about his feelings for me? I may have just screwed things up between us.

I needed some sister time. I called my sister to see what she was doing. I started to tell her about me and Ian. She was pretty excited about the fact that I was dating a doctor's son who was going to be a doctor himself. Most people in this town knew Dr. Connor. They had been to him or knew someone who had. She started drilling me on him and what I didn't like about him.

"He is handsome, has a bright future. I think spending time with him is really the best ever. What's not to like is a better question."

"So, what the hell is the problem?" she asked.

"I don't know. I really don't." Her cure for all things was going shopping. We would have lunch at the Magic Pan in South Coast Plaza and shop all afternoon tomorrow.

Kathy had a housekeeper and sometime babysitter. Her name was Marta Valdez. She stayed in their guest house Tuesday through Saturday and was off on Sunday and Monday. She charged astronomical rates to watch the kids. I didn't blame her. I never watched them. Too scary for me. They were hyper, and I was always afraid I would lose one.



This visit to the mall was going to be expensive for my brother-in-law. I told her I would meet her at the mall. It was easier if the kids did not see me. They would want to come too. They were well behaved children. It was just too exhausting taking them all and trying to eat and shop, let alone talk about personal matters.

I hadn't been to this mall in a long time. I thought the last time I was here I was shopping for a prom dress. I told you before, my sister was at this mall a lot. She should have bought stock options in some of the large department stores. We arrived at one side of the mall and made our way to the other. She bought something from most of the stores. My mom gave me a credit card to use in case of emergencies. It was in her name. I was a user on the card. This was an emergency.

Besides, I had never used it, and I had been carrying it around for two years. So I picked out some clothes, and of course I needed shoes to go with the clothes. All this shopping was making me hungry. It was time to go over to The Magic Pan. My favorite thing on the menu was the Monte Cristo sandwich. It was ham and turkey on thick bread that was dipped in batter and deep fried. Yum! They also gave you a small container of raspberry jam to dip your sandwich in. Marvelous!

The conversation went back to Ian. "You screw around, and not commit, and you will probably lose him," Kathy said.

"You don't even know him. You just like him because he is going to be a doctor, and you think that is a good catch," I said, exasperated.

"What is wrong with that? You want to get married one day, and settle down and have a family, don't you? It might as well be someone who has the resources to provide for you," she said.

"Slow down. I am not talking marriage with anyone. Now you are starting to scare me. I need to get through four years of



school before I start thinking about that. I have not even started my first class yet. You are jumping the gun here,” I said.

“Oh, don’t be such a baby,” she told me. “You have to grow up sometime. You need to plan ahead for your future. What is wrong with choosing someone to spend it with now? I’m not saying get married this summer. Just lock down a candidate.” We both started laughing.

My brother-in-law was a lawyer. She wanted me to choose someone like him. We were just dating. I was not planning a life together with anyone right now.

“I am not you,” I told her. “I have a different kind of lifestyle. More laid back. And I love the beach, not the mall. I don’t really care about money either.”

“You will after you have kids. You can’t be a little Miss Surfer Bum your whole life,” she warned me. I was not going to win this fight. I could tell.

“Whatever. All I am saying is I am not ready for a serious relationship right now. I love being with him, and hanging out together. Why can’t that be enough?”

“You will have to wait and see. If he starts showing interest in other girls, you better make a commitment,” she said.

I enjoyed the day with my sister Kathy. I just didn’t get out of it what I was hoping for. I didn’t know what I expected her to say. Kathy told me she needed to go home as her hubby would be coming home soon. I had had all the insight from my sister I could handle for now. I told her I loved her, and she hugged me. She said, “Everything will work out just fine. You’ll see.” She patted me on the arm as she said it.

“I hope so,” I answered.

As I was driving through my neighborhood, I saw Lena’s little sister sitting on my neighbor’s front lawn. I stopped to see what she was doing. She was thirteen and a little incorrigible. I



squatted down in front of her. “What are you doing?”

“Nothing. I’m just sit-in,” she slurred. Great. She was wasted. I tried to talk her into coming with me. She was wasted and should not be sitting on the Pattersons’ lawn. They would be home soon.

“Why don’t you come with me and we will see if we can find your sister?”

“Fuck you. I don’t have to do what you say.” She mumbled, but I was sure that was what she said.

“I know. I just don’t want you to get into trouble. You could be arrested.”

Too late. Here came Mrs. Patterson, pulling into her driveway. She got out of the car. “What are you girls doing?”

Before I could politely tell her we were leaving, Stacy staggered towards her, yelling, “Fuck you! I didn’t do nothing. Just sittin’ here.” Mrs. Patterson took a step back, looking very startled.

I jumped in. “Stacy, watch your mouth. I am sorry, Mrs. Patterson. Let me take care of her. You go on in, and I will help her home.”

I tried to get Stacy over to my car. She pulled away and stumbled over to where her purse was on the grass. She fell on her face. When I tried to help her, she swung around a quart of beer, and it went all in my face and all over my clothes. This was not happening to me, two houses down from my house. I took the bottle from her and tried to help her up again. This certainly made her crazy for some reason, and she started swinging at me, calling me obscenities.

I wrestled her to the ground, and another neighbor came out and threatened to call the police. Great, it looked like I was out here beating up a drunken kid. I would never hurt her. She was trying my patience with this bullshit. She was trying to pull my hair when all of a sudden I am yanked off her.



Lena was behind me. She grabbed Stacy and popped her in the face with a slap. That woke her up. She swung at Lena, and the next thing I knew Lena was dragging her younger sister down the street toward their house. She yelled back over her shoulder as she slapped Stacy again, "I'll take her home to my mom and let her deal with it. Sorry about the scene." Holy cow, and what a scene it was. It looked like the whole block was out here watching us.

I got back to my car, driving the rest of the way to my house reeking of beer. How embarrassing. I was glad my parents didn't witness that. A little while later Lena came back. She told me her mom would get to the bottom of that mess. She would find out who was buying her thirteen-year-old daughter beer. "Man, I am glad that wasn't me when I was her age. My mom was seriously pissed," Lena laughed.

"I wonder who she was with today," I said.

"There is no telling," Lena said. "I just came by to let you know that won't happen again, and to ask you if you wanted to go play volleyball at the beach tomorrow? A bunch of us will be playing volleyball and hanging out."

"That sounds good to me," I said, and then she took off. I wondered if Ian would call me. He never did. I wondered if he ever would again.

I awoke to another bright, sunny day in Huntington Beach. There was a large group of people by the volleyball nets. I saw Lena, Lisa, and their friends. It looked like a bunch of people I did not know. I liked volleyball. This should be fun. We chose up teams and started to play.

I was competitive by nature, so I played really aggressively. I didn't need guys running the ball down for me. I would run down my own, thank you very much. I also was not afraid of getting a little sand on me, so I dove for the ball. After we ran



into each other a few times, they got the idea and let me play the ball when it came to me. There was a girl on the other side that had no hand-eye coordination. Poor thing. The ball had hit her in the face twice now. I couldn't help but laugh. I knew it was not funny. Those guys on that team needed to be jumping in front of her. She was the one who needed help.

I stayed for a couple of hours, but I was not up for the get together they had planned for tonight. I made excuses and took my leave. I was not into meeting guys today. They were a little younger than me anyway. That was definitely not my style. I would like to know where Ian and I stood.

I walked to the pier and watched some of my friends surfing. Nice waves, a little small, but they looked fun. Today I was just observing. As I was walking along, I heard music coming from somewhere on the pier. It was Jim Croce's "Time in a Bottle." I stopped and listened for a while. The song ended, and I moved on. Did it have meaning for me, or was I just imagining it? It made me feel kind of sad.

My mind wandered as I walked along. Why was everything so complicated? I did not want a committed relationship. I didn't have one, so why did I feel so down? Maybe I should have gone to the party with Lena. I was going home. I wondered if Keith and Shelly wanted to go horseback riding in Laguna Canyon. I went a few times before with them, and it was fun. I would call her when I got home.

Of course, she was not home; of course she went off with Keith. What was I thinking? I loved Shelly's mom. She was a crack-up. I called Shelly's house and her mom answered and said, "She is never home anymore. You should know she is either with you or that boy."

"Sorry, Mrs. Gray, I should have known," I said. "Thanks. Goodbye." I hung up. Great. Now what? There was never



anything on TV during the day. I pulled everything out of my closet and rearranged it. It was now organized by colors. It looked kind of cool. I wasted two hours of my day. Unfortunately, it was not fun or exciting. I was feeling lonely now. Boredom had seriously set in.

I called my cousin, but my aunt told me she was not home. Everybody had something to do but me. I sat in my bean bag chair and listened to my Goodbye Yellow Brick Road album by Elton John. I stared out the window, hoping someone called with something to do.

No one called, and I ended up eating all night. I stood in front of the refrigerator, and grazed, then went to bed. I had to practice in the morning. I reserved the ball machine to work on my swing. Maybe I could get a match in with someone. I spent an hour hitting forehands then backhands. I got a hopper of balls and practiced my serve. It was one of my best assets in tennis. I had developed a hard serve with a kick up when it hit the ground. I could serve up to 108 miles an hour. My serve was consistent, and my placement of the ball was usually accurate.

The guy in the pro shop offered to play with me. His name was Steven. He was a nice enough guy. He always watched me. How pitiful did I look? Lonely too? Maybe he just had a crush on me. We hit the ball around a little, and ended up hanging out and talking for a couple of hours. We watched some matches as we were talking. There were some outstanding teams at this club.

He asked me what my plans were. I told him about school and my tennis scholarship. He told me if I needed any help to let him know. I thanked him. I was ready to go home. It was funny what people thought. We belonged to this club and so everyone assumed we were rich. We were just regular middle class Americans.

When I got home, I went up to my room and dropped my



rackets and equipment in the corner. My dad had a specific place in the garage for them. I was too lazy to put them where they belonged. My room was pale green and white—white walls, white furniture, and my pale green comforter, and frilly, white pillows. It was very girly. I used to like it. For some reason I felt like taking it all out and painting it black and white. I would put that off until I was in a better frame of mind. I thought my dad would have a coronary if I painted the trim of my room black and bought a black silk comforter. That was something to consider for another day.

I still hadn't heard anything from Ian. I could call him I guess, but he pretty much shined me on since we came back from Catalina. What if he expected me to call? No, I could only assume that it was over between us. The idea of sitting around moping over a guy was out of the question. I guessed I would make myself available at the beach tomorrow. I had a lot of summer left. I had things I wanted to do. I would like to have someone to do them with.

My cousin called. They were going to Yosemite National Forest camping for a few days and asked if I would like to join them. Oh, yes, I definitely wanted to come. It was just what I needed: an adventure. "Well, alright now," I said out loud. I had never been there. I cruised my bike over to Cindy's to discuss what I would need to bring. When I got there, my aunt and uncle were making their plans.

Cindy asked, "You want to skateboard down the street? There is a little downhill. I have been seeing people out there the last few days, and want to give it a try."

"Sure, sounds interesting," I said. I was always up for a challenge. I was familiar with where she was talking about, and that street was not a small hill. It was kind of steep.

She rode her skateboard over. I walked along with her. I was



not worried about it. I had balance and coordination. The hill looked pretty steep. Cindy chickened out. I was thinking of Ian and the guys going down Ortega highway. It had that radical curve. This was a straight shot.

There were lots of kids out there doing it. So I picked up the skateboard and walked up halfway to the top. I stayed low, squatting the whole way down. I felt a high speed wobble, but I made it to the bottom. “That was fun. What a rush,” I said. “You should try it. I am going to do it again standing now that I have a feel for it.”

Cindy agreed to try it and went up to where I started my first run. She also did the squat stance. “That was pretty crazy,” she said, smiling at me on her way back up. When it was my turn again, I stopped at the halfway again. This time I was standing and crouching a little. The high speed wobble was more pronounced when standing. Pretty scary, I thought. Cindy patiently waited her turn and tried standing all the way down. She started walking back up. “Come on up! Let’s do it for real this time, from the top,” she yelled. I couldn’t be outdone by a younger cousin. I was kind of old for this kind of recklessness. What the heck—I was still under twenty-one. I headed on up, and when I went down, things were going well until I hit a rock almost at the bottom.

The rock made the skateboard come to a complete stop, and my body continued going forward. I hit the pavement pretty hard with my shoulder. I rolled over and over. I was not sure how many times. These guys came running up. “Gnarly. Are you alright?” they said as they tried to help me up.

“I think so,” I said.

Cindy was right there. “Oh, man, you scratched the side of your face up,” she told me with this concerned look. I just wanted to make sure I did not break anything. I got up slowly



and walked it off. Nope, nothing appeared to be broken.

“Major road rash, babe,” one of the guys said.

“Oh, yes, I feel that. My elbow and the side of my leg are starting to sting. My face feels pretty raw too.” The guys gave us a ride back to Cindy’s so I could get cleaned up.

My aunt threw a fit. I told her I was OK. I just needed to go clean the road rash. She started pulling out her emergency medical kit. “Should I call your parents?” she asked.

“No, no, definitely not. I don’t want them to worry over some scratches. I will tell them about it when they get home,” I said. “Actually, I feel pretty decent, considering.” I thought I would head on home. I would be back tomorrow night.

We were leaving in two days. There was plenty of time to get my stuff together for the trip. I thought I would go surfing tomorrow morning. I spent the rest of the day packing my gear. Cool. I loved the National Forests. California had many National Parks—there was Yosemite, of course, and Joshua Tree, Kings Canyon, Death Valley, and Mojave National Preserve, just to name a few. The forests had these massive redwood trees. They were beautiful. I couldn’t wait.

I got up early in the morning, before the sun. My road rash looked and felt pretty bad. I was feeling kind of achy too. I ate a quick breakfast and headed to the beach. No one was out yet. I paddled out past the breakers. This was usually not my style. I didn’t normally go out when no one was around, for safety reasons. My mom’s rule. The salt water hurt the injuries from skateboarding. It was too nice of a day to miss this morning peace. All I could hear was the sound of the waves, and the seagulls out by the end of the pier.

It was so tranquil sitting out here. I took a few waves in and paddled back out. People started to appear on the beach—my cue to go on home. Now the beach would load up with the regulars



as well as the visitors of summer. There wouldn't be a place to park for miles by ten. That was just how it was in the summer. I rode my last wave in and walked up the beach. I stopped and said hi to the guys. They were all interested in what happened to my face. It got me a few date offers from some new guys after they found out how I hurt myself.

I mentioned that I was going out of town. They asked where I was going. I didn't state where, I just said, "Oh, I am late. I have to go. I'll catch up with you later." I strolled off real fast. I always liked to have a little mystery behind me when I went. I had some new phone numbers, given to me if I wanted to hang out. Being injured was a surfer guy magnet.

I packed up my stuff and headed on over to Cindy's. We got some Jack in the Box (Bonus Jacks, fries, and chocolate shakes) for our dinner. I would spend the night with her so we could leave early. Uncle Pete was an early riser. We went to her room and talked for a while. I told her about Ian and what happened. She took his side. She really liked him and thought I was crazy. It appeared that my sister had been talking to her and Aunt Elaine. They knew the whole story. That was really nice, Kathy. So much for telling something in confidence. We fell asleep talking about my failed relationships and Cindy's lack of one.

Uncle Pete opened the door in the morning and woke us. He said we would stop to eat somewhere down the road. We got in the trailer so that we could have privacy talking about whatever we talked about. They got in their Suburban and we were off.

Yosemite National Forest is up in Northern California. It was closer to the Nevada border than it was to the ocean. We made many stops on this trip—restroom stops, lunch stops, snack stops. It seemed like it took forever.

We finally stopped in Bakersfield for the night. Cindy's parents did not like driving at night. They got a hotel room, and



we stayed in the trailer. We ate dinner at this roadside diner. I ordered an open faced roast beef, with mashed potatoes and gravy poured all over it. No vegetables. At diners, the potato was your vegetable. It was delicious.

Cindy and I walked around and then went back to the trailer to play cards. We played this game called Idiot's Delight. You played with three decks of cards. You could play it for hours and no one ever won. Hence the name! We talked about anything and everything. We had always gotten along really well, even though she was a little younger than me. She was eighteen and could party with the best of them.

She would be going off to college in the fall also. She was going to NYU. I never understood why she wanted to go to New York. Anyway, she could not wait to go and her parents were so proud of her. We laughed about how I was getting a late start in college. "Better late than never," I said defensively.

"If you waited any longer, you would have lost your scholarship," Cindy said.

"I know, I know," I grumbled.

She kept laughing at me. What was the joke? I was going now. We ate breakfast at the same diner. I had a western omelet and hash browns. They all had eggs over easy, sausage, and pancakes. I was not a fan of pancakes or syrup. Now we would see some new scenery. It changed a lot when you got on the other side of Los Angeles. I kept telling myself we were more than halfway there.

We finally reached Yosemite National Park. It was almost 1,200 square miles of mountains and wilderness. It was really beautiful, something everyone should experience. We could see Half Dome, waterfalls, streams, and lots of trees, beautiful giant Sequoia trees. We drove for a while, soaking in the scenic landscape. Then we turned off into the campgrounds. They had electrical hook ups. It was a modern campground.



After we helped set up camp and pulled out the side awning to cover the picnic table, Cindy and I walked around the camp. There was a group of campers about our age. We waved and smiled as we went by. “Maybe we should cruise back by here tonight,” Cindy said. “Let’s scope out the place and see if there are any guys,” she threw in.

“Yeah, why not. We have to be cool. I don’t want them knowing we are scoping them out,” I said.

We ended up not going back down there at all. We hung out with my aunt and uncle and talked about being careful at night. There were bears up here, and they would attack. “Make sure there is no food or garbage left out. They can smell it, and they will come into the camp,” my uncle said. We sat around telling stories about past trips, like the one to Lake Miller when Cindy learned to water ski. And the trip to the Salton Sea where I learned to drive the boat. Yes, we had had lots of fun. We didn’t own a trailer. My parents always rented one from the Navy base. We had such happy times.

I wanted to do some hiking up the trails. Uncle Pete made scrambled eggs and fried hominy for breakfast. Hominy was weird. I had only eaten it when we were on camping trips with them. No one else had heard of it. It was like a blown up corn kernel.

We headed off in the direction of the hiking trails. As we were making our way, we saw everyone had on hiking boots, hats, backpacks, and lots of gear. We had on Vans deck shoes, shorts, and bathing suit tops. There were drinking fountains all the way up on site ledges, where you could stop, take pictures, and sit and rest if you needed to. The water from the fountains was actually fresh mountain spring water. I saw people filling up canteens. It made me wonder where they were going. It took almost two hours to make it all the way to the top.

“Isn’t this an incredible view? I would like to learn to do



some rock climbing,” Cindy said.

“It is indeed. I am kind of afraid of heights, so I do not think I would do well, climbing rocks,” I said. “I don’t feel tired either. What about you?”

She looked at me and said, “I still feel fantastic. Are you ready to make our way back down?”

I was, but I wanted to stop more and look at the scenery. It seemed like we were so focused on getting up here that we did not look around much. Cindy agreed, and we started back down the path slowly to take in the sights.

We noticed right away that a lot of the hikers we saw in the beginning, with all the gear and the boots, were sitting and resting. I was beginning to think we had the right idea, going light. They were tired and it looked like some wouldn’t make it to the top. Too bad. They were missing the view from the top. We both agreed overkill on the equipment and hiking gear for a day hike. It was a great hike with beautiful panoramic views at every stop. It was not something I would soon forget.

Uncle Pete had been barbecuing all day. He was slow cooking beef brisket. Aunt Elaine brought potato salad and beans. Dinner was going to be scrumptious. She asked us to ride into the tourist area, as we forgot to pick up milk. Cindy didn’t want to drive the winding narrow roads, so I said, “I will. Not a problem.”

“Don’t forget to pull in the side mirrors. You won’t need them without the trailer,” Uncle Pete said as he went into the trailer. We stood around a little while telling my aunt about the hikers. About thirty minutes later, we headed on down the road in the new Suburban. It was very narrow, and had lots of curves.

There were cars parked in a line on the shoulder of the road. As we passed them, I heard a loud bang. Cindy jumped. “Oh, God, Oh, God, you just took off that guy’s mirror, with our mirror!” she said. She was looking back at the people on the side



of the road who were yelling and flipping us off. There were lots of cars behind me and no place to pull over.

“Oh, shit, I can’t believe I forgot to pull the trailer mirrors in,” I said.

There must have been fifteen cars behind us. When I tried to slow down they started honking. So we just kept on going. We didn’t stop until we got into town. We pulled into the parking lot and had a look at the damage. “I am afraid to look. Your dad is going to kill me,” I said as I walked around the Suburban.

“I see nothing. Not a dent, not a scratch, nothing,” Cindy said.

“I am so relieved. But I damaged that guy’s mirror,” I said. “Let’s get what we have to get, and we can go back up slowly and find him,” I said as I looked at the way we came. There went my savings.

We never found the guy. So we went back to the campground and swore never to mention the incident to anyone. I didn’t think I had ever had brisket before. We made hot sandwiches on Kaiser rolls. They were delicious. After dinner, we walked on down to where we saw all those guys earlier. A few were paired up with some girls, but there were three that were not. We strolled by all casual like. We heard, “Hey, what are you ladies up to?” We told them we were walking off dinner. We stood around and talked to them for a while.

They invited us to go swimming with them at a lake tomorrow. We said sure, and after a couple hours of talking about where we were from and what we all were into, Cindy and I headed back to our camp. The stars at night up here were amazing. As we laid in the back of the Suburban with the tailgate down, looking up, I said, “Wow. I have never seen so many stars at one time, and the sky so clear.”

Cindy agreed. “Man, it is an incredible sight.”

The swimming hole got its water from an underground



spring. We swam for hours. Cindy paired up with this guy Tony. They looked cute together. It was a shame he lived in Fresno and she lived in Huntington. They were into each other. They were together the rest of the stay in Yosemite. I kept my distance from the other two guys. I was not into starting any long distance relationships.

We all hung out every day for the last several days. We drank a little, and they smoked weed the night before we were going home. They planned to camp a few days longer. Cindy and Tony exchanged phone numbers and addresses. Tony promised to come to the beach and visit. I didn't see that going anywhere.

The whole way home all Cindy could talk about was Tony. How cute Tony was. This might not end well, I advised her. I told her not to get her hopes up. Long distance relationships didn't usually work out. She didn't seem to hear my warning. Live and learn, my mom always said, so I let her carry on about Tony.

The drive home seemed longer than the drive there. As it was on the way, it was on the way back—too many stops along the way. We stayed at a hotel again, and we ate at a different diner in a different town, but it was the same. The special was chili. It made me think of Ian, and I ordered a cheeseburger instead. Uncle Pete got some kind of mystery meat stew, which he actually enjoyed. We all made fun of him for eating it.



CHAPTER 4

My trip to Yosemite was great fun. Now that I was back home, I had to figure out what to do with the rest of my summer. I wanted to talk to Shelly. Elton John was in concert at the Long Beach Stadium. That should be a blast. I gave her a call, and she said to come over. She called Keith and he wanted to go. We got together to plan the outing. “What about Ian?” Keith said.

“What about Ian?” I said.

“Does he want to go?” Keith said.

“Not with me. I have not seen or heard from him. I will be a third wheel. Is that OK with everybody?” I said.

“Sure, it is OK.” Shelly jumped up and gave Keith that “you better not say anything” look. Then it was settled. The three of us were going.

I couldn’t wait. I just loved Elton John. Shelly and I both had all his albums. Keith said he would get liquor for the show. So I got ready and waited for them to pick me up. They pulled up in the driveway. I shut the door. I wouldn’t have any house guest because Lena and her mom were calling a truce and she was back at home. On the drive there, we passed around some beer. When



we got there, Keith showed us a bottle of tequila he was going to sneak into the concert. I didn't say anything, but I looked over at Shelly. I would definitely pass on the tequila tonight.

We had excellent seats. We were on the second level, to the right of the stage. And the show was rocking! Elton John played on five different pianos on stage that lit up in different colors spelling out "E L T O N." It was fabulous. Shelly and Keith were sipping the tequila throughout the show, which I saw they polished off before we left the concert. When we were out of the arena, they asked me to take us home. It looked like the tequila got both of them this time. I took them each to their separate homes, and then took Keith's car to my house. I would give back it to Shelly in the morning. What a show Elton John put on. I loved it. I went home and put on some Elton albums, singing out loud in my room. I listened to them for a few hours.

I was up in my room with the lights down low listening to music and singing. Of all the nights, Ian picked tonight to do a drive by to talk. And what did he see as he was coming by? Keith's car in my driveway, and the lights down low in my bedroom. No other lights were on in the house. I could only imagine what he thought. I knew he drove by because he left a rose with the petals pulled off of it on the hood of my car, and a note saying "I came by. You looked busy." Geez, what else could go wrong?

I tried to call him. His mom said he was not home. I was sure he was home. "He doesn't want to talk to you!" would have been the accurate statement. One of Ian's friends was going to have a party this weekend. I had planned to go with Lena and Lisa. I was already planning on talking to him, either to make up or just for closure sake. That was, if he went to that party at all. I thought we were done, over. He gave me the brush off. He never called, so it would be his fault if I shackled up with someone else.



Besides, I was alone. I was not shacking up with anyone. Didn't he know Keith and Shelly were an item? He must have thought I was some kind of slut.

Now I was starting to get mad. He was a jerk. How could he jump to conclusions like that? This whole thing was ridiculous. I didn't like having to explain something that didn't even happen.

Tomorrow my folks would fly into LAX. I got to go pick them up. "Oh, boy." I was thrilled at the prospect. They didn't come in until the afternoon. I could lounge around until then. I took Keith's car back to Shelly. She told me she and Keith were moving in together. "That's cool, but when did this all go down?" I asked.

"I have been talking about me moving out for a while, and he said we should move out together." She sounded so excited.

Shelly's parents got divorced our freshman year of high school. Her mom was so cool, I was surprised she wanted to move out. They got along well. Everyone seemed to be happy. She told her mom this morning. Her mom really liked Keith, and thought they would get married one day. *Well, that's just great*, I thought to myself. I kind of always thought we would move out together.

"I am real happy for you," I said. She smiled at me, then let me know that she needed to cut our visit short.

"I want to go check on Keith. He was not well last night. He drank more tequila than I did, and called me saying he was sick," she said. As we were walking out the door, I told her about the rose and the note from Ian. She offered to call him and explain. I told her I planned on doing that Friday night when I saw him. She gave me a sad look and drove away. She still believed Ian was the one for me. I walked back to my house. It was just around the corner. I was walking left. If I were to stay straight I would have headed towards my cousin's house.

I hit the surf again before I had to go get my folks. I said



“hi” to the guys, letting them know I was back. The swells were enormous. I had a hard time getting out. Once I was out there, the guys were looking at me like I was crazy. “What?” I said, shrugging, palms up.

“It’s pretty heavy out here, Lil D!” Steve yelled above the sound of the surf. I didn’t even bother to answer. I just waved him off and started paddling. H-o-l-y c-o-w, it was heavy alright.

These waves were big and powerful. And there was a lot of force behind them. It was all I could do to stay up and not get my feet washed out from under me. I was just happy to get off that one. I cut back, and paddled back to Steve. “You weren’t kidding!” I said.

“You did alright. I thought I might have to go and save your ass for a minute there,” Steve laughed as he paddled off for the next set. Jimmy gave me the thumbs up and yelled “Shacka!” as he took off on his wave (whatever that meant).

Man, that was just crazy. I didn’t know why I didn’t turn around when I saw how hard it was paddling out. It was too late now. I didn’t want to look like a kook. I took a few more waves, and then decided to head in. The last wave I caught I would ride all the way to the shore. At least, that was what I planned. The next set I took off on started to curl early, or I took off too soon. It was breaking right on top of me. I was quickly swallowed up by this massive wave. I tumbled under the crashing wave, getting slammed to the ocean floor.

I didn’t fight it, because eventually I should be pulled toward the surface by my leash, which was attached to my board. Everything was in slow motion, and I continued to tumble. I hit the bottom a couple more times, and then I broke the surface, gasping for air. Just as I took a breath, another wave came crashing down on me. I took a deep breath and dove under. My board was dragging me as it was smashing around in the waves above me. The next chance I



got above the surface of the water I grabbed for my board and then rode on my belly in. That was treacherous.

Once in the shallow water, I got up and tried to walk in with a little dignity. Most of the dudes saw what happened and came up to me to see if I was OK. "I am fine," I told them. I didn't think any one of them believed me.

"You took a cruncher. We saw you getting mauled by that wave. I was surprised to see you out there," Mike said.

"Yeah, well, you don't know what you can do until you try," I said, trying not to sound as shook up as I felt. I really got scared for a minute. Jimmy gave me a brotherly hug.

"You're a tough one, Lil D. When I didn't see you for a few seconds I paddled toward where I saw you go down. It scared the living hell out of me. Like a champ, you came up and made it into shore."

"You need to stay out of the water while that road rash heals. The salt water will make it crater," Mike said as he showed me a really ugly crater on his knee.

"Thanks for the tip. I always thought salt water was good for sores," I said.

"Not when you are in it as much as we are," he said. I told them I had to go. My parents were coming home today. I had to go out to the airport to get them.

They were good guys, and were glad that I was OK. They made some jokes about me having balls. I flipped them off as I was walking away. We all had a good laugh. Steve yelled something about me having dude mentality, with curves. Jimmy said something about my butt that I did not quite hear. They all continued laughing at their stupid jokes and lewd comments. I didn't bother to turn around. I kept walking with my middle finger in the air, laughing at my friends.

I hung out around the house the rest of the day. I did laundry,



dusted, vacuumed, and cleaned the house up. It didn't get messy. My mom probably would clean it if she were home. I remembered how much I put on the credit card at South Coast Plaza, and decided I would wash their sheets and dust their room. I usually never entered their room. It was their only private place. I respected that.

I even went outside and washed my dad's car. The neighbors knew they were on a cruise, so I got the "You did a nice job" from Mr. Roberts across the street. He was always watching. I knew he was hoping I would have a party or something so he could rat me out to my folks. I knew better than that. Sorry, nothing to report in to the captain, Mr. Roberts.

I forgot about my face. Mom was going to have a fit when she saw me. She wasn't into the sports I did, other than tennis. She thought only boys should surf and that no one should skateboard. It was just a broken bone waiting to happen. I tried to fix myself up as much as I could. I even wore one of the sundresses she got me, and a pair of my new sandals I got shopping with my sister. I arrived a half an hour early. Heaven forbid I should make my dad wait. He always said, "If you're not five minutes early, you are late!" It must have been a military thing. Mom left me the arrival time and gate, so I walked over and stood in the window, looking out. Their flight was on time from what the sign said.

The plane taxied up to the gate, and everyone started to disembark. It would be my luck they were the last ones. Yes, they were the last ones. I thought Shelly and I got burned when we went on our walk. It was nothing compared to my dad. He was red from head to toe. I waved at them. When they got close enough, I started to say something about how red he was. My mom gave me a "keep your mouth shut" signal that I learned many years ago. "Welcome home," I smiled at them. I gave them some hugs, and we made our way to the carousel to retrieve their luggage.



As we were loading the car, and away from other people, my mom said, “What on earth happened to your face?” I told her a sugar-coated version of my skateboard accident. “What would you have done if you had broken something?” she said.

“I would have gone to the hospital. I am a big girl. I can handle it,” I said in a huff.

“For the love of God, we cannot leave you alone ever.”

My dad finally chimed in. “Kate, she said she would have gone to the doctor. Obviously she handled it. Let it go.” So we rode quietly for a while. I could see by my mom’s profile. She was perturbed.

My dad knew just how to fix an unpleasant situation. “Why don’t I take my two favorite women out to eat? We couldn’t eat that slop on the plane. How about Senor Frog?” he asked, all smiles. We all loved Mexican food. And that just happened to be my mom’s favorite.

“I could eat a little something. How about you, Dee Dee?” my mom said. I could see her mood brightening as she spoke.

“That sounds yummy to me. I am pretty hungry,” I said. I wish I could have one of those frozen margaritas they made there. They were delicious. But ordering a drink with my parents was a definite no.

So we went to dinner, and they told me all about the cruise, and the different foods, and the wonderful sites. I told them I went camping with my aunt, uncle, and Cindy and about everything we did and saw. I told them I hung out at the house, went to tennis practice, and surfed the rest of the time. I left out the drug trafficking and coke snorting. I also didn’t mention the Ortega camping trip on hallucinogens. I said that I had Shelly over to spend the night, and how she was getting her own place. I left out the fact that Keith was moving in with her, as we were a Catholic family and that sort of thing was just not done.



Everyone was glad to be home. I for one didn't want to talk anymore about what I had been up to, as it seemed all sordid now that I was thinking about it. They were really tired, and they dragged their luggage up to their room. My mom had lots of souvenirs to show me, but they would have to wait, as she was beat and wanted a bath and sleep. I said my good nights to them and went into my room.

I had been pretty busy so far this summer. I had some unfinished business with Ian, and would like to see where we stood. As I laid in my bed, I considered my options. There probably weren't any options at this point. I needed to move on. I would like to talk it out with him anyway.

The next few days went by without any excitement. I didn't go surfing so my face would heal up. It was a novelty at first, telling people what happened—especially the guys. They were all so interested in my story. I got a lot of attention. But now I was burnt out on it and just wanted it to heal and go away. I didn't want to talk about it at all.

The night of the party rolled around and I decided I wanted to look extra special. My face was getting better. It was just a pink mark that my mom thought would not go away. I was not worried. I had been putting vitamin E on it. I knew it was getting better. My mom brought me back a halter dress with a floral kind of island-looking print on it. I really liked it, and I was going to wear it tonight. The browns and blues of the fabric looked really sexy against my tan skin. Lisa and Lena were so jealous when I picked them up. They were just wearing shorts and summer tops. We went by the liquor store. We knew the guy that owned it, and he sold to me. We drank the beer on our way over to loosen up a little before the party.

I saw Ian's van when I was looking up and down the block for a place to park. I didn't know why I felt nervous. We parked



and walked up to the house. The usual crowd was there. Dewey saw me first and smiled at us. “Hey, Dee Dee, Lisa, and Lena. What’s happening, ladies?” he said as we walked into the garage.

“Not much,” I said. “Just wanted to see what is going on.”

Both Lisa and Lena said, “Hi!”

“The keg is in the kitchen. Go on in.” He gestured toward the keg.

“Sounds good,” Lena said.

I was just about to ask if he came with Ian when I saw that he did not. Ian came with Karen. She had had a thing for him for a long time. Everyone knew it. Maybe he had had a thing for her. They kept their distance from us. You would think we had the plague or something. I thought about saying hello. That might be awkward. I said nothing. Karen was alright. I didn’t know her. I had not heard any dirt on her, so she must be OK. “Looks like somebody moved on,” I whispered to my friends.

Lena and Lisa both chatted it up, trying to look as if everything was funny. I just felt kind of strange, out of sorts a little. I wanted him to know I was not sleeping with Keith. It looked like I would not get the chance. He probably no longer cared. Wade and Fred came in and we started talking to them. I glanced over at Ian now and then, and our eyes met. I looked away. This was the pits. I hated feeling this way.

Lisa really liked Wade. I saw them leave together. So at least somebody was having fun at this party. Lena and I were hanging out, laughing, and talking, and then I noticed Ian and Karen were leaving too. Ian said something to Dewey, and they went out the door. Lena looked at me and said, “Now what?”

“Nothing, I guess.” I shrugged. How uncomfortable this whole situation was. I couldn’t relax and have a good time knowing Ian had moved on already. He never said a word to me. Maybe he was not so perfect after all.



I didn't want to leave right after them, so we stayed another half hour. I was not into it, and Lena was getting dragged down by my bummer mood. As soon as a few more people talked about leaving, we said we were taking off too. "I am not ready to go home. You?" Lena asked.

"Not really," I said.

We headed over to this little bar not far from the house. Ian and I went there a couple of times, and they never carded me. It was a little hole in the wall where you could play pinball and foosball, and they had pool tables. We ordered a pitcher of beer and talked about what happened at the party. "Ian brought a girl," Lena said.

"Do you think I didn't notice? She is a nice girl too, from what I hear," I begrudgingly admitted.

"She is pretty and has big boobs," Lena said.

"Thanks, Lena, that makes me feel better," I said.

She quickly changed the subject. "Did you know Wade is growing weed in his back yard? They are big plants. Lisa saw them behind the storage shed from Wade's bedroom window," Lena said in a low whisper.

"I didn't even know she was hanging out with him," I said, surprised.

"Since the Ortega trip," Lena told me. "He comes by and gets her, mostly late at night. He came by the other day to get her, and she didn't come home until the following afternoon."

"I wonder why he would be growing plants when all he has to do is get what he wants from Dewey," I said, and then I regretted that that just came out of my mouth.

"Lisa and I were hanging out with them the other night. I knew Dewey always has a stash. So I asked if I could buy some. All I wanted was a small amount, a two finger lid. He said, 'OK, this time. I don't like to handle small amounts. You can get it



from Adam after today. Tell him I told you to go to him.”

“Wow, it seems like everyone has a hand in the business,” I said.

Then Lena asked, “What kind of amounts is he talking about?”

“Well, since I already opened my big mouth... I have been riding down the coast with him and Ian to get pounds,” I told her. “We are picking up large boxes of it. Don’t ever repeat that.”

“For real!” she said. Her eyes looked as if they would pop out of her head.

“Yep,” I said.

“Dewey has a bunch of cocaine! Did you go to pick up that?” she asked.

“No, he is real secretive about that. Even when I went to get the weed, I never met anyone. I stayed in the car,” I said.

“He always has a lot of cocaine. We did some that night we hung out,” she told me. “I really dug it.”

“Yes, I liked it too,” I said. “It’s all pretty scary, when I think about it. I wonder how long they have been doing this. Not only them, but there seems to be many people around town that buy and sell too.” We finished our pitcher and decided to call it a night.

That night in my bed, as I laid staring up at the ceiling thinking about tonight’s events, I decided that there was no reason to be bummed out. We had a good time. I didn’t want a heavy duty relationship. What we did have was over. I got what I wanted. I thought I got what I wanted. The main thing was that I could not sit around here and stew on it. Tomorrow was a new day. I planned on going out with some new guys. If Ian could get over it that quick, I could too. I found it strange that we never talked about it being over. There was no break up.

I headed out to the beach. I did not bring a surfboard today. I was doing a different kind of surfing. I set up my stuff in my favorite spot. I put out my chair and towel. I turned on my transistor radio and waited. There were lots of people on the



beach. I scanned for anyone interesting. So far no one was eye catching. The usual local guys came by and said hi. They were more like brothers, not potential boyfriends. I always enjoyed their company and antics.

Lena showed up with some of her other girlfriends. They all laid out their towels, and we sat and talked. “We are going to the Surf Theater tonight to see Big Wednesday.”

Nina asked, “You want to come?”

I thought for about two seconds. “Yes, I would like to.” Nina told me they would pick me up at seven. We hung out the rest of the afternoon laughing and talking about the people cruising the beach. Lena’s friends were all cool. I had hung out with them from time to time.

That evening we walked into a theater full of guys. The movie started, and so did the howling. I always said, “If you have never been to a surf movie, you should go.” It was definitely an experience. Everyone hooted and howled when there were large waves and excellent rides. This crowd was almost all surf locals. I knew a lot of the guys we saw on the way out. We stood out in front of the theater talking to some of them.

No one was happy with the selection. We ended up at a coffee shop talking about how there were no guys in this town. That was funny, considering most of my friends were guys. We all got a laugh at how ridiculous that sounded. I guessed we were never satisfied. We all made a plan to hang out in Newport tomorrow. I told them I would drive everyone, as all their stuff would fit better in my ride.

I made the rounds in the morning and picked them up. We headed on down the coast. Parking in Newport Beach was as bad as Huntington this time of year. We finally found a place and headed for the sand. Lena, Sally, Lisa, and Nina did not surf, so I didn’t bring my board. We hauled all our stuff to the beach.



No familiar faces at all. Nina brought beer in the cooler. I told her, “You can get arrested if you get caught drinking that on this beach.” *I think you can, anyway.*

She put it back in the cooler. She didn’t say a word. She just got up, grabbed her purse, and walked up the beach. “I wonder where she went,” I said, watching her walk away.

“You got me,” Lisa said. Nina strolled back a few minutes later. She had a cup with a lid and a straw in her hand.

“Where there’s a will, there’s away,” she said, smiling at each one of us.

“You just crack me up,” I said. “I am going for a swim. Anyone for some body surfing?” They all shook their heads no.

“We are going to go get cups too. Do you want us to get you one?”

“No thanks. I will be in the water if anyone wants me,” I said.

I ran down and dove into the water, under the first wave that was breaking in front of me. The temperature was a little cool. It felt great. I bobbed around a little bit. I wore the wrong bathing suit, though. After a few mishaps with the top I realized my bathing suit was inappropriate for the sport of bodysurfing. So I floated around a little, and then got out and walked along the shore. Being alone was alright. I did not need a guy. I had my friends, and most of the summer left. All was cool in my world.

There was still Jaycee’s birthday coming up. I would probably do that solo. It would be a terrific time no matter what. She always threw a fabulous party. Ian would probably take Karen. I would be way over it by then. I needed to call Jaycee. I hadn’t talked with her in a while.

I was off in my own world, kicking the waves as they rolled up on the shore and then creeped back down into the ocean, watching little sand crabs scurry into the sand before the water went back out to sea. As I walked along, I heard a version of the



Beach Boys' "Surfer Girl." "Little surfer, little one makes my heart come all undone." It was not on the radio. Someone on the beach was singing it, maybe to someone else.

I looked around to see who was being serenaded. It was me, to my surprise and embarrassment. There was a guy walking slowly on the shore behind me. He was a handsome guy at that—longish surfer hair, dark tan skin. I turned around to face him.

"For real," I said, looking at him.

He shrugged his shoulders and said, "It was worth a try. What part didn't you like? The song choice, or my singing it?" He smiled at me with these pearly white teeth. *Nice smile*, I thought to myself.

We laughed, and he introduced himself. "My name is Randy. You are?"

"I'm Dee Dee," I replied.

"And Dee Dee is short for?" he asked.

"I'll never tell," I said to him, shaking my head adamantly. We laughed again. I didn't tell him, but it was short for Delores. Yuck. I hated that name. My cousin Cindy could not say it when we were little. She called me Dee Dee, and it stuck. Thank goodness for toddler vocabulary.

He asked me if I lived in Newport.

"No, I live in Huntington," I said.

"Why come here if you live at a beach?" He gave me a curious look.

"I wanted some different scenery. Why? Do you ask locals only, or something?" I said.

"No, I...ah..." He was at a loss for words for a second. Then he laughed and said, "I get it. We surfers are territorial. You are just being a surfer, with the turf stuff," he said. "Maybe you are here looking for guys?" His smile got real big. I didn't comment. He laughed again, asking, "Would I not be welcomed on your



beach?" I looked at him for a minute. He was extremely cute.

"No, I am not territorial. I cannot speak for some of my guy friends, though. So you surf too?" I asked.

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I do," he said. "Does it show?" He flexed his arm muscles.

"No," I said. He frowned at me. "Oh, I didn't mean you do not look the part, the long hair and dark tan, good muscle tone," I added. "You do not sound the part. You don't say dude or gnarly or call me a Betty." I didn't want to offend his macho-ness by not throwing something in about the muscles he so proudly flexed. He told me he was an educated surfer as he laughed.

We talked about this beach a little, and how crowded it got in the summer and on holidays. "I know the feeling. It is the same in Huntington." I asked him why he wasn't surfing. He let me know he was out all morning. His friends were up the beach. He liked to walk the shore. "By walk the shore, you mean pick up chicks?" I gave him a devilish grin.

"No, not usually," he told me. "Today I just got lucky."

"Oh. So you think you have picked me up, do you?" I asked.

"I didn't mean that. Well, maybe," he said. I laughed, and he just smiled.

"I need to walk up to where my friends are," I said.

"Why don't you trust me? Do you need back up?" He laughed at me. He was so charming I wondered if I did need back up.

"No, I told them I was going in the water. I have been down here a long time. I just want to let them know I did not drown."

"Do you mind if I go with you? I would like to hang out some more if you are in to it," he asked.

"Sure, come on. I will introduce you to my friends," I said as I grabbed his hand and pulled him along.

I didn't know why I grabbed his hand. I didn't normally act this forward with guys I did not know or just met. This was the



new me, I guessed. I was putting myself out there, and going bold. I was not holding back anymore. When I did, I had a tendency to run guys off, the way I did with Ian. The same as every other guy I had dated, for that matter. I wanted to see what would happen when I did the leading in the relationship for a change. Well, this was early to say relationship. We would see how this panned out.

We walked up to my friends, and they all stopped talking. They all stared at Randy, then at me. “Hi, girls. This is Randy.” I pointed at Randy and then made the circle, pointing first at Lena. “This is Lena, her sister Lisa, Sally, and Nina.” They all said hello. Nina’s beer buzz was starting to show.

“Where in the hell did you find him, Dee Dee? He is such a fox?” she asked way too loud.

I said in a hushed voice, “I found him on the beach. Do you have to talk so loud the whole beach heard?” We all started laughing. I couldn’t believe I said I found him. They all knew I just embarrassed myself in front of this bitchin’ guy.

Randy found the group pretty entertaining. He joined me on my towel, and we all sat around and talked. Everyone filled him in on where they lived and what they did. We started talking about getting back to Huntington.

Randy asked, “Can I talk to you in private for a minute?” All the girls gave each other conspiratorial looks and smiled at us.

“Sure.” He took my hand this time and helped me up off my towel. We walked out of earshot from my friends.

He remained holding my hand as we stood there. “I would like to see you again. If that’s OK?” he said. “Can I get your number, and maybe we can get together? Go out and do something maybe?”

“Yes, that would be cool,” I said. “Let me get a pen to write it down for you.”



“No need. This number I will remember.” He winked at me. I gave him my number and said goodbye.

He stood there watching us pack all of our stuff up. Then he walked us to the street where the car was. We all jumped in, and I waved as we drove off. He still stood there watching us go. He actually winked. Was that real cool or real goofy? I didn’t know, but there was something exciting and different about Randy. I couldn’t wait to get to know him better. He made me a little unnerved in an exciting way.

Randy was the talk of all the girls on the way home. He was not tall, but not short—maybe five foot nine or ten. He had a dark tan and long hair that had blond streaks bleached by the sun. “Oh, God, Dee Dee, he is good looking. Those sexy brown eyes, man,” Lena said.

Nina chimed in. “How do you do it? You’re just walking along the beach, and snag a good looking dude. When we couldn’t even find one in an entire theater last night.”

Lisa said, “He’s alright. I wouldn’t go all ape shit over him.”

“You are in love with Wade. You don’t see the possibilities here,” Lena said. “Besides, he couldn’t have shown up at a better time for Dee Dee. I dig him.” She looked over at me, giving her approval.

Lisa made a face. “I like Ian better. I am not in love with Wade, Lena.”

I said a little too loudly, and definitely angry, “Well, Ian doesn’t like me, and Randy seems to think I am really cool! So it doesn’t matter who you like better.” That shut everyone up.

Lena nudged Lisa with her elbow. “Great. You have to go and bring up Ian, you idiot,” she whispered to Lisa, but I could still hear her. It did not matter. I had a pretty fun day. I came away pleasantly surprised at the prospect of the new guy.

Lena, Lisa, Sally, and I all went to see Queen in concert the



following night. They were Lisa's favorite group next to Kiss. I liked Queen. Kiss, I was not such a fan. We had a fantastic time. We snuck in some rum and poured it in the soda we bought at the concession stand. It was not hard to sneak stuff in when you were a girl. Just put it flat on the bottom of your purse and put tampons on top. Guys looked in and let you go. Lena snuck some weed in too. She had it in her bra, and no one searched her.

The concert was good, but it seemed too short. Lisa was so excited. I was glad we got the tickets. She didn't like to spend her money on concerts when she could hear the group on the radio for free. I explained to her, "You have to experience a live performance to get into a group. That's just my opinion." She was hooked on going to concerts. I could tell by how she went on and on about it.

Lena told me on the way home she met this guy. He wasn't from around here, and no, we didn't know him. She met him at work. She worked at an ice cream parlor. He dropped in with his little nephew one day. They got to talking, and he asked her out. They were going out tomorrow night. He had to be a decent guy if he was taking his nephew out alone for ice cream. Single dudes didn't usually do things with little kids. We would all have to go out together if Randy called me and Lisa asked Wade. "You just want Wade to go back and tell Ian you are seeing someone," Lena said.

"Well, it can't hurt. I don't want to look as if Ian dumped me and I cannot get over it," I said with some attitude. "I wonder if I am going to hear from Randy," I said.

Lisa finally commented, "I don't think he dumped you. Did you call him?" I gave her a look.

"He has moved on. You saw him at the party with Karen."

"You'll hear from Randy. The way he was checking you out at the beach, no problem." Sally quickly got back to Randy. I dropped



Nina and Sally off first, then Lisa and Lena. Lena also told me she had been saving for a car. She would be buying one soon, and I would not have to be the taxi all the time. I just laughed. I didn't care about that. They were always pitching in for gas.

Wade parked his car out in front of Lisa and Lena's house. Lena and I both went, "Wow, he can't stand one night away from you."

"Shut up, you guys," she said with a huge smile. Lena walked into the house by herself, and Lisa ran and jumped in Wade's car.

I drove away feeling kind of jealous that she had someone who cared enough to sit in a car all night waiting on her. He knew we were going to the concert. There was no way of knowing when we would be home. It must be love.

When I got home, I quietly crept up to my room so I did not disturb my folks. I wished Randy would call. I kind of would like to be seen around town with someone new. It was dumb, but I had to look cool. Nobody probably cared if I was seeing anyone or not.

At least, if he did not call, my friends would never know. They wouldn't know I got shined on again. Just as I was about to turn off my light, the phone rang. I jumped because there was a phone in my parents' room as well. I did not want it to wake them. What if it was Randy? It was kind of late. Oh, well. I snatched it up and said really quietly, "Hello."

There was sobbing on the other end of the line. It was Lisa. "He doesn't want to see me anymore," she cried.

"Wade?" I said. That was stupid to say. Who else would it be?

"Of course Wade," she snapped.

"Did he say why?" I asked.

"He said he didn't want to hurt my feelings, but he just wasn't looking for a steady girl right now. He thinks I am an alright chick, but..." She continued to cry.



“What the hell?” I said.

“I tried to be cool and say I am not his girlfriend, that we are just hanging out,” she sniffled.

“What did he say to that?” I asked.

Then I listened to her cry some more before she could tell me his answer. “He said, he said a clean separation between us would be better. Then he said ‘I have to go, Lisa. I will see you around.’” She hiccupped in between words. “So I got out of his car and went in the house. I damn sure didn’t want him to see me cry.”

“Where is Lena?” I asked. I was surprised Lena did not follow him and kick his ass.

“She is right here. She said if we had a car she would go over and fuck up his car.”

It was a good thing they did not have a car. I tried to calm her. “I know how you feel, and I am sorry, but we need to sleep on this. I will call you guys and we all will talk more tomorrow about this. We can make plans, OK?” She agreed. She had been drinking all night and needed to sleep. I did too. “I will talk to you in the morning,” I assured her. “Tell Lena to chill out.”

What a total jerk off Wade was. He should have known better than to mess with one of my friends. They were always asking me to bring girls over, and when I did they acted like total dicks. That was not what I was expecting to hear tonight. Now I was all wound up, and it would take forever to fall asleep. I put my headphones on and lay back in my bean bag chair. I listened to my new Bread album. It was mellow, and just what I needed. “It don’t matter to me...” my stereo sang into my ear.

My door opened slowly, and my mom asked, “Is everything alright? Late night calls usually mean someone is in jail or the hospital.”

“Everything is fine, Mom, just a bad break up,” I told her.



“Are you drunk? You sound drunk,” she said.

“Maybe a little. I need to get some sleep, Mom,” I told her as I climbed into my bed.

“You certainly do. This conversation will resume tomorrow,” she said, all indignant. I didn’t answer. I just turned off my lamp and covered my head. Great, this was just great. I tossed and turned until sleep finally relieved me of my misery.

I slept in, and when I finally did get up the house was quiet. No one was home, thank goodness. Mom and Dad had gone to work. I ate a fried egg sandwich and called Lisa. She was better today. “That motherfucker. I will show him,” she yelled into the phone. She had a mouth on her when she got mad.

I told her no one was home over here if she and Lena wanted to walk over and hang out. Lena got on the phone. She had to work and had a date, so she would not be coming over. She would fill me in on the date tomorrow.

Lisa got back on the phone. “I will be right over,” she said, and she hung up.

A few minutes later she was at the door. “Come on in,” I hollered. She looked terrible. Her eyes were swollen.

“I know, I know. I look like a frog.” She laughed a little, and I hugged her.

“Are you hungry? I can make you something,” I offered.

“No, but coffee would be good.” So I broke out the coffee and made her some.

“So now what? You guys can’t do anything to his car. They will know it was you,” I said, kind of nervous about how they got even with people sometimes.

“Oh, that was just Lena blowing off steam. She will be occupied with this new guy, don’t worry.” *I wonder*, I thought to myself.

“I have decided to go up to Los Angeles and stay with my



cousins for the rest of the summer. They have been asking me to stay with them for some time. I just didn't want to go because of Wade. My mom plans on going up the day after tomorrow to spend time with her sister and some new man she met up there. I am going with her. They will bring me back if I want to come back," she said.

"What do you mean, if you want to come back?" I asked. There should be no if.

"I have nothing going for me here: no job, no money. My cousin has plans for us. If I stay I can work where she works," she said.

"Well, it sounds as if you already made up your mind. Be sure and call me now and then to tell me what you are up to. I am going to miss you. This all seems so drastic, because Wade is a jerk. You know there are so many other guys out there. I just went through this. I do not plan on leaving town."

"No, it's not as drastic as you think. My cousins and I have been talking about me coming for over a month. It's something I want to do. I know some guys up there too," she said. She drank her coffee and we talked for a while. She told me how much fun she always had in the summers past when she stayed up there for a week or two. I didn't remember her ever saying anything about Los Angeles, or it being fun. I hated L.A.

While we were talking the phone rang. "Please, no more bad news," I said to her as I picked up the phone. "Hello? Oh, hi, Randy," I said, and I gestured to the phone with my finger, giving Lisa a grin.

She took this as her cue to go. "I am going to take off," she said, walking toward the door.

"I will see you later, right?" I called as she was opening the front door.

"Yeah," she said, and she closed it behind her.



“Sorry, Lisa was just walking out my door. What’s up with you?” I asked.

He said, “Not much. I thought we could get together and do something.”

“What do you have in mind?” I asked.

“Now that is a dangerous question,” he laughed.

“I sort of left myself open, didn’t I?” I laughed back at him.

“Maybe a movie tonight? What do you think?” he asked.

“Sounds good. What time do you want to pick me up?” I said.

“I checked the paper and One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest starts at nine. I can pick you up at seven, and we can get something to eat first,” he said.

“Well, OK. It’s a date. See you then,” I said. I gave him directions to my house and hung up. Cool. I was wondering if he would call.

I had some running around to do, so I got dressed and headed out. I had to make a quick stop for gas. I pulled into the gas station and there was Ian’s van at the pump. There was Karen, riding shotgun.

I looked down at what I was wearing. Cool, low rise white short shorts and a tied up Hawaiian shirt. I looked the kind. Not that it mattered to anyone but me.

I decided to be the better person. I jumped out and walked around to the pump. “Hi, guys. How’s it going?” I gave them my best “I love life” smile and started pumping my gas. They just started self-serve gas pumps recently. I was glad I knew how to do it. I would have felt stupid had I not learned. Not that Ian would have helped me.

Ian said, “Hi. It’s going good. You?”

“Just peachy,” I said. Karen gave me a finger wave but didn’t speak. I decided to clear my name, and said, “Did you hear that Shelly and Keith are moving in together?” Ian looked at me kind



of strange. “Yeah, the night we went to the concert. They must have decided everything after I dropped them off. Keith was pretty wasted that night. Shelly had to babysit him. I taxied us around town in his car.”

I started to say more, but Ian cut in. “You and Keith aren’t...”

My turn. I cut him off. “Of course not. I cannot imagine why you would think that. Shelly and Keith have been together since Adam’s party. They have gotten really close. That’s why they are moving in together.” My pump clicked, letting me know my tank was full. I turned to Ian and Karen and said, “Well, I have to run. See you guys around.” I turned quickly, walking to the cashier.

“Oh, ah, sure. See you around,” Ian stuttered, trying to comprehend the information I just gave him.

I didn’t look back. But I knew he was just standing there staring at me. He continued to watch me walk to the pay window. Ha, I felt vindicated. How do you like them apples? I paid for my gas and kind of sashayed back to my car. He was still standing there dumbfounded. I jumped in and gave them a finger wave with a big smile before pulling out of the gas station. *That went quite well*, I thought to myself. Now I would finish up my errands and get ready for my date tonight. Randy, here I come. I had to find an excellent first date outfit. Not too revealing, but enough to keep his interest. I needed to get home and dig through my closet.

I would have to find something surfer girlish. I already wore the island print dress. Randy didn’t see it. It was wasted on Ian, who was all about Karen the first night I saw them together. I thought I would give it another try and see what kind of reaction I got this time. It had to be better than the last time. I had some new leather flip flops I bought at the beach the other day. That should be perfect.

Our first date went off without a hitch. I felt a little shy around Randy for some reason. He thought it was cute and ate it up. We



had dinner at Captain Jack's that night before going to the movie. Randy heard it was good. I didn't mention to him that Ian and I liked the crab legs there. I ordered prime rib and so did Randy, even though he thought it was strange to order beef at a place known for seafood. I thought everything they served was delicious.

We enjoyed the movie. We sat in his car for a while and talked after the movie. We talked easily, as if we had known each other for longer than we had. He tried to make some moves, but I put him off. He was incredibly good looking and sexy as hell, but I did not want to get used. We would have to get to know each other before I was ready for anything more than a kiss. We ended up talking for hours that first night. It was cool. We seemed to have many things in common.



CHAPTER 5

Randy and I had been hanging out for two weeks—not every day or anything smothering like that. We had dinner a few times. We walked on the pier and talked late into the night on several occasions. I enjoyed his company. He was really funny. And he was so charming. Did I mention he was very, very charming? We talked about everything. He was the oldest of four brothers. He was barely a year older than his younger brother. He said his parents wanted them to all be close in age.

Anyway, I told him there were three kids in my family and that I was the youngest. He was four years older than me. He worked for his family's business. His father was an architect who had designed a lot of buildings in Southern California. He told me he did construction. He was working on his contractor's license. He came by one night and we just hung out in front of my house talking. We seemed to do a lot of talking.

Another night, he came by and took me to his house. He had an apartment in Newport that he shared with his brother. The rest of the brothers were still at home with his mom and dad. His brother was home, thank goodness. I was feeling a little pressure. We sat and talked to Ray, his brother, for a while, had



a few drinks, and then drove down to the beach. We sat on the swings in the playground on the beach, talking about this and that. He always seemed to have the right things to say. I was becoming totally at ease with him.

He was going to go on a surf trip with his buddies. He would be gone for a few days. He wanted me to know so I would not think he bailed on me when I did not hear from him until he got back.

I smiled and tried to act cool. “You don’t have to check in with me, or tell me where you are going,” I said.

“I enjoy spending time with you, you know. I like you and want you to be around when I get back,” he said, pulling my swing close to him so he could kiss me.

“Well, in that case, have a good trip, and you know where to find me when you return,” I said, and I kissed him. He smiled, showing his perfectly white, straight teeth. I was starting to really like that smile. We talked and kissed and talked and kissed. Then I told him I should be getting home. It was too early in this friendship to do anything foolish. If we kept kissing, I wouldn’t be able to control myself.

“You sure you don’t want to come back to my apartment for a while? I am sure Ray has gone by now,” he asked as he rubbed my back.

“Oh, I don’t think so. I really need to go home,” I said.

I could see the disappointment in his face, but he smiled and said, “Alright. Let’s get you home.”

He opened my door for me and then went around to the driver side and got in. He was really quiet. I was wondering if he actually thought he was going to get lucky tonight. Too bad. I was not ready for sex with him just yet. No doubt I liked him, but how did I know he wouldn’t be a Wade and dump me after he got what he wanted, like he did with Lisa? That whole mess was still fresh in my mind. I tried to make small talk to see where



we stood. “You have a really nice car,” I said, looking over at him, trying to get him to look at me so I could read his mood. He drove a BMW. It was a beautiful black shiny car.

“Thanks. It’s kind of extravagant, but I work really hard and am dirty all day. This was my reward,” he laughed. “Does that sound like a little kid or what?”

“No, I think people who work hard deserve nice things. Selfish or not,” I said.

Then he took my hand and held it the rest of the way home. Crisis averted, thank goodness. I thought this was going to be over before it ever got started. We talked about his surfing trip. They were going to San Onofre. I had never been, I told him. I had surfed in San Diego.

He told me, “I keep forgetting that you surf. After my trip we will have to catch some waves together.”

“That sounds good. I have never seen you surf. You could be a poser for all I know,” I said, laughing at him.

We laughed as he walked around to open my door. We walked up the front walkway and he moved in to kiss me good night. It felt like *deja vu*. Only the light was not going off and on. I closed the door behind me and stood there listening to him pull away. I was really into being with Randy. I was wondering if we could be a couple. “We shall see,” I said out loud to myself.

I hadn’t seen Jaycee in a while. I gave her a call to see what she was up to, and if she wanted to hang out. She needed to ride into Los Angeles to check on some business for her dad and asked me to ride along. What was up with going to L.A.? I didn’t have anything else to do. I might as well tag along. We rode into the city with the top down. I drove, of course. This car was gorgeous. I really felt like somebody special driving it. Jaycee was in an extra good mood.

We went to a bank for her dad. She got some papers and what



looked like a lot of money. I didn't ask her about it. I should not be nosey about her dad's business transactions. After we left the bank we headed back to Huntington. "We have to make a quick stop, and then we will go get something to eat," she said.

"OK," I said. She had me stop at a house in Sunset, and I waited in the car. This whole thing seemed odd to me, but hey, I was just along for the ride. She came out, and we went to Sizzler for the steak and salad bar.

I loved the salad bar. The steak I was not into. She carved her steak up and ate like a man. We talked about her party coming up. "It will be fun," she clapped her hands, "as long as I have some party material."

"You got that handled?" I asked, because I just happened to know someone to get the illegal party material she was talking about.

"Oh, yes, I have a friend that will handle that for me." I did not ask about her friend, in case we were not talking about the same person. I didn't want to name names.

"Cool," I said, and I finished eating my salad.

We cruised back to her house and broke out a bottle of wine. "Let's party," she said. "You can stay in the spare room so you won't have to drive."

I looked at her and jumped up. "I need to ring the house and let my folks know," I said. I called my house my dad answered. I told him I was staying at Jaycee's house. He thanked me for the call and told me good night. "Good night," I said.

Jaycee and I drank wine and talked about what had been happening. As we were talking about me not seeing Ian anymore, she casually reached into her purse and pulled out a large bag of blow. Then she pulled a large mirror out from under her couch. She began chopping up some with a razor blade. "Is that an ounce?" I asked.



“No, it is only one half ounce,” she said casually.

“Why so much, Jaycee? You selling it?” I asked, a little unnerved by the amount.

“Hell no. It’s my personal. I buy in large amounts like this so I don’t have to go back as often. I also get a better price. It’s a safety precaution. I don’t want to get busted, you know,” she said, smiling, while she continued chopping lines.

“This is hardly a recreational amount,” I said, looking kind of shocked at her.

“Oh, don’t go getting all weird on me. This will last a really long time,” she said, getting defensive.

“I should hope so,” I said. She turned on some music and we changed the subject. I did a little with her, but that amount was really bothering me. It sure wasn’t bothering her, because she was snorting with gusto. She kept offering me some, but I told her I was good. We ended up having a good time, laughing and talking into the early morning.

I finally told her that I was ready to crash, and she pointed up the stairs. “Go ahead. I am right behind you. Let me just put away this stuff.”

“Do you need my help?” I rinsed out my wine glass and set it on the drainer.

“No thanks. You go on up,” she said.

“Good night,” I told her as I slowly went up the stairs. The spare room was cozy. It had a big four poster bed with a floral comforter and pillows. I pulled the decorative pillows off and pulled the comforter down. I stripped down to my undies and climbed in the bed. It didn’t take long to fall asleep. The combination of crisp cool sheets along with the wine always did it to me.

I woke up to the sound of glasses clinking around in the kitchen. I put on my clothes and headed on down. “You are up



early,” I said all cheery. “Do you have any plans today?” I asked.

“No, I just want to lay around on the sun deck and get some sun. Maybe eat some Mexican food later,” she said. “Did you bring your bathing suit? If not, I will buy you one.”

“Are you for real, Jaycee? I surf. There is almost always a bathing suit in my car. I will be right back.” She always wanted to buy me stuff. I knew she meant well, but it was embarrassing.

I was walking out to the car, thinking that she looked like she had not slept. I bet she stayed up all night doing coke. I looked in the back, and sure enough, there was a suit in there. It was kind of damp, but that was OK. It would dry quickly enough in this heat. I grabbed it and headed back in. She was in the bathroom, so I just went up to the spare room and changed.

I came down and she was still in the bathroom. I asked if she was OK. “Sure, sure, be right out. You can go up on the deck if you want. Oh, and there is coffee, and I went out and got donuts earlier,” she hollered through the door. It didn’t take a rocket scientist to know she was still getting high.

I headed up to the top floor and walked out onto the deck. I just loved the view. I positioned my lounge so that I faced the ocean, which was a little over a mile off in the distance. I drank my coffee and waited on her. I should have grabbed one of those donuts. She finally joined me. We spent a relaxing afternoon together...even though I was worried about how much coke she had been doing.

“What is that guy’s name you are hanging out with?” she asked.

“Randy,” I told her.

“So will he be coming with you to my party?” she asked me.

“I don’t know. I really only just met him. I am not sure I am ready to introduce him to all of my friends,” I said.

“I wonder if Ian will still come. I need to call him,” she said.



I just said, “I would not know. I did run into him and Karen at the gas station not too long ago.”

“You think he is really into her?” she asked.

“Once again, I would not know. They are hanging out together,” I said.

“You still want to go with me to eat Mexican food? There is the best little place that opened up on Warner and Bolsa Chica,” she said.

“I need to go home and take a shower and change. Then I will come right back. And no, I don’t want you to buy me something to wear so I do not have to go home. I will only be gone a half hour or so,” I said.

She laughed. “Suit yourself.”

I ran down the stairs to my car and headed home. I ran in and told my parents I was going out to eat with Jaycee. My mom looked at me. “We still need to talk about the other night.”

“What’s there to say? I drank at the concert. I got home safely,” I said.

“You are not twenty-one yet, young lady, and you should not be drinking,” she said.

“I will be soon.” I looked at her.

My dad was always the life saver. He said, “No harm, no foul. But if you get in trouble do not call us to bail you out. You will learn the hard way the consequences of getting in that kind of trouble. You could even spend a night in jail.”

I nodded at them. “I understand.” I ran up the stairs, took a shower, changed quickly, and ran out the door. When I got back to Jaycee’s she was ready to go too. Once again we took her car and I drove. The place was not far. The food was absolutely wonderful. It was very authentic. I hadn’t eaten all day, so I cleaned my plate. Jaycee did the same.

“I want to go up to this little club I found. Do you want to



go?” she asked.

“Yes, sounds like fun to me. I don’t have ID, though,” I said.

“Don’t worry. I know the door man,” she said. She told me how to get there, and we headed that way.

We pulled into the parking lot. Before we got out of the car she pulled out a bullet full of coke and spooned some up each nostril. “Here, you do some.” She shoved the bullet at me. I did a little, and we went inside. The place was cranking. The music was not bad, and the place was loud. We found a table off to the side and sat. We ordered drinks and tried to hold a conversation over the loud music. Guys came by and asked me to dance. I sweetly declined. “Why don’t you dance with any of them?” she asked me as one came up and asked her.

She said, “No thank you,” and we both started laughing.

“The right one hasn’t asked.” I gave her a devilish grin.

After a few more drinks and a few more bumps off that cocaine bullet, we were ready to dance. “Screw these guys. Let’s dance.” I grabbed her hand and pulled her up on the dance floor. I danced and jumped around to several songs. Jaycee was spinning around. We laughed, and some guys tried to dance around us. It was really a good time. The same losers kept bothering us, so I threw my arm around Jaycee and told them, “We are together.” I kissed Jaycee real quickly on the mouth. “Do you get my meaning? Together!”

They looked at each other, and us, and then it hit them. “Oh, sorry. My mistake.” They walked away. We started laughing. Pulling the lesbian trick worked every time.

She eventually talked to a few guys. They seemed nice enough. She invited them back to her house.

“No, no, no,” I was squealing.

“Oh, come on. They are coming ‘cause I told them you would be there too. You don’t have to stay if you don’t want,”



she was begging. “But, please,” she whined.

“Oh, OK,” I said. They followed us back to her house.

They stopped at the store to buy beer and wine, then came in right behind us. We all went in, sat, and talked for a while. Then the big mirror came out, and everyone was doing lines. I didn’t mind talking with them. I just did not come here to be set up. At about three in the morning, I said my goodbyes, and this one dude wanted me stay. I gave him an excuse about work, said my goodbyes, and hauled my butt out of there. I told Jaycee, “I will call you tomorrow,” but she did not answer because she had some guy’s tongue down her throat. She just waved.

I was relieved to pull into our driveway. It was late. I had been drinking and doing coke. I didn’t know what I was doing these days. I snuck up to my room. I didn’t bother turning on the light. I just stripped off my smoky smelling clothes and climbed into bed. I stayed up almost all night again. I drifted off to sleep thinking about all the things I had been doing this summer. I knew I shouldn’t think this, but I had been enjoying myself.

I slept in until noon. No one was home. I went downstairs in a fog. After I ate I decided to call over to Lena and Lisa. I never heard how Lena’s date went, and I wanted to find out when Lisa went to L.A. No one answered, so I hung up. I would try again later. I called over to check on Jaycee. “Hello,” she said, kind of sleepy.

“Hey, it’s just me. I wanted to see if you survived, and if anyone stayed?”

“Yes, they all stayed. We just went to bed a little while ago. Call me later.” Click. She hung up.

I hung out around the house for a while, and then decided to ride down to the beach. It looked like glass that afternoon. I grabbed my board and headed on out. It was smooth, and the swells were small. I got out there past the breakers, and then it always hit me. Jaws. Ever since I saw the movie I now always



had that Jaws moment. Then, after I rode a few in, I forgot about the possibility of being eaten by a shark. I had to admit it was pretty fun out here today. When the waves were smaller, it was easier to try new tricks. I worked on a 360 since there was no one I knew out here. It was really hard with twin fins, but I played around with it anyway.

I wore myself out after a couple hours and went on in. I saw Steve when I got up to my stuff. “I saw you out there hot dogging it,” he said.

“I was just goofing around, having fun,” I said.

“Well, you looked pretty decent,” he said.

“Yeah, right,” I said.

“No, for real,” he told me.

“Thanks, but I need a lot of work to be at your level,” I said, boosting his ego.

He just shook his head. “Hey, we are doing the bonfire tonight, and we are going to bury a keg. If you want to come we will be in Sunset, about a half mile south of Warner. Bring your friends and just look for our cars. You will probably hear us first,” he laughed.

“Cool, it sounds like fun,” I said. We hung out, talking for a while longer, then I headed on home. The bonfire parties were always fun. I would call Lena, Shelly, and Jaycee to see if anyone wanted to go.

Lena had a date with her new guy. They had a good time the other night and were going out again. She said maybe they could still drop by. She would see how it went. Lisa went to Los Angeles already.

“Man, she left already. I can’t believe she didn’t say goodbye,” I said.

Lena said, “Lisa is in a funk. It will be good for her to get away.” I thought we were close. I wouldn’t have left without



saying a word. Geez. Lena acted as if it was no big deal. Then she let me know she had to go.

Shelly and Keith already had plans. Cindy was not home when I called her house. Next, I called Jaycee and saw what she was up to. “I am going to dinner with Ted, one of the guys from last night. Maybe we will stop out there after. Tell me where,” she said. I gave her the directions I got, and she hung up. Damn. I really didn’t want to go alone, but what the heck. I didn’t want to miss it either.

I decided on some capri jeans and put on a Hawaiian shirt that I tied up in the middle. I braided my hair as it was always windy at night, and I did not want my hair to tangle. I checked myself out in the mirror. I looked decent, so I grabbed some leather flip flops and gave myself a spray of lemon fresh splash. I loved that stuff. I had to look good when I was flying solo. I was as ready as I would ever be.

As I closed the front door I heard a honk. I turned around, and it was Cindy, my cousin. “Hey, where are you going?” she asked.

“I was headed to a bonfire at the beach, you want to come?” I said.

“Yes, I was just coming over to see what you were doing. I am bored, looking for something fun to do,” she told me.

“Great, let’s go,” I said.

“We can take my car. Cute top.” She pointed at my shirt.

“I am so glad you came. It should be fun,” I said, climbing into her car.

She reached into the back seat and pulled out a couple of beers. “Let’s get started,” she smiled.

“Wow, you came prepared.” I laughed at her, wondering who sold beer to an eighteen-year-old girl. I was always able to score—why not Cindy?



I gave her the directions, and we headed on out to the beach. It was not far. We were there quickly. We left our bottles in the car. It was illegal to drink on the state beach. That was why they buried a keg. We put the tap nozzle on a Frisbee to keep it from getting sandy. We drank out of disposable cups to be ambiguous. Cops never bothered us as long as there were no scenes or fights.

We walked up and I said hi to several people. I introduced Cindy to the ones that did not know her. Steve walked up with two cups and showed us where the keg was buried. It looked like we were going to have a great time. We were all laughing and talking. Joints were being passed around. Wade was there. I did not say much to him. I was still pissed about Lisa. But I didn't want to get into that tonight. Jimmy sat by us, and we chatted for a while. He let us know that Ian and Dewey should be here later. Great. I should have known. Cindy and I talked about being cool.

I loved how the waves looked florescent when there was a full moon. It was beautiful. Cindy, Jimmy, Steve, and I were all looking out at the ocean. Jimmy and Steve were trying to make moves on us. We all laughed. I joked around with them, trying to keep it friendly. Besides, it looked like Cindy had her eye on Chris. Chris was kind of shy. I told her she would have to make the first move. He never would. As we conspired together on what to do about Chris, we turned around to get more beer, and Ian, Dewey, and Karen were at the keg.

"I bet Karen is making the runs to Newport now. I have been replaced," I said.

"What runs to Newport?" Cindy asked.

"Oh, when Ian and I were hanging out, we were going to get weed in Newport, pounds of it," I said.

"Why didn't you ever tell me that?" she asked.

"I don't know. I guess I felt like Dewey wouldn't dig me



telling anyone,” I said.

“No big deal, but it’s not like I would say anything,” she said.

“I know. I never thought you would. Well, no time like the present to break the ice. Let’s get some more beer and say hi.” I walked up and said, “Hello, guys. Do you remember my cousin Cindy?”

“Sure, hi, Cindy,” Ian said.

Dewey said, “Hi,” and Karen again did not say anything.

We made some small talk about the summer, filled the beer cups, and then Cindy and I walked off. “That was uncomfortable,” I mumbled. “I wonder if we are ever going to be friends, or if it is always going to be weird?”

Cindy looked at me and said, “It’s always going to be weird because you two could have been something, you should be something. Maybe you still are, and you just don’t realize it.” I didn’t know what to think about that. It really didn’t matter now.

“Well, we’re not something. He doesn’t feel that way. I never see him without her,” I said with frustration, slinging my thumb towards Karen.

“The problem is that you two have never sat down and talked about your feelings for each other since that day you went to Catalina,” she said, looking at me with seriousness I had never noticed in Cindy.

“OK, Dr. Cindy, when did you become the psychologist?”

“Laugh if you want, but I still think you need to talk to him,” she said.

“That’s not going to happen. Let’s drop it, and have some fun,” I said, and I shoved her.

She tried to shove me back, but I ran just out of reach. I hollered back over my shoulder, cracking up at her. “They are playing my song.” On the radio, “Tiny Dancer” by Elton John and Bernie Taupin was playing. I sung and spun around, laughing



and singing. Steve jumped right in to slow dance with me. Cindy pulled Chris up and made him dance.

This was very odd for Chris. He was so very shy, and that was nothing he normally would do. But he let himself be pulled along. The song ended and I pushed Steve away. He could get carried away quickly. If you didn't keep him in check he became all hands. I had learned never to let him put his hands anywhere on me for too long. Someone changed the station, and David Bowie was singing "Changes." We all tried to sing along. It was disastrous but funny. Not one of us could carry a tune, it appeared. No one seemed to care, and we sang along to a few more tunes. I danced with Jimmy for a few songs then moved on.

I told Cindy I had to go to the bathroom, and I started walking up to the parking area where there were public restrooms. As I came around the side of the building, Ian was coming out of the men's room. "Hey, Luv, how are you?" he said.

"Oh, I am good. What about you? Are you having a good summer?" I asked. I wondered if now would be a good time to have a little talk.

He walked up close to me and started to say, "Not really..." He was cut off mid-sentence by the sound of Karen's voice, calling him from the other side of the restrooms.

"Ian, what is taking you so long?" He looked at me.

"I'll be right there," he yelled to her. "I was hoping..." And that was all he said because she came around the corner.

"There you are." She wasn't looking at him. She was staring at me.

"Looks as if beer is running right through all of us," I said in a hurry, and I pushed past him and into the women's restroom.

I could hear them arguing about what she thought he might be doing. He told her to chill out. Everyone ended up in the bathroom sooner or later. It was no place for any kind



of romantic interlude, and he told her to get a grip. They were walking away, so I did not hear the rest. I hated confrontation. I was glad that was over, but so much for talking anything out. The public restroom was no place for a heart to heart.

I walked back to the party and wished Randy was here. It would help my status here with Ian and Karen being an item. I would like to have a guy with me. I loved all these guys. Most of them I had known since elementary school. A couple of them I even went steady with in junior high. I was so much younger then, and my tastes had changed. I really couldn't rekindle anything with any of the past boyfriends, and had no desire to start up anything with the others.

Cindy, Chris, and I are all standing off to the side, talking. I had that funny feeling you get when you know someone is looking at you. It was Karen. I wished she would just say something instead of just staring. It was over between Ian and me. I had no plans with Ian. I could see it. Could she not see that? She was the one who came here with him. What could she have to be worried about?

We hung out for a while longer, drank a few more beers, and then I told Cindy I was ready to go. She was not ready, of course, and wanted to hang with Chris a while longer. He said, "Give me your number. We will get together." I was glad. I would hate to ruin her night. Giving her number to Chris seemed to make it OK to leave. She had another night with Chris to look forward to.

As we were walking away, I told her, "We want to look cool, and not be the last to leave. That sometimes makes you look like you are waiting for a hook up."

"I was looking for a hook up," she said, and we both started laughing. We drove through Jack in the Box and got some food to take home to eat. I went to her house and spent the night. We talked until all hours of the night about Chris, Randy, Tony from



Yosemite, Ian, and Karen. I did not remember falling asleep.

The next thing I knew, there was a black Labrador in my face. “Joey, would you please get out of my face?” I grumbled. Joey was Cindy’s dog. He was a big lovable dog she got for her birthday several years ago.

“He needs to go out.” She hit me with a pillow. “I will let him out. Come on Joey,” Cindy grumbled. She jumped up and opened the side door. Joey bounded out to the back yard. What a happy dog.

We decided to go to the beach. I didn’t know if I would surf, but I wanted to take my board. We went around to my house to swap out cars and get my bathing suit and board. It was a little overcast but it should burn off. The usual dudes were here. Chris was out in the water. Cindy was really stoked. “Stay cool. He will come over. Don’t look anxious,” I told her.

Sure enough, when he came out of the water he saw us as he was coming in. “Hey, ladies, I didn’t expect to see you here,” he said, and he gave Cindy a grin. He said that for her benefit, as I saw him here all the time. From then on it was their conversation, and I just kind of drifted in and out of it. I thought he liked her. He was a really decent guy, and, well, Cindy was my cousin. I didn’t want anyone playing games with her affections.

We had been laying out for several hours, and I needed something cold to drink. As I was bent over digging for some change for a Dr. Pepper, I heard a familiar voice say, “Nice view.” I looked through my legs and realized that my butt was up in the air. Randy was walking up behind me. I saw him upside down. He looked good upside down. I jumped up. My face was all red. I was embarrassed as all hell.

“Hey, you’re back,” I stammered.

“Yes. If I remember, I told you I’d only be gone a few days,” he said. He was getting a kick out of my embarrassment, and he



kept smiling at me.

“What are you doing here?” I stammered.

“What? You are not glad to see me?” he said, feigning sadness. “Your mom told me I would find you here. I called your house,” he said, still grinning. “We had a nice chat about how you live down at the pier. I thought only pier rats lived at the pier. I could be wrong.”

I gave him a look. “For sure,” I replied. He knew I thought he was a smart ass.

I stepped towards him to say something, and he grabbed me by my hips and pulled me to him, kissing me. Not just a peck, either. I couldn’t help but be startled, and then I kissed him back. I felt myself heating up quick. I felt I was melting into him. “Are you glad to see me?” he asked. I was still trying to get my head together after that kiss.

“Yes I am,” I said. He looked at me but didn’t let me go. I also noticed that my guy friends were all staring open mouthed, and some looked pissed off. I would have a lot of explaining to do about who he was. But not right now. I was really glad to see him. He appeared to feel the same way.

“I was just going up to get something to drink. Walk with me?” I said. He took my hand, and we walked off. I needed to get him away from the dudes. This was not going to go well, I could tell. It was going to be a turf thing. They all knew he wasn’t a local boy. I would worry about that later. All I could think about was kissing him again. I was not sure, but I thought I was running a fever. I didn’t remember ever getting this frazzled over a kiss before. I felt like we kind of sizzled when we kissed. Or maybe I had just been deprived of intimate contact for a while.

I asked him about his trip. He didn’t give me much detail. He said it was OK, but he was thinking of me the whole time and wanted to get back. Alright now, this was just what I wanted



to hear. So I didn't ask any more about the trip. We got the Dr. Pepper and walked back to my spot. He pulled me to him again and said he could not stay. He had some things to do, but that he just needed to see me and wanted me to know he was back from his trip. He pulled me up against him again and kissed me hard. Wow, now I knew how Scarlett O'Hara felt in *Gone with the Wind*.

I was not usually into public affection, but what could I say. I was drawn in and could not get out. He moved his hands down my sides real slow while kissing me, and I could not do anything but let him. He pulled his head back and said, "Let's get together tonight, OK? I have missed you." I could not even speak. I just kept my eyes on his eyes and nodded my head yes.

He touched the side of my face with the backs of his fingers and said, "I will call you later," and he slowly pulled away from me and walked off without even looking back. He did, however, say rather loudly, "See you tonight." I knew that was for our audience's benefit. He seemed to be enjoying the way they were checking us out.

All the guys who were hanging around Cindy and me were giving him the stink eye! I could tell they did not like that little scene at all. They stared him down as he walked away. He smiled and kept walking. I was glad he didn't say anything to any of them. They were all scrappers and would have loved nothing better than to kick his ass all over the beach.

I stood there staring after him. I didn't even notice that Jimmy was asking me something. "Earth to Dee Dee," he said.

"Oh, what?" I stuttered.

Jimmy gave me this disgusted look, asking, "Who's the dude? He is not from around here."

I turned to him. "No he is not. The dude is my friend, and it's none of your business," I added.



He puffed up his chest a little, making fists with both hands. “Chill. It just looked to me as if he was going to do you right here in front of everyone, and you didn’t fight him off,” he said. “It is just not cool! That’s not like you, Dee. Little Miss Hard to Get.”

“I told you he is my friend. We have been seeing each other for a few weeks. He is not from around here. I didn’t know I had to get permission to date from any of you,” I shouted at him and the rest of the crew that was looking over at me.

“I don’t know what you are getting mad about. I am just being a good friend, and looking out for you.” He was looking around to the other guys for approval. “After what we just saw you need looking after.”

They nodded their heads in approval. “Yeah, he was molesting you right here, man,” Steve snarled. “We got to look out for our own,” he said, looking back at Jimmy. Jimmy started to speak. I stopped him, putting my hands up.

“No, Jimmy, that’s not how it is, and Steve, you know it. If I would have been making out with one of you, no one would say a word. You guys are all going to find something wrong with him because he is not local. He surfs in Newport, where he lives, and if he wants to come here and spend time with me, he will,” I said.

They all stood there and grumbled about the new guy. They were all in agreement that he did not belong and needed to stay on his own beach. It was just how I knew it would be. So I told them all what I was thinking.

“We don’t have to like him,” one of them shouted. I was pretty sure it was Billy.

“I am not asking you to like him, just give him the benefit of the doubt and get to know him before you pass judgment.” I stamped my foot on the sand.

I started to pick up my stuff, and Steve walked over. “Don’t



go. We don't want you to be mad at us. We just care about you. You would do the same if we showed up with some inland girls from Anaheim, now wouldn't you?" he asked me, the others were all saying, "Yeah, wouldn't ya?"

I dropped my stuff and looked at them. They all looked pitifully sorry. "I guess," I said. They all made sad puppy faces. We all started laughing. They started mimicking valley girls, trying to pick up on each other.

"I am, like, totally into you, Steve." Billy was trying hard to sound like a girl. What a bunch of goofy guys. I stood there and glared at them.

"Goofing around doesn't fix things. I am going to see whoever I want to," I said.

"OK, OK, we will give him a break, but he can't be all over you out here in front of us, or we may have to flatten his face!" Jimmy was acting like a big brother.

"Alright, no more public shows," I laughed. "I am sorry too." I could see that they would jump him the first time he did something wrong. I would have to keep them all separated. I was hoping to ease him into my group of friends. With these guys so close to me for all these years, it was going to be difficult.

Cindy finally said something. "Wow, he is cute. When are you seeing him again?"

I smiled. "Tonight. He is going to call me later."

She gave me a big smile and said, "Chris and I are going to the drive-in. I'd ask you guys to come but, well, you know."

"I do know, and don't worry about it. I haven't seen Randy in several days I think we need some alone time too." I really was looking forward to some alone time.

"I'll say that little scene was turning me, Chris, and everyone around us on just watching," she said.

"Great. Everyone is going to be thinking bad things about



me,” I said.

“I wouldn’t say they are thinking bad things, but you definitely got some imaginations going.” She gave me an evil grin.

“As if,” I said. We hung out for another hour or so. Chris said he needed to do some things before they went out tonight, so he took off. We packed all our stuff and headed out right behind him.

We followed him most of the way. It looked as though he might be headed to Dewey and Ian’s neighborhood. Chris lived over by our neighborhood.

I wondered if he also was in business with Dewey. I asked Cindy if she knew, and she said she did not. There wasn’t anyone in this town that was not connected to the drug business, one way or another, it would seem. I dropped her off and headed over to my house.

I took a shower and waited for Randy to call. My phone rang and I jumped. It was not Randy. It was Jaycee. She needed some weed. She didn’t know Adam, so I told her I would check around and call her back. Randy called and he said he would pick me up at eight.

“Dress nice. We are going to dinner,” he said.

I called Adam and saw if he had anything. He just got some from Dewey. I asked if I could come by and pick it up. “Sure, come on by. I will be home.” I told him it would have to be hit and run. I had a date.

I got dressed in this cute little black tank dress. I threw on some strappy black high heel sandals and off I went to Adam’s. No one was there. He walked out to the car and leaned in the window. He gave me the thumbs up. “You look nice,” he said. We talked for a minute before he dropped the weed in my lap. He told me to hug him and put the money in his hand. I did, and my first drug deal was complete.

I pushed the bag of weed under my seat. I waved goodbye and



headed over to Jaycee's. I ran up to the door, tapped, and went in. I gave her the weed. She gave me the money and twenty-five dollars extra. I told her it was not necessary. She said it was for the risk. I hugged her and left. Now I had just made a profit off my first drug deal.

I got back to my house just in time. I shut the door behind me, and a few minutes later the doorbell rang. It was Randy. He looked so attractive all dressed up. "Are you ready?" he asked.

"Let me grab my purse," I said. I ran upstairs to swap out the one I carried every day for a small black one. I took one last look in the mirror. Not bad, I said to myself. I walked slowly back down the stairs to give him the grand entrance effect. He gave me an appreciative once over.

"Wow, poetry in motion," he said.

"You look good as well," I said.

We headed back towards Newport Beach. He was taking me to the Rueben E. Lee. It was a restaurant on a boat. They had steak and seafood. This was a pleasant choice. We were seated by the window overlooking the water, and the sun was setting. "What a beautiful night," I said. He pulled out my chair for me. Bonus points for him.

He reached for my hand and said, "Yes it is." He looked deep into my soul with those sexy eyes.

The waiter came by to get our drink order. Randy ordered a rum and Coke. I tried to order the same, but they asked for my ID. I felt really stupid and just ordered a Coke. The waiter smiled at me and walked away. "How old are you?" he asked.

"I am twenty," I said. He was twenty-four. He told me that when we first met. They took our order. We both got surf and turf. The food was superb. We had no room for dessert, so we walked along the docks. There were lots of beautiful yachts moored here.



I didn't know why, but I wondered if any of these boats ran drugs from out of the country. How weird that I would be thinking that right now, with Randy holding my hand and talking about how John Wayne moors his Catamaran in Newport. I was also aware of the heat from his hand traveling up my arm. Holding hands was usually an innocent sign of affection.

But everything about Randy caused a sexual friction in me. I was so aware of every touch for some reason tonight. We stopped at the end of the walkway and looked out over the harbor. He put a hand gently on the lower part of my neck, and that sent a chill down my spine. He smiled knowingly at me.

"I wanted to take you to Hut Two for some dancing. They may not serve you there either," he said.

"I think I am just going to hand my ID to the waiter and see if they notice. My birthday is not far off."

"That sounds cool," he said. The place we were going was not a far drive. We got there pretty fast. He got out of the car and ran around to let me out. We parked pretty close to the front door, and the doorman saw what we were driving and gave Randy the thumbs up. "Thanks, man," Randy said. And we went in. It was kind of early for club action, so we got a nice table right off the dance floor.

A very cute waitress asked us what we wanted. We told her, and she asked for I.D. I handed mine over. She glanced at it. I didn't think she even looked at it because she was so busy eyeballing Randy. She handed the I.D. back to me while smiling at Randy. "She obviously likes you," I said. He just shrugged. I couldn't help but notice he watched her ass the whole time she was walking away. I thought to myself, Guys are always going to look, and put it out of my mind.

We were dancing, drinking, and having a terrific time together. I excused myself to the ladies room. There was a crowd



in there. Some stalls had more than one girl in them. I was sure I heard the sounds of people snorting up in those stalls. I didn't care. I really had to go, and would like to get in there. It was finally my turn after a fifteen minute wait. I was in and out. There were girls snorting right at the sink. I washed my hands and headed out.

I saw Randy walking my way with a concerned look on his face. "Are you feeling OK?" he asked.

"Yes, I am OK. The restroom was really crowded. There were women in the stalls and at the sink snorting coke. I think a guy was in one of the stalls with them," I said.

"Oh, man, I am sorry you had to witness that. I can't stand putting pollutants into your body. Do you want to go somewhere else?" he asked.

"No, it's not a problem. I am OK. What other people do is their own thing," I said, but I was thinking, *This is very good to know*. There were a lot of people we would never be able to hang around, and many parties we would not be attending together.

We went back to the table and forgot about that conversation. We danced all night. Randy was a pretty good dancer. I didn't know many guys that had any rhythm. We were hot, sweaty, and had spent most of the night all over each other. This type of behavior was uncharacteristic for me. I went with the flow and found my heart racing. I felt erotic. He finally asked me, "Do you want to get out of here?"

I said, "Sure." I knew he wanted to take me to his place. He paid our tab and we left.

We went straight to his house. No frills, no prelude to what was next. He unlocked the door and ushered me in. He turned on a lamp but took my hand and led me to his bedroom. He said, "I feel we have something really special between us. I would like to take it a step further." He looked me in the eyes, and I felt the



heat rolling through my body. I didn't say anything. I did not need to. He could see it in my eyes.

The next thing I knew it was a frenzy of taking clothes off and throwing them around the room. He was very smooth. He knew what to do, and exactly when to do it. He was not old fashioned. He was very imaginative, and once again, I went with the flow. We went through unusual moves. I felt he was almost professional with his knowledge of the female anatomy.

Maybe it was just that I was not as experienced as I thought. We laid there looking up at the ceiling. "I should be going home," I whispered.

"No, stay, please. I want you to be in my arms when we wake up, and make you breakfast," he pleaded. This was a very good sign that this was not a one night stand. I felt better about my decision.

"OK, I'll stay," I said, smiling over at him. He moved closer to me again, and we were back at it a few more times before we both passed out.

I woke up with a start. I was not in my bed. I looked around feeling disoriented. I heard voices in another room. I found a T-shirt and some boxers and put them on. I slowly walked out of the bedroom. Randy said all bright and cheery, "Dee Dee, you remember Ray, don't you?"

"Yes, but this isn't exactly how I thought we would run into each other again," I said red faced.

Ray just smiled. "Hi, Dee Dee. You doing alright?" he asked.

"Oh, just fabulous," I said, still feeling embarrassed.

Randy was all smiles. "I am making my specialty French toast and sausage," he said all happy.

"That sounds great," I said, pulling myself onto a barstool at the breakfast bar that divided the kitchen from the dining area. "This is a really nice place you guys have," I said, looking around.



“Not too bachelor for you?” Ray asked.

“Oh, gosh, no. It looks professional,” I said.

“Mom had a lot to do with that. She gave us help,” Randy said.

We all ate breakfast together. I was a little uncomfortable. It didn’t seem to bother either of them. We talked about the weather, the waves, pretty much nothing. Ray told some goofy jokes. Then I excused myself and asked, “Do you mind if I take a shower?”

“No, go on back. I will get you some towels.” As I was going down the hall they were whispering. It sounded like Ray said, “I like her, Randy. Do not screw it up.”

Then Randy said, “I know, bro, I know.” He ran up behind me and picked me up around the waist until my feet were off the floor. “I dig seeing you in my boxers and shirt,” he whispered in my ear. He kissed my neck. Then he yelled over his shoulder, “See you late this afternoon, Ray.” He put emphasis on “late,” and I smiled to myself.

“Yeah, yeah, later,” Ray said, and we heard the door slam.

“I thought he would never leave,” Randy said as he peeled the boxers and the T-shirt off me. So much for that shower I was going to take. Later, we both got up and took a shower. We lounged around the apartment for a while. Randy made us tuna sandwiches for lunch. We talked about our families, surfing, and food. We stayed away from talking about relationships past or present. I didn’t know what it was about Randy, but I was infatuated with everything about him. He was just a smooth operator, not like the guys I grew up with or hung out with. He seemed almost European, or something I could not put my finger on. But whatever it was was working on me.

I spent the whole day with him. But I really needed to get home. I had to check in now and then or my parents would worry. He gave me a sad face. “I want to keep you here forever.”



Just the words coming out of his mouth excited me.

“I would love to, but I need to assure my parents I am OK,” I said. He reached over and started kissing me.

“Oh, if we do this I will never go.” I looked at his face. He buried it into my neck.

“That’s the idea,” he said into my neck. He kind of groaned and said, “OK, but when can we see each other again?” as I was getting my things together.

I looked over at him. “I can always come back tomorrow.”

“I have to work during the day.” He thought for a minute. “But I could cook you dinner tomorrow night,” he said, smiling that sexy smile.

“See, now there’s a plan. Do you want me to pick up anything? What time should I be here? It will be easier if I drive myself rather than have you come all the way out to get me, just to turn around and drive me back home,” I said.

“I get off at three. I will get everything I need. Can you be here at six?” he asked.

“It’s perfect.” I smiled at him as we headed out the door. Randy serenaded me the entire drive home with “Surfer Girl.” He was a goof, but it was a cute gesture.



CHAPTER 6

My relationship with Randy was going along smoothly. I came over to his house. He cooked me dinner. Sometimes I stayed the night, sometimes I just went home. We were getting along remarkably well. Some nights we didn't see each other, which worked for me. I stayed home, talking and hanging out with my folks. I didn't know if my dad liked Randy or not. He was very quiet around him. It looked to me like Dad gave him a stare down sometimes, when Randy came to pick me up. So I tried to be ready. It kept them from sitting in silence for too long.

Shelly and Keith were in their new place and invited us over. I actually felt like an adult hanging out over there. We sat around talking, drinking wine, and listening to albums. Keith had a gigantic selection so we could listen to almost anything. Shelly liked Randy too. She told me to beware. "He is almost too smooth. I can't figure him out. Maybe it's nothing."

Keith and Randy were getting along well. They had plenty of things to talk about. I thought that Shelly just liked Ian and hoped that I would be with him.

The house they rented was really nice. It was a three bedroom. It had glass sliding doors that led out to the backyard from all



three rooms, and a pool. There was a view of the back yard from every room. It was only a few blocks from the beach. They got a breeze through the house with those doors all open. It reminded me of something you would see in Hollywood. It was built in the fifties.

The other thing about hanging out there was there were no drugs, and the topic would not come up because Keith did not like them either. Shelly told me there was another barbecue at Paul's this Saturday and that he told her to invite us. He thought "us" was Ian and me. Surprise, Ian moved on, and now so had I. But it was a good time, and I asked Randy if he would like to come. He had something to do Saturday night at his folks' house, but he could hang out all afternoon. We all decided to go. Randy must have been as close to his parents as I was because he was always having to go there for something.

So we all went to the barbecue. We played yard darts. I was pretty accurate at throwing the darts in the ring. We played volleyball in the pool. I was short, so it was difficult when we were in the deep end. I could tread water for a really long time, but jumping up to hit the ball while treading water turned out to be harder than I thought. We all ate barbecued chicken cooked to perfection. There were two kinds—one was garlic butter and the other was a traditional barbecue flavor. Delicious. I ate my fill and went to find a lounge to relax on after I ate.

"You guys missed all the excitement last Saturday. We were all out here having a good time and my neighbor Dave who has his kids here for the summer—you remember him, Dee Dee?" I said yes, and he went on. "Well, apparently his fifteen-year-old daughter has been shacking up with this twenty-two-year-old guy in 4B.

"Dave got the wrong idea because she was always hanging with us. That we were getting down with her. Anyway, he shows



up here waving a pistol around. It was crazy, man. He was yelling about his baby, and we were all jumping over the fence and diving under things. I was talking to him from the side of the building trying to calm him down.

“It took a lot to calm him. I told him I have a lot of respect for him. I never let her drink alcohol. We looked out for her when she was with us. I would have stopped that had I known.

“To make a long story short, that is why you don’t see them here today. He shipped them on back to Boston. He is still too embarrassed to show his face out here. We haven’t seen or talked to him since. We thought it was going to be a shoot-out.” We all talked amongst ourselves about that as he walked back over to his buddies.

“Glad I missed that!” I said.

Then Paul came over and said, “Shelly says these guys aren’t cool with weed.”

I told him, “She would be correct, but if you want to go up to your apartment we can just stay down here with them at the pool. Nobody will know.”

“Good idea,” he said. He gathered up a couple people and off they went. We hung out and drank beer for several more hours, and then said goodbye.

“I had a really good time,” Randy said.

“Me too.” I hugged him. “They are all really nice normally. The gun story was a little out there,” I told him.

“Yeah, they are alright. Hey, I have some things to do for my mom, so I am going to have to head home,” he said.

“OK. I was hoping you would be around all night, but that’s cool. I’ll just talk to you later,” I said.

I had noticed this before. He was always running to his mom’s. He dropped me off at my house. Nobody was home. My parents went to Santa Barbara. I didn’t want to sit around



here and do nothing. So I called my cousin. She was not home. I called Jaycee, and she said to come over if I wanted.

“I will see you in a few minutes,” I said.

I still had a beer buzz, so I cruised on over to Jaycee’s. She was by herself for now. The guys would be coming over later. She looked as though she had been doing coke again. I wondered if she might be losing weight. “What’s been happening with you?” I said.

“I have been seeing one of those dudes we met that one night. His name is Eric. We have been hanging out basically ever since.”

“I thought his name was Ted?” I asked.

“Ted is one of the guys, but I like Eric. We have so much more in common, and we get along great,” she explained. “He is really cool. We like doing everything together,” she said.

“Like doing coke,” I snapped.

“No. We do that, but there are other things,” she said, taking the defensive immediately.

“Like what?” I asked. I wondered if I would believe anything good about this guy.

“We both love Mexican food. We both like old movies. We stay up late watching movies together all the time, and the sex... Well, that goes without saying. I told you before I have certain talents,” she said while wiggling her eyebrows up and down. I knew she was trying to lighten up the conversation.

I didn’t feel good about this relationship at all. I hoped it was not one-sided. Jaycee was a free giving person, and people sometime took advantage of that. She was genuinely happy about Eric. I didn’t tell her what I was feeling about this new relationship. Hopefully, he was an alright guy and there was nothing to worry about.

We talked about the party coming up. She asked, “Will you



still be coming with Ian, or will it be Randy?"

I looked out the window. "Ian is seeing Karen, so I hope I am bringing Randy." I did not know why, but just saying that bothered me a little. Then I asked her, "If you do not mind, I would like to bring Randy." I wondered if she would mind.

"You can bring whoever you like. I just thought you and Ian were going to be a couple forever," she said sadly.

"I keep hearing that. He didn't want to take it slow. He kept pushing me. Then it just blew up. Oh, well. He moved on rather abruptly, I might add."

She looked at me. "I didn't see you fighting for him either." She was right. I did not.

"Well, that is old news and I am hanging with Randy. He is great. You just need to get to know him, maybe hang out with him, to see how cool he is." I gave her a grin. "He is devilishly sexy. He doesn't push relationship stuff. We see each other a lot these days," I said.

I still wondered what I could have done or said to Ian to make things work. It didn't matter. He and Karen were happy and so was I with Randy. As I was thinking about Randy, Jaycee was pulling out her mirror of coke. "Here, let's do a line," she smiled at me.

"No, I am good," I said, but I was thinking I wanted to.

"Oh, just one. You have been partying all day. It will just give you a boost."

"OK, just a little," I said, wondering why I was doing it. I had not even seen any in weeks and I probably shouldn't. But I went with the flow as usual. She could be persuasive when she wanted. Or I just liked it. I tried not to dwell on that fact.

"Randy doesn't do any kind of drugs at all!" I told her.

She said, getting snippy, "Too bad for him."

"I like that he doesn't. It can't be good for us," I said.



“I don’t care what other people like or do not like.” She kind of raised her voice.

“Right,” I said. “To each his own and whatever floats your boat!” I started feeling the effects of the line. And we started having a good time.

Her friends knocked on the door. I wanted to talk about Randy, to get her input, but they were here. I had to jump into the now, and party mode kicked in. They were a bunch of decent enough guys—some of them, anyway. She looked over at me as we were all talking to each other about this and that.

“You can take your pick of any of these guys. If you touch Eric, I will rip your face off,” she said as she made claws of her hands and scratched at the air.

“I think I like the Ted guy better for you,” I told her.

“I thought I did too, but Eric and I clicked. We have more in common. I told you that,” she said with a grin. She mouthed the words “Ted is boring in bed.”

“Well, you don’t have to worry about me picking any of them. I am not into any of these guys. I like Randy. I want to see where we go together,” I said. She had blown off everything I had said about him earlier.

Eric had checked me out a few times when we were both in the kitchen getting beer or wine. I didn’t like it, and it reconfirmed what I initially felt when I got here about her relationship with him and his intentions with her. I planned on keeping my distance from him. The other dudes tried to put some moves on me too. They were good natured about it. I thought they had to test the waters. I saw Eric looking, but he never said or did anything. Thank goodness. He knew not to mess with me and piss Jaycee off. She was his meal ticket to party land. I was uncomfortable with that. Jaycee and I would have to talk about him another time.

Some of the guys knew my friends. They dropped a few



names, like Billy and Mike. They weren't surfers, but they hung with some of my friends. Jaycee told them, "Dee Dee is a good surfer. She has been surfing since she was twelve." That embarrassed me.

"I am OK." Then we talked about who was good that we all knew. This was my territory, so I talked a lot about this subject. I couldn't seem to shut up. It must have been the coke.

All in all, it was a pretty fun night. I let everyone know I needed to bail. Jaycee asked me to stay. I did not feel comfortable sleeping here with all these guys. I didn't want any ugly rumors started about me. This scenery reeked of gossip. I also didn't want to give any of these guys the wrong idea. I said my goodbyes and left.

I put my Peter Frampton album on the stereo. It didn't take me long to fall asleep. Sometime in the night I shut the music off and went back to sleep. I really did not remember doing it. That was so weird. I usually had a clear memory and I even remembered my dreams. I must have been drinking too much alcohol.

It looked like rain today. The wind was blowing in dark clouds. I thought I would just chill out around the house. Maybe I would do some laundry and domestic things. All the windows were open and the wind was blowing the clouds in. The curtains were blowing all over the place. I got my laundry started and then went out on the back patio with a sandwich to watch the sky blacken. I liked watching the sky. I heard thunder in the distance, and saw the lightning. We didn't get a lot of rain, but when we did I enjoyed watching the storm.

I didn't hear from Randy all day. I knew he had to work today. Maybe we could do something in the evening. I would cook for him, but my cooking skills were limited. Grilled cheese and tomato soup and tacos were my best culinary features. I also made a mean fried egg sandwich.



Cindy called to see what was up. We talked on the phone for over an hour. My folks were home from work. My mom was making pork chops. I didn't want to commit to dinner without hearing from Randy. It was already six. So I joined my parents for dinner. They commented on how I was never around and hardly ever ate dinner with them.

"I told you I wanted to blow it out this summer and do a lot of different things. That means I will be gone a lot," I told them.

My dad warned me not to blow it out too much. "Stay out of trouble," he warned.

"I will. I just want to have fun before I buckle down for school. I plan on taking that seriously and want to do well." They both beamed at me and told me to have a good summer and that they were proud of me.

I wondered if they would be so proud if they knew the extent of my blowing it all out. I headed up to my room and put the rest of my laundry up. My phone rang. It was not Randy. It was Jimmy. "A bunch of us are going to Palm Springs for the weekend. Do you want to come?"

"Yes, that sounds like a good time," I said, excited.

"We will be bringing girls," he said, "so feel free to bring whoever you like. There is plenty of room."

I felt that he was saying it was OK to bring Randy. "Cool. When are you guys are leaving?" I asked. Maybe I could bring Randy into this group.

"Friday night. We will all meet at my house and caravan down," he said. I wrote down the particulars and hung up.

Randy never called, so I did not get to ask him about going. I fell asleep to the TV, thinking about the Palms Springs weekend. I woke up to another rainy day. I thought to myself, Construction workers can't work in the rain, so I should hear from Randy. It poured rain all day. No phone calls.



My parents were surprised to see me home again for a second day. I told them I was going to Palm Springs for the weekend. I decided to hang out until then. It was Thursday night, and I had not heard a word from Randy. I told a little white lie to make them feel like I had plans just to hang out with them. I was glad I did. My mom was making tostadas. And she was pleased that I was home with them again.

I helped cut up the lettuce, tomatoes, onion, and cilantro. She fried up the tortillas while the hamburger cooked and the beans heated up. We set all the goodies on the table. My dad got out the jalapeno peppers and taco sauce, and we were ready to create the tostadas. We all created these big mountains on our plates of ingredients. They looked like big salads with fried tortillas on the bottom.

We talked about the family for a while as we slowly devoured our tostadas. They told me about my brother's promotion to sergeant on the force. I thought to myself, I am glad he lives in another county. I would hate for him to arrest any of my friends. "That is great news," I said. "He deserves it. He has worked very hard."

My dad agreed. "I would have never expected this when he was throwing all those parties at the house when he was in high school while we were out of town. Who would have thought that he would become a police officer?"

My mom, always sticking up for my brother, said, "He was just a kid, doing what kids do." Then they both looked at me.

"Don't look at me. I have never had a party here, and don't plan to."

"He told me there was a crash landing at Meadow Lark Airport." Dad went on to explain, "By the time emergency vehicles got to the Cessna there was no pilot. They did find lots of white powder all over the inside of the plane. They said it was some kind of drug." Meadow Lark was a small private air strip



right in the middle of town.

I gave him a puzzled look, as if I could not imagine what it could be. I wondered if it was a delivery for anyone I knew. I didn't voice an opinion.

I helped clear the dishes and load the dishwasher while my parents had their cocktail hour out back on the patio. The rain was still coming down. I heard them out there talking about the weather. I smiled to myself. They did everything together. They even went grocery shopping together. I hoped to be like them one day. They were a devoted couple still in love in their fifties.

The phone rang so I took it in the privacy of my room. It was Jaycee wanting me to get her something. I told her I would call around and then I would let her know. She wanted a half ounce of cocaine. Scary, but I could just go to Dewey. No strangers would be involved. How dangerous could that be? I called him. He said, "My folks are home so I will bring it to you. Have the money when I get there. I will be by in an hour."

I called Jaycee and she said no problem, she had the money. Her guy had not answered the phone in a couple days. I told my folks I had to run to the store. I would be right back. I went over to Jaycee's to get the money. It was a lot of money, all in 100-dollar bills. I was glad I did not have to make any stops. Carrying this made me nervous. If something happened, it would take forever to pay it all back.

I did a hit and run, with her promising to be right back. I hurried home and waited for Dewey. I watched out the window because my folks were home. I needed to catch him before he knocked on the door. I was looking out the window when I saw Ian's van pull up. Great. What did he want? I went out to intercept him.

He smiled and said, "Hey, stranger. How are you?"

"Great. What are you doing here?" I snapped.



“Well, it’s nice to see you too,” he said. “Brought what you asked Dewey for. We thought it might look better since Dewey had never been here and your parents know me. I was just trying to help.” He looked at me, frowning.

“Oh, I am sorry. I guess I am a little jittery,” I said, feeling stupid now. I shouldn’t have snapped at Ian.

“You should be nervous. What do you need this much for?”

I stared at him. “What do you care?” I said.

“You know I care about you. I would not want anything to happen to you. This is nothing to be messing around with,” he said as he moved in a little too close for comfort.

“It’s not for me. So don’t worry. I am getting it for Jaycee. Her guy won’t answer her calls.” I stepped back a little.

He was enjoying himself and moved closer again. He ran his hand down my arm and told me, “I can drive you over there. We can exchange money and product at her house, then your folks won’t see anything weird going on in your front yard.” I stepped back a little, rattled by his touch.

“That is a good idea.” I forgot about my folks the minute he stepped into my personal space.

“Let’s roll,” he smiled. Ian always smelled fresh, not of cologne, but a natural fresh clean scent.

We got to Jaycee’s. She was happy to see Ian. They handled everything. He took out a small package and gave it to me. “That’s from Dewey. He said that is for you. He appreciated the business.” Another payment for my services. Jaycee put some out on the mirror and tried it. She offered us some. I did it, but I was not into it. I thought not taking it would be rude. We hung out for a while chatting. Ian borrowed the phone to call Dewey and let him know he had the money. He would be heading that way in a little while.

It was like nothing ever changed. We all sat and laughed,



talking about the usual stuff we all have been doing this summer. Then Ian said he better get going. Me too. I never said anything to my parents about leaving again. I needed to get back home. He went directly to Dewey's.

"What about me?" I asked.

"I don't want Dewey wiggling out about his money. I need to drop that first, then I will take you home," he told me.

So we made the rounds. He ran up to Dewey, who met him at the door. Dewey gave me a wave. Ian came back and got in. "OK, now I take you home," he said, smiling to himself.

The ride was short and we were quiet. I felt weird, and didn't know what to say. We pulled up in front of my house. Ian said, "You sure you want to go in? Maybe we could hang out." I looked over. He was smiling that smile that I loved so well. But no, I couldn't do this. There was Randy to think about. And what about Karen?

"I can't do this, Ian. I am seeing someone, and so are you," I said sadly. Why was I sad?

"Karen and I are friends. We aren't in a relationship like that. We have been hanging out since elementary school. It's not romantic in any way."

I looked shocked. "You could have fooled me. I believe she doesn't see it that way at all." I continued, "She gives me the evil eye every time I see her." There were a lot of girls that were "just his friends" that seemed to think they should be more.

Then it hit him. "You said you are seeing someone?"

I looked at him as if he was crazy. "Yes, for a while now. Randy and I have been hanging out for weeks. Certainly someone would have mentioned seeing us together," I explained.

"No. I have seen you at several parties, but you were with friends, or your cousin. No guy was ever with you." He was getting mad as he was talking. I didn't understand. He always



had someone with him. Why care who I was with?

“I guess I just thought you knew. Look, I need to go. I will see you around, Ian,” I said as I was getting out of the van.

I didn’t even get the door closed all the way before he peeled off down the street. Yipes! I had pissed him off. I thought he had moved on. He was always with Karen. We never talked about what happened with us. He was the one who had her in tow every time I saw them. What was I supposed to think? I tried to convince myself that this was his fault. Of course it was his fault.

Had I screwed up something good? Or was it good riddance? He had too many girls on a string for me. My mom opened the door. “Was that Ian I saw out there?” She really liked Ian too. Ian and Mom could always sit and talk comfortably while I was getting dressed.

Randy was uncomfortable around my parents. “Yes. He stopped by to say hi,” I lied. “He couldn’t stay. He was out running errands.”

She gave me a smile. “I hope you two remain friends. I really like that young man.”

I gave her a look. “That the young man is going to be a doctor one day has nothing to do with why you like him.”

She frowned. “That is not true. It is a nice bonus. But he is just a nice person,” she said.

“I know, Mom. Everybody likes Ian!” I practically shouted as I headed up the stairs. That was not fair of me to say. She became fond of Ian before I told her he was a med student.

Randy finally called. It was 11:30. “Can you come over?” he asked all sexy.

“No, I can’t, sorry,” I said. I hadn’t heard from him in days, and he called me when he was horny. “But I did want to run something by you. My friends have a house in Palm Springs. They are driving out tomorrow night to stay the weekend. It is



always a good time. Would you like to go with me?" I asked him.

"Baby, I wish I could come with you. I have this thing I have to do this weekend. That is why I wanted to see you tonight. We haven't been together in days. I have been missing you." Well, what could I say? I caved in and told him I was on my way.

I left a note for my parents telling them I decided to stay at Jaycee's and watch movies and eat junk food all night. I would be home in the morning. I headed to Newport and Randy. What a push over I was. He was at the door waiting for me when I walked up. He must have missed me because we were in his room going at it before I could even get all my clothes off. When we woke up he was in a strange mood. No breakfast, nothing. He just said he had a lot to do. I took that as my cue to go. I felt awkward. This was not the norm.

I told him I was going to Palm Springs. "You are going without me," he said, angry all of a sudden.

"Yes, I told you all my friends are going. Why should I sit at home? You will be doing whatever you have to do." I got defensive. He definitely didn't like the idea of me going for some reason. But why should I stay home with nothing to do? Besides, I would not be told where I could and could not go. "Why would you not want me to go have fun?"

He looked at me and hit the counter with his palm. "I won't be having fun, and I will be worrying about you. I don't want you to shack up with any of your boyfriends. I am not stupid, you know. I don't like the idea of you drinking and partying with them, and then spending the night. You think I don't notice how they all are drooling over you?"

I didn't like what he was suggesting. It made me angry. "First of all, you do not tell me where I can go, or whom I can go with. Second, I am not shacking up with anyone, except you, of course. Give me some credit. I have known all these guys



for years, and do not sleep with any of them.” I started getting dressed. “This is stupid. I have to go.”

He jumped up and wrapped his arms around me. “Baby, baby, don’t be mad at me. I am sorry. I do trust you. I guess I am jealous, and I am not used to that emotion. You make me feel that I need to protect you. Don’t go home mad.” He kissed me all over my face and neck.

“OK, I am not mad.” He started tickling me, and we ended up back in bed. After we had done everything physically possible to do to each, other we talked. I told him that I trusted him, and that he must trust me. I cared so much for him. I would not jeopardize that. He told me he was feeling some new feelings too. I made him crazy for some reason. He explained how he had never felt jealous over any girl.

We made out and rolled around for a few more minutes. He finally let me get dressed and then walked me to my car. “I really am sorry. Don’t be mad. I will miss you.” He made a sad face that was very boyish.

“It’s OK. Do not worry about it. Call me Monday night and we will talk about our weekend, and how much we missed each other.”

I pulled his face down to mine and kissed him again. “Bye,” he said, shaking his head and laughing about something.

“Bye,” I said as I pulled away. I left him happy. I felt better about our talk.

No one was at home when I got there, so I packed my stuff for the weekend. Cindy called. She was going too. My car was bigger than her little sports car, and if it was crowded we could sleep in the back. I grabbed my sleeping bag just in case. “Don’t forget your sleeping bag. I will be by to get you later.” Good. I didn’t want to go by myself. I was going to ride with someone so I would not have to drive. This was better. We could leave



whenever we wanted.

We all met up at Jimmy's to caravan down. We stood out in front of the cars and talked for a while until everyone who was going was there. We were just about to leave when Ian pulled up.

"He is going too?" I asked Jimmy and Cindy.

"Yes," Jimmy said, giving me a look. Then he started to walk to his Jeep.

"What about Karen?" I asked.

"What about her?" Then he said, "He didn't mention bringing her. If you need to know his status and agenda, ask him," and he walked away.

Cindy asked, "What's the problem?" I shook my head back and forth.

"You know exactly what the problem is. And the last time I talked to Ian, which was yesterday, he was pissed at me." She looked at Ian, who was trying hard not to look my way.

"He always goes. You are going to have to get used to hanging in the same crowd, or get over yourselves and get back together," she lectured.

"We are all friends. We will have a good time whether you are together or separate. Let's get going. Everyone is getting in their cars."

"He definitely isn't going to ruin my weekend," I grumbled as we got into my Suburban. I asked Cindy if Chris was coming.

"Chris isn't coming. He can't get off work," she said.

We followed each other in a line and jumped on the freeway. Cindy and I were singing, "I've been through the desert on a horse with no name; it felt good to be out of the rain" by America. We were laughing and singing the whole way. This was going to be fun. You could see who the puffers were, as two of the vans in front of us had excessive smoke coming out of the windows. We laughed and pointed at them, and then went back to singing.



We were almost through Riverside when one of the vans was signaling to pull over. So we all followed suit and pulled over. They wanted to stop and get a case of beer and some supplies. There was a place right outside of Palm Springs, so now we all knew and could stop when we got there. We all got back up to speed on the freeway. It was an uneventful trip, and we stopped to get the beer. We then made our way to Jeff's parents' place.

The house was in a neighborhood of lovely homes. They almost all had groundskeepers who lived in them all year around, keeping the places up and controlling the air in the houses. It got hot out here. They had to make sure the temperature in the houses stayed cool. The heat destroyed things. The groundskeeper to Jeff's place would not be there this weekend. He made himself scarce when the family used the house.

It had a large pool and a Jacuzzi. There were five bedrooms and a pull out sofa in the family room. Wade, Jimmy, Steve, Ian, Davy, Brian, and Jeff were the guys that came. The girls included Kim, who was with Davy. They were the ones together at the Dana Point party that Ian and I shared the room with. Wade brought a new girl named Mary. Jimmy brought Sue, and Jeff brought Kathy. I knew them all from school.

That left me, Cindy, Ian, Brian, and Steve all going solo. I didn't know if I liked this. Where is Karen? I wondered. We would find out soon enough. The couples immediately all grabbed rooms. They told me and Cindy we could have the fifth room. Ian said he would sleep in his van, and Steve and Brian were cool with sleeping on the couch. We took the bags to our rooms and came down to the kitchen where the party was starting.

There was every kind of alcohol in the bar imaginable. "Drink what you like, but remember, you have to replace what you drink," he hollered.

"House rules," we all hollered back. We all knew the rules.



Everyone started making drinks and pouring shots. Cindy and I headed for the beer.

“What, no tequila?” Steve laughed.

“No, I don’t think I will ever be able to drink that again.”

“Lightweight! We have a lightweight!” he yelled. Everyone ribbed me a little about that. It was all good natured. I just took it.

As the night progressed, we were all having a great time. We played some drinking games and wandered around the house. A few of the guys ran and stripped their clothes off to jump naked into the pool. We laughed. Ian came up behind me. “Aren’t you going to jump in too, water girl?”

“Yeah, right,” I laughed at him. “I don’t think so. What about you?”

He said, “No, not my thing. Besides, what would your little cousin think of me if I got naked?” he said, all innocent.

“Oh, I don’t know. She might like it,” I said, making my eyebrows go up and down at him. He didn’t comment. He just shook his head no.

People started dropping off to bed. I said good night and headed back to my room. I saw Ian watching me. Then he headed out the front door to his van to sleep. “Try to find out what is going on with him and Karen. Why isn’t she here?” I told Cindy.

“What do you care? You have a boyfriend, remember?” she said. “I think since you are not interested in him, I might go for him,” she challenged.

“What about Chris? I thought you two were together now.”

She looked at me and shrugged. “Chris knows that I will be in another state in the fall. We decided we don’t want the long distance relationship. We will always be good friends. So that makes me available, and Ian is available. That is, if he isn’t seeing Karen.”

I didn’t say anything. What could I say? I had a boyfriend.



She was available. I really didn't like it. I was not sure I would be able to handle them snuggling up in front of me. What was wrong with me? I couldn't have everything. Yet I couldn't seem to let go of Ian altogether. Something always brought me back to thoughts of us together. I had nightmares about Cindy and Ian all night.

I woke to the sound of laughter. I grabbed some shorts and a bathing suit top and put them on. Cindy was still sleeping hard. I walked into the kitchen. There were Wade and Jeff, whipping up breakfast and cracking jokes. "Hi, guys." They said hi without turning around. "What are you making?" I asked. I was kind of leery about eating anything they made after that dinner the guys made on the Ortega trip.

"We have eggs, bacon, and toast," they both said.

"That's all? No extra ingredients?" I said, giggling at them.

Wade turned around laughing and said, "Oh, right. No, we just have regular food this weekend, I promise."

I smiled and said, "OK, if you promise." We ate and left the rest warming for the late risers.

They headed out to see if they could find any empty pools in the neighboring yards for skateboarding. I walked out to the pool in the back and stretched out on a lounge chair. You could see out into the desert from the back yard. It was a little higher on a hill than some of the other homes. The desert was just beautiful. The sky was so blue. I could see the mountains off in the distance.

"Well, that is quite a view," Ian said as he was stepping out the glass sliding door on to the patio.

I gazed out into the desert and said, "It sure is," but when I turned to look at him he was gazing down at me and not at the desert. "Let's keep this friendly, Ian," I told him.

"I'm friendly. We just find beauty in different things." He



gave me a grin.

“You know what I mean,” I said, flustered.

“Oh, that’s right. You don’t want to do anything that might get back to your boyfriend,” he said, stretching out the word boyfriend. He sounded sarcastic to me.

“I am just saying we can be friends.” I looked up at him. He did not hear me. His mind was somewhere else.

“We are friends.” He reached over to brush a hair from my face. I didn’t want to fight. I didn’t say any more about it. We sat in silence for a few seconds.

“Good,” I said, jumping up. I ran in the house. It was hard for me to be alone with him. I still felt something strong for him. I knew it was just because it had not been that long ago that we were together. He did not say anything else. He took my seat on the lounge and looked out into the desert, the way I was viewing it before him.

I went back to my room and dug around for my tennis shoes. I wanted to see if the guys found a pool. Not that I planned to skateboard. I would be watching from the sidelines this trip. Cindy was just waking up. I told her to see if Karen was still in the picture. I didn’t know why I even cared. But I did. “Ian is out back by the pool. You can talk to him before all the guys get back.” I slipped out of the room before she could comment.

I walked out the front door and started walking through the neighborhood. I knew if they were close I would hear them hooting and cheering. I was walking along and I finally heard them in the back yard of one of the houses. I walked along the fence and let myself in. It was too hot out here in the summer. Many of the people did not come when it was this hot. So many houses were empty. Not all had groundskeepers, but a lot did. I crept around to see if there were any homeowners or their groundskeepers lurking about. I only saw the guys. The pool



had been emptied for some reason. This was just what they were looking for.

It was a kidney-shaped pool, perfect for tricks. They started at the shallow end and rode down into the deep end and then swung up around the light. They were crazy. They got horizontal as they went over the light in the deep end. Jimmy got air as he shot down into the deep part and straight up the wall, clearing the pool edge.

He did a 180 in the air and went back down the side of the pool wall, ending up in the shallow end. Everyone whistled and hollered. “Nice ride!” Ian shouted as he came through the gate. “That was righteous, bro.” He walked over to Jimmy and said something else I could not hear. They looked my way. But I still did not hear what they were saying.

Ian didn’t ride today either. He didn’t stand near me. He hung off on the side where the guys were hanging out in between turns in the pool. We stayed there for an hour and then they started getting thirsty and all decided to head back to the house. I followed slowly, walking by myself, taking in the sights. The desert was beautiful. People thought it was just sand and cactus. But there were flowers—some are yellow, and purple, and an orange-red. I didn’t know how they grew out here. It was so dry in the desert.

We swam in the pool and hung out all day. The beer drinking started at noon. I couldn’t get into drinking this early. Jeff told me about some indoor tennis facility. His mom liked to play there.

“I should bring my racket next time. Do you play?” I asked.

“I’m not real good, but I go hit some balls with my mom,” he said.

I laughed, “You don’t have to be good when you are playing your mom. She is going to let you win because you are her baby.”

He really laughed. “Not my mom. She is really serious about



her game. She hit me in the eye one time with her crazy serve.” We both cracked up thinking about that.

“If I recall, she plays on a team at the country club I play at.”

He shrugged. “I am not sure.” He was not that interested. He tried to put his arm around me a few times. I guessed he was checking for interest. I brushed him off, and he got the hint and moved on. I looked around and wondered where Kathy was. They were here together, I thought.

When evening rolled around the guys announced that they were grilling steaks. If anyone was vegetarian, they could have salads. I volunteered to make the salad. Cindy helped me. I told her about Jeff. We giggled about him while we made the salad.

“I am going to talk to Ian after dinner. I will find out about Karen. But not for you. It is for me. I told you, if you aren’t interested, then I am. I hope you are OK with that.”

After we ate, we cleaned up and got into the bar again. We poured shots, mixing drinks and telling stories. The guys had large bags of weed and sat around rolling joints. Wade offered everyone a Quaalude. Cindy and I both took one, drinking it down with a beer chaser.

We were sitting around in groups talking. I saw Cindy move in next to Ian and take a seat. He smiled at her, and they sat there talking for a long time. Wade said, “I think your cousin is moving in on your turf.”

I just rolled my eyes. “He is not my anything.”

Wade pointed at himself and then me. “Maybe?” I shook my head a firm no. He shrugged at me. “I don’t get you. It’s Ian, isn’t it?” I shook my head no again. “If it isn’t Ian, why are you always watching him?” he asked as he leaned into my shoulder.

I jumped. “I am not always watching him.” I started to walk away.

“You sure are touchy about the mention of him,” he said, and



he poked me in the arm.

“I am not. Geez, Wade, get real.” He made a silly face at me to express his point. I walked back to the bathroom just to get away from that conversation.

What was wrong with me? I was really into Randy, and he was into me. But Wade was right. I did find myself watching Ian. I felt kind of jealous when other girls were around him. I had no right. I had never wanted to date two guys, and I was not going to start now. Besides, what if he hooked up with Cindy? Then what would I do? I would kill her, that was what. I walked out to the pool and put my feet in. I sat on the side with my feet on the step for a bit. Then I got up and walked down to the other end so that I was facing the house. This way I could see if anyone came out. The water was kind of warm from the sun all day. I was expecting it to be cool like the ocean. I sat on the side, dangling my feet. That Quaalude was making me feel mellow.

Cindy came out of the house. “What are you doing out here?”

I splashed her little. “Just sitting here looking at the stars. They are beautiful. There are so many up there. It seems like the sky is much clearer in the desert,” I said. She looked up. It did not seem to have the same effect on her as it did on me.

She sat down next to me. “Karen is not here because she would expect to sleep with Ian, and he says they don’t have that kind of relationship. Bringing her out here would give her the wrong idea. He doesn’t need more complications.”

I looked at her. “So what about you?”

She gave me a splash. She smiled. “You’re a dork. He asked about you, and Randy, and if I like Randy, and what is your relationship with Randy, and do I think you will stay with Randy. He is still into you!” She rolled her eyes, looking at me as if I was dense.

“I got sick of talking about you and Randy, so I told him I



had to pee and left him in by the fireplace. I want you to know I think you are being stupid when it comes to Ian. I am going to tell you one last time. He is really into you, and I think you are still into him. You are wasting time with Randy when Ian is your man.” She really splashed me this time. She got up and ran out of reach before I could retaliate.

Maybe I was. Now I was really confused about my feelings for Ian. “I just don’t know. Why was he shoving Karen in my face all the time? He drove me to Randy in the first place. He never called, then he showed up with her on his arm. What an ass!” I told her.

“Whatever you say. I think you still like him, and need to get back with him. Hey, at least take advantage of him this weekend. Go check out his van for a few hours with him.” She gave me an evil grin. “Oops, it must be the pills. I didn’t mean you should be a slut. Oh, hell, maybe I did.” She giggled.

I turned to her. “I have Randy. I can’t do that to him.” I got up and went to get another beer. “I must say, it does sound tempting.”

“Whatever. You are awful touchy about Ian,” she yelled at me as I walked through the door. I left her giggling in the dark.

We all partied for several more hours. We had a great time. Jimmy waltzed me around the room while his girl was passed out in the recliner. Steve and I serenaded the others with an old Elton John song, “Crocodile Rock.” Cindy just laughed and drank the night away.

I started getting tired, and I went off to bed first. I fell asleep listening to them laugh and talk. I woke with a start. I had the strangest feeling someone was looking at me. I must have been dreaming. I woke up first because I drank the least. There was a purple flower on my pillow. There was a small piece of paper next to it that just said, “Thinking of you.” I recognized Ian’s handwriting.



I got up and went to the kitchen. I poured a glass of orange juice and took it out back by the pool. Ian was sitting back there. He looked up and smiled when he saw it was me. I walked over and sat next to him. “Thank you for the flower.” I felt shy for some reason.

“You know it has been hard being here with you and not being with you,” he said.

I took his hand. “I know. It’s hard for me too.” He leaned into me and whispered, “What are we going to do?” He gave me a soft kiss on my temple. Oh, gosh, I wanted to be with him in that van about now. But that would be wrong.

“I thought you moved on, Ian. When I saw you everywhere with Karen, I thought we were over. If you would have called me, or something... We never would be having this conversation. I would not have been looking elsewhere. Now it’s too late. I have Randy, and he deserves a chance. He has been good to me.” Ian got up and started to go into the house.

“I am leaving. I need to get back to Huntington. We are not through, Luv, not by a long shot. I guarantee you that.” He walked into the house without another word.

I sat there dazed. What did that mean? We looked through to me. He just walked out on our conversation. That was pretty final. He had a way of walking away from me all the time in a confrontation.

After Ian left, Cindy ran out. “See? I told you.”

I looked over at her. “You were eavesdropping.”

She just grinned. “I couldn’t help it. The window to our room is right there, and it’s open. I woke up to the sound of you two love birds.” This time I jumped up.

“We are not love birds. I am seeing Randy.”

She just laughed. “For now. I have a feeling things are going to change, and soon.”



CHAPTER 7

The trip to Palm Springs left me feeling terribly confused about my relationship with Randy, and the one I had with Ian (the one I sometimes wished I still had). Ian was so soulful to me. There was something about the way he cared for me. There was something special about how he talked to me, and the little things he did, like leaving flowers and notes. I didn't expect to hear from Randy until Monday night, and I was glad. I didn't know what to do. I decided to sleep on it.

I didn't want to take anything away from Randy. He was funny. He was sexy and a smooth talker, with more charm than any guy I knew. I really enjoyed myself when I was with him. I felt there were a lot of things I did not know about him.

He was very vague about where he went when we were not together. Not that I expected him to tell me everything. We were just dating. But he made it clear before this weekend that he did not want me to be with anyone but him. So I guessed that meant we were exclusive. For me, if I was sleeping with someone, we were exclusive. I didn't believe in sleeping around.

I needed to talk to Randy and see where we were going. Funny, I didn't want a relationship. I wanted to be a free agent,



and here I was wondering if I was in a relationship or not. And if I was in a relationship with the right guy. Life was so complicated sometimes. I couldn't help but think of Ian and how soft his touch was, and I was going to go crazy thinking about him and Randy.

I hung out around the house all day. I talked to Jaycee, then I talked to Lena, and Cindy called to see if I had broken up with Randy, and if I was in the middle of wild make up sex in my room with Ian while my parents were at work. She was a nut. I told her that I was feeling confused. She thought it was an easy decision and to get over it now. She hung up, leaving me feeling even worse.

Finally, Randy called. He was not in a good mood. I was happy to hear from him though. He wanted to come get me. I told him I could drive to his house. He told me no, he would come get me. Weird. That was all I had to say. I fixed myself up. I wanted to look good for some reason. I had this low hip-hugging skirt in a paisley print and a crop top that matched. It exposed my whole middle section. I found it at a thrift store. I had never worn it. I hoped he liked it.

When he got there, I threw open the door and stepped out into his arms. He kissed me, then stepped back to take a look. "Wow, you look like a felony walking." He laughed and swung me around. I wondered where he came up with all these weird little one liners. "You feel so good to me. I could stand here and hold you all night." I was not sure what to say to that.

"You missed me, I take it. I thought of you the whole time." I really did, even if it was in the same thoughts as Ian.

"Let's go. We need to be alone. I don't want your dad to change his mind about letting you out in this outfit." He grinned at me and all my worries melted away. When I was with him, it was just him that I thought about.



We drove out to the beach and parked. We talked a little. I told him about the weekend. I didn't mention that Ian went with the group. Not that I had told him anything about my relationship with Ian. I told him Cindy and I shared a room, explaining that the guys brought girls. It was partly true. He relaxed his attitude about the trip, and then he was all over me. "If you wanted to have sex, why did we not go to your place?"

He stuttered a bit, and said finally, "We always go there. Let's be spontaneous." He continued kissing me and touching me. He won, of course, and we got naked in the car.

Then out of the blue he said, "I don't have a lot of time. I need to get home. I hope you don't mind." Mind? I was speechless.

"Of course. I don't mind. You can drop me back off at the house. But what is so important?"

He shrugged. "Family drama. But I was missing you, and I had to see you. You have no idea how badly I need to see you, and be with you. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me. I hope you know that," he said as he took my hand. He held it on his lap the whole way home. I felt bad for him. The urgency in his voice and his strained facial expression were heartbreaking. He dropped me off at my house after kissing the life out of me before I got out of the car. I loved being kissed, but that was disturbing.

"I have a lot of work tomorrow and Wednesday. Can we get together on Thursday? I will make it up to you," he shouted out the window as I was walking up to my house.

"Sure, Randy, give me a call on Thursday," I said. Why did we not go to his place? I felt kind of stupid maneuvering over seats and the gear shift in his car. What a weird night that was.

I went up to take a shower and change into my pajamas. I came back down. My mom was in the kitchen getting ice cream for her and my dad. "I thought you went out," she said.



“Yes, I did, Mom, but just to check on a friend,” I lied. How did you tell your mom your boyfriend just came and got you for a thirty minute sex visit, and then left? It would never happen. Some things were better left unsaid. She looked at me with approval and then headed back to their room.

“That’s nice, honey. Your friends are important,” she said as she climbed the stairs.

Thursday rolled around and Randy called, but not to tell me he was coming over, or for me to go to his place. He said, “Baby, something came up. I won’t be able to see you tonight.”

I was quiet for a minute. “What?” I said.

“What do you mean what?” he said.

I said slowly, “What came up, Randy?”

He stalled. I could tell he did not want to go into it with me. “It’s Mom and Dad. We have some problems. I have to go to their house and discuss. I am sorry. I miss you already, baby.”

Now I felt like a mean idiot. “I am sorry, Randy. I should not have even asked. It is none of my business. I will miss you too. I hope everything works out alright.”

He sighed. “Baby, you are the best. I am so lucky to have you. I can’t wait to be next to you. I will call you. We will do something, I promise.”

“OK, Randy. You take care.” I hung up. I was a jerk. That was all there was to it. I was so selfish. He had family problems, and I was going to get whiny on him because I wanted to go out. I was a mess.

I called Lena. We hadn’t talked since she started seeing her new guy. I needed to talk to her. She said, “Let’s go to that bar where they have the foosball tables, and drink some pitchers of beer.” I said “Cool.” I started getting ready. As I was going out the front door, she was walking up my walk.

“I would have picked you up,” I said.



“I can use the exercise,” she said. It was great to see her and hang out.

We went into The Place and grabbed a booth. We always cracked up about the name The Place. We went round and round. “Where are you going?” I said.

“The Place,” Lena said.

“What place?” I asked.

“You know, The Place.” It went on and on. You had to go to the bar to get your drinks. This establishment didn’t have waitresses. The bartender was a woman probably in her thirties who had tattoos from head to toe.

She asked, “I have carded you before, haven’t I?”

I looked at her with a big smile. “Sure, I can grab my ID if you need it.”

“No, that’s OK. You look familiar,” she smiled back at me.

“Yes, we come in all the time. This is a great little place.” She nodded and gave me the pitcher and two mugs. That was a close one.

Lena and I started talking about what had been going on. She and this guy she was dating were getting really serious. He wanted her to move in with him. He owned a house in Westminster. He was twenty-nine and divorced. He had a little boy whom she thought was his nephew. “Wow, this is all kind of sudden, isn’t it?” I asked.

“Yes, but I have never met anyone like him. We can talk about anything. He says I am in my prime, and will never look and feel this way again.” I couldn’t help but think how weird that just sounded.

I took a sip of my beer and tried to word this carefully. “You are nineteen. He is ten years older than you. No offense, but you are prime to him. Are you sure you just don’t want an excuse to move out of your mother’s house?”



She gave me an angry look. "I am everything to him, and yes, it gets me out of my mom's house. It is the perfect solution. That is how I see it."

"You and your sister make such rash decisions lately," I said.

"Lisa has decided to stay in L.A. She met a guy and she is moving in with him. He is twenty-six and they are very happy."

My mouth dropped open. "She just went up there! How could all this happen so fast?"

She looked at me as if I was stupid. "Why not? She knew this guy from last summer, when we were up at a family reunion. They hung out every time she was up there visiting. They hung out again when we spent a weekend up there last Christmas."

"You just don't move in with someone because you like them and had a good time one summer," I pleaded.

"Well, Lisa has been, you know, a little messed up lately. She wants to start a life with someone. I know how she feels," Lena replied.

"I didn't know," I said rather sheepishly.

"How could you?" she said. "We don't tell you all our family problems. It's my mom's fault after she divorced my dad. She has had one guy after another in my house. It is gross. What kind of role model is that for her daughters? She and Lisa fight all the time. Lisa wanted out and she left." Now Lena wanted to go too.

"The only thing keeping me is my little sister. But she is going to go live with my dad this school year. Mom says she can't handle her. I am a big girl. If things don't work out for me with Stephen I will move back."

I looked at her with tears in my eyes. "You know my parents wouldn't mind if you moved in with us."

She moved over to hug me. "I know, but I can't," she said softly. "I want to live with Stephen. You will like him. Just give him a chance," she said, looking over at me.



“Oh, you are probably right,” I said, looking down at my beer. Then I turned to her with a smile. “I am sure he is great! Now, let’s have some fun. No more sad talk. It is not like you are moving away,” I said.

I remembered that I had that little package from Dewey. So we took turns going into the bathroom and snorting the coke off a key in the bathroom stall. Pretty soon we were laughing and acting silly. All the worries of Lena’s family life were forgotten for now. We were the last ones to leave the bar. The bartender lady kept looking at us and looking at her watch.

It was one in the morning and we weren’t tired. It was too late to call anyone. So we went to my favorite liquor store, bought some beer, and headed to Sunset. We parked by the fire pits. We sat and talked, drinking the beer. By 2:30 we were finally all talked out and we went home. Lena stayed the night at my house.

The next morning we got up and went down to the kitchen. I made some bacon and toast. Lena made a peanut butter and jelly sandwich with bacon. She always ate the strangest combinations. As we finished our breakfasts, I said, “Lena, you know the annual Fourth of July Block Party is next week. No time like now to introduce your man to everyone. And I will bring Randy. We can all hang out together. It will be a good time.”

She agreed. “Yes, that would be fun. I know you are really going to like Stephen. Maybe he and Randy will hit it off, and we will all start hanging out together as couples.” She clapped her hands.

It was late, but I wanted to check out the waves. Lena said she couldn’t go. She had things to do, and she wanted to talk to her mom about moving in with Stephen. We hugged, and she went home. I ran upstairs and put on a bathing suit. I had many. I thought I needed a new one. I would have to check out the shops on Main Street.



As I was going out the door, the phone rang. I ran and grabbed it. “Hi, baby, it’s me,” Randy said. “I was just thinking about you, and wanted to call.”

Nice, I thought to myself. “That is sweet,” I said to him. “What are you doing?” He told me the usual. He was working and dealing with family drama.

“Are you at work?” I asked.

“Yes, I took a break and found a phone booth. I was hoping to see you tonight, but it’s not happening. I will call you tomorrow, and we can make plans,” he told me. This was getting to be such a drag, but I didn’t want to say anything stupid. He had a lot on his plate.

“OK. I am heading out to the beach to do a little surfing,” I said.

“Try to keep a safe distance from those dudes that are always drooling all over you,” he told me. Again, I felt like he was giving me orders.

“Those dudes are my friends, Randy. If I was going to sleep with any of them I would have already,” I said rather testily. “We have been over all this.”

“Hey, I know how guys think. I don’t trust any dudes, not where you are concerned,” he said, raising his voice.

“Randy, I can take care of myself, and you don’t need to tell me how to act. I don’t sleep around.” I raised my voice too.

“Good. We are clear on that then. I will call you later, baby.” He hung up rather abruptly.

I didn’t know if I liked the way he was talking to me lately. I knew he was stressed out with family problems, but he was acting weird. Then again, he was just a jealous guy. Most of the people that I hung out with at the beach were male. I would have to be a little more understanding, I guessed. I never really gave it much thought that I hung out with a bunch of guys and how it might look. Still, this was weird.



The beach was packed as usual. I dropped my stuff in the usual spot. As I was waxing my board I looked out and saw Jimmy ripping it up. I stopped and watched for a minute. He was really, really good. I headed on out. I sat and waited on a good set. Jimmy paddled up and positioned himself next to me.

“You are looking good,” I said.

He smiled back. “Thanks, but don’t you have a boyfriend or two?”

We both laughed. “You know what I mean.” I gave him a splash.

“No, really, thanks. These waves are bodacious today,” he said, flashing a big smile. I thought to myself, No wonder Randy is jealous. Look at these dudes I hang out with. Jimmy is really a gorgeous guy.

I started paddling and yelled back at him, “Are you going to enter the surf championships next month?”

He hollered, “Probably!” I spent the rest of the day surfing and laying out. The guys came and went throughout the afternoon. Jimmy sat for a while, then Steve hung out with us. They left only to be replaced by Billy and Jeff.

Jeff was asking us as we sat on the beach if we had heard about Adam.

“No, what about him?” I asked. I was curious now.

“He has been lying low because someone broke into his house. They broke out a back window and stole all his stash and all his money. I hear he is out several grand in cash, and a couple pounds of weed.” He shook his head. “I can’t imagine who would be that low.”

“Oh, my, that is such a drag,” I said, looking at Billy. “I haven’t heard a word.”

Billy said, “Someone is going to get their ass kicked royally when Adam and his friends find out who it is.”



“I feel bad for him,” I said. “Too many people hang out at his house on the weekends. It will be hard to figure out who it is.”

Jeff thought it would be easy. “Someone is going to accidentally brag to the wrong person. It always happens like that.” We all talked about Adam for a while longer, then Jeff took off.

When I finally felt I had had enough fun in the sun, I headed back to my car. I grabbed one of my favorite surf shop T-shirts out of the back and slipped it over my head. Then I untied my bikini top and pulled it out from underneath. I heard a familiar voice. “Can I help you with that?” Ian said.

“Uh, no thanks. I think I got it.” I turned to him.

“What’s going down?” he asked. He was so good looking.

“Just finished hitting the waves,” I told him.

“I saw you,” he said.

“Oh, so now you’re local, hanging out at the beach?” I asked with a smile.

“No, I heard this little fox was tearing up the waves so I came to check her out,” he said. “You must be hungry by now. Want to grab a burger?”

“Yes, that sounds good.” I didn’t know what I was thinking. I should go home. This was only going to complicate things. “I will follow you in my car. Where to?” He told me and I followed him to Bob’s Big Boy.

We ate and talked. He kept it light—no relationship talk. We talked about the upcoming Fourth of July party. We laughed about the things that happened in previous years at the party. When we were done and the check came, he grabbed it.

“I can pay for mine, Ian,” I said.

“I know, but I would like to pay for it, if you don’t mind.” He smiled and took the check up to the register. I grabbed my purse and walked up behind him. I thanked him for lunch and I



expected it to be awkward in the parking lot, but he walked me to the Suburban and said, “Thanks. I enjoyed that.”

I said, “No, thank you, Ian. It was nice.” He didn’t try to kiss me or anything. He just gave me a wave, then smiled and walked off to his van.

There was a party in Dana Point again. Lena wanted to go. I didn’t hear anything from Randy so Lena and I made our plans. We pulled out almost all of my clothes to pick out something to wear. Lena wore one of my Hawaiian tops, and I picked out my favorite lace up jeans. They were so cool. They rode real low and laced up the back. I chose a red and white polka dot mid drift top, and we were on our way. When we got into Newport, I could swear I saw Randy’s car driving down the PCH, with some blonde in the front seat.

Lena and I decided to follow it. I tried to catch up, but his car was fast. It stayed way ahead of us, and I couldn’t really see in the dark. I wished I knew his license plate number. Then I could be sure. After we chased the black BMW around, I decided I was being stupid and headed over to the party. But the night was ruined because of what I might have seen.

Lena said, “You didn’t have a commitment, did you? I thought you were just dating.”

I told her about how Randy freaked out about me and other guys. How I told him I don’t sleep around. “He acts like we are exclusive,” I added, but I was really upset by the idea he might be seeing someone else.

She could see I was getting upset. “Well, in Newport black BMWs are a dime a dozen. It probably wasn’t him,” she assured me. I still had a bad feeling. We got a beer from the keg, and the more I drank the madder I got.

I went to the back room and used the phone where it was quiet. I dialed Randy’s number. He picked up right away. I said, “Randy?”



“Hello, Dee Dee. I was just thinking about you, baby.” I told him I was thinking about him too. “What’s the matter? You sound down.”

I was, and I told him. “We haven’t really spent any time together lately, Randy.”

“I know, baby, I know, but we will.”

Then I remembered the Fourth of July party. “Hey, we have an annual block party every Fourth of July. I want you to come with me. It starts during the day and goes on into the night.”

He was quiet for minute. “OK, we can go to that,” he said with hesitance in his voice. That was OK. He probably did things with his family every year, and would have to tell them he would be with me.

I didn’t mention that I thought I saw him and chased some random dude around Newport. I felt stupid. He was at home thinking about me, and I was at a party. I had to stop jumping to conclusions. It was really messing with my brain. He told me he would be busy the next week, and he would call me. Hopefully we could get together. I did miss him.

I rejoined the party in a better mood. I told Lena I talked to him. “Did you mention that you saw him with some chick?” she said.

“No, I would feel stupid saying I chased a car around thinking it was him when he said he was thinking about me,” I told her.

“I don’t know about that. Oh, look who just showed up—Ian!” she said, all excited. I thought, Great, one more thing to mess with my head.

We had fun, and we all just hung out and partied. The weed smokers were out on the back patio. Lena and Ian both walked out there a few times. There was food and beer. A good time was had by all. We didn’t stay the night. We headed back to my house. “Ian is so funny,” Lena said.

“Yes he is. He is so easy to be around,” I said. We both left it



alone because we knew it couldn't happen between Ian and me. I had Randy now. I really liked and cared for Randy, and he didn't deserve to be hurt by my past. Still, Ian lingered in my mind.

The Fourth of July rolled around. I was excited about the block party. It was a mixture of parents and kids of all ages. The neighbors all barbecued, and they put tables out in the street and blocked off the entrance at both ends. I went and bought a cute red T-shirt, some tiny jean shorts, and red and white sandals. I was all patriotic. This was going to be fun.

I talked to Cindy. She was going. I called Jaycee, and she would be there. Lena was bringing Stephen, and Shelly and Keith were coming. Now all I had left to do was wait on Randy. Everyone started the party around two in the afternoon, and it went on until two in the morning, or sometimes later.

Randy finally knocked on the door. I walked out. "I will have the foxiest babe at the party," he said appreciatively.

I said, "Hello to you too." I took his hand, and we hopped in the car to go a couple blocks over to the neighborhood where the party was held. I introduced Randy around. He was very friendly with everyone, and they were nice to him. It was going really well. We ran into Ian and Karen. I introduced everyone, and we made small talk. Karen was really being nice to Randy. He kept his hand protectively around my waist.

Everyone was having a great time. No one mentioned anything illicit here today. Parents and children were everywhere, and I was glad. We ate and talked and wandered around. I noticed Randy always had a hand on me at all times. I hoped he was not insecure about all my friends. They didn't put any moves on me. I felt sorry for him that he would feel this way. He kept looking at his watch too.

Lena was right about Stephen. He seemed really nice. He was very funny, and everyone seemed to like him. He was one



of those guys who had a joke for every occasion. He was a hoot. Randy had no problem having long conversations with him. They laughed and talked a lot throughout the day. Lena and I were glad to see them getting along so well.

My parents were here, and he wanted to go back to the house. I knew what he wanted but I couldn't take the chance that my folks might walk in on us. So we hung out for a while longer. They did the fireworks at around nine. We stood next to Shelly, Keith, Ian, and Karen. It was a good pyrotechnic display. We hooted, hollered, and clapped. Randy told me he had a blast, and he hated to go, but he really needed to. I was disappointed, but I told him I could get a ride with my folks in a little bit. They never stayed past ten. He seemed happy about that, and I walked him to his car.

He kissed me and asked me if I wanted to meet him at the beach in Newport to surf together. That sounded great, and we settled on a time to meet, and where. He drove off. I was glad we would be seeing each other without all my guy friends. I thought he did a good job of making friends, but it was probably a little intimidating. He seemed to have had a good time. I hoped he did, anyway.

I walked back to the group, and Wade said, "Your dude's a little over protective. Didn't seem to like anyone in between you and him."

I shook my head. "He likes me. What can I say?"

"Sure, but it was a little extreme, man." He walked away.

I didn't think he was that bad, though I noticed he barely ever left my side or took his hands off me. I thought he was being sweet, not possessive. I walked over to Shelly and Keith. They didn't say anything bad about him. They were heading home too. I looked for my parents to get a ride, but I didn't find them anywhere. I would have to get a ride home with one of my



friends. Where were Lena and Stephen?

I didn't find Cindy or Lena and Stephen anywhere. Ian walked up behind me. "Where's Randy?" he said, all cheery.

"He had to go. I told him it was OK to leave. I thought I could ride home with my folks. I think they left. I don't see them anywhere," I said, looking around.

"They did. I said goodbye to your mom right after the fireworks."

"Well, that's just great," I pouted.

"I'll give you a ride, Dee Dee," he grinned.

"I don't think so. Karen probably wouldn't like that," I said.

"She left. She isn't happy with the way things are not progressing between us, or something like that. I don't know," he said with a shrug of his shoulders. "I won't try anything, Luv. I will just give you a ride home. Don't worry. I cross my heart." He gave me this innocent boy face and crossed his heart with his fingers.

On the way home he brought up Randy. "He is an alright guy, Dee Dee, but everyone noticed how obsessed he is with you. Kind of weird. Did you notice when you talked to any of the guys he was always in between you and them? He had his hands all over you the whole time."

"You are making more out of it than it was. He is the new guy on the block trying to get to know everyone. I thought he was being sweet," I said, getting defensive.

"No one saw it the way you did. Especially your dad. I saw him watching you two a couple times."

"That's just great. Everyone is always ganging up on us," I said with regret.

"I said he was a nice enough guy. He has some issues though. It's obvious, and you might want to be careful. You are going to do what you want anyway. I know how you are," Ian said as we



pulled up in front of my house.

“I am not sure what to say.” I looked over at him. He just smiled and jumped out of the car.

“Don’t worry about it.” He kissed my forehead. “I will see you around.” He smiled like he had a great secret that I didn’t know. What a guy. Did I mention how good looking he was? I needed to stop thinking like that.

I met Randy at the beach the following day. He seemed distracted at first. I suggested we catch some waves. We paddled out and got some great sets. I enjoyed watching him. He was surprised by my surfing too. The wind was picking up, and I told him I was ready to go in. We talked about the party. I asked him if he was uncomfortable. “No, I had a good time. Most of those guys are pretty cool.” I noticed he said most, but I didn’t say anything about that. I couldn’t help but wonder who he might not like.

“I had a good time. I am glad you could hang out with my friends and their families,” I told him.

“It was nice,” he said. We laid out and talked but he seemed distracted again. I asked him, “Is everything alright? You seem like you are somewhere else today.”

He looked over. “I am distracted. I have a lot going on right now.” He looked like he wanted to say more.

I was about to say something about him being able to talk to me if he needed to when I noticed this girl coming down the beach. She looked like she had a purpose. She was walking really fast, swinging her arms, with her blonde hair blowing back from her face.

I wondered who was going to be on the other side of that wrath she looked to be ready to unleash on someone. She stopped in front of us and started yelling at me. “You bitch! Slut! What do you think you are doing?”



I started to say something, and Randy jumped up. “Rachel, this is Dee Dee. She is my friend, and we were surfing.”

I looked at him. “I am your friend?” I said. I was thinking, *This can't be happening*. And people were starting to look our way.

“She is your friend, alright, your fuck buddy, you asshole! How could you do this to me? This is who you have been sneaking around with?” Her voice was reaching a screeching high pitch.

“I don't sneak around, Rach, calm down,” Randy said, holding up his hands.

Now I had had enough. The way he said “Rach” in such a familiar way bothered me.

“I don't know who you are, but I don't sneak around with anyone. As for you, you are pathetic. If you know about me, why are you hanging on to him? Have some self-respect!” I said in a low growl. I stood up so we were face to face. I was not going to fight this chick for a guy. She started to screech out some more obscenities, but I stopped her short.

“You can have him. I had no idea that there was anyone else. I certainly wasn't aware of you. I am out of here. Goodbye, Randy. Don't bother calling!” I yelled as I picked up my things, slinging my board around. It was a wonder I didn't knock her over with it.

He said, “Wait, Dee Dee,” but this whole thing was so screwed up, and I was so humiliated at the scene we made. I would never come back here again ever. Goodbye, Randy, goodbye, Rachel, goodbye, Newport. I could not get out of there fast enough.

I heard her yelling at him as I walked away. “Did you tell her I was pregnant, Randy? That you said you would marry me?” I didn't hear his reply, and I didn't care. There were some guys not far from us saying things like “Gnarly, dude, you're screwed,” and “I'll take one off your hands.” I could have just died.



I felt like crying, but I was too pissed off to cry. How could I have been so stupid? I walked right in and let him manipulate me. I believed all his stories. I pounded on my steering wheel the whole drive home, so angry at him and myself. What a scumbag he was. When I got home the phone was ringing. I was not picking it up, because it was probably him. I had absolutely nothing to say to him right now, or probably ever.

I went to my room. My mind was spinning with what just happened. That was him that night in his car with a girl. And all the secrets, the not being able to see me—he was with her, getting her pregnant. Well, better that it was her than me. I was done with him. I still felt hurt and used. Was this all a game? I wondered how long he was with her before he started hanging out with me. That was why I didn't like becoming attached. No one was ever what they seemed. I fell asleep thinking about all the good times we had, and how we would never see each other again. I was so gullible. I was such a fool.

I woke up to the smell of something cooking. My mom was making a pot roast. "I didn't know you were here, honey." She looked at my face. "You don't look good. Are you alright?" she asked.

"No, Mom, I am not. Guys are jerks, and I am having nothing to do with any of them ever," I told her.

She shook her head sadly. "Did something happen with you and Randy? He has called four times. I told him you weren't here."

I got teary-eyed. "I won't be taking any of his calls ever again." She patted my arm as she passed.

"It can't be that bad, that you can't talk to the young man?"

I didn't mean to blurt it out, but it came out anyway. "He has a pregnant girlfriend!" I started to sniffle and grabbed a tissue.

My mom came over and wrapped her arms around me. "Well, that no good bastard!" I started laughing through my tears. Mom



never cussed, so that coming out of her mouth was just so funny. She brushed the hair out of my eyes. “Well, he is.” We both started laughing.

My dad came in. “What’s the big joke?” he asked.

“You’ll be happy to know that Dee Dee here has given Randy the boot. Good riddance,” she said smugly.

She continued to laugh as she went back to making dinner. We all knew my dad was not fond of Randy. He walked over and rubbed my back. “I know you always make the right decisions.” Poor Dad. He was clueless, but this time I wanted him to stay that way. My mom gave me a conspiratorial look, and we dropped the subject of Randy.

I had a nice dinner with my parents. I didn’t think I wanted to tell anyone what went down just yet. I was not ready for everyone to say “I told you so,” or have anyone feel sorry for me. I laid low around the house at night, and my days were filled with tennis or surfing. I talked to the guys. Wade apologized for saying anything about my Newport dude. I told him not to worry about it. We all got along so well. They knew me, and I knew them. Everyone let each other be what they wanted to be without judging. I wanted to tell them he was out of my life, but I couldn’t.

My pride was hurt. Why could I trust these guys with my life, but when I tried to trust a guy with my heart it got trampled? I could not get over how stupid I was. I should never have gotten that close, should never have been that vulnerable. And I wouldn’t do it again. Geez, was I hurt, or just my pride bruised? I liked to be the one to walk away. I should have when things were getting weird with Randy. Damn, he had me fooled.



CHAPTER 8

The surf championships would be hosted at the Huntington Beach Pier soon. I loved going and watching. That was something to look forward to. I had gone to a few parties, and no one had said a word about Randy. I acted like everything was fine. I didn't lie about it. I just refused to confirm or deny anything about us. I saw Ian out a lot. He seemed to be running solo too. I wanted to tell him, but I was not ready for him to know either.

I was so absorbed in my own world. I walked into my house and my sister was in the kitchen talking to my mom. I heard her little monsters upstairs destroying something. I yelled up, "You guys better not be in my room!"

They hollered back louder, "We're not!" My mom kept a big toy box in one of the spare rooms for when they came over. When my sister and brother-in-law couldn't find a sitter, they stayed with us.

I walked into the kitchen and they both were looking very somber. "Who died?" I said rather rudely. My mom looked near tears. "Oh, gosh, Mom, I am sorry. That wasn't very nice." What if someone did die, Dee Dee? I thought to myself.



“Your brother-in-law has been offered a great job in New York with some fancy law firm,” she whimpered.

My sister Kathy tried to smile but it wasn’t working. She was intensely rocking the baby. “Yes, they want us to relocate in September.” I couldn’t believe it. I had never thought of her moving away ever.

“So are you moving?” I said, stepping into the room. I was just shocked.

“Yes, he has accepted. That’s why I am here. To tell you guys we will be moving, the second week of the month. They are taking care of everything. They are listing our house. Packing us up and moving us there. We are going to fly out next week to look at homes.”

“What is wrong with his job here? He is happy and does well,” I demanded.

She looked over at me. “He will make almost double what he makes now,” she said.

“At what cost to you, and the kids? New York, Kathy? That’s no place to raise kids. There is no beach. It is all cement and tall buildings,” I complained to her.

“We will live in a country club, in the suburbs, and he will commute,” she said, trying to look at the bright side.

“Now it sounds like they have made up their minds, Dee Dee. You have to respect their decision and be supportive,” my mother scolded. I could see she was as upset as I was. She was right, though. I shouldn’t make it any harder for my sister to go than it was going to be.

“Well, you had better get a place big enough for us so we can come visit.” She smiled and I hugged her. She already told my brother a week ago. They were always in cahoots about things. Of course she told him first.

“Are you taking the kids, or leaving them here?” I asked,



then said quickly, “To go look at homes, I mean.” We all laughed at that slip of the tongue.

“We are taking them. This is such a big change for them, and we want them to be part of the process. They can help pick out the house. Tell us what room they want.” She was trying to sound excited, like it was something to look forward to, not a sentencing to doom. That was just how I saw it.

That was not what I wanted to hear today. It was one bummer after another. The little guys got on my nerves sometimes, but I loved them all. I would miss my sister and her family terribly. I would like to knock my brother-in-law in the head. What would make him do such a thing? They were very happy where they were. My sister had all her childhood friends here. She would be leaving them, and us, to go to a place where they knew absolutely no one.

My sister’s house was gorgeous. It was professionally decorated. She did all the color choices and patterns, and the interior decorator put it all together. There were rich greens of all shades. She had a nice mix of plaids and solids. It was very nice. They had a pool and on the side of the house the kids had a playground with all kinds of climbing toys and a fort. They would have no problem selling it, but what a shame. She just finished it a year and a half ago. It was her dream house.

Maybe I would go visit her after they settled in. I really didn’t see that being fun, no matter how hard I tried to make it so. This was really a bummer. I knew we would get used to it, but for now that was one more thing that had gone wrong for me this summer.

A bunch of my friends were having another bonfire and burying the keg at the beach scene. I thought I would go. It was depressing around my house. I went by myself. Cindy went to the Salton Sea with her family. Everyone else was coupled up



and had plans. I headed out there after it got dark. We did the usual—drank beer and hung out. It was a good time. I was glad I came. Ian was being a good friend. I didn't know why. He never asked about Randy. He just hung out with me, as if we were never together. Dewey and Ian were going to eat at the Chili Factory in Newport. Dewey asked if my boyfriend would allow me to go with them.

"Sure," I said. "He doesn't own me," I told him. Dewey never gossiped or talked about people. That was one of the many things I liked about him.

"OK, Ian and I will pick you up tomorrow night at six. Is that cool with you?" he asked.

"Super," I said. I wondered why no girl had latched on to Dewey. He was so sweet. He was honest and straightforward. I never saw him with a girl though. I saw many chicks checking him out all the time.

The following night they came by and got me. We went to eat chili. "I really like this place," I said. Then, since we were in Newport, they told me they had to make a stop at Dewey's friend's place. "It's obvious I know what is going on. Why do I have to sit in the car?" I asked.

Dewey looked at Ian. "I guess she can come in." So we headed over to Dewey's friend's house.

As we were walking up to the door, Ian whispered, "Don't judge!" I looked at him, and Chase opened the door. He was really nice looking, and very stylish. His place was great. Teak furniture, lots of leather. Very expensive set up. We all got introduced, and he invited us to sit. Dewey broke out some white powder and made line for everyone.

We talked and hung out for over an hour, and then we left. This time Ian backed the van into Chase's garage. They loaded it up. I thought I was way off on the amount we were traveling



with. I thought we were carrying ten pounds at a time. Tonight we were doubling that. I didn't say anything. Chase said, "Nice to meet you, Dee Dee." I smiled at him.

"Nice to meet you too, Chase." We waved and headed on down the road. I didn't say anything about Chase being gay. "He is really a nice guy," I said, all cheery.

Dewey looked at me. "Yes he is. You do not talk about these trips to Newport with your boyfriend, do you?"

I looked surprised. "I don't mention these trips to anyone." I crossed my fingers. I only told my close friends. They wouldn't repeat it to anyone.

Dewey laughed. "I had hoped. I just need to hear you say it. I think you are really something, Dee." Dewey smiled down at me. I thought to myself, *And you are gay, Dewey*. That was why he never had girls around. But I didn't say anything like that.

"Thanks. You aren't so bad yourself," I said to him. I understood so much more now. Everything made sense.

"What is with the speaker boxes?" I asked. Dewey told me Chase owned a big stereo store, and he used the boxes that came into the shop for his other business. It was all very undercover, but it seemed to work for them. We dropped Dewey and the boxes off first. Then Ian said he would drop me off.

"You were pretty cool," he said after we left Dewey.

"What?" I looked at him.

"You know, Dewey and Chase?" I shrugged like it was nothing. He told me, "I was a little uncomfortable with it at first. Dewey and I went to school together since third grade. He had a real hard time with it."

"I never would have guessed in a million years," I said.

"I wouldn't have either. He just told me one day," Ian admitted. He looked at me.

"I don't care, Ian. I know you guys have been really close



your whole life.” I smiled. “Not that close, but you know what I mean.” It lightened up the mood.

“Please don’t say anything. When they are ready they should be the ones to say what and who they are.” He gave me this serious look.

“Of course,” I agreed, shaking my head.

We pulled up in front of my house and stopped. “I am getting burnt out on the coke. I don’t want to do it anymore,” I told him.

“I know what you mean. It burns me out too. I will tell Dewey not to offer it to you anymore, that you aren’t into it. You know, you could have just said no thank you,” he said.

“I felt weird not doing it at the dealer’s house. I didn’t want them to think I was a narc or something,” I explained.

“I see what you mean. Don’t worry about it.” He started laughing. “You are a funny girl, Dee Dee.” He jumped out and ran around to let me out.

“Thanks, but you don’t have to open the door for me, Ian,” I told him.

“What can I say? I have good manners. My mother raised me right.” He kept laughing. He didn’t walk me to the door, but he said before he got back in the van, “I will see you around.” And of course he gave me a lopsided smile as he stood there leaning against the front of his van. Then he casually walked around and jumped back in his van and drove off.

I rode with Ian and Dewey on a lot of the trips to Chase’s. It seemed that Chase and I had a lot to talk about. I enjoyed his company, and Dewey seemed relaxed and at ease with it. We always had fun. He knew the entire history of Balboa. It was a little finger that jutted off of Newport. I had rented sail boats there with my family for the day. We did it a lot when I was a kid. Apparently, so did Chase’s family. They owned a sail boat. We were all on very good terms now, and I could come and go



when I pleased, as a friend. I liked that. I really liked Chase.

These guys had really infiltrated the weed trafficking business. I didn't see how the authorities had not caught on to what they were doing. It was very large scale. Dewey was not the only one that went to Chase for large quantities. There were other people that came by and got pounds. No one ever talked about where it came from. I once saw a used round trip ticket from Colombia. I never mentioned it.

I stayed busy and tried not to think of how Randy burned me. It was hard when he kept calling. I sometimes thought I would like to talk to him. I would like to know what happened with us, and why. But I probably wouldn't get the truth. I would never know, I guessed.

My mom told him to leave me alone, that I would not be taking any calls from him. He had better listen to her, or Mom would sic my dad on him. So the summer marched on, and I was alone. It was not so bad, not really. I had my friends, and there was always a party or something to do.

Cindy came by one morning and announced that she wanted to learn to surf. "OK," I said, all happy. "Let's go." We went down to the pier. I ran into a surf shop my friends hang out at and asked them if they had a board Cindy could borrow. "She wants to learn." They suggested a long board first. I told them I learned on one. They went in the back and brought the prehistoric-looking board out. We all laughed. Then Cindy and I hit the waves. She stood up right away. I was stoked for her. She fell, but went right back out to do it again. By the end of the day, she was standing pretty good.

"What a blast," she exclaimed. "I want to do it some more. I want to get good like you."

"We can come back out tomorrow." We drove through Jack in the Box on the way home, and ate while driving to my house.



She was really excited about surfing. I wondered why she never wanted to try before.

She hung out with me the rest of the day. We walked over to her house. "I haven't seen or heard you say anything about Randy in a long time. What's up with him?" she asked.

"We are over," I told her.

"Oh, sorry. You look bummed, but not too. Are you OK?" she asked.

"Yes, I am. He is a low down dirty cheater," I spat. "I was really upset at first, but now I don't care anymore. I am more embarrassed that I believed in him, and he was a scammer," I said.

"He was too smooth for his own good, I thought," she said, slapping her hand on the table. She grabbed us each a Pepsi.

"That's the problem. Everyone saw through him but me. That is why I haven't told anyone we broke up," I said, turning red.

"No one knows?" she asked.

"Nope." I shook my head.

"What about Ian?" she asked.

"What about him? We are friends. We get along, and no, he doesn't know. And no, I don't want to tell him just yet," I explained.

"You need to get back with him," she pleaded.

"No! We hang out, and are good friends. I don't want to complicate things. So don't get any ideas. I have been seeing him out and we talk. That's enough." I kept trying to explain our new relationship to her. "I have been letting him think I am still with Randy."

She looked at me crossly. "He is so into you. Give him a chance, will you? I don't think you are being fair to him."

I looked at her and smiled. "I will think about it. That's it for now. I am going to go home. I will swing by early for your next surfing session," I said as I walked out.

She hollered, "I will be ready."



“Good. Don’t wuss out on me,” I laughed at her. I walked back to my house. I came around the corner in time for Randy to spot me. “Oh, shit,” I said out loud.

He pulled up next to me and said, “We need to talk.”

I looked at him and rolled my eyes. “I think we are talked out.” I gave him a fake laugh. I started walking toward my house. He shut his car off, jumped out, and ran up behind me.

I could see that he was about to grab my arm. “Don’t even think about touching me,” I growled at him.

“Whoa, whoa, that’s the problem. You are all I can think about touching,” he said in a sad voice. “You don’t understand. Rachel and I have known each other for years. We went to high school together. We have always hung out, but we were just friends.” I started to make an ugly comment and he cut me off. “We were never anything to each other.” He looked down at me and said, “I know you won’t believe this, but it’s the truth. I slept with her one time. It didn’t mean anything. We were drunk, and it was a mistake. We both said so the next day.”

“Well, it sure means something now, doesn’t it, Randy?” I was frustrated, and I didn’t want to hear anything he had to say.

“Please don’t be this way. I hadn’t met you yet,” he pleaded. “We were good together. We can be again.”

I stopped and looked at him. “Are you for real? Come on Randy. She is pregnant. I just don’t understand how you want me to fit into this scenario of yours. Aren’t you getting married?” I said sarcastically, not really wanting an answer. I started walking toward my house. He started to say something else. I turned back. “Just stop, OK? There is nothing to say or do. Goodbye. I wish you and your new family the best.” He didn’t say anything else. He just turned and walked back to his car.

That was not fun. My heart was hammering in my chest. I could have done without running into him. I know he thought



that he could keep Rachel and me apart and have both worlds. He was ridiculous to think I would believe that they were only together one time. Yeah, right. I didn't want to think about them anymore. I wasted enough time on him already.

Cindy and I headed out to the beach early the next morning. I told her that Randy came by, and what he said. "Bull shit!" she said. "He messed around and got caught!"

"Whatever. I am over him, and anything that has to do with him."

She started singing, "One bad apple don't spoil the whole bunch, girl," and we started laughing. We still had the long board. I let Cindy ride that a little more until she got her footing again. Today she wanted to try mine.

"Go for it," I smiled. I paddled out behind her and hung out on the long board. She took mine and looked for a good swell. She started to go a couple of times but turned back. "Go when you're ready. There is no rush," I yelled, trying to be supportive. She finally picked one and went for it. She was up but went down hard right away. I watched her to make sure she was OK. She bobbed up and paddled back toward me.

"Damn," she swore. She was looking very frustrated. "Water up my nose!"

"You can't get it in a day," I calmly told her. It took lots of practice. She paddled away and went again. She was up, and staying. Then she went down again.

I felt for her. It was frustrating. She didn't come back to me. She just went for another swell. This one was a little smaller, and she got a good start on it. She rode a little ways, and then ate it. She got right back up and went after another one. This went on for a long time. She never really rode one wave for very long, but the rides got longer each time she tried. There was real progress. She hadn't figured out how to move around on the



wave. It would come in time.

She finally came back to me and said she had had enough for now. She was exhausted. I told her how good she did. She rolled her eyes at me. "I am crappy. Admit it."

I said, "No, you are not. Everyone started just where you are. Don't give up." We walked up on the sand and put down the boards. A few of the guys came over and gave her some encouraging words. She beamed at me. "I told you we have all been there, and there is no judgment out here for the locals." *I sure didn't get this nice treatment when I first came out here.* I didn't mention that.

We laid out for a while. I went out and grabbed a few waves while she rested. The guys were being so nice. When I came back they invited us to a party right off Main Street tonight. We said we would be there and took off. She was stoked and couldn't wait to party with these dudes.

We were back out here at the pier again in the evening. I followed the directions they gave us, and we found the place in full swing. They had what they called Hunch Punch. It was a big bottled water container full of fruit and rum. They handed us big glasses as soon as we got there. One of the guys warned, "Go easy. It goes down smooth, but it sneaks up on you. One minute you're good, and the next you are wasted!" He laughed.

I found it strange that I didn't really know any of these guys. They were not the crew I hung with. Although I had surfed here for so long, how we didn't really know each other they found weird too, since they were all from here as well. We definitely knew a lot of the same people. They were all funny and basically good guys. I saw Cindy already getting to know one guy in particular. We hung out and partied but after a few hours I was done. She of course wanted to stay. I could tell she had drank a lot of that punch. The guy she was with said he would take her home.



I said, "Sorry, dude, but she has to go with me."

"What are you, her mother?" he asked.

"No, I am her cousin, and my family will come back and get her if I don't show up with her," I threatened.

Cindy slurred, "What are you, my mother?" then laughed hysterically.

"You can get her number and call her, but tonight is over." I helped her up, and she kept laughing. For some reason she thought me being her mother was really funny. I finally got her to my car. "I don't see your friend anywhere. So we know what he had planned." We pulled out and I saw him out front, probably moving on to the next chick. She was passed out before we got out on the highway.

I took her home. Her parents went to bed even earlier than mine. I snuck her into her room and put her to bed. She slurred at me, "Night, Mom." I shushed her, but she kept laughing. That was pretty fun. She cracked me up. I went around the corner to my house and crawled into my own bed. I laughed to myself about Cindy.

I had a tennis lesson in the morning. I got my gear together and went over to the tennis courts. The pro told me I needed to play against men. I needed to develop quicker reaction time, and the women I was playing weren't giving me enough competition. I thought he was referring to himself. But then this kid came out, probably about thirteen years old.

"I thought you said men." I pointed out the obvious.

He just chuckled and introduced Dennis to me. He was a champion in his age group. So we warmed up and hit the ball back and forth. He asked if I was ready. I said sure. I served first. He said he was impressed. *You're a kid. What do you know?* I was thinking.

Then it was his turn and I fully understood. The ball whizzed



by me so fast I didn't even try to swing. He gave me a smirk and went to serve again. Same thing again—it went right by me. I had to get a grip here. I couldn't let him serve me out with no return balls. I decided to move back. The ball came again. I at least got a racket on it, but I sent it out of the court.

I could see the pro out of the corner of my eye, watching. I had to do something. I got an idea. He served for the game, his final serve. I didn't swing. I blocked it back. It went over and a rally began. We hit it back and forth. He hit it hard. I tried to change the pace up on the ball to slow it down. That worked and I got my first point on his service. We played for a good hour, and he of course beat me. My pro said I wasn't beaten too badly. I was respectable. Great, I was respectable. He knew I hated that. He told me he would match me up with others of this level to strengthen my game. I told him thanks and left.

I stopped at the liquor store and bought a Dr. Pepper. When I was coming out I ran into Ian and Steve. “Did you play a little tennis today?” Ian asked.

“I got my ass kicked by a thirteen-year-old boy, to my amazement,” I said, feeling so embarrassed even admitting it.

Steve looked at me. “Oh, tennis. I just thought you were wearing a really short skirt.” He leered at me.

“That's real nice, Steve.” I gave him a shove. “You pervert...”

“We are all going to the mountains in a few days. If you and Cindy want to go, let us know. I have to go up to check on the family cabin, so I decided to make it a party,” Ian said. “You two can ride with me and there are plenty of rooms so you could have your own if you would like.” He smiled. I started to decline, and he said, “Oh, yes, the boyfriend. I guess you can bring him.” I just shook my head.

I couldn't go into all this yet. I was just not ready. “I can't, but thanks. I have a tennis match I am playing, and will not



have any free time. But the surf championships start next week. Maybe we can meet up for that.” I gave them a big smile and walked off.

I was going to have to tell them. It would have to wait until they got back. I jumped in my Suburban and cranked up the stereo. The Rolling Stones’s “Tumbling Dice” was playing, and I listened to it all the way home. When I got there I ran up and took a shower. I planned to do absolutely nothing for the next day or two. I would eat and sleep and lounge around.

Jaycee called. “Why don’t you come over? I will order Mexican.” I told her I had to take a rain check. I gave her the same excuse about tennis. She said, “OK. Will you get me some coke from your friend? My guy got busted. I won’t be calling him anymore.” I told her I couldn’t. He went to the mountains to Ian’s family cabin. She didn’t have to know they hadn’t left yet. “Do you know anyone else?” she asked, sounding kind of desperate.

“No, Jaycee, it’s really not my thing. I am burnt out on it.”

She ignored what I just said. “If you think of someone you can get it from, call me. I will get the money for you.”

I said, “OK,” just to get this conversation over with, and hung up. She was really getting hooked on that stuff. All she did these days was sit around and snort all day. This was not good. I was really not sure what to do about it.

The next day I didn’t even get dressed. I stayed in my pajamas all day. I ate and laid around. Wow, why had I not done this before? It was marvelous. The phone rang a few times, but I didn’t answer it. I took a nap and tried to start reading a book. The book was boring, so I put it down and went back to sleep. My mom came home and thought I was sick. No, just being lazy. She went back downstairs to make dinner. I told her I was not hungry. I had been eating junk all day.

The next day I got up and out of bed by six in the morning.



I wanted to surf and then go get killed by the kid at the tennis courts. I got to the beach, and no one was out yet. The sky was getting brighter with every minute. I stood there and watched the sun rise for a few moments. It was full of beautiful colors—blues, oranges, and purples. I was truly amazed sometimes at the beauty of this place I lived.

It was really a great day. The swells were large, and they were breaking clean. I paddled out and just listened to the sound of the ocean. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else but here. I thought of my sister living up north in the ice and snow. I would never move from here ever.

I got some really nice rides today. When I was coming out of the water, some of the locals were just getting to the beach. We said hi and talked about the surf today, and I got ready to leave. One of the dudes asked about Cindy. It was that guy from the Hunch Punch party. I told him she was cool. He gave me his phone number and asked me to give it to her.

I was surprised. He seemed like a love them and leave them kind of guy. Well, he never got to her, so maybe he was trying again. I would give her the number. It was her decision to see him or not. I walked down to my car, and I thought I noticed someone following me. It was creepy. I jumped in my car and looked around, but I didn't see anyone. I must have imagined it.

When I was driving home I saw a blue car following me. At least, I thought it was. I knew I saw it at the beach, and now I was turning into my neighborhood, and it was behind me. I pulled into our driveway, and my heart was pounding. It drove on by, and the man driving didn't even look my way. I didn't know when I started getting paranoid like this. It was probably someone who lived in this neighborhood who went to the beach today too.

Jaycee called me again today about the coke. "I don't know



a lot of people that have it, Jaycee. I only know one,” I told her. “Why don’t you ask those dudes who live behind you if they get high? They have a lot of traffic going to their place. They probably can hook you up,” I suggested.

She said, “I don’t know, maybe.”

“I know they are cool, and if they can’t get it, well, you tried. You know they are cool,” I said.

“Yes, maybe I will,” she said, and she hung up. She had a bad jones going for cocaine.

Cindy called me. I gave her the guy from the beach’s number. She was all happy about that. I didn’t see the big deal, but she liked him. She said she was calling him right now, and she would call me later. My parents were going out for prime rib at Victoria Station tonight. I decided to get dressed up and go with them. I had a lot of dressy clothes, but I didn’t have a lot of occasions to wear them. I wore a red fitted dress with puff sleeves and a low cut neckline. Very avant-garde, as my mother would say.

Dinner was very good. I liked my beef rare, like my father, and my mother liked hers cooked well. We had a good time. They talked about my sister moving to New York. She would be back this week. They found a house they liked. My dad said they would make the trip to New York after Kathy and her family were settled in. I would be in school, so I would have to stay home. Maybe I could go on one of my breaks, and Dad said my mom could go again with me.

That made her happy. She had been really down about my sister moving away. We moved onto another subject before my mom started crying. We talked about my tennis, and how my dad hoped he was getting his money’s worth for my lessons. I thanked him again, and reminded him that my scholarship from tennis saved him thousands. After a delicious dinner we headed home. I told them I was hitting the sack. I had a match in the morning. We



gave our good night kisses and I ran to my room. I loved my folks, but I could only handle so much loving family time.

I pulled out my pajamas and I found Randy's boxers. I took them from him that first time I spent the night. I knew it was stupid, but sometimes I wondered what would have happened had he not knocked up another girl. It seemed like things were so perfect. Or maybe I thought they were perfect because I had nothing now. It ended so terribly.

Then there was Ian. What did I do there? We just faded away. We had always had bad timing. At least we were still friends. I could still tolerate the sight of him. I didn't feel the urge to strangle him. I guessed I was going to have to go man shopping again. Put myself out there. It was always scary. Bad things happened when I trusted guys. Ah, but I did have fun when I had a guy. There had to be someone who could be with me on my terms. I was not talking settling down, but just be there for me, and me for him, whoever he was. There had to be one out there I could hang with. I just had to find him.

Maybe I would start looking at the surf championship. There would be thousands to choose from. Hey, maybe one of the professional surfers that was coming to town. Cool. That would be my next challenge: find a new guy. Then again, what was the big deal? I already had a dozen guys I hung with now. Steve, Jimmy, Billy, and Wade just to name a few, and I had a great time with them. And there were no strings to any. I thought I was putting more into this than was necessary.



CHAPTER 9

I warmed up for my tennis match. I stretched really well, and then warmed up my swing. I took some practice serves, and I was ready to go. My opponent served first. We got into the game, and we were pretty evenly matched. She won the first set, and I won the second. I had soaked my clothes with sweat. She was looking just as sweaty and worn out as I was. We took a break because of the split sets. I drank water and ate a banana. I wiped my face down with a wet towel and changed into a fresh top. OK, I was ready to finish this match. We were in our third hour. I was feeling fatigued, and I knew she was too.

The last set was a struggle. We were running very close. In the end, I beat her. I was so relieved. I really thought she had me. I shook hands with her, and told her it was a good match. She smiled, but she was not happy. I walked over to my pro. He said I should have taken her quicker. I needed work if I planned on being any good on the college team. I packed my stuff and left. Gee, I thought I won. He scolded me like a loser.

I got home and told the folks I was the winner. I whined to them about how the pro treated me. My dad thought it was constructive criticism. My mom consoled me. They wanted



pizza. My mom ordered it. I said I would go pick it up for them. I showered, changed, and went back out to my car. As I was pulling out of the driveway, that blue Ford was following me again. Or did this guy live in our neighborhood? I went to get the pizza, and looked for the car on the way back. I didn't see it. He must have lived in my neighborhood. I sure did see him around a lot.

We ate the pizza and watched *How the West was Won* on TV. My parents commented on how nice it was that I had been staying home at night and not running the streets. I told them I was home because nothing was going on. When something came up I would go out. When school started I would be home all the time. They said they understood. I wondered about them. I went up to my room and put on some music. I pulled out my Steely Dan album and listened to it for a while. It made me feel melancholy. A lot had happened this summer. I always associated music with events and feelings.

I hadn't heard from Lena since the Fourth of July party. I called her house, and her mom said she moved out. I said thanks, and then hung up. She must have gone through with it and moved in with Stephen. Well, good luck, Lena. I wished she would have called me. Shelly was laying low too. She and Keith never did much with anyone anyway. I called her. She picked up on the first ring.

I asked her how things were going. "Everything is great. We get along so good. We are going to this big fund-raiser for the Special Olympics," she said, all excited.

"That is very cool," I said. She proceeded to tell me all about it, and how they were involved. What a great thing to do. "I am happy you are involved in something so worthwhile, but we never hang out anymore," I whined.

She said she missed the parties, but Keith just wasn't into the



crowds. He always told her to go if she wanted. She never did. “He says it, but he would be mad if I went without him.”

“You sound like you’re married,” I said.

“It feels like I am sometimes. I have never been happier,” she said. I was happy to hear her voice and talk. We used to be inseparable. Funny how much had changed.

“What about you and Randy? How are you two doing? He was so clingy and attached to your hip at the block party. I thought it was cute. Keith thought it was weird,” she said.

“All the guys thought it was weird. That’s all I heard about afterward. It doesn’t matter. We broke up,” I said. I went on to tell her everything that happened, and how his girlfriend before me was pregnant. And how he came to my house to try and patch things up. “AS IF!”

She felt bad for me. This was what I hated. I didn’t want pity. I told her I was fine, and I was meeting the man of my dreams at the surf championships. We cracked up over that, and I told her I had to get going. We said how good it was to talk to each other, and made promises to get together soon. I really missed hanging out with her. I wondered if she missed me. She never really said anything about hanging with me.

It looked like another early night. I went to bed and hoped something good was heading my way. I felt like I had had enough bad things happen, that now things had to get better. That old saying: “When you are at rock bottom, you can only go up.” Something like that. Anyway, I fell asleep dreaming about huge waves breaking at the cliffs, and everyone was there to watch me. I woke up before I actually surfed those thirty footers in my dream.

When I was at the beach hanging out I heard someone say everyone was back from Ian’s cabin, and what a blast they had. I kind of wished I would have gone. They got back the night



before my match. I could have gone. Oh, well. Maybe I could make the next trip. Everyone was talking about the professional surfers that were arriving in town. I hadn't seen anyone yet, but I was sure I would.

This was a huge event, held here every year. The championships brought together some of the most esteemed surfers from around the world. It started tomorrow. I could not be more excited.

I thought that before I went home I would buy that new bikini I promised myself, and this was just the occasion for it. I cruised in and out of the shops looking for the best one. There was every shape and color. This year the French cut bikini was really popular. I finally picked one—a brown Hawaiian print bottom with a brown crocheted top. It was way hot. I was happy, and would wear it on the first day of the competition.

I couldn't wait. I loved watching these guys and girls. They were so unbelievably talented. It was exciting just to be a part of this event. I would have loved to be that good. They had natural raw talent. It was not something everyone had. Well, I would be back tomorrow. I couldn't wait. Maybe Cindy wanted to come with me.

Jaycee called me again about the coke. I told her I would find out today for her. Man, this was not good. I was worried about her obsession with getting the coke. I asked her if she would like to go to the beach with us, and she said no, she had things to do. The dudes in the back of her apartment only sold weed. She finally went back and asked them if they had any coke. So she pleaded, "Please, get some from your friend. I have the money!"

I really didn't want to get it for her, but she might do something stupid like try to find it in a bad neighborhood, or from some crooks, so I would go to Dewey for her. I told him I needed the same amount as last time. He told me to come and get it.



When I got there we hung out and talked a while, so as not to look suspicious. He told me some funny stories, and then gave me a lunch bag with the coke in it. “Usually, I need the money up front, but because it’s you I will front it to you. Be back as quick as you can, though. I don’t want to worry about you,” he warned. I grabbed it and said I would be right back.

I cruised over to Jaycee’s, and she was pacing the floor. I gave it to her. She put out a line for her, and one for me. “No thanks. I am not into it, Jaycee. If you like it, give me the money. I got this on the front, and need to get back,” I said, trying to get her to hurry.

She smiled as she finished the first line. “You even got the lingo down,” she said before she snorted up the other line.

“Yeah, I got to go, Jaycee.” So she handed me the money. I didn’t count it because I knew it was all there. I put it in my purse and headed for the door.

“You sure you don’t want to hang out and party?” She sang the sentence out.

“No, really, I got to go,” I said, and I ran out the door. I drove slow. All of a sudden, it hit me. What I was doing. I could go to prison for a long time. I didn’t like feeling this nervous. I couldn’t help it, but I scanned the street for the mysterious Ford I had been seeing. I didn’t see it today. “Thank God!”

I went back to Dewey’s, and he was out front talking to Steve. They waved, and I walked up. “What’s going on tonight, guys?” I asked, trying to be cool.

“Nothing I know of,” Steve said.

“Too bad,” I said, smiling at him. He said his goodbyes and left. Dewey was going to his car so I followed.

He told me to jump in. I jumped in and handed him the money. He tried to give me a hundred dollar bill. I refused it. He shoved it in my hand. Oh, what the heck.



I said to him, “I got to go, but thanks.” When I got out of his car his mom was pulling up.

He hollered at me, “See you at the beach tomorrow!”

I said, “You know it,” waving goodbye as I pulled away.

I talked to Cindy, and she wanted to go with me to surf champs. She told me she called the guy from the beach and would be meeting him there. We headed on down early. It would be crowded, and we didn’t want to have to hike several blocks from a parking spot. How exciting. Everything was set up. There were TV cameras up on the pier, and on the beach. News people were everywhere. I thought I noticed that blue Ford again. I wondered if that was a neighbor who surfed, or was he really following me?

We walked around and checked out all the people here. Most of our friends came down. The beach and pier were packed. There were surfer dudes from all over. Kids were in line getting autographs. We walked past some of the pro surfers in the tents, smiling and saying hello. We got some appreciative glances. I didn’t want to be a surf pro groupie. There were a lot of girls already filling that position. They could have it. We found a spot where we could watch the waves.

The horn blasted for the first heat. The waves were great today—glassy, about five to six feet. We watched some great rides. There was a lot of riding the lip and shooting down into the tube. They were pulling off some great tricks. They seemed so sure-footed as they were maneuvering their cut backs. They were crazy good. Heat after heat, more guys went out. They were getting better. Some were catching some hang time in the air, some did 360s, and all around amazing moves. Wow, it was so far out I couldn’t leave my spot to wander around the beach. I didn’t want to miss anything.

Sometime during the contest Cindy’s guy showed up. They



were talking, laughing, and having fun. At one point between heats I noticed Ian up on the pier. Maybe I would catch up with him later and see how the cabin trip was. This day went by so quickly. I couldn't wait for tomorrow as they went on to the next level. Cindy and Beach Guy were making plans to see each other here tomorrow. I wouldn't miss it. Now neither would Cindy.

We headed on up the steps. I didn't see Ian. I needed to get with Jaycee and Dewey. I wouldn't be running for her anymore. I wanted to call him when I got home and see if he wanted to deal direct with her. Then I was telling her this was it. I was out. I didn't like what was happening to her. I didn't like the drug scene myself. I had already told her, and Ian.

After I dropped Cindy off, who was acting all silly and gaga over this guy from the beach, I headed home. I thought I saw that Ford go around the corner when I was in my driveway. Whatever. He definitely lived around here for me to see him so much. I laughed to myself, and about my paranoia. I reflected about Cindy, and how giggly she was with this new guy. I guessed I had acted that way too over my boyfriends.

My folks told me they were going to Morro Bay for part of the week. "Do you want to go honey?" my mom asked. I loved Morro Bay. We used to go a lot when I was a kid and fish for rock cod and picnic. One year some people were rock climbing on Morro Rock and got stuck. A big rescue team was sent out to get them down. It was very exciting when you were eight years old.

It was fun, but I couldn't miss the championships, so I declined. "No thanks, Mom. I want to see who wins the championship surfing contest."

She said OK, but I could see she was hoping I would go. The phone rang, and my mom said, "Will you get that? I have flour on my hands." I ran up the stairs in case it was Jaycee.

It was not Jaycee, and I wished I didn't pick up. It was



Randy. He said, “Hey, Babe...um, Dee Dee. Don’t hang up.” He started to call me “Baby.” I thought he knew he had no right and switched it up.

I sighed. “What, Randy, what?”

He was quiet for a minute. Then he said, “I just wanted to hear your voice.”

I quickly told him, “Don’t do this, Randy. It’s too late for us.” He sounded down.

“Hey, I am sorry. I just want to be friends. You know we were good together, babe.”

I shook my head. “We can’t be friends, not now. I don’t know, maybe, down the road sometime in the distant future. What would Rachel think if she knew you called me?”

He mumbled something, then said, “Yes, I know. She would have a cow.” He tried to explain to me that I was so important to him still. That Rachel getting pregnant was an accident. How he believed we were meant to be together. He was just sure of it. I stopped him by saying I would hang up.

“I was hoping maybe to see you at the surf competition tomorrow.”

Oh, no. Now I was really mad. “No, Randy, don’t come down there and ruin it for me. All my friends are there, and you and I would end up arguing.”

He sounded agitated. “Who cares what your friends think? And Rachel knows I want to see it. We don’t have to fight about anything. Besides, I go every year.”

“Rachel would not like you there with me. She would be upset, and now is not the time to upset her. She is pregnant,” I said with venom. “Look, we can’t be around each other. It won’t work, and I have moved on. Stop calling me, and take care of your girl.” I hung up without waiting for a response.

The nerve of that guy. He just wouldn’t go away. He better



not show up tomorrow. That would totally ruin everything for me. I called Dewey and asked him if he could talk with me about what I got before. He said, “Ian says you’re not into it.”

“I know. It was for my friend,” I said.

“OK, come by, but my folks are home so you will have to hang out. A hit and run would make them suspicious.” I told him I would be by in half an hour.

I told my mom I was going to Jaycee’s and I was not sure if I would be home for dinner. I hated all the lies and secrecy associated with this drug lifestyle. It was not me, and I was getting out. I went to Jaycee’s and told her I was going to try to get her the connection with my friend. Then hopefully she could deal directly with him and leave me out of it. “Oh, thank you. That is so cool of you.” I made no promises. I told her I would be back in a little while.

He answered the door and told me to come in. I heard someone yell from the family room. “Who’s there, Dewey?”

“Just one of my friends, Dad,” he yelled back.

“Well then, bring him on in here so I can meet him,” he yelled.

We walked into the room, and Dewey said, “Dad, this is Dee Dee. Dee Dee, my dad.”

His dad was a huge version of Dewey. He gave me a big smile with those big white teeth that were just like Dewey’s. He had the same blond hair, cut in a butch military style.

He stood. “Nice to meet you. Dewey doesn’t bring many ladies to the house.” Then he hollered to his wife in the kitchen. “Nancy, put on another plate. We have company!”

“Oh, no, I didn’t mean to interrupt your dinner. You all go ahead. I can wait in here,” I stammered.

Dewey’s dad was not taking no for an answer. “Nonsense. Kids are always hungry. Join us.” I certainly didn’t want to



offend him. Dewey gave me a big smile and gestured toward the dining room. This room was huge, by the way. The table was twice as long as ours, even with the leaf in at Thanksgiving. Their dining room was very formal.

I was feeling a little self-conscious about now. We sat down at one end of the table. Dewey and I were on one side. His mom was on the other, and of course the big man was at the head of the table. We had lamb burritos. I had never had them before, but they were delicious. This was simple fare for this grand table setting with cloth napkins and candelabras.

We laughed, talked, and sat at the table for a good hour. It really was nice, and Dewey's parents were great. They made me feel like I had been eating meals with them my whole life. I offered to help clear the table. I proceeded to grab things and carry them into the kitchen. I could hear Dewey's dad say he thought I was a well-mannered, nice little girl. He was chuckling about me being permanent in Dewey's life. He must have thought Dewey and I were boyfriend and girlfriend, and Dewey did nothing to discourage him.

Dewey and I hung out in their den for another half hour. Then I said I needed to go. His folks asked if I had to run. The fights were on tonight. I should stay and watch. I told them my parents might worry. I didn't tell them I would not be home for dinner. They liked that answer, and told me to come back for dinner any time. Dewey jumped up and said, "Let me walk you out." His dad gave Dewey a conspiratorial wink, and he walked me out.

I expected Dewey's family to be really stuffy. The huge house and all the expensive furnishings. They were so down to earth. "Your parents are great," I said.

"Thanks for everything, Dee Dee. They really liked you. You made them feel real comfortable."



“Me?” I said. “They are the best. Tell them I said thanks again. I really enjoyed their company.” He just shrugged and smiled.

Now I headed into dangerous water about selling Jaycee the coke. I told him about how I had known Jaycee since high school, that she was a cool chick, and that she would never hang him on the money. He told me to give him her number, and that he would think about it and maybe call her. I hugged him and walked to my car. I wanted to tell her what he said, so I decided to swing back by her house. When I got there she was all happy and acting like the Jaycee I knew and loved. I knew that she was going through withdrawals when I got the coke for her. She was now in a really great mood. Withdrawals or whatever problems she had had been forgotten.

We talked about the championships. She told me she might come down to the beach and look for me. I told her what Dewey said. I also advised her not to get too jazzed, because he could change his mind. She then told me that her dad was on to her.

“On to what?” I asked. Now I was nervous. I knew I didn’t want to hear what she had to say.

“Remember when we went to the banking district in L.A.? I took thirty grand out of an escrow account,” she admitted.

“I know you were doing something for your dad,” I stated.

“No, I took it to buy coke,” she said.

“Oh, geez, Jaycee. What the hell were you thinking?” I said.

She looked ashamed. “I told my dad it was for the building, and things I needed for repairing and stuff. I know he didn’t believe me. I usually sell some of the coke I bought. My friend told me how to cut it with a baby laxative. It goes further, and I make a profit. I have been putting money back in the bank with that profit. I don’t know what happened. I can’t seem to keep my nose out of it. Somewhere along the line, I stopped putting the



money back. Parties are costly. You know I like to entertain.”

I was floored. I didn’t believe any of this. “You shouldn’t be paying the tab to entertain all the time. My friends all pitch in when we party. Maybe you should just quit doing it altogether. That would solve the problem,” I suggested. She said she probably would, but she was not very convincing. I sure didn’t believe her. Then she told me a silly joke, trying to lighten up the mood. We laughed for a bit. But I was not happy about the person Jaycee was becoming.

“I have got to go,” I told her. She stood up to walk me out.

“One other thing: my dad thinks I am hanging around with undesirables. I think he is having some of his cronies investigate my friends,” she warned.

I thought to myself, So much for lightening my mood. “What kind of investigating?” I asked.

“Oh, you know. To see if they have criminal backgrounds, or who they are affiliated with. Crazy stuff,” she said.

“Great,” I said. “Oh, like I have any affiliations.”

We both said we’d see each other tomorrow, and I took off again. This running all over town was for the birds. I pulled off her street, and I saw that blue Ford. This could not be a coincidence. Just to see if it was really following me, I went home the back way. Then I acted like I forgot something, and made a U-turn, and headed for the liquor store. I ran in and bought some Cheetos and a Dr. Pepper. I didn’t see the car, so I headed home. I didn’t know if I was crazy, or if I was being followed. I wondered if Jaycee’s dad was having me checked out.

I ate some shrimp with the folks. I just had dinner an hour ago, but they would be leaving in the morning, so I spent a little time with them. I hung out in my room the rest of the night. I laid out my bikinis to see what I should wear tomorrow. I thought I would go with the all white. I didn’t get much wear out of it. I didn’t like



to wear it when I surfed. My board was rough on the material.

I woke to my parents pulling out of the driveway. Then I rolled over and went back to sleep for a while. I stretched and started to wake up when I heard Cindy at my door. I jumped up, threw on my bikini, and we headed to the beach. She said she really digged this guy at the beach, and she was so excited he was meeting her again today. I thought to myself, I was with you yesterday. I know. But that would be mean. “Cool. I hope you two have a good time,” I said instead of *Oh, brother*, which was what I was thinking.

It was another beautiful day in Huntington Beach. It was bright and sunny, with a little off shore breeze blowing. The conditions could not have been any better. The waves were curling in perfect form. The faces of the waves were high and glassy. We should see some great surfing today. I was excited. We passed different friends here and there who were enjoying this day. Music was cranking out of these oversized speakers. We heard the Doobie Brothers’s “Listen to the Music” as we walked along.

Cindy bailed out on me as soon as we got there to go look for her new guy. I smiled and waved, trying to find a place to put my towel so I could watch. These surfers were so unreal. It was coming down to the best of the best. I was so glad I was here to see it. Now and then one of my friends would stop by and say hi. We chatted about the competition. Then they moved on. I was really enjoying it.

I walked up and got some strips with cheese at the concession stand. They were my favorite. I stood there and ate them. I was trying to talk to people walking by as I was stuffing strips in my mouth. How ladylike I was sometimes. Nobody cared. Everyone was more interested in having a really good day. I saw Jaycee up on the pier. I waved at her. She waved back but she didn’t make a



move to come down, so I threw my strips container in the trash, tried to wipe the sauce off my face, and ran up there.

I walked up to her by the rail and said hi. She was really white next to me. She just hadn't gotten out much this summer. She laughed. "I need to lay out more." She pointed at her pale legs, and then to my tan ones. She used to lay out every day.

"It couldn't hurt," I laughed with her. We talked about who was moving up into the final heats. She said she saw Ian and some of the local boys earlier.

"I saw them too," I said.

She asked, "Are you and Ian...you know?"

I told her, "We are friends, and that is really great." She didn't comment on that. She appeared preoccupied.

I had to ask her about the Ford. "Do you think your dad might have me followed?" I told her about the car, and how I thought it was someone who lived in the neighborhood, but I saw it by her house as well. She told me to be careful. She would not put it past her dad. She would be watching for the car when she went home. I told her I would too. We stood up on the pier and talked for another hour.

She said, "I think I have had enough sun. I am heading out." I told her I would talk to her later.

Damn, this car following me was getting scary. I was going to stay as far away from Dewey as I could. I didn't want to bring any heat down on him, just in case it wasn't Jaycee's dad. I wondered how long this would go on. I made my way back down to the beach to watch the end of today's heats. This week had been really fun. I ran into Ian on way down to my towel. We stood together for a few minutes and talked about nothing. Then he said, "I'll let you go," and walked off, smiling to himself.

What was that all about? Oh, well. I had to get back to this last heat. The guys were ripping up today. Cindy made her way



back to me and let me know that Terry was giving her a ride home. She gave me a sly smile. Oh, the new guy. “OK, see you later. You better call me and tell me everything,” I yelled back at her as I watched the ride going down in front of me. This guy was so good. I didn’t know him. He was not a local competitor.

I walked up with the crowd to the street. I didn’t see anyone I knew. I walked down the street to my car. Was that the blue Ford? I started to walk toward it, and it pulled out. I watched it go by. It was definitely the same guy I had seen before. I really didn’t like this. He was definitely waiting for me. I was just sure of it.

I got in my Suburban and rode home. I was sleepy from my day in the sun. I ate an avocado sandwich and watched TV. The house was mine once again. I decided to go to bed early, and headed upstairs. My nights didn’t seem to be too exciting these days.

I got a bowl of cereal and went out on the back patio the following morning. The sun was just starting to come up, and it was so peaceful out here. I didn’t get up this early to sit and enjoy the sunrise very often. It was a nice time to reflect. While I was reflecting I could not help but wonder what was up with Ian and that shit-eating grin he gave me. I guessed I would find out. I didn’t know when I did it, but I dozed off. When I woke the sun was up in the sky, and I needed to get going.

I called Cindy. She said she would make her way over while I got dressed. I met her at the door, and we headed for the beach. I didn’t see my friend in the blue Ford today. Good! It took me a while to find a place to park. This beach got more packed with people every day. The two of us getting a late start didn’t help.

Today was the finals. We walked toward the beach and saw that the pier was overly crowded. There was no rail space all the way out to the end. There were a lot of people with cameras hoping to get the perfect shot. We went down the stairs, which



was a feat in itself. It took so long to slowly make our way. She went over to the concession stand to meet Terry. I headed for the beach and told her we would catch up later.

I found a spot on the beach near the local boys. They were howling at the surfers out in the current heat. I could not believe the talent. The maneuvers they were pulling off were just unheard of. We all screamed and hollered. I could hear whistling, and I wondered if it was Ian. The heat was over, and they were preparing for the next one. The music came back on, and we all started walking around.

The local boys were girl trolling. They were so obvious. That was just how they were. I was walking over by the contestants tent, checking out who was there. I smiled and walked by. The girls were all crowding them, and I didn't want to be in that mix. I said hi to Jimmy, who was under a tent. He would be in the finals. That was so cool. He was definitely a major contender. I hollered some encouragement to him and continued on. He gave me a big grin and a wave. I gave him the thumbs up. His groupie girls all gave me dirty looks and turned back to him.

As I was walking along, I saw Randy walking toward me. Not today, I thought to myself. I turned to try to avoid him and walked the other way, but he caught up to me. "Hey," he said, kind of shy.

"Hi," I said back.

"Don't walk away, Dee Dee. I just want to talk to you about something."

I rolled my eyes. "We have said all there is to say," I told him.

"Listen, Rachel's parents are buying us a house. I am keeping my share of the apartment with my brother. I was thinking once she is set up, you and I could go back to the way we were. We can go to my apartment and be together," he blurted out kind of fast, because he knew I was ready to bail. *He has some nerve,*



I was thinking. I wondered if anyone overheard that. My blood began to boil.

“Are you crazy? I will not be your other woman! What the hell, Randy. I can’t imagine what made you think I would stoop that low. I can be with any guy. I don’t need this in my life.” I tried to walk past him, but he put his hand on my arm and stepped in front of me.

“It wouldn’t be like that. Just hear me out. I just want to help her and move on. Let’s just talk about it.”

I pushed him. “Don’t ever put your hands on me again. Get out of my way.” As I started to walk away, Jimmy, Steve, and Ian all appeared out of nowhere.

Jimmy said, “Back off, bro. It looks like she isn’t interested.” I remembered Randy saying one time he was not a fighter. Well, Ian, Steve, and Jimmy were. Randy stepped forward but all three guys blocked his path to me.

Steve bowed up his chest. “Dude, I think you should go.”

Randy looked at me, and all I could see was fury. He said to the guys, “This has nothing to do with you.”

Steve said, “That is where you would be wrong, dude. She has everything to do with us.”

Randy told them, “We’re not through here.” He looked at me, trying to get around them. “Dee Dee?” He grinded mt name out, staring me down.

Steve gave him an evil grin. “Oh, you’re through, dude.” He flexed his hands, making fists with both. Jimmy and Steve made it plain, under no uncertain terms, that we were through. Randy tried again to walk around to me.

“Dude!” Jimmy put a hand up on Randy’s chest.

I heard Ian say something, I didn’t know what, but Randy heard it, and so did Steve and Jimmy. Then Ian walked up to Randy, saying something softly, just above a whisper. “You get



it, bro?” That was the tail end of whatever he said. He put out his hand to shake Randy’s, giving him a sarcastic smile. “We cool?” He looked at Randy like “If we are not, you are getting your head stomped.”

Randy took Ian’s hand finally and shook it. “Ah, yeah, we’re cool.” He looked at me and then walked off. I sure would like to know what Ian said. In the background, Led Zeppelin’s “Black Country Woman” was blasting from the speakers. “Hey, hey, momma, why you treat me mean...” I would relate that song to this scene for the rest of my life.

They all smiled at me like they just won some war. “We cool?” Steve laughed at Ian and clapped him on the back. “You are a smooth dude, Ian. I would have rather jumped him.”

Jimmy repeated it. “We cool?” He laughed out loud. These guys, they were all so macho. Ian was smiling the most. Jimmy shook his head and went back to the competition. He leaned towards me as he passed, and asked, “You OK?”

I nodded my head. “Yeah, I’m OK. Thanks, Jimmy.”

He was a true friend to step out of a national competition to fight for a damsel in distress. That was why I loved these guys. Steve was still pumped up and asking why they didn’t pulp him. Ian laughed and said it wasn’t necessary. Steve insisted that it was because he didn’t learn a lesson about our turf and making moves on our honeys. We all laughed. I was still a little shook up, but I tried to shake it off.

Steve walked off, making some boxing moves with his arms and hopping around. Ian came over to see if I was OK. “Yeah,” I said. “What are you smiling for?” I punched his arm.

He laughed at me. “You have to know I would be happy to see that you are not with that ass clown any more. If you are OK then, I will catch you later.” He walked off, looking at me with that crazy grin again. Did he know something I didn’t? What



was the joke?

I watched the finals in peace over the next two days. Jimmy didn't win, but he did get second place. He was really good, and got a sponsorship out of it. We watched the winners for men and women get their trophies. It was excellent! I headed for the pier as the crowd started to clear out on the final day. I needed to find Cindy. She was at the top of the stairs with a gleam in her eye. "Wasn't that great?" I asked.

She smiled. "Oh, yes." For some reason I didn't think she was talking about the finals.

Terry came running up and grabbed her hand. "So does she want to?" he asked.

"Oh, I haven't asked her. Terry is cooking spaghetti for some friends. Do you want to join us?"

I felt like a third wheel. I said, "No. But thanks."

They insisted that they were the only couple, and it would be fun. So I agreed to go. I smelled the sauce simmering when we walked into the apartment. I whispered to Cindy, "The dude can cook?" She ignored me and followed Terry into the kitchen.

People were filtering in slowly. They had invited ten people. I helped Cindy with the garlic bread, and some other people made the salad. We all grabbed plates and found places to sit and eat. Some were in the living room, and some were out on the front porch sitting at a picnic table.

I ate a huge plate. "You are a good cook," I told Terry through the open window. He was on the floor in front of Cindy, who was sitting on the couch. They were feeding each other spaghetti.

"Thanks. I like to think it is my specialty," he said as he wiped some spaghetti sauce from Cindy's chin.

Everyone was very cool. We all talked about the championships. This was what I needed—some laughter and fun. "No Hunch Punch?" I asked.



Terry laughed. “We can only handle that stuff once a year at our annual Hunch Punch party.” Everyone commented on the last time they drank it, and what crazy antics they performed under the influence of Hunch Punch. We all laughed and told stories into the night.

These people were really nice. I made some new friends and had a good night, but it had to end sometime. I got up and thanked Terry for inviting me. I took a few phone numbers with me from some of the guys. Cindy informed me she already called her folks and told them she was staying with me since my folks were out of town. She and Terry walked me out to my car. I said my good nights and went home. They were two little love birds, and I saw them through my rear view as I drove away, kissing on the curb.

I pulled around the corner onto my street, and that blue Ford was down at the end of the block. It was not empty either. The same guy was just sitting in it, with the dome light on. I got out of the Suburban and stood on the sidewalk, staring at him. He realized I was looking at him and quickly shut off the light. I stayed in my same position for a couple minutes, and he drove off. Who was that guy?

I decided to go in and call Ian. I needed to find out what I should do. I called his house, and no one answered. What was I thinking? It was midnight. His mom would have been mad had she answered. I looked out my window, but I didn’t see the car. It creeped me out, and I went around shutting windows and locking doors.

I turned on the TV for company. This being followed around town was scaring me. I thought I would be happy having the house to myself. But not when I was scared. I called Jaycee. If she was doing blow she would be up. She grabbed the phone on the first ring. I told her about the car. She told me she was going



to confront her dad tomorrow. If it was him, he would stop. “I am going to tell him he is scaring innocent girls with his secret spy crap,” she said.

“OK, I guess I will hit the sack. I will talk to you tomorrow.”

Of course, I had no one to cuddle with. Not even a dog or cat. What a mess I had made of my blow out summer. It was just as well. When I went back to school, I wouldn’t have time for staying the night at someone’s house or seeing a guy every day. I thought of Randy for a second, and then put that jerk out of my mind. Then I thought about Ian and that “I have a secret” smile he had the last two times I had seen him.

Something was up with Ian. I just didn’t know what it was. He had shown he could be a true friend. He hadn’t put any pressure on me. He never tried to get in between me and Randy. I thought after Palm Springs he would try to put moves on me. It was clear to me that he wanted to sleep with me out there. But he never pushed the point. He couldn’t be any nicer. I often thought about Karen and what that relationship was all about.

It was really none of my business. I didn’t have any right to butt into his relationships. Of course, if he wanted to tell me as a friend I would listen. Well, we would see how good of friends we were in the next month. I wondered who he would take to Jaycee’s birthday bash. I would be going solo. I wondered if he would do the same.

I fell asleep with the TV on. When I woke up the Evangelist channel was on. The pastor was condemning my evil ways and telling me to repent. *OK*, I thought to myself. I got the message.

I was going to change my ways. But not right now. At the end of summer. I still had a month of fun to go. I was going to be careful who I hung out with and what I did from now on though. I had to try not being so reckless.



CHAPTER 10

Jaycee told me that her dad denied having me followed. So I could only think it was an undercover cop. Why me, though? She did mention that her dad knew an awful lot about me. He knew that I quit my job a few months ago. I lived with my parents, who were middle class. He even mentioned that I didn't have a savings account. Otherwise I was clean. That was good to know. I was not a major player in any of this. So why was I being watched?

I called Dewey from a phone booth and told him what I suspected, and that he might want to be careful. I wouldn't be making any runs to Newport with him. He thanked me and hung up. I hadn't seen the blue Ford in a couple days. But that didn't mean anything. I was suspicious of any strange cars in my neighborhood now. How scary all of this was.

I ran into Ian around town, but it was always the same. "Hi, how are you, and see you around." I hadn't had a chance to bring up the fact that I was being followed. I kind of wanted to talk to him about that. I barely saw Cindy now that Terry was in her life. I guessed I was that way too when I had a boyfriend. She was really happy and I was glad.



Randy no longer tried to contact me. That chapter of my life had closed. I regretted the whole mess. I had been going out on dates lately. I went to the movies with Jeff. He was a friend of Ian's. He was nice enough but there was no physical attraction. I played putt-putt golf with Billy one night, and that was fun. He tried to put some moves on me, but I told him I wasn't into it.

One weekend Terry had to go out of town, so Cindy and I went to Magic Mountain. We had a blast. We didn't know until we got there it was a special Motown celebration. The crowd was predominately black faces. Besides the people working there, we were the only white faces. We laughed while in line for rides with people about not getting the memo. What a trip that was.

When it got dark the shows started. There were some really good bands. I liked Motown. Cindy didn't really know what it was until the show started. They played lots of our favorite songs. We laughed and sang along. We hung out with a great group of kids all night. We took a bunch of pictures with our new friends. We told them if they were ever in HB to come by and visit. They made jokes like, "Yeah, we need a tan." It was really a good time. Then we made our way back to the car and left. It was a hellacious drive. We stopped and got coffee to keep us awake and drove on home. I stayed at her house that night. No sign of the blue Ford. She had been looking for it too, but had not seen it. We talked into the night about her and Terry. She hinted that I should get back with Ian. I told her I was a free agent and out dating.

It was Sunday morning, and I smelled bacon. My aunt and uncle were creating a huge breakfast with pancakes, eggs, sausage, bacon, and toast. We all sat down together and talked about how our summer had been going. We told them as much as we could without incriminating ourselves.

My uncle brought up something too close to home. "I was



talking to your brother,” he said, looking at me. “He told me there is a big run of drugs coming into California from Mexico. It will bring a lot of crime. He says he has never seen anything like it. Thousands of pounds of marijuana coming up from Colombia, through the Mexican border, and circulating in our cities.” He continued his warning. “I want you girls to be careful with all your running around you do. You could accidentally run up on these criminals and get yourself killed.”

My aunt stopped him and asked, “Pete, what kind of table time talk is that? Let’s talk about something more pleasant.” He said he just wanted to keep us safe. We finished our breakfasts and headed to the beach. Terry would be home today.

We got in my car and drove toward the beach. “Holy shit, that was weird,” Cindy exclaimed.

“Man, I thought he was going to tell us he knew all about what we have been doing,” I said, my eyes as big as saucers. We both started laughing. Geez, that was too coincidental. I wondered if he or my brother had any idea how close to home that conversation was.

We talked about the pounds that I helped drive from one city to another. I knew I had had to have made at least twenty trips. Each trip had an average of four to ten pounds all bundled up and packed in speaker boxes. “Think how many trips were made that I didn’t go on.” I told Cindy not to worry. I wouldn’t be going on any more of these trips.

We stopped at my friend’s to borrow the long board for Cindy. She wanted to surf today, but learning on my board was too hard and not fun for her. We set up our beach camp and headed out to the water. The waves were small today. That should make it easier on her. After playing around out in the surf for a couple hours we were tired. We carried the boards up and dropped down on our towels.



I was feeling drained. I dozed off, and when I woke up the beach was almost deserted. I woke her up. She was fried. Lobster red, I would say. I couldn't believe we slept the whole afternoon away. How funny was that? Usually at least one person would come by and say hi or something. But no one ever did. We packed up all of our stuff and decided to cruise by Terry's to see if he was back from his trip.

His roommate was there, but no Terry. He invited us to stay for dinner but I could see he had a girl there, and we were intruding. We said thanks and left. She was bummed out.

"Sorry, Cindy. He will probably call you at the house later," I consoled her. That made her want to hurry home, so she didn't miss his call.

I had a really good weekend. I should play some tennis in the morning. I was planning to hit the sack early. My parents were already eating dinner when I came in. "Hi all," I said. My mom jumped up to make me a plate. "Don't get up, Mom. I can get it." I smiled at her. She was really great. I took her for granted sometimes. They had a big pot of navy beans and ham. There was corn bread on the table. I grabbed a bowl and sat down. "Have I mentioned how great my parents are lately?" I said with a big grin.

"OK, what's going on? What do you need?" Dad said with a big grin also.

"Nothing. I just want you both to know how wonderful you are to me!" I beamed at them.

My dad looked at me. "I know this is going to cost me."

I smiled at them both again. "Not this time. I just really am lucky to have you both." We spent the rest of the meal talking about this and that. I helped clean up and gave them both a kiss on the cheek, and then headed up to my room.

I turned on my stereo and listened to some old Beatles albums



that I had while I laid on my bed. I had the music low so as not to bother my parents. It was a perfect night, and the breeze was blowing through my window. The air was sweet, with the smell of jasmine blossoms in my yard. My mother planted those years ago. She put them under all the downstairs windows. She loved how the scent of the blossoms came in the windows on breezy afternoons and left a sweet smell throughout the house.

I fell asleep thinking about the flowers. I woke up to the sound of my stereo making a scratching noise. The album ended hours ago. I got up, shut it off, and climbed back under the covers. The house was quiet and peaceful. The only things I heard were a few crickets out in the yard.

Morning came around, and I slowly woke up to an empty house. The folks had gone to work. I had nothing planned. I didn't feel like going to the beach, and I didn't want to play tennis either. I would lounge around here and maybe see what was happening with my friends later. I stayed in bed for another forty-five minutes before I made my way down to the kitchen and started some coffee. I really needed to get dressed and head over to the tennis courts. I just didn't have the motivation.

I missed Lisa and Lena. They used to always come over in the morning for breakfast, or just coffee, and make plans. And now neither one was around to make any plans with me. I would like to talk to Lisa and see how she was. I thought I would call Lena, or her mom, and get a number for Lisa. I would love to hear what she had been doing this summer since she left.

It was a little after ten, and I was about to call Lena's mom when the phone rang. I picked it up. "Hello?" It was Jaycee, and she was hysterical. I got her to stop screaming long enough to ask her what was wrong.

She cried, "It's Eric. I think he is overdosing, and I don't know what to do!"



“Oh, God, Jaycee, call the paramedics,” I told her.

“I don’t want the cops to come or my parents to find out.”

I raised my voice above hers. “Don’t be an idiot. If he dies, you will have to explain to the cops and your parents, and you could go to jail,” I warned her. “Now call the paramedics, and if you have anything illegal in that house get rid of it before they get there. I am on my way!” I hung up and my hands were shaking. I hoped she called. I threw on some clothes and dashed out the front door. All the way over there I kept repeating, “God, don’t let him die!”

I pulled up, and they were wheeling him out on a gurney. I asked if he was OK. They asked me who I was. I just said I was a friend. They said he was OK for now, but it was not looking good. They put him in the back of the ambulance and left. There were no cops for now, thank goodness. Jaycee was sitting on her couch inside. I went in to see if she was OK. She just started crying really hard. I put my arms around her and let her cry. I could not believe this happened.

“That was so scary,” she told me. “One minute we are having fun, and the next, Eric is twitching on the floor with foam coming out of his mouth. Oh, God, it was horrible.”

“Enough is enough, Jaycee. He could still die. What did you tell the paramedics?” I asked as I tried to calm down.

“I said he came over and was acting all jacked up and funny. We drank some wine, and he stayed amped all night. I acted like I didn’t know why. One of the paramedics said he looked like he was on cocaine or maybe speed, and asked if I knew anything about that. I said no.” She looked at me with dark circles around her eyes. “I don’t think he believed me.” I was sure he didn’t.

“Well, he is gone now. I don’t think they will come back. Just how much coke did you two do?” I asked her.

“I don’t know. I threw what was left down the toilet before



they got here. We have been up for a couple days,” she sniffled. “I buy about a half ounce a month. We do a lot of it. I sell some of it though.”

I stared at her with my mouth open. “Geez, you could OD too, you know. When did you take your last bump?” I asked. Now I was scared for her. I had no idea she was buying this much every month.

She looked at me with big, scared eyes. “It has been several hours. You don’t think I could die, do you?” She started to cry.

“I just don’t know! I cannot believe you have been up for days. I think this is a lesson for us to stop doing this. It is much more dangerous than I ever imagined. Promise me you are not doing it anymore. You are in over your head, Jaycee.”

She nodded her head yes. I scooted over and hugged her again. She was really shaken by this, and so was I. I hung out with her the rest of the day to keep an eye on her. She finally started coming down off the coke in the afternoon, and said she was hungry. “Good sign,” I said. She just looked at me and said nothing. I was going to run up to Jack in the Box and get us some food. I would be right back. I grabbed my purse and ran out to the car.

Jack in the Box had a long line in the drive-thru. It looked like I was not the only one who wanted a Bonus Jack. After what seemed like forever, I made it through the line and headed on back to Jaycee’s. She was on the phone when I came in. I set the food on the table and got some ketchup out of the refrigerator.

She got off the phone and told me she wanted to check on Eric. He was doing well. He had a close call. “I am surprised they told you all that,” I said.

“I told them I was his sister Kay, and that I had been calling around all day trying to find out if he was in a hospital or jail, as he didn’t come home last night. He told me not long ago he had



a sister named Kay,” she said. “I feel like I should go visit him. But I am scared.”

We sat down and ate in silence for a while. She asked me to stay the night because she was still afraid she would die. I called my mom and told her I would be at Jaycee’s. We watched movies and I made popcorn, but it wasn’t as fun as it usually was. We went to bed early. I stayed in her room with her. I hated to think it, but this maybe was what she needed. I couldn’t say it to her. She was a mess. We left the TV on and fell asleep.

She promised me she would stay away from the coke. I believed her this time. This was a horrible experience. She did say, however, that she wanted to make brownies. How odd, I thought. So we got the mix at the store and went back to her place to bake. I was thinking it was some kind of therapy. Then she broke out a bag of weed and put a bunch into the brownie mix.

“You are crazy,” I laughed. She said it would mellow her out.

I helped her make them, and then I took my leave. I felt worn out from all this. I went home and hung out around the house. I remembered that before Jaycee called me, I was going to find out how Lisa was. I called her mom, and she gave me the number. She told me things were so much easier when we were kids. I was not sure why she said that, but I said I missed those days, and we hung up.

I called and got no answer. I would try again later. I start my laundry. I hadn’t done any in over a week. My mom would freak if she knew dirty laundry was festering in my closet that long. I dragged my basket down the stairs and into the laundry room to start a load. Laundry was such a drag. In our house you learned to do your own laundry at twelve years of age. No one liked laundry.

I heard the phone ringing. Please be good news for a change, I thought. It was Ian. What a surprise. “Me, Dewey, Steve, and



Fred are going to see Tommy at the movies. Do you want to come?" he asked.

"Yes, I really wanted to see that."

"Cool. We will swing by and get you at ten. We're going to the late show."

"Sounds good. I will be ready," I said. He hung up.

Well, that was different. It was just a friendly call from the guys, to go to the movies with all of them. I couldn't wait. I tinkered around the house all afternoon. I really didn't have anything to do. My folks came home from work, and my dad cooked us some steaks. I spent the rest of the evening watching TV with them, and then headed up to get dressed for the movies.

Finally the guys showed up. I ran out to the van and hopped in. "Hi guys," I said. They all said their hellos and we went to the movies. Tommy was a musical. There was a story line about a blind boy that played pinball. But the music was all done by the band The Who. I really enjoyed it. I wondered how the night was going to end. Maybe Ian would drop the guys off and we would sit in front of my house and talk.

That was not how it went. They dropped me off first. Everyone was nice. We all said goodbye. Ian jumped out and opened my door like always. He walked me to the door. I hesitated for a minute, not sure what to do. "Good night, Luv," he said, and he ran his hand down my arm. Then he turned, walked back down the walkway, and got back in the van and drove off.

I didn't know what I expected, but I was a little disappointed. We really had become just friends. It was nice, but sad too. I went up to my room and changed into my pajamas. The summer was not quite over but it felt over. Everything had been so final. My friends had all settled in with someone. I was a free agent, just like I wanted. No boyfriend, no commitments. Why was I not happy?

The next day I had some things I had to do. I first called to



check on Jaycee. She sounded good. She was doing some things with her mother. We laughed at that because she never wants to do things with her mother. But she had to find the right outfit for her birthday. They were doing all the birthday planning and sending out invitations. They were planning the food that would be set out, and of course drinks. She would be busy for the next few days. I told her to have fun, and then hung up. Good. Her mom would keep her out of trouble.

My next thing was to call Lisa. I let it ring six times, and right as I was about to hang up, Lisa picked up. “Hi there, Lisa, it’s Dee Dee. How the heck are you?” I said, all cheery.

“Oh, Dee Dee, how nice to hear from you,” she said. But she didn’t sound happy at all.

“Oh. Lisa, if I have caught you at a bad time, I can call you back,” I said.

“No, no, it is good to hear your voice. It is just that it’s always a bad time. I have been sick for days,” she said.

“I am sorry to hear that. What’s wrong? Do you have the flu?” I asked. She could hear the concern in my voice.

“Oh, God, I haven’t talked to you in so long. You don’t know. Dee Dee, I am pregnant.”

I was floored. Then I laughed. “I thought you said you were pregnant.” I continued laughing. I realized she hadn’t said anything at all. “You mean pregnant? You are pregnant having a baby pregnant?” I stammered.

“Yes, I am only four weeks. I just went to the doctor a few days ago,” she said. “I have stayed sick the whole time. It is miserable.”

I was not sure what to say. I was silent for a few seconds. “Lisa why are you pregnant?” I said, and I realized how stupid that sounded, but I just didn’t know what else to say.

Lisa said very calmly, “Well, you are older than me. You know how women get pregnant I am sure.” Normally, this would



be a funny statement.

I was so confused about why she left, why she moved in with some guy, and why some guy got her pregnant who was way too old for her in the first place. “I guess that didn’t come out right. I just don’t understand how you can move away, jump into a relationship with some guy, and now you’re pregnant. It is all too sudden, and somehow doesn’t seem right. Are you in love?”

She plainly said, “I really like Rick. He is a good guy. He takes care of me, and I take care of him. We are good together.”

I was upset by all this. “You like a guy so you move in with him and have his baby?”

“You don’t understand, Dee Dee. This is better for me here, and the baby... Well, we didn’t plan it but...” she said.

I tried to remain calm when I explained to her, “You are right. I don’t understand. How does tying yourself down like this, at a young age, make things better for you?” I felt as though I was about to snap. “You haven’t even experienced a lot of things yet, and now you are making a prisoner of yourself before your time!” I couldn’t help but raise my voice.

“I am happy. What do you know?” she snapped back at me. “We have a good life. We don’t all surf and pick up any guy we want. Some things are just different for other people than they are for you.”

I didn’t believe what I was hearing. “You can’t be serious. You haven’t given yourself a chance. You are so young. You could do anything, be with anyone!” I was shouting, and I knew that was not right. I tried to calm myself.

She didn’t agree, and I didn’t want to fight with her. I asked if I could come visit her. She said yes, but to wait until she was over the sickness so she would be some fun. She said she would call me and let me know. I told her that I missed her so much. She said she missed me too, and couldn’t wait to get together.



We hung up, and I felt like crying.

What was happening to everyone? I never in my wildest dreams thought that she would go up there to stay permanently and start a family with some strange guy. This was so upsetting. I couldn't believe she was happy about all this. I was certainly not. But of course, she didn't seem to care what I thought. It was her life, after all, and if she was happy, what could I do? I just hoped she really was happy. I didn't recall her ever saying she was happy.

The following day I got a call from the tennis coach at Long Beach State, telling me that school would be starting soon, and that I had to start coming to team practices. Wow, summer seemed to have flown by. So I started going out to the college to practice with the team a couple days a week.

I was glad I took lessons all summer because some of the people on my team were really good. We worked on strokes and technique the first few practices. He told me we would start challenge matches to see where we would play on the ladder of the strongest players to least strong players next week.

I didn't usually work out because I was physically active in my life already, with surfing and tennis. I thought I would throw in some sit ups each morning, to be on the safe side. I would also keep up my lessons at the club. I would have to cut them down to once a week, since I had practice with the team three days a week. I didn't want to be too far down on that position ladder of players. My scholarship depended on my success.

Somewhere in all of this I needed to get some surfing time in. I could go early, and then drive out to Long beach. There was no time like the present, so I threw on a bathing suit and headed to the beach.

Jimmy was out there, and it looked like they were filming him from the pier. Cool. He looked as if he was making the big time pro surfer scene. I was so happy for him.



I decided to surf the other side of the pier so I didn't mess up any shots. I saw Steve and Wade out there surfing around Jimmy. I still stuck with the other side. It was a good day out here. The waves were glassy, and perfect sets. I worked on some of my tricks while everyone was occupied with Jimmy. I ate it a few times before I actually got some good tricks in. It was a good thing no one was paying attention to me.

There was a lot of pain sometimes that came with surfing. I walked back up to the beach with my board, but not without some sand burns from hitting the bottom today. Steve and Wade were standing there watching Jimmy. "He is looking good," Steve said. I asked who was taking the pictures. They both said at the same time, "Surfer Magazine!" I couldn't be happier for him, and neither could they. We were all so proud that one of our own had made it.

"That is the best. He has hit the big time." We all stood around and boasted about Jimmy, and he walked up.

"Bro, that was the kind," Wade said, making some hand gestures that the surfer dudes make to each other. Steve clapped him on the back. I stood there smiling like an idiot. I didn't know what to say. This was so great—one of our own.

"This is so cool. You are truly great," I finally said. For the first time, I felt speechless with one of my friends.

"I don't know about that, but it beats flipping burgers," Jimmy said. His camera crew was standing off to the side, taking candid shots of Jimmy and his friends.

"This will be in the September issue," one of the photographers said, "just in case you want one."

"Bitchen," I said. They smiled and waved at Jimmy, and told him that was it for the day, and thanks. As they left, we all stood there in awe of Jimmy.

"They want to do some shots of me skateboarding next



week,” he announced.

“It just doesn’t stop. All this good fortune you are having,” I said to him.

“Dude,” was all Steve mustered. We knew what he meant though.

“I am having a little party at my house on Walnut tomorrow night. Tell everyone to come,” Jimmy said.

“When did you get your own place?” I asked. He said about a week ago. He got paid up front for the magazine shoot. They found him the place.

“Excellent,” I said. “See you there.” I gathered my things to head home.

I was walking to my car thinking, How great things are working out for Jimmy. He is a good guy. He seems to be getting everything he ever wanted. I would be busy calling my friends to tell them about the party. It should be fun. I saw Fred getting on a motorcycle not far from my car. “Hey,” I waved. “Are you going to Jimmy’s tonight?”

He gunned the motor on the bike. “Hell yes. Are you?”

I answered, “Of course. See you there.” He waved and rode by.

I called all the usual suspects—Lena, Shelly, Jaycee, and I even called Ian, just to make sure he heard. He told me he had, and was going to give me a call. We laughed. At least we were still in with the mix. We talked a few minutes. I told him I had started practicing for the Long Beach State tennis team. He let me know he really was excited for me to be going to school. “Break a leg, or that’s not what they say, is it?” He laughed.

“No,” I said, “that would not be a good thing.” He told me good luck, and he would see me at Jimmy’s party.

I pulled onto Jimmy’s street and there was no place to park. I cruised up and down until I found a place. I hoped I was looking good. Everyone was here. I said hello to people as I was walking



up. I saw Karen standing off to the side of the front walk with Wade. I figured Ian must not be too far away. That seemed to answer any questions I had about those two. They still must be hanging out. As I passed them, they both said hi. I was shocked. She spoke! She even offered a smile. I smiled and stopped to talk. I asked them who was here. I pointed out to the street. “Looks like everyone and their brother.”

Wade said, “There are a lot of people from the magazine and the people who sponsor him. I think they are throwing this gig.”

Karen said, “That’s what I heard.”

“Well, I guess I will go in and say hi to Jimmy. See you inside.” They both nodded and went back to talking about who was here. Ian was standing next to Jimmy when I walked in. He waved me over. I was heading that way anyway. They were both all smiles. I said, “Great party, Jimmy. I think all of HB is here.”

He laughed. “Maybe half,” he said. I didn’t mention to Ian that I ran into Karen, and that she was actually social with me.

Jimmy showed me to the keg, and I got a beer. Was Jimmy checking me out? He smiled and walked off. I did see people all around that I didn’t know. They seemed to be having a good time. Shelly and Keith came in just as I was about to ask if anyone had seen them. Their place was not far from here. Shelly came over and hugged me. I took them to the keg, and they got beers for themselves too. We talked about Jimmy’s success and all the cool people that were at this party for him.

I wondered if it might be a drag because he had to impress these people. But to my surprise, they were playing beer drinking games, laughing it up with us locals. All in all, it was fun. Everyone danced and sang and acted their usual goofy selves. We were all having a great time when Steve came in. I called to him from the couch, “Steve, you’re getting a late start.” He didn’t say anything, but I could tell something was wrong. He



went over to the guys and started talking in a low voice. I walked over to see what was wrong.

Ian looked at me with this really sad face. “Fred was killed on his motorcycle today.” He dropped his eyes and looked at his hands.

“No. I just saw him a few hours ago, laughing and happy.” Tears burned my eyes, but I didn’t want to start bawling right here. He couldn’t be dead. “What happened?” I asked.

Steve said, “Some lady ran a red light. He couldn’t stop, and he T-boned her car. He died on impact.” I shook my head and walked outside.

I stood out there alone for a while, wondering how things like this happened. Fred just turned twenty-two, and had so much more life to live. The tears came down, and I couldn’t stop them. I had known him for about six years. I felt someone’s hand on my back. I looked up, and I was surprised that it was Karen. She murmured how sorry she was, and how unfair life was sometimes. After I collected myself, I told her, “Thank you.” I appreciated her trying to console me.

I went inside and told everyone goodbye. I was not in the mood to party anymore. This was so devastating. I had never had a friend die before. I was finding it hard to deal with the loss of someone so young. Ian offered to drive me. I told him I was fine, and I could drive myself. He said, “I know you can, but you really shouldn’t.” I insisted, and left them all staring after me.

I drove home slow, and very careful. I was so aware of cars around me. How easy it would be for someone to make a mistake and end my life, or I theirs. I made it home safely and went up to my room. I didn’t fall asleep for a long time. I kept running over in my mind the last time I saw him, and what a good mood he was in. This was so sad, so very sad. I cried myself to sleep.

We all went to the funeral a few days later. His family was Catholic, so we went to the church that most of our families



brought us up in, St. Bonaventure on Springdale. It was a very somber affair, and we all paid our respects. After we spent some time at the church with the friends and neighbors, they gave us his ashes. We went to the pier and had our own memorial to Fred. Several of the guys, including Fred's little brother, paddled out with his ashes. His parents joined the rest of us up on the pier to watch. They each took turns dumping his ashes in the ocean. We threw flowers into the sea from above them.

His family had a wake at their home afterward, and we all went back to the house to eat and hang out. We talked about Fred for hours. There were tears and some funny stories that made everyone laugh. His little brother really took it hard. Even though Frankie laughed with us, I found him several times crying off by himself. I hugged him, but there was no consoling him. They were so close. Fred always gave Frankie a hard time, but he allowed him to hang out with us and would stick up for him no matter what.

We all trickled out in small groups after paying our respects and eating all kinds of food. Fred would be missed by all of us. And not one of us would ever be able to forget what a crazy, funny guy our friend was. I went home and told my parents all about the funeral, and the memorial at the pier. They were very quiet.

Finally Mom spoke. "You kids are not invincible. I know it wasn't his fault, the accident, I mean. The paper told how the woman was yelling at her kids. She reached back to swat them, and the light changed. She will have to live with this for the rest of her life. I just want you to be careful. I don't know what I would do if we lost you."

I hugged her. "I know, Mom." I went up to my room and cried some more.



CHAPTER 11

Everyone was talking about Jaycee's party. It was going to be fun. Her mother was putting an announcement in the paper. Of course she was. Why wouldn't she? Right on the front of the society page. I still didn't know what I was going to wear, and Jaycee was being very secretive about what she was wearing.

My mom offered to take me shopping for something nice to wear. I said yes. We hadn't been shopping together in a long time. "It will be fun," she clapped. Yes it would. I looked forward to it. We would go on the weekend. She wanted to go to Fashion Island and make a day of it. We would have lunch at Bob Burns, one of her favorite lunch places. It sounded like a plan to me.

I hadn't seen much of Ian or Dewey. I stayed away from Dewey because I was being followed, and I did not want to get him busted. I hadn't seen the blue Ford in a while, and no new strange vehicles had been following me. At least, I hadn't noticed any. I was not sure what was up with Ian. He was very friendly to me when we saw each other. I guessed the sparks that used to be there between us fizzled out. I missed that, but I was the one who blew it. I was the one who would not commit.

There were only a few more weeks left before we went



back to school. Well, he went back. I had to start new classes. It was kind of exciting. I did a lot more this summer than I ever planned. Some things I was ashamed of. But I didn't regret any of it. I learned a lot and experienced more than most people did in a lifetime.

I planned on surfing every day until I started classes. I had tennis practice to squeeze in as well. The guys wanted to make one more surfing trip down to Oceanside. We would go further on down for a day to San Diego. I was always up for the camping trips. I was not sure how it would go not being with Ian, but I would take my Suburban because I could sleep in it. Cindy and her new boyfriend Terry would be going with me. She was bringing a tent for the two of them.

My days were kind of busy. I went to the beach in the morning, practice after that, and then came back to the beach to hang out with my friends. I had been eating dinner with my folks most nights. I thought they felt relieved when I was at home, and they didn't have to worry about me.

My mom and I had our shopping trip to Fashion Island. There were lots of great outfits. I chose a dress with a low back. My mom actually loved it. It was royal blue and had a tear-shaped opening in the front below the neck line that ended in the middle of my breasts. It was a halter that slung down really low in the back, and it was a little shorter than what I normally wore. It fit perfectly. We picked out some strappy sandals with high heels to finish off the outfit.

Our lunch was scrumptious. I had a Crab Louis salad with warm rolls, and my mom had frog legs. Yuck. She seemed to enjoy them. She got the same thing every time we went there. We talked about the outfit, and what my dad would think of it, all the way home. He was out relaxing on the patio when we got home. Mom went out to join him. She kicked off her shoes



and started rubbing her feet as she told him about our day. I ran upstairs. I kicked off my shoes. My feet didn't hurt. I wore flip flops. I was tired, however, and I laid back on my bed and dozed off. My mom stuck her head in hours later and asked if I was hungry. I told her no, I was still full from our lunch. She was going to make Dad a sandwich. She was full too.

I needed to spend more time with her. She was not getting any younger, and we really had a good time together. She acted all prim and proper all the time. It was nice to see her let her hair down and have fun. I thought about the funny things we talked about today. She could be so funny. She reminded me of Lucille Ball sometimes. My dad said the same thing about her.

I was laying there thinking about things when the phone rang. It was Ian on the line. "Hey, are you going camping tomorrow with us?"

I told him yes. I also told him that Cindy and her new boyfriend were going too, so we would be taking my Suburban.

"Sounds cool. We will caravan down about ten tomorrow morning. Meet you in front of Wade's," he said, and he hung up. Everything was still good between us.

As I sat and pondered our relationship my phone rang again. I picked it up, and a familiar voice said, "Hi, is Allen there?" I knew who it was. I wondered if he realized who he called.

"No, you have the wrong number," I answered back.

"Oh, Dee Dee. Sorry. I must have dialed the wrong number. So, how are you?" Randy asked in a timid voice, which was so unlike him.

I felt sorry for him for some reason, and instead of hanging up like I should have, I told him that I was good. "How have you been doing?"

He sighed and said, "Not too bad. I have called you a few times, but your mom told me to leave you alone, that you are happy."



I responded, "I am happy. A lot of things have happened to me this summer but I am OK, and I am happy."

He cleared his throat. "You know I never meant to hurt you. I actually thought we would be together a long time. Things just didn't work out like I planned."

I was still feeling sorry for him for some reason. "I know, Randy. I don't know where we were going but it just wasn't meant to be."

"You sound really good. I only want the best for you. I hope that we can be friends down the road. Maybe if we run into each other you can act like you don't hate me." He chuckled low in his throat.

I snickered a little too. "I don't hate you, Randy. I was hurt, but I am better now. I wish you well in your life. And I promise not to scratch your eyes out of your head if I run into you in public." We both laughed again, and I told him I must go.

"I really enjoyed talking to you," he said.

I just said, "Me too," and hung up.

I thought that was really weird. I would have liked to say, "I have a new boyfriend. He is wonderful, and we are so happy. I hope you are miserable." But I didn't hope he was miserable. And I didn't have a boyfriend to rub in his face. He didn't say he was happy either, I noticed. "These are the choices we make in our lives," I could hear my mom say in the back of my mind.

I got up the next morning early to get ready to go down south. My parents were happy Cindy was going with me. I didn't mention Terry. My folks were old fashioned. They both still saw Cindy as a little girl and not a soon to be freshman in college. I rolled around to her house and picked her up. We waved at her parents as we went. We met Terry at the gas station where his friend dropped him off so my aunt and uncle would not see him. It was all so very clandestine.



We went over to Wade's, and he was putting the last of his gear in his van. Ian pulled up after me, with Steve in his van. *Hmm, flying solo*, I thought to myself. The rest of the guys were pulling up too. No Jimmy this trip. "He is too good for us lowly surfers now," Wade laughed. "Just kidding. But he is going to Hawaii tomorrow for some big deal surfing gig of his."

Steve said, "What, no girlfriends, Dee Dee? What a bummer. I was hoping you would bring the chicks."

"It's not my job to supply entertainment," I said, looking at Wade. He knew I was still pissed about his thing with Lisa. I shouldn't, but I blamed him for Lisa's move.

The subject was dropped really fast, and we all jumped in to make our way down to Oceanside. It was not a bad drive, and we all three sat up in the front bench seat, talking all the way. Cindy filled Terry in on what went on when we took these trips. He brought his board so he would fit right in. He also brought a long board to work with Cindy on. I told them they were so cute. That earned me two dirty looks.

We followed them down to this spot by the railroad tracks. It was not a camp area but no one knew about it. It was hidden by trees off the main highway. "Great. There is no bathroom, no sink," Cindy and I whined. Wade told us under the tracks was a trail to the beach. There was an outside shower and an outhouse.

"We are all set," he smiled.

"I guess that will work," I grumbled. Ian snickered as he was setting up his van. I looked over and thought about the last trip with the bucket of water and the flowers. I didn't realize I was staring in his direction until Cindy hit me in the arm.

"I wouldn't be so obvious if I were you," she laughed at me.

"What? What, I wasn't," I stammered, but I never finished my sentence. Ian was looking back at me with a big grin. "Shit, shit, shit!" I said under my breath. We were here ten minutes



and I had already made a fool of myself. Terry helped me get the boards down off the rack on my car.

The guys were already heading for the water. I grabbed my board and headed out right behind them. Cindy and Terry were still putting up their tent. I was not sure what Ian was up to. I didn't want to get caught looking over at him again.

We played around out in waves for a while. They were a little larger than I was used to but very smooth. We watched each other and gave our opinion of the rides. It was all in fun, and we all came back in laughing at each other. I tripped like an idiot coming up on to the shore. "Great," I said. Everyone was laughing, including me. Ian came over and put out a hand to help me up.

"Are you hurt?" he asked with mock concern.

"Hell yes I am hurt. My pride is stinging all over the place," I hollered. He continued to laugh at me, along with everyone else.

He helped me up, and we continued walking back to camp without incident. Everyone was still getting a kick out of my falling. I was not finding it funny anymore. After a while it died down and they stopped talking about it. I was such a klutz.

Steve, Billy, and Wade managed to pick up on some girls at the beach earlier, and they invited them back to our camp. Dinner was simple. There were hoagie rolls and cold cuts. We set up a card table with all of the food and condiments. Everyone made big sandwiches and found places to sit and eat. There was a cooler full of Coors beer, and the guys grabbed a beer with their sandwiches. Cindy and I preferred Coca-Cola with ours so I grabbed them out of the cooler I brought.

We sat around talking about the end of the summer coming. For some it was business as usual—working and surfing. Others were going to college. They all joked around with Ian about being the big doctor. He took the ribbing and threw back some



jokes of his own. The girls finally showed up, and things got a little more wound up. They giggled and passed around joints with the guys. I talked to them a little, but this was a hook up, so I gave them some space.

Off in the distance we saw lights. Steve pointed and said, "UFO." We all laughed. We could hear a plane engine off in the distance.

Ian said, "It looks like a grasshopper."

I got up and walked toward the sound. "What's a grasshopper?" I asked. I was picturing a big green bug.

"Planes that are smuggling things across the border. They fly low like that so that they aren't picked up by radar." He stood too, and we watched the low flying lights as they crossed the sky off in the distance.

"Really, man?" Steve asked as he too got up and watched the lights flying low in the sky.

"I read about it," Ian stated. "Some even fly without lights."

Now we were all standing watching the plane. It was not too far off in the distance and we could actually see it was a plane as it went by really low.

"Far out. I wonder if that plane is loaded with weed," Wade said as he blew a big smoke ring from the joint he was smoking.

"Looks dangerous. They could hit something," I said. We stood there for a while talking about the grasshopper. Then we lost interest in it and went back to what we were doing.

We had a mellow night of just hanging out and casual beer drinking. Cindy and Terry were the first to call it a night, and they receded into the tent they were sitting in front of most of the night. I was sitting on the tailgate of the Suburban. My sleeping bag was laid out, and my pillows were fluffed up, but I was not ready to sleep. I grabbed another beer. Ian came over and sat by me. He took a big gulp of his beer. "You ready for bed?" He made



a gesture with his thumb towards my sleeping arrangement.

I jumped off my tailgate and quickly answered, “No, I was thinking about walking down to the beach. I am not tired yet.”

He gave me a sad puppy face. “Too bad. I was going to tuck us in,” he said with a shy smile.

“That is my space, not yours. You have your own over there.” I pointed to his van.

“It can’t hurt to try,” he smiled. “Let’s walk. I will go with you. I can’t let you walk by yourself in the dark.” We each grabbed a couple more beers for the walk and headed out under the railroad track to the beach.

The night was beautiful and clear. It was a little windy, and the sound of the ocean was soothing. I loved California—the only place to live where you could go to the beach, the mountains, and the desert all in one day, on one tank of gas. It was an amazing place to grow up. We walked and drank our beers. We kept the conversation light.

Eventually we had to talk about Randy and Karen. Ian started by saying, “I am sorry things didn’t work out with Randy.” I laughed and hit him in the arm.

“You are not!” I said while laughing.

“Well, maybe I am not. I didn’t like seeing you hurt,” he said, putting his hand on the back of my neck as we walked. There was that tingle again from his touch. We found some rocks up ahead and sat on them.

“So what happened with Karen? She is a nice girl,” I asked.

“She is sweet, and I have known her for years,” he said, looking down at his can of beer. I was thinking he might be sad about her.

“She is sweet, and she really was into you,” I said.

“Yes, she is into me.” I noticed he was using the present tense of the word. Why that bothered me, that they still had something



going on, I didn't know. I was over Ian, I thought.

"So why didn't you bring her? It's time she and I became friends, don't you think? I mean, you and I will always be friends, right?" I asked him.

"The problem is I am not that into her. We have fun, we can talk, but I don't have those kind of feelings for her. I don't want to lead her on any more than I already have. I wouldn't want to hurt her. Though I think I already have. She deserves someone who will give her what she needs. You see, for me there is someone else," he said, and he smiled.

Someone else? Who? I wondered. I didn't think I wanted to know. I wanted to always be friends. I couldn't imagine not talking to him. I really cared for Ian, but I was burnt out on his love life and all these girls that didn't matter to him. He seemed to have gone through a few this summer. So I quickly changed the subject.

"Well then, let's have fun," I said as I pushed him off the rock and ran for the ocean. I was starting to feel the beers I drank. I thought I drank them too fast. I had a good buzz.

"Hey!" he yelled as he was getting up off the sand. "You don't fight fair." He laughed and started chasing me.

We ran around, splashing in the water. I was running along the shore, and I turned to splash him but he was right behind me. He ran right into me, and with a thud we both hit the ground. He practically knocked the wind out of me. We were both laughing, and waves were rushing up and washing over us. He looked in my eyes, and I was captivated. He kissed me really quick on the lips, and then jumped up and started peeling his clothes off. *Hold on, cowboy*, I was thinking.

"Let's go for a swim!" he hollered as he was running into a wave in his boxers. Geez, he startled me. I thought he wanted to do it right there on the sand. I jumped up and stripped off my



T-shirt and shorts. Normally, I would have had a bathing suit on, but I changed before dinner. So I ran out there in my underwear as well. It was a good thing I bought all new bras and panties when my sister and I went out shopping. You just never knew when someone might see them.

I dove under a wave and came up next to Ian. The water was really cold. “Wow, it is cold,” I said, making a brrr noise with my lips.

“Lightweight,” he said, and he started swimming diagonal with the coast line.

“We will see who the lightweight is,” I said as I started swimming really hard past him.

“OK, surfer girl, if that’s how you want it.” He grabbed my foot as I was going by, and he pulled me under the water and started stroking really hard down the beach. I came up sputtering.

“Cheater!” I yelled. We goofed around in the water for a while longer, and then headed up to the beach. We were breathless as we walked along.

“This is a good time, isn’t it?” he said, looking up at the stars.

“Yes, I really am having fun.” But I didn’t trust myself with Ian and all the beer I drank. I didn’t want to make any drunken mistakes that I would regret in the morning. I was remembering that he mentioned he was into someone.

“Let’s go back to camp,” I said.

He took my hand and said, “Yes, let’s.” As we walked we talked about the guys and the girls they met on the beach. We made some lewd jokes about them.

“I hope they took it in the van. I don’t want to walk up on any orgies!” I said laughing.

“I hear you,” Ian laughed. When we walked back into the camp no one was out. They had all retired to vans and tents.

“You better get those wet clothes off.” Ian gave me a



mischievous grin. “Do you need any help? Because you know I am happy to help.” He kept grinning.

“No, thank you. I think I can handle it,” I said, smiling back at him.

“OK, as long as you know I offered,” he said, walking to his van. I pulled out some dry undies and threw them on hiding on the side of the Suburban. I snuck around to the back of my car and climbed into my sleeping bag.

I laid there looking up at the stars, almost wishing that I was in Ian’s van with him. But that would be a mistake. He had someone special. I didn’t want to mess it up for him, and I didn’t want to be used for the weekend. Ian popped up at the tailgate and startled the heck out of me. “You all tucked in?” he asked.

“Oh! Ian, you scared the hell out of me,” I said, jumping.

He leaned in and whispered, “Sorry. I just don’t like the idea of you being out in the elements all alone.”

I looked at him and shook my head. “I am a big girl, Ian.”

He smiled. “I know, but there are a lot of big boys out here that would love to take advantage of a big girl who has been drinking all night.”

I told him, “You seem to be the only one wanting to take advantage.”

“No, look,” he said, pointing, and I saw the guys looking my way. They just went to pee in the bushes.

I didn’t know if they were thinking even remotely what Ian was accusing them of, but they smiled and waved at us. “See,” he said as he climbed in and laid on top of the covers. “I better stay here to protect you,” he grinned.

“Wait, I am fine, and can take care of myself,” I argued, trying to stop him from settling in. He just got comfortable and closed his eyes. “OK, have it your way,” I grumbled. I rolled over on my side with my back to him and shut my eyes.



I couldn't sleep with him right there. I rolled over again, and he was smiling at me. "Go to sleep," he whispered. "I am not going to do anything. Cross my heart." He crossed his heart with his fingers and kissed me on the forehead. "Sleep, Luv, just sleep." He was always crossing his heart around me. I didn't know when I fell asleep. I just remembered thinking that he was so warm. I couldn't help but wonder if he knew the effect he had on me. I was dreaming that he was holding me and we were just about to... And I was startled awake by laughter.

The guys were up and getting their gear together to surf. One of the girls from last night peeked out of Wade's van. I pulled on some shorts and a T-shirt and climbed out of my Suburban. I didn't see Ian anywhere. I wondered when he got up. His van was gone too. Maybe he had to get back early. He didn't mention that he was leaving. I was about to ask about him when I heard cackles and laughs.

Steve mentioned how I looked pretty good creeping around my Suburban last night in my undies. "Shut up. You weren't supposed to be spying on me," I said, all embarrassed.

"Hey, I had to take a leak. When I came out of the bushes you were coming around your car. What can I say? I had to look." He gave me a big grin.

"Oh, and lover boy went to get coffee and donuts. He will be right back." His grin got bigger, like he knew something no one else did.

"Smart ass!" I said, and I walked away.

Just as I got my bikini on, Ian rolled back into the camp. One of the girls from last night was in the van with him. Great, now I knew what Steve meant by "lover boy." For some stupid reason, I thought he was saying Ian was my lover boy. He brought me some coffee. I took it and said, "You get around, don't you?" He looked a little bewildered but he didn't say anything. I walked



back to my Suburban to get my wet suit. I had a short john that I liked to wear to keep my bikini in place.

The girl thanked him for letting her ride with him. She was carrying a pack of cigarettes. She and the other girl immediately lit up. None of us smoked cigarettes, and the smell was repulsive. I would skip on the donuts and head for the waves. Wade was right behind me. “What, you don’t want to hang with your girl?” I said to him.

“That isn’t how it works. No one is my girl. I know it, and they know it. They will be gone when I get back,” he said, and he ran down to the water ahead of me.

To me that seemed kind of mean. I guessed they all knew what they were doing. I never got into playing the field like Wade and Jimmy. I wondered when Ian had time to hook up with that girl. It was really none of my business. I knew I shouldn’t care. I couldn’t help but think that it was crappy that he laid in my bed, and that as soon as I fell asleep he got down with that girl. He was free to do what he wanted. We weren’t together so I had to let it go.

We had fun in and out of the water all morning. Ian tried to talk with me a couple times. I joked around with him, trying to keep my distance, and moved to be with the crowd as much as possible. I mentioned that I wanted to get back and have Sunday dinner with my folks. I was going to head out early. Everyone was in agreement, and we started packing everything up.

We all said what fun we had, and that we would see each other back in Huntington. Terry and Cindy jumped in the Suburban, and we all waved goodbye. Cindy asked, “What is up with you and Ian? You guys were pretty cozy.” I really didn’t want to talk about this in front of Terry.

“We weren’t cozy. We are friends. We hung out. He told me he and Karen will never work out. They have no chemistry. He



is into someone else but he didn't say who."

Cindy bounced on the seat. "It is you he is into, dummy. Why are you the only one that can't see that?"

I shook my head. "I kind of thought maybe it might be, but I don't know. The minute I fall asleep he is with one of the girls from the beach."

Cindy commented, "How do you know he was with her? I am sure she just rode to the store with him. That's the way I see it."

Terry said, "You babes don't get it. Why can't you just go with the flow and see how things work out? You might find you like it."

I was thinking to myself, *I don't know what the hell this guy is trying to say*. "Surfers," I said.

Cindy just gave him a big smile and kissed him with a big smack. "That's why I like you," she said.

"You're my babe." He put his arm around her. Obviously she got whatever he was trying to say. I turned the music up. Jethro Tull's "Locomotive Breath" was playing. We listened to the song at a blaring sound level. When it was over I turned it down and made small talk all the way back. They both avoided talking about relationships, thank goodness.

We dropped Terry off first. Then we headed to Cindy's. Her parents went out of town this morning. They asked me to stay with her. We had to eat with my folks first. Then I would stay at her house for most of the week. I dropped her off so she could get cleaned up. Dinner was at 5:30.

I got home and leaned my board and my short john against the fence on the side of the house. It would have to be rinsed before I could put it in my dad's garage/workshop. He built a rack on the wall just for my boards. Everything had a place, and everything was in its place. That must have come from the military in him.



I came in and said hi. I told them that the surf was great, and ran up to my room. I didn't like to go into my trips with too much detail. Even though this one was an uneventful trip, and not much was done in the way of drugs. The guys only brought that one bag of what they called Maui Wowie. They all smoked over the weekend, and it was just a mellow surf trip.

I showered and got into some shorts and an Infinity Surf Shop T-shirt and headed down for dinner. I heard Cindy in the kitchen talking to my mom. "I need to run out and put my board and wet suit away," I told them as I was about to go out the side yard door.

"Your father is out there doing that now." I took a seat at the breakfast bar.

"I would have done it," I said.

"I know, but that is your father we are talking about," she said, and we all started laughing.

"What are you hens cackling about?" Dad said as he came in the door.

"You," I said, smiling at him. "I would have done that, Dad."

"Well, it's done, so let's not worry about it," he said, walking over to the bar. He pat me on the back and reached into the liquor cabinet. He pulled out the martini mixings and made a drink. It was happy hour for my folks—five o'clock. He made my mom a drink and they walked out to the patio.

"Dinner is at 5:30," she said over her shoulder as my dad opened the French doors out to the back patio.

Cindy and I both said at the same time, "Like clockwork," and started laughing. There was a tray with olives, cheese, some marinated mushrooms, and green onions. Cindy and I nibbled on that for a bit and complained about not being invited for happy hour. My mom gave me a sour look from the patio.

Finally it was dinner time. My mom roasted a chicken, and



there were mashed potatoes, gravy, peas, and dinner rolls. It was very good. Cindy and I offered to clear the dishes and told my parents to go watch their shows on TV. We had this handled. I packed up the leftovers in Tupperware just like my mom would. When we had the kitchen spic and span for my mom, we told her we were heading over to Cindy's.

My dad didn't say anything about parties. I found that weird because he always told my brother, "No parties while we are gone." He did, however, warn, "I think it would be a good idea not to have boys at the house while Pete and Elaine are not home." Strange thing to say, I thought.

Cindy laughed and said, "Gotcha!" We went up to my room to get some clothes and things I might need for the week. We hollered "Bye" to them as we ran out the door.

"Call us if you need anything," my mom yelled at us as I closed the door. We looked at each other and laughed. We wouldn't be needing anything from my folks, I was sure.

My aunt and uncle would be gone until next Saturday. That was almost a week of hanging out and having fun. Cindy was an only child. She was very spoiled and got whatever she asked for. That had always made it fun for me. I was usually included in most things. We went where we wanted and did what we wanted when it came to Uncle Pete. He thought I was smart and level-headed and very trustworthy. He trusted me with everything, including Cindy.

When they asked me to stay they didn't lay down any rules except one. Uncle Pete bought a case of beer. Aunt Elaine really wasn't happy about that, but she never disagreed with any decision her husband made and kept her comments to herself. Anyway, the rule was that if we drank the beer we had to stay in the house. No going out, no driving the cars. Cool. That was easy enough. Uncle Pete had a Corvette that he rarely ever drove. I



would have liked to, but I had not mastered the stick shift. So it would stay safe and sound in his garage.

The first night we just hung out and watched TV. Cindy told me she wanted to have a party. I was leery and told her so. “Ah, come on. Just a small group of friends. We will do it mid-week so it will be low key. Besides, it’s my house.”

I looked at her. “I know, but your dad left me in charge. What if something gets broke?” Aunt Elaine collected expensive statues and crystal. Their dining room was full of fancy plates and crystal goblets in the curio cabinets.

“We could block the dining room with chairs and put a little sign that says ‘Off Limits.’” I thought about it.

“OK, just a small group,” I said, giving in. The next day we called around to some friends and told them to come. We went to the beach after we made the calls. I surfed a little, but it was blown out and slushy. I came in and hung out.

Cindy told me, “I told Terry. He is bringing his roommate, and his roommate’s girlfriend.”

I added, “I told Jimmy, Steve, and Wade. They will tell Ian, and whoever he might bring.”

We both talked about what fun it would be. After a full day at the beach we headed back to her house. We made hamburgers and turned on the stereo. We listened to album after album. Of course Cindy had a huge selection. She got everything she wanted. When we were going to bed we heard something. Joey was at the back window barking, with the hair on his back standing straight up.

This scared the hell out of us. I grabbed the curtain that covered the sliding back door and pulled it open. I saw a shadow of what appeared to be a man running toward the back fence. Cindy flung open the door and yelled, “Sic him, Joey!” Joey ran out there barking up a storm. The guy leapt over the fence, and



we heard him hit the ground pretty hard on the other side. He picked the wrong yard.

Luger, a Doberman pinscher and a really unfriendly dog, lived over there. We heard Luger growling, and then the guy took off. Luger must have bit him because we heard a scream, and the lights all went on over there. Mr. Smithson yelled out his back door, "Good dog, Luger, good dog." We peeked over the fence, and Mr. Smithson had a rifle pointed at this long-haired guy who was sitting with his back against the wall, holding a bloody spot on his leg. "Jenny, call the police," he said, keeping his eye on the guy. He looked over at us. "Do you know this guy?"

We both hollered, "No! He was trying to get in the house, but Joey scared him off." He just nodded his head as we heard sirens coming into the neighborhood.

"Then I take it you are alright." We told him yes.

The cops came running through the house and around the back gate, yelling, "Drop your weapon." Mr. Smithson slowly lowered the rifle and called Luger to his side so he didn't eat a policeman.

"I am the homeowner. Luger, stay," he said while putting his hands in the air.

We stayed hanging on the fence. We watched as Mr. Smithson's wife brought out his driver's license to prove he lived there. They were putting the cuffs on our would-be burglar. One officer came over to ask us what happened. We told him the story. He thanked us and told us we could go. We walked back into the house talking about what a crazy night this was. We were very proud of Joey, and he followed us in, wagging his tail. He looked pretty proud of himself too.

Even though it was over we were still scared. We locked up the house and decided we both would sleep in her parents' room. We both jumped at every little noise. For safe keeping, we called



Joey up on the bed, and he made a comfortable spot at our feet. All locked up and safe, we tried to sleep.

The early morning sun was shining in the cracks of the curtains, and it woke me up. That and a big dog butt on the side of my stomach. At least Cindy got his head. I pushed his rear end down and got out of bed. He stretched out in the warm spot that I just moved from. He made a groaning sound and slept. “Stupid dog,” I said as I walked out of the room. Cindy was still sleeping. I went through the house opening curtains and windows to let fresh air in. We had this place locked down tight.

I was looking out the front window when Cindy finally rose and came out. We talked some more about last night. We both agreed we would not say anything to my folks. They would make us stay at my house. I didn’t have to worry about Mr. Smithson saying anything. He was very anti-social. We decided to hang out at home today and get ready for the party tonight.

We did some re-arranging. We were moving the breakables out of the living room and into the dining room, just to be on the safe side. We set up the chairs to block off the entrance, and hung a sign that said “Please do not enter.” Then we headed to the grocery store for some snacks to set out for the party, chips and dips mostly.

We decided to go have some fish and chips at Michael’s. It was the best fish and chip place in town. It was always crowded because it was so good. It was worth the wait, and we finally put in our order. We got our food and found a place to sit. We talked about tonight, and had the usual what to wear conversation. We decided on shorts, and we would try on tops later.

We had burned up most of the afternoon getting supplies and eating lunch out. We told Terry to get a keg on his way over. He was happy to oblige. It was early evening, and we started getting ready. Terry would be here soon to set up the keg. Cindy



picked out a cute Chinese pattern halter top. I put on a little silky mid drift top that tied in the back. For being cousins, we did not look alike. We both had long blonde hair, but that was where the resemblance ended. Cindy was five feet tall, very tiny, and cute as a button.

We looked in the mirror while brushing our hair and doing the finishing touches. Neither of us wore a lot of makeup. Some mascara and lip gloss and we were ready. We were ready just in time too, because I heard Terry's car pulling to the driveway. We unloaded the keg and finished putting out the snacks.

The phone rang, and it was my mom. "Do you girls want to eat dinner over here?" she asked.

"Thanks, Mom, but we went and got fish and chips from Michael's." She knew it had been a favorite of mine and Cindy's since we were kids.

"OK. If you need anything let me know." I thanked her and hung up.

"It was my mom offering dinner," I told them. Cindy said "How nice," and we went back to setting up.

Terry tapped the keg and we all got a cup and went to sit in the living room. He brought some weed, but Cindy and I didn't really smoke. She said OK, but we needed to smoke outside. I was surprised. I thought she really didn't like it. Oh, well, guys could change you. They walked out back, and I looked out the front. It was getting dark, and cars started to pull up.

There was music playing, and people were in little groups talking amongst themselves. I played hostess and walked around socializing with everyone. I stopped and talked to Jimmy and some new chick he brought. "You are looking exceptional tonight," Jimmy said with a smile.

I gave him a hug. "You don't look half bad yourself," I said. He gave me an appreciative once over with his eyes. Then I



smacked him on the arm. "Don't go overboard, surfer pro," I laughed.

"Guys got to look," he shrugged. Then he went back to his girl, and I moved on to the next group and talked for a bit.

I heard the phone ringing so I ran to the master bedroom and shut the door in case it was my mom again. It was Shelly. "Your mom said I could reach you at this number. Are you having a party?" she asked.

"Yes I am. You should be here. Everyone else is," I told her.

She said, "Maybe Keith will want to drop by for a bit."

We both knew they wouldn't. "Why were you looking for me?" I asked her.

"Oh, I wanted to talk to you about something, but not on the phone. Hey, maybe I can come by tomorrow afternoon. I will bring you guys some Chinese food," she said.

"Sounds great. We will be here," I said.

"OK, see you tomorrow. Bye." She hung up.

Now I wondered what that was all about. I sat there for a few minutes wondering if I should be happy or worried. That was a strange phone call. Oh, well. I had a house full of friends and the night was young. I walked back down the hall and rejoined the party. It looked like more people had come. As I was looking around at the people, Ian strolled in with some albums under his arm.

He walked straight over to the stereo and changed the album to the Allman Brothers. It was a good album but we had music on already. He walked up to me. "Make yourself at home, Ian," I told him.

He laughed and said, "Oh, my music. Sorry, but you needed something new. What does a guy have to do to get a beer around here?"

"Come on." I grabbed his arm and led him into the kitchen where the keg was. "Cups are on the counter, pot smokers are on



the back patio. Is there anything else you need?" I asked.

"I think that covers it," he told me. He filled his cup and walked out back. Steve and Dewey were out there talking about the difference between smoking hash and smoking regular weed. Ian joined in the conversation. I had no idea what the difference was, and didn't care. I headed back into the kitchen. Cindy and Terry were telling secrets in the kitchen. Everyone else was moving around, talking and laughing. I sat in the living room laughing at Jimmy and his girl. She was hysterical. I didn't know where he found her, but she was really funny.

Ian came in and sat next to me and joined in on the conversation and laughter. We were all having a really good time when I noticed people were smoking cigarettes in the house. I got up to say something, and Cindy stopped me. "Just help me put some plates around for ashtrays, and let it go," she told me.

"OK, but if they burn anything it's your funeral." I helped her set out the plates all around. It seemed really crowded. I went back and sat with Ian, Jimmy, and I could not remember this girl's name that came with Jimmy. We had been laughing and talking for hours, getting beer, coming back, and sitting down. I noticed also that Terry, Cindy, and Dewey had been spending a lot of time in the den. They had to be snorting coke. I wondered why Ian hadn't gone in there.

Ian finally looked at his watch and said, "I have something I have to do. I have to bail, but I will be back if you guys are still hanging out." I assured him that we would be hanging until late. He and Dewey took off. I cruised around the party and stood with different people talking about nothing in particular, just having a good time. I told Cindy we should have called Lena and invited her and Stephen. Cindy said she felt bad—we should have. She must not have felt too bad, though. She was back in a corner telling secrets with Terry again. They were so cute together.



It was really getting harder and harder to get to the kitchen. There were a lot of people here. The back yard was crowded. The kitchen was overflowing, and the front door was open. There was also a huge crowd on the front lawn. I realized I didn't know any of the people outside. The chairs we had blocking the dining room had been moved, and people were sitting in them, using crystal goblets that were over \$100 apiece for ashtrays.

I found Cindy and told her this was way out of control. There were just too many people here. I saw wine spilled on the davenport and ashes on the carpet. She was getting nervous too. It looked like a bunch of strangers had taken over the house. I casually asked a group of people in the hall if they knew who owned the house. They didn't. Someone at the beach told them this was the place to be tonight. They asked me if I agreed. I nodded and moved on.

I went back to Cindy and told her what they said. "We have to get them out of here." She looked at me. "What should we do?"

I thought for a minute, and then I told her, "I have an idea." I found all our real friends and told them to go into the master bedroom and close the door. I told them not to smoke or do any drugs. I had to get rid of these people. They asked what I was planning. "I am calling the police on this party." They laughed, but I picked up the phone and told the police department there was a loud party going on, and gave them the directions. I told everyone to sit tight. I walked out front and waited.

The street was mobbed with cars. People were everywhere. I saw the first patrol car coming up the street, thank goodness. People immediately started leaving. Two officers walked up the driveway flashing their lights on kids, and they immediately took off. I stood there waiting for them. One said, "Who is responsible for this party?"

Cindy was standing behind me looking scared. I reached



back and patted her hand. “I am.” I stepped forward. The house was emptying out now, and I was feeling a little better. I told them, “We invited a few people over, and all of these strangers showed up. I didn’t know what to do. I was afraid they would destroy the house, so I called you out.” I was looking up at them, and they were giving me this strange look.

Then they both rocked back on their heels laughing. “Well, if that doesn’t beat all. We have never had a teenager call the cops on their own party.”

I frowned at them. “I am not a teenager, but a lot of these kids that showed up looked like they are.”

They asked if they could come in, and I of course said yes. They walked in and told everyone the party was over, and to take off now. That got the rest of them gone. They asked me if there was anyone left. I told them I had ten people in the back room that were my friends. They were very cool. They told us to close up the house and keep it down. They would get rid of the rest of the people in the street. They also warned that if they had to come out again, I, the party thrower, would go to jail. They both gave me a stern look to let me know they meant business. I said I understood completely.

I thanked them for helping, and said good night. I closed the front door and turned off the front lights on the house. We got everyone out of the bedroom and resumed our party. I took a lot of ribbing and bad jokes about calling the cops on myself, but we had a good time.

Almost a half hour after the cops left, Ian showed back up. He said he saw the cops so he drove on by. I explained what I did, and everyone had a good laugh again. He hugged me. “You are crazy.” We played cards into the wee hours of the morning. Terry and Cindy took my aunt and uncle’s bed. I straightened up and bagged all the cans and bottles that were sitting around.



Then the rest of the partiers left. Ian helped me clean up. He then kissed me on the forehead and told me good night.

I walked him to the door, and he smiled and told me to lock up. I was kind of hoping he would stay. As he went out the door he turned. I thought he had changed his mind. He tilted my head back and ever so softly kissed my lips. I stood there with my eyes closed, and I realized he was looking down at me. When I opened them, he said, “Good night, Luv. See you later,” and left.

What a crazy guy. I couldn’t figure him out. I felt like he was still attracted to me, but he didn’t make any moves on me anymore. He just teased me with these righteous kisses. I wondered if I had a thing for him. I always felt incomplete, or like something was missing, when we saw each other. And he seemed like a big smart ass. Like he knew something I didn’t. I wondered if he did that to all the girls. Yes, who was I kidding? Of course he did!

I went to Cindy’s room and hopped into bed. Oh, I had to let Joey out. He was in the garage. It sounded mean, but he had a huge comfy pillow bed out there with food and water. Cindy also put a little portable TV out there to keep him company. I opened the door to the garage and called him. He bounded over all happy to see me. “It looks like it’s me and you, handsome,” I said, patting his head. He followed me back to Cindy’s room. I shut off the lights and hopped back into bed. He looked at me with that sideways look. “OK, get up here.” He had good manners. He waited to be invited before he jumped into bed. We snuggled up, and I fell asleep to Joey snoring.



CHAPTER 12

Joey and I woke up to laughing and giggling. We made our way out to the kitchen to see Cindy and Terry making breakfast. It was 12:30—more like lunch time. But what the heck? Breakfast was good any time. I let Joey out and made myself a plate of scrambled eggs. “Have you had a chance to look at the front yard?” I asked.

“No, but we better make sure there are no beer bottles in the yard,” Cindy said, looking kind of nervous. I finished my plate and walked out front. Joey followed me.

“We have a lot of cleaning up to do. There are beer cans and bottles on your yard as well as the neighbor’s.” I grabbed a trash bag and headed back out. Terry and Cindy followed suit. It was a mess. What was wrong with people?

“They trashed my house,” Cindy yelled. We cleaned up the mess and carried it around to the side of the house where the trash cans were. They were overflowing. “It’s a good thing the trash man comes Friday,” Cindy said.

“You got that right,” Terry chimed in.

I hoped that the neighbors weren’t mad. The first thing they would do was tell Cindy’s parents. Well, it was too late to worry



about it now. I told them about Shelly coming by later and bringing Chinese. They were happy about that small concession for what we had to deal with. They ended up going back to bed. I just hung out and watched TV. I fed Joey and lazed around the rest of the afternoon.

Shelly showed up at six, with big bags of food. “Where is Keith?” I asked.

“He is helping his mom do something,” she said. Terry and Cindy were still in her parents’ room.

“Well, what did you want to talk about?” I asked. She looked so happy. It must have been something good.

She jumped up and threw her left hand out. “I am getting married,” she said, displaying a beautiful diamond solitaire.

“Wow, Shelly, it’s beautiful! When?” I said, bubbling over with excitement for her.

She grinned real big. “Oh, not right away. We haven’t set a date or anything. Maybe in a year or two. Keith just wants everyone to know I am taken.” I was relieved. It was not another rash decision on anyone’s part. It seemed like there had been a lot of that this summer, where my friends were concerned.

“I am so happy for you,” I said, hugging her.

“You know you will be the maid of honor when we do set the date.” She jumped around clapping. I joined her.

“This is so exciting! You will be the first of our friends to get married,” I whooped loudly.

Cindy and Terry finally emerged from the bedroom, all sleepy-looking. “What’s all the excitement?” they asked, stretching and yawning.

“Shelly is engaged!” I said. Shelly once again proudly displayed her ring.

“That’s great! Congratulations!” Cindy clapped.

“That’s far out, man,” Terry said.



“Hey, Shelly brought us dinner. Let’s eat it before it gets cold.” We got plates and utensils and sat down around the table grabbing cartons and loading up our plates.

We hung out all evening together, lying low. We talked about the wedding a little, and I told her about the party last night and how I had to call the cops on us. She got a kick out of that. She stayed and watched TV with me. Cindy and Terry told us they were going to a movie. They invited us to go with them. We told them to go ahead. We wanted to hang out around here.

It was nice hanging out. It seemed like we just didn’t see much of each other. We both agreed to try to get together more often. I told her about my friendship with Ian, and how great he had been.

“He is the one you should be with,” she said very seriously.

I laughed. “I think that ship has sailed, and it is too late for us.”

She shook her head. “I think you still care about him, and he seems to care about you. It is never too late.” She let me know that she needed to get going. She wanted to be home when Keith got there.

We hugged, and I walked her out. We made our promises again to stay in touch more. I reminded her, “Tell Keith congratulations for me. I know you too will be very happy!”

She gave me a big smile. “Can you believe it? I never thought in my wildest dreams I would want to get engaged. You know me—play the field. The independent woman never gets burned motto.”

I did know how she was. “So no more love them and leave them?” I asked with a laugh. “What was it you used to say? I remember! ‘Always let them down easy!’” We both laughed about how she was in high school.

She shook her head. “That was the old me,” she said as she climbed into her car. “See you later.” She waved, backing out



into the street.

“See you.” I waved back. I watched her drive down the street. “Come on, Joey,” I called to him. He was sniffing around the yard.

The next door neighbor whom I did not notice earlier was staring at me, saying, “No party tonight, missy?”

I stuttered, “Ah, no, no party,” and ran back in the house. It looked like my aunt and uncle would know all about the party because that neighbor was sure to tell them.

I decided to heat up some of that leftover Chinese food and see if there was anything on TV. I gave Joey an egg roll. He seemed to like them. I warmed his too. I didn’t know why I bothered. He wolfed it down in one bite. I took my food into the den and turned on the TV. Love Story was on. I ate my food and shared what was left with Joey. I heard Cindy and Terry return. They came in to see what I was doing.

“What’s the matter?” they both said, all concerned, seeing me crying all by myself.

I pointed at the TV. “Love Story is on,” I sniffled to them. They both laughed. “Hey, it’s sad,” I said in my defense. Joey gave them a little whine and snuggled closer to my leg. “He understands,” I said.

Terry stayed with us the rest of the week. He helped us keep the place clean so it looked good when her folks got back on Saturday. He turned out to be a really nice guy. I got up that morning, gave the house the once over, and told them I was going surfing. I packed all of my stuff in the Suburban and headed to the beach. I had a good time with Cindy, but it would be good to sleep in my own bed tonight. As I drove to the beach I laughed at myself, and at the things that happened at Cindy’s this last week.

What a beautiful day it was in sunny Huntington Beach. Well, it was almost always a beautiful day in Huntington Beach.



I parked my Suburban, got all my things together, and headed down to the beach. It was pretty quiet. Not many people were out yet. I stood and watched the waves for a minute, and after waxing up the board I headed out. There were a few guys out that I knew already. They were sitting on their boards, contemplating the next set. I didn't join them. I stayed a little off by myself.

The water was a clear blue-green. The wind was blowing just slightly. I sat staring for a while. I didn't realize how long I had been staring out to sea. "Are you going to sit there all day, or you going to take a wave?" Jimmy yelled from up on the pier.

I snapped out of my daze and yelled back, "You should talk, poser! You're up on the pier!"

He waved his arms in the air at me. "I was out earlier. Take some waves, and then come in. I want to talk to you when you're done."

I just shook my head at him and paddled off. I couldn't help but wonder what he would want to talk to me about. I would enjoy myself and find out later. No sense in wrecking my day if it was bad news.

I stayed out for a good hour and a half and then I came in. Jimmy was sitting casually by my stuff. "What's going down?" I asked.

"Not a whole lot." He smiled. Jimmy was very good looking. He just had never been my style. We kissed a few times playing spin the bottle in seventh and eighth grade, but I had always kept my distance. He had a reputation for breaking hearts. It never bothered me, because we were just good friends.

I heard someone yelling "Jimmy!" He looked up, and some guys on the pier yelled down, "Thanks, we got it."

I asked him what that was all about. "You," he said. "My sponsors are looking to recruit some girls. I thought of you. They took some footage of you surfing to take back with them."



It's pretty cool, Dee Dee. You get your clothes and boards free. But you have to compete."

"I don't know about that, Jimmy. I am not good enough to compete. You have seen these pro surfer chicks. They would eat me up." I flung myself back on my towel.

"Aw, come on. It would be fun. You get paid for the pictures they put in the magazines. They comp everything. The traveling is great. You are better than any girls I know," he said in earnest.

"Thanks, but that's not saying much. The girls you know can't chew gum and walk at the same time," I told him.

He laughed. "Well, yeah, but I see a lot of real surfer girls out on the circuit that are really good. I think you could be as good as they are. Just think about it. Don't say no right away," he pleaded.

"I will, but I have a lot coming up. I start school in September. I am on the tennis team at Long Beach State. I don't know when I will have time for all this," I said.

"You could be on a surf team instead of that tennis team. You have always said surfing is your life."

I shook my head. "You don't understand. I got my scholarship because of that tennis team."

He looked over. "You don't need that either. You can win money and get paid for other promotions. Just think about it, will you?" he asked.

I told him I would. We sat there in silence for a while. "Hey, what's going on with you and Ian?" he finally asked.

"Not much," I said. "We are good friends. That's about it. Why?" I was thinking he had a message from Ian or something. But no. He blew me away with his next statement.

"Well, as long as you aren't a thing. I was thinking we could go out."

I laughed, "Come on now, Jimmy. Me and you dating?"



That is crazy.”

He looked at me with mock hurt on his face. “Why not? We have been friends forever.”

I couldn’t even say what I was thinking. I didn’t want to be mean, but Jimmy got around. “That’s just it, Jimmy. We have been friends forever. I wouldn’t want to ruin what we have.”

He put a hand on my knee. “You never know. We could have a lot more.” Oh, geez, he was serious.

“You know I love you, Jimmy, but I know almost every girl you have ever dumped, slighted, jilted, and walked on. What can I say? I don’t want to be a notch on your bed post, for one thing, and the other would be to lose a good friend if things didn’t work out.”

“Ouch,” Jimmy smiled at me. “I’m that bad, huh?”

I grabbed his hand. “No, you’re not bad. You are just you. All the girls love you. You love all the girls. And that’s great. That is always how it has been.”

He looked at me with those blue eyes of his. “All the girls but you. I have tried several times to get next to you, and you always blow me off. Why don’t you just think about it? Let’s go get some lunch at Seventeen Street Deli as friends, and hang out. We can do that, can’t we?”

“That sounds good, but this is not a date or anything,” I warned. He laughed, helping me pick up my stuff, and he carried my board.

“I got you. Not a date.” But I couldn’t help noticing the guys giving him the thumbs up as we passed. I didn’t say anything. I really liked Jimmy—I always had. He was definitely a looker. And his body...well, that went without saying. He was very muscular and had a washboard stomach. I just knew him too well. The funny thing was I did not remember him hitting on me. If he did I must have thought we were goofing around.

I met Jimmy in the first grade. We played together on the



jungle gym every day. He threw sand on me, and I punched him. After our visit to the principal's office, we had been friends ever since. We had the same teachers every year up until seventh grade. Jimmy and I danced at the first dance in seventh grade. He was smooth back then. We definitely had history. We started going our separate ways about that time. I was a late bloomer, and Jimmy had an eye for the girls with big boobs. That trait stayed with him up until today. Although I looked different than I did in seventh grade. I never thought he would be interested in me, and frankly, I never cared.

Jimmy was just Jimmy, one of my very good lifelong friends. We got up to my Suburban and loaded my board and my gear in. Jimmy said, "Let's take my car," and pointed to a cherry red Corvette that was parked a few spaces down. I locked my car and started walking toward his.

"Wow, so this is you?" I exclaimed, looking at his beautiful car.

"Yeah, I told you this pro surfing gig is quite lucrative." I hopped in his car, and we did a U-turn and headed down to Seventeen Street.

"Winning the Hawaii Championship recently helped." He smiled into his mirror. The old Jimmy just surfaced, as he was checking himself out in the mirror.

"Right, I forgot you just got back from that. It was all over Surfer Magazine. You earned the cover!" I told him with excitement. He shrugged it off, not commenting on it at all. We got out of the car talking casually, and went in to order sandwiches. Everyone knew Jimmy and was congratulating him on his recent wins. There were a lot of high fives before we finally got our sandwiches.

We took them to a place by the cliffs and sat in his car eating. We watched the surfers out in the water in silence for a while. Jimmy and I would never be a couple that I would have



put together. He looked over at me a few times, but didn't say anything. I couldn't think of anything to say right now either. It was not an uncomfortable silence, just strange. He was definitely looking at me differently. I could feel it.

There was no doubt we were comfortable together. But that was because we knew everything about each other. "See, this isn't so bad," he said, smiling at me. I didn't say anything. It wasn't spending time with him that I was worried about. That part was easy. I just didn't think we could have a serious relationship. I knew all the air-headed girls he had hung out with before me. I couldn't even imagine trying to hold a conversation with any of them. I kind of thought that was why he dated air-headed girls. They had hardly any conversation, and an easy goodbye.

"Are you finished with your sandwich?" he asked. I nodded yes, and he opened the door and jumped out. "Let's go walk on the beach." What harm can that do? I wondered.

"Sure." I started to open the door, but he was already around opening it. We strolled along talking about his new-found fame. I asked him what it had been like. He told me all about the photo shoots and traveling. About winning meets, and how that felt. He didn't talk about the money he had won. I knew it was a lot. We laughed about nothing.

When we stopped to turn around and walk back, he pointed out some sets coming in from outside. The guys out in the surf saw them too, and started paddling for them. "That last set is going to break perfect," he said, staring out to sea.

"How do you know?" I looked up at him. He turned me around to face the ocean. He stood behind me with one hand on my shoulder, and he leaned down to speak in my opposite ear as he was pointing toward the wave.

"It's the way it rolls," he said. "If you watch the horizon you can see the swell building as it is coming in."



“I have watched the swell, and caught perfect waves, but I don’t really know which one is the best. I just hope for the best.” He wrapped the arm that was pointing out to the surf around the front of me. It was casually draped across my chest. His hands were both on my left shoulder. He kept talking about the way that wave was going to curl over and form into a perfect barrel.

“That dude is too far out in front of the wave to get in the tube. It’s obvious that he took off too early. His timing was way off. He wasted that perfect wave,” he said, disappointed at the action we were watching. He pulled me kind of close as he continued to educate me on the waves, and which ones to wait for. All I could think was that we were way too close for friends. But he didn’t seem to notice, and it was just surfer conversation. So I stood there listening to his instructions. I didn’t think there was anything he didn’t know about surfing.

He finally let me go, and grabbed for my hand. “The wind is starting to pick up. Are you ready to go?” We started walking back up the beach toward the car.

“Yes, I have some things at home I need to do today,” I lied. I was afraid he might invite me back to his place or something. He opened the door for me and I got in. We drove back to my car. He continued to talk about wave formation and timing.

Before I could get out of his car, he asked, “We are taking another trip to San Diego for the weekend. Do you want to go?” I would have loved to, but this was probably a big mistake.

“I don’t know. I have tennis practice?” I stammered. He looked like I had offended him.

“Hey, now. I would never force myself on you, Dee Dee. Do you think Ian is the only gentleman in the group? That I have some couth? I would never ask you to do anything you were uncomfortable with,” he said. “Do you really think I would?” he asked, definitely upset.



Yes, I thought to myself. I had seen Jimmy and the guys in action. But I didn't say that. "No, Jimmy, I don't think that." He walked me to my Suburban, and after I jumped in and rolled the window down, he stood there with his hands on the door.

"Please think about it, would you? I will call you and see if you decide to come." He looked at me with those big blue eyes once again.

I smiled, "OK. I will think about it. Give me a call this week." He gave me a big grin and hit the side of the car with an open palm.

"It will be a good time, I promise," he said, walking toward his car. I saw in my rear view mirror he was smiling broadly as he opened the door to his car. He hopped in, fired up that eight cylinder, and revved it up a few times.

"I just said I would think about it," I hollered back at him as I started to pull away. He just waved and kept smiling as he pulled into traffic behind me.

When I got home I was going to call Shelly and tell her all about Jimmy. I drove home thinking either I was the biggest idiot, or maybe this could be a good thing. We would see. I made no promises to Jimmy. But I didn't know about him and me together.

I called Shelly when I got home. She was laying out by the pool. She invited me over. I told her I would be by in about an hour. I needed to shower and get the sand off.

When I got there I rang the bell. She hollered from the back, "Door's open. Come on back." I walked through the house.

"Hey, what have you been up to?" I asked.

She stretched. "Just this. Keith is out running errands, and I am relaxing. I spent all morning cleaning this house." She looked over. "What have you been up to?"

"Well," I said, "I went surfing and spent the rest of the day with Jimmy." Her eyes got big.



“Do you mean surfing with Jimmy like you do with all those guys, or one on one you and Jimmy?” She sat up to face me.

“One on one. We went to lunch. It seems he wants to date me,” I said with this bewildered look on my face.

“Dang it, I have always liked Jimmy. When we were little, remember, I used to write his name and mine all over my notebook,” she laughed. I said that I remembered her obsession.

“It’s too late now. You are engaged,” I said.

“I know,” she laughed. “But I was hung up on him for years. Wishful thinking all that time. Apparently I wasn’t his type.”

“If you remember, you were taller than him for years,” I laughed. “I wanted to talk to you about this. I know about Jimmy, and so do you. He gets around. He is good looking, and I love him to death, but...”

She jumped up. “But what? He likes you. If you like him, go for it. You aren’t seeing anyone.”

I shook my head. “I know, but it’s Jimmy. What if it doesn’t work out? I don’t want to lose a good friend.”

“You are being silly. Why don’t you just hang out and see what happens. You know if it was meant to be something will blossom. If not, you can go on being good friends who weren’t meant for each other. He knows the score. You have to be adventurous,” she explained to me. “Besides, what if you end up being the one special girl he has been looking for? You and I both know you are nothing like the flavor of the week girls that come and go.” She was looking at me like I was stupid or something.

“I told him I would think about it. He is calling me this week to go surfing in San Diego for the weekend,” I told her.

“Perfect. You go and see what happens. Will anyone else be going?” she said, all excited now.

“He said we are going to San Diego, so I assume the usual suspects will be there: Wade, Steve, Billy, maybe Ian,” I said



with a smile, not so sure how I would feel with Ian there. “What the heck? I will go and see what happens.” I looked at her and she jumped up and hugged me.

“You dog, you know I always had a thing for Jimmy. Now you will be getting down with him. I am not sure how I feel about that,” she laughed at herself.

I hugged her back. “I don’t know about all that.”

She threw back her long hair. “He has a thing for small blondes, and I am a statuesque brunette. Like I said, I am not his type.” She laughed again, like it was just a thing, nothing to be bummed about, and it didn’t hurt her ego in any way, shape, or form. We both laughed, and then talked about what Jimmy and I had in common. We both wondered if we would become an item. I hung out with Shelly all afternoon. We went to the movies and saw *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

That was an experience. People dressed weird, and there was a lot of audience participation. People in the audience made loud comments and mimicked the movie. It was definitely strange. We had a good time, and then went back to her house, of course driving through the Jack in the Box on the way home. They had the best onion rings. Keith was there when we got home.

“I would have got you something, honey. I didn’t know you would be home so early.” They hugged and kissed and acted like they were married already. He went off towards their room.

He said, “I will let you two gossip, or whatever it is you do,” walking down the hallway.

“You two get along so well,” I said, and I took a big bite of my burger.

“Yes, isn’t it great?” she sighed. *Yes it is*, I thought to myself.

The days went by slowly, and by Wednesday night I was wondering if Jimmy was going to call. I called everyone I knew to see what was happening this weekend, just in case he changed



his mind. Lena said they were thinking about having a little get together at her place. I told her about Jimmy, and that I might be going down south with him surfing. She seemed happy about that, but I was not sure. Of course, she warned me about Jimmy. “I know, I know,” I told her. “I will come to the party if the trip pans out.”

I went up to my room to relax and listened to my Neil Young “After the Gold Rush” album. It was one of my all-time favorites. I sat in my bean bag chair, staring up at the ceiling, wondering what I should do about Jimmy. We had been friends for so long. He had always been great to me. Shelly was right. It couldn’t hurt to hang out. The song “Only Love Can Break Your Heart” came on. “I hope this isn’t the case,” I said out loud. Sometimes I made too much out of the music I was listening too. Everything was not a secret message to me. What a clown I was sometimes.

The next morning I was getting ready to head out when Jimmy finally called. “Hey, Sweetness, did you think about this weekend?” he asked.

“I did, and I think it will be fun. When do you want to leave?”

He paused for a second, then said, “I will pick you up early Friday morning. We can get down there in about ninety minutes.” I told him OK, and we planned the time. My folks would be at work, so he could pick me up at the house. “Great. I can’t wait. You going to do any surfing this morning?” he asked.

“Yes, I was just heading out,” I said.

“My sponsors want to talk to you today, and Surfer Magazine wants to use the shots they got of you the other day. They need you to sign an authorization to use them. There will be some money in it for you if you say yes.”

I thought about it. I could use some extra money. “When do they want to talk?” I asked.

“We can talk about it at the beach. They will be doing some



shots of other locals today.” I told him I would see him at the pier. I decided to change into a new bikini, and grabbed my short john. I didn’t want any accidents with the camera crew out there today.

I found a place to park and headed to my usual spot. I saw the guys all standing around talking. I walked up and dropped my stuff. They all got quiet. “Wow, did I walk in on a private conversation or something?” I asked. They all made lame excuses about what they were talking about. Jimmy was out in the water. I headed out to catch a few good sets. He was happy to see me. He pointed up on the pier. The photographers from Surfer Magazine were up there. Janie, a girl I went to school with, was surfing and looking really good. They were taking shots of her too.

She should go pro. She had always been exceptional. She waved and said hello. I hollered hello back, and then paddled towards the next set coming in. The waves were fun today, and we all stayed out a pretty long time. When I finally did decide to head in, my muscles were aching. Janie was coming in too. We talked on the way in. She asked if I noticed the magazine photographers up on the pier. I told her I knew they would be here today.

She pointed at Jimmy. “They are always wherever he is. He is such a fox. I wish...” she said with a sigh, and didn’t finish her sentence. She just watched him up by my friends.

“Come up with me and hang out,” I said.

“Oh, no, I couldn’t. I would be too embarrassed.” She headed quickly off in the other direction, but she kept looking back at Jimmy. She was a bit on the shy side.

“Who is your friend?” Steve asked.

“That is Janie. She and I went to school together since the seventh grade. She is a pretty cool chick,” I told them.

“She sure can surf,” a guy walking up to us in street clothes



said. “Hey, Jimmy,” he said, “can you and your friend here come up to the coffee shop and talk for a few minutes?” He and Jimmy looked at me with a questioning look.

I said, “Sure,” and grabbed my flip flops and a pair of shorts.

We all walked up to Egg Heaven together. There were some people already there waiting for us. We got the greetings out of the way and sat down. The waitress came over, and we ordered drinks. They laid out some shots of me surfing. There were lots of shots of Jimmy as usual. The guy that was on the beach introduced himself as Ted. He told me that he wanted to do a whole layout of Huntington Beach locals. He needed my permission to use the shots of me. He gave me a nice payment offer, if they could interview me and print what I said.

Jimmy was all into it. He convinced me to say yes. Everyone was happy, and tomorrow morning they would like to interview me on the pier. I told them I would be there. They asked me to dress casual. I was already thinking what I was going to wear. They told me they would see me at the appointed time and place. They all jumped up paid the tab and left.

Jimmy told me to wait because the sponsors wanted to speak to me as well. So we hung out and waited for them. We ordered more soft drinks and sat for what seemed to be a really long time. They finally showed up. There was a girl named Suzette and a guy named Michael that joined us. They told me what they were looking for. I let them know I had never competed and had no titles. They knew already, and wanted me to compete in some small competitions up the coast. If I could place in the top three, I had a sponsor.

With that said, they got up and left. I was thinking they should have been talking to Janie. She was the one who should compete. I was not half as good a surfer as she was, and I told Jimmy that. “Dee Dee, you are as good as she is. You don’t see



yourself. We all do. We have been watching you for years.” He made a funny face, moving his eyebrows up and down. I slapped him good naturedly on the arm.

“Stop that,” I said, “this is serious. I don’t want to make a fool of myself.” It turned out they had been talking to Janie too. I believed she got the same pitch I did.

“You won’t,” he tried to convince me. “Listen. There is a contest coming up in Half Moon Bay. Not this weekend, but next. I will work with you on some excellent moves that will make you a front runner. If you don’t feel comfortable after that, then you can tell them no. It is the perfect opportunity because it is a small competition, so not as many people will be watching. Good experience for you though.” His excitement was contagious, and I found myself getting caught up in it.

“Well, maybe. Let’s see how well I do in San Diego,” I smiled.

“I can’t wait,” he said, pulling me out of the booth.

He left the waitress a ten for taking over the booth for so long. She gave him that “Baby, I’m yours” look. He continued to hold my hand as we walked out, and he never looked back at Miss “I Would Do Anything For You.” I looked back though in time to see her and another waitress giving me the evil glare. Hey, did she just mouth the word “bitch” at me? Hanging with Jimmy was going to be interesting, to say the least. I was thinking hopefully it wouldn’t be hazardous to my health.

“This is all overwhelming,” I said. He pulled my hands up to his mouth and kissed the backs of each hand.

“It is cool and very exciting. Just ride with it, Dee. You don’t have to worry. I will be by your side. It will be really cool. You will see.” He put an arm around me, and we walked back down to the beach. I saw every one of our friends who were there staring at us. They were giving us conspiratorial looks with big smiles. It looked like I had the local boys’ approval on this one.



Friday rolled around. I was packed and waiting for Jimmy to pick me up. I heard him honk twice, and I grabbed my things. Honking didn't sit real well. I wondered why he didn't come to the door. Oh, well. I was not going to nitpick. I picked up my stuff and walked out to his car. He was in a Jeep today. That was what I was used to him driving around before he went pro. I saw he had a tent in the back and his camping stuff. He took my stuff and helped me strap my board down. We met the rest of the group at the liquor store. Everyone was ready, and we headed out.

The drive down the coast was really nice. There was a clear blue sky and the smell of the ocean. We picked a beautiful day, and he had the canvas top off the Jeep. We talked and laughed about days gone by. Then Jimmy reached over to the glove box. "Hey, I got something I want you to hear." He pulled out an eight track tape and shoved it in the player. The song took me back to the seventh grade. "One is the loneliest number that you'll ever do..." He smiled over at me. "Remember?" The music was blaring.

"Yes, it is a song we used to dance to at the school dances in junior high," I said, thinking back.

He said, "It is the first slow song I ever danced to with you." He was looking intently at me.

"How do you remember which ones we danced too?" I laughed.

"How could I forget?" he said, and he continued singing along to the song. I joined in and we finished the song together.

This was going to be fun, and I finally started to relax. We did have a lot in common, and we always had fun. We hung in the same crowd, went to the same parties. We knew all the same people.

We got to the campground and started setting up. Jimmy and I set up his tent. It was heavy but not too bad. I noticed it had two cots. I was really feeling better about this trip. We put the cots up



and laid our sleeping bags on them. He had a big cooler out in front of the tent, and he set up some beach chairs. “Home sweet home,” he said with a big smile.

I got ready to say something, but he cut me off. “Let’s catch some waves, if you’re up for it.”

I shrugged and said OK. I used the tent to change. I came out, and he had his board and mine. We walked toward the beach.

“I can carry that, you know.”

He looked at me. “I know. I am trying to impress you with my muscles.” He laughed, and I followed him to the shore line.

“I want to show you some things that the judges like to see,” he told me.

“Oh, we are starting early with the lessons,” I said, running out behind him into the water. After we paddled out and got past the breakers he started his tutelage.

“You have to be careful not to take off too early, and not too late. You will want to cut back, and ride the top of the curl if you can, then drop back in. If you can ride in the tube that is always great. Oh, you definitely need to work the board with good cuts. Make as much out of each ride as you can.” He told me to watch as he took the first set.

I sat and watched in awe. As usual, he was incredible. He rode an excellent wave, and did a lot of cutting back and up and down movement on one wave. He came back looking all serious. “Now you go. Don’t force it,” he warned me. I paddled off and took a decent enough wave. I tried to get as much out of the wave as I could. I didn’t ride the top curl much. That proved to be harder than I thought.

He critiqued me when I got back, and told me how to stay up on the curl longer, because that was where you pulled off your tricks. “Easy for you to say,” I told him. “Let me try it again.” I started paddling away.



He hollered, “Use your hips more, and rock your upper body to swing your cut backs, and for dropping back in.” I thought he was kidding, just being a guy checking me out on the board, but I tried it, and I felt the board swinging around much easier. I came back with a big grin on my face. I really felt the difference in that ride.

He smiled back. “Let’s ride one together, and then go in. You have been working hard but your muscles probably need a break.” I was not ready to quit now that I learned something new, but he insisted. I was feeling fatigued. We rode all the way in. When we got to the shore I dropped my board, ran over to him, and threw my arms around him and kissed him on the cheek.

“Thanks. That is way cool. It really works, Jimmy.”

He picked me up off the ground and hugged me back. He set me down and looked down at me with a smile and said, “If that’s all it takes to get you in my arms, I would have taught you some tricks a long time ago!” I gave him a quick brush of the lips and pushed away.

“Don’t get carried away, playboy surfer pro. I am grateful, but that doesn’t mean I am going to lay down right here for you.” He shrugged and picked up his board and followed me. He had to jog a little to catch up.

“Hey, we’re just having fun, right?” he said, looking down at me.

“Yes we are, Jimmy. We’re having a great time.” I gave him a big smile, and we headed back to camp. This camp had all the amenities. The bathroom had plugs for blow dryers. They had good lighting, showers, and they didn’t smell. I told Jimmy I was going to get cleaned up, and I headed over to the ladies room. When I got back everyone was sitting around drinking bottled beer.

Steve had some girl I had seen him at the beach with off and on. She seemed nice enough. Her name was Ann. Wade was solo



this trip, and so were Billy and Mike. They planned on picking up chicks tonight in town. So it looked like it was just the two couples left in the camp. There was a pastrami sandwich place we saw on the way in, so Mike and Jimmy went to get us all some dinner. They brought it back and we sat around the camp eating our food.

We were drinking beer and talking when the guys decided to head out. I whispered to Jimmy, “You can go too, if you want, and I can knock off early and get some sleep.”

He looked at me with confusion written all over his handsome face. “What in the hell are you talking about? If I wanted to pick up random chicks and have sex, I would not have brought you. I can do that anywhere, anytime. I want something more. I am tired of the games, the one night stands. I am very happy to be hanging out here with you.” He leaned toward me and bumped me with his shoulder.

“Sorry, will you excuse me while I take my foot out of my mouth?” I said. That was a stupid thing to say to him. I was such an idiot sometimes. He just laughed and took a big swig of his beer.

I took the last drink of my beer, and he grabbed it. “Let me get us another,” he said with a big smile.

“You wouldn’t be trying to get me drunk, would you?” I asked, batting my eyelashes at him.

He looked back and grinned, “I would if I thought it would work, but you are too stubborn to take advantage of. But then again, you might want to take advantage of me.” He came back and dropped back down in the chair next to mine. I thought to myself, *He’s right. I just might.*

“Where is Wade and that chick, um, what’s her name? Oh, Ann?” I asked. He gave me funny look. “They were getting pretty friendly the last I saw. They went off in the dark somewhere to grope each other in private.” We both started laughing. The rest



of the night was very casual, and we talked about when we were kids. We talked about who went steady. Who were the first to kiss, and who was still hanging out with us to this day?

It was an enjoyable night. I was tired, but I felt nervous about going to bed. I didn't know what Jimmy was expecting. I was not ready for anything too intimate. He surprised me, and said, "Well, let's hit the sack. We have a lot to work on tomorrow if we're going to have you ready for that contest." He helped me to my feet and he pulled me to him, kissing me on the lips but no tongue. It was just a nice friendly kiss on the mouth. He smiled down at me, and then turned me toward the tent.

"You go ahead and get changed. I will be in there in a minute." So I went in and changed into some running shorts and a T-shirt. These were my typical camping pajamas. He came in a few minutes later in some Ocean Pacific shorts and no shirt. He was really built. All that surfing had been good for his physique. He climbed into his sleeping bag and stretched out with his arms crossed behind his head.

"I won't lie. I would really be a lot happier if we were sleeping together, if you know what I mean. But having you here is pretty cool," he said, staring up at the ceiling of the tent.

"I am sorry, Jimmy," I said.

"Don't be. I didn't say that to give you a guilt trip. I was just always honest and up front with the honeys," he said very matter of fact. The Jimmy I knew with the ladies snuck out every now and then.

I didn't say anything else. I was not used to guys like Jimmy. He was honest and straightforward. I couldn't ask for anything more. But it was kind of weird too. Most guys stayed away from talking about other chicks when they were with me. He was very comfortable talking about past relationships. Sometimes he was a little too comfortable.



The rest of the weekend was more of the same. We surfed off and on all day Saturday. We took breaks to eat and rest. We laid on the beach together and people watched. He told me which girls were easy and which were not worth the time. I found this all unnecessary to hear. But I laughed along with him. He was being really sweet to me. I apparently was never measured in with the easy or not chicks. He told me he had always had a special respect for me.

He was an excellent teacher, even if he was very demanding and wanted perfection. He made me do things over several times, to make sure I understood what he wanted from me. I was used to this type of demand, as I had always played team sports.

That night was the same. We hung out, but he kept an arm draped over my shoulder most of the time, or a hand on my leg. Wade and Ann disappeared again into the darkness. Jimmy and I did some shots of Jack Daniel's and chased them with our beer. We were laughing and carrying on. We walked out to the beach and ran around for a while, then made our way back to the camp.

Jimmy pulled me to him before we went to bed. This time he made himself clear on what he wanted. He kissed me deeply, and I returned his kiss. I remembered that kiss from seventh grade. How funny. I started to laugh. He pulled his head back and looked at me. "I thought we were being romantic. You think this is funny?"

He made a disgruntled face, and I pushed him. "Yes I do, you big goof. I was thinking of how every girl voted you in the yearbook the best kisser in seventh grade." We both laughed really hard at that, and headed into the tent.

He pulled me to him again and started where he left off. I easily could let down my guard and melt into him, but I was not ready to go that step. I really enjoyed kissing him. I remembered I enjoyed it before. But that was an innocent kiss, and this was a



prelude to something else entirely.

He brushed my hair away from my face and looked into my eyes. I could feel his heart beating, and I was sure he could feel mine. He held my face in his hand and kissed my eyes and then my mouth again. He let me go. "I am going to have to go jump in the cold water. I know you aren't ready for what I had in mind, and I told you before I will not force myself on you. I am confident that you will beg for it one day, I swear," he chuckled to himself as he walked out.

I got into my pajamas and climbed into bed. I was glad he left because much more of that and I would have been one of those easy girls he pointed out on the beach. I fell asleep before he got back. I hoped he wasn't too upset with me. I really liked Jimmy. I was finding that I really enjoyed spending time with him.

I woke up and stretched as Jimmy was coming into the tent with coffee. He said, "Good morning, sunshine. I got coffee and donuts from up the road if you are hungry."

I sat up and took the coffee from his hand. "You are something else, Jimmy." I smiled at him. He laughed and sat down on the cot next to me.

"That's what I hear." He laughed and brushed my hair over my shoulder, and kissed my neck.

He got up right away, though, and told me he would be out at the table when I was ready to get up. Weird, I thought to myself. I could have sworn he was going for it, but I had underestimated him again. I found some girly shorts and a more feminine top to wear. I didn't know why but I wanted to look good for him. I sprayed on my lemon splash and headed out.

Everyone was really hung over this morning. We ate and made plans to get back to town. We packed up all of our stuff, and one by one drove out of the campsite. The drive back was fun. We were getting used to each other, and talking was very



easy between us.

He reminded me of the competition in Half Moon Bay coming up. We would need to work some more at the pier. I told him OK, and when we pulled up to the house I said, “Give me a call when you want to go out.” He hopped out and started getting my things.

He leaned in, gave me a quick kiss, and said, “See you in the morning first thing.”

I gave him a salute and said, “Yes sir.”

He laughed and said, “That’s right. Don’t you forget it.” He waved as he drove away.



CHAPTER 13

I told my parents all about how Rip Tide wanted to sponsor me, but that I had to prove myself first. My dad thought it was great. Mom, of course, had reservations because I had too much on my plate right now. I told them all about how Jimmy, who had gone pro recently, was teaching me new moves to help me score higher with the judges.

“We have always told her she can do anything, or be anything, she wants. Now you’re telling her this is too much,” Dad told my mom.

“I am not trying to tell her that. I just want her to be serious about her commitments, and she seems to have too many of them.” I looked at my mom.

“I am not going to be the best on my tennis team. There are girls that have been playing their whole lives. They want to go pro in tennis. This is their life. My job is not necessarily to be the best, but to keep the level of play up so we win a championship. I don’t want to play in the 1 or 2 position. I want to play at a lower level, and just do my part. I never wanted anything more than a scholarship out of the game. I will have time for surfing. I wouldn’t do it if there was no time for surfing. It may be a hobby



to you, but it is a lifestyle to me,” I said indignantly.

“OK. I am just trying to understand what your goals in life are. Don’t get all snippy,” my mother said, trying to calm down the situation. “When is this contest?” she asked.

“It is in a week,” I replied. “I will have to go up for the weekend, and stay in a hotel.”

“Well then, we will go and cheer you on,” she said.

Well, that was not exactly what I had in mind. But it was still cool she wanted to support me. She told Dad they were going and that was that. He agreed with her. I told them I would get the particulars and let them know where to stay.

The next day I was out surfing with Jimmy, and I told him about my parents. He told me he would get the rooms. I asked him where, and told him that they would need to stay at the same hotel. He told me he would write everything down for them. “Not to worry. I have it under control,” he assured me.

The next week was filled with practice and going to parties at night. I was surprised we hadn’t run into Ian anywhere. I couldn’t help but wonder what he would think of Jimmy and me dating. He probably had a new girlfriend by now anyway. That one special girl he always talked about. I was not sure why what he thought mattered, but it did.

Jimmy had been great. He taught me so much. He had been nothing but a gentleman, and had been telling everyone I was his girlfriend. I saw the disappointment in many of his girls’ eyes. He did have some girls that he hung around with all the time. While he was still nice to them, he was very clear that he was with me.

Everyone was pretty cool about it. I called Lisa now and then in L.A. to see what she was up to, and I told her I was going to compete in a surf contest up north. She told me they would try to come and watch. I had told Lena and Shelly as well. Shelly and



I were back to talking almost every day. She was really into the idea of Jimmy dating me. She had made it clear that when I grew up I would marry Ian. “Very funny,” I laughed at her.

Jaycee had been too busy to hang out with me lately. It was just as well. She needed to clean up her act. She had been too crazy this summer, and I was really worried about her. She said she and her mom had been spending a lot of time together, and she was thinking about going to college to get a degree in Interior Design. It sounded great, and I could not be happier for her. She also was still seeing Eric. She said he learned his lesson from the drug overdose and going to the hospital. I sure hoped so. But I still didn’t trust him.

We talked about the upcoming party. I informed her that Jimmy would be my date that night. I heard the disappointment in her voice. She was trying to be enthusiastic about Jimmy and me but I knew her. I knew how much she really liked Ian. Hell, everyone liked Ian. What was not to like? After I hung up, I sat and thought about my time this summer with Ian. It seemed like such a long time ago, and really it was only about two months ago.

The surf contest was two days away. I would drive up the coast with my parents and meet Jimmy there. It would be time to introduce my parents to him, and he them. He was not thrilled at the idea. I told them about him, and how I had known him since first grade. They were looking forward to meeting him. I also explained that he was a bit of a celebrity in the world of surfing. Tomorrow after they got home from work we would go. I talked to Jimmy on the phone for a while. He was not a phone guy, and soon tired of it. He wanted to see me out.

He asked me if he could come by and get me. I would rather drive to see him. I liked the idea of having my car available. He said some of the guys were over at his place hanging out, and asked if I would please come by. I told him yes and changed my



clothes. I wore a sun dress that was very surfer girlish. I hoped he liked it. This dating thing made me feel kind of silly inside.

When I pulled up in front of his house I heard music and laughter. I went up and rang the bell. Steve answered. He and Mike were laughing really hard about some joke that was said prior to my ringing the bell. He let me in and hollered towards the kitchen, “Hey, Jimmy, your girl is here.” Jimmy came in from the back yard and gave me a big hug and kiss.

“Sweetness, I am glad you came.” He walked me into the kitchen. “You want a drink? We have been spinning margaritas,” he told me.

“That sounds good to me.” He poured me one and took my hand. We walked back to his bedroom.

I slowed up a little, and he looked at me. “Easy, girl. I just wanted to be alone for a minute away from my dudes.” He continued to guide me to his room. He had music playing softly, and we sat on the edge of the bed. “You have really been working hard for this contest. I am so proud of you.” He pulled out a small white box and opened it. “I got you something.” He was looking in the box.

“You didn’t need to do that, Jimmy.” As the words were coming out of my mouth he held up a delicate gold chain with a little gold surfboard on it. “It’s so pretty,” I said, and he got up to put it on me.

He moved my hair aside to attach the clasp at the back of my neck. I felt the coolness of the gold against my skin. Then I felt the warmth of his lips on my neck. I was wearing a halter dress, and he continued to kiss my skin down to my shoulder. I wondered if I should just go with it, but I couldn’t. I still had reservations. I stood up. He held me facing him. “What are you afraid of? You want me. I can see it in your eyes. But you fight me at every turn. I really dig you, Dee Dee, but you are starting



to drive me crazy.”

I told him how sorry I was. Then I went on to explain my summer. First there was Ian. I didn’t want to commit, and he moved on. Then there was Randy, whom I tried to commit to, but he was already in a relationship that he couldn’t walk away from because of the baby. I had been around the block too many times. I told him I was feeling kind of slutty. He laughed and continued to laugh.

“What is so funny?” I asked him as he kept laughing at me.

“Damn, Dee Dee, I am the last person to pass judgment on who you have slept with this summer. This isn’t going to sound good, but I have slept with two girls in the same day. Talk about slut!” We both started laughing. “It was really bad. I can’t believe I am even telling you about it. One of those guys dared me, and what can I say? It’s something that I feel really shitty about. The girls don’t know. I wouldn’t want them to. I hate the fact that I did it to either of them.” That was Jimmy—always brutally honest.

Then he continued laughing at me. “You are the hardest nut to crack I have ever come up against.”

I said in between snickers, “All you have to do is look at a girl, and she starts taking her clothes off. I have seen it. Don’t forget I have been to almost all the parties you have scored at.”

He stopped laughing. “Exactly. So don’t go putting yourself down for a couple bad relationships. It really means nothing to me. You and I, here and now, is all that is important.”

I downed my margarita and set it on his night stand. I came around to the end of the bed and sat next to him. “What am I going to do with you?” he asked me while pulling me closer. We kissed for a while, then he took me by the hand. “Let’s go out and do some damage to that pitcher of margaritas.” We were laughing and talking coming out of his room when I saw none



other than Ian and Karen sitting on the couch.

Holy shit, I thought to myself. Why did I feel scared that Ian was here? But he looked up and the disgust in his facial expression was all I needed to know why. I didn't want him to think badly of me. But on the other hand, there he was with his arm around Karen, whom he kept telling me it was not happening with. Right. Jimmy kept his arm around me as we walked into the living room.

"What's going on with you guys?" Jimmy said jovially.

Ian sat up and took his arm from Karen and said, "Not as much as what's going on with you." He smirked and swung his head toward the hallway.

I said, "Hi, Karen." I asked her if she would like a margarita. She jumped up and said she'd love one.

Jimmy said, "You, Ian?"

Ian said, "Sure," so we all walked into the kitchen. Jimmy started mixing a new batch.

We all hung out in the kitchen talking about things. We kept it friendly. Karen and I were actually hitting it off pretty well. Ian and Jimmy knew each other through friends, and they ended up rolling a joint and going out back. Karen rubbed Ian's arm as the guys were walking outside. He gave her a smile. It looked like maybe things were going the way Karen wanted them to go.

"You and Ian have been together for a while." It was a statement as well as a question. I smiled at her.

"Yes, it has been on again, off again all summer, but we are finally getting to a more serious level." She asked, "So, are you and Jimmy getting pretty serious?"

I told her we had known each other since we were real little. We were hanging out a lot though. She looked like she was going to say something, but then she stopped herself. I wondered what she was going to say.



She finally started talking and told me how jealous all the girls were. “I don’t think that there is anyone who hasn’t heard about you and Jimmy getting together. Everyone has been gossiping about you two.”

“I wasn’t aware,” I told her. She told me at first her and Ian argued about it. “But when Wade and the guys came back from camping in San Diego, they said how you and Jimmy shared a tent and all. Well, he had to believe me. Now here we all are. Seeing is believing.”

She smiled real big. “We pretty much have been hot and heavy since.” Karen was really a pretty girl. She was a few inches taller than me, with really long brownish-blond hair.

I advised her that Jimmy and I weren’t hot and heavy. We were just hanging out. She said, “It didn’t look that way when you were coming out of his bedroom.”

I didn’t know why, but I told her, “He wanted to give me a gift for working so hard for the upcoming surf contest.” I showed her the necklace. “He didn’t want to give it to me in front of the guys. He knew it would embarrass me.”

She lightly touched it. “Wow, nice,” she murmured.

She smiled and drank her drink. I didn’t think she believed me, that all I did was get a gift. Ian was coming back in with Jimmy on his heels. I knew Ian and he looked pissed off to me. He kept a smile plastered to his face, but it never really reached his eyes. I was very familiar with his smile. Jimmy grabbed his glass and filled it up again. We all went out and hung with the rest of the guys in the living room.

Karen kept a hand on Ian at all times, and I noticed Jimmy was doing the same with me. Ian pissed me off. It seemed like every time he thought I might have done something, he always jumped the gun and hooked up with Karen again. He never confronted me. Obviously Shelly and Jaycee and the rest were



wrong. Ian and I were never meant to be together. I was through trying to figure us out. Obviously there was no “us.”

Karen kept whispering and smiling at him. I could only wonder what she was saying. We all drank the rest of the margaritas and I was feeling no pain. I was dancing around to “Cinnamon Girl” by Neil Young when Jimmy got up and wrapped his arms around me. We stood that way for a few minutes, and then Ian abruptly said, “Well, thanks, Jimmy. I enjoyed myself. Karen, we need to go.” They got up, and we said goodbye. Steve and the others went out too. I laid back on the couch as they all piled out the front door. I didn’t know why but this whole night made me laugh. Ian and I never had a chance. Our timing was always off, and that made me laugh even more. It was kind of a hysterical laugh, and I couldn’t seem to stop.

Ian was finally giving Karen what she wanted. I was with the king of non-commit. And wasn’t that how I started this summer? I said I didn’t want anything serious, no commitments. I wanted to have fun and hang out. Now I had just that. It was uproariously funny to me now. Jimmy closed up the house and came back into the living room.

“I think you, little sweetness, have had too much to drink. You need to sleep it off.” I continued to laugh. Why I thought it was funny that Ian was finally really with Karen, and I was with Jimmy, was funny, I would never know. But it was! He went in the kitchen and straightened up a little. I heard glasses clanking around, and then he came back into the living room. He picked me up, and I wrapped my arms around his neck.

“I think it is time we really get to know each other Jimmy,” I slurred.

He laughed as he carried me down the hall. He pulled the cover back on his bed and laid me down. I could feel him sliding my sandals off my feet. He tucked me under the covers. “This



is every guy's dream, to have a beautiful inebriated girl in their bed to do with what they wish. But I have a feeling, Sweetness, that you will regret this night." He kissed me softly, got up, and walked out, humming to himself.

I felt the sun shining in on my face, and I woke with a start. My head felt like someone hit me with a ball peen hammer. I looked around and realized I was in Jimmy's bed. Damn, what did I do? I started to get up, and I realized I was wearing the dress I came over in. That was a good sign. I got up and wandered barefoot out to the kitchen where I found Jimmy straightening up.

"I guess you aren't up for a surf lesson this morning," he smiled.

I rubbed my forehead. "No," I said as grumpily as I could, but I was smiling at him.

"What?" he asked, baffled by the look on my face.

"Jimmy Morgan, you are really a nice guy." I walked over to him and put my arms around his neck.

He looked confused, and then he said, "Well, hell, don't tell anyone. You will ruin my reputation." He was laughing down at me. I pulled him back down the hall to his bedroom, where I dropped my sundress on the floor, and I pulled him with me into his bed. I rewarded him for his good behavior last night.

We spent the day there. "Jimmy," I purred, "come here. You were right. I am begging." He pulled me close. The heat of his body against mine sizzled. He never stopped smiling that whole day. He made me lunch, and we went back to bed. He was everything the girls said and more. He didn't care that I had some bad relationships this summer, and I didn't care about his past. We were good together. I was going to go with the flow, like a good wave. I was going to ride this one out and just enjoy whatever it was that we had together.

I finally told him I needed to go. We had to drive up to Half



Moon Bay tonight. He let me go, but not without whining about how he would miss me. I reminded him I would see him tonight, and took off for home.

I went home and showered. I had packing to do. I saw that my parents had all their things packed and ready to go. The suitcases were by the door. They were so organized. I got my stuff together and called Shelly. I told her I was waiting on my folks to take me up north. I went into last night with her.

She felt sorry for Ian. I couldn't imagine why. He and Karen had been shacking up for weeks. It was not like he was lonely. She told me he wanted me. She could tell. The timing was always off.

"That's a load, and you know it. Besides, Jimmy and I are more than friends now."

She gasped, "You lucky dog. Is he good in bed? I think he is a stone fox. I bet he is good, isn't he?"

I laughed. "I will never tell. But I will say that I can't wait for the next time." We both laughed at that, and then I heard my folks come in. I told her goodbye. She wished me good luck.

My parents rushed in and told me to start putting my stuff in the car. We needed to get on the road. They hated driving at night. I dragged my bags out to the car and got the surf board rack out of the garage. It was dusty. We hadn't had to put it on my dad's car in years. I finally got it attached with minimal cussing. I got my boards off the rack in the garage. I needed to take them both in case I broke one.

We eventually got on the road. I fell asleep, and before I knew it my mom was shaking me, telling me we were here. I asked about the rooms. The desk attendant told me all the rooms were next door to each other. That meant Jimmy got one next to ours. Good. We took our things to our rooms, and a bellhop helped me with my boards. I wouldn't leave them on the car.



Someone could steal them, and I would freak.

My parents asked me if I wanted to get something to eat in the dining room. I told them I wanted to rest up, and that I would order room service.

In my room I laid myself out on my bed. I noticed I had an adjoining door to the room next door. I assumed that it was my parents' room. I heard a light tapping on that door. I went to open it, saying, "Mom?"

Jimmy slid through. "Not quite," he laughed as he swung me around. "I set it up so they were on the other side of your room, and no adjoining door." He looked at me with a mischievous grin. "I won't keep you up tonight. I know you are tired. But I will expect some alone time with you tomorrow night."

He kissed me and rubbed his hands down my arms, making a whistling kind of sound. "I have to get out of here before I change my mind." With that, he went back to his own room, and I heard the door lock. I ordered a cheeseburger from room service and ate it watching TV. My folks came by on the way to their room. I let them in. They thought it was odd that there was a room between us, but didn't really make too much of it. I told them I wanted them to meet Jimmy tomorrow. He was the whole reason I was here.

They gave me hugs and headed to their room. I changed into a little T-shirt and my panties and climbed into bed. Jimmy snuck back in one more time. We talked for a few minutes, and he told me he was going to bed, but it would be hard sleeping knowing I was here. I told him he could stay. My parents had already been by to say good night, so there would be no interruptions.

He looked like a kid on Christmas morning. He jumped over me and slid right under the sheets. He pulled up the blankets to see what I was wearing. That whistling noise came out of his lips again, and he shook his head. "Damn, but you are so tight." We



shut off the lights, and we got lost in each other for a few hours.

The phone rang at exactly 6:15. It was my wakeup call from the front desk. I thanked them and hung up. Jimmy was laying there, snoring softly. I jumped up and showered. When I came out he was awake. He pulled me down on top of him. "I really don't have time for this, Jimmy," I said, smiling into his face.

"I know," he said, and he stood me back up. He swung his tan legs over the side of the bed and started looking for his pants. I heard a knock at the door and almost wet myself. It was my folks getting me for breakfast. He quickly ran to his room and shut the door quietly.

"Hi Mom, Dad," I said. I had a towel around my body and one around my head.

"We are heading down for breakfast. Will you join us before you go to the beach?"

I said, "Yes, let me get some clothes on. I will be right down." I hurried and got dressed. I told Jimmy through the door to meet us in the dining room. I wanted him to meet my folks before the contest. He said OK and I went downstairs.

I found my parents' table and joined them. It felt like I just ate that cheeseburger. I ordered coffee and some toast. "You need more than that, honey. You have a big day ahead of you," Mom said, but all of a sudden I was really nervous.

"She will be OK. Leave her be." My dad patted my mom's arm. As we were sitting there talking, Jimmy walked up to the table.

He said, "Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Walker. I am Jimmy Morgan."

My dad stood and put out his hand. "Nice to meet you, Jimmy. We have heard a lot about you. Would you like to join us for breakfast?" He said he would and he slid in next to me.

"That's not much of a breakfast for the day you have ahead



of you,” he said, looking at my plate.

That got a big smile from my mom. “That is just what I told her.” We all fell into a casual conversation, and everyone seemed to be getting along splendidly. After a short while Jimmy excused himself to get ready for the contest. He was not a contestant. It was way too small of a competition for him, but he would be a guest of honor in the announcer’s booth, and a spokesperson for Rip Tide, his sponsor.

After he excused himself, my mother said, “What a handsome young man.” The dark hair and blue eyes got them every time.

My dad chimed in, “He has movie star good looks,” and he watched Jimmy walk toward the door. We were not the only ones watching him. Everyone was checking him out as he left. I forgot his effect on people, his charm and good looks. He had always had it all. That was why the girls had fallen all over him everywhere we went. Well, ladies, he was taken.

We paid our check and headed out to the beach. My dad carried my boards for me, even though I assured him I could handle it. I went over and signed in. My heart was pounding. I didn’t know why I was so nervous. I surfed almost every day. I got myself signed in and went over to the contestant tent. I was surprised to see Janie there. “Hey, Janie.” I was actually glad to see her. She said hi but seemed preoccupied. She must have been nervous too.

The heats started, and the girls were going out. They had some good runs, and I felt sick to my stomach. There was some really good competition out here today. Jimmy had me thinking it was a piece of cake. I looked around for him and saw him up by the announcers. The usual group of chicks were hanging out. This time I felt a little jealous. He saw me looking at him and waved. He also gave me the thumbs up. I smiled and waved, but I wondered how I would feel about all these girls all over him



all the time.

I heard my name, and I was up with someone named Lisa something. We went out, and she got the first break. She did OK—nothing to write home about. I took the next swell, and it was a big one. I tried to remember everything Jimmy said. Don't drop in too early. Ride the top of the curl, and use your hips. I had a pretty solid run, and I was feeling a little better. The horn blasted, signaling the end of the heat, and Lisa had two rides to my one.

As the day went on, we saw others and how they were scoring. I was looking pretty good. I would be moving on to the finals tomorrow. So would Janie, Lisa, some girl named Janice, and a few others I couldn't remember. The girls I named would be the ones to beat, though. I watched Janie, and she had some good runs. She always did at home. I was a fool to think she would be any different here.

I walked up, and my parents came to me to tell me how good I did. Jimmy was there as well, telling me what I might want to try tomorrow. Girls and kids were all around him, asking for his autograph. I told him I would see him at the hotel. I was not up for all this. He saw that I was not happy, and said he would be along shortly. My parents invited him to have dinner with us. He said, "Sounds good. I would love to."

Back at the hotel I showered and laid on my bed. We would meet my parents downstairs at 7 p.m. to go to dinner at a local seafood restaurant the hotel manager suggested. I was thinking about Jimmy, and what might or might not be going on while I was out in the water. I heard a tap at the adjoining door but I didn't say anything. It slowly opened, and Jimmy stuck his smiling face into the room.

"Hi there. Are you sleeping?" he asked.

"No," I said rather shortly. He came in and sat on the edge of



the bed next to me.

“What’s wrong? You did just fine today, Dee,” he said, looking down at me.

I frowned at him and rolled onto my side, turning my back on him. “Just what did you do all day?”

He put his face up close to mine. “I smiled for cameras, and I talked to people who are dicks, all the while pretending that I give a shit what they have to say. Why do you ask? This is your time, Dee Dee. Who cares what I am doing?”

I rolled back on my back and said, “I was mediocre at best. And I hate all those chicks hanging all over you.”

He pulled me into his arms. “I don’t believe it,” he laughed.

“You don’t believe what? And what is so funny?” I said, pushing him away.

He was still laughing. “Little Miss Hard to Get is jealous.” I tried to squirm away.

“I am not,” I said, looking him in the eyes.

“You are, you really are.” He was looking at me with wonder in his face. “This is so cool,” he continued. “I have finally reached you.” I tried to get away again, but he pulled me in tighter.

“I don’t understand why my discomfort makes you so happy.” He kept smiling with that look of awe on his face.

“We have reached a milestone in our relationship, and you don’t even see it.” He shook his head with a sad look on his face. I knew he was teasing me. “Let’s go to dinner. I want to show you off wear something sexy. I will be back to get you in an hour. We will meet your parents in the lobby.”

I brought a little black dress to wear for any event that might call for evening attire. It was a simple sleeveless black dress. It didn’t show too much but it was very form fitting. I kept my jewelry simple. I wore the necklace Jimmy gave me, and a small diamond promise ring my parents bought me for my eighth



grade graduation. After I put myself together I took a last look to make sure it looked good from all angles. I was happy with the final product. Just in time, because I heard a knock at my door. “Just a minute, Jimmy,” I called out.

It wasn’t Jimmy. It was the man from Rip Tide. What was his name? Michael, I thought. He gave me a big smile and an appreciative look, asking if I had a minute. He was really checking me out, or maybe I was imaging that. I told him, “Sure, come in.” He told me he wanted to talk to me about the sponsorship. He immediately took a seat on my bed.

This made me a little uncomfortable. “It looks like you will join us after tomorrow. You are doing well going into the semifinals. We will set up an itinerary with you after it is over for interviews and photo shoots.”

I shook my head. “I think you are jumping the gun here. I may not make the top three. I had some strong competition out there today. Janie, for example, is killing me.” He just shrugged and told me she wasn’t what they were looking for. That was strange to me. She was better than me and I knew it. I was standing in front of him, and he took my hand and smiled up at me. There was a knock at the door and he jumped up.

“I had better be going. See you tomorrow, Dee Dee. Don’t stay out too late tonight. We want you to do your best.” He reached out and ran his hand down my arm and smiled again.

I didn’t know why but that really gave me the creeps. It was not like he was old or anything. I just headed for the door, and as I pulled it open I said, “Not to worry. It will be an early evening for me.” When the door opened, Jimmy was standing there.

“Hey, Jimmy. I think our girl is going to do well tomorrow. Either way she is on our team.” He clapped Jimmy on the shoulder and walked out the door and down the hall, whistling.

By the look on Jimmy’s face I could see he was disturbed



by that guy being in my room. Before he could say anything, I hugged him. “I am glad you are here.”

He pulled my arms down from around his neck and said, “What the hell was he doing in your room?”

I told Jimmy, “He came to talk about the sponsorship.”

He said, “I got that. What’s he mean, either way you are on the team?”

“I don’t know. I told him that I thought Janie was killing me out there. He said she wasn’t what they were looking for. I don’t think I am going to be in the top three, but he doesn’t seem to care,” I told him as I grabbed my purse and headed for the door.

This all had Jimmy pissed off for some reason. “I really didn’t dig the way he said ‘our girl.’”

“Let’s go to dinner. My parents won’t like waiting on us.” We went downstairs, and my parents already had a table. My dad stood and shook Jimmy’s hand.

“Have a seat. The waitress will be back with the menus.”

Jimmy pulled out my chair and nodded to my mother. “Mrs. Walker.”

She gave him a big smile. “Hello, Jimmy.” The dinner mood was cordial. And we all had a great meal together. I ordered Alaskan crab legs, and so did Mom. Dad and Jimmy both got steaks. Even though it was all smiles, I felt a strange undercurrent from Jimmy. I wondered if he thought something happened in my room with Mike what’s his name.

The meal was great. Jimmy tried to grab the check, but my dad was having no part of it. We thanked them for dinner, and Jimmy suggested we go for a walk. My parents were heading to the lounge for a night cap. Of course, my mom had to mention to me, “Don’t stay up too late. Tomorrow is a big day, honey.”

I waved, saying, “Don’t worry, I won’t,” as Jimmy and I walked away.



“From what Michael said, tomorrow doesn’t matter for you.” He looked down at me and now I could see he was mad.

“What are you talking about? Tomorrow doesn’t matter. It matters! No one will take me serious if I don’t rank tomorrow.” He grabbed my hand and started walking fast.

I pulled my hand back. “Slow down. I am not going to run in these shoes. Besides, what is your problem? You wanted me to be sponsored. It was you who wanted me in all this. Now here I am, and you are acting all pissy. You wanted this, remember.”

“I am beginning to wonder if it was a good idea. I thought if you got sponsored you could travel with me. We could surf in other countries together, and have a great time. I hadn’t counted on some fucking corporate ass clown trying to get to you. But I should have known.” He stopped walking and looked at me. He looked so unhappy.

I started laughing. Soon I was bent over laughing. “What?” he asked, and he was getting very angry. “This is funny somehow?” He threw his hands up in the air. Hostile indignation was written all over his face. The madder he got, the funnier it was for me.

“Now who’s jealous?” I kept laughing. I just hoped I didn’t wet my pants. I was hysterical laughing at him. Now I knew how he felt earlier today. He finally started to laugh too. We sat down on a nearby bench and continued howling for a few minutes, leaning into each other. I even made an embarrassing snorting noise through my nose. That sent Jimmy howling and rocking back and forth. He couldn’t even talk he was laughing so hard.

I finally started getting control of myself. “This is silly,” I said. “Things like this are going to happen. We have to get used to it. I don’t like the groupies, and you don’t like the executive dicks trying to get more than a contract.”

He put an arm around me and said, “Yeah, well, the difference between me and you is I will kick his ass if he makes any moves.”



We sat there chuckling about that for a while, and finally stopped laughing long enough to talk and then continue our walk.

“I forgot to tell you that if you make the top three they are going to put in The Daily Pilot society section that local champion surfers have a budding romance.”

I looked at him. “For real. Who would care?”

He shrugged. “Apparently somebody.”

I said, “If I don’t rank they won’t print anything about a loser dating a surf pro. Will they?” We both laughed real hard again, and then walked on together, holding hands in silence.

The next morning I was up early, before my wakeup call. The door between our rooms was open, and I heard Jimmy in the bathroom showering. I got ready. Today I felt a little anxious, but nothing like yesterday. I could only do my best. There was a tapping on my door, and I opened it to my mom. “I just came by to wish you good luck. We will be watching.” Then she looked at the adjoining door, and then back at me. She didn’t say anything, but I could see the disapproval in her face.

There was no sense in making up a lie or excuses that would have just made this worse. I told her thank you, and that I would see her down there. As she was heading down the hall she turned and said, “I think we should keep this between ourselves. Your father would shoot him.”

I smiled and said, “Thanks, Mom.” Sometimes I underestimated her.

Down on the beach the heats started with a horn blast. I watched from the tent as I prepared for mine. Lisa was looking good out there. When it was my turn Janie went out with me. I tried not to think about her, and concentrated on me. I got the first wave but it was small, and I didn’t get much out of it. I should have waited for a better swell. As I was paddling back out Janie was coming in with an excellent ride.



Damn, I thought to myself. I waited for the next set. I saw one that looked good so I started to set up. As I dropped in I tried to remember what Jimmy said. I pulled up and rode the top of the wave, then dropped down, trying to use up the entire wave, working the face of it, cutting back and forth. The ride was solid but I was not sure it was good enough. I paddled back out and waited for another. I knew I didn't have much time.

I saw another good swell coming, and so did Janie. I knew she was ahead of me in the scoring so I couldn't let her take this. I jumped up and cut her off. I heard her cursing me as I took off. This one felt good, and I tried some cut backs, and got a little barrel action when I came out of the tube. I decided to go for it, and I cut back up to the top of the wave and got a little air before I cut back off the wave altogether. I could hear cheering from the beach so I must have pulled it off. Janie and I walked up to the crowd. She didn't say anything about the stolen wave.

When it was over, the competition final score went as follows: Lisa was the champion, Janie was second, and I took third.

"Thanks for letting me have that last wave," I said to Janie.

She nodded and said, "It was nothing." Not bad, I thought. Everyone was screaming our names, and cameras were flashing. I waved at my folks standing down in front, smiling up at me. Jimmy handed out the trophies. He kissed each one of us on the cheek. Then Michael from Rip Tide came up to the microphone and announced that I was the newest addition to the Rip Tide team. He had a custom surf board that was made especially for me. He presented it to me and he kissed my cheek, and then he gave me a hug which he held on to for longer than necessary.

I knew a lot of people expected Lisa or Janie to be invited to the team. What could I say? This was decided long before we came to Half Moon Bay, apparently. We all hung out and enjoyed the excitement for a while. Then it was over and time



to go home. We went back to our rooms, and I told Jimmy that I needed to ride back with my folks. I promised to call him. We would catch up at home.

What a day. It was just amazing with the rush of waves and the chances I took to score high. The cameras flashing, the people yelling, and the overall excitement was just crazy. I didn't know if I could do this all the time, but this weekend was something else. I totally dug it.

The drive back was a lot of chatter about the contest and how well I did. My mom had reservations about me being sponsored and the commitment I had made to surf for Rip Tide. "With school and the tennis team, it is too much," she complained. My dad was ecstatic. He told my mother everything was achievable if I worked hard. I listened to them talking back and forth about my future as I dozed off.

My folks woke me when we pulled into the driveway. We unloaded all my gear and the suitcases. Everyone was tired. I thought they had a good time too. It was a trip I wouldn't soon forget. Mom would be calling my sister to tell her all about it. She acted like she didn't want me to do it, but I thought secretly she was very pleased with the whole thing. I knew I made them proud. I sure hoped I did.



CHAPTER 14

The buzz around town was that I placed in my first surf contest, and that I had a sponsor. Everyone was calling to congratulate me. Shelly and I talked for hours on the phone about all the changes it would make in my life, and how exciting the whole thing was. She talked like I was a celebrity. It was fun but not really what I wanted. I liked the idea of surfing in the contests, and I would be doing several local ones in the near future.

I also was keeping up with my tennis team practice. Jaycee's party was coming up as well. I had been trying to fit her in with all my other engagements. Lena and I talked, but not much. She was busy working, and it looked like things were going well with her decision to move in with her boyfriend. She said she was really happy. Lisa, on the other hand, was not happy. I was bummed about her situation and had told her she needed to come home. Since that conversation I hadn't heard from her.

Cindy and I were going to the beach today. She was going to do a little surfing and then hang out with Terry. I had been letting her practice on one of my boards, and we had retired the long board. She seemed to be getting the hang of it. We walked down on the beach, and the usual gang was there. Shelly was laying



out with some new chick she introduced to us. “This is Kylie. Kylie, my friend Dee Dee and her cousin Cindy.”

I said hi in unison with Cindy. We stood around talking for a few minutes, and then Cindy and I hit the waves.

I saw Jimmy as I was coming in from the water a little later. He waved and gave me a dazzling smile. I also noticed Kylie trying to get his attention. It never ended. He had that effect on all women. I walked up and dropped my board. “Hey, Jimmy.” He came over and gave me a quick kiss. Territory marked. I smiled and asked him what he was doing today.

“I need to talk to you about some travel plans,” he said, and he took my hand. We walked off down the beach a little ways for privacy. I saw grave disappointment on Kylie’s face. I couldn’t help but smile to myself. She asked Shelly for the low down on Jimmy and unfortunately me.

“So what’s up?” I asked him.

“We have a competition coming up in Florida. I want you to go with me, and Michael wants you to compete for Rip Tide.”

I looked at him. “I said I would do local competition. I don’t know about traveling right now.”

He smiled. “You have to come. I will not be able to concentrate if I know you are here and I am across country.”

I gave him a push. “Right, Jimmy. Nothing affects your ability to surf anywhere.”

He pulled me to him. “You know it will be fun, and you need more competition under your belt. Besides, we will only be gone from Thursday to Sunday. We will be home on Sunday night. We have been on camping trips longer than that.”

“OK, OK. I will go, but I think I am going to get destroyed by these girls. It was hard enough with locals that I know. I will be up against national champions,” I said nervously.

He shook his head. “Win or lose, it will be good for you. It’s



time to get out there,” he told me as he took a piece of my hair and tucked it behind my ear. We walked back over and hung out for a while. I told Cindy and Shelly I was going to Florida next week with Jimmy.

“Wow, that’s bitchen,” Cindy whooped. Shelly couldn’t stand it. She was so excited for me.

Kylie asked, “So you are a professional surfer chick?”

I didn’t answer. Jimmy did. “Damn straight!” he said, pulling me back towards him so he could wrap his arms around me. My back was to Jimmy, and I looked up and shook my head. We all cracked up.

“I don’t know about that, but I have competed. I got my first title,” I added, smiling at her.

Kylie was visiting from Las Vegas for a few weeks. She was staying with Shelly and Keith from what Shelly had told me. I told her about some upcoming parties that she might be interested in attending. We all made plans to go tomorrow night to Ian’s. He was having a band at his house, and everyone was going. “Don’t forget to bring your bathing suit. Everyone always ends up in the pool,” I said as we picked up our stuff to head home.

Jimmy called me that night. “Hey, what are you doing?”

“If you must know I am doing my laundry and going over my practice schedule for tennis.”

“Why don’t I come get you for a while? We can hang out, then I will take you home, or you can stay at my house?” he asked.

“I would love to, but I really need to stay home tonight. We can do that tomorrow. What do you think?”

He hesitated and said, “I am going out of town tomorrow, and will be gone for a few days.”

I said, “What a bummer. I didn’t know you were going to be gone. I have practice early in the morning. We will just have to see each other when you get back.”



He sighed, “Yeah, guess that’s the best we can do. You going to Ian’s party tomorrow?”

I said, “Yes, I planned on meeting Shelly and her friend there.”

He sighed again. “Well, you have fun then. Not too much fun though. I will take you out when I get back.”

I laughed at him. “How much fun can it be without you there, Jimmy?” He laughed and we hung up.

I laid there thinking about Jimmy and what he had brought into my life. He was really something special. He was on the go all the time. His surfing was phenomenal. Everyone liked him, especially the girls. The idea of him and me as a couple still hadn’t sunk in. But we were getting along great and having a good time. The traveling was going to be really fun as long as it didn’t interfere with school and the tennis team. I was taking on a huge load here. I hoped my dad was right and I could handle it.

I got my tennis in for the day. Unfortunately, there was no time for any surfing. I went home, showered, and figured out what I should wear to Ian’s. I always had to look good, even if my man was out of town. That sounded so crazy, and the idea of Jimmy being anyone’s man permanently was funny too.

I drove over to Ian’s for the party. I was really flying solo tonight. Jimmy was out of town, and everyone else seemed to have a date or something else to do. Jaycee said she would meet me here later. There was a huge crowd, and Ian had some of his big Kung Fu friends bouncing at the door. I walked up and they didn’t know who I was. I heard Steve say, “Dude, let her in or Ian will be pissed,” and the big Samoan let me pass through the side gate.

Everyone was hanging out around the back patio that overlooked the harbor. Ian’s dad had a big seventy-foot Bertram yacht moored off a floating dock behind the house. There were



people down on the dock and milling around the pool. What a spread. The house was enormous. It had nine bedrooms and five bathrooms. I wondered where his dogs were. His family had a matching pair of Dobermans named Bonnie and Clyde that would like to chew your arm off if you weren't careful.

There was a guest house off to the side that had its own kitchen, sitting room, and bedroom. The bathroom had a Jacuzzi tub. It was decorated like something out of the South Pacific. The side that faced the harbor was all glass. What a view. It had palm trees and lots of green plants and rattan furniture. Anyway, that was where Dewey had set up shop. I noticed people going in and out. I was sure they were making purchases.

I walked around and talked to different people. I hadn't seen Ian yet. I found that kind of strange. I didn't see Karen either. I went over to the keg and got a cup of beer. For the next hour or so, I mingled and talked with everyone. Shelly and Keith were here with their friend Kylie, so I hung with them, talking. They hadn't seen Ian either. I walked out to the end of the deck and looked down at the dock. I lost myself in thought, thinking about the good times Ian and I had here.

I was smiling to myself, looking out over the water, when I felt someone's arms wrap around me. I didn't move. It was all too familiar. "So what's up, Luv?" Ian said.

I didn't move. "Not much. I am just enjoying the view. It is so beautiful out here at night. I forgot how nice it is back here."

He didn't let go of me. "Yes, there is something romantic about the moon over the water and the stars twinkling in the sky," he said softly in my ear.

I was thinking how comfortable this was, how easy it was to be with Ian. Then reality hit and I jumped and put some space between us. "I thought Jimmy was out of town," Ian smiled.

"He is," I said, feeling really uncomfortable.



“So what’s the problem?” He looked at me.

“You know I am not into that.” I glared at him.

He laughed. “Relax, would you? I am just kidding. Besides, we are just talking. Jimmy is my friend. I have some loyalty to my friends.” I relaxed and giggled kind of nervously. Maybe it wasn’t Ian that I should worry about. It was me. I hadn’t been able to control myself all summer. Three guys. I didn’t know what had gotten into me.

“Dee Dee, ah, Dee Dee,” he said, waving a hand in front of my face. “Are you thinking about Jimmy? Wishing he was here?” I moved a little further away from Ian. Being that close to him made me nervous for some reason. I didn’t trust myself at all around him.

This was crazy. “No, I am not,” I said a little too quickly. “Where is the band? I heard you had a band for tonight,” I said, changing the subject.

“They will be starting up in a minute,” he said. He pointed off to the side yard where they were. Then he gave me that strange grin I had seen one too many times over the last month. “Your cup is empty and so is mine. Let’s go get a beer.” He grabbed my elbow and steered me towards the keg. We filled up as the band started cranking up. They were really good, and the place was hopping.

I walked around, talking and hanging out. I noticed Kylie checking us out as we walked around. She must have been interested in Ian. She seemed to be interested in every guy I talked to because she was always flirting and talking it up. Or maybe it was just every guy period. She seemed to be on a mission.

Dewey walked up to me. “Where’s Jimmy?” he asked.

“He is out of town,” I told him.

“Oh, so, ah, would you, ah, mind taking a ride with me to Newport then? Ian can’t go, and I hate making that drive alone.



Please.” He drew out the “please.”

“I guess so.” I was thinking I should not be anywhere near Ian if I was any kind of girlfriend to Jimmy.

We weren’t talking five minutes when Kylie walked up. “Introduce me to your friend, Dee Dee.” She smiled at Dewey with the same interest as a man-eating tiger.

“Oh, sure. Dewey, this is Kylie. She is staying with Shelly and Keith. Kylie, this is Dewey. He is one of my good friends.”

Dewey nodded at her. “Hi.” And that was all he said.

She didn’t take the brush off. “Hi, nice to meet you, Dewey. Do you live around here too?” She moved in closer, trying to entwine her arm in his.

“Yeah, I am around in the cul-de-sac out there.” He pointed and moved away from her. I couldn’t help but feel sorry for her. Dewey was really good looking, but unfortunately for Kylie, he had a man. He was very smooth, though, saying casually, “It is nice meeting you, but we really need to go. Catch you later, Kylie.” He put his arm around me and we walked out to the front yard.

“Poor girl. She likes you,” I told him as we walked to the van.

“She likes every guy. I have been watching her all night making moves on every single guy here. What is her story?” he asked.

“I don’t really know. They told me she is visiting from Vegas. I am not sure how they even know her. But it is strange that she is trying so hard to get a man when she will be leaving soon. I’m not sure what her deal is,” I told him.

We took Ian’s van and drove out to the Pacific Coast Highway heading toward Newport. We drove along in silence, listening to “Black Magic Woman” by Santana on the radio. Then Dewey turned to me and said, “So you and Jimmy, huh? I don’t think I would have put you two together in a million years.”

I looked over. “Why do you say that, Dewey?” Even though



I thought that same thing myself.

He shrugged. “Don’t get me wrong. We all like Jimmy. Hell, I grew up with him. He just is kind of hot and heavy with all the ladies, and you, well, I always thought of you as above all that. If you know what I mean?”

“Hey, Jimmy is a good guy. You know that he will stand up for anyone. He is everybody’s friend,” I added defensively.

“I know, but I don’t think you could be his only... Well, he just won’t ever settle down,” Dewey stuttered.

“What are you talking about?” I asked, and then I laughed. “We are just hanging out, having a good time, not getting married,” I said, still giggling. But in the back of my mind I was thinking he really wasn’t a guy I ever would have settled down with either.

“Take my advice: hanging out with Jimmy won’t be good for your reputation. Dee Dee, you will be another notch on his bed post. I dig Jimmy, but he uses girls up. You know how he is.” He looked at me with a sad expression.

“Hey, are people talking bad about me and Jimmy?” I asked.

He nodded his head yes. “They think he is using you. You’re just the flavor of this week, and when the next babe comes along you will be history.” Dewey was not one to gossip, so I knew he was just looking out for me. But it made me mad anyway. People can change. They don’t know anything, I was thinking.

“Fuck them!” I snapped. “Maybe I am using him!” I shouted.

“OK, OK, don’t get all mad. I just was giving you the heads up on what’s going around town. You know I hate gossip. I just am telling you as a friend what I heard because I care about you,” he said, trying to calm me.

“I don’t care what people think.” I raised my voice again. “I have everything I want. I am going to college in a few weeks. I am playing tennis for Long Beach State University. I have a



sponsorship with Rip Tide. I travel free, and compete in national surf championships. You know I am going with Jimmy to Florida next week to compete for a national title. Jimmy got me that. Yeah, Jimmy! If anyone is getting used, it's him. I am enjoying the ride for however long I feel like it!"

"Sounds to me like you have it all figured out. Let me just give you one more word of advice, and then I won't say anything else. Don't forget about love. It's hard to find, and when you do you have to hang onto it. You have had that. I saw it. You let it go. You are going to do what you want to do. You are kind of hard-headed like that. But take some time to think about it. You know exactly what and who I am talking about." He stopped talking and stared at the road. I knew he was referring to me and Ian.

"You have that with Chase, don't you?" I looked at him, softening my tone.

He didn't turn his head. He continued to stare ahead. "Yes I do, and I won't ever let that go, for money, or fame, or anything." We pulled into Chase's drive, and Dewey shut off the van.

"Come on. Enough serious talk." He smiled and we went inside. "Hey, Dee Dee. Haven't seen you in a while. Why aren't you at Ian's party? I heard it's going to be a blast," Chase said as he hugged Dewey and led him into the living room.

"I got kidnapped." I looked over at Dewey.

"Well then, let's get the party started here," Chase said, leading us into the kitchen. We got some beers out of the refrigerator and sat down in the living room. The music was playing low. Dewey put out some lines of cocaine, and Chase got out this two-foot bong to smoke weed in. I passed on the weed but decided to do a line. We hung out for a couple of hours laughing and talking, and then Dewey got up to pull the van in the garage.

"I thought you never drank or got high when you transport," I said when he came through the garage door.



“It’s just me and you. We will be careful. No speeding or driving crazy. No open containers. We will be fine.” They loaded the van up with speaker boxes filled with marijuana. We said our goodbyes to Chase, and then headed on back to the PCH. We drove the speed limit and didn’t go through any yellow lights. We talked but we were mostly quiet. As we were getting close to the neighborhood, Dewey changed lanes, and I noticed he did not signal. I was going to say how careless that was when a cop hit his flashing lights behind us and turned on his siren.

“Oh, shit,” Dewey said as he looked over at me. I couldn’t say anything because I could only think of doing twenty years for the pounds of weed that were in this van. I felt like I was going to cry, and I was shaking all over. My heart was beating double time. Dewey signaled this time as we pulled to the side of the road. “I am so sorry,” he said. And then the cop car whizzed right by us, doing about sixty miles per hour. “Holy shit,” he said again, and he pulled back out into traffic. “That was a close one. He isn’t after me,” he laughed nervously. “That scared the shit out of me. Scared you too, huh?” I didn’t speak I was so scared.

A few minutes went by. “Take me to Ian’s now!” I yelled.

“You got it,” he said. He wanted to say more. I felt it. But he knew better. He kept his eyes straight forward for the rest of the ride to Ian’s.

“Don’t talk to me, Dewey. Don’t say a word. I just want to get out of this van.” We pulled up in front of the party but I didn’t feel like going in.

“Dee Dee, I...” He stopped talking as I walked down the street to my Suburban and got in. I sat there shaking. We came so close to ruining our lives. That was what I got for going with him and doing the coke. I started my car and prayed that I could make it home without getting pulled over. My God, that was so scary. I was filled with so many emotions right now. I told



myself I was going to be careful, not do anything reckless, and I jumped right into the thick of things.

I loved Dewey, but he almost got me busted. What was I thinking? I almost got myself busted. I couldn't blame this on anyone but myself. I had to make some changes in my life. Now. Tonight. No more of this craziness. I pulled up in front of my house. I didn't feel safe until I was up in my room. I put on my pajamas, climbed into bed, and shivered. Even though it was hot outside, I was cold. I laid there thinking. What was I doing with my summer? This was not fun. I fell asleep thinking about what could have happened.

I didn't mention to anyone what happened that night with Dewey and me. I wanted to forget it. Jimmy came back in town, and we hung out. We planned our trip to Florida. He told me who would be in the competition. There would be women from all over this time. I had to be on my toes. He gave me some pointers, and then told me not to think about it anymore. "That's what I do. I make a plan, then don't worry about it anymore." He smiled.

That might work for him. But I was going to worry. Boy, did I worry. I worried at home, on the plane ride there, and all the way up to the first heat. It was very exciting. The water was really warm. I had never felt anything like it. It was like bath water. It was also a different color than the west coast water too. For two days, I busted my butt working those waves with everything that I had. It paid off in the end. I left with the first place trophy, and a big check.

We celebrated that night, eating a lobster dinner. Jimmy, of course, won his division too. He was so well known by everyone in the surf communities. Everywhere we went people came up to us and shook his hand or wanted their picture taken with him. The women were all over him. I was beginning to realize that



Dewey was right. This was Jimmy's world, and I didn't feel like I fit in. I had a great time, though. Winning was indescribable.

Jimmy was great too. He had a way of making me feel like I was the only girl in the world for him. But I could really see that I was that girl right now. He would move on eventually. After the last set of pictures was taken he walked back over to me. I was looking out across the beach. East coast beaches were really different too. The sand was flat. People drove on the beach here. I felt like all I wanted to do was go home.

"Hey, Sweetness, you OK?" He draped an arm around me, quietly looking out at the beach.

"The sand is flat," I said out of nowhere.

"You OK?" he asked again.

"I am great, Jimmy. Couldn't be better." I smiled up at him.

"Let's go back to our room. I think we need to be alone," he told me, smiling like he knew just what I wanted. I wouldn't complain. The trip was fun. Jimmy was great to me. When we were alone he was so into me. But when we were out in public I felt like a possession. Strange as it sounds, that was exactly how I felt with Jimmy. He held my hand. He paid attention to me, but we were not really connected. Not like we should be. It was all too obvious to me now. No matter how much I would like it to be different, the facts remained. I didn't think Jimmy was ready to settle down. I thought he was great, but could I really ever love him and he love me? Probably not was what I was thinking.

The flight home seemed to take a life time. Jimmy was talking about this and that. "You know the Haleiwa Contest in Hawaii is coming up? You can make some big money in that contest. We need to plan that trip." I pretended to be asleep. I didn't want to talk about another trip right now. I thought we needed to talk about us. He kissed me on the forehead when he realized I was sleeping (or he thought I was, anyway). "I sure do



dig you, Dee,” he whispered.

I did fall asleep, and I was woken by Jimmy shaking me gently. “We are here, Sleeping Beauty. You are a drag to travel with. I had no one to talk to but the stewardess.”

I rolled my eyes. “I am sure she was good company.”

He frowned as he helped me out of my seat. “What does that mean?”

I smiled and took his hand. “Nothing, silly. I just think she enjoyed it from the stares she has been giving you.” He didn’t reply. He just frowned at me as we were walking off the plane.

On the drive home we talked about the Haleiwa Contest. I told him I would check my schedule and see. He reiterated how important it would be for me. “I know, Jimmy, but it is not my life,” I said.

“It could be. It’s a good life. Aren’t you having fun?” he asked.

“Sure, but there is more to my life than surfing,” I told him.

“Like what?” he asked. “It’s a great life. I love the traveling and surfing all the time. What else is there?”

“Well, for me, a lot. I like my simple life in Huntington Beach. I am a hometown girl. I like my routines, my friends, and traveling kind of complicates it,” I argued. I really thought I would be more into the traveling part.

“That’s crazy. You would rather hang with your friends than travel the world catching unreal waves in different countries with new scenery and new babes? I mean people. Wow, I didn’t mean to say that,” he said, turning red.

“Yes you did, and that’s OK, Jimmy. That’s you. That’s who you are. You have been that way since the eighth grade. There is always a new girl, and you are always the most popular guy in the room. There is nothing wrong with that,” I said earnestly. “We are having a good time, and I understand that. You will continue to travel. You will meet new girls. I will always be your



lifelong friend. We weren't ever going to be any more than that. You know it as well as I do."

Jimmy looked at me. "I think we are cool together. You are very special to me, Dee."

I smiled and patted his leg. "Yes, we are cool together. And we always will be cool together, but probably not as a couple. You are special to me too, Jimmy. Nothing will ever change how I feel about you." I leaned in and kissed his cheek.

"You have to admit we looked good together," he said. Then he stared ahead, quietly contemplating our next move. "Are we over then?" he asked me. He knew I was right about everything.

I smiled and put my hand on his face. "We will always be friends, so we could never be over. We just aren't couple material. Besides, I need you to take me to Jaycee's big birthday party. I have this unbelievably sexy dress I bought to wear, and I have to go with the most handsome dude in Huntington, don't you think? I just think we need to move on from the dating aspect of our relationship and go back to what we were."

"Man, I don't know if I am bummed or relieved. I want what I have with you. But I wonder about being tied down. I guess that is why I love you, Dee Dee. You have always been way cooler than any girl I know. You are more like a dude in some ways," he said.

"Gee, thanks, Jimmy. That's what I want to hear. I am like a dude?" I pushed him with my hand.

He just laughed. "You know what I mean. There is no scene, no crying." Then he got this funny look on his face. "Hey, you broke up with me! That's a first for me. You're way cool, and you always know what you want, don't you? I just love you, Sweetness." He kissed me.

"You're still the best kisser since seventh grade." I gave him a big smile and kissed him on the mouth again. I would



never forget his kiss. We both laughed. “I love you too, Jimmy. I love you too!” I laughed as we were pulling up in front of my house. He dropped me off, and told me to think about Haleiwa. I promised I would. Jimmy was my friend and nothing would change that.

My parents were waiting to hear how I did. I went upstairs, dropped my bags, pulled out my trophy and my check, and ran back down. “Ta-da!” I yelled as I displayed my winnings in their faces.

“That’s my girl,” my dad said proudly. My mom got teary-eyed.

“You can do anything, sweetheart. Your dad was right.” I told them about Florida. They had been down to the Florida Keys on a vacation once so we compared our trips and talked late into the evening. My mom said, “Jimmy is a very nice young man. Are you two going steady?” My dad was making his “I hate talking about boyfriends” face.

“No, we are not. He is very nice, and I have known him since elementary school, but we are surf buddies, and that’s it.” She didn’t say any more about Jimmy, but Dad’s mood certainly seemed to brighten by the answer I gave.

The next couple of weeks flew by. I practiced tennis with my team. I surfed early in the morning and hung out with my friends as much as possible. I did another surf competition in San Diego. I came in first over Janie, who was second this time. My old rival Lisa from Half Moon was there also, but she did not do well. Janie and I hung out and partied together. She was a great girl. We talked about hanging out in Huntington. I was starting to feel that maybe I could compete in Hawaii after all.

At the beach I heard all kind of stories about Ian’s party. Kylie seemed to be the center of most of them. I couldn’t help but wonder if those two got together. No one said they did, but I would not put it past her. It was not that I didn’t like her. She just seemed to really want to attach herself to a man, any man,



from what I could see. I really hoped she wasn't with Ian. I had no right to feel that way, but it really bothered me thinking that they spent that night together.

I asked Shelly what she knew about her. She didn't know a lot. Keith met her from some of his friends. "She gets around," Shelly said, and she looked at me with a disgusted look.

"I would watch her around Keith if I were you," I said, looking at her very seriously.

"I don't think there is anything to worry about there. He is driving her back to Vegas next week. He has some business there."

I looked at her with a frown. "You are going too, aren't you?"

She shook her head no. "I have to stay. I have things to do here. I definitely want to be here for Jaycee's birthday party," she said. "He is going to be gone through the party. He comes back the day after."

"Why will he be gone so long? What about Kylie? Where will she be?" I asked.

She told me, "He will drop her off to her family, and then he will go on to his business meetings. He is starting up a new business."

I couldn't believe that Shelly would trust Kylie anywhere near Keith. "I don't trust her, and you shouldn't either," I added.

She smiled. "I am not worried. I may not trust her, but I definitely trust Keith. She seems to rub him the wrong way. He gets annoyed every time she speaks. Now let's talk about something else besides Kylie." Shelly smiled about how annoyed Kylie made Keith. Definitely no worries there.

I talked to Lena on the phone. She told me everything was great. We talked about Lisa too. "She seems happy setting up house and planning her family," Lena assured me. She was picking out nursery furniture and getting into the idea of being a mom.

"I can't help but worry about her decision, but it is her



decision. We need to go visit her.” Lena told me she had been up there several times. Next time we could ride together and spend a weekend. I agreed, and we talked about what we had been up to for over an hour. I really missed Lena and Lisa. We used to talk every day. Now it was just now and then. Life changed. I guessed we were all growing up. We had our own separate lives. I finally broke down and told Lena about going to Newport and almost getting pulled over. I had to tell someone.

She couldn’t believe it. “You better slow down,” she said.

“I am not going anymore, and I am not doing any coke ever again,” I swore to her.

“I am not doing any of that either,” she said. “Beer is good enough for me. My life has changed and I don’t need drugs to complicate it.”

I laughed. “Me too,” I said. She had things to do so I let her go, and we of course promised to get together soon.

The party was next weekend. Everyone was talking about it. Jaycee took it all in stride. She was used to these kinds of events in her life. Jimmy and I had been hanging out, but it was not the same. We had gone back to being just friends. I was glad. He said he was looking forward to taking me to the party though. I was excited to go with him. Any time with Jimmy was always a good time.

We surfed together off and on, talking about the usual stuff. We kept it light. I saw that the girls knew he was available, and they flocked around him like they used to. He was happy, and so was I. We always hugged and went about our lives as if nothing ever happened between us. No one said anything to us about our relationship, but they all knew it was over.

Dewey always gave me a knowing smile, like he was the one that changed the way things were between me and Jimmy. Maybe he did. I didn’t admit it. I let Dewey know that I was not



mad at him. It was not his fault. “I feel so bad about that night, Dee Dee,” he told me. He said he and Chase were going to rent a big house in Laguna Hills so he would not be driving around with all that weed anymore.

“I am so glad. It is really dangerous.” I hugged him, and my eyes showed relief. “I would hate for you to get in trouble.”

He gave me a big smile. “I wouldn’t do well in jail,” he said. “That was too close for me too. It scared the fuck out of me and Chase.”

I gave him a serious look. “Not enough to quit what you are doing though?”

“Naw. I just have to rethink it and do things differently,” he told me. It was his life and I couldn’t tell him how to live it. But I did think it was great that he and Chase were getting a place together.

I wanted to ask him about Ian but I was afraid of what I would hear. I guessed hearing he was hanging with Kylie really bothered me, so I didn’t ask. Dewey did tell me that he went back to Ian’s party and it was in full swing until 3 a.m. The cops came and told the band they had to shut it down at 12:30 a.m. Everyone had a good time. “You should have come back in. It was a great time,” he told me.

“I went home to bed. I felt so scared. It was all I could handle after that drive.” I shivered thinking about it.

“Ian asked about you,” he told me. I really wanted to ask what else he said, but I didn’t reply. He dropped the topic of Ian.

“Will I see you at Jaycee’s?” I asked him.

He said, “Yes, I will make an appearance to be nice, but I am not staying. I want to wish her a happy birthday but it is really not my thing.”

I hugged him. “Great. I will see you then.” He took off. I thought to myself it must be hard this day and age to be a gay man. Everyone was always making ugly jokes because they



didn't know about him. I was sure it hurt him, but he didn't say anything. I wanted him to be happy. I truly hoped he was. He and Chase deserved it.

My mom was excited for me. She couldn't wait to see me dressed up for the party. It was a big society thing and everyone was talking about it. "I saw the article in the society pages," she said, showing me the paper at breakfast.

"I remember when she had her debutante party. We weren't really close then. I heard she wasn't at the party through most of it, and her parents were furious."

My mom looked at me. "Well, that is terrible. They put together these extravagant affairs, and she doesn't attend her own party," she said, all indignant.

"She is more like a hippie than a debutante, Mom. They are trying to fit a round peg into a square hole," I explained. "She isn't like them. She never will be, no matter how hard they try to mold her."

My mom rolled her eyes. "That is just silly," she said.

I continued, "It is not. She doesn't want to be like them. Everything they do is bigger than life. Jaycee is a 'fight the establishment' girl. She is a simple, barefoot and hanging out type." I could tell my Mom didn't understand. So I moved on to another subject. This was just something she was not going to understand, no matter how I explained it. We talked about my sister and her new place.

Mom was getting used to the idea of her being far away. They talked on the phone more since she was moving than they did before. My mom was going to go out there to help Kathy the first week they moved, to get them settled in. She thought it was too much for my sister to handle with the kids, and she needed to go to organize. I thought it would be good for Mom. My sister, well, she seemed to be able to handle anything.



I would go to bed early tonight. I was going to go surfing at six in the morning. I wanted to be out at the break of dawn. There was something so peaceful about being at the beach early in the morning. Don't get me wrong—the sunsets in the evening were spectacular. But they were better enjoyed with a guy by your side, making it one of those incredible romantic moments. I would just have to look forward to the dawn by myself. I told my parents good night, and they both looked at each other like something was wrong with me.

“I have a date with some serious waves early in the morning,” I said as I kissed them both good night, and then headed on up the stairs. I put my headphones on and got lost in my music. I had my Neil Young “Harvest” album playing. I closed my eyes and listened to the words. “Old man, take a look at my life. I'm a lot like you...” The morning rolled around quickly. I didn't know when I fell asleep but the stereo was still on, playing over and over. I jumped up and shut it off. Dad hated when I left it on all night.

I changed into my favorite surfing swimsuit. I had special ones that stayed on better than others. I always thought about giving a peep show for the people on the pier. How embarrassing. After I was dressed I headed down to make breakfast. My folks were getting ready for work. I had some coffee and toast with them and then I headed for the beach. The roads were filled with the morning work commuters who were going their separate ways to work. I had the radio blaring as I looked for a parking spot close to the pier. I sang along with Peter Frampton. “Do you feel like I do...” I parked my Suburban and gathered up all my gear and walked down to the beach. I saw someone was already out in the surf as I walked down to my spot and dropped my things. The surfer was familiar but I didn't know his name. I waxed up my board and checked out the sky. It was a multitude



of deep colors—blue, purple, and orange, with streaks of white and yellow.

I thanked God for this beautiful day and ran for the water. The waves were decent size, and I had to work to paddle out. Once I passed the break I sat out there on my board and watched the sets coming in. I waited for a good one. I worked hard on each wave, getting the most out of them. I wanted to try some new things in the next competition. If I could I would go to Haleiwa. I didn't need Jimmy to get me there, although I was grateful he got me this far. I really wanted to do this one on my own. I convinced myself that I would compete. I would definitely call my sponsor and have him set it up for me.

This for sure was the life. Jimmy was right about it all. Surfing was the best. I would never give it up. I just didn't want it on the grand scale that he did. But I wouldn't drop out of the competitions. That would never be my style. I had been working the waves for a couple hours and really needed to eat. I brought a banana in my bag so I headed up to my stuff on the beach. My towel was spread out and I fell down on it and looked out at the water. The sun was way up in the sky, bright, and it was starting to get hot.

It was going to be a beautiful day. No doubt about it. As I ate the banana I thought of how fast this summer went by, and all that had happened. Shelly was engaged. I really was happy for her. She seemed to have everything she wanted. She and Keith were really happy together. She was convinced he would be this great business man. That was so very cool in my book. Lena was still with her man, and very happy in her new place. Lisa...I could not image how things were for her, but Lena was always saying she was happy too. So good for her. I wished her the best. Cindy was still with her man Terry, and happy as all get out.

I had done so many things and made so many changes in



my life. I was not unhappy with all that was going on in my life. However, I felt like something was missing. I didn't know what. I went out with three completely different guys, and had a great time with each. I had so much to look forward to. I was a little anxious about everything. Maybe that was why I was feeling so strange or out of sorts today.

My thoughts were interrupted by Steve and Wade. They were saying something, but I was lost in dream land again. "Hi guys," I said as they dropped their boards on the sand and started waxing them up.

"You're here early," they both said. "Jimmy is coming down right behind us," Steve said.

"He stopped to talk to that girl," Wade said, and Steve slapped him in the back of the head with the palm of his hand.

I laughed. "Hey, everything is OK. Jimmy is a free agent. He can pick up on any chicks he likes."

Wade looked at me. "I thought you two were..."

Jimmy walked up. "You thought who was what?"

I jumped in. "We are good friends, guys, and always will be." Jimmy helped me to my feet.

"What are we waiting for? Let's catch some waves!" Jimmy gave me a hug, and the other two guys looked baffled.

We all ran down and paddled out. It was a really fun day with the guys. We surfed, ate strips with cheese, and surfed some more. When my body ached so bad I couldn't take anymore, I told the boys goodbye and headed for home. Jimmy was taking me to Jaycee's. The limo was supposed to pick me up but I called and told Jaycee not to send it, but I might need it to go home. I planned on really having a good time at the party. It would be the last of the summer. Then it was time to get serious. My blow out summer would have officially come to an end.

I took a nap when I got home from the beach so I would not



be tired. I wanted to party all night. I was excited. I didn't think I would be. I was looking forward to getting dressed up and going to the Yacht Club with Jimmy. It would be great. I slept really hard. I came home exhausted. I started getting ready at seven. Jimmy rang the doorbell at 8:30 sharp. My dad called up to me, "Your date is here."

He was standing in the foyer looking all handsome in his grey pinstripe suit. "You look incredible," he smiled at me, and then he stepped forward.

"I think you look great too," I said, looking him over. My mom and dad both said how beautiful I looked, and what a handsome couple we made. I took his hand and walked toward the door. We hollered back at my folks good night. They of course told us to be careful.

We walked down the sidewalk to his Corvette. I could see my neighbors staring at us from across the street. "We make an outrageous couple, Dee Dee," Jimmy said, opening my door for me. I smiled as I slid down into the bucket seat.

"I have to agree. Movie stars from Hollywood," I said.

He looked down at me and shut the door. "Damn, what a babe," he said, sort of to himself as he walked around and jumped in. He drove kind of fast. I hoped my dad wasn't watching, or he would worry all night.

We talked about the whole summer and its events on the way to the party. We were keeping the conversation light. I didn't mention that I knew a couple of girls he had been hanging out with. It would only embarrass him if he knew that I already heard about them. It was cool. I was happy if he was happy. The place looked grand, almost regal, as we pulled up to the valet parking.

They let me out. Jimmy came around and put out his arm. I entwined mine around his, and we walked in. This place was crazy. It was so elegant. There were flowers and balloons. We



walked by a huge fountain that had little candles floating in it. Everything was so spectacular. I looked around for Jaycee. Shelly walked up behind me and told us Jaycee would be announced shortly. “Announced? Wow, this is really something, isn’t it?” Jimmy just kept looking around. There would be a band later, but for now soft music was playing in the background.

There were tables all around with name tags in place for everyone. It wasn’t a sit down dinner but there would be tables of finger food. There was also an open bar. I was worried that they would card us. I would not be twenty-one for another month. Jaycee was though. We walked over to the bar and ordered drinks. The bartender smiled and gave us each what we asked for. I stuck with beer. I didn’t want to make a fool of myself here, so no hard alcohol for me tonight.

We wandered around, talking to people we knew and smiling at the ones we didn’t. The lights went low and the music changed. We heard a voice over the loudspeaker getting everyone’s attention. They introduced Jaycee as the birthday girl, and she came out on stage. She looked so lovely. I didn’t think I had ever seen her dressed that way. She was wearing a simple white summer dress with a Grecian flair, and flat white leather sandals. She thanked everyone for coming, and asked that they all enjoy themselves. We all clapped. She came down to me and the party began.

I told her how lovely she looked. Everyone agreed. She just laughed and said, “Enough of the bullshit. Let’s party.” We all laughed and downed our drinks. The band was great, and we all danced together in the center of the floor as a group instead of couples. Eric, her friend, was there. They were still together from what I could tell. He seemed quite attentive to her these days.

I saw Ian over by the door but I hadn’t had a chance to talk to him. Jimmy and I had been inseparable since we got to the



party. I noticed one of the girls that he was rumored to have been hanging with was here. “Jimmy, I asked you to bring me to this party but you don’t have to be attached at the hip. Go have fun. Mingle with the crowd. I know everyone here, and I am having a great time.” He gave me a questioning look. “I mean it. Go hang with your friends too. We have all night.”

He smiled. “The first slow song they play I will be looking for you,” he said, brushing my lips with a soft kiss.

I said, “OK, I will look for you too.” He walked off with that confidence only Jimmy had. What a hunk. I was going to miss saying he was my boyfriend and destroying the dreams of girls who would die to know him.

“What is going on with you two? I thought you were an item,” Jaycee asked.

“No, not really. He is my great friend. That’s it.”

Ian walked up to us. “Hey, ladies.” We all said hello. And the subject of Jimmy dropped.

“How is it going Ian?” I asked. Jaycee walked toward the back door as we were talking.

“I am great. It’s good to see you. Are you doing alright? I heard you took first in that competition in Florida. That is really cool.” We stood and talked about my surfing ability for a long time. I bragged about my San Diego win as well. Then we headed back to the bar. We talked with different people coming and going, getting different cocktails.

Everyone had had a great summer, and we were all having a good time talking about everything we did. Jaycee made her way back to the bar, and I could tell she was high. I didn’t say anything but I wanted to. She was talking fast and loud. It was not like her to be loud. I was embarrassed for her. She was having a good time, and it was her birthday. I didn’t want to be the one to spoil it for her. I hadn’t seen her parents at all. They must have



left after her introduction.

She wanted to dance some more, and the band was cranking. We all went back out on the floor and danced around to all our favorite songs. I jumped around with Steve, Wade, Billy, and even Ian, who really didn't like to dance. But everyone was out on the floor shaking it up, so he stayed out there with us.

The band was playing one good song after another. We went from dancing to singing and back again. We all made a conga line and danced around the room until I couldn't do it anymore. I told Shelly I had to get some air. She went with me outside. The club was in Huntington Harbor and there were many beautiful yachts moored outside the club, so we walked down on the docks and checked them out.

"What a great party," Shelly breathed out.

"Oh, yeah, I knew it would be really big, but it is so much more than I expected." Shelly stopped walking.

"What about Ian, Dee Dee? What are you going to do about Ian?"

I laughed, but not a real laugh. "That ship has sailed, I'm afraid. I told you before." I made a big sweeping gesture with my arm towards the mouth of the harbor.

"It is not funny. He is right for you. I am glad you and Jimmy aren't together. Jimmy is really good looking, and I have always liked him, but he is not for you. Ian is the one. I just know it."

I looked at her. "You're right. It is not funny. He has moved on. Karen told me all about them and how they have been hot and heavy for weeks. I can't go back. I have to be moving on too." I hugged her. "Let's go back in and have some fun. I don't want to talk about lost love and all that."

"Where is Karen tonight?" she asked.

"Good question. I really don't know," I said, walking back up the dock.



We made our way back into the party. Everyone was having a great time. The band was so good. They could play anything, and everyone had been asking for them to play different songs. They played some Elton John, Beatles, Bread, Beach Boys, and Jackson Browne. I could go on and on. They were just phenomenal. No one was disappointed with them, least of all Jaycee. She was having the time of her life.

I passed Jimmy several times, making the rounds. We smiled and nodded but that was about it for our contact. I spent some time talking with Ian several times during the night, but the conversation was light and fun. It was nice, just like friends should talk. I had a ping of regret when I looked across the room at him. I couldn't help but wonder where we would be now in our relationship had I not flaked out on him. The band finished up their set and said they were taking a fifteen minute break. "Stick around. We will be right back," the lead singer said.

When they came back he again made an announcement. "We are going to slow it down a little bit, so dudes, grab your chicks and get romantic." Eric immediately walked over to Jaycee. He took her hand and led her out on the dance floor. They started playing "Surfer Girl" by the Beach Boys. I immediately thought of Randy and that serenade on the beach the first day we met. For a moment I thought of him and what we could have been.

I stood there staring off into space when I heard Jimmy at my side. "I said I wanted the first slow dance, so I asked them to play this song for you." I took his arm as he led me out on the floor. "I will always think of you when I hear this song. Little surfer, little one, makes my heart come all undone," he sang to me, low and soft. "This was our summer. No regrets?" he said, looking into my eyes.

"No regrets," I smiled back up at him. He even sang well.

I continued looking up into his face and smiling. "You



are quite the romantic, aren't you." He didn't say anything, just pulled me closer to him and swayed to the music. "I will remember this moment with you forever," I whispered to him.

He pulled his head back and stated, "We could really be good together. I think we could be making a big mistake. You sure we can't try to stay together?"

I shook my head no. "You have places to go and people to dazzle, Jimmy. We will always have this summer, and you will always be one of my best friends." I didn't notice that the music had changed as we were whispering back and forth, unaware of everyone around us.

Jimmy was looking down at me, grinning, when someone tapped him on the shoulder. It was Ian. "May I cut in?"

Jimmy shrugged. "Ah, Ian. Damn, dude, we were having a moment." He looked back at me, and then smiled and handed me off to Ian.

"She is all yours, you lucky bastard," he said quietly. He gave Ian a pat on the shoulder as he walked away. I wondered if he knew that it was Ian that had my heart.

"I hope you don't mind," Ian smiled.

"No, not at all," I said. I heard the band playing "Your Song" by Elton John. It was one of my all-time favorite songs. Ian moved me around the floor. For someone who didn't dance he was very smooth. It was another pleasant surprise. He had many surprises hidden up his sleeve.

"Are you having a good time?" I asked.

"Definitely. The band is great." He tightened up his hold on me. We glided around the floor. My dad taught me to ballroom dance when I was little. Now I was glad he did. Ian must have learned somewhere too. As the song came to an end, I pulled away. Ian pulled me in. "One more?" he asked.

"Sure." We just stood there, swaying back and forth. I didn't



even think it was a slow song. I just knew that at that moment being in Ian's arms was the only place I wanted to be.

We didn't talk. We just moved. I had my head resting on Ian's chest, and he had his head resting on the top of my head. I felt so unbelievably calm and loved. I would have stayed that way forever but the music changed again. Everyone was jumping around us and bumping us.

"OK, you two! Get a room!" someone shouted. I didn't know who. We stopped and looked at each other and laughed.

As we walked off the floor Ian turned to me. "Will you walk outside with me on the docks?" I nodded and followed him out.

"It is a beautiful night," I commented.

He smiled. "Yes it is." He took my hand and led me down the dock away from the loud music. "Are you ready to go back to school, or are you going on a world surfing tour with Jimmy?" he asked, taking on a serious tone.

"I am going back to school. I start next week. Jimmy and I aren't together. I am going to compete in some competitions, like Haleiwa. That will be the only one that is far away, and I plan to continue competing in the local contests. I will not be going with Jimmy. He is a super surfer and I am not in his league. Anyway, I have a tennis team I have committed to." He didn't say anything at first. He just stared out on to the harbor.

I didn't know what he was thinking about. He was still for a long time. I just watched him. I enjoyed looking at his profile while he pondered something important, or so it seemed. He finally turned to me and took my hands in his. "I go back to school next week as well. Everything I have been doing stops and I get serious. I won't have time to run with Dewey. He and Chase are getting a place together so there won't be any more runs anyway. It was all fun. "

I started to say something but he put his finger to my lips.



“Shhh, I need to finish. Things have been really crazy this summer, and I can’t do any of it anymore. I will have a serious career, and my family’s medical reputation to uphold. I would like to move on with you.”

I looked at him and saw in his eyes he was so serious, and that this was very important to him. I wanted to tell him that I believed we were meant to be together. He pulled my face towards his and gave me the lightest of kisses. His lips just barely brushed mine. He looked at me and said, “You don’t have to say anything tonight. I realize I have put you in an awkward position. You came here with Jimmy, and I know you will leave with him. But think about us. I am so into you, Dee Dee. I always have been. I am tired of going in circles with you. I have been patient, but I can’t wait forever, Luv. I won’t wait forever.” He brushed my lips one more time.

Then he turned and walked back up the dock and left. I was in shock. He didn’t wait for me to respond, or even explain that Jimmy and I were not an item, or ever would be. That I had thought about him since we were together, and no matter who I dated this summer my thoughts always seemed to go back to the great time I had with him. He was warm and funny. He was good looking and smart. I didn’t know anyone like him. I regretted not telling him from the start. I thought I was too stupid and naive to know what love was. I didn’t realize I was in love the whole time. I was just scared.

I walked back into the party to look for him but he was gone. Jimmy was there, waiting to take me home. The place was starting to thin out, and many people had left. We said goodbye to Shelly. I looked for Jaycee and saw her coming in the back door from the docks where Ian and I were. I never even noticed she and Eric were out there. I hugged her and told her happy birthday.

“I will come by tomorrow with your present, so don’t stay up



too late. I want to hang out with you.”

She gave me a big kiss on the cheek. “See you tomorrow, love,” she said and giggled.

“You were spying on me, you rat,” I scolded her.

She laughed. “Yes I was, and I loved every minute of it. Come by in the morning. We will have breakfast together.”

I waved goodbye and followed Jimmy out to get his car. He said, “Love?” I just shrugged, trying to look confused. Like I had no idea what that meant.

“I had a good time and you...you were beautiful tonight,” he said, getting in the car.

“Thank you, Jimmy. It was fun, wasn’t it?” We chatted about the party and everyone who came. We laughed about how someone danced, or who was wasted, or who was boring. Before I knew it we were in front of my house. Jimmy came around and opened my car door for me. “You are such a gentleman,” I said, taking his hand as we walked to the door. We stopped and it felt a little awkward. Jimmy leaned down and kissed me. It was not a goodbye kiss.

“I will see you around, right?” he asked.

“Of course. When you are not traveling the world, I will be surfing the pier with you, like we have for the past I don’t know how many years. I am not going anywhere, Jimmy. You will always know where to find me. Thank you for a lovely evening. I will remember it always.” We smiled and waved at each other as he strolled back to his car.

He jumped in and gave me one last look before he shook his head. “My surfer girl,” he hollered.

“Shhhh, you will wake the neighbors,” I laughed, and he pulled away. I loved Jimmy no matter what. He had never tried to be anything he was not. He was a surf champion and a ladies’ man. I was glad we spent the time together that we did.



I went in and quietly closed the front door. What a night. It was so much fun I couldn't remember ever attending a better party. Everything was so special. I felt kind of Cinderella-like. Well, maybe not Cinderella. I didn't have an ugly stepmother. But it was magical and wonderful. I tip-toed up to my room. I wished Lena and Lisa would have been there. They would have had a blast. The night was over so quickly. I slipped out of my dress and hung it up. It was perfect for tonight. I thought I looked really good in it. I put on my pajamas and climbed into bed. I laid my head on my pillow and breathed out the last party of the summer. What a bummer.

I dreamt of dancing all night. My Prince Charming's face kept changing though. It was Jimmy, then it was Randy, then it was Ian. I guessed it was not so odd considering the relationships I was in over the last three months. I woke up, stretched, and just laid there thinking about all of them. My dream was really quite real, as I thought back about it. Three princes and me.

I heard a light tapping at the door, and I snapped out of my deep thought. "Come in."

My mother stuck her head in the door. "Are you awake, honey?"

I sat up. "Yes, come in," and she stepped in.

"How was your party last night? You came in much earlier than you have most of the summer," she said. I turned red. All my sneaking around, and she heard me anyway.

"It was just wonderful, Mom. The decorations were beautiful. There were flowers everywhere and white balloons. There were twinkle lights on everything. It was just grand."

She smiled and patted my leg. "That's nice. I am glad you had a good time. I am making breakfast. Will you join your father and I?" she asked.

"No thank you, Mom. I want to go have breakfast with



Jaycee and give her the present I got her. She didn't want gifts at the party." She went back out my door as quietly as she came in.

I got up, showered, and found something to wear. We might go out to eat breakfast so I chose something nice. I had this short halter top with lavender flowers on it that I had never worn. I put that on, feeling very good about the outfit. I gave Mom and Dad a kiss on the cheek before I went out, and told them I would be back later. They waved and continued reading their favorite sections of the newspaper.

The day could not have been more beautiful. The sky was a powder blue, with some big white fluffy clouds floating here and there. The smell of the honeysuckles that grew down the side of our fence mingled with the breeze. It was probably a great day to surf, but I didn't dwell on that thought. I promised Jaycee I would come over. I found an ankle bracelet down at the beach in a shop on Main Street. I knew she would like it. She had simple tastes for a wealthy girl.

I set the little wrapped box on the front seat and drove on over to Jaycee's. When I pulled up I saw Eric getting into his car. He waved at me as we passed each other. I wished she would lose that dude. But what did I know? Their relationship had lasted longer than any of mine. Anyway, I didn't want to spoil the day talking about him, so I would not bring him up. Jaycee opened the front door as I walked up. "Hi there," she said in a sing-song voice.

"Hello," I said back.

I gave her a hug and handed her the present, and we walked in. She ripped the paper off before we got into the living room. I kicked off my sandals and pulled my feet up under me as I sat on the couch. She plopped down next to me, opening the box. "Oh, I just knew you would get me something cool. I love it, Dee Dee," she squealed while she was putting it on.



“I am so glad. You are kind of hard to buy for,” I said.

“Not me. I am a simple girl,” she laughed.

“You really are.” I laughed too. We went to Alphy’s Coffee Shop for breakfast. I ate corned beef hash and eggs with hash browns. Jaycee had coffee. “You are no fun. Why did you invite me for breakfast if you are not going to eat? I could have eaten with my folks.”

She smiled. “I thought I would be hungry after all that drinking, but I feel kind of queasy.”

I frowned. “That’s a bummer.” She nodded in agreement. After I stuffed myself, we headed back to her house to see the stuff she got for her birthday.

We spent the rest of the morning putting things away and just hanging out. It was nice because we hadn’t really spent much time together since the Eric incident. We laughed and talked about old times for hours. She was in a really good mood today. She even talked nicely about her parents, who she never had anything good to say about.

“I saw you and Ian dancing last night. You make such a cute couple. I wish you would seriously think about getting back together,” she said.

“I have been thinking about Ian lately,” I told her.

She jumped up and down. “You are going to get back together, aren’t you?”

I stretched and said, “I am thinking about him, or I should say us. We will have to see how it goes. Besides, you heard everything that was said on the dock, you little sneak,” I scolded her. She just laughed.

We drank iced tea and watched TV for a while. I was thinking to myself, I really need to get going, when I saw a man walking by the side French doors of her living room. On one side of her house there was a walk that went up a hill to the apartments in



the back. It was level with her living room. “Did you see that guy?” I asked.

“Yes,” she said.

“I think the back of his jacket said ‘police’ on it.” As I was saying that, I saw another guy with a yellow jacket that said “police” also. He was walking slowly with a handgun drawn.

I slowly walked over to the window and looked out. The place was surrounded by police. They had guns drawn, and were walking toward the back of the apartment where those guys lived upstairs. I was thinking to myself, *I wish I had their number so I could call up and tell them the shit is about to hit the fan.* I had no way to warn them what was happening.

“Oh, my god,” she said, “we have to get out of here.”

I looked at her. “It doesn’t look like they are here for you.”

She was shaking. “Maybe not yet. We need to go. Let’s get in my car and just drive away like we don’t know anything is happening. I will stay gone for a while until they are all gone.” She was shaking so badly.

“OK, Jaycee, calm down.” She handed me her keys.

“You drive. I can’t.”

Once again I said, “OK, but try to calm down. I will get us out of here.” She ran up to her room and grabbed some clothes and things.

Then we walked through the door down to the garage and unlocked her convertible Mercedes. She put her stuff in the trunk and we got in. I hit the electric garage door and backed out slowly. As I was backing the car toward the street, I saw all the police cars blocking the way. I saw she was still shaking. “Don’t say anything. I will talk.” The first officer to see us waved me toward him.

I pulled up and said, “What is going on?”

He looked at me with a comforting smile. “Do you live



here?" I nodded, my eyes as big as saucers. I knew I looked scared, and I thought that was what saved us.

"Jaycee, my friend, owns this building. We were going to the beach. What is going on?" He told us he was not at liberty to say, but he suggested that we not come back until later tonight. It was dangerous to be here right now. I told him we would stay away. He told the other policeman to let us pass. As we drove by, I looked back at my Suburban out front. I didn't know when I would be able to come back to get it.

Jaycee asked me to take her over to her parents'. They went out of town this morning, and would be gone for a few days. She said we could hang out there. Besides, she promised to water the plants and feed the cat. I agreed to hang out for a while. She was visibly calmer as we got further away from her house. I turned into her parents' driveway and we got out of the car. I waited for her to get her things out of the trunk.

"What is that, Jaycee?" I turned and asked. She had a brown paper bag that was tucked down in the spare tire space in the trunk.

She said, "I will tell you when we get in the house." She unlocked the front door and we walked in. Her parents' house was a 36,000-square foot home on the main harbor in Huntington Harbor. It had a five car garage, and it was one of the largest waterfront properties in this neighborhood. It was very French Victorian. It was all white and gold everywhere. There were huge chandeliers throughout the house. It was all very extravagant to me as well as Jaycee. She had always said she hated this show place.

"So what is in the bag?" I asked, my voice starting to rise. She pulled out what looks to me like a very large bag of cocaine.

"This. I bought it last night with my birthday money." She gave me a big grin. "We just drove right through those cops with it." I was floored once again by Jaycee.

I didn't believe what I was seeing and hearing. "Yes, we did,



and we could have gotten in a lot of trouble.” She didn’t seem to grasp the magnitude of the situation like I had.

She laughed, “But we didn’t.”

I was really upset, and she didn’t seem to care about that either. “I am sick of this. I don’t want to be a part of this anymore. I won’t be a part of it anymore.” I started heading for the door.

“Where are you going? We just got here,” she asked. I kept walking and didn’t say anything.

“Please don’t be mad. I didn’t tell you because you said you weren’t into it anymore, and I didn’t want to bring it out around you. But the cops came, and I thought they knew I had it. I was freaked out and really scared.”

“Jaycee, this is what I have been talking about— people are going to jail. Your friend overdosed. Where does it end?” I was completely exasperated with this whole situation.

She just shrugged. “Everyone has their own way of life, Dee Dee. I am not quitting what I do because you don’t do it anymore.”

I stood there staring at her. “Do you actually hear yourself? This is not a game. You could go to prison. Or worse, you could die. I just don’t understand you, Jaycee. I love you, but as long as this is your choice, and you continue down this road, I won’t be hanging out with you.”

I waited for her to say something. “Suit yourself. It looks like I am going to really miss you.” That was all she said, and I walked out the door. She didn’t call after me as I walked away. I had hoped she would come to her senses. But she didn’t, and it should not surprise me. She had always done exactly what she wanted to do. That was just Jaycee. Apparently the cocaine was more important than our friendship.

It was a beautiful summer day, and the walk would do me good. It was pretty hot out, I realized as I headed down the road. I was heading out of Huntington Harbor when I saw Ian’s van



going down the street. I just kept on walking. He was too far away to hear me if I hollered for him anyway.

I continued out past the shopping center where El Rancho Market was, and this nice restaurant I had eaten at with my parents. I walked out to Warner and continued down the road to my neighborhood. It was probably a good three miles but today it did not seem that far. My mind was reeling with everything that happened.

I needed this time to rethink my own path. I really was looking forward to school and some normalcy. I was a part of some bad things this summer. I also had a great time, but I was just lucky things did not go south on me as they did for those guys living in the apartment behind Jaycee. I counted my blessings on that. I couldn't help but to feel sorry for them.

The most important thing I needed to do was try to work everything out with Ian. I was going to open my heart to him and let love take its course. Love—I was sure that was what we had. If it was, and we were meant for each other, time would tell. I thought back over the summer and how my thoughts always returned to Ian, even when I was dating Randy and Jimmy.

I daydreamed about his smile, and how I felt when I was around him. He made me feel alive. He made me feel good about us. I just didn't give him a chance. He said he would not wait forever, so I had to tell him today. I wanted to call him as soon as I got home. I wouldn't let him slip through my fingers again.

I finally saw my house as I rounded the corner. I couldn't wait to call him as soon as I got there. We would start over together, now with full commitment. What a crazy ride I had been on. This summer was the most event filled time of my life. I did some things I never thought I would. I traveled, surfed, and learned a lot about myself and relationships. I did pretty much what I set out to do.



Even though I would probably never do some of the things I did this summer again, I was glad I experienced everything that I did. There were so many dumb sayings going through my mind as I walked up the sidewalk to my house. “Live and learn”—one of my mother’s. I had to admit that I was glad this summer was over. It was more outrageous than I ever could have imagined it would be. But like I said to Jimmy—“No regrets.”

If you loved this book, could you please provide a review
at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)?



