

Chapter Six

GRAD SPEECH TEXT

The Monday after spring break, the students of Miss C's yearbook class shuffled in, the end of their first day back to reality. At their teacher's direction, they tugged their desks, metal feet groaning on the tile floor, into a circle formation.

"Welcome back, everybody," said their teacher, her ponytail frizzier than usual, like her students still adjusting to life at Northside. "So, as I know you know, we're back, and we're nearing the finish line. As of today, we have six weeks left in the academic year."

"Five weeks four days," corrected Carrie, ever one for technical distinctions. "Finals week is only Monday through Thursday."

"Technically five weeks three days, with Memorial Day," added DeShaun.

"Five week two and a half days, since we have a half day the Friday of prom," said Carter.

"I'm very happy to see you're all keeping such a close eye on the calendar," said Miss C, reasserting herself. "But before we turn our eyes forward, I wanted to take a moment to touch base and ask if everybody had a good break. After all, we're in the business of recording memories, right?"

"You get your own line," Conner said.

"So let's open up the floor. What'd you do over break?"

Amanda supposed she should take some credit for it all. Not that she'd done it for the credit, but it was nice to have some small part in not merely recording her classmates' memories, but creating them.

It had been the Friday before break when it happened, and it was the strangest little thing. With the distance to spring break now measuring in minutes rather than hours, the staff was barely working, and Miss C wasn't even bothering to press them at that point, running out the clock together with her students.

When suddenly, in the course of an innocent, off-handed comment, lovers and rivals alike became united.

"It's going to be amazing," Siobhan was saying. "My dad got us all spots at this resort his company did work for in Maui. It's going to be amazing. I was looking at pictures earlier, and like, it's right on the sand, practically. It has its own pool, five-star restaurant, there's horse riding, they have a golf course right next to it..."

"I thought you hated golf," said Marisa.

"I do, but you know if they're golf-adjacent, it's totally gonna be ritzy. Check it out. We're gonna have such a killer time, I know it." Siobhan handed over her phone, where apparently the resort info was already up in her browser.

"We? Who all's going?" asked Marisa, thumbing through snapshots.

"Geez, let's see. Me, Devon, Marco, Tiffany – Saunders, not Jenkins, obviously – and... I dunno, everyone, basically. The seniors, at least. Have to be eighteen to get a room." said Siobhan.

As the two continued thumbing through pictures together, suddenly, three people in the room seemed to realize in unison what they'd overheard. Amanda looked across the room to where Conner was sitting by Miss C's desk, and then the two of them scanned to where Jordan was seated on the far wall, looking up from his own phone.

"Conner, can I see you in the office?" she said.

"Uh, should we be...?"

"We should. We absolutely should," she said.

Without another word, the three – Jordan was coming too – stood and made their way to the editor-in-chief's office.

"You heard that, right?" started Jordan excitedly. "How'd she say it...? Marisa said 'who all is going,' and Siobhan said... shit, who did she say?"

Conner was already typing, and Amanda was leaning over his shoulder giving corrections from her own recollection. Soon, they had what they were sure was a close approximation – close enough that they'd easily be able to fix the precise wording – and paused.

"Wait," said Conner. "I'm not doing this if it's going to mean a week of looking over my shoulder, wary who's saying what."

“Get out of the way, Fishers,” snapped Jordan. Conner was already sliding back, having no other option, but Amanda quickly snapped shut the laptop.

“Hold it right there. He’s right, Jordan. If we do this, we’re going on vacation. We’re not going to start another fight. No creepy tricks, no ambushes, no escalations. That’s the only way we’ll agree to it.”

“Fuck what you agree to, Mandy. If you don’t do it, I’ll just enter it myself.”

She squeezed past him and opened the door. “Miss C? Can anyone use the laptops over spring break?”

“Absolutely not,” their teacher called back in a firm voice.

Amanda walked back over to the laptop and, before anyone realized what she was doing, typed up the exchange in a new spread, *springbreak19*. “There. Now if you go, you won’t have a computer with TIOS installed for a thousand miles.”

He scowled. “You fucking—”

Conner stood up, fists clenching. He made for a poor knight in shining armor, and she certainly didn’t need one, but she could kiss for trying. In fact, she meant to. “Watch yourself, Jordan.”

“Boys, relax. We can do this. I’m for it. All we need to do is agree to take a week off from Us. Then we’ll go relax on vacation, courtesy of Siobhan’s rich-ass daddy. But I want to hear everyone say it first.”

There was some squabbling, some negotiating, but in the end, they made an agreement, and along with the exchange between Siobhan and Marisa, they added, “*None of us are going to use anything we hear one another say to enter later into TIOS.*” – Conner Fishers, Amanda Carpenter, and Jordan Lyons. Suddenly, without quite knowing how, they were aware of a whole host of details – the shuttle buses leaving school the next morning for the airport, flight arrangements, roommates, the return trip... it was like they’d been planning this for months. Except they, and only they, knew they hadn’t.

And so, the entirety of the Northside High senior class – except for Tiffany Jenkins – had a week’s stay in a place that, if it wasn’t paradise, certainly offered a good view of it from the upper balconies. But Amanda was pretty sure it was paradise.

“Angelica! Lotion!” called Kirsten Vaughan for at least the third time in the past couple hours.

Carter was sitting across the Rose Pinnacle Resort’s pool, using his sunglasses to pretend not to be watching the girls with interest. One of the pools, anyway. They had two, so that at least one would be out of the building’s shadow at any given time. He’d been here all morning, and frankly, he didn’t have any desire to go anywhere else.

This place was incredible. What had possessed Siobhan’s dad to rent the whole place for the seniors of Northside, he couldn’t have guessed, but he’d never seen anything like it. Carter counted himself that number who’d never gone on a vacation anywhere, much less a place like this. He was raised by a single mother, and with three siblings, vacations were not on the menu. Many Nighthawks here were on their first vacation, first time out of state, first time outside the continental U.S. Some, it was their first night in a hotel.

He remembered seeing Tye Oldring’s eyes well up with tears when the bus unloaded them in front of the Rose Pinnacle. Carter wished he’d gotten a picture. Amanda and Conner would’ve loved that for the yearbook, but he had a suspicion Tye would’ve beaten him to a pulp if he noticed.

The resort was incredible, the food was unbelievable, and Hawaii was better than anything he’d seen even in movies. Yet that morning, it was having a hard time competing with the spectacle across the pool.

Angelica Buck, whom Carter recognized from pre-cal, picked herself up out of her lounging chair, obviously looking a bit annoyed at the request. Carter knew she was a girl, but still, it was hard to imagine anyone complaining about being asked to rub down Kirsten’s heavenly body. Not that Angelica herself wasn’t beautiful. She was shorter even than Carter himself, with straight brown hair currently held in a topknot, with huge sunglasses that only partially concealed the look of displeasure on that gorgeous face. Carter took the opportunity to admire that tight rear end as it bent to retrieve the lotion from Kirsten’s bag. Her own bikini would have been skimpy if she were not so petite, but it nonetheless rode up her ass a bit, and she had to tug it back out with a finger.

If he’d thought he envied her fingers as they darted in and out of Angelica’s bikini bottoms, it had nothing on how Carter felt about them as matters unfolded.

He had to remind himself that Kirsten wasn’t actually posing; she simply looked like that. In a place where almost every woman present was half-undressed, where most of the women staying in the few rooms in the Rose Pinnacle not in use by the Nighthawks looked like trophy wives hardly older than the high schoolers, Kirsten nonetheless managed to stand out. The supple curves of her legs, an ass that jutted behind her like a pair of apples. Apples that couldn’t help but jiggle fluidly wherever they passed, as if defying anyone to find a reason to look anywhere else. A tiny diamond

thigh gap graced the place where legs and ass met, and there was the top half of her. Oh, the top...

For that, though, Carter had to wait for Angelica to finish the back side.

The girl was meticulous about it, for sure, leaving no nook unlotioned. She was just as casual slathering up Kirsten's feet and ankles as she was around her hips and butt cheeks. Today, their second full day at the resort, Kirsten had selected a black two-piece, three thin slits cut into each side of the bottoms, which on a butt so ample, it otherwise struggled to cover. It wasn't a thong, but the shape of her kept trying to make it one. Angelica didn't hesitate to squirt a dollop of sunscreen on each mostly-naked buttock and begin rubbing it in. Kirsten helpfully, scandalously, assisted her by spreading her thighs, instructing Angelica to make sure she got *everything*.

"You want me to undo the string? It's starting to look like there's gonna be a tan line back here if I don't," said Angelica. Carter wondered for a moment how he could hear them, but then realized that almost everyone around the pool area was similarly transfixed.

Kirsten answer was to undo the tie holding her top on and rest her head back on her arms, having already let Angelica coat them. Carter adjusted his visor on his lap to conceal an erection he couldn't imagine any other woman – or women – would ever be able to compete with. Side boob. Kirsten fucking Vaughan's side boob.

"Now the front," said Kirsten, rolling over, clutching her bikini top to her chest. There it was, lying across those perfect, massive, shapely tits, held on by nothing more than gravity. Carter wasn't a religious man, but in that moment he prayed to any gods who may be listening for a sudden gust.

"The front? Are your arms broken or something, Kirsten?"

"I don't want to get my hands greasy. Yours already are," the blonde replied, arching a sculpted eyebrow.

The two locked eyes for a moment, and Carter for the first time wondered what conflux of events had turned one beautiful girl into the other's sunscreen deliverer. As Angelica crawled back to Kirsten's feet started at the knees, working her way back up, their classmate wondered if the two might actually be... lovers?

No. It couldn't be. That was something that only happened in porn. Besides, everyone knew that until recently, Kirsten had been dating a college guy and had been since she'd been a sophomore. Yet as he watched Angelica work her hands, kneading up Kirsten's smooth belly, along her ribs, up her sides, and begin working in toward the the center, he swore he could see Kirsten's breath quickening, manifested in those world class breasts glistening in Angelica's hands.

Maybe... Kirsten was...

Suddenly, a redheaded guy Carter hadn't even noticed walking across the pool area was bent down and gave Kirsten a kiss. She looked almost as surprised as Carter,

but then her hand came down on the back of his head and held him there until Angelica took it as a signal that her work was done.

Man. Owen Gibson was the luckiest guy in the world. “I’m gonna head to one of the hiking trails, see if I can find somewhere half as pretty as you. Wanna come?”

“Sure,” agreed Kirsten, sitting up, catching her top just in time to ruin Carter’s day.

“Ange?” He looked to the other girl.

“I’d love to,” she said, slipping on her sandals.

“Jesus fucking Christ,” said a man’s voice nearby, and Carter looked over to see Mr. Rodriguez staring in the exact same direction he had been, leaning against the bar with some kind of fruity-looking drink in hand.

Carter frowned at his teacher for noticing what he had himself been admiring; adults weren’t supposed to notice that kind of thing. But as he watched the two girls asses swaying away, undulating with each step, one of Owen’s hands on either girl’s hip, he could hardly blame the guy. They passed by Carter without any of them looking in his direction, but the canny yearbook student didn’t miss the look of displeasure on Kirsten’s face when Angelica smiled up at Owen.

Carter wondered what was so special about the shorter, flatter girl that would induce him to put a frown to the angelic visage of the other. He couldn’t imagine what it would take for him to risk driving away a girl like Kirsten Vaughan, much less why Kirsten would let her boyfriend keep the other girl around when she was so clearly so smitten.

“You look like hell, man,” Mike said as Don flopped down on a towel beside him. Before them sprawled an endless blue, waves that were surely enormous crashing in the distance only to gently roll onto the sand nearby, as if nervous to intrude upon the peace of the vacationing Nighthawks. Nearby, a group had started up a volleyball game with some local kids, laughing off a contest in which neither side had any interest in keeping score. It was all too surreal.

Don hardly saw it, squinting even behind his sunglasses. “I feel like it,” he said.

“How can you not be loving this, man? This place is like a whole other universe! I shit you not, like ten minutes ago, I saw Yuri Andersen ride by on a freaking white horse. No joke.”

“Yeah, that’s... uh huh,” mumbled Don.

“You not feeling well or something, man? I can get you to the hospital.”

“Hosp... what? No, man. I’m just tired as hell. Barely been sleeping.”

“What, Lauren keeping you up all night?” Mike grinned.

Don had to smile back, a little. “Some. But like, I have a room right next to Miss C, so we have to keep it pretty chill. Honestly, we mostly, you know, during the day when everybody’s out and about. Though last two days she’s been waking me up at like eight in the morning on her way in from the resort gym.” Lauren, recipient of a full ride volleyball scholarship and captain of the NHS team, wasn’t about to let her vacation get in the way of her twice daily workout schedule.

“That sucks, man.”

“There was some sucking,” Don said, smirking a little. “I swear, she has gotten so much better at that he past few months.”

Mike handed Don a beer from the cooler – they didn’t even pretend to card here – and sat back down. “So what’s up then? You somehow look pale and tan at the same time.”

Don sighed. “Oh, just... neighbors. I’m a light sleeper, and I’m pretty much the only one in the hotel bothering with keeping it quiet or at decent hours.”

“Why don’t you complain to Miss C? She’s pretty cool – I bet she’d keep it anonymous and tell people to shut up.”

“Come on, man, I’m no snitch,” snapped Don. “Besides, it’s... well, never mind.”

“No, what? What’s up?”

Don looked around, as if someone might be lurking behind them on the wide open private beach. “Look, you didn’t hear it from me, but... Miss C is part of the disruption.”

“Wait, *what?*!”

Don nodded. “Every night since we been here, man, but like, waaay late. I think she’s trying to be sneaky about it, but her bed’s up against the shared wall, and she’s not quiet about stuff, man.”

“No way!” Mike shook his head. “That’s wild, man. You know, for a teacher, she ain’t bad. I had her for sophomore English, and I tell you what, I didn’t hear a word the bitch said, but at least I never slept through class.”

“Don’t talk like that, man, she’s good people.”

“She’s tits, Donny boy.”

“What does that even mean?”

“Man, Miss Coszic-Lewandoski, shagging some strange dude in Hawaii. Who’d’ve thunk it.”

Don twisted the top off his beer and took a long drink. “Actually... I think it’s one of the other teachers.”

“What? No way! You see who?”

“Nah. They’re at it, like, two or three in the morning. They’re trying to be sneaky about it, and I don’t wanna get caught snooping.”

“Then how do you know it’s a teacher?”

“Well... all right, I got nosy, all right?” Don squirmed, the sand opening a little space under him that he could feel was cooler even through the towel. “I sorta... listened.”

Mike barked a sudden laugh. “You fuckin’ perv, man!”

“I’m not! I just wanted to know who it was, same as you, that’s all!”

“Yeah, whatever man. So what’d you hear? She a dirty girl?”

“Well, yeah. Let’s just say Miss C is a real people pleaser and leave it at that. But none of that gave anything away. It was when they were talking after.”

“Anything juicy?”

“Eh, mostly just sappy stuff. She was talking about how she wishes they didn’t have to hide, how much she’s going to miss him after her uncle’s gone, and he was saying how he’d still be around, but she’s all it won’t be the same. I don’t know what her uncle has to do with it, but they kept mentioning him. It was pretty muffled; I couldn’t follow.”

“Her uncle?”

“Yeah, kept talking about her tío.”

“Who’s T.O.?”

Don could hear in his inflection that he’d said it as an acronym. “Damn, Mike, you don’t pay any attention in Spanish, do you? It means uncle, you moron. Guess she must be half-Hispanic or something.”

“Oh yeah, I guess that makes sense. I think Lewandoski is a Mexican name.”

“Anyway, yeah. She’s definitely way into this guy, and she wouldn’t be if it was somebody she’d just met.”

“Poor gal. So that’s it, huh? Miss C’s booty calls keeping you up all night?”

He frowned. “I wish. Heather Blake’s on—”

“Hooter Blake!” Mike cheered.

“—the other side of me, and she’s been hooking up, too. Quieter, but nowhere near quiet enough. She’s up all hours with whoever the hell she’s messing around with, and practically as soon as she’s done, Miss C starts up. It’s like a freaking conspiracy.”

“Maybe it’s the same guy, moving from one booty call to the next?” Mike joked.

“Heather doesn’t need to sleep with a teacher to get her A’s,” Don assured him.

“I’m more interested in her D’s!”

“You do have some concept of what a D cup looks like, right? She’s gotta be like three quarters of the way through the alphabet.”

“T cups, maybe? ‘Cause those babies are tittays, brotha!”

Don humored him with a chuckle. “Maybe O, for O my fucking god?”

“Ha! T & O baby!” Mike laughed, then stood up and whooped joyously, unrestrainedly out at the ocean. He downed his beer, then snagged another bottle and clinked its neck against Don’s. “To all the tíos out there, baby!”

Don sighed, closing his eyes. “To the tíos.”

Heather, meanwhile, had given neither her uncles and their hope to steal her inheritance, nor her judgmental prick of a grandfather, the least bit of thought so far during this trip. There was always something to do here, even if the doing was simply walking around and seeing. What had possessed Siobhan's dad to fund such an excursion was quite beyond her, but she was grateful, enough that it may have even taken the smallest bite out of her rage against the patriarchy. Not enough that she had let up on her protest of gendered attire – tonight, a microbikini so scant it showed her contempt for the idea that men could show their nipples at the beach but women who did it were sluts. Some of the Pride girls were taking the week off, but she was a true believer in the war for women to be seen for more than their clothing choices. Someday no man would be able to look at a girl walking around 99% naked and judge them for it.

Some men, she granted, were already ahead of the curve.

“The hours are going by too fast,” one such man said, brushing a wisp of hair out of Heather's eye. There was usually a breeze here on these pristine beaches, but by night it was flat-out windy, and in seconds, the hair was back. She liked that Conner kept trying, though.

“We still have four whole days left,” Heather said, nestling into his arms. Though it was still warmer than it had been even in the middle of the day back home, it was cool compared to the day's heat, and on any account, she was happy to have a reason to be held.

“I know.” The boy rested his cheek on her head. The weight of him was comforting. Anchoring, in this place where it felt she might just drift away. “But I don't just mean this week.”

“I know.”

She hadn't had much time to talk to Conner this past week, nor he her. But the past few days, they'd been together as often as not, and this was the topic they had been circling. It had been growing inside her with every date they went on.

Heather spoke into the silence. “I told you this was going to happen, you know. You remember? I told you that everything was running down on the same timer now. Anything that started was going to have to end almost right away.”

He sighed in concession. “I am indeed owed an I-told-you-so.”

“You're owed several, but I'll restrain myself to just the one.”

They sat there together for some minutes, gazing out into the whitecaps cresting across the horizon. It was hard to believe she was really seeing this, that it wasn't a scene in a movie. The whisper of the wind in the palms, the waves crashing on the beach, the moonlight. To say nothing of the sweet, attractive young man whose arms were wrapped snugly around her. It was too perfect.

“What would you say if I offered to take a year off, do what you’re doing and stay here, get some of my electives out of the way on the cheap before heading off to Berkeley?” she asked.

“Stay here? If you can talk Siobhan’s dad into it...”

She pinched his leg. “You know what I meant. What would you say?”

Heather allowed him a moment to think it over, as she did once more herself. Probably for the hundredth time. This was the first time she’d ever tried the idea out loud though. The first time she was letting Conner know what she’d been considering. She would never be able to tell him, however, how glad she was he’d never fixed those big blue eyes on her and asked her to. Heather knew in her heart what her answer ought to be, but for all her academic talents, she wasn’t sure she’d given that right answer when it counted.

“I’d tell you that you’re sweeter than I deserve,” he said at last, “and remind you that you’ve been working for Berkeley nonstop for four years now, and you’re not settling for some podunk community college because of some handsome, charming, brilliant and well-hung young gentleman.”

She laughed with sudden relief to hear he knew better than to give her the opportunity to be weak, and drew him in for a kiss. “Who’s charming?”

The two made out there on the beach for a while; in the span of a few weeks, they’d gone from making out with the occasional hope of a little manual genital stimulation to having sex on nearly every date. This week, they’d been going at it daily. This place had proven quite the aphrodisiac for her, as was the removal of all her usual cares and burdens left behind back home. Enough so that, at her urging, Conner had purchased a few little blue pills from Jimmy Evans. (Jimmy’s dad was a pharmacist, and it was a poorly kept secret that his son was already following in his footsteps.) The pills had done their trick, and he’d yet to want for stamina.

Despite certain other... impediments.

“I know about Amanda,” she said.

Conner pushed himself up off of her. “What? How did you...” He paused, seeming to compose himself as he processed her statement. “What do you mean? What did you hear?”

Heather rolled her eyes, but didn’t try to extricate herself out from underneath him. “Since you didn’t issue a denial, why don’t we skip right past your questions and you can tell me how things stand between the two of you.” It wasn’t an accusation. But she did want to know, more than she cared to admit.

It wasn’t fair of her. Not like she’d been monogamous while she’d been together with Conner. Sure, it wasn’t quite the same with Mr. Lyons, but sex was sex was sex. Even so, and even knowing that their timer was running down, she couldn’t help but feel a little bit jealous.

Conner's lips twisted nervously. "How things stand...? I don't know. We only went on like, two dates before Maui. But I don't know if any of this counts. I, um, think we're probably in a similar situation running out a timer."

"You don't sound very sure."

Conner climbed off of her and laid down on their blanket beside her, picking the side that would shield her from the wind. Maybe that would become her new litmus test for guys – find a guy who shields her from the wind without even having to think about it. "It's complicated, but... after graduation, I think she's going to be, um, going away. For good."

"That's too bad," said Heather quietly.

"Too bad?" He cocked his head back, looking somewhat affronted.

She put a reassuring hand on his chest. "I'm not saying I want to pawn you off on someone, Conner. I'm only saying..." Heather took a moment to steady herself. She didn't get sentimental easily, and when she did, she liked to hurry through it as quickly as possible. "Look, Conner, you're a great guy. Really. Before we went out, I never thought I'd be this happy. With anyone, not just you. But I want you to be happy too, and if I can't be part of that, I want you to be with someone who deserves you. And I like her. She actually kinda reminds me of you."

Ever since she and Amanda had started talking more when she'd joined the Pride, Heather had been struck by how much the girl reminded her of Conner. That fastidiousness in her work, the dry humor, the way she had all that anxiety about what she was doing but tried so hard not to show it. They were almost eerily similar at times.

Conner saw she was struggling with the moment and threw her a little levity. "Is it the legs? You can touch them, if you want."

"I don't know if you know this about me, but I'm actually not super interested in Amanda's legs." Heather pinched him again, though she had to admit that she did like his legs. "Besides, I've got something she doesn't."

"A hard time reaching the top shelf?"

"Shut up!" she giggled, play-fighting at him for a moment. "You know, never mind. I was gonna show you, but I guess I better let you go be with her."

"Aw, come on. You know I prefer a little meat on those bones." Conner ran his hands along her thighs.

"So I'm meaty now?"

"What? People *like* meat!"

She grinned. Who could waste time being mad about petty crap like that in a place like this? "I suppose they do. Come on, Prince Charming, let's go back to my room so we can show you what you seem to have forgotten."

"Oh come on, what's wrong with out here?" he teased, playfully taking a gentle squeeze of her left breast. Heather didn't know how she'd spent so many years resenting

men's interest in her chest, but once she realized how amazing it felt to have a guy actually touching them, playing with her nipples... she'd become less resistant to their interest.

"Yeah, out here on the beach? I know we're at a fancy resort, but there's still public nudity laws, bucko." The thought was kinda hot, yeah, but she wasn't about to get tossed in jail for uncovering those final few evidently objectionable inches of skin.

"I guess you didn't see the nude beach sign," he said, still grasping.

Heather cocked her head to the side and looked around curiously. She hadn't seen any such sign. Still, Conner had used that tone she recognized, where he sounded like he was making a joke but really he was pointing out something she should have known was true in a gentle way. Besides, it was what she wanted to hear anyway. "Huh, really? I haven't seen anybody using it yet. But... well, if it's not illegal, and nobody's around..."

Trying not to look smug about the way the dear boy's eyes widened to the size of dinner plates, Heather reached behind her and undid the poor, overwrought clasp on her bikini. It was funny, in a way; her bikini was practically a joke, two triangles barely bigger than her thumbs, but the way Conner reacted when she took it off, it was like he was seeing her skin for the first time. It was flattering, sure, not that she needed more flattery about her chest. She knew that they would probably age poorly, but for now, they were still proud and as perky as gravity allowed them to be.

"I will never, ever get tired of that sight. So you know."

"I know." She laid back down on her back. The words *public access* were emblazoned there on either breast, a declaration to the world that a woman's body wasn't meant to be hidden away in some horrible shame shirt. Between them she'd gotten a pattern that, unfortunately, some people might mistake for the explosion of a cock. She'd intended it to look sort of like fireworks, but more elegant, a celebration of her femininity, but, with the way Conner's eyes glazed over when he looked at them...

She shouldn't. She'd sworn she would never.

Maybe it was the moon, or the beach, or being half a world away from her normal boring life, or the way this sweet, scrumptious boy was staring at her, but...

Oh, what the hell. Just this once.

"So, super-dong," she said, helping him off with his boxers and giving his manhood a slow stroke. "Have you ever..."

Heather was having too hard a time getting the words out, so he took a guess. "Ever done it outdoors before? Sure have. Yeah, once with..." He caught himself, and stopped, looking appropriately remorseful.

His bravado slew her bashfulness. "Really? Don't stop there. Go on and tell me about all your other wild exploits. Or can I finish." His jaw clicked shut. "I was going to ask... have you ever... I believe the term is 'titty-fucked' a girl before?" She made a face,

showing what she thought of that term. One of her most difficult assignments in Mr. Lyons' class had been learning to hear and use the term, which she did in class, but she didn't like using men's words to describe women's bodies when she didn't have to.

Heather could read it in his face that he had. Part of her wondered with whom. Amanda? She was pretty stacked. (Could flat girls do that? Sex ed didn't really have many girls with small boobs, and she'd never seen Mr. Lyons try it on them.)

Still, not ten seconds ago she'd made it plain she didn't want him discussing his history with other women, and he applied his learning in his response. "Next to you, I don't think anyone else's could qualify for the act."

She smiled, pleased. A right answer. "Nice. Now, I know I've said I'd never... you know. But... we're in Hawaii, and it's gorgeous, and... I dunno. I guess, just once, I'm curious what it's, um, like." Technically, she was curious what it was like with someone she cared about, rather than enduring the grunts and taunts of Mr. Lyons. She learned almost nothing in his class except how corrupt and pervasive the patriarchy was, but she supposed he was only working with the curriculum the school had given him.

Unlike her teacher, Conner actually applied a moment's thought before diving into a girl's tits. Breasts, rather. "We'll need to do something about the, ah, friction."

"Oh. You didn't bring any sunscreen?"

"It's after midnight."

She peered around, but there was nobody around. They were probably a mile or more away from the resort, and at this hour, the place was abandoned. Although even if there had been somebody, not like she could go over and ask to borrow their sunscreen at this hour.

"Come on," he said suddenly, and held out a hand to help her to her feet. She didn't know what he had in mind, but she was game. Here, now, she was game for anything.

Moments later the duo was running into the ocean, their naked skin gleaming blue-white under a three-quarter moon. "Out here? Not sure I can hold my breath that long, Conner," she said, pressing her body against him. There was nothing quite like the feeling of a warm, wet man against her bare, wet breasts.

"You know, I was just gonna use the water, but now that I have you out here..." Heather yelped in surprise as Conner, her gentle Conner, hefted her into his arms, holding her aloft with a firm grip on her soft ass. "I just want to have sex with you. Is that OK?" She could feel his tip beneath her, waiting.

She beamed at him so brightly that for a moment it dispelled the night. But even as he carefully lowered her onto his waiting cock, a wave came along and slapped them over with a shriek of surprise. They emerged, laughing, on the shore a few moments later, crawling out of the ocean and collapsing nearby on the sand.

“That was sweet, Conner. Thank you for that.” She rolled onto her back, pulling him on top of her. “But now that we’re back on the earth, you wanna...?” Heather grasped her breasts and pulled them apart, making space for him.

“Oh, if you insist.”

Conner titty-fucked her until her tattooed pattern earned their place, and then and there she stopped resenting the artist for mucking it up. He was even mindful of her affinity for having her nipples stimulated, taking his time and playing with them while she let him admire a view that, in his words, was even better than the scenery around them.

“I’d like to see Amanda try *that*,” she said after, as she rinsed herself off in the Pacific waters. She didn’t know where Conner’s cum would end up, but she’d enjoyed watching and being part of where it had begun its journey.

“Oh wow, yeah, you think she’d let me?” he said, but he didn’t flinch when she punished him with a soft underwater punch.

So he was fooling around with Amanda Carpenter. And she was sleeping with Jordan Lyons. Who was also have sex with Amanda Carpenter. (Such as his brutality towards her was “sex” in the traditional sense.) And Amanda was... Yeesh. The whole affair was... not dizzying, quite, but rather a surprising, neat little pattern that nonetheless defied sense. Soon they would graduate, and both girls would at last be done tolerating their teacher’s instruction, and then both girls would have to leave. Until then, she was going to enjoy herself, and if she gave Amanda half so much cause for jealousy... so be it.

Was this love? She’d always thought love would be more... monogamous. But maybe it was just having someone in your life who made you happy? Heather dismissed the analysis. She was eighteen, nearly nineteen, and she didn’t have the arrogance to presume she’d answered the poet’s question.

Soon, Conner was holding her again in chest-deep water. The two swayed against the rolling waves, their bodies pressed together under a starry sky. “You know, for years, guys have kind of obsessed over my breasts,” she said softly. “Would you really rather...?”

“Honestly?”

“Conner, you don’t know how to be anything but honest. That’s part of what I love about you.” She hadn’t told him she loved him, quite, but she saw in his eyes he’d heard the near-miss, and was happy at how close it had come.

“Well then... there’s no ‘rather.’ Whenever I can be with you, I want to be with you. I’ve wanted to be with you for so long that I can barely believe I get to be. And whatever we do, it’s together. Until that timer runs out.”

She kissed him, and would kiss him many more times before he would have a chance to speak again. To think, she’d come so close to never giving herself a chance to

enjoy these final few months of high school. Her eyes had been fixed on the horizon – Berkeley, grad school, and beyond – that she forgot sometimes to immerse herself in the here and now. Somehow, it had taken this sweet, geeky, irrepressible boy to remind her of it. She would miss him when the summer was over, but for now, it was springtime in Maui, and she had nowhere else to be.

Siobhan glanced at her phone, grimacing. Normally her phone's notification screen cut off most of the text, but here, her father's message was short and sweet.
\$312,119.80?! CALL ME NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

"Go on ahead, you guys. I gotta call my dad."

"Tell him thanks!" said Hayleigh. "This place is amazing. He must have an in with the owner or something to be able to afford this."

"Or something," Kylee said, dialing.

"Hi Daddy... what's wrong?... why are you... don't shout, Daddy... I told you everyone and you said OK, right?... I mean, everyone. You agreed, remember?... no, I know, but... we can't go back in the middle of... but Daddy that's not fair... no refund? well then why make us... OK, I'll, um, tell everyone... uh huh... all right... yes, Daddy... I love you too, Daddy..."

A few minutes later, Kylee hung up the phone with a smirk. No refund? So no cancellation. Not like he wasn't good for it, and she'd make it up to him when she got home. Probably. Or not.

Kristy had been surprised at how well Arthur Rodriguez moved on the dance floor. This club was something else, too. Back home, on the rare occasion she and Brent had gone out dancing, they were relegated to one of the two local clubs, one of which was nothing special, and the other was special only in its dinginess. This place... huge movie-sized screens showed psychedelic imagery, and the bass of the music pulsed in her bones. The people were all young and hot; Arthur was easily one of the oldest people she'd seen here and he was barely forty. They'd only let him in because he was with her. Even the location was amazing, built right on the beach. Apparently part of the oceanside wall even retracted into the floor when they wanted to open it up, though it was too cold for that tonight. Still, club-goers could come and go through a door that lead out to a partitioned private beach. Inside, there was an artificial waterfall and lagoon, over which dancers writhed in suspended cages.

All in all, it was a pleasant break from being surrounded by goggle-eyed teenagers.

She and Arthur made their way to a table outside on the beach, where the music was muffled enough that they could actually hear one another.

"You got moves, Artie," she said as he handed her a drink.

"You know it," he said, clinking his glass against hers. "You're not half bad yourself."

"Oh, do go on." She flipped her hand at him.

"Seriously, though, I can't imagine what Brent was thinking, walking out on a woman like you, Kris. Smart, gorgeous, funny... you got it all."

She nodded, realizing he'd drunk enough to be going from flirty to making a move. Kristy wouldn't be the first faculty member he'd tried it with; Mr. Rodriguez even had a reputation among the students for his wandering eyes. "Well, somehow I manage."

"So you single these days, then? Saving yourself for some new young buck?" he asked.

Even if the answer had been yes, she would have said no. Besides, she'd been drinking more than a little herself. She'd have to be careful not to be too obvious about it on her way back into the Rose Pinnacle. "Nah, I've got somebody I've been seeing for a few months now."

He masked his disappointment rather well, she thought. "Oh? How's that going?"

"I... don't know," she answered carefully. "I like him, and we have fun together."

"Buuuut...?" he prompted. She'd left the unspoken "but" pretty obvious, she supposed.

"But... well, it's complicated." Was that ever an understatement. That it was a student was more than complicated enough, to say nothing of whatever role a magical piece of software had played.

“Complicated how?” he asked. “You like him, you have fun... so what’s missing?”

Had she been sober, she would have issued a simple “I’d rather not talk about it” and been done with it. Had she been merely drinking, she might have distracted him with another invitation to dance. But the alcohol was combining with whatever that was that had been passing around being smoked the dance floor to make her both introspective and impulsive at the same time.

“It’s a few things,” she began, taking a drink in a vain effort by her subconscious to shut her up. “For one, he’s sort of seeing another woman – no, two other women now.”

“Wow. Real player, huh? Why would you stay with a guy who’s messing around like that?”

She ignored the subtext of his statement, such-a-guy-didn’t-deserve-her so she-should-dump-him and hey-now-she’s-single and oh-you’re-here so why-not-let’s-fuck. Men were such simple creatures. “Because I like him, like I said. And because he makes me happy. But it’s also probably gonna be over in a few months anyway, so I’m just making hay while the sun is shining.”

“What, he got cancer or something?”

“No, but... well, he’s in education, too.” Sort of. “And after the academic year, he’s transferring to another school, and... not sure what that’s going to mean for us.”

“Long distance never works,” he said, not so subtly.

“It’s not the distance, but... our current set-up works great. We get to see each other every day, and we help each other with our stuff, and...” Kristy trailed off, realizing she’d said too much.

“Wait, he works at Northside? Who is it?” Arthur leaned in, excited to be offered this morsel of gossip. “Shepherd? Adler? That ape Conrad?”

Kristy grimaced, then downed the rest of her drink. What could she say? Arthur might not be a social butterfly, but she still couldn’t make up a relationship and expect it to keep quiet. Telling the truth was out, too. “You wouldn’t believe me if I told you,” she said finally.

“It’s a student, right?” Her eyes widened, and the alcohol suddenly hardened to a rock in her stomach. Oh god. Oh god, shit, no—

“Kris, I’m kidding, geez!” Arthur patted her shoulder. “Good grief, I wouldn’t even joke about something like that if anyone else was in earshot. I know how that stuff ruins careers.”

She let out a breath. “Damn right it does.”

“You wanna keep your secret, fine. But your mystery man must be quite a guy if he can keep a woman like you, if you don’t mind my saying.”

“Thanks, Arthur.” She gave his hand a little squeeze.

“And you know, if you like this guy so much, go for it, ya know? Make him make a choice, and give him a reason to choose you. You want to make it work, make it work. You can’t just worry about making everybody else happy – you gotta worry about your own happiness, too.”

She considered those words for only a moment, for then he was saying that if she really wanted to be happy tonight, he had a spare key to his room he’d be happy to give her. But later, as she washed her perfume off of Conner in her suite’s shower so that nobody would smell her on him, those words continued to echo in her mind.

Jordan had to hand it to Amanda – this had been one hell of an idea. He might even take it easy on her for a while when they got back. He'd worried that TIOS might have some kind of range limit built in, that practically halfway around the world, things would start to fall apart. But as Stacy eagerly squirmed around his cock for the third time that evening, the plush, pillow top mattress beneath them absorbing the brunt of her efforts, things were holding together well indeed.

"I, don't, know, how, you, keep, that, thing, hard," Stacy grunted between bounces, "but, I, fucking, love it!"

Jordan had been very careful not to mess around with his own file in TIOS. After all, start editing himself, and suddenly the person making those decisions wasn't him any more, but rather some alternate universe version that may or may not have the same goals and drives. But he'd let himself splurge on the erections-at-will quote. Sometimes he wondered if his instantaneous refractory period was causing him to over-focus on his baser instincts, but giving in to his baser instincts had been the whole point of TIOS to begin with, after all.

Jordan had first made out with Stacy at a party freshman year, back when they'd been going through a seven-minute-in-heaven phase. Back then she'd had no boobs, dagger-sharp braces, and Jordan himself hadn't had the slightest clue what he was doing. Both had agreed to tell everyone it had been an amazing time, and Stacy had. He'd told everyone a more accurate account in order to curry favor with Kirsten, which had gone nowhere. It had taken TIOS to melt that ice princess, and even then, she was heavy on the frost.

Now he fucked Stacy almost daily. She was one of the girls coopted under "*Some of us are going to have sex while we're still in school.*" – *Mary Buchanan*, but unlike the others who'd fuck him out of class, Stacy actually liked fucking Jordan. If not for Hailey, he'd probably give in and be boyfriend and girlfriend like she wanted. But while Hailey tolerated him fooling around, he didn't think she'd be willing to be a homewrecker. Not worth the risk. Nothing was worth the risk of losing that. So instead, they had the same study hall period, and their teacher was incredibly lax about hall passes. Now she had straight white teeth, a sweet pair of perky titties, and Jordan himself knew exactly how to handle her.

There was a knock at the door. Probably Jackson again, pissed off about being ousted from his room. One would think after six days he'd be used to it and have found somebody else to bunk with, but no, he was still being a bitch about having less success than Jordan.

"Someone's, ungh, knocking," Stacy pointed out when it continued.

"Just Jackson. I put the do not disturb on the door – he'll respect it."

But suddenly, a woman's voice was calling out from the far side. "Jordan? Are you in there? I really need to talk to you."

Stacy didn't look surprised at hearing a woman's voice wanting in; she knew full well what kind of guy she was sleeping with, and was almost certainly fucking at least a couple other guys herself. She was perfectly ready to disregard it and keep rutting away.

Jordan, however, recognized the voice. "Get up," he said.

Stacy frowned. She was close to coming, and loathe to stop. "I'm almost there," she whined.

Jordan smacked her on the ass, hard so she'd know he meant it. "Jordan? Please open up," came the voice. When Stacy still didn't let up, he tossed her off of him and rose from the bed, tossing the girl's clothes at her as she cussed him out for his abruptness. Soon, she was half storming, half being shoved into the hallway in her underwear.

"Hailey? You're pushing me out for Hefty fucking Hailey?" snapped Stacy angrily. She might not have the social clout of Hottie Hayleigh or Kirsten, but she was a hot enough girl to suffer from a similar over-abundance of pride. Being forced out for a girl like this was a bitter pill for her to swallow.

"Get the fuck out," he said, then ushered a sobbing, miserable-looking Hailey into his room, slamming the door in Stacy's face.

"Fuck you, you fucking chubby chaser asshole!" she shrieked.

If Jordan still had to work to get pussy, he might have been upset about that, as well as the coming shit storm as she'd surely be running down to the beach to tell everybody who would listen. That was going to suck.

But Hailey looked like she'd just had to euthanize a kitten with her bare hands, which could only mean one thing.

"I d-did what y-you said," she wailed, collapsing against him. He had to hold her up, she was so distraught, and he quickly lead her to the bed. Hailey wrapped herself around him, shaking as she wept.

She couldn't get more words out as yet. Jordan simply held her, stroking her hair and making soothing noises. He wasn't very good at being comforting, but as sad as she was, it wasn't hard.

"I did what you said," she repeated a long time later. The sun was setting now, the final time it would set on their stay.

"Do you feel any better?" he asked.

"I don't know. I waited down the hall from his room, and when I saw him go in, I went down and pounded on the door until he had to open it. Then I told him that I knew. About all of them. I told him he couldn't treat people like this, that I wouldn't let him use people and lie to people and..." She lost herself for a moment again, but composed herself much more quickly this time. "I told him what he was doing was wrong."

“Good on you.” He pulled her close and kissed her forehead. “Sure, that sow Heather might be shaking her fist at the patriarchy or whatever bullshit she thinks she stands for, but you’re the one really standing up for women. I’m so proud of you.”

“Thanks. He looked like he felt really bad.” She didn’t sound happy about that at all, somehow. How did a pud like Fishers make these women so stupid for him? “I didn’t think he’d... I don’t know what I thought would happen. I was just so mad, you know?”

Jordan didn’t know. He’d been stoking that anger for almost two weeks now, trying to push her to this very point. She’d spent most of the break traipsing around Maui, reading by the pool, or, whenever possible, fucking him. But little by little, watching Conner walking hand in hand with Amanda around the city, seeing him sneak away with Heather down the beach, back and forth, had worn on her. Finally she’d caught him sneaking into Miss C’s room the night before, and Jordan had made what turned out to be the last push.

“You have every right to be mad, hon. It’s one thing to be a cock-starved little slut like yourself, or a dude-slut like me. We at least own what we are, right? But a lying, conniving little sneak like Fishers...” Frankly, Jordan was more offended that the guy was using TIOS so little and wasting the opportunity than he was at how he was mistreating anyone. Still, Hailey needed to feel supported.

“Yeah. He... he has no right to be mad at me. I didn’t do anything he didn’t! I did *less* in fact! I’d never sleep with a teacher! Or trick someone into thinking I was going steady with them when I wasn’t! The only reason I never told him about you and me was because I didn’t think he’d care, you know?”

Jordan nodded. The rumor-proof TIOS quote had proven invaluable in keeping his schemes under wraps, but it was pretty damn annoying when it came to offhanded dismissals of people’s interest in him. “But today, I let him have it. I didn’t hold back at all, just like you said I shouldn’t. And when I told him, he said—”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa,” he said. “Easy there, pretty girl.”

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to shout,” she answered, her volume reined in. “Anyway, he said—”

“You know what?” he interjected quickly. He’d been listening carefully, making sure she didn’t get those words in. After all, he’d agreed not to use anything he heard over spring break in TIOS. “Tomorrow, on the flight home, you should write it all down. Write it in your diary, so you can remember the day you told that dirtbag he couldn’t break your big beautiful heart ever again. Every word you said, every word he said.”

“I... but...”

“You can tell me all about it when we’re back home. I don’t want to let him ruin our last night together. Come here, Hailey.” He rose, leading her by the hand to their balcony. He’d landed a suite on the twenty-third floor of a twenty-five story building, and the view was out of this world. It felt like miles down to the ground, where dark

shapes speckled the ground like ants. To their right, they could make out the soft glow of Maui lighting up for the night, and to their left, the sun setting throwing an orange hue across the azure ocean waters.

Jordan wasn't prone to corny lines, but he could use one right then. And for once, he actually felt rather corny. "I swear, that's the best view I've ever seen in my life, but you're still the only thing I want to look at right now."

Hailey's tear-streaked face brightened. "Do... do you want to fuck your little slut? Here, on the balcony?"

"Did you see who I just kicked out of my room? Because that skank can't hold a candle to my perfect little gutter-mouthed fuck toy."

She squealed in glee, and threw off her clothes so hastily that her top simply flew out into space. Whatever. Jordan didn't want to see this girl's tits covered up again until the hotel staff forced him out of the room. Hailey bent herself over the railing and shook her ass invitingly until he seized her hips and pulled himself into that snug little cunt of hers. It drew him in like a tractor beam, and didn't let up until he was all the way in.

"Get to work, slut," he growled into her ear.

She giggled in exultation, and shrieked into the darkening sky. "I'M BEING FUCKED!"

She sure was. And soon, Fishers would be fucked too.

DeShaun rubbed his eyes, but there was no mistaking it. That was definitely Hefty Hailey on the next floor down, naked, bent over the railing, her body bouncing in a manner that could only mean she was being nailed, hard, from behind. Downstairs, though... that was Jackson and Jordan's room... right?

They must've changed rooms.

"Squeeze my fucking titties, baby!" she was saying. "Harder! It barely hurts – do it *harder!* You own my mother fucking titties, Jordan, don't be gentle!"

No fucking way...! But sure enough, a pair of hands that could well be Jordan Lyons reached out and took hold of those big fat tits. Hailey's pair was smaller than he would've thought – such a waste. A fatty like that usually at least had big boobs, but these were perfectly shaped C cups at best, he'd bet. Such a shame.

DeShaun's unease at the scene unfolding on the balcony beneath him was at least as much because Jordan Lyons, NHS's most shameless man-whore was fucking its least fuckable girl, but also because when she raised her slender, toned hock on the railing, he feared she was going to fall off. Jordan saw to that though, with a hard grip on Hailey's plain, lustrous mane, jerking her neck back to keep her weight against him.

"Oh GAW-HAW-HAWD you have the biggest bestest fucking dick! Goddammit I can't get e-fucking-nuff of your goddamn dick. Your little slut could never get enough dick ever, but yours... oh FUCK, yours is shredding my fucking cunt!"

Against his better judgment, DeShaun leaned forward to get a look at the face behind the flab. Sure enough, there he was. Jordan Lyons, putting it hard to Hefty Hailey McManus.

Once he'd seen it, there was no unseeing it. It was every bit as horrifying as he'd have thought such a thing would be. Round, perky boobs jiggling in off-putting symmetry; her skinny-big ass, the kind made to bounce whole rolls of quarters off of, slamming off of Jordan's abs; a face that might be slammin' hot if it wasn't attached to that lumpless, bulkless body.

But to listen to her...

"Harder, baby, fuck me *harder!* My pussy can take it, I promise. Your fuck toy won't break, baby. You can bend my will however you want, I'll do fucking anything, *any fucking thing*, but you can't break my pussy. It's yours. My honeypot is sweet just for you. You smash that pot and watch how my sticky icky gooey pussy holds together around your big fat cock, baby..."

She never really stopped. DeShaun couldn't make himself watch, but... he had to admit, he didn't mind listening. He doubted anybody else on any other balcony for ten floors was missing much of it either. Who'd have thought Hefty Hailey was cut out to be a phone sex operator? He'd always thought she seemed like a nice person, but... this was one nasty, nasty girl.

Honestly, he almost didn't blame Jordan for stuffing that box. Almost.

Eventually they moved back into the room, and while he could listen to the moans coming up through the floor if he wanted, DeShaun decided he'd been creeping enough for one vacation. Down by the pool, he met up with Brad and Nick.

“We’ve been waiting for like half an hour. Where you been, D?”

Had it been anyone else, DeShaun would have started gossiping. But, considering it was just Jordan being his usual skanky self... “Nowhere. C’mon guys. Vacation’s almost over – let’s rock this little island, eh?”

“Well?” Miss C prompted, looking around the classroom. Still no one answered.
“Don?”

“It was good,” he said, looking at his lap.

“Heather?”

“Really, really fun.”

“Marisa?”

“Pretty good, yeah.”

The students went around the circle. “Good.” “It was so good. Thank your dad for me, Siobhan.” “Cool.” “Got tan.” “Yeah, pretty fun.” And so on. The underclassmen were no more talkative than the seniors.

“Riveting stuff guys.”

“Well, what happens in Maui...” said Don.

“That’s not the saying,” Marisa corrected.

“All right. Well, I hope you all had a good time. Because now, break’s over, and it’s time to get serious. From now on, we’re in the home stretch.”

