

High School Dress Code



Part Two

Briana Vermont



A "Her TV" Novel



Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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High School Dress Code 2

By Briana Vermont

Summary of Part 1

Julian Avery moves to a new town and a new school, where all the girls dress like his grandmother. The problem, it seems, is a school dress code that is enforced relentlessly by a sadistic Vice Principal, Mrs. Carmichael. When the girls in the school plan a protest where everyone will come to school breaking the dress code, and even suggest that guys should participate, Julian is enthusiastic to join in! Unfortunately he is the only guy in the school to do so.

The Vice Principal rounds up every girl who broke the rules, including the hapless Julian. She gives them all a two-week suspension, but offers them an alternative. They can wear the new school uniforms for two weeks instead, modeling them and convincing the other students to buy into the idea.

The boys' uniforms aren't available yet. Mrs. Carmichael insists Julian will be punished the same as everyone else, and must

attend school as a girl for two weeks. An appeal to Principal Pelton does not go well as the very strange man is attracted to the helpless Julian, even more so when he learns Julian is a boy! A misunderstanding in the office results in an update to the school computer records, and Julian becomes Julie Ann, attending all the appropriate girls' classes.

Julian's best friend Sid is no help. Sid is inexplicably infatuated with his friend, much to his own dismay but even more to Julian's! His mother Melissa is no help either. She seems to only want to assist Julian with hair, makeup and clothes, as if she's oblivious to his being her son and not her daughter! She even seems to think it's okay for him to fill in as a hostess at the gentlemen's club she manages.

And what about the other characters enabling the poor boy's deception? Helena, his mother's bra fitter who knows exactly the right lingerie for any occasion or body type. Bobby, the club bouncer who protects the poor boy as he would his own daughter. Gina, the club's makeup artist who teaches him stunning makeup tricks no boy should ever know. The man from the apartment next door, who thinks Julian is at least three different people. Or Miss Homek, his Home Studies teacher who is helping him to design and sew his first dress for the dance next week?

And now Julian has caught the attention of the school cheerleaders! Evelyn, Dabria, Chelsea, Bailey and Ashley have invited Julian to sleep over at Evelyn's house for the weekend. He probably could have said no, made an excuse. Yet somehow, a sleepover with five beautiful girls sounded like fun. His mother even spent the money she was saving for his birthday to buy him everything a girl could need for a fun girls' weekend...

High School Dress Code 2

Chapter 1

Friday Night

All the girls met up at Evelyn's house and immediately went to her bedroom. Julian couldn't believe how nice the home was, or how big Evelyn's room was! Evelyn had two beds(!), in addition to a massive walk-in closet, a long dresser with six drawers, a makeup desk with lighted mirrors, a computer desk, a flat-screen TV, and there was still space for six girls to sit on the floor, laughing and giggling and poking and playing! Julian thought he just might have died and gone to heaven.

Talking with the girls was a problem at first. They all talked so fast, and about things Julian didn't always understand. But he quickly learned it didn't really matter. He could easily keep up his end of the conversation with a few simple phrases, like:

"I know, right?"

"That is so cute!"

"Really, really, super cute!"

"No way?"

"I know, don't you love it?"

"You are so sweet!"

At some point in the conversation, Evelyn stopped talking and stared at Julian curiously. It was a general rule with this group of girls, Julian had begun to understand, that when Evelyn spoke, everyone listened. But even more when Evelyn was quiet, everyone was quiet, waiting to see what she was about to say. All the girls were soon completely quiet, looking back and forth between Evelyn and Julian, wondering what Evelyn had noticed about the new girl in the group.

“What are you wearing?” Evelyn finally said when she had everyone’s full attention.

Julian was the center of attention; he just didn’t know why. Evelyn was looking at his shoulder and so he felt with his hand, finding his exposed bra strap. His T-shirt had slipped again, showing off the red brassiere his ever-helpful mother had bought for his girls’ weekend!

“It’s . . . just my bra,” Julian said, turning as red as the item under examination as he quickly pulled up the shirt to cover it again.

“You’re wearing a *red* bra?” asked Bailey.

“Let me see!” said Chelsea, tugging Julian’s shirt to expose the strap again. Soon all the girls were pulling at Julian’s T-shirt, trying to get a look.

“Take it off!” demanded Dabria. The five girls soon overpowered poor Julian, pulling the T-shirt over his head, exposing him in his beautiful, embroidered, red satin and lace lingerie. The girls sat back and stared in awe.

“A red bra! So hot,” said Ashley. “Where did you get it?” she asked as she reached out and stroked the beautiful cups which held Julian’s strategically presented breasts.

“My Mom takes me to a lingerie shop downtown,” Julian said, as a couple of other girls touched the sensual cups and the straps which held the awe-inspiring view in place. “She bought this for me, for my birthday.”

“Your Mom bought you a bra like this for your birthday?” asked Bailey. “Your Mom is so awesome!”

Chelsea was running her fingers under the straps. “It’s so soft! And smooth; it must be so comfortable!”

“It is,” replied Julian. His mother had said the bra would give the girls something to talk about. He really hadn’t pictured being the center of attention though, with five other girls touching his breasts and sliding their hands under the straps, over his shoul-



ders and across his back. He was fairly sure, though, that this was the most amazing moment of his entire life!

“So what about the panties!?” asked Evelyn, suddenly realizing that there might even be more to see!

“They’re matching,” said Julian, without a clue what was about to happen.

Suddenly and without warning, five girls were shoving their hands down Julian’s short-shorts, trying to get hold of his red panties. Julian was overcome with giggles as the girls tickled him mercilessly, however he somehow managed to lie himself facedown on the floor, leaving the girls only his back side to work at. Five girls lay on top of him as their hands slid down the back of his shorts, as well as up the back of his shorts, grabbing at his bottom and pulling at his panties until they were exposed. Those who couldn’t reach into his shorts continued to restrain him through fits of laughter as they tickled him without pity.

“They *do* match!” Dabria laughed as she pulled the red fabric well beyond the top of Julian’s shorts.

“Roll her over!” said Evelyn. “I want to see the front!”

Julian giggled and shrieked as he tried to resist. Fortunately, Evelyn’s mother came to his rescue.

“Pizza’s here!” she said from the door, observing the attack on her daughter’s bedroom floor as if it was nothing special. This was a girls’ sleepover; what else would you expect except that the girls would hold each other down to expose their underwear?

The effect of food was immediate, the five girls instantly losing interest in Julian’s panties as they rushed madly down to the kitchen. Julian held back for only a moment, to see if he could find his shirt. He couldn’t. Taking another moment to straighten his breasts and fix his panties in Evelyn’s full-length mirror, Julian quickly followed the other girls in his bra and short-shorts. All the girls were already at the table with plates of pizza, so Julian went to the counter to help himself.

Evelyn's mother handed Julian a plate. "That's a beautiful bra you're wearing," she told him.

"Thank you Mrs. Dressler," said Julian, blushing as the woman placed a slice of pizza on his plate. "I looked for my shirt but couldn't find it," he explained. Glancing at the table, he saw Dabria waving his T-shirt like a flag, as if to say, "Come get it if you can!"

As Julian made his way to the table, Evelyn's father entered the kitchen. "Anyone have something for me?" he said as he almost ran into Julian. "Whoa, this looks good!" he said, glancing down Julian, stopping momentarily at his brightly decorated breasts, then continuing down to the plate of pizza. He picked up the slice and took a bite. Julian had no idea what to do and so simply stood still in the middle of the kitchen, watching the older man eat his pizza.

"Daddy, you're embarrassing me!" Evelyn said from the kitchen table.

"Hey," the man replied. "Anything going on in your bedroom is your own business. But when it spills out," he continued, indicating Julian's ample breasts, "into the rest of the house, all bets are off!"

"There's plenty of pizza, Julie sweetie," Evelyn's mom said sympathetically to Julian as she replaced the slice on his plate. Mortified, Julian sat at the table to eat. He looked at Dabria with annoyance, and Dabria threw him his shirt. He dressed quickly before eating his pizza.

* * *

The girls had finished off all the pizza a while ago, and Evelyn's mom felt it was time to reclaim her kitchen. Breaking through the continuous, overwhelming chatter she said, "Evelyn, what are you and your friends planning for tonight?"

Evelyn replied to her mother, "Nothing much. Just hang out in my room, I guess."

“Then why don’t you and your friends go get into your jammies? Off you go, girls!”

Julian got up from the table with the other girls, and in a stampede of long legs, bare feet, and blonde hair, the six girls pounded up the stairs to Evelyn’s room. Julian found his overnight bag where he had dropped it against the wall, and as the room descended into a chaos of tossed blouses, skirts, shorts, and bras, he snuck out of the room and down the hall to the bathroom.

Julian opened his bag to find his pajamas. Except they weren’t there! He dug down to the bottom, and although he didn’t exactly examine every item in the bag, he was positive that there was no large flannel shirt or pants. There was no large anything, and there was certainly nothing flannel!

Julian got a sick feeling as he realized what his mother had done. He looked through the bag again and found what he knew would be there: a tiny, pink, satin and lace babydoll nighty. With bloomers! Just like the type he would see his mother wearing every morning as she helped him prepare for school.

Julian had no choice. He stripped off all his clothes, placing the T-shirt, short-shorts, and red bra and panty set into his bag. Then he stepped into the bloomers and pulled the satin slip over his head, pulling it down as far as it would go, which was to say barely to his hips. Julian pulled his hair up and out, and arranged it over his shoulders. He then checked himself over in the mirror, took a deep breath and left the safety of the bathroom, returning to Evelyn’s room.

“There she is!” shouted Ashley as Julian walked in the door. He looked around the room, finding himself surrounded by the other five girls. They wore a variety of sleepwear, featuring all forms of skirts and ruffles with kittens and pandas and ribbons and bows. Chelsea even wore a pair of polkadot flannel pants and top! But their feminine attire didn’t take away from the fact that they looked like a pack of wolves ready to pounce.

“You’ve been keeping secrets from us!” Bailey said, poking Julian in the middle of his chest with a very pointy finger.

“What? No, I don’t have secrets...” said Julian. How did they know? He froze in place, a deer in the headlights, his knees quivering far below the hem of his pink nightie.

“You better tell us everything right now!” demanded Chelsea.

“Yeah, spill it!” said Dabria, complete with another finger poke.

“I’m sorry!” said Julian, almost in tears. “I just wanted to be...”

“Makeup secrets now, sister!” ordered Evelyn. “Tell us what you know that we don’t!”

“Oh, makeup secrets!” said Julian with relief. Except, “I don’t really have any secrets. Just, you know, I wear makeup...”

“I knew it,” said Ashley sadly. “Julie’s just naturally beautiful like the rest of you. Look at me, I’ve got this big round face like a beach ball, I’ll never be as pretty as any of you.”

“Have you tried contouring?” asked Julian.

“I’ve tried everyth... what?” said Ashley. “What do you mean?”

Julian looked around the room and spotted Evelyn’s makeup table. Searching the tubes and bottles, he found exactly what he needed.

“Like this,” he said, applying a bronzing lotion to Ashley’s cheeks. “Use a dark bronzer, maybe two or three shades darker than your skin tone. One with a matte finish is best. Apply it to areas you want to de-emphasize, like your cheeks here, and we can put a little on your temples, narrow your chin like this.” Julian then found a lighter shade and applied it to the center of the girl’s chin and forehead. “Then use a shiny, light color to highlight any features you want to emphasize!”

Ashley looked at herself in the mirror. “You really do have secrets!” she shrieked, jumping and hugging Julian. “You are so amazing, Julie!”

“How do I make my eyes pop like yours?” asked Bailey.

Julian looked at the other girl closely. “Use an eyeshadow that’s the opposite color of your eyes. For your blue eyes, you should be using something with orange undertones.”

Bailey began searching the makeup desk, quickly setting to work with the peach eyeshadow she found.

“What about me!” said Chelsea, looking for assistance with her thin lips.

Julian realized he really *did* have makeup secrets! Having spent most of his week in makeup classes, being worked on by makeup professionals at his mother’s work, and having his mother go over all the details with him every day, he really had learned a lot about beautifying yourself. All the girls worked together for the next hour, sharing all their tricks and giving each other makeovers. And whenever they needed an ‘expert’ opinion, they turned to Julie!

“What are we going to do for Julie?” asked Ashley. “Her makeup is already perfect.”

“Look at her nails,” said Bailey. “She definitely needs a manicure! What colors of nail polish do you have, Evelyn?”

Julian did not want to have his nails painted! “I never paint my nails,” he said weakly as the girls all sprang into action. Ashley and Bailey set to work, filing and shaping his untrimmed nails into long, feminine almond shapes. Evelyn arrived moments later with the polish.

“I have two of these. The color’s called ‘Girly Girl!’” squealed Evelyn.

“It’s perfect for her!” said Chelsea. “It matches your nightie.”

Julian stared at the shiny pink polish the girls were applying to his long, feminine nails. How do you remove nail polish, he wondered? *Can* you remove it?

“I’ll send a bottle home with you for touchups,” Evelyn offered helpfully.

“A girly-girl needs pigtails!” said Dabria. She sat behind Julian, separating his long blonde hair into two sections, pulling them out from the sides of his head above his ears, and tying them off with elastic hair bands that looked like cute pink bows that a baby might wear.

“Here you go,” said Ashley, handing a bottle of polish to Julian as she and Bailey finished his fingers. She sat down cross-legged in front of Julian and said, “You paint my toes and I’ll paint yours!”

Julian painted Ashley’s toes and watched as she painted his, while the other girls moved on to styling each other’s hair.

Julian was blowing on his toes, attempting to dry them, when Bailey said, “Who wants to play Truth or Dare?”

All the girls readily agreed, and Julian soon found himself seated in a circle with the others. Evelyn took a bottle of polish, and spun it in the center of the circle, and it landed on...

“Chelsea!” everyone screamed and laughed.

Chelsea held her breath for a moment, before saying “I choose dare.”

Evelyn got a wicked look in her eyes and said, “I dare you to... kiss Dabria!”

“Hey, not me!” said Dabria. “It’s her dare, not mine.”

“I’ll do it,” said Ashley. Julian stared in wonder as Ashley and Chelsea approached each other on their knees, stared at each other for just a moment, then closed their eyes, wrapped their arms around each other, and kissed a long, deep kiss.

“Ewwww!” said all the other girls.

“This is some kind of kissing game!” Julian thought to himself. “This might be gross for girls, but this is going to be amazing for me!”

“Enough already!” said Bailey. “Break it up you two. The rest of us want to play too!”

Chelsea and Ashley released each other and returned to their spots in the circle. Ashley picked up the bottle of polish, spun it, and it landed on...

“Julie!” all the girls screamed.

Julian wasn't exactly sure what to do, so when he hesitated, Dabria said, “Quit stalling, Julie! You need to choose. Is it truth, or dare?”

Julian wasn't sure what truth meant, but dare was pretty good and so he replied, “Dare!”

“I know!” said Evelyn, even though it was technically Chelsea's turn to dare. “I dare you to pierce your ears!”

“You don't have pierced ears?” asked Ashley.

“Yes, what a great idea!” said Bailey. I'm going to get some ice!”

“I'll get the alcohol!” said Chelsea as she and Bailey tried to get out the door at the same time.

“Wait, what?” said Julian, not quite sure why he wasn't kissing someone right now. “Pierce my ears? No, I can't! Dare me something else.”

“You have to!” said Dabria with an evil grin, searching through Evelyn's drawers to find a needle and a cute pair of gold hoop earrings. “Or else pay the penalty.”

“What's the penalty?” Julian asked.



“Remove one piece of clothing for the rest of the game,” said Ashley. Julian looked down at his skimpy outfit. He really didn’t have a piece of clothing to spare.

Bailey returned with a bowl containing a piece of ice, and Chelsea arrived with towels, cotton balls and a bottle of rubbing alcohol.

“Ready?” asked Bailey.

Julian stared up at the girls surrounding him. Reluctantly, he turned the first ear toward them and squeezed his eyes shut in anticipation. “Do it!” he squeaked out.

Fifteen minutes later, Julian was looking in the mirror at the cutest little pair of gold hoops hanging from his ears. He had bled quite a bit as Dabria pushed the needle through his earlobe, and everyone had left him with a needle sticking through his ear when Chelsea fainted and hit her head on the floor. Evelyn had had a lot of trouble getting the hoops through the hole made by the needle, since the hole was so small and it was still bleeding a lot. Then they went through the whole process again on his other ear, complete with Chelsea fainting and hitting her head all over again. But in the end, after they cleaned all the blood off his neck and the floor, those earrings made his ears look absolutely adorable.

“Your turn to spin, Julie,” said Chelsea from where they had propped her against the wall.

* * *

“Time for bed, girls!” said Evelyn’s Mom as she stood in the doorway to Evelyn’s room. She had waited until midnight, hoping the girls would tire and fall asleep on their own, but that was obviously never going to happen. “Oh, what a great fort! Whose idea was that?”

Girls appeared out from under the pillows, blankets and cushions that had been used to form tunnels all around Evelyn’s room. Everyone giggled as Evelyn said, “Julie suggested it! She has the funniest ideas, Mom. Can we play some video games?”

Julie says we all should play Flawless Dark. Can we Mom? Please?”

“Evelyn, what did I just say?” her mother asked. “You have all weekend to play games. Time for sleep! Go get ready for bed, girls!”

Fortunately Evelyn’s family had endless bathrooms in the house, so there was no waiting. Julian found his overnight kit in his bag, and ended up sharing a bathroom that had a double sink with Ashley. The two girls washed off their makeup and brushed their teeth. Julian brushed his long blonde pigtails. Ashley’s hair had been French-braided and so she simply waited for him to finish. Finally the girls headed back to the bedroom.

Julian sat on one of the beds. “So where do we all sleep?” he asked.

Evelyn sat beside him, while Dabria sat on the other side of the bed. Before he knew what happened, Julian was swept under the covers, lying between the two girls on the narrow mattress.

“Two beds, three girls each!” said Evelyn with a laugh. Julian looked over to see Ashley, Bailey and Chelsea settling into the other bed with a pillow fight used to determine who slept where.

“You better not snore, or I’ll poke you right here!” Dabria declared. Then she jabbed him with a sharp finger just under his ribs, causing the poor boy to involuntarily shriek and giggle like a girl. In Julian’s second round of Truth or Dare, he was asked what was his most ticklish spot, the answer to which had been providing Dabria endless amusement ever since.

“Girls, please! No more noise! Settle down girls!” said Evelyn’s Mom until all the girls lay down quietly. “That’s better. I’ll see you in the morning.”

Mrs. Dressler turned out the girls’ light and closed the door. Fortunately, Dabria took the hint and stopped tickling Julian, as the girls all tried to get comfortable in the narrow beds. Julian lay on his back, while Evelyn and Dabria turned toward him, each with one arm draped over his pink nightie-covered body, hug-

ging him in order to keep themselves from falling out on their respective sides.

Evelyn and Dabria were soon asleep, and from what Julian could tell, the girls in the other bed were sleeping as well.

Julian turned his head toward Evelyn. She was breathing softly, in and out through her pouting lips, just an inch from his own. Her breath smelled like cinnamon.

Chapter 2

Saturday Morning

Julian woke. He was still sleepy, but he had slept well. He hugged his pillows, letting his face melt down into the soft, warm cushions.

“Time to get up, Julian!” said his mother. “I made cinnamon buns, just for you!”

Julian breathed in the beautiful scent. He would definitely be getting up, soon. Soon...

“Julie?”

Julian’s eyes snapped open. He looked up to find Evelyn lying beside him, looking down. His arms were around her waist and his face was resting comfortably, snuggled between her breasts.

Julian tried to disentangle himself, finding his arms were pinned and therefore mostly needing to shove away from the girl with his face. Evelyn laughed hysterically at his predicament, saying “Julie, get off my boobs!”

Julian finally turned himself around, only to find himself nose to nose with Dabria.

“You like Evelyn’s boobs so much, what about mine?” Dabria asked, grabbing Julian’s hands and placing them over her own ample chest.

The poor boy was barely awake and so he just held the girl's breasts, stunned, until she began poking him in the ribs. Julian shrieked, and laughed, and begged for Dabria to stop until tears ran down his face.

"Breakfast is ready, girls!" said Mrs. Dressler, interrupting the tickle fight. Julian was swept up in the early morning migratory patterns of the scantily-clad voracious females, before he knew it finding himself at the breakfast table in front of a bowl of sliced fruit. He picked up a spoon and began eating as the room erupted with the sounds of impossibly high voices, all competing to be heard. From what Julian could tell, no one was listening, although everyone was talking.

"So what do you girls have planned for today?" asked Evelyn's Mom, as the voices died down and the girls took more of an interest in their stomachs.

"Play video ga..." Julian began to say, except he was drowned out by every other girl saying:

"The beach!"

"That's a great idea," Mrs. Dressler said. "You girls should really get out and get some sun."

"Can you give us a ride, Mom?" asked Evelyn.

"I'm sorry, no," her Mom replied, much to Julian's relief. And then, because nothing ever got better for Julian, she told them, "You girls will just have to get there on the bus."

"No, wait!" said Julian, shaking his head so hard that his long pigtails flew out from the sides of his head. He couldn't go to the beach dressed like a girl! He tried to think of any objection and finally came out with, "I didn't bring a bathing suit!"

"Yes you did," said Ashley.

"No I..." Julian began to object. But then he decided instead to ask, "Wait... What? How would you know?"

“You showed up to a sleepover in a red bra and panty set!” Dabria said. “You think we weren’t going to go through your bag to see what else you had?”

“Your tangerine bikini and beach cover-up are so cute!” Bailey told him.

“Seriously hot,” added Chelsea.

“Okay ladies, upstairs! Get ready for the beach!” Evelyn’s mom directed the girls. Julian found himself swept away once again in a pink haze, back to Evelyn’s room.

Julian found his overnight bag again and looked through the contents for anything tangerine. He pulled out three items, then disappeared into the hall, back to the bathroom to change.

Julian pulled his hair out of the childish pigtails, shook it and brushed it out straight again. He took off his pink babydoll nighty and bloomers, setting them aside. He then held up the tiny bikini bottoms, hesitating for just a moment before stepping into the skimpy briefs. They fit awkwardly, as they appeared to have a stiff, flat panel in the front. It didn’t take long to realize that this was designed to flatten and hide his non-feminine attributes.

“Where do you find these things, Mom?” he wondered. He didn’t need to wonder long though as he slipped on the bikini top and found it adjusted to display his breasts like any other bra he had ever worn from Helena’s shop. Possibly a bit higher, and a bit further forward, now that he looked closely. Helena just couldn’t resist giving the poor boy large, shapely breasts!

Julian sighed as he took the last piece, the tangerine beach tunic, and slipped it over his head. He adjusted it, then checked himself over in the mirror.

“This can’t be right!” he said. The cover-up was barely more than a long shirt! The clingy synthetic fabric adhered itself to his every curve. Being practically see-through, it displayed all he had to great advantage.

“There is no way I’m wearing this out of the house!”

Except he would have to wear it back to Evelyn's room. His only alternative was his babydoll nightie. Or maybe a towel.

Julian returned to the bedroom to find all the other girls dressed for the beach, all wearing far more fabric than him! He looked for his bag but before he could grab it and run, he was pulled into the room to be viewed from all angles by the five screaming girls.

"Oh my gosh, you are so hot!" shrieked Chelsea.

"I can't believe you're wearing this to the beach!" said Bailey, jumping up and down with excitement.

"All the boys will freak!" added Ashley.

"Julie, isn't that a bit mature for a girl your age?"

All the girls turned quiet, backing away from Julian as Evelyn's mother entered the room, leaving him all alone to face the adult.

"Does your mother know you're planning to wear this?" the woman asked.

"She picked it out for me," Julian answered without thinking. "She bought it for me, for my birthday."

"Well, that's alright then," the woman said, to the great relief of everyone in the room. "I was going to suggest something less revealing from Evelyn's things, but as long as your mother is okay with it, then you can certainly wear this."

Julian couldn't believe it! Why didn't he just say no?

"Mom, can I..." Evelyn began to say.

"No." Mrs. Dressler left the room, and the girls finished getting ready for the day. Julian did his makeup, taking turns with the other girls at the makeup table.

* * *

“Muscleman Beach,” announced the bus driver. “Last stop on the line! Everybody off!”

Julian was the first of the girls out of the doors; the ride had not been pleasant. Every seat had been taken, and so while Julian had hoped to hide in a corner, down low and covered, he actually ended up standing on the edge of an attractive group of girls, his long legs and feminine attire attracting the attention of every pair of eyes on the bus.

“So, what should we do now?” Julian asked the others. “Who wants to go swimming?” He figured that being underwater was his best hope of avoiding all the people on the beach.

“We’re going to do what we always do!” said Ashley, pulling off her shorts and stuffing them away in her beach bag.

“We’re going to walk the beach and check out the hot guys at ‘Muscleman’ Beach!” said Bailey as she removed her blouse, revealing a long, lean, feminine body.

“And they are going to check out us!” added Chelsea as she shook out her long blonde hair.

The other girls quickly stripped down to their bikinis, stuffing skirts and shorts and blouses away in beach bags. Julian almost felt overdressed as he stood with them, still wearing his see-through, hip-length cover-up.

“Aren’t you going to get undressed Julie?” suggested Dabria unhelpfully.

“No, well, it’s. The sun and everything,” rambled Julian, trying to explain his reluctance to give up the one piece of clothing between him and a submission to femininity he was not yet ready to make – a bikini on the beach!

“Leave her alone!” said Evelyn, much to Julian’s relief at the unexpected support. “She looks so gorgeous as she is! You are totally working it, Julie!” Well okay, there was that.

Julie followed the other girls down to the water's edge, where the sand was firmer and better for walking. They walked together along the beach, hips swaying, shaking their hair out, laughing as if they were telling jokes when they weren't. They would run as if chasing each other, kicking their heels up and splashing the water.

It was all an act, Julian realized. An act, meant to bring attention to a group of nearly naked teenage girls who hardly needed to draw more attention! And Julian was in the middle of it, laughing and running and splashing, because to be the only one not doing so would probably bring him more attention!

"So Ashley, do you girls ever..." Julian said, turning and looking for Ashley in the group. He wanted to suggest some regular beach activities - swimming, building castles, getting ice cream, anything that might get them out of view! Except Ashley wasn't there.

"Where's Ashley?" Julian asked.

"She met someone back there," said Bailey. "We'll pick her up on the way home."

"Oh," replied Julian. Who could she have met? He didn't think these girls ever hung out with anyone but each other.

"Hey Chelsea, who do you think..." Julian began to ask, except Chelsea wasn't there either.

"Bailey, where's Chelsea?" he asked, except Bailey was gone as well. Half their group had disappeared!

"Evelyn, where is everybody?" he asked, starting to panic. Evelyn and Dabria were the only girls left!

"Don't worry, you'll get your turn," said Dabria. "Although it might help if you actually undressed!"

"Seriously Julie!" said Evelyn. "Don't get so upset. The best-looking girls always get chosen last. We're more intimidating, I suppose."

“Chosen?” asked Julian, his beach cover-up now spotted with moisture and clinging to his every curve, providing an allure that not even naked flesh could match. “Chosen for what?”

“Hello ladies,” said one of two guys as they approached the small group. Dabria and Evelyn lost interest in their conversation with Julie as they turned and greeted the older boys with their most alluring smiles. “Care to join us? We have a spot in the shade just over there.”

Dabria and Evelyn each took an arm of one of the men and wandered away from Julian, leaving him alone at the water’s edge. Julian watched as the couples lay down together on the sand by some trees. He ran over to join them.

“Hey guys!” he interrupted. “So, what should we do now?”

“Go find your own guy, Julie!” Dabria told him unambiguously, glaring at the poor boy.

“Do you guys have a friend who Julie could be with for the day?” Evelyn asked the guys.

“Not here right now,” said the one with Dabria, much to Julian’s relief. “But there are lots of guys back at the house. Hey, we’re having a party tonight. Maybe you’d all like to come? I know a guy who’d love to meet your girlfriend here.”

“Sure!” said Evelyn. “We’re always ready for a party! So Julie, you go find your own guy for now and we’ll see you later.”

Julian watched as Dabria and Evelyn turned to their respective guys and started kissing.

“I think, maybe I’ll just hang out with you guys!” Julian said, laying down his purse and sitting between the couples. He knew Dabria would be harsh with him, but he did not want to be wandering the beach alone!

“Fine!” said Dabria, indicating it was anything but fine. “You can stay with us, but not right here! Just go find something to do.”



“We’ll watch your purse if you want to go swimming, Julie,” said Evelyn a bit more kindly, but still trying to get rid of him.

“Maybe you can finally get undressed,” added Dabria.

Julian turned red but stood and pulled his beach cover-up over his head, setting it down with his purse. He ran toward the water, wanting to get away from the awkward five-some as quickly as possible. He wasn’t watching where he was going though and hadn’t gotten more than ten feet before he collided with someone.

Julian and the stranger went down together, rolling across the sand with the force of the collision. They came to a stop at the water’s edge, Julian pinned under the other body as waves lapped up against them. The two took a moment to orient themselves, before Julian looked up to see who it was lying on top of him.

“Sid!” he cried out, as the weight of the other teenage boy pressed his back into the wet sand, and the waves gently tugged at his long hair.

“Julian?” Sid said in surprise. “You came to the beach? Dressed like... Wow, Julie. You look amazing.”

Sid slowly examined the body beneath him. Julian’s soft, blonde hair was gently washed toward the ocean by the waves which lapped against their entwined bodies. His friend’s long, soft neck, his feminine shoulders, his incredibly presented breasts...

“Sid!” Julian yelled again, trying to get the teenage boy to focus. Sid looked at him for a moment but his eyes were drawn back to the amazing, pushup bikini top Julie wore. He reached toward Julie’s...

“Sid!” Julian screamed, rolling his friend off. “Don’t you dare even think about touching them!”

Julian stood and Sid reluctantly followed. Sid pretended to brush some sand off Julian’s waist and back, while Julian at-

tempted to shrug even further away. But then he realized; Sid was the answer to his problem!

“Come with me!” Julian said, taking Sid by the hand and leading him back to where Evelyn and Dabria lay with their new friends.

“Hey everybody! Look who I just ran into. Um, literally,” Julian said to the girls. “This is Sid, my boyfriend!”

Julian pulled Sid closer, and Sid took the opportunity to put an arm around Julian’s waist, hugging him by the hip.

“Great,” replied Dabria. “Does he have his own spot on the beach?”

“Can Sid come to your party as well?” Evelyn asked the boys. “I mean, can Julie even come, if she’s not going to be with your friend?”

“Sure, it’s a party,” said Dabria’s guy with a shrug. “Lots of guys, lots of girls. Lots of opportunities to hook up with everyone,” he said with an admiring glance up and down Julian.

“No!” yelled Julian. He wanted to spend time with the girls, but not if it meant hanging out with a bunch of horny college guys! “The thing is, well...”

“We’ve got plans,” Sid said helpfully when Julian had no ideas. He wrapped his arms around Julian’s waist, pulling him close and speaking within an inch of a kiss. “We’re going on a date.”

“That’s so great!” Evelyn said enthusiastically, snapping a photo of the couple with her phone. “You two are really cute together. Julie, everyone says so. Oh, and I have the perfect dress for you to wear. We’ll get you ready this afternoon, and Sid can pick you up from my house!”

“Sure, *so* great,” said Julian awkwardly as he pulled his face away from Sid’s and attempted to move the boy’s hands away from his breasts once more. “A date with Sid.”

“So if that’s all settled, maybe you two can *go find your own spot on the beach*,” Dabria suggested, having had enough of Julian distracting everyone.

“Sure, come on,” said Sid, leading Julian away from the couples who had already turned their attention back to kissing. “I’ve got a spot over here where we can lie down together.”

“Not likely!” said Julian, taking Sid’s hands and firmly shoving them away. “You’re taking me back to the street and you’re going to buy me an ice cream. And you’re going to try to remember that we’re both guys!”

Chapter 3

Saturday Night

“Ow, ow, ow!” shouted Julian.

“Hold still, you baby!” teased Ashley, as she lifted Julian’s hair and brushed it upwards vigorously. “This is going to add so much volume to your hair; you won’t believe the difference!”

Ashley pulled his hair, spraying it from beneath. Julian tried to ignore the amount of spray as it blinded him in one eye and left a chemical taste as it went in his mouth and landed on his tongue. These girls were hell-bent on perfection in beauty, and nothing he could say would stop the process.

“You want to be gorgeous for your date with Sid, don’t you?” Bailey reminded him as she tweezed Julian’s eyebrows to a template of perfection, based on information from a website that analyzed the boy’s facial features and proposed the perfect feminine brows.

“Sid already thinks I’m gorgeous!” Julian complained. Julian’s problem was holding Sid back, not luring him in! But there was not much he could do against five determined females, dressed as he was in only his red bra and panty set. Most of his effort needed to be focused on covering himself and keeping the tiny strips of cloth in place!

“Okay ladies!” said Chelsea, approaching the group with the cosmetics selected for the next step. “Let’s do this!”

As it turned out, the other girls were not going out that evening. Ashley, Bailey and Chelsea had a great time with the boys on the beach, but none of them wanted a date with the guys they met. And the party that Dabria and Evelyn’s guys talked about fizzled out. So when Julian proudly announced that he would be going on a date with Sid, thinking this would free him from participating in the other girls’ plans to make out with guys, he became the focus of the afternoon activities, preparing him and him alone to go out for a Saturday night date with his boyfriend!

For the next hour, Julian was judged from every angle. Every pore was analyzed, every feature painted and glued and squeezed and colored to look like something they were never meant to look like. His eyes were widened until he looked like a teenage girl in a Japanese anime. His nose was narrowed and given a tiny upward-tip, like some kind of cartoon princess. His lips were made lush, full, and red, and shaped like a kiss without his needing to perform the slightest pucker. Once the girls understood that makeup could be used to paint any face you want over your actual face, there was no stopping them.

“Wow, Julie!” said Dabria when Julian’s makeover was finally complete. “I never thought I would say this, but you actually look okay.”

That might sound like faint praise but Dabria never had anything nice to say about anyone, ever! Julian broke free from the other girls and ran to look at himself in the mirror. The image looking back at him was absolute, feminine perfection.

“And now I have the perfect dress for your date!” Evelyn cried with glee as she approached Julian, holding a tiny bundle of cloth which Julian did not get a good look at before five girls began pulling it over his head. He just had an impression of white cloth, covered in large, red roses. His first actual look at the dress was in Evelyn’s full-length mirror, after he was wearing it.

“You are so kawaii!!!” shrieked Ashley.

Julian stared in disbelief. He stared at his thick, full hair, his huge child-like eyes, his tiny upturned nose and red lips. And he stared at his body; his feminine curves, emphasized by a tiny dress that barely covered his bra straps, leaving his arms, shoulders, neck and chest exposed. It cinched in below the chest, giving him a feminine waistline and flared out to give him feminine hips, ending exactly where his legs began. The naturally long legs of a boy somehow become incredibly sexy legs when disguised as a girl, he suddenly realized.

“Here are the shoes to wear with it!” said Bailey, setting down a pair of bright red pumps with a three-inch heel for Julian to step into. He stepped into them without thinking, his mind numb, and the transformation was complete.

“I can’t go out like this!” shrieked Julian, his voice reaching an octave most actual girls can’t achieve.

“Don’t be nervous,” Chelsea tried to calm him. “You are so beautiful. Sid is going to love you!”

The doorbell rang and all the girls ran to the window. Julian looked at the clock; Six-thirty, the time Sid had said he would pick him up! His stomach twisted in knots.

“He’s here!” screamed the girls as they spun Julian through the bedroom door, down the hall and down the stairs to the front door. Julian’s protests were in vain as he could barely maintain his balance in the unfamiliar heels. Before he knew what had happened, he was at the front door, staring out at Sid staring in.

“Hi,” said Julian shyly, as five girls covered their giggling behind him.

“Wow,” said Sid, staring at his friend. “Julie, you look... amazing!”

“Thanks,” said Julian. He stepped out onto the front porch to stand beside Sid.

“Kiss him!” all the girls whispered, to Julian’s great embarrassment. Sid leaned in and Julian reluctantly gave him a quick kiss.

The girls shrieked, and captured the moment on their phones. Sid looked about as pleased as Julian looked mortified. Sid leaned in for another kiss, but Julian put up a hand to block him.

“Come on, let’s go,” Julian said, grabbing Sid by the hand and heading toward the street as quickly as he could in his heels and short dress.

* * *

“I still don’t get why you would ever want to go out with me,” Julian said to Sid as they headed toward the downtown.

“Are you kidding?” Sid replied. “You’re amazing! Absolutely gorgeous!”

“You really think so?” said Julian, embarrassed but somehow pleased. “No. I’m not really, at least not compared to girls like Evelyn, and Dabria. Dabria especially has been giving me a hard time, probably because I’m the least attractive girl this weekend.”

Sid laughed. “If you believe that, then you don’t know Dabria. She’ll allow Evelyn to be better looking than her, just because Evelyn’s got money. But if she’s giving you a hard time, it’s because you’re a threat to her. And you’re a threat because you’re prettier than any of them, Evelyn and Dabria included.”

“Okay, so I’m gorgeous,” Julian said reluctantly. “But still, why would you want to go out with me? I mean, you know I’m not a girl! There’s no future in this relationship, you know!”

“I’ll admit, it freaked me out a bit at first. But then I thought, what do I really want in a girl? I’m sure not interested in a relationship with a future. All I really want is a girl to hang out with, someone with long hair and long legs, a pretty face and a cute figure. Some girl who’ll want to just hang out and have fun. And then I thought; Julian and I have a great time already! He likes action movies and video games and would never drag me to a chick flick.”

“That’s actually kind of sweet,” Julian said.

“And I’ve never really gotten very far with any other girls,” Sid continued. “Just, you know, making out with them and maybe feeling them up over their clothes. I could do that with you and it would be exactly the same!”

Julian looked at Sid in astonishment. “No, you can’t do that with me! It might be exactly the same for you, but what am I supposed to get out of it? I have no interest in making out with another guy! And I’m sure not going to let one feel me up! Maybe if you were dressed like a girl too, I might be convinced to kiss you, but... no way! I’m not even going to hold hands, so just forget it.”

Sid laughed. “Well, there’s no way *I’m* dressing like a girl. But we’ve already kissed and I’ve got to tell you, it was pretty hot. And as for holding hands, you’ve been holding mine since we left Evelyn’s house!”

Julian looked down to find Sid was right. He quickly let go of Sid and looked for something to do with his now free hand. He had no pocket to put it in, no shirt to straighten. No clothes at all to speak of, really. No coins to jingle, no keys to fiddle with. He tried crossing his arms under his chest and felt stupid. Finally he just let his hand hang at his side, and Sid was soon holding it again.

“You see?” said Sid. “This is just natural. A guy and a girl, holding hands. Just relax and have fun, Julie!”

Sid and Julian walked downtown and soon found themselves at the local movie theatre. The line was long, but they reached the front just in time to buy tickets and get to the theatre before the movie started.

“Two for Star Force: The Wars Awaken! Seven o’clock show,” said Sid, reaching into his back pocket for his wallet.

“Sold out,” the ticket girl told him.

“Ah, Jeez!” said Sid. Looking up at the board he asked, “How about nine-thirty?”

“Sold out,” the girl told him. “Also the midnight show.”

“What else has tickets available?” Julian asked. “Something starting soon,” he added, wanting to get into the dark and away from male glares as quickly as possible.

“‘Two Girls’ has tickets available and it starts in ten minutes,” Ticket Girl told her.

“I don’t know that one,” Julian said, leaning in to speak with Ticket Girl. “What’s it about?”

“Oh, it’s so funny!” Ticket Girl told him. “It’s about these two girls. They decided to live together, but at first they don’t get along. They have so many problems and need to learn how to get along.”

“No way, that’s so great!” Julian told her, falling back on his girl-talk training.

“I know, right?” said Ticket Girl. “It stars two female comedians who also wrote the script. I’ve seen it twice and I cried both times. So, two tickets?”

“Definitely!” Julian said with girlish enthusiasm. Ticket Girl printed the tickets and took Sid’s money as Sid looked on uncomprehendingly. Julian held the tickets as Sid put his wallet away, and they headed toward the theatre showing ‘Two Girls’.

“Why would you want to see this movie?” Sid asked. “And what kind of comedy makes you cry? We came here to see Star Force! You were supposed to be the girl who never made me take her to a chick flick!”

“Well I’m sorry,” apologized Julian. “She was just so nice to tell us all about it. I didn’t want to be impolite.”

“She was a ticket girl!” Sid yelled. “You don’t have to be polite to a ticket girl.”

Sid led Julian into the theatre and found two seats together. It wasn’t difficult. There were only about eight people there; mostly girls, and one couple with a bored-looking guy. Sid looked at him and they nodded, acknowledging what guys go through for girls.

The film started. The two girls moved in together. They argued over everything; who was messier in their spotless apartment, whether one should stay out if the other had a boy over even though neither of them ever had a boy over, whose underwear was the one non-dingy pair that came out of the laundry. Julian laughed with all the other girls in the audience and Sid felt like dying. Then he noticed Julian shivering.

“You okay, Julie?” he asked.

“It is so c-cold in here!” Julian replied, holding his shoulders and rubbing his arms. “It’s summer and so I’m practically naked, but they’ve got the s-stupid air conditioning set at Ice Age! I can’t feel my f-fingers or my t-toes!”

Sid folded the armrest up between them. “Here, move in beside me,” he told her. Julian snuggled up against Sid, and as Sid curled an arm over her shoulders, Julie tucked her hands inside Sid’s jacket and around his body; his warm, fully clothed body.

“You okay now?” Sid asked as he massaged Julie’s shoulders and arms.

“Mmm-Hmm,” Julie told him, snuggling her face into his warm chest. She tucked her nose inside his jacket to warm it. Julie was suddenly so comfortable, she fell asleep.

Sid closed his eyes, shutting out the sight and sound of the horrible film. He concentrated on Julie, the smell of her hair, warming her arms, her thighs. He was soon fast asleep as well.

* * *

“Hey lovebirds! Time to leave.”

Julie and Sid startled awake to find themselves wrapped in each other’s arms, Sid’s right arm up to the elbow between Julie’s thighs. Sid’s lips were braced against Julie’s, exactly where he recalled leaving them at some point when he had woken up during the movie.

Julian opened his eyes, fully awake in an instant. He shoved Sid's face away, and jumped off his hand.

"We must have fallen asleep during the movie," he said apologetically to the theatre cleaning staff.

"Twice," said the cleaner. "We saw you two making out between shows and thought maybe we could give you some time together!" He gave Sid a knowing look and they did a quick high-five.

"We weren't making out," Julie told the man but no one seemed to believe him. Not even himself. He straightened his clothes and, gathering as much dignity as a boy with long platinum blonde hair in a dress and heels can after being caught making out all night while asleep in a movie theatre, he left.

Sid followed him all the way back to the street. "I like the way your butt moves when you walk," he said as he caught up to Julian.

"Shut up, Sid," Julian shot back. "I'm wearing a miniskirt and high heels! That's the way a butt moves under those circumstances!"

"Sure, I get that," Sid replied. "And as I said, I like it."

"How could you embarrass me like that?" Julian said with an angry kitten face. "I was asleep, Sid! You were kissing me, and holding my butt all night while I slept!"

"Well to be fair, my arm fell totally asleep after about ten minutes. So I really wasn't getting anything out of it. I just didn't want to move it because you looked so peaceful and I didn't want to wake you. And I was asleep almost the whole time as well."

Sid and Julie walked in silence for a while.

"So, still friends?" Sid asked.

Julie let out a sigh. "Sure. Still friends. Just, no more kissing me or grabbing my butt while I'm asleep, okay?"

“Boy Scout’s honor,” said Sid with a smile.

“I’m cold again,” Julian told him. Sid put an arm around him and held him tight until they were back at Evelyn’s home.

Sid led Julie up to the house. As soon as they were on the porch, curtains were drawn and eyes stared from all the windows.

“Looks like your fan club waited up for you,” Sid told him. “They’re expecting a goodnight kiss, I’ll bet. You’re not going to disappoint them, are you?”

Julie smiled up into Sid’s downward stare. “I’m going to close my eyes and pretend you’re Evelyn,” he giggled. Then he closed his eyes and his lips parted slightly.

Sid wrapped his arms around Julie and pressed his lips to hers. Shrieks were heard from inside the house as Sid slid his hands down her back, grabbing two hands full of feminine bottom and lifted the tiny girl up onto her toes, pressing her more deeply into the kiss. When he finally let her go, he turned and walked to the street without a word. Julie watched until he finally turned for one last look and she gave him a small wave. Sid waved back, then turned and walked down the street. Julian watched until he was gone.

The front door burst open and five sets of hands grabbed Julian, dragging him into the house and up to the estrogen-soaked atmosphere of Evelyn’s bedroom.

“Tell us everything!” the girls demanded.

Chapter 4

Sunday

All the girls got up late Sunday morning, having spent the entire night peppering poor Julian with questions about his date. After all, they had seen it start with a kiss, then end with a kiss! How much kissing went on in between?

Julian changed into his nightie like the other girls. Then he told them about the entire date, which took almost all night! And because the girls expected a girl's-eye view, he pretended that he had liked it. Every retelling, every moment, yes, it was so wonderful! Yes, Sid was such a gentleman to hold him and keep him warm. It was getting to be so easy, to actually be a girl, to lie about everything and fool everyone.

Eventually though, one-by-one, the girls began to drift off to sleep. First Ashley, then Bailey and Chelsea, and finally Dabria and Evelyn, under the covers during one final retelling of how cute Sid was when he arrived to pick up Julie. Julian took a while longer to finally fall asleep, trying to find some way to keep his hands to himself in the narrow bed, but eventually he spooned in between the two girls and fell asleep.

Sunday morning began without much enthusiasm, it was clear that the sleepover was over. Evelyn's mother made a small breakfast for the girls, then everyone began packing up. Julian was the last to leave, even though he had dressed quickly in his red bra and panty set, with his blue jean short-shorts and grey cutoff T-shirt. He said goodbye to Evelyn at her front door, thanked her mother for having him for the weekend, and walked home, his overnight bag and purse over his shoulder.

* * *

"Mom, I'm home!" Julian called from the front door as he kicked off his mother's high-heeled sandals. He dropped his purse on the front hall table and got as far as the living room couch before his mother came out from the kitchen to greet him.

"Sweetie, you're home!" his mother said with a hug. "Did you have fun? I want to hear all about it. It looks like you got some new makeup tips from your makeover! I really like what the girls did for you."

"What do you mean?" said Julian. "How do you know the other girls gave me a makeover?"

"Well, of course you all had makeovers!" Melissa said. "That's the whole point of a sleepover!"

“I wish someone had told me that before,” Julian said with a pout.

“Oh sweetie, don’t make that face! You look so pretty. I especially like your eyebrows. That website your friends used is fantastic! I tried it myself and I’m going to ask Gina to help me with the eyebrows it selected for me. You know, if I’d known you were okay with reshaping your eyebrows, we could have done that earlier.”

“Wait, wait, slow down!” said Julian. “How do you know about my eyebrows? How do you know about the website?”

“Sweetie, I’ve been following your whole weekend on your MyFace account!” Melissa told him. “Your friends have been posting and tweeting all weekend.”

“No, that’s not possible!” Julian exclaimed. “The girls can’t have linked to my MyFace account. If they did, they would find out that I’m not a real girl!”

“Don’t worry, silly!” his mother reassured the boy. “I set up a new account for you as Julie and linked in all your new friends. I hope you don’t mind, but I posted a few things for you. Just the kind of things I’m sure you as Julie would want to say to the kids at school.”

Julian pulled out his phone and began typing furiously.

“These are pictures of me! From my weekend! This was supposed to be private, Mom!”

“Well I didn’t post the pictures, Sweetie. Your friends did.”

“Mom! This is me on the beach, wearing a bikini! Why would anyone post this?”

“Because you’re so cute! People like to see pretty girls having fun. Don’t worry so much. You look beautiful, everyone thinks so.”

“Yes, everyone!” shouted Julian. “There are over a hundred likes on it, by everyone in school! Did you read the comments?”

‘This the new girl? Wow, she’s hot!’ ‘Why didn’t we go to the beach, dude?’ ‘This girl’s got it going on!’ Mom, guys are talking about me!”

“Julie, it’s not just the guys. The girls at school had a lot of nice things to say as well, so don’t worry. And I know you don’t want a lot of guys asking you out, so I took care of it for you.”

“In a relationship?!” Julie screamed. “You told everyone at school that I have a boyfriend? Just who do you think I’m dating?”

“Why, that nice looking boy you’re kissing in all the photos,” his mother replied. “Isn’t he your boyfriend? If he’s not, then we have to talk about how to behave on a date, young lady.”

“That’s just Sid, okay, Mom?” Julian tried to explain. “He’s just a guy who was helping me out, because he knows I’m another guy. And yes, he gets a little carried away and doesn’t seem to mind a lot that I’m a guy, so yes, it’s hard to keep him from kissing me. But he’s not my boyfriend!”

“Oh, alright. I’m sorry,” Melissa said apologetically. She got out her own phone and began typing. “I’ll set your status to ‘Available’.”

“No!” screamed Julie.

“How about, ‘It’s Complicated’?”

“Mom, you don’t understand! I can’t have hundreds of people looking at pictures of me as a girl! It’s embarrassing!”

“Oh!” said Melissa, suddenly realizing how Julian truly felt. “Then maybe you better not look at the video of your ear piercing.”

Julian quickly scrolled down on his phone. “372,000 views!” he screamed, his voice reaching an octave appropriate to his appearance. “Mom, this is me in that skimpy nightie you bought and I was forced to wear! Who’s filming this? Oh, Dabria of course! Errrgh, now I have to kill her on Monday. A bikini is bad enough, but a sexy nightie?”

“I think this next part is why it’s gone viral,” Melissa told him. Julian watched, mortified as his ear was pierced by the needle, blood shooting everywhere, him screaming and crying as he was left with a needle through his bloody ear while everyone tended to a fainting Chelsea, then more screams and tears as they removed the needle and replaced it, with great difficulty, with a hoop earring. And then another needle, more blood, screaming, fainting and tears. The video ended with Julian, wearing his nightie and smiling into the camera, showing off his new earrings as several other girls tended to a groggy Chelsea in the background.

“Do you want to watch the ‘Saturday Night File’ version from last night’s show? It’s really funny!” Melissa told him.

“No thanks, Mom. I’m not really in the mood,” Julian told her, his cheeks burning with shame. “I think I just want to change and watch some TV.”

“That’s a good idea. Let’s both put on our nighties, and have our own girls’ night. Okay?”

“Sure Mom,” said Julian. “Let’s do that.”

Chapter 5

Monday, Week 2

“I still can’t get over how much alike the three of you are.” The elevator arrived, and the man from apartment 1207 held the door as Julie entered first.

Julian still wasn’t sure how to deal with this. “Well, that’s because we’re twins,” he said.

“Twins?” said the man. “The three of you are twins? How does that work? And I thought the boy wasn’t even your brother?”

“Oh, he’s not!” Julian told the man. “When I say we’re all twins, I mean my sister and I are twins, and she’s a twin with my

brother, but my brother and I are not twins. Why, he's not even really my brother; you know that!"

The man looked more confused than usual. "But... how can that even happen?"

"Well, see," Julian explained. "When a man and a woman really love each other, the man will sometimes put..."

"Stop!" the man asked. "It's okay, I think I know this part."

"Oh, okay!" Julian said. The elevator doors opened at ground level, and Julian stepped out. "Bye mister! Have a nice day!"

* * *

Julian passed Bernice Thomas in the hall, heading in the opposite direction. 'Bernie' was wearing the school uniform as well, having been caught the previous week breaking the dress code just like Julian. Bernie was actually a girl, but she was somehow even more uncomfortable in the uniform than Julian. She was a large girl who lacked any interest in feminine things and even played on the boy's football team. She had never worn a dress to school in her life before now.

"Hi Bernie!" Julian called out on identifying a fellow convict by her prison uniform. Bernie looked miserable in her skirt, blouse, and bow, so Julian smiled at her and called out, "Just one more week!"

"Easy for you to say," Bernie replied miserably.

"Not really," Julian said quietly, watching the large girl lumber past.

"Hey, new girl!"

Julian was watching Bernie and didn't turn around right away. Until a large, masculine hand landed on his shoulder and spun him around, that is.

“Who, me?” asked Julian, looking around at the wall of football jerseys that had formed behind him without his realizing.

“Of course you!” said the alpha male, causing all the others to laugh. “You’re new, you’re a girl. New girl, right?”

“Well, I’ve been here a few weeks now so...”

“Whatever,” the guy stopped her. “So you’re a cheerleader, right?”

“What?” said Julian, wondering where this conversation was coming from. “No!”

“You hang out with Evelyn though, right? And all the cheerleaders?”

“Well, I guess so,” said Julian. “I mean, we were at her house on the weekend and she...”

“Good enough,” the boy interrupted him again. “She’s a cheerleader, or will be soon.”

“Hey, what’s this all about...”

“You’re taller than the other girls, right? How tall are you?” asked another Neanderthal.

“I don’t know if that’s any of your...”

“Doesn’t matter,” said another, stepping forward. “She’s tall enough. Hi, I’m Steve.”

“Hi Steve, I’m...”

Julian looked up. Way up. Julian was short for a guy, but tall for a girl. In heels he was five foot ten, but Steve had another half-foot on him. Steve took Julian’s chin and tipped his head back further so he was looking into Steve’s eyes.

“This must be what it’s like for a girl to be with a guy,” Julian thought to himself.

“Steve’s the tallest guy on the team,” another side of beef told him.

“I’ve been waiting for a girl like you,” Steve said in a gruff voice, pulling Julian in close.

“Whoa! No, wait!” Julian said, with a tinge of fear entering his voice. He struggled out of Steve’s embrace and said, “I’m flattered. Really! But I’m not looking for a boyfriend right now!”

“So why does your MyFace status say ‘Looking for a boyfriend’?” asked another.

“Well that’s just, I mean I didn’t want it to say I *had* a boyfriend, because that would just be... Look, Steve, I’m sure you’re a nice guy and all but...”

“So you’re my date to the dance,” Steve said, his commanding voice difficult to resist. Seriously, Julian had to deal with bullies like this guy his entire life, doing any horrifying or humiliating thing they had ever asked. But be his date to a dance? Then Julian spotted a way out of this predicament.

“Except I already *have* a boyfriend!” Julian said, grabbing Sid as he approached his locker. Julian wrapped his arms around the unsuspecting Sid. “I’m sorry Steve, but Sid and I are already together. Isn’t that right, Sid?”

Julian gave Sid a kiss on the cheek.

“Bye Sid, see you in class! Love you!”

Julian ran from the group of gorilla-men, leaving Sid as their sole focus. The wall of testosterone closed around him.

* * *

“What are you wearing?” laughed Dabria.

Julian looked down at himself. He had attempted to change quickly and quietly in the corner where he hoped no one would

pay any attention. But of course, Dabria would make sure anything he did was noticed by everyone!

“Just my Phys Ed uniform,” he said hesitantly, gesturing at his red shorts and white T-shirt.

“You’re wearing a boy’s uniform!” Dabria laughed hysterically, with most of the other girls in the change room joining her.

“This is what I always wore at my last school,” Julian said, trying to explain. “I mean, all the girls did.”

“Does anyone have an extra uniform she can borrow?” asked one of the girls.

“Here, you can have my spare shorts,” offered one girl.

“I’ve got a top you can borrow for today,” said another.

Dabria grabbed the spare uniform from the girls and shoved it into Julian’s arms. “You’d better hurry and get dressed, Julie! Miss Kraussfitt doesn’t like it when girls are late!”

Most of the girls ran out to the gymnasium, leaving Julian alone with his new uniform. He quickly stripped off his old T-shirt and shorts and changed into the same outfit all the other girls were wearing.

The grey short-shorts had pink piping around the leg and up the side, with a pink drawstring to fit it tight just above the hips. The top was a white, slim-fit scoop neck tank top, again with pink piping around the neck and armholes and barely long enough to tuck into the top of the shorts. He looked around at the other stragglers and noted that none of them had even tried to pull it down. The sport bra that Helena had chosen for him gave him the perfect, athletic female look he didn’t want so much, and his artificial chest tugged the shirt from his shorts relentlessly. With a sigh, Julian pulled the shirt out from where he had tucked it into the pants and let it ride up above his navel.

“Why is my punishment for coming to school in revealing clothing to have to wear more and more revealing clothing?” he wondered.

He put on his white socks and runners, rolling down the socks the way he had seen the other girls do, and ran out the door to join the others in the gymnasium.

“Ah, so glad you could join us, Miss...?” inquired Miss Kraussfitt, the girls’ physical education instructor.

“Avery,” said Julian, embarrassed at being singled out in class. “Julie Avery. Julie Ann, that is, Miss.”

“Well, Miss Avery, I expect my girls to show up on time!”

“I’m sorry, Miss. I needed to get the right uniform. It won’t happen again.”

“It had better not,” Miss Kraussfitt said. “I expect my girls on time and in proper uniform, or you can expect a punishment of ten sit-ups!”

Ten sit-ups?! That was a punishment? Julian’s last punishment in Phys Ed had been four laps around the track and fifty sit-ups. Finally, there was an advantage to being a girl!

“Alright ladies, let’s warm up with some stretching exercises. Reach up high, and down low. High, on your toes, and down low...”

Miss Kraussfitt took the girls through their warm-up exercises. To Julian, Phys Ed had always been an endless series of Herculean tasks while some sadistic old man barked orders like some kind of drill sergeant. Girls’ Phys Ed was great! Ten minutes into the class and he hadn’t even had to move from this spot! And Miss Kraussfitt actually seemed almost nice. For once, being a girl was working in his favor.

“Now ladies, stretch out the inner thigh. Drop down, into the splits position. Reach left, above your head, touch your toes. Reach right... Miss Avery, what are you doing?”

Julian was falling behind, because he hadn’t actually been able to drop into the splits position. He looked around at the other girls. Most were on the floor, their legs spread out to the left and right without difficulty. Some of the girls were not flat on the

floor, but they were all close. All except for him. Julian stood there, looking like a capital letter A in a room of upside-down Ts.

“I’m sorry Miss,” he apologized, grunting with effort as he tried to get a couple more inches into the splits position. “I’ve just never been able to do this.”

“Nonsense,” said Miss Kraussfitt. “All girls can do the splits. Let me help you.”

Miss Kraussfitt kneeled by Julian, grabbing one of his feet and sliding it across the floor another inch, before Julian dug his heels in.

“Take off your shoes,” she told him. “You’ll be able to slide further in your socks.”

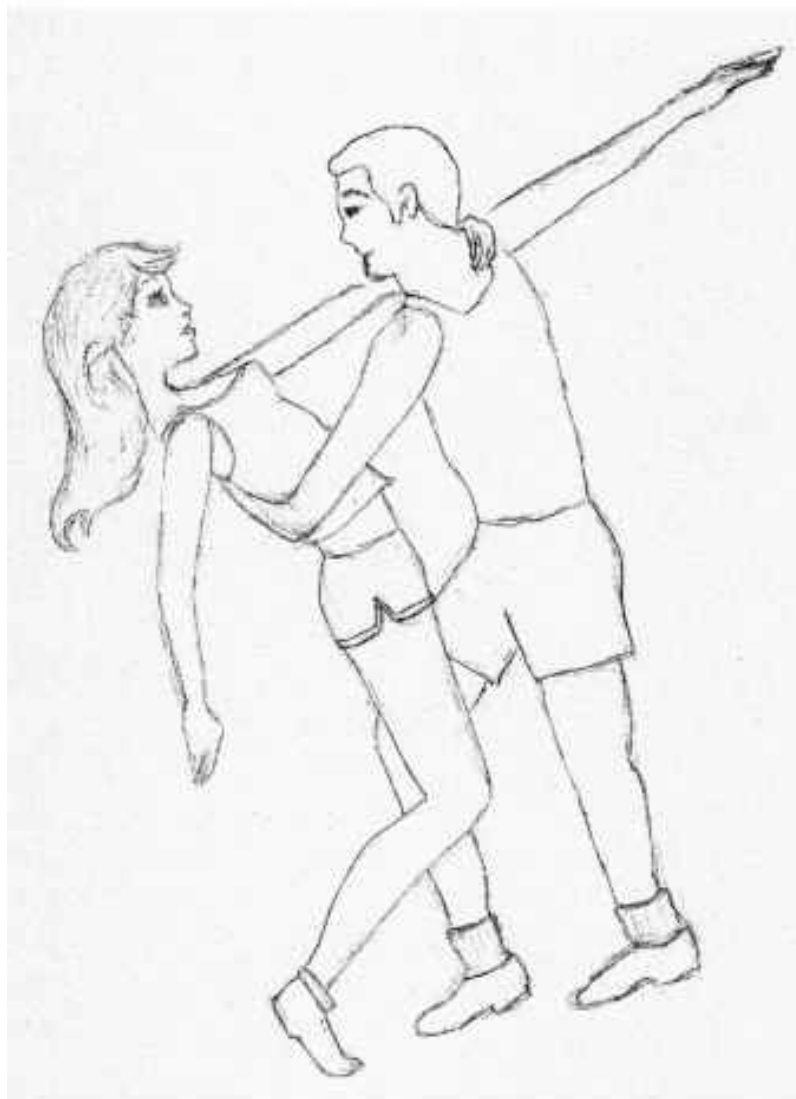
Julian stepped out of his shoes, then reluctantly went back into the splits position. “I’m sorry, Miss, but this is as far as I can go!”

Miss Kraussfitt approached Julian from behind and kicked his foot a little further. Julian stifled a scream, as he was unable to resist in his stockinged feet. But further attempts seem to get no results, as Julian’s hips truly appeared to have no more stretch in them.

“You see, Miss? That’s as far as I’ve ever... Ahhhhhhheeeaaaarghhhh!!!” the boy shrieked as Miss Kraussfitt grabbed him around the waist and pulled him down, using all her weight to shove Julian’s legs to either side and his bottom to the Gymnasium floor.

“You see?” Miss Kraussfitt told the boy in soothing tones. “I told you, all girls can do this. Now I’m going to hold you down like this until you get used to it. Shhh, stop crying. I can’t let you up until you stop crying, okay?”

Julian eventually managed to control himself and stopped crying like a big girl. But when he still couldn’t do the splits on his own, Miss Kraussfitt repeated the entire process. The next time she asked him, he was able to do the splits on command.



Julian was standing at the side of the gym, leaning on the wall and massaging what he thought he could get away with, when the boys' gym class entered the Gymnasium.

“Ladies, we have a surprise for you!” exclaimed Miss Kraussfitt. “There is a dance at the end of the week, and so instead of our usual lesson, we are going to have a dance lesson with the boys!”

The reaction of all the girls was one of excitement. Not only would they get to spend time with the guys, but they would be dancing with them! The reactions of the guys were mixed. On the one hand, they would get to touch the girls. They were even required to touch them! On the other hand, dancing was pretty lame, especially since they wouldn't get to do sports today.

Julian's reaction was a little different and hard to read if you didn't know him. But he was terrified! He'd gotten used to the idea of girls' Phys Ed, even a dance class, but not close dancing with a boy!

“Everyone grab a partner!” shouted the boys' drill sergeant.

Julian spotted Sid and ran for him like a drowning man reaching for a life ring. Except when Sid saw him coming, he looked terrified and hid. Before he could figure out what was the matter though, he found a long, muscular arm draped over his shoulders.

“You're with me, Cutie Patootie!” Steve said to Julian.

“Just great,” Julian muttered. “This might be easier if you could at least call me Julie, please Steve?”

“Sure thing, Baby Girl,” Steve said with a grin.

“Let's start with a slow song,” said Miss Kraussfitt as she started the music. “Ladies, reach up and place your arms around your partner's neck. Boys, place your arms around her waist and pull her in close. Boys, move forward and girls step back. And, left, right, left...”

Julian liked the idea of constantly moving away from Steve, even if he wasn't making much progress.

* * *

"Julie!" shouted out Principal Pelton as he jumped up from his seat and danced around his desk to greet the helpless boy. "Julie Ann, so nice to see you! So good of you to come visit me! Sit! Sit sit sit sit sit!"

"No thank you," Julian said anxiously as he attempted to avoid the hands which were attempting to force him onto the Principal's couch. "You asked me to come here, Principal Pelton!"

"I did?" replied the Principal in a slightly confused manner. "Strange. Any idea what I wanted?"

"I have no idea!" Julian said. "You made an announcement just five minutes ago. You asked for me by name. You said it was a matter of life and death!"

"Really? How odd. I wonder what..." the Principal mused.

"Well if that's everything, Principal Pelton, I need to be getting home. School is over and I promised my mother..."

"No wait!" shouted the Principal. "I do need your help."

When Principal Pelton offered no more explanation, Julian prompted him, "You need my help with...?"

"That light bulb is out. Please, can you replace it?"

Julian looked up to the ceiling, where there was indeed a burned-out bulb. He had never been comfortable with heights. "Doesn't the school have staff to take care of these things?"

"They never want to help," pouted the Principal. "They'll come in and talk about union rules and workplace safety and overtime pay and who knows what else. Please Julie! You're here, can't you just do it for me?"

“Well I suppose I could, if I had a ladder,” the boy suggested, hoping that would settle things.

“I have a ladder!” trumpeted the Principal. And sure enough, he had a ladder hidden behind his desk. Principal Pelton lifted the ladder, carrying it awkwardly to the center of the room where Julian assisted him in setting it up.

Julian stepped onto the first rung tentatively, not feeling the least bit at ease. He turned back to the Principal. “Do you have...?”

“A light bulb?” Principal Pelton completed his sentence. He reached into a pocket of his pants and produced a light bulb, handing it to Julian. “Here it is!” Julian accepted the bulb and continued up to the next rung.

“Be careful!” shouted out the Principal, causing Julian to shake in his awkward climb. “Here, I’ll hold your legs!”

“Principal Pelton!” shrieked Julian as the older man grabbed at his thighs. “This is difficult enough without you pawing at me!”

“Sorry,” apologized the Principal. “I’ll just watch,” he said as he stared up at the boy’s bare legs.

Julian slowly climbed to the top of the ladder, wishing he had taken off his high heels first. Wishing he had never come to the office. Wishing the Principal wasn’t directly below, looking up his skirt!

“I like your panties,” said the Principal from the bottom of the ladder, wanting to break the awkward silence.

“Uh, thanks,” responded Julian distractedly as he unscrewed the old bulb.

“Feminine, but playful,” Principal Pelton added. “Some girls your age are no longer comfortable in bunny undies.”

“Well, I’m a different kind of girl,” said Julian. He quickly removed the old bulb and twisted in the new one until it lit. He then



backed down the ladder cautiously, almost grateful to feel the Principal's hands holding his hips to give him support.

"Thank you so much, Julie!" said the Principal as if a great weight had been lifted from him.

"You're welcome, Principal Pelton," replied Julian. "You can let go of my hips now."

"Oh? What are you... oh." Principal Pelton backed away sheepishly. "But seriously, thank you so much! I don't know what I would have done without you, Julie, I really wish you would reconsider being my student assistant after school! I have so many ways I could use you!"

"That's sweet, Principal Pelton," Julian said. "But I really need to get home. My mother wants me to go to the club with her tonight. We really need the extra money I can bring in."

"Oh, student assistant is a paid position! And then I can take you to the club. I'm going there anyway."

"Principal Pelton, it just won't work!" Julian said in exasperation. "I need to go home and get changed. I can't go to the club dressed like a schoolgirl. I need an appropriate evening dress!"

"Is that all?" replied the Principal. He walked over to his closet and flung the doors open. "You can take anything you need from here!"

Julian looked in the closet and gasped. It was filled with some of the most outrageous women's clothing he had ever seen. Everything from Little Bo Peep to Cat Woman seemed to be represented. Principal Pelton pushed past the startled boy and pulled out a sparkly champagne-toned evening dress.

"This will be perfect for you!" he said. "And it's just your size!"

"How would you know my size?" Julian started to ask. But then, he decided he would rather not know the answer. He gazed at the beautiful gown, wanting to try it on, but really *not* wanting to try it on.

“You like it? It’s yours! Please, try it on!”

“Principal Pelton, even if I wanted to wear it I can’t!” Julian told him. “This dress has only one shoulder, and I would need to special order a bra to go with it.”

Just then the intercom on the Principal’s desk squawked.

“Principal Pelton, there’s a delivery man here.”

The Principal pressed the intercom button. “Send him in please.”

A rough-looking man entered the office and held out a package. “Uber Bra, delivery for Julie Ann Avery. Sign here.”

Julian was bewildered but signed and accepted the package.

What on earth...?” Julian said to the Principal after the man had left.

“Uber Bra! For all your lingerie emergencies!” said the Principal as if he was quoting a commercial.

Julian opened up the package and stared at the contents, mesmerized. “A bra with one strap, skin tone, full padding. When did you order this?”

“Just before you got here,” the Principal replied. “They really are the fastest way to fill women’s underwear!”

“But how...?”

“Helena had all your measurements. So I’ll leave you to get dressed. Do you want me to leave the door open just a crack?”

“No. Really, no...”

Principal Pelton left the room and waited anxiously, just inches outside the door. Julian came out of the office half an hour later, looking amazing in the sparkly gown. It hung off of one shoulder, leaving his arms and shoulders and back bare. The skirt came down just to fingertip length, Julian’s long legs looking all

the longer for the matching high heels. He had quickly curled his hair, then tied it up on his head in a mature fashion. A touch-up to his makeup and he was ready for a night at the club.

“I hope you don’t mind, I took a pair of stockings from your desk,” Julian apologized.

“Not a problem. I should have offered. So shall we go?” Principal Pelton offered Julian his arm.

* * *

Julian lingered in the ladies’ room, possibly longer than he should have while Principal Pelton waited in the club. The principal might be difficult and not a little bit strange, but he was a paying customer. Tony would not be pleased if Julian wasn’t working, getting Principal Pelton to buy more drinks. Julian looked through his purse and decided to touch up his mascara.

“Oh, hi Julie!” his mother said as she entered the room. She joined him at the mirror. “You know you can use the back rooms to fix your makeup? It’s usually nicer than the bathroom. You can sit down and relax a bit. Gina will even help you.”

“Thanks, Mom. I know,” said Julie as he put his mascara back in his purse. “I just needed a minute alone, is all.”

“Sure, I understand!” Melissa said. “Hostessing is a difficult job. I’ve been meaning to tell you all night, I love your dress!”

“Oh, do you really?” Julian asked. “I wasn’t sure about it. I like to ask your opinion before I wear anything. I thought it might be too mature.”

“Oh baby, it’s perfect for a girl your age!” Melissa assured him. “Believe me, flaunt it while you’ve got it. I hope you didn’t pay too much for it though?”

“No actually. I wanted to tell you, Principal Pelton gave it to me and I’m just not sure I should be accepting...”

“A man gave you this dress?” his mother said quizzically. “Julie Ann, that is... amazing! This is at least a \$200 dress. Did he pay for the bra as well?” Melissa asked the poor boy, pulling his dress down off his shoulder to get a better look at the undergarment.

The boy nodded. “And the shoes, and stockings,” he added. “Actually I’m not sure, he may want the shoes back. I didn’t ask.”

“Never ask, just assume,” his mother advised. “My goodness, you’ve reeled in a live one! Believe me, Sweetie, when you find a man like that, you keep him happy. I wouldn’t mind having a few nice things in *your* closet that *I* can borrow!” she said with a laugh.

“But Mom, this is all happening so fast!” Julian complained. “And, I mean, he’s my principal! Should I really be dating my principal?”

“It’s not a date, it’s business!” Melissa told the boy as she straightened his bra strap and dress over his shoulder. “A pretty girl like you can capitalize on her looks, there’s no shame in that. Who’s going to complain if you get a few nice things, and as he’s your principal he may even give you a boost in a mark or two, hmmm?”

“I know, you’re right,” the boy agreed as he let his mother fix a few wisps of hair at the sides of his head. “But he really wants to spend a lot of time with me! He wants me to be his student assistant after school.”

“Really?” his mother questioned. “Well, you know, you don’t have to do anything you don’t want to. And here at the club, you can count on Tony and Bobby to make sure he behaves. But Baby, anything you can get your principal to buy is one less thing you and I have to pay for, right? So you get back out there with a big smile, my beautiful baby!”

Julian smiled his biggest smile at his mother, and returned to Principal Pelton’s table.

Chapter 6

Tuesday

Julian saw Sid at the lockers and ran up to greet him.

“Sid!” he called out. “I’m so glad I caught you before class. I have something I need to ask... what happened to your eye?”

Sid slammed his locker shut as he turned to face Julian. “Your boyfriend, that’s what happened!”

“My boyfriend?” Julian said quizzically. “I don’t have a boyfriend. Do you mean Steve? Steve did this to you?”

“Steve and the rest of the examples of a double-Y chromosome that he hangs out with. They told me yesterday to stay away from you and this was just a little reminder they gave me after school.”

Julian didn’t know what to say. “Steve’s not my boyfriend, you know,” he said apologetically.

“I know that,” Sid told him. “But as long as he thinks he is, I need to stay far from you. So what was it you needed to ask me?”

“Well, the thing is...” Julian said hesitantly. “I really need you to ask me to the dance! Please, Sid. It’s really important!”

“No, absolutely not!” Sid replied. “Didn’t you hear anything I just said? You know exactly what Steve and the gorilla gang will do to me if I take you to the dance!”

“Sure, but no one knows what he might do to *me* if *he* takes me to the dance!” Julian said with a pout.

“Why, what will he do?” Sid asked.

“I just said no one knows!” Julian replied angrily. Then he softened and tried a new approach. In a sultry voice, he tried suggesting, “Please, Sid. Take me to the dance and I’ll let you touch me through my clo-thes!”

Sid looked down at the floor. “I can’t do it, Julie.”

“You can touch my knees!” Julian tried, getting desperate. “My... *lower* thighs. Please Sid, I’ll let you slip your hand under my bra strap!”

Sid looked briefly at his buddy’s bra strap but turned away with every ounce of resolve he could muster. “Don’t make it any harder than it already is,” he said as he walked away.

“Coward!” Julian said under his breath and turned in disgust, only to bump straight into Steve.

“Hey, Julie. Sounds like you and Sid broke up,” Steve said in a false sense of sympathy.

“Oh, what? No, no,” Julian stammered. “You know how it is. Every relation has its setbacks. Life’s little ups and downs. He’ll come around, eventually, I’m sure...”

“So now that Sid knows his place, I’ve got something to ask you,” Steve said, leaning in close and pressing Julian’s back against the lockers.

“Really?” Julian said with a squeak in his voice. “If it’s about math, I did the homework but, you know, I, I-I-I wasn’t sure on some of the questions so maybe you could ask someone who, you know, might know a bit more about differential equ...”

“I have something important to ask you, but not now,” Steve said, leaning back and releasing Julian to his great relief. “Right now I just want to make sure you’ll be at the football game after school today.”

“Football?” Julian said as if he had never thought of going to a game, which he hadn’t. “I don’t usually go to games. I mean, football is a metaphor for, for all the violence humanity engages in and I’m more of a, more of a, a, a pacifist, especially given the current state of the world and, and, and-and-and our country’s role in...”

“Anyone ever tell you, you get the cutest stutter in your voice when you’re excited?” Steve said, ignoring everything Julian

was trying to project. “Don’t be shy. You deserve this! I’ll see you at the game, Julie!”

Julian watched Steve as he turned and walked away to his next class. “I will so *not* be at the game,” Julian said to himself.

Finally, the last class of the morning was over! Julian had been starving since breakfast. Why do girls eat so little? He would have to ask his mother if it was really necessary for him to starve himself. Julian swept up his books and left the class, heading to the lunch room.

“Hey Julie!” Dabria called out. Julian turned around to see his friend and possible enemy, together with the other girls, all dressed in their cheerleader uniforms. Game day, of course, and the girls would all be wearing the uniforms that broke every single dress code rule at the same time! “We’ve been waiting for you.”

“Thanks, I just need to stash my books and get my lunch,” Julian said.

“We may not be getting around to lunch today,” said Evelyn with a sly grin.

“We’ve got a gift for you!” Ashley said as she beamed knowingly, before holding out the shopping bag she was holding behind her back.

Julian quickly opened his locker and threw his books inside. He looked at the bag. “Scantila? That’s so expensive!”

“It’s not really from Scantila,” Bailey confessed.

“We just reused the bag,” Chelsea admitted.

Dabria looked at the others with disgust, and snatched the bag away from them. “Just look inside!”

Julian looked at the bag Dabria had just thrust into his arms. He pulled out the tissue paper on top, revealing...

“A cheerleading uniform? For me?” Julian wondered aloud.

Evelyn smiled. “We took a vote and almost unanimously decided to let you join!”

“But don’t I have to try out or something?” Julian asked as he pulled out the skimpy blue, white and grey top and skirt. He noticed there was a tiny pair of blue panties still in the bottom of the bag. “I’m not really very athletic.”

“Cheerleading is easy,” Ashley told him.

“So easy,” Bailey added.

“We’ll teach you everything you need to know before the game tonight,” Chelsea assured him.

“The game?!” Julian realized with horror.

“Come on, chicken!” Dabria mocked the boy. “Let’s get you changed and make you one of us.”

Julian looked around the hallway desperately. Then he saw his salvation...

“Mrs. Carmichael!” he called out to the Vice Principal who just happened to be passing nearby. The older woman stopped.

Julian turned back to the cheerleaders. “I promised Mrs. Carmichael I would wear only the school uniform for two weeks. It’s my punishment for not following the dress code. I’m sorry, but I can’t be a cheerleader with you.”

Mrs. Carmichael approached the girls and addressed Julian. “Julie Ann, did I overhear that you are thinking about wearing something other than your school uniform? Have you forgotten our agreement?”

“No, Mrs. Carmichael,” Julian said submissively. “I was just explaining that I can’t wear the uniform, or cheerlead with the other girls at the game tonight.”

Mrs. Carmichael looked at the disheartened faces of the five girls, and the phony-disheartened but slightly relieved face of the one boy, and saw an opportunity.

“Julie, you’ve done a wonderful job of modeling the school uniform this past week. But a lot of girls are still on the fence, as it were, about the uniforms. However, if they were to see that the new girl wearing the school uniform has been accepted into the most popular group of girls in the school, I think opinion on the new uniforms would be swayed to overwhelmingly positive!

So, Julie, you have my permission to join the cheerleaders and wear their uniform for the rest of the day. I’ll look forward to seeing you perform at the game tonight.”

With that, the Vice Principal turned and took her leave, a satisfied grin spreading across her face!

Julian, still holding the tiny top and skirt, turned to face the cheerleaders. “Yay?” he said awkwardly, staring at their wide-eyed grins.

The five girls grabbed him up in a whirlwind of long hair and long legs, sweeping him off to the change rooms.

* * *

“Push ‘em back, Push ‘em back, Waaaaay back! Push ‘em back, Push ‘em back, Waaaaay back!” Julian cried out with the other girls, pushing forward one hand, then the other, and finally sticking his behind out as far as he could.

Cheerleading was just as easy as Ashley had promised. The girls had taught Julian the simple verses and simple dance steps that went with them in only a half-hour before the game. And because of Miss Krausfitt’s gym class, he was even able to do the splits with the rest of the girls. The girls finished their chant and ran off the field, sitting on their bench at the sideline.

The buzzer went, announcing the end of the first half.

Okay, so this is the big one!” Evelyn told Julian. “Remember, you can just move your mouth if you forget the words, but do you think you remember all the dance steps?”

Julian looked up at the stands, filled with students and parents. Dancing for their entertainment in a tiny top and not-quite-there skirt was not something he had ever expected he would be asked to do. But...

“I’ve got this!” he said with a cheerfulness he definitely did not feel. Except as they were about to stand, there was an announcement over the loudspeakers.

“Before the cheerleaders put on their usual halftime entertainment, the football team has asked for a moment to say something.”

Julian looked around curiously, wondering what was going on. It didn’t take long to spot the six football goons headed in their direction, crossing the field until they stopped directly in front of the girls’ bench. Julian looked up from his seated position with the cheerleaders, where the guys standing in front of them looked like a wall of Coke machines on legs. Steve was directly in front of him.

“Our own guys in blue have a question for these lucky ladies,” said the announcer. “Look up at the scoreboard, girls!”

Julian didn’t want to, but he was compelled to look up. On the scoreboard was spelled out the question he most dreaded seeing, “Will you go to the dance with me?”

When the crowd read it, though, they loved it. A cheer went up, and soon everyone was chanting “Yes! Yes!”

None of the girls would make a move until Evelyn did, of course. And Evelyn had an impeccable sense of timing. She waited, glancing at the crowd, then at the football goon in front of her. Everyone knew she would say yes, as they had been going out since their junior year, but she knew how to make them wait.

Finally, when the crowd couldn’t stand it any more, Evelyn stood and kissed her massive boyfriend, sending the crowd into wild cheers. A moment later, Dabria stood, grabbing her guy and kissing him, working up the crowd further. Then Chelsea, Bailey, and finally Ashley, stood and kissed their suitors. The

five couples then stood, beaming at the crowd, the anointed ones, the most beautiful couples in the school.

All except Julian. He continued to sit, terrified, unable to even look at Steve who beamed down hate and loathing the longer Julian refused to move.

“Stand up, Julie!” Steve hissed between his teeth. “You’re embarrassing us all!”

The cheering went on for a while, but finally stopped as everyone realized the proposal hadn’t gone as planned. Julian looked up at Steve.

“I’m sorry Steve, I just don’t think I can...”

Steve reached down and picked up Julian in his massive arms. The boy’s long, naked legs dangled in the air as Steve held him at arms’ length. The two stared into each other’s eyes until Steve pulled the helpless boy in for a kiss.

Steve held Julian in the kiss until the cheers finally died down. When his feet finally touched the ground again, Julian ran off to do his halftime dance with the other girls.

Chapter 7

Thursday

Julian looked at the tiny strips of fabric that were the result of his Home Economics project. It was Thursday and school had ended but because he was late joining the class, his dress wasn’t finished and so Miss Homek was helping him with the final touches. The dance would be starting soon and she wanted him to be able to wear his creation with the other girls!

“Miss Homek, I don’t think this looks right!” Julian suggested.

“It’s looking good to me,” Miss Homek replied. “Why, what’s the problem?”

“Well the skirt right here, we never even sewed it up on this side!” Julian told the teacher.

“That’s because it’s slit up the side!” Miss Homek said with a laugh. “You entered that into the design specifically, don’t you remember? Honestly, I thought it was a bit daring when I first saw it. But it’s going to look gorgeous on you and so I allowed it.”

“Gee thanks,” Julian told her, trying hard not to sound sarcastic. “But all these missing pieces! When do we add them?”

“Now I *know* you’re just kidding,” Miss Homek said. “Do you expect me to believe you specifically added all these cutouts, and now you think there should be pieces to fill them?”

“No...?” Julian said tentatively.

Miss Homek looked at Julian. “Julie, you’re not having second thoughts about your dress design? You’re not worried about wearing it to the dance, are you?”

“It’s, I mean, a nice enough dress I guess,” Julian stammered. “Just, you know, with me in it, there’s going to be a lot of me on display too. I mean, like, more me than dress. The dress is great, just, where there isn’t any dress, and like, it will be me instead...”

“Julie, if I thought for a minute that you couldn’t wear a dress like this and look amazing, you know I would have said something!” Miss Homek told the boy. “Trust me, everyone will be looking at you in this dress tonight, and for all the right reasons!”

“I really don’t think I even know what the right reasons are anymore,” Julian said, looking at the tiny dress dangling from his fingers.

“Enough worrying, young lady!” Miss Homek said decisively. “Now go behind the screen and try it on so we can make the last few alterations!”

Julian turned awkwardly toward the changing area, behind a screen that had been set up for the purpose. Then he turned back, a faint light of hope in his eyes.

“Miss Homek, I don’t think I can wear this to the dance!” Julian said. “It breaks just about every rule in the dress code!”

“Is that what’s worrying you?” Miss Homek said sympathetically. “You don’t need to worry about that. The state court decided last year that schools can’t enforce a dress code for after-school events. You can wear anything you like to a dance!”

“Oh. Hooray,” Julian said without delight. But then he realized; there was a reason why he couldn’t wear the dress tonight. A good reason! A really good reason that no one could deny!

“Miss Homek, There’s no way I can wear this without a bra, but the one I’m wearing is all wrong! I would need a special bra! It would have to be strapless and backless, it would need to somehow not be visible through this cleavage cutout. In red! It would need to be special ordered. Oh what a shame!”

Just then there was a knock on the classroom door.

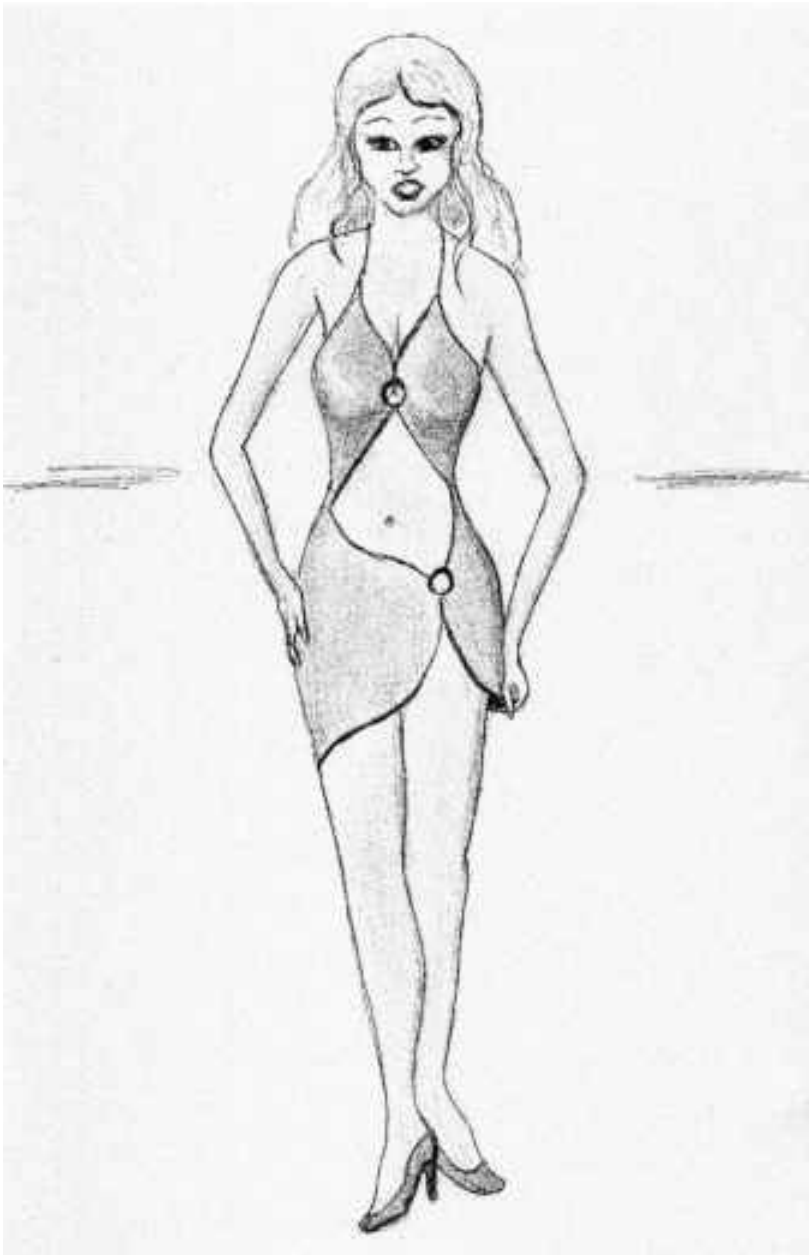
“Just in time!” Miss Homek said as she crossed the room to open the door.

“Uber Bra,” said the rough-looking man, holding the exact bra Julian had just described. It was suspended from a hanger and covered in a long, clear plastic garment bag. “I was told I could find Julie Avery here?”

“Surprise!” cried out Miss Homek as she stepped back and revealed Julian. “I knew you would need a bra, so I sent your dress specs to Helena!”

Julian took his new bra from the Uber driver. Not only was it clearly visible through the plastic, but there was also a big tag on it with his name in huge letters. “Did you carry this through the entire school like this?”

“Sign here,” said the Uber driver in his gruff voice. Julian held the bra in one hand while signing awkwardly with the other.



“This must have cost a fortune,” Julian said, looking at the custom-made piece of lingerie.

“Principal Pelton authorized the expense from the school’s discretionary budget,” Miss Homek told him.

“Of course he did,” Julian said under his breath.

“Thanks for supporting Uber Bra, Miss,” said the driver. “You’re one of our top customers.”

“Maybe I should get a loyalty card,” Julian replied as the driver left.

“Now no more excuses, young lady!” Miss Homek said with glee. “Get back there and get changed, because I want to see you in this dress!”

* * *

Julian stood nervously at the edge of the parking lot, near the entrance to the school. He knew that he would be working late on his dress and so he had asked Steve to meet him here. What he hadn’t counted on was Steve being half an hour late, so that he would be on display for everyone in the school as they entered the dance!

Another car pulled into the parking lot. Another guy helped another girl out of the passenger seat. Another happy couple approached the entrance to the school. Another guy lost control of his lower jaw as he saw Julian in his dress. And Julian was now another girl’s sworn enemy as another girl stared daggers at him.

“Please make this day be over,” Julian prayed to an uncaring universe. He tugged at the hem of his dress, wishing it was just an inch longer. Or maybe six inches. Or was in fact a pair of pants. Then, as if Steve being late hadn’t made the night bad enough, Steve arrived.

Six cars arrived in the parking lot, one right after the other. And as the doors opened, Julian recognized the other five cheerleaders with their football-player dates, and Steve. Steve was the

first up the steps to where Julian stood like a sacrificial lamb waiting to be slaughtered.

“Julie, you look good!” Steve said, admiring his date’s exposed assets. He grabbed Julian’s hips, pulling him in for a kiss that Julian expertly avoided.

“Please Steve, my makeup!” Julian complained, as if messing his makeup was his biggest concern.

“Julie!” shrieked the other girls as they arrived, surrounding the grateful boy as they separated him from Steve.

“Your dress is so cute!”

“Did you really design it yourself?”

“So daring.”

“I could never wear anything like that.”

“I would die, but you look so amazing!”

The girlish conversation ended and the others all went back to their dates in order to enter the school dance as couples. Julian found himself engulfed by one of Steve’s massive arms over his shoulder, with a slightly sweaty hand clutching his waist.

Julian entered the school with Steve and just as every other boy in school’s mouth had dropped open at seeing Julian, it was now Julian’s turn for his mouth to drop open.

“Principal Pelton, what are you wearing?” Julian said in disbelief. He shrugged Steve’s arm off his shoulder and approached the school’s principal. The principal stood before him, dressed in an outfit that simply can’t be described. So I won’t.

“Julie! I was looking for you. Where have you been? I’ve had a devil of a time getting into this without you. You need to take your job as my student assistant more seriously.”

“I’m not your student assistant. But what are you supposed to be? A mermaid?”

The principal huffed. “As if you didn’t know, Julie Ann! I’m a lobster. In keeping with the theme of the dance!”

Julian was confused. “What’s the theme of the dance? Latex fetish-wear?”

Principal Pelton looked grieved, then pointed to the banner hanging over the entrance to the gym.

“Enchantment. Under. The. Sea!” he read slowly with great emphasis. “Now do you get it?”

“Oh. Right,” Julian acquiesced. “I suppose it makes perfect sense now, you being dressed in skin-tight red latex in order to look like a lobster. Except isn’t that a lady’s costume?”

“It was my mother’s,” the principal told him.

“Yo, Julie!” Steve shouted. “Get over here!”

“I have to go now, Principal Pelton,” Julian said awkwardly.

“You go be with your friends,” the principal told him. “Except maybe meet me back here later? I think this latex has gotten twisted around and I need you to help pull and snap it back into place!”

Julian hurried over to Steve, somehow finding this a better option than remaining with Principal Pelton.

“What is it, Steve?” Julian asked as he arrived, out of breath from running in heels.

“They’ve got a photographer here,” Steve said, pointing out the couples ahead of them having their pictures taken. “We need to get a picture so we can remember our first big date.”

“It’s not our first big date!” Julian said in exasperation. “It’s our first date of any size. And last! It isn’t even a date!”

“I like the way you wrinkle your nose when you talk to me,” Steve said.



Julian let out a sigh. “I save that look just for you,” he said with a roll of his big, doe-like eyes.

“Hey, that’s nice. I like that.”

The last of the five cheerleader couples finished their photo and stepped away, making room for Steve and Julian. The two stood side-by-side, with Julian fending off any attempt at a more intimate pose.

“Okay, on three.” said the photographer.

“One...”

Julian shook out his long hair and wet his lips in preparation for a smile...

“Two...”

Steve reached around Julian, grabbing him by his bottom and raising him so his legs straddled Steve’s waist. Then with one hand cupping Julian underneath, Steve reached behind Julian’s head with the other hand, pulling him in for a huge kiss on the poor boy’s sweet, full, red lips...

“Three!”

The photographer snapped the photo, just as Principal Pelton photo-bombed the happy couple.

* * *

The rest of the dance went not too badly, comparatively speaking. Julian spent most of his time dancing with the other girls who, aside from Dabria, were fun and supportive. Steve would come over occasionally and demand a dance. Julian would fend him off on the dance floor like Captain Nemo fending off a giant squid. However he found he had one resource unavailable to Captain Nemo: the ladies’ room. Even Steve’s eight-armed, tentacle-like reach couldn’t penetrate that barrier.

Sid was there as well (at the dance, not in the ladies' room). Julian had tried to speak to him, but Sid was too afraid and would scurry away every time Julian approached. So Sid stood on the other side of the gym, unreachable, just staring. I mean, it wasn't like Julian wanted to dance with him or anything! He just wanted another guy to talk to. Another guy to have a normal conversation with for a few minutes. One who wouldn't be constantly trying to grope him. In fact, Julian realized, Sid was not the answer to that particular desire.

There was also the usual high school drama you would expect at a dance. Chelsea broke up with her boyfriend and Julian joined the other cheerleaders in consoling her. In the ladies' room, of course. That seemed to be where most girls' problems were dealt with.

And of course, Principal Pelton demanded his share of the poor boy's attention. He really had managed to get his costume twisted and it took some effort to straighten the skin-tight latex lobster suit. Julian continued to insist he was not the man's student assistant but he might as well be, given the number of insane requests he had to take care of for the man.

The photos were posted to the school's FaceByte page before the dance even ended. Julian and Steve's photo was quickly "Loved" by his mother, as well as most of the people he worked with at the club, plus a few thousand likes, loves, wows, and laugh emojis after it really got trending.

The dance eventually ended, even though it seemed at times that it never would. However that wasn't the end of Julian's evening. The cheerleaders were all on the school's dance committee and so Julian had to stay to clean up after the dance ended. Stacking chairs and sweeping floors had never been so difficult until you tried to do these things in a short skirt and heels. Especially with Steve following you, being more hindrance than help.

But eventually, Julian's dance nightmare actually ended. After the last banner was pulled down, after the last table was folded and the last trash can was emptied, Julian and the other girls' work was done. The other girls left, and their dates left, just not necessarily together. Julian found himself alone on the school steps with Steve.

“Well, thank you Steve, I guess, for a lovely evening,” Julian said with as little encouragement as he could while still sounding polite. ‘Remember your manners,’ he could hear his mother reminding him.

“Hey, where you going?” Steve called out as Julian tried to get away. “I’m going to drive you home!”

“That isn’t necessary, Steve,” Julian told him. “I don’t live far. Just a few minutes that way. I walk it every day.”

“No girl of mine is walking home!” Steve insisted.

Julian found it difficult to resist, particularly when when Steve grabbed him and turned him toward his car in the parking lot. Seriously, physically difficult, as Steve was much bigger and stronger than the smaller boy who was tottering in high heels and wearing a dress that required frequent adjustments in the downward direction. It was cold, and dark, he was dressed like a sex magnet, so under the circumstances it was probably a good idea to accept a ride home. So, in spite of the ‘girl of mine’ comment, Julian walked with Steve to his car.

Steve escorted Julian around to the passenger side of the vehicle. But instead of opening the front door to let Julian in, he opened the door to the back seat.

“What is this?” asked Julian. “Do you expect me to sit in the back?”

“Nah,” replied Steve with perfect elocution. “Just come here. I want to show you something!”

“Steve,” complained Julian. “I’m tired, it’s been a really long day, and I just want to go home.”

“Just... come here!” said Steve. “Trust me. You’re going to like this!”

Julian rolled his baby blue eyes for probably the hundredth time that evening but did as he was asked and circled around to the back of Steve’s car. Whatever ‘this’ was, he obviously

needed to get it over with before Steve would allow him to go home.

“Okay, I’m here!” said Julian. He took a look in the back seat and saw exactly nothing. Turning to face Steve, he folded his arms in defiance and said, “So what was so import... oof!”

Before Julian could get the words out, Steve shoved the boy over backwards into the car and leapt on top of him. Julian could barely speak through the wet stream of impassioned kisses that fell upon him.

“Steve! Mmmmwuh! What, are you, mwuhg! Doing? Get off mleg-ee!” Julian said, incensed, through the endless barrage.

“Don’t try acting like Little Miss Perfect here, Julie! You want this as much as I do and you know it!” said Steve, timing the words around his own kisses more effectively than Julian was able to manage. “You were sending me signs all night!”

“What signs?” screamed Julian. “Stop? Wrong Way, Do not Enter? Stay off Bare Shoulders?”

“How does this bra come undone?” Steve asked. “There isn’t even anything back here...”

“It’s a custom bra, designed for the dress!” Julian yelled. “It doesn’t have regular hooks. Look, just, don’t touch that! It’s expensive and you have no idea what you’re doing!”

Steve grabbed Julian’s bra in the middle and shoved it up around the poor boy’s neck. “There, that works!” he said with a laugh.

“Look, Steve, you can’t...” Julian said, trying to reason with the refrigerator straddling him, when reason suddenly lost its appeal. “Screw this. No offense, Steve, but I’m just going to start screaming, okay? Aaaaahhhhhh! HELP! HEEEELLLLPPP MEEEEEE!!”

Julian suddenly went quiet as Steve backhanded him across the face with the hand he was not using to hold the boy down by his throat.

“Just shut the hell up and this will go a lot easier on you!” Steve yelled.

Then suddenly, over Steve’s shoulder and through the open car door, Julian saw his salvation.

“Sid!” Julian cried out to his friend. “Please, Sid! Please, help me!”

Steve turned to speak to the boy, never releasing his grip on Julian. “Just turn around and walk away, Sid! This has nothing do with you. Walk away or this time I’ll beat you and you won’t get back up.”

Julian looked into Sid’s eyes and saw in them the conflict he was feeling. There was sympathy there, yes. But one of those eyes was still blackened from the last time he tried to help his friend. Then shame entered the mix and he saw Sid turn, and run away.

“No!” screamed Julian. “Please! Sid, come back!”

Steve backhanded the boy a second time. “I told you to keep quiet!”

Julian stifled his sobs, as Steve continued to press his kisses upon him. “I think it’s time to see what you have under here for me,” Steve taunted Julian as he slipped his hand under the boy’s skirt.

“Nothing you’re gonna like,” Julian managed to say.

Julian closed his eyes tight and braced himself for the inevitable beating that was soon to be his. Steve’s hand slid up his thigh, and then, suddenly... Steve was gone!

Julian opened his eyes to the incredible sight of Steve, suspended in the air as he was lifted through the door of the vehicle and tossed across the parking lot.

“Sid! You came back!” Julian cried out, until he realized... the person standing beside the car was not Sid. The person’s back was to Julian and so he didn’t know who it was. Whoever it was,

though, he was a lot bigger than Sid. He didn't look like any of the other football players either, although he was as big as any of them and at least an even match for Steve. Big enough to lift him and throw him, that was for sure.

"You!" shouted Steve. "This is none of your business!"

"I'm making it my business. Leave her alone, Steve!" the man said. Julian thought he recognized the man's voice but right now nothing was very clear or made much sense.

"I don't think so!" Steve yelled as he sprang from the ground, charging the man as if he was tackling another football player. Except before he even reached him, the man raised a fist the size of an Easter ham and connected it with Steve's jaw. Steve dropped to the pavement and didn't get back up.

The man nudged Steve with his foot. When it was obvious he would not be getting up again, the man turned to Julian.

"Are you okay Julie?" he asked softly, offering his massive hand to the boy.

Julian adjusted his bra back into place before he accepted the proffered hand, then stepped from the vehicle. Julian adjusted his dress, and finally looked at his savior

"Bernie?" he said in bewilderment. "Bernie! Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Julian threw his arms around his savior; the one girl on the football team. The other misfit in a dress at the high school for the past two weeks since they had both been forced to wear the school uniform. The only other person who could possibly, ever relate to anything he had gone through since that day he broke the dress code...

Julian stopped kissing Bernie's face, and pulled back far enough to really look at her. People usually didn't notice Bernie. She was always around but wasn't someone you thought about a lot. And yet, looking at her as if it was the first time, Julian noticed that the massive girl was actually kind of pretty. Not pretty like Dabria or Evelyn, but there was definitely something ap-

peeling about her. She had such a kind face, Julian thought she might just be the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

Julian stared at Bernie for only a moment, their arms wrapped around each other. And all at once he knew and didn't hesitate another moment. Julian pulled himself up to Bernie's lips and kissed her like he had never kissed any girl before. Or guy.

"Wait, Julian. Please stop," Bernie said, pushing the puzzled boy away. She looked conflicted but continued, "I don't know what you've heard about me, but I know the way people talk..."

"No one's told me anything about you," Julian said. "I don't know what you mean. I was just trying to say that I really like you!"

"I like you too, Julie," Bernie tried to explain. "Just... not in that way. I know people look at me and, and I'm, I'm big and look like a guy and play football so maybe you think I might be a lesbian, but Julie... I'm not. I'm sorry, I don't want to offend you, but... I like guys."

Julian realized what Bernie was 'confessing', and began to laugh.

"Please don't laugh at me, Julie!" Bernie said, hurt. "I like guys. And I hope that, one day, I'll meet a really nice guy who likes me just the way I am."

Julian laughed again. "Bernie, I'm not laughing at you! It's just that it doesn't matter that you're not a lesbian, because I'm not one either! Bernie, *I'm a guy!*"

Bernie snorted derisively at him. "Right. Julie, please don't treat me as if you think I'm stupid. I'm glad you're alright. I'll see you tomorrow at school."

Bernie turned to leave, but Julian stopped him. "Bernie, it's true! Underneath this dress, behind the makeup and hair dye and extensions and false lashes and nails, I'm a guy. *A guy who likes you just the way you are!*"

Bernie looked at Julian suspiciously, but then her eyes went wide with understanding. “You’re serious? You, Julie Ann Avery, the new girl, the cheerleader, the most popular girl in school? You’re a guy?”

“Yes,” Julian confessed. “Mrs. Carmichael has been forcing me to dress this way in order to sell her school uniforms. But next week our punishment is over and I can finally go back to being a guy again.”

“I remember, online, the night before we broke the dress code, there was one guy who said he would join us. We encouraged him and called him a hero.”

Julian laughed. “You’re grumpycat? Well, you’re *my* hero now.”

“And, you like... me?” asked Bernie, not quite believing it.

Julian approached the girl with a smile. He grabbed Bernie gently by the collar and pulled her into a kiss.

“Yes, I like you,” Julian said as he released the larger girl. “And I’ll prove it as many times as you wish!”

“In that case,” Bernie suggested, “Would it be alright if I gave you a ride home?”

“I would like that very much,” Julian replied, beaming as he did so and holding out a hand for Bernie to take. “Where’s your car?”

Bernie pointed, turning an adorable shade of scarlet. “I have a dirt bike a couple blocks over there.”

Julian laughed. “You expect me to ride on the back of your dirt bike? In this dress? I love it!”

The two stepped over Steve, hand-in-hand, and proceeded in the direction of Bernie’s bike.

They walked for a full minute before Bernie worked up the nerve to ask the question that was foremost on her mind. “So why do you always have so many tampons in your purse?”

Chapter 8

Friday

Julian stood by his locker before class, checking his lipstick in the magnetic mirror his mother had given him to stick on the inside of the door.

“Hey buddy!” called out Sid, as he approached and opened his own locker. “So how did things go last night?”

Julian took one last look at his makeup, then slammed his locker and turned to Sid, a look of fury on his adorable face.

“*How did things go?*” he said angrily. “How can you even ask me that, Sid? How do you have the nerve to even speak to me after last night, let alone ask ‘*How did things go?*’!”

Sid was taken aback. “I just... you know, after what happened, I was just worried about you. I just wanted to make sure you got home okay.”

“Wow, Sid,” Julian said sarcastically. “Just, like, wow. Why would you be concerned? The last time I saw you I was only about to be raped, then very likely beaten to a bloody pulp and left to die in the school parking lot. And let’s see, I can’t quite remember what you did about it. Oh right, you ran away! You ran away and left me, Sid! And then you ask how did it go?!”

Sid was stunned. “Julian, I didn’t run away.”

“No?!” shouted Julian. “Well, it sure looked like you!”

“Julie, please!” pleaded Sid. “I really didn’t run away. There was nothing I could do against Steve. I already tried that once this week and I got the crap kicked out of me. But I saw Bernie at the far end of the school, and ran to see if she could help.”

Julian wasn't able to go from 100 miles per hour of rage all the way to zero that quickly. So he said, "Why should I believe you? You didn't even come back. You should have stuck around and told me then!"

"Bernie laid Steve out cold before I even got back to the parking lot. Then it looked like the two of you were having a moment, so I held back."

Julian stood with his mouth open for a moment, realizing his horrible mistake. "Wow Sid, I'm sorry," he apologized. "I really misjudged you. No offense, but I would have expected you to come back and try to take advantage, maybe get in on some of the hero action."

Sid shrugged. "I can't say I didn't think about it. Except Bernie did all the heavy lifting. And seriously, you looked so happy with her. I know I've been kind of a jerk about your situation, trying to be your boyfriend when that was probably the last thing you wanted. But you understand, my attraction to you is purely physical. I would never want to stand in the way of you having a real relationship."

Julian's anger was in full reverse. He smiled at his friend, and kissed him on the cheek. Then something in the hall caught his attention. He turned back to Sid and said, "Don't ever sell yourself short, Sid. You are a hero to me, and every hero should get a reward!"

Julian turned and spoke to a girl approaching down the hall. "Hey, Chelsea!"

Chelsea stopped, surprised that one of the more popular girls would speak to her first. "Hi Julie! Omagosh, you were so cute last night! You looked so amazing in that dress. I just loved it!"

"Thanks Chelsea!" replied Julian with the obligatory jump and squeal. "You looked so great too. Like, so, really, really gorgeous! Hey Chelsea, remember when I said we didn't get into the new Star Force movie, and you said you wanted to see it too?"

"Sure," replied Chelsea, not really seeing the direction of the conversation.

“Sid,” Julian said, turning to his friend. “You still haven’t seen Star Force, have you? Weren’t you going to see it tonight?”

“Um yes,” replied Sid. “That’s right.”

Julian rolled his big, beautiful eyes at how lame his friend was being. He tried to motion Sid toward Chelsea with his eyes and when that didn’t work, he stepped out from between the two and shoved Sid toward the waiting girl.

“Um, would you like to come with me?” Sid finally asked Chelsea.

Chelsea smiled at the nervous boy. “Sure! That would be amazing!”

“Oh? Well, great!” Sid said in surprise. “See you here after school?”

“I’ll be here!” said Chelsea before turning with an expert hair flip and a well-practiced walking-away walk.

“You got me a date with a cheerleader?” Sid said when he could finally speak.

“Hey, you’re my hero!” Julian said with another kiss on Sid’s cheek. “You deserve it. Just, try to go a little slower than you did on our date last week, please?”

* * *

The film ended, and the four girls at the center of the gym said, “So, what do you think?!” as they jumped into the air. Everyone attending the school assembly, which was basically everyone in the school, cheered and applauded.

Mrs. Carmichael approached the small group, applauding as well, leading the school to continue the applause which likely would have ended sooner otherwise. Then she pulled out a microphone and addressed the students.

“...” she said. There was some confusion until a student from the AV club ran out and helped Mrs. Carmichael to turn on the microphone. She tried a few test phrases and after determining that, yes, the microphone now worked, she tried again.

“Thank you, Jimmy,” Mrs. Carmichael thanked the student as he ran back to his seat. His name was Richard. “And a big thank you to Dress 4 Skool for joining us at our assembly today! Can I please have another round of applause for an excellent presentation!”

The students were mostly clapped out, but they managed to pull it together for another ten seconds of applause.

“As you are all aware by now,” began Mrs. Carmichael, “your school administration has been looking into school uniforms as an alternative to what many consider a tedious list of rules in the school dress code. And if you believe following the rules is tedious, you should try enforcing them! You don’t like the rules and *we* don’t like the rules.

“For the past two weeks, we have been running an experiment. I’m sure you have noticed a number of students wearing these uniforms in your classrooms and in the hallways. Can I ask all my school uniform models to come forward?”

Julian and Bernie stood up from where they sat together in the bleachers and ran down to the gym floor with all the other girls. Julian looked around. There was Carol Ann and Just Ann, Leopard and Other Girl, and all the nameless girls he had come to know so well from the hallways and lunch room and his classes. He smiled at Medium Girl who was presenting again today, who gawked back in disbelief at what an incredibly beautiful girl Julian had become. And all the students applauded once more for Julian and the other uniform models.

Mrs. Carmichael continued to drone on. Uniforms would be on sale Monday. Pricing, expectations, blah blah blah. Julian wasn’t really listening. To Julian, the only two people in that vast gymnasium were him and Bernie. The guy who looked like a girl in a dress and the girl who looked like a guy in a dress. Julian squeezed Bernie’s hand and looked up into her big, strong, beautiful face. He had never been so happy.

Chapter 9

Week 3, Monday

Julian wandered dreamily to his locker, then just stood there, twirling his long, golden hair in his fingers. Sid had to call his name three times before Julian snapped out of his trance.

“Hey Julie! Hello, anybody home?”

“Oh, hi Sid,” Julian finally responded, turning to his friend and leaning back against the lockers, looking like a girl just waking from a deep, dreamy sleep.

“Wow, what’s up with you today?” Sid asked.

“Nothing,” replied Julian, with a deep, satisfied sigh. “I just had such a great weekend.”

“That must have been some weekend!” Sid said with a laugh. “So are you going to tell me about it?”

“I had a date!” Julian said happily.

“A date?” Sid said skeptically. “You mean, like, a date-date? With a guy?”

“No!” Julian replied in annoyance. “Don’t be stupid. Bernie asked me out.”

“O-ka-ay,” Sid responded, stretching out the word as he tried to picture this date and how it was not Julian with a guy, or a girl-guy with a guy-girl, or two girls? There were just too many possibilities for his usually overactive imagination to cope. “So, just tell me the rude bits.”

Julian shoved his friend playfully, giving a perfect ‘stop-it’ look with his eyes and smile, and a shake of his head of long, blonde hair.

“Sid! There were no rude bits! Bernie was a perfect gentleman. She asked me to the carnival for Sunday. She took me on

the rides. Oh, and she won me the biggest, cutest panda bear at the football toss!”

“So, just so as I can picture this,” Sid inquired. “You went on a date with Bernie, with you dressed like a girl, and Bernie dressed like... Bernie? But mostly, you dressed like a girl?”

“Well, yes!” Julian replied, not understanding why Sid didn’t understand the most obvious parts of his story.

“Dude, it was the weekend!” Sid tried to explain. “You weren’t in school. You didn’t have to dress like a girl!”

“Well, I wanted to look nice!” Julian explained. “It was a date, after all! What would Bernie’s parents have thought of me if I didn’t make any effort at all for a date with their only child?”

“You met his parents?!” Sid said in shock. He then shook his head and corrected himself, “You met *her* parents?!”

“Yes, they were very nice to pick us up at the end of the day. They took us to their house and we had Sunday dinner. They were really nice.”

“You had dinner with Bernie’s parents?” Sid still couldn’t get past this. “Dressed like a girl?”

“It’s not what you think,” Julian explained to Sid, who really hadn’t settled on thinking any one particular think. “Bernie told them that I’m a boy. She told me it was a bit of a relief to them. They’re sort of old fashioned and never said so but Bernie thinks they always worried she might be a lesbian.”

“Well I’m sure you showing up, dressed like this, put their minds at ease about that!” Sid suggested.

“I certainly was not dressed like this!” Julian said, indicating his short-skirted uniform. “I wore a perfectly modest, knee-length skirt, with a blouse and sweater. I didn’t want her parents to get the wrong idea about me!”

“No, no, of course not,” Sid said. “You wouldn’t want them to get the wrong idea. Whatever *that* is.”

* * *

Julian met up with Bernie during their spare class in the afternoon. Most students were using their spares to go to the auditorium, where ‘Dress 4 Skool’ was selling uniforms. Julian and Bernie headed in that direction, joining the general flow of students through the halls.

“Bernie, what’s the matter?” Julian said with a playful pout, imitating his girlfriend’s expression in an attempt to knock her from her bad mood. “You should be happy! This is the last day of my punishment. I’m going to buy a boy’s uniform, and from now on I’ll be your boyfriend! You should be happy for me, for us!”

“Sure, great for you,” Bernie sulked. “You get to be a boy again, and I couldn’t be happier for you. Except for the past two weeks I’ve had to dress like a girl. Julie, I look like a freak in a skirt and don’t tell me I don’t because I won’t believe you. And now I have to buy a girl’s uniform and wear it for the rest of the year!”

“Is that all that’s bothering you?” Julian said. “If you don’t want to wear a skirt, then don’t! Just get in the boy’s line and buy a boy’s uniform!”

“I don’t think that’s allowed,” Bernie countered. “The dress code says...”

“The old dress code is out the window!” Julian interrupted. He pulled the pamphlet the school had provided earlier out of his purse and explained, “Look here. The new rules say, ‘Girls’ uniforms and Boys’ uniforms will be provided.’ That doesn’t say who has to buy which, does it? Then it says, ‘Students will be expected to purchase the appropriate uniform’. Does it say anywhere that a girl’s uniform is the only appropriate uniform for a girl? No! And finally it says, ‘Students must maintain their uniforms and wear them to school every day.’ That’s all it says! So if you buy a boy’s uniform, that is *your* uniform and that is what you have to wear every day.”

“It still seems like you’re stretching the wording to make it say what you want,” Bernie said, still unsure you could just do that.

“That’s the law,” Julian said, maybe with more confidence than he should, but feeling fairly confident anyway. “The school gets to write the rules, so if the rules are misinterpreted, it’s their fault. And anyway, they’ve been forcing a boy to wear a girl’s uniform for two weeks. They have no reason to deny a girl to wear a boy’s uniform.”

Julian and Bernie arrived at the school auditorium, and faced the two lines for boys’ and girls’ uniforms.

“So what are you going to do?” Julian asked. “Get in the girls’ line and hide behind a skirt the rest of your life, or take a stand and join me in the boys’ line?”

Bernie looked at her beautiful little friend and Julian’s confidence swayed her. “Let’s get in the boys’ line!”

The two walked toward the left side of the auditorium where the boys’ uniforms were being distributed. However just as they reached the line, they were approached by two men wearing black suits, heavy black Oxfords, and dark sunglasses indoors.

“We need to have a word with you, Ma’am,” said the one who looked identical to the other one.

“Okay!” shouted Bernie. “I’m sorry! It was all my idea. I’ll get in the girls’ line!”

The second man stared at Bernie for a moment before ignoring her and turning to Julian.

“Would you please come with us Ma’am?” he said in a voice with zero inflection. “It’s a matter of national importance.” He flipped open his badge long enough for Julian to read F.B.I. before flipping it closed and hiding it away.

Julian looked shocked but nodded to the two men before turning to his friend. “Keep my place in line, will you please, Bernie?” she said as the two men led him away.

The two agents led Julian out of the school. “What is this all about?” Julian asked for the third time. The agents refused to answer until they were across the parking lot and all three were in the backseat of their black Crown Vic limousine, with Julian squeezed in the middle.

“Thank you for your cooperation, Ma’am,” said one of the agents, it didn’t seem to matter which one. “I’m Agent Henley, this is Agent Meisner,” he said as the two quickly flipped their badges open and closed. Julian just stared back and forth, overwhelmed.

“What is this about?” Julian asked. “I’m not in any trouble, am I? Whatever you think I did, I swear I didn’t do it! Well, I might have, but there’s probably a really good explanation, I’m sure!”

“You’re not in any trouble, Ma’am,” Agent Henley assured the boy. “We need your help.”

“We have been made aware of widespread corruption within your school’s administration,” continued Agent Meisner.

“Is this about Principal Pelton’s sexual harassment of students and, well, everyone? And his... general deviance?” Julian wondered.

The two agents looked at each other briefly. “Negative,” Agent Henley said as they returned their gaze to the boy. “That has been effectively dealt with.”

“Not exactly *effectively*,” Julian said, as he self-consciously adjusted his skirt.

“We’re looking into financial mismanagement; misdirecting of school funds,” said Agent Meisner.

Julian’s mind went to the numerous bras the Principal had purchased for him, but lost the thought as Agent Henley continued, “We need someone on the inside to help take these felons down. You’re Principal Pelton’s student assistant, correct?”

“No,” Julian corrected him. When this just elicited stares from both agents he continued, “He asks me all the time, but I’ve refused.”

Agent Henley looked at Agent Meisner, who then said, “We need you to accept the position. We need you on the inside where you can find the evidence of corruption.”

Julian didn’t know where to begin. “Agent Henley, Agent Meisner, you just don’t understand! Principal Pelton is not going to want me to be his student assistant after today!”

The Agents simply stared. A blank, incomprehensible stare, which prompted Julian to continue.

“Principal Pelton only wants me to be his student assistant because I’m a girl. I won’t be a girl after tomorrow. I’m only a girl as punishment. I’m a boy dressed like a girl, see? Tomorrow I’ll be a boy again!”

The agents turned their gaze to one another again. “Do they communicate telepathically?” Julian wondered.

“Does the Principal know you’re a boy?” asked Agent Henley.

“Yes, of course he does!” Julian said in exasperation. “That only makes him want me worse! So I’m buying a boy’s uniform today and hopefully he’ll forget all about me when I come back to school as a boy tomorrow.”

The agents stared briefly but nodded at each other, after which Agent Meisner said, “We’re going to need you to buy a girl’s uniform, and continue attending school as a girl. Tell the Principal that you’ve changed your mind; that you now want to be his student assistant. Do anything he asks, but use your time in the office to look for any evidence of corruption.”

Julian looked back and forth between the two agents, his red-lipsticked mouth open in disbelief.

“Are you freaking serious?!”

* * *

Julian returned, alone, to the auditorium. Bernie was close to the front of the boys' line, but Julian did not join her. Instead he went to the back of the girls' line. At least he was going to get the 10% discount Mrs. Carmichael promised.

Chapter 10

Week 32, Wednesday

Julian climbed the ladder, wearing his usual schoolgirl's uniform, and placed the book on the top shelf of the bookshelves in Principal Pelton's office. Then he climbed back down and bent down to get another book from the bottom shelf. He climbed the ladder to place the book on the top shelf...

This had become something of a ritual. Wednesdays were the day that Julian would help Principal Pelton rearrange his shelves after school. For some reason, the Principal really wanted the books moved from the bottom shelf to the top, but by the following Wednesday they would all be at the bottom again. Principal Pelton couldn't do this himself because he was afraid of heights. Both high heights and low heights, apparently. Principal Pelton would just remain at standing height where he could look down Julian's open top when he was at the bottom shelf, or up his short skirt when he was at the top shelf. Julian had stopped protesting long ago. He did insist, however, that the Principal turn off his body cam for the entire process.

Julian bent down and retrieved another book from the bottom shelf...

"Principal Pelton!" interrupted Miss Taken, one of the office secretaries, as she rushed into the Principal's office frantically. "Principal Pelton! It's an emergency! One of the toilets overflowed!"

"Ohhh, they don't need me, do they?" the Principal whined. "Don't we have people who fix that kind of thing?"

“It’s the girls’ bathroom this time!” Miss Taken elaborated.

“I’m coming now,” Principal Pelton said without hesitation. As he exited the office, he turned to Julian and said, “Julie, don’t do a thing while I’m gone! Take a break. Sit on my couch. You love my couch!”

Julian watched from his crouching position on the floor as the Principal turned and ran out his door, past the administration desk, and into the school hallway. Julian stood, and stretched his back before taking the Principal’s advice and flopping onto the couch.

Julian had been working with the Principal for almost eight months but so far had failed to turn up any evidence of financial corruption. Incompetence and sexual deviance, yes, but corruption, no. The Principal often misused school funds for various purposes but he always seemed to pay it back. All of the lingerie the Principal bought for him, for example, was purchased through an Uber Bra account set up with school funds but always repaid by Principal Pelton in cash, usually within a day or two in order to hide the purchases. The whole transaction was designed to look like corruption, in order to hide the Principal’s sexual misconduct. Julian hardly felt that counted as fraud. Just dirty money laundering. Or dirty lingerie laundering. Something like that.

Julian had even managed to hack into the Principal’s computer. What he found there may have scarred him for life but there was no financial mismanagement. Agents Henley and Meisner would show up once in a while, asking for updates. Julian never had anything to tell them.

Julian rested a moment, then noticed he was holding the last book he had removed from the bottom shelf. With nothing else to do, he decided to read it.

“Discipline in a Public School System,” he read, and opened the cover. “Property of Mrs. Gertrude Carmichael.”

This book belonged to Mrs. Carmichael. Julian thought perhaps he should see that it got back to her. He flipped through the

pages to see if any titles or anything struck him as interesting, when he came across an old Post-it note.

“Password: Kill_the_kids-27,” Julian read the paper aloud.

Julian was astonished! Mrs. Carmichael’s password; he had tried to crack her computer a dozen times but couldn’t. Principal Pelton’s password was easy. Julian guessed it on his first day. It was - well, you can guess what it was. But now he had Mrs. Carmichael’s password and could finally check her files.

Julian snuck out of the Principal’s office and made his way into Mrs. Carmichael’s. He had searched her office a few times but she kept nothing in writing that could be used against her. Julian slipped behind the desk and logged into the computer.

Julian searched the records. “Banking records, banking records...” he muttered to himself. “Here they are!”

Julian looked and couldn’t believe his luck! He had found Mrs. Carmichael’s personal banking records which showed dozens of transfers from Dress 4 Skool directly into her private account. Finally, this was the evidence he needed! She was taking kickbacks from Dress 4 Skool on all uniform sales!

Julian rummaged through his purse until he found a USB drive, shaped like a unicorn with the USB connector protruding from its butt. He plugged it into Mrs. Carmichael’s computer and copied all her financial records. Then for good measure he did a search for all Dress 4 Skool files and copied them as well. He waited nervously for the download to finish.

It took almost a minute but Julian finally had all the data to bring Mrs. Carmichael down. He pulled out the drive, replaced its unicorn tail and headed for the door...

“Julie Ann, what are you doing in here?” said Mrs. Carmichael as she appeared in the doorway, blocking Julian’s exit.

“Mrs. Carmichael!” Julian called out, a bit too loud to appear completely innocent. “I was just... returning your book!”



Julian handed over the book he was still carrying, forgetting until the last moment that the Post-it note was now stuck to the cover. Mrs. Carmichael's gaze zoomed in on her password. A fierce look crossed her face before she shoved Julian into the room, behind her desk. She immediately saw that her computer was on.

"I left this turned off," she said menacingly. "'You're a clever girl, Julie Ann! What have you been up to?'"

Hitting the BackPage button a couple of times was all Mrs. Carmichael needed to see exactly what Julian had done.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Carmichael," Julian pleaded. "Here's your data."

Julian tried to hand over his unicorn and set it on the desk but rather than take it, Mrs. Carmichael crossed the room and closed the door. Then she pulled out a gun.

"I'm sorry, Julie," she said as she aimed the gun with deadly accuracy. "But I can't let you leave here. Think of this as receiving a detention, for the rest of eternity!"

She had obviously fantasized saying the line and likely practiced it in a mirror many times. Maybe Julian should have taken the password as a warning? Mrs. Carmichael took final aim and was pulling the trigger, just as Principal Pelton entered and struck her with the door.

"Mrs. Carmichael, I've looked for Julie everywhere. Oh there you are Julie! Julie?"

With Mrs. Carmichael trapped behind the door, Julian snapped up his unicorn and ran past Principal Pelton, heading for the hallway.

"Julie? Julie! Come back! I thought we could give each other foot massages!" called out the Principal.

Julian ran down the hall, fairly competent in heels after eight months in high school. The hallways were empty, other than Sid at his locker.

“Hey Julie!” called out Sid. Julian pushed past him, reached into the boy’s locker and pulled out Sid’s skateboard. “Hey, what gives?!”

Julian threw the skateboard down and jumped on, pushing himself faster and faster toward the end of the hall.

“Run, Sid, she’s got a gun!” Julian called back over his shoulder.

“Who’s got a gun?” Sid asked, just as a shot rang out. “Wow!” Sid screamed as he jumped into his locker, pulling the door shut behind him. Mrs. Carmichael raced past, taking another shot at Julian before the skater girl disappeared around the end of the hallway.

* * *

Julian pushed himself on the skateboard down the alley at the side of the school as fast as he could, his long hair and short skirt flapping hard in the wind his speed created. Then he heard tires and an engine as he approached the end. It was dark out but the entire alley lit up as a car pulled around and blocked his exit, its headlights lighting up the night.

Julian turned and headed the other direction as fast as he could. The car engine roared in place for a moment but then Mrs. Carmichael was in hot pursuit. She quickly caught up to Julian, who braced himself against the hood of the car. His long blonde hair obscured his face, making it hard to see as Mrs. Carmichael pushed him and his narrow skateboard to greater and greater speeds down the narrow alley. They must have been going at least fifty when they reached the end of the alley and Julian’s skateboard hit the curb.

The skateboard flipped under Julian’s feet and Julian flew up, into the air. “Not much left except to hit the pavement, then get run over by my insane Vice Principal,” Julian thought to himself. Julian watched the pavement rise to meet him until it magically stopped around three feet short.

Julian watched the pavement race past, three feet below him, as something appeared to have snagged him by the waistband of his skirt. A couple of flips and turns and he found himself seated behind Bernie, riding on the back of her dirt bike.

“O. M. G., Bernie, where did you come from?” Julian cried out, unsure if Bernie could even hear him with the wind whipping in their faces.

“Sid told me you were in trouble. Hold on!” Bernie called back to him.

Julian wrapped his arms around Bernie’s muscular chest, holding on for dear life as Mrs. Carmichael caught up to them. Bernie dodged as the Vice Principal tried to ram them and took the bike to greater and greater speeds in his attempt to evade the insane woman.

“Take a right up here!” Julian called out, his golden hair floating all around them. Bernie followed his instructions without question. “Straight through this intersection!” Julian called out as they reached the end of the block.

“We’re not going to make the light!” Bernie yelled back.

Mrs. Carmichael fired at them out her car window. “Run it!” Julian yelled.

The light turned red but Bernie punched the accelerator, when suddenly a car entered the intersection before they could make it through. Bernie hit the brakes and swerved, missing the car but causing the bike to fall on its side, sending it and its two passengers sliding down the road. Bernie and Julian came to a halt, just as the bike hit hard into a lamppost.

Julian looked back, just in time to see Mrs. Carmichael’s speeding vehicle cannon into the car in the intersection. The night lit up as an explosion rocked the neighborhood, flames from the collision reaching three stories high. Julian watched in disbelief. But then the flames parted and Mrs. Carmichael emerged, limping toward them, hair and clothing singed and smoking, gun extended.

“Get up!” shouted Julian, shaking a semi-conscious Bernie. “On your feet, soldier!” he yelled as he dragged the larger girl to her feet and the two limped past the bent and useless bike.

“Quick, down this alley!” Julian instructed. Neither of the two was moving quickly but fortunately for them, Mrs. Carmichael was no faster. Halfway down the alley, Julian found a door. He pulled the latch but it wouldn’t budge. There was no other way out.

Julian pounded on the door. “Hey! Help us! Open up, please!”

Mrs. Carmichael finally reached the two lovers and raised her gun. Julian still needed to help Bernie, as the two backed away from the door.

“Well, that was fun!” Mrs. Carmichael said as she followed them, all the way to the end of the alley. “Oh, how I am going to enjoy this!”

She aimed first at Julian who watched as his Vice Principal... suddenly collapsed to the ground. Standing in her place was Bobby, the Club’s always-protective bouncer, holding his truncheon in a post-bludgeoning pose.

Bobby turned to Julian. “Hey, little girl! You know you can use the front door of the club, right? Just remember; you’re not supposed to bring friends. Or enemies!”

Chapter 11

Friday

“Mommy, would you please just... Mommy!” Julian said.

“Just hold still, Sweetie!” his mother said with a laugh. “I know you’re excited but baby... okay, lift your hair and I’ll zip you up.”

Julian did as he was told and Melissa zipped up the back of his dress, finishing it off by closing the tiny hook and eye at the base of his neck. She stepped back to admire their combined efforts.

“Oh, Sweetie, you look adorable!” Melissa said, gushing with pride.

Tonight was Prom and Julian had been preparing all day. He was wearing a short, white lace dress with a gorgeous A-line skirt, a scoop bodice and long sleeves ending in thumb straps. It had been hanging in the closet since he and his mother had bought it the previous weekend, but at the last minute they found the hem was frayed. Melissa had been stitching it up while Julian wondered anxiously if his entire evening would be ruined. He should have known better; Moms fix everything.

“Mommy, please!” Julian said in annoyance as he looked himself over in the mirror, patting down his skirt and adjusting the sleeves. “This night is so important. I don’t want to be ‘adorable’. I want to be beautiful, for Bernie.”

“Bernie is going to be over the moon when she sees you!” Melissa assured the boy. “Is Bernie wearing a dress tonight?”

Julian giggled. “Have you met Bernie?” he asked sarcastically. “She wouldn’t wear a dress even if the rest of the football team wore them. Why would you even think that?”

“Well, a prom is so special,” his mother said with a sigh. “I just think every girl wants to be beautiful for her prom.”

“Most girls maybe, but not Bernie!” Julian said. “Besides, she told me she was picking up a tux this afternoon.”

“Well I’m sure she will be very handsome,” Melissa said.

Julian smiled shyly and said nothing, not wanting to give away his private thoughts. Melissa knew what he was thinking anyway. There was a knock at the apartment door.

“He’s here!” Julian said in a panic.

“Calm down,” Melissa told him. “You stay in the bedroom. I’ll let him in, and you come in when I call you.”

Melisa went to the front door and opened it.



“Hey, Mrs. A.!” Sid greeted her.

“Hello, Mrs. Avery!” Chelsea said excitedly.

“Sid, Chelsea! Wow, don’t you two look amazing!” Melissa replied. Then she called out to Julian, “Julie! It’s Sid and Chelsea!”

Sid and Chelsea really did look amazing. Sid was wearing a white tux jacket and black pants with a red vest and tie. The red was chosen to coordinate with Chelsea’s two-piece, red satin and lace prom dress consisting of a crop top and long skirt slit to the hip.

Julian ran out to greet his friends. When the two girls saw each other, though, they shrieked and held each other, then ran off to Julian’s bedroom.

“Well, Sid!” Melissa said seductively, looking the poor boy up and down as they were left alone. “Chelsea had better be careful. I might just steal you from her.”

Sid laughed. Nervously. “Ah, Mrs. A.!” he said, taking a step away from the very attractive older woman, feeling slightly trapped in the narrow entryway. Fortunately there was another knock at the door. Sid opened the door to let someone else - anyone else - join them.

“Hey, Sid!” said Bernie. She was wearing a black tux with a bow tie and cummerbund, as advertised, and carrying a bouquet of flowers and a small box. “Good evening, Mrs. Avery. These are for you,” she said, handing Julian’s mother the bouquet.

“For *me*? Thank you so much, Bernie. I’ll just put these in some water,” Melissa said. As she turned to the kitchen she called out to her son, “Julie! Your date is here!”

Julian and Chelsea came out of the bedroom and greeted their dates in the Avery’s small living room. Bernie just stared at Julian, at a complete loss for words.

“Julie, you look, I mean...” she stuttered. Julie smiled shyly. When her date got no more than a few additional words out, he took pity on the poor girl.

“Is that for me?” he asked, indicating the box Bernie was beginning to crush in her nervous grip.

“What? This? Oh, yes!” Bernie said, handing the box to the boy of her dreams.

Julian opened the box and pulled out the wrist corsage that it held. “Oh, Bernie! It’s beautiful. I love it!”

The corsage was made from baby blue and white silk roses with adorning pearls and silver filigree leaves, set on a pretty diamond wristlet. Well, obviously not real diamonds, but pretty just the same. Julian slipped it on his wrist, and showed it to Chelsea.

“Oh my, isn’t that beautiful!” said the boy’s mother as she returned to the living room with her flowers in a vase. She set the flowers on the table, and admired her son’s corsage. “Do you know, I have a hair ribbon this exact color of blue! I’ll get it for you.”

The party continued for another ten minutes or so. Sid and Bernie made guy talk and Julian and Chelsea made girl talk and Julian’s mother tied up her son’s hair with a pretty blue ribbon that matched his corsage perfectly and really set off his pretty blue eyes. It was almost time to leave for the prom, when there was another knock on the door.

“Are you expecting anyone else?” said Mrs. Avery as she went to open the door.

“No, no one,” Julian told her. Curious, he went with his mother to the door.

“Evening, Ma’am,” said Agent Henley to Mrs. Avery, with a nod from agent Meisner. Then acknowledging Julian’s presence, he nodded to him and added, “Ma’am.”

“Agent Henley! Agent Meisner!” said Julian in surprise. “Come in please. What can I do for you?”

“We just wanted to inform you,” said Agent Meisner as he and his partner entered the room. “Mrs. Carmichael’s case was reviewed this afternoon and she was found guilty on all charges.”

“Wait, what?” said Julian. “That was fast! I only gave you the evidence two days ago!”

“Justice needs to be swift,” deadpanned Agent Meisner.

“Swift yes, but...?” Julian said, trying to comprehend what was going on. “Was there a trial? I thought these things took a while and nobody asked me to testify or anything?”

“Not necessary,” said Agent Henley. “Open and shut case. She confessed to misuse of school funds, as well as using a school computer for personal purposes.”

“She received a stiff warning,” said Agent Meisner. “Believe me, she won’t be trying anything like that again next year.”

“Stiff warning?” said Julian, shaking his baffled blonde head. “Next year? You mean she’ll be back at school next year? What kind of prison sentence did she get?”

“No prison sentence,” Agent Meisner confirmed. “The school board wanted to keep this quiet so a deal was reached.”

“A deal?” Julian shouted. “She tried to run me over with her car! She shot at us! She tried to kill us! What kind of FBI agents are you?”

Agents Henley and Meisner looked at each other briefly, then turned back to Julian.

“We are not FBI agents, ma’am,” Agent Henley informed the boy.

Julian’s pretty face showed utter astonishment. “Of course you are!” he sputtered. “You showed me your badge!”

Agent Meisner pulled out his badge and flipped it open. “Do you mean *this* badge?” he asked without inflection.

“Yes of course!” Julian said in exasperation. “It says right here, F.B.I.!”

Then he looked more closely. Touching the badge and moving Agent Meisner’s thumb slightly, he noticed it didn’t actually say F.B.I.

“E.B.I.?” Julian shrieked. “What the heck is E.B.I.?”

“Education Board Investigations, ma’am,” Agent Henley informed him. “We investigate all activity outside of school board guidelines.”

“So where does the school board stand on attempted murder?” Julian wanted to know.

“Not really our area,” replied Agent Meisner.

“Unbelievable!” cried out Julian. “Un-freaking-believable! I’ve been working for the school board, not the FBI? I’ve dressed like a girl for almost a year because you told me it was necessary! I was on the cheerleading squad! I put up with Principal Pelton’s perversions! I was on the freaking beach volleyball team for Pete’s sake!”

“You were so good on the beach volleyball team, Julie,” Chelsea interrupted, trying to calm her friend. “Best season ever!”

Julian ignored his co-cheerleader as he continued to yell hysterically at the two unresponsive agents. “And now you tell me Mrs. Carmichael gets a slap on the wrist and will be back again next year?”

“We would like to thank you for your cooperation, Ma’am,” said Agent Henley, as if Julian had not just ranted at him and his partner for the past two minutes. “Our superiors were very impressed with the work you did. We’d like to request your cooperation in further investigations next year. There’s a school across town where we’ve noted some highly suspect activity from the janitorial staff.”

“But I’m graduating!” Julian objected. “I won’t be in high school next year!”

“We would send you in undercover,” Agent Meisner explained.

Julian thought about this. It sounded absurd at first, but then he realized that he really had no other plans for next year.

“Can Bernie and Sid come too?” he asked.

The two agents looked at each other wordlessly for a moment until Agent Henley turned and nodded in agreement. “That would be acceptable. Your typical female friend would also be welcome.”

“No thanks,” replied Chelsea. “I’m going to State.”

All right, it’s a deal!” said Julian. Then he added, “On one condition. You two are going to drive us all to the prom in your limousine!”

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