

# Eddie, The Junior Year

## Chapter Seven Summer Break

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Summer vacation is special this year for Kathy and Paula. They have both graduated, and never really have to go to school again if they didn't want to. But, they both like gym class, physical education, and sports. And, that is what they will be studying in college, making it more fun than work. Kathy still has her Summer job. Along with Paula, they will be both teaching gym class in the mornings at the Summer day camp where they have worked for the last two years. Eddie will be also working during the Summer cutting lawns, maintaining pools, and doing odd jobs. Mark will be again working with his father.

Teaching gym class at the Summer day camp involves organizing kick ball and softball games for the kids. On a really warm day, class activities might involve taking the kids to the county pool. On a rainy day, basketball or volleyball played inside keeps the kids busy. And, there is always that all-day field trip to the beach once or twice during the Summer. As a Summer camp gym teacher, you play the role of gym teacher, school nurse, psychologist, babysitter, and referee all at once. But, Kathy and Paula really enjoy it.

One afternoon, the week after graduation, Paula decides to check in with Angelo again. She hopes to find out whether Angelo has found a car for her yet, or whether the Jeep CJ that Vinnie was expecting has arrived. Paula is going to have to do something real soon because she can't ride her bicycle to college every day, especially when it rains. So, she rides her bicycle to Angelo's, who she finds is just finishing up lunch.

Paula walks in and asks Angelo, "hey, do you remember me? I'm back again." Angelo replies, "yeah! How can I forget you? You're the Jeep girl!" Paula replies, "yeah, that's me. The Jeep girl." Angelo asks, "did you find anything yet?" Paula replies, "yeah, sort of. But, everything is out of my price range, so I keep looking. I suppose you hear that a lot from college

students.” Angelo replies, “actually, quite a lot. But, most of the time that I hear it is the week before they go away to college. You’re smart. You’re starting to look early.”

Angelo tells Paula to have a seat. He gives her a pad and pen, and tells her, “you’ll need to take some notes.” Paula, who just graduated, feels like she is back in school again. School just ended, and Paula is now told to take notes. Angelo tells Paula, “you’re in luck. Vinnie just got that CJ that I told you about come into his shop last week. It’s still there. I haven’t been over there to see what exactly happened to it, but I know the vehicle. The drive train and everything else mechanical is in perfect condition. I maintained it myself for the owner, so I know.”

Paula, who is overwhelmed asks, “so, what do I do?” Angelo replies, “go over to Vinnie’s and take a look at it. If you want it, tell Vinnie to buy it from the insurance company for you and have him retitle it.” Paula asks, “then what?” Angelo explains to Paula, “then, you go down to the Jeep yard on Sunrise Highway. Pick out any replacement parts for those that are damaged, and have Vinnie put them on for you. They must have a few hundred Jeeps down there.” Paula, who is taking notes, asks, “where is the Jeep yard?” Angelo replies, “it’s about ten miles East from Malea’s place, where Kathy got her Porsche.” Angelo tells Paula, “so, you get the Jeep, install the new parts, and drive away.”

Angelo makes everything sound so easy. That’s because what Angelo just described is quite an easy job if you’re a mechanic. Paula tells Angelo, “Wow! Okay. This is a lot.” Angelo tells Paula, “get Eddie to help you with it. He’ll know exactly what to do.”

Paula asks Angelo, “what exactly is the Jeep yard anyway?” Angelo explains, “it’s a junkyard. They buy Jeeps that have been totaled or don’t run, and sell the parts. It’s a big market. They would love to get their hands on the one in Vinnie’s shop. You’ll have to beat them to it.”

Angelo tells Paula, “let me make a call.” Angelo makes a quick call to Rocky, the owner of the Jeep yard, to find out the price of a CJ body, which is the worst case scenario that Paula could expect. Angelo specifies that it must be in near perfect condition. Rocky gives Angelo a range of what the body will cost. Angelo tells Paula what the approximate salvage value of the CJ at Vinnie’s is, and the cost of the body. Paula is very surprised, and tells Angelo, “okay. So, I’d better get moving on this now.” Angelo agrees, telling Paula, “go talk to Vinnie now. He’s across the street. I’ll call him and tell him you’re on your way.” Paula thanks Angelo, and rides her bicycle across the street.

Paula rides her bicycle into the parking lot of Vinnie’s Body Shop, where Vinnie comes out to greet her. In his Italian accent, Vinnie asks,

“so, you’re the Jeep girl?” Paula replies, “yeah, that would be me. The Jeep girl.” Paula is now known at that intersection as the Jeep girl. Vinnie tells Paula, “Angelo told me you were on your way. I suppose you want to see it. It’s in the back. Come with me, and I’ll show it to you.”

Paula and Vinnie walk to the back, where there is a parking lot of mangled up vehicles that look like they were haphazardly dropped there by a tornado. Seeing the condition of the cars parked in the lot, Paula is prepared for the worst. They come up to the Jeep, which is a light shade of blue. Paula, who is very surprised, asks Vinnie, “I thought it was totaled. What’s up with it?” Vinnie explains, “it is totaled.” Paula asks, “how is it totaled? It doesn’t look too bad to me.” Vinnie tells Paula, “trust me. This Jeep is totaled. I did the estimate myself.”

Vinnie explains to Paula, “it’s like this. The owner drove it through a hail storm. The hood and front fenders are all slightly dinged. You have to replace the hood. You just can’t put Bondo on a hood. And, the radiator has to be replaced because the hail damaged it. It has a very small leak, but the guy kept putting water in it so he can drive it around. The windshield is also cracked from the hail. And the vinyl side and rear windows are a little marred from the hail, and have to be replaced. If you add all of that up, and a bunch of other little things, it’s totaled.”

Looking at her notes, Paula tells Vinnie, “Angelo tells me I should buy it from the insurance company.” Vinnie tells Paula, “you should. It’s in really good shape.” Paula is confused. The Jeep is totaled, but it’s in good shape. That just doesn’t make any sense to her. To Paula, a totaled car is one that looks like the person driving it may not have survived. Vinnie sees that Paula is confused, so she tells Paula, “come inside for a second, and we’ll talk.” Paula follows Vinnie into the office.

Vinnie calls Angelo on the phone, as Paula takes a seat in the only 300 square feet of air-conditioned space around. Vinnie tells Angelo, “hey, I got the Jeep girl here.” Paula thinks to herself that she has just earned a new title that will probably follow her around for a while. Vinnie asks Angelo, “can I tell her the story behind the CJ?” Paula wonders what in the world they are talking about. Vinnie then tells Angelo, “good. So, it’s safe. Thanks.”

Now, Paula is really wondering what is going on. This is not how things usually happen in an auto dealership. Paula never heard this kind of talk when her parents bought a car. Paula gets the impression that she is trying to buy a Jeep under the table on the black market. Vinnie, however, was just making sure it was safe to tell Paula the real story behind how and why the Jeep was totaled.

Vinnie tells Paula, “okay, so it’s like this. The owner of the Jeep is moving across country in a week or so. After he got stuck in the hail storm, he didn’t want the Jeep back, so I totaled it for him.” Paula asks, “how do you do that?” Vinnie explains, “I found every last little thing that was even remotely damaged by the hail, and put it on the estimate. It all added up really fast. For example, the chrome around the headlights has a few slight dings from the hail. And, the paint on the bumper is slightly marred, so technically it has to be sanded and painted. So, the insurance company gets the Jeep and the owner gets the check. Come on back, and we’ll take another look at it.” Vinnie gets the key, and they walk back to take another look at the Jeep. Paula is now beginning to understand what is going on.

Vinnie and Paula walk back to the Jeep. Vinnie points out all of the insignificant issues that caused the Jeep to be totaled. Paula can see that, if you add all of the items up, it might cost a lot to fix, but none of them really matter too much at all. Vinnie tells Paula that the only things that really need to be done are to replace the windshield and replace the radiator, which he can do for her. Vinnie also tells Paula that she could buy a hood from the junkyard, and he could paint it and put it on for her.

Now realizing that the Jeep might be a good deal, Paula tells Vinnie, “okay, I think I want it. Can I have Eddie come look at it with me?” Vinnie tells Paula, “sure. Bring him by. And, if you want it, I’ll just buy it back for scrap value from the insurance company.” Paula asks, “how much is that?” Vinnie replies, “two hundred dollars at most. The scrap value is what they’ll sell it to the junkyard for.” Hearing that, Paula tells Vinnie, “okay, I’ll be back like real fast.” Paula thanks Vinnie, and rides her bicycle as fast as she can to Eddie’s house, hoping that he is there.

Paula arrives at Eddie’s, finding Kathy there with him. Eddie is tinkering with his MGB, as he and Kathy discuss what they are going to do in the afternoon. When Paula rides up, Eddie says, “oh, good! The second shift has arrived. Now we can go to the pool.” Paula’s mind is racing, trying to keep up with her body, as she is trying to make a decision that she is having trouble with because she is stressed. She can’t let a good deal pass, especially since there is no other deal on the horizon.

Almost in a panic, Paula tells Eddie, “I found a Jeep. Actually, Angelo found it. Angelo worked on it, so he said it runs good. But, it’s totaled. But, it’s really not that totaled, and it needs some work. But, it’s in really good shape. I wrote it down. It’s here somewhere. It’s at Vinnie’s. Geesh! Where is that paper! Oh, here it is.” Kathy tells Paula, “whoa! Slow down, girl. Let’s take this from the beginning. Breathe.” Right now, Paula has enough adrenaline flowing through her body to beat Mark in the 220-yard dash.

Paula calms down a little, and Kathy asks, “okay, so you found a Jeep?” Paula replies, “yeah. It’s at Vinnie’s, across the street from Angelo’s.” Kathy replies, “okay, good. What’s up right now?” Paula replies, “I want Eddie to take a look at it.” Eddie replies, “okay. We can go over there and do that.” Paula tells Eddie, “Angelo said he worked on it, and it’s in good shape.” Kathy asks, “and, you just came from there?” Paula, who is overwhelmed and almost to tears, replies, “yeah. Can you guys come look at it with me?” Kathy gives Paula a hug, and tells her, “sure, we’ll come look.” They all ride their bicycles to Vinnie’s together, riding a little slower than when Paula raced to Eddie’s house.

Paula is under the impression that, if she doesn’t move quickly, she’ll never get her Jeep. She would hate to be stuck driving a four-door sedan. That’s just not her style.

When they arrive, Vinnie is working in the shop. Eddie has met Vinnie many times in the past, and walks right in as if he owns the place. The girls wait in the front parking lot. Vinnie yells out from the shop, “hey, Eddie! The Jeep girl said she was going to get you. That was fast!” Eddie replies, “yeah. She wanted me to take a look at it. They’re out in front, waiting.” Vinnie stops what he is doing and gets the key. Vinnie and Eddie walk out of the shop, and Kathy and Paula follow them back to the Jeep. On the walk to the back, Paula begins to calm down some more.

When they get to the back, Vinnie announces, “well, here it is.” He unlocks the doors so they can all take a look. Kathy and Paula look at the inside, while Eddie and Vinnie talk about what needs to be done. Kathy tells Paula, “wow! That’s really a beautiful color.” Kathy and Paula sit inside, looking at the details of the interior. Kathy tells Paula, “it’s perfect. It has four seats. You can drive us all to the beach.” Paula replies, “yeah. I know. That’s part of the plan.”

While the girls are talking, Vinnie explains to Eddie, “it was caught in a hail storm. The owner wanted me to total it, so I did. I can replace the windshield for her. The radiator got slightly damaged by driving into the hail, so it needs to be replaced. I can do that too. Other than that, it’s mostly minor cosmetic issues.”

Eddie asks, “how did you manage to total it?” Vinnie explains, “the owner is moving across country. Instead of having it repaired, and having it transported, he’d rather have the insurance check and buy a new one when he gets there. I found every last little scratch and ding on it from the hail, and put it on the estimate. It all added up real fast. The insurance estimator couldn’t argue with it. So, technically it’s totaled, but it’s in really good shape.” Eddie takes a look at the Jeep, finding it to be in really great condition.

Paula and Kathy get out of the Jeep, and take a look at the outside. Vinnie tells Paula, "if you want it, let me know. I'll buy it back from the insurance company." Paula asks Eddie, "what do I do?" Eddie replies, "buy it." Eddie doesn't have to think about this too much. He knows a good deal when he sees it.

Paula asks Vinnie, "okay, so now what do I do?" Vinnie explains to Paula, "I'll buy it from the insurance company, and retitle it. It will save them the trouble of towing it away, paying my storage fees, and unloading it. Trust me. They'll be happy for me to buy it. It will have a salvage title, which is hard to get, but I can do that. Then, after that, it's yours." Paula asks, "what's a salvage title?" Vinnie explains, "if a car is totaled, it may need to be inspected to make sure it's safe to drive. Once it's determined to be safe, they issue the title. I can take care of that. No problem. Hail damage does not make a car unsafe to drive."

Paula is really happy that she is actually going to get a Jeep CJ. It's the vehicle that she's always wanted, ever since she was a kid. Paula asks Vinnie if he can paint "Beach Patrol" on the doors. Vinnie tells her that he can paint anything she wants on it. Paula asks if the words can be painted in a circular pattern, where the word "Beach" is on the top, and the word "Patrol" is on the bottom. Vinnie assures her that he can do that for her, and that it will look good. Paula also wants a small yellow sun painted on the hood in the front. Vinnie tells her that he can do that as well, but suggests that she wait until she gets the Jeep before she starts making all these decisions.

Vinnie has Paula write her name and phone number on a piece of paper. Paula hands the paper to Vinnie, who writes "Jeep Girl" in large letters on the top of the paper. Paula is now totally convinced she'll never lose that title, but she figures it's better to be known as the Jeep girl than having to ride her bicycle or walk everywhere she goes. Vinnie tells Paula that it could take a few weeks, and not to worry. Vinnie also tells Paula to check back in a week to see how everything is moving along. Paula thanks Vinnie again, and they all ride back to Eddie's house.

When they get to Eddie's house, Eddie asks Paula, "so, where's Mark today?" Paula tells Eddie, "he's working with his father on a job today, so I thought I'd ride to Angelo's to see if he found anything for me." Kathy mentions, "well, it looks like Angelo found something." Paula replies, "yeah. But, I was panicking. I didn't know what to do." Kathy tells Paula, "that's why you have us." Paula sighs, and says, "yeah." Eddie mentions, "well, it sounds like your Jeep is on it's way."

Paula, who is still a little bit stressed, throws out the question, "but, what if something goes wrong? What do I do?" Eddie tells Paula, "that's not how these guys work. Nothing will go wrong." Paula asks Eddie, "how

can you be so sure?" Eddie replies, "because they're on your side. They're not like Mr. O'Brien or Mr. Crum. Angelo and Vinnie are not your enemies. They're there to help you." Kathy tells Paula, "I've seen it myself. When I was trying to get the 914, I was overwhelmed too. But that's what these guys do. They make things happen, and make them happen fast."

Kathy goes on to tell Paula, "when I got my 914, Eddie and Angelo took out the motor. They made it look so easy. Eddie took the motor apart, and the parts were laying all over the workbench. Some of the parts were even lying on the floor. And, Eddie found the valve that was broken, and we got the new parts and he put them in. I was wondering if he would ever get the engine back together again. By the end of the day, the motor was back in the car, and the car ran. And, when I went to bed that night, I kept looking out my window at my car in the driveway, making sure that it was for real and that I wasn't dreaming."

Paula tells Kathy, "wow! That must have been some day!" Kathy sighs, and replies, "yeah, it was. It really was." Kathy then tells Paula, "what I remember most about that day is when Eddie said, 'I've never heard Angelo be this quiet before.' Then, I asked Eddie, 'how can you hear someone being quiet?'" Paula laughs, and says, "that is kind of funny."

Paula is now more confident that Vinnie will deliver what he says he will. Unfortunately, paperwork is the only thing stopping Paula from driving the Jeep home today. Paula will just have to wait. But, Paula can't wait. She wants to know, and she wants to know now. So, Paula comes up with an idea. Paula tells Eddie and Kathy that she wants to ride to the portal, and go two months into the future to see if she can find out if she got the Jeep. Hopefully, she will see the Jeep in her driveway. Eddie and Kathy decide to go with her, so they head to the portal together to find out.

When they all arrive at the portal, Kathy asks, "so, where and when are we going?" Paula thinks for a moment, and asks Kathy, "what happens if I get there and I'm not home?" Kathy replies, "then, you come right back to here, and you'll be all upset." Paula replies, "darn! That's right." But, that is a chance Paula is willing to take.

Eddie, remembering that he went to the future in the middle of the night once, suggests, "why not pick 3:00 a.m.?" Paula exclaims, "yeah, that would work! I should be home at 3:00 a.m.!" Paula takes herself, Eddie, and Kathy two months into the future, at 3:00 a.m.

They immediately arrive to the future, and Paula mentions, "hey, it's dark." Kathy replies, "well, duh! It's 3:00 a.m." Paula utters, "oh, yeah. It's night. It's supposed to be dark." Kathy, yanking Paula's chain, asks

her, "wait a second. How do you know it's not a total eclipse of the sun?" Paula replies, "then, how do you know the sun didn't like just burn out?" Kathy tells Paula, "maybe it did. So then, you won't need a Jeep, now will you? You'll need a dog sled because we'll have another ice age." Kathy and Paula often talk with each other in this way.

They then ride in the direction of Paula's house. On the way, they pass Mark's house. Passing the intersection at Angelo's and Vinnie's, they turn right. The roads are all deserted, but that is to be expected in the middle of the night. When they get to Paula's street, they turn left. Paula stops, because she is now having second thoughts about taking a look.

Paula tells Kathy, "okay. So now, I don't know if I want to know." Kathy tells Paula, "okay then. We'll stay here and Eddie can go and look." Paula says, "oh, I just don't know. What if I find a broken down clunker at my house? Or worse! What if there's a four-door sedan?" Eddie tells Kathy and Paula, "you guys talk about it. I'm going to take a look anyway." Eddie rides off to Paula's house. Kathy and Paula talk for a moment and then ride to Paula's house. They figure they'll find out from Eddie what's in the driveway anyway, so they might as well find out first hand.

Eddie comes up to Paula's house and sees Paula's Jeep CJ in the driveway. When Paula sees her Jeep come into view, she exclaims, "I got it! I got it! I got it!" Paula rides into her driveway and looks at the Jeep under the moonlight. Paula sees the words "Beach Patrol" painted on each door. And, just like she wanted, there is a golden sun painted on the hood. Kathy and Eddie also take a look. Eddie mentions, "it looks really good from what I can see." Paula sees that the cracked windshield has been repaired, and the Jeep is nice and clean. Paula is now very excited.

It's not only Paula who is excited. The police officer that just stopped to question them is excited as well. The officer thinks he has come across a few vandals who might be trying to steal the Jeep, or break into it. The spotlight shines on Paula, Eddie, and Kathy. The officer gets out of his car and approaches the Jeep and the three perpetrators. Kathy whispers to Eddie, "oh crap. We're busted." Eddie asks, "for what? It's her Jeep." Kathy replies, "oh, yeah. That's right!" Paula, hearing what Eddie just told Kathy, just figured out how to get herself out of this.

The officer, Officer Richard Hayes, asks the group, "how come you characters are out at 3:22 a.m., looking at a Jeep in someone's front yard? Go ahead. I'm listening." Paula tells the officer, "it's my Jeep." Not quite believing Paula, the officer replies, "oh, really?" Paula tells him, "yeah. I live here." The officer asks Paula, "can you prove that?" Paula wants to get rid of the officer as quickly as possible, in case her parents wake up



and realize something is going on outside. Paula replies, “yeah. Here’s my license,” as she hands the officer her driver’s license. Paula is hoping for the best.

The officer checks the address on Paula’s driver’s license with the house address, and tells her, “okay, it looks like you check out.” Officer Hayes takes a closer look at the Jeep, and exclaims, “oh wait! You’re the Jeep girl!” Now recognizing Kathy, Eddie, and Paula, the officer asks, “what are you guys doing out here in the middle of the night?” Kathy replies, “we were all out riding our bicycles, and we just wanted to make sure the Jeep girl got home safe.” The officer recognizes Kathy, and mentions to her, “yeah, and you’re the pizza girl.” Kathy recognizes the officer from the night at the pizzeria when Paul Mahoney made a scene and ran down the street, nearly causing an accident. Kathy replies, “yeah, that’s me. The pizza girl.”

Paula asks the officer, “so, I’m the Jeep girl?” The officer laughs, and replies, “yeah. You’re always driving around with the top down. It’s hard not to notice a Jeep that has ‘Beach Patrol’ on the doors.” While Paula is talking to the police officer, Kathy points out to Eddie the front license plate on the Jeep. Kathy and Eddie see a custom made decorative airbrushed plate that says “Beach Girl” with coloring that matches the Jeep. Eddie whispers to Kathy, “Vinnie must have made that for her.” Kathy replies, “I guess it’s carved in stone. She’ll be the Beach Girl forever.” Eddie tells Kathy, “and, it looks like you’re the pizza girl.”

The officer tells Eddie and Kathy to get home safely. He gets back in his car and drives off. Once the officer is gone, Paula mentions, “oh wonderful. I’ve seen my future. I’m the Jeep girl.” Kathy tells Paula, “hey! That’s better than being the pizza girl.” Eddie tells Paula, “it’s better to be called the ‘Jeep girl’ than a whole bunch of other stuff, like ‘the Chuckie’ or ‘Jimmy O’Cryin’.” Paula has decided that the nickname “Jeep girl” is not such a bad name after all. They all head back to the portal, and get back to their time.

They ride back to Eddie’s house, where Kathy and Paula sit and talk, while Eddie finishes up what he was working on. Paula, who was very stressed, is now very excited, to say the least. She tells Eddie and Kathy that she’s going to start looking at ways to personalize her Jeep. Kathy gives Paula a hug, and tells her, “see? Everything is going to work out just fine.”

Eddie asks Paula, “hey. When does Mark get home?” Paula replies, “late. Real late. He’s working on a big job with his father.” Kathy asks Paula, “do you want to go to the pool with us?” Paula replies, “yeah. After today, I need to just relax. After all, if I’m going to drive around with the top down, I might as well work on my suntan.” Kathy tells Paula, “suntan?

Have you looked in the mirror, girl? You're already darker than Johnson and you're catching up to Braden!" Paula replies, "I guess it's my Italian genes."

Paula heads home to get her swimsuit. Kathy informs Eddie that they are all going to the pool. Eddie finishes up on the MGB, and is ready to go. Kathy asks Eddie, "so, how's the MGB coming?" Eddie informs her, "I just finished wiring up the new gauges." Kathy reminds Eddie, "it was running last weekend. What's up?" Eddie explains to Kathy, "nothing. It still runs. The new gauges that I added didn't have to be wired up for it to run." Kathy replies, "oh, good. I'm glad it's not broken."

Eddie installed gauges that indicate the engine oil temperature, differential oil temperature and transmission oil temperature. He got the idea from Kathy's Porsche 914, which has aftermarket gauges indicating the transaxle oil temperature, engine oil temperature, exhaust gas temperature, and a separate temperature gauge for each cylinder. The inside of the MGB is beginning to look like a cockpit, but nothing like the inside of Kathy's 914. Eddie gets ready to go to the pool, as Kathy takes a close look at the MGB. Kathy came prepared, just in case going to the pool was on the agenda. But, then again, Kathy is always prepared for going to the pool or beach.

Paula returns from her house, and they all head to the pool. Eddie has to practice for his rematch with Tessa. Tessa swims nearly every day, and has her eyes set on the State invitational meet next year in swimming. Eddie, however, swims for cross training, not for competition. Today, Kathy and Paula will swim with Eddie. Kathy and Paula both received a track scholarship, so neither of them can afford to slack off this Summer. Kathy calls it a "bodyship" instead of a scholarship, since she insists the school wants her for her body, and not for her mind. She is not far from the truth.

Two weeks later, the day of the big rematch between Eddie and Tessa arrives, perhaps a bit early this year. Eddie and Kathy head to the pool to meet the rest of the tribe. When they arrive at the pool, sure enough, Tessa is already there, swimming a few warm-up laps. The rest of the tribe is hanging out at the tables or in the water. Kathy notices that Lena Borg, who graduated with Kathy this year, is the lifeguard today.

Kathy goes over to talk with Lena. During their conversation, Kathy tells Lena, "Eddie and Tessa are here for their rematch. Do you want to race them again?" Lena replies, "not this year," and asks, "when were they wanting to race?" Kathy replies, "they haven't really set a time." Lena tells Kathy, "this place is going to get really crowded after lunch. Sooner would be better than later." Lena tells Kathy, "if it's only two of them, I can clear

one side of the pool for you. If there's six who want to race, I can close the pool down for a few minutes." Kathy tells Lena, "I'll go and find out."

Kathy walks back to the tables, and tells Eddie, "Lena says you guys should race sooner than later because it's going to get crowded after lunch." Eddie replies, "I'd rather swim before lunch anyway." Kathy asks the group if anyone else wants to race. Today, there are no takers. Kathy tells Eddie, "it looks like it's just you and Tessa." Tessa, who got out of the pool earlier, tells Eddie, "I'm ready whenever you are."

Kathy asks Eddie and Tessa, "so, are you guys ready now?" Eddie replies, "let's go for it!" Tessa replies, "I'm ready! But, I'm not so sure about Eddie." Tessa probably shouldn't have said that. Her comment will just make Eddie more motivated to win.

Kathy goes over to Lena, telling her, "everyone is ready. We only have Eddie and Tessa swimming, so we only need two lanes." Lena tells Kathy, "okay. I'll close down three lanes. Get them warmed up and ready." Kathy goes back to the tables, and tells Eddie and Tessa, "get warmed up. Lena is going to close down half the pool for us."

Lena blows her whistle, and tells everyone in lanes one through three to move to the other side of the pool. Tessa lets Eddie have lane two, which is the better lane. Tessa, who is very confident this year, will take lane one, which is against the wall. Eddie and Tessa line up at the deep end, and Lena gives them the go ahead. Tessa reminds Kathy, who will be the Starter, that she is to announce 'take your mark,' and then tell them to go. There is no "set" command as there is in track. Kathy asks Eddie and Tessa if they are ready, and they both indicate that they are.

Kathy announces, "take your marks." Eddie and Tessa are ready to dive in. Kathy then announces, "go," and Eddie and Tessa dive into the water. Eddie and Tessa are fighting it out, for a lot is at stake today. Eddie has a slight lead over Tessa initially because he dove a little farther than Tessa. Tessa, however, is catching up to Eddie as they both approach the wall. Kathy walks along the side of the pool as they swim, wanting to see what happens during the flip turn. The race attracts a lot of attention, and a few spectators stand at the side of the pool to watch.

After the first turn, Eddie has gained a slight advantage over Tessa. During the second lap, Tessa closes in on Eddie's lead, and overtakes him halfway through the lap. At the end of the second lap, Tessa kicks off first, starting her third lap with Eddie right behind her. Eddie kicks off as if he is trying to break the concrete side wall. Eddie overtakes Tessa, and is now slightly ahead. Eddie and Tessa are tied halfway through the lap, but Tessa again takes the lead. Tessa enters the final lap first. Eddie knows he is behind, so he kicks off of the wall with as much force as he

can deliver. Eddie overtakes Tessa, and Tessa is well aware of it. It is now a fight to the finish. In the last few yards, Tessa overtakes Eddie. Eddie uses all the muscle he can recruit in order to catch up. Tessa touches the wall right before Eddie, winning this year's rematch.

Eddie knows Tessa won, and congratulates her. Tessa grins, and exclaims, "I beat you, buddy!" Kathy announces that Tessa is the winner, but Tessa and Eddie already knew that. Tessa took Barbara's advice from last year and improved her kick during her flip turn. Tessa's work has clearly paid off. Tessa is also faster in the water this year, but so is Eddie. Tessa is stronger this year, but so is Eddie. Today's race, with a winning time of 58 seconds, goes to Tessa. There will probably be another rematch next year, perhaps sooner if the tribe gets together at the pool later this Summer.

Eddie and Tessa get out of the pool and walk back to the tables. Everyone congratulates Tessa, and many are surprised that she actually won. Tessa tells everyone that she would not have won if it wasn't for Eddie, and the rest of the tribe. Tessa explains that, two years ago, Eddie and Kathy showed her how to do a flip turn. Tessa also tells everyone that she took Barbara's, and everyone else's, advice from last year, and has been working on her kick off the wall.

At the tables, Eddie asks Tessa, "so, what did you do to improve your flip turn?" Tessa tells Eddie, "I've been doing squats and, on the weekends, I run one of Mr. Frazier's drills. Then, in the pool, I swim the width, and kick off the wall as hard as I can." Eddie tells Tessa, "keep doing it. It's working." Kathy asks, "which drill do you run?" Tessa replies, "the one everyone hates."

Tessa's answer, "the one everyone hates," is a definitive answer, and everyone knows exactly which drill she means. Tessa was referring to the drill where the sprinters sprint for 440 yards, then take a recovery lap. Once they can't sprint for 440 yards, the sprinting distance is dropped to 220 yards, then 110 yards. No one likes the drill, but to do it voluntarily attests to its efficacy.

After spending the morning and afternoon at the pool, everyone decides to get pizza. Today, Eddie drove to the pool in his MGB. Everyone walks out to the parking lot to see the car they've all heard about for the last year. The top is down, so everyone gets a good look at the inside too.

Braden asks Eddie, "whose car is faster, yours or Kathy's?" Eddie replies, "Kathy's is faster and handles better, but hers is pretty much a racing car." Tessa suggests, "maybe you two should have a race." Eddie replies, "Kathy's car would win, but I could probably beat her car in a 40-

yard dash.” Kathy asks, “really? I’m not too sure about that.” Eddie confidently replies, “I can, and so could you. Put it on the list. We’ll have a race someday and see.” Eddie and Kathy will leave that competition for a future date.

When they arrive at the pizzeria, Joe, as always, is glad to see them. They take a seat, and Joe comes to the table to take their order. Everyone orders pizza today, including Bobby B., who has recently been forgoing his usual high protein meals. Since he won the gold medal in the shot-put for the last two years at the State invitational meets, Bobby B. has been eating a lot more pizza.

While they are waiting for their pizzas, Kathy asks Paula, “have you heard any more about your Jeep?” Paula replies, “no. But, I should probably check back with Angelo or Vinnie on Monday afternoon when I get off of work.” Kathy tells her, “remind me. We can drive there before lunch.” Paula replies, “that sounds like a plan to me.”

Braden asks Paula, “so, what are you gonna get?” Paula tells Braden, “I might get a Jeep CJ. I have something in the works, but it’s been taking some time.” Braden exclaims, “you’re getting one of those? That’s awesome!” Everyone is suddenly interested in Paula’s Jeep that she doesn’t have yet.

The pizzas arrive, and Paula gets out of explaining more about her Jeep. She has been waiting anxiously to find out when she will get it. Mark mentions that he is looking for a truck. Everyone asks Mark why he wants a truck. Mark explains that, after high school, he will probably follow in his father’s footsteps and be a jobber. Mark already has the skills he needs, and he likes the work. Mark cannot stand to be inside all day, so any job working in an office is not for him. Mark points out that even if he changes his mind, he still would have a truck.

Braden comments, “I always wanted a Dune Buggy.” Paula asks, “why a Dune Buggy?” Braden explains, “I got a ride in one of them once. I felt like I was out in the open. I really hate to be all boxed up in a car. I even hate to be boxed up in a classroom. Now that I’m thinking about it, I hate to be boxed up anywhere.” Mark replies, “I can relate, bro.” Paula tells Braden, “that’s why I want a Jeep CJ! I hate to be in a car or inside.”

Braden explains, “I don’t even know where to get a Dune Buggy. I see them all the time in the Summer, but never in the Winter. And, I ain’t seen anywhere that sells them.” Eddie tells Braden, “you have to build a Dune Buggy, bro. They’re built on a modified Volkswagen chassis. Or, you can buy one that someone else has already converted.” Braden asks Eddie, “how easy is it to build one?” Eddie replies, “it’s not hard at all if you’re a mechanic. I can help you with it, if you want.”

After dinner, everyone goes their separate ways for the remainder of the evening. Eddie and Kathy go back to her house, where they sit by the pool for a while. Kathy waits for her star to appear, but she isn't looking too closely tonight. Laying on the chaise lounge with her head on Eddie's chest, her lips find his as the sun sets for the evening. Kathy's star appears in the sky, unnoticed tonight, but is faithful to appear in the same place in the sky as when Kathy first saw it.

Monday, after work, Paula reminds Kathy to stop by Angelo's to get a status update on her Jeep. They drive into Angelo's and arrive while he is eating lunch. Kathy fills her gas tank while Paula goes into the office to ask Angelo if there is any news.

Angelo greets Paula, saying, "hey! It's the Jeep girl! You're in luck today!" All excited, Paula asks, "what? Tell me!" Angelo tells Paula, "Vinnie has some good news for you." Paula, who is now even more excited, asks, "so, I can get my Jeep now?" Angelo tells her, "yeah. You should go over and talk to him." Paula tells Angelo, "thank you, thank you, thank you! I'm going there right now!" Paula runs out of the office, right past Kathy, and across the street to Vinnie's.

After pumping her gas, Kathy goes inside to pay Angelo. Angelo tells Kathy, "wow! The Jeep girl was really excited. I've never seen anyone run that fast before!" Kathy replies, "yeah, she's fast. So what's up?" Angelo tells Kathy, "Vinnie has the Jeep all ready for her." Kathy tells Angelo, "we were stopping by to find out if there is any news. She's been really waiting for this." Angelo tells Kathy, "from her excitement level, it looks like your next stop is the bank." Kathy replies, "I guess I'd better go chase after her." Kathy drives across the street and walks around, looking for Paula.

Kathy hears Paula in the back, with Vinnie. Walking up to the Jeep, Paula is very surprised. When she sees the Jeep, Paula jumps up and down and screams, "it says 'Beach Patrol' on the side! It says 'Beach Patrol!'" Vinnie painted the doors, with the words 'Beach Patrol' as Paula wanted. He also replaced the windshield and radiator. Vinnie also points out to Paula the towing hooks he added to the front bumper, and tells Paula that there are recovery cables in the back. Vinnie explains to Paula that recovery cables are used to pull vehicles out of the sand or snow.

Paula looks over the Jeep and, to her, it looks really good. Kathy also looks over the Jeep, and finds the "Beach Girl" plate on the front bumper. Paula missed that little detail when she was looking at the towing hooks. Kathy doesn't say anything about the Beach Girl plate. She'd rather let Paula find it herself.

Paula and Vinnie get ready to take the Jeep for a test drive, and Kathy decides to come along. Paula drives out of the parking lot in the direction of the pizzeria. Paula decided she definitely wants the Jeep before she even shifts out of first gear.

Noting the direction Paula is going, Kathy mentions, “oh good. We’re going for pizza.” Paula passes the pizzeria, and takes a right on a thru street, which will bring her back to Vinnie’s. She drives back into the parking lot and parks next to Kathy’s Porsche. They get out of the Jeep, and Paula asks Vinnie, “okay, now what do I do?” Vinnie tells Paula, “come inside, and we’ll talk.”

Vinnie shows Paula the invoice, which includes the cost of buying the Jeep from the insurance company. Vinnie added his charges to replace the windshield and radiator, and for painting “Beach Patrol” on the doors. There was also a nominal fee for Vinnie to have the Jeep titled. Paula is quite happy with the price. Vinnie tells Paula, “just bring me a check or cash for that amount, and you can drive it away today.” Paula tells Vinnie, “okay! I’m going to the bank right now! I’ll be right back.” Paula and Kathy head to the bank, both forgetting that they have not had lunch yet.

On the way to the bank, Paula tells Kathy, “okay, now I’m stressed.” Kathy asks, “why? You’re getting your Jeep. You should be happy!” Paula tells Kathy, “all of this stuff about getting a driver’s license and buying the Jeep is just stressful to me.” Kathy asks, “why?” Paula replies, “I don’t even want to tell you.” Kathy responds, “that bad, eh?” Paula replies, “no, worse.” Kathy tells her, “okay, tell me. This is going to be good.” Paula tells Kathy, “you have to promise not to laugh.” Kathy replies, “okay, now I know this is really going to be good. Out with it, girl.”

Paula explains to Kathy, “okay, so when I filled out my application for my learner’s permit, on the line where it asked ‘race’, I put ‘220-yard dash’. I wasn’t thinking.” Kathy exclaims, “no! Tell me you didn’t!” Paula replies, “yeah, I did. And then, the lady behind the counter tells me, ‘hon, your race is not a number or a distance, it’s usually a color.’ I felt so stupid. After that, anything about driving and cars has stressed me out.” Kathy tells Paula, “well, hopefully after today, all that will change.”

When they return from the bank, Paula goes inside to meet Vinnie. She gives him the cash. Vinnie signs the title and registration, gives her a bill of sale, and makes several copies of all the paperwork. Vinnie has caught on that Paula is a little bit stressed. So, he makes up a package with all the paperwork needed for the Department of Motor Vehicles, and writes “DMV” on it. Vinnie explains to Paula to take the envelope labeled “DMV” to the Department of Motor Vehicles, and they will take care of the rest. He tells her to keep a copy of the bill of sale, a copy of the title, and registration with her until she gets her tag. Vinnie puts those documents

in another envelope labeled “glove box”. He hands Paula her paperwork and the keys. All of that took about ten minutes. Paula is surprised that the whole process was so easy. She has seen her parents buy cars before, and it was never this simple. Paula realized that her stressing over the situation is what made buying the Jeep so difficult.

Paula and Kathy drive to get pizza since they have not yet had lunch. In the parking lot, Kathy gets out of her car and takes a closer look at Paula’s Jeep. Kathy particularly stands in front of the Jeep, coaxing Paula to look at the front a little closer. Kathy wants Paula to discover the airbrushed plate on the front that says “Beach Girl.” Paula looks at the hood, and tells Kathy, “you know, the hood doesn’t really look too bad. I might just leave it for a while.” Kathy tells her, “yeah, the bumper looks really good too. Vinnie must have cleaned it up a little.” Paula looks at the bumper, and exclaims, “wow! Beach Girl! Look what Vinnie put on there! I can’t believe he did that!” Kathy tells Paula, “it looks kind of nice. It even matches the Jeep color.” Paula realizes that Vinnie must have made that special, just for her. As Paula stares at Vinnie’s artwork, Kathy tells Paula, “well, it’s carved in stone. You’re the Beach Girl now.”

After lunch, Kathy and Paula head over to Eddie’s house. By now, he’s done with his work, and ready to do something for the rest of the afternoon. Kathy pulls into the driveway with her 914, and Paula parks right behind her with her CJ. Eddie, tinkering with his MGB again, comes to take a look. Paula tells Eddie, “hey! I got it!” Eddie replies, “yeah, I see that, Beach Girl! Nice plate!”

Eddie had looked to see if the “Beach Girl” plate was on the front bumper, and sure enough it was. Paula tells Eddie, “yeah, I guess I’m the Beach Girl and the Jeep girl forever. I wonder if I can take that off.” Eddie takes a look at the plate, and tells Paula, “it looks like Vinnie installed it with theft-proof screws. You’d have to buy a special tool to get it off.” Kathy mentions, “yeah. He probably didn’t want anyone to steal it from you.”

Paula stands tall, and replies, “okay, I’m the Beach Girl! You are looking at the one and only authentic Beach Girl!” Paula is not likely to escape her new nickname, but the beach persona is what she wanted. It’s far better than being called the “four-door sedan girl”.

Eddie asks Paula, “is Mark still working that big job with his father?” Paula replies, “yeah. But, that job is coming to an end. He’ll have more time soon.” Kathy suggests, “why don’t we go and visit him where he’s working?” Paula replies, “yeah! Let’s do that!” When you get a new vehicle, any excuse to drive anywhere will do. They take the top down, all get into the Jeep, and head a few miles away to Mark’s job site.



Paula thinks she knows exactly where Mark is working. She rode her bicycle there once to see him during the afternoon a week ago. Paula drives around in the area where Mark's job is, and finally finds it. They drive into the service road to the gardens where Mark and his father are building an eight-car garage to house the service vehicles. The building is almost finished. Mark has helped his father pour the slab, frame the building, install the electrical and plumbing, put on the roof, and install the garage doors. Mark and his father have been putting in ten-hour days on this project. Today, Mark and his father are laying brick.

Paula honks the horn, and Mark, who is standing on some scaffolding, turns to see who drove up. Seeing Paula in the Jeep, he comes down off the scaffolding to check it out. Mark exclaims, "you got it! Awesome!" Kathy tells Mark, "hey! Check out the front bumper!" Mark walks around to the front of the CJ and sees the "Beach Girl" plate on the bumper. Mark exclaims, "awesome! And, wow! You got 'Beach Patrol' painted on the doors!" Paula replies, "yeah. And, we're all going to the beach the next chance we get!" Kathy suggests, "yeah! How about this weekend?" Paula agrees, telling Kathy, "I'd really love that."

Mark tells Paula, "I have three more days on this job. Then, I'm taking a three-day weekend." Eddie mentions to Mark, "well, it looks like you're getting a good workout." Mark replies, "yeah. Tell me about it. Working out is rest compared to this job." Mark has been laying brick for the last few days, which is hard work.

Mark takes a good look at the Jeep. He tells Paula, "I don't want to touch anything. I'm so dirty." Paula replies, "good! You can jump in the ocean and wash off!" Mark would love to go to the beach right now but, unfortunately, he has work to do. Paula tells Mark she'll catch up with him later, and they all drive back to Eddie's house.

The weekend arrives, and Mark has finished the big job he has been working on with his father. Paula has her heart set on heading to the beach, but this time she is driving. She takes the top down, drives over to Mark's house to pick him up, then to Kathy's to pick up Eddie and Kathy. They then head down the parkway to the beach. During the drive, everyone gazes over at the concrete path 75 feet over that they've all ridden for years. They all miss riding their bicycles on the path today, but no one says anything.

The trip to the beach, which takes a half hour by bicycle, has been trimmed down to ten minutes by Jeep. Paula drives into the parking lot, and instinctively drives over to where the bicycle racks are. This is where they have always locked up their bicycles, and it is now going to be Paula's favorite place to park her CJ.

They get out of the Jeep, noticing that a few people are staring at them. Paula asks, "why is everyone looking at us?" Mark replies, "maybe it's because your Jeep says 'Beach Patrol' on the doors." Kathy mentions, "they're probably thinking that we're the lifeguards." Paula comes back, saying, "duh! Okay, I don't want to hear it." Kathy smiles, and replies, "hear what?"

As they are getting their stuff out of the back of the Jeep, some guy in his thirties comes up and asks, "hey, am I allowed to drive onto the beach?" Apparently, Paula's "Beach Patrol" logo on the doors gives the appearance that she is working in an official capacity. Eddie replies, "not on this beach." Pointing to the East, Eddie explains to him, "you have to go down to the next parking lot, two miles down the road. You can drive onto the beach there. But, you'd better make sure you have four-wheel drive. If you get stuck in the sand, you'd have a really big problem getting out." Eddie again points the guy in the direction of the parking lot that allows vehicle access to the beach. Eddie knows this beach well. He's been coming here for years. And, Paula just learned something new.

They walk onto the beach, setting their stuff in the usual place. They lay out in the sun for a while. Paula asks Eddie, "can I drive my CJ onto the beach?" Eddie replies, "yeah, if it's in four-wheel drive." Paula asks, "how do you put it in four-wheel drive?" Eddie replies, "it's easy. You have locking front hubs. You just turn the mechanism on the hub to 'lock' and drive onto the sand." Paula remarks, "I'll have to do that sometime." Kathy asks, "how about later?" Paula replies, "yeah! Maybe before we go home, if no one cares." No one objects but, after all, this group is always open to a new adventure.

After a while, they go into the water and ride a few waves. Watching from the water, they see the beach begin to fill with people. Paula watches, as everyone who walks by her Jeep curiously stares at it. Apparently, it's official now. The Beach Girl is also the head of the beach patrol. After putting up a little resistance to the whole Jeep girl and Beach Girl thing, Paula is now accepting of being the Beach Girl and the head of the beach patrol.

Eddie watches as a few people run down the beach. As they get closer, the group becomes vaguely familiar. Out of the blue, Eddie yells out to Mark, "hey! Look what's running down the beach!" Everyone takes a look, and it is none other than McCutchen and his 4 by 440 relay team, along with a few other of his track buddies. Mark yells back, "I guess they want to win something this year." Embedded in the group of runners is Brad Evans, who has apparently been employed by Centerville High School as a trainer to whoop their runners into some sort of shape.

Kathy asks, “hey, where’s our trainer?” Eddie reminds Kathy, “you and Paula are our trainers and assistant coaches now. Remember?” Kathy replies, “oh, yeah! That’s right! Swim! Faster! No slacking off! Get moving!” Eddie lies on his back and asks, “how’s this?” Paula comments, “it looks to me like you guys have a lot of work ahead of you.” Eddie and Mark have just come to the realization that they may have to step up their training a little. After the State invitational meet a month ago, apparently some of the other teams have already realized they must seriously step up their game if they are to win.

The group decides to get lunch, and take a seat on the picnic tables near the concession stand. As they are eating, Mark expresses a silly grin that everyone notices. Paula asks Mark, “okay, what are you thinking?” Mark replies, “I’m going to tell McCrutchen that running in the sand weakens tendons and ligaments. Then I’ll tell him it’s not apparent until you sprint, when it just tears.” Everyone laughs, and Eddie says, “he might just believe you.” Mark replies, “of course he’ll believe me.” Kathy comments, “poor McCutchen. A few choice words from Mark, and all of McCutchen’s training goes right down the toilet.”

Mark corrects Kathy, explaining, “it’s McCrutchen, like in crutches.” Kathy replies, “oh, so that’s why you call him McCrutchen. So, how long has this been going on?” Mark replies, “since eighth grade. The first time I saw him, in seventh grade, I thought he looked like an old Rock ‘em Sock ‘em Robot. Right before the 100-yard dash, I asked him, ‘since when do they let Rock ‘em Sock ‘em Robots run track?’ I guess he never got over it. Then, the next year, we found out his name. Then, we started calling him McCrutchen.” Everyone starts laughing. Eddie was there when all this happened, but it was the first time that Kathy and Paula heard that story.

After lunch, the group gets a surprise visitor. The guy who asked, earlier in the morning, about driving onto the beach, walks down the beach, looking for the beach patrol. He finds them sitting at the picnic table, and tells them, “hey. I got my car stuck in the sand. Can you guys help me out?” Everyone looks at Paula, since it’s her Jeep that would be pulling him out. Paula replies, “sure. Where are you?” Pointing down the beach, the guy replies, “down at the other parking lot.” The other parking lot just happens to be two miles down the beach. The guy walked quite a way in the sand to get help. He could have just as easily walked along the road.

Kathy asks him, “what’s your name?” The guy replies, “Don.” They load up their stuff, and everyone squeezes into the CJ along with Don. Eddie, Mark, and Kathy sit in the back seat, where Kathy sits on Eddie’s lap. They quickly find out that, with Eddie and Mark in the back seat, there is barely enough room for two, much less three.

Getting to the parking lot, they stop at the edge where it meets the sand. Eddie shows Paula how to put the Jeep into four-wheel drive. Paula and Eddie drive out to the sand to Don's car. Don, Kathy, and Mark walk to Don's car, which is only 100 feet from the parking lot. Eddie gets Paula to turn around, since Eddie feels it would be better to use the trailer hitch rather than the towing hooks on the front. Paula gets the recovery straps and Eddie begins hooking them up.

While Eddie is working, McCutchen and his crew are approaching. Mark stares at McCutchen as the runners get nearer. Mark waves, and McCutchen decides to stop and say hi. Just maybe, McCutchen thinks that Mark might be a little more cordial off the track.

McCutchen, stating the obvious, tells Mark, "we're training over the Summer." Mark could reply with any number of sarcastic come backs, but why let a good opportunity to confuse McCutchen go to waste. Mark replies, "I'm not going to have much time to train this Summer with this job." McCutchen asks, "what job?" Mark points to Paula's Jeep, with the words "Beach Patrol" painted on the doors. Mark tells him, "we're in the beach patrol, unit 2A. Daytime shift."

Kathy finds it hard to keep a straight face, and suspects a lot more is coming from Mark. Mark tells McCutchen, "you wouldn't believe the shit that goes on out here. Shark attacks. Heatstroke. Cars getting stuck in the sand. People running in the sand barefoot, cutting their feet up. One guy had to be rushed to the hospital after running along the beach." Seeing McCutchen and his buddies running barefoot in the sand, Mark adds, "he cut up his feet really bad, and sand got into the cut." Kathy is about to crack up, so she walks over to Eddie and Paula, and tells them what Mark just told McCutchen.

After Kathy walks away, Mark continues to play mind games with McCutchen. McCutchen asks Mark, "what do they get cut on?" Mark replies, "mostly glass. But, it's stepping on jellyfish tentacles that's the real problem. When you step on those, your feet could swell up to three times their size. And then, you can't walk for a few weeks. And, watch out for Prickly Sea Spiders<sup>1</sup>. If you have a run in with one of those, they'll probably have to amputate your foot. Getting bit by a Prickly Sea Spider will cause problems for the rest of your life." McCutchen and his cronies take Mark's word as highly authoritative. Mark sees that Eddie is ready, so he tells McCutchen, "it looks like I have to get back to work." Mark tells McCutchen, "have a nice run! And, watch out for jellyfish and Prickly Sea Spiders," as he goes back to help Eddie.

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<sup>1</sup> While there is a such thing as a Prickly Sea Spider, Mark made up the consequences of encountering one.

McCutchen runs down the beach, and is now paranoid about all Mark told him. But, since Mark is part of the beach patrol, McCutchen, and everyone else with him, has no reason to doubt what Mark said. After all, it all makes perfect sense. Anyone can step on glass and get cut. Everyone has been told to steer clear of jellyfish. There are sharks in the water and, every once in a while, someone does get bit. But, to McCutchen, this Prickly Sea Spider that Mark speaks about sounds very dangerous.

Eddie and Paula are ready to pull Don's car out of the sand. Paula drives, and Eddie sits in the passenger's seat. Eddie tells Mark to steer Don's car. Don already caused one problem by driving his four-door sedan onto the beach after being told not to. No one wants him to cause another problem, so they keep him out of the way. Kathy tells everyone in the way, or potentially in the way, to move aside. Paula drives the Jeep off the beach, towing the sedan behind her. Paula tells Eddie, "wow! This is awesome." Eddie replies, "this is what Jeep's are made for."

They get Don's sedan off the beach, and unhook it. Don tells them, "I can't thank you guys enough. What do I owe you?" Paula replies, "nothing today. But, if you want to drive onto the beach, buy a four-wheel drive vehicle." Eddie explains to Don, "when your wheels spin, like they were from the looks of the holes in the sand, you're just digging yourself in deeper. The same thing happens in mud." Don learned a valuable lesson today. Hopefully he won't repeat the same mistake, because next time the beach patrol will probably be at the pizzeria or the county pool enjoying the afternoon.

Paula suggests, "maybe we should drive down the beach to make sure no one else is stuck." Kathy replies, "you just want to drive down the beach." Paula replies, "I'm busted." They all get in, and Paula drives down the beach. Paula asks Eddie, "what happens if I get stuck?" Eddie tells Paula, "then, you take all that seaweed laying on the beach, and put it in front of all of your tires. It will prevent the sand from shifting as much. If there's no seaweed, any vegetation you can find will work. And, the more vegetation you can put in front of the tires, the better. Then, when you get moving, don't stop." Paula asks, "how come you didn't tell that to Don?" Eddie replies, "because, that would be giving him a free license to get stuck again. I already told him not to go onto the beach without four-wheel drive. He did it anyway."

Eddie tells everyone, "if you get stuck in the snow, doing the same thing will help. Just put whatever you can find under the tires to prevent them from spinning. Or, better yet, invest in a set of tire chains. It's the best insurance you can have to prevent getting stuck in the snow and ice." Paula mentions, "maybe I'll get a set." Eddie replies, "that's a good idea."

Paula drives down the beach for quite a way. They quickly figure out that the CJ opens up a whole new world for them. The beach in this area is mostly deserted, sparsely populated with a few people who also have four-wheel drive vehicles. A few groups of people are parked on the beach, having outings away from the busyness of the public beaches. Others have just stopped, finding a remote location to enjoy the calm serenity. Mark mentions, "I was going to get a truck, but this is changing my mind." Eddie tells Mark, "they make four-wheel drive trucks." Mark replies, "I'll definitely keep that in mind."

The trip down the beach takes them to yet another beach a few miles down. Eddie has never ventured this far on his bicycle, so the beach is new to them all. They pull off the beach into the parking lot, get out, and take a look around. It's not too different from the beach they are accustomed to visiting, but far less populated. Kathy and Eddie look around, and there are no sand dunes like at their beach, and no concession area. This beach, however, appears to be a good place to lie around and do nothing, which is what everyone they see is doing. Paula names it the "hole in the wall beach," which is quite fitting. Kathy names it "nothing beach," also quite fitting.

After looking around for a while, they get back into the CJ, and head back to their beach. They could take the road that parallels the coast but, if you have a Jeep, you drive along the beach, which is what they decide to do. On the way back, they cannot decide what to name the beach that they just left, so they decide on naming it "hole in the wall nothing beach".

They arrive back at their beach, now knowing that it is truly their beach. They go into the water one more time, then call it a day. Kathy asks Mark, "what happened with McCrutchen after we left?" After Mark fills everyone in on the details, he tells them, "I didn't want them to get in better shape, so I messed with their heads. They were getting really paranoid, and checking their feet. At the meet next Winter, remember today. We'll somehow use it against them." Everyone has a good laugh. Messing with McCutchen's mind always provides a cheap and easy form of entertainment for Mark. The sad part about it is that McCutchen falls for it every time, on the track, and now off. They all head back home, making the trip in record time.

Not a week seems to go by that Eddie's mother, Nina, and Mark's mother, Mariana, doesn't run into Chuckie's mother at the local farmers market. Nina and Mariana always shop when the new shipments arrive, always getting the prime fresh food. They both make two or three trips per week to the farmers market to assure that the food they serve is always fresh. Nina and Mariana have both been making fresh pizza since

their sons, after meeting their girls, seem to eat a lot more pizza than before.

Nina always mentions to Mariana the good deals she finds, and Mariana returns the favor. Nina and Mariana also have their own gardens at home, and exchange items with each other throughout the year. Whenever they meet, they always talk briefly about Eddie and Mark, and what they have been up to. Today, Nina tells Mariana that Eddie finally got his car running that he has been working on for the last year. Mariana mentions that Mark is looking for a truck so that he can work alongside his father when he graduates.

It seems that Chuckie's mother, Kathryn Black, seems to know Nina's and Mariana's shopping schedules very well, and goes out of her way to harass them. Mrs. Black walks up, adding a new twist to her usual sarcastic introduction, "well, well, well, if it isn't Nina Svoboda and Mariana Bogenskaya." Correcting Kathryn, Mariana comments, "that's Mariana Svoboda and Nina Bogenskaya. I hope you're not getting dementia or something." Nina laughs, and replies, "and, if it isn't the Kathryn Black, the mother of the little jail bird Chuckie." Nina always refers to Mrs. Black as "the Kathryn Black," as if she is an inanimate object.

Nina asks, "so, how is your little Chuckie doing? Is he still in jail, or have they let him out?" Kathryn replies, "just so you know, Charles is not in jail. He's doing very well." Nina sarcastically replies, "oh, that's right! That was silly of me to forget. Chuckie is taking gym class this Summer because he failed it. And, he's cleaning the trash off the streets on the weekends because he pulled on a girl's underwear." Mariana adds, "that will keep the poor little Chuckie off the streets." Kathryn belligerently mentions, "well, if it wasn't for Eddie and Mark, Charles would not have so many problems." Nina tells Kathryn, "well, I wouldn't blame it all on Eddie and Mark. I hear the Chuckie is getting beaten up by the girls now."

Nina has had enough of Kathryn. Nina takes a look at Kathryn's shopping cart, seeing it filled with unhealthy items. Pretending to have deep concern regarding Chuckie's health, Nina informs Kathryn, "you should feed the little Chuckie some more of that bacon you have there so he can build up his muscles. Oh, and you should feed him fried bologna sandwiches. Make sure you put it on white bread. That will make your little Chuckie big and strong, so he can throw the shot-put. And then, he won't fail gym class next year." Kathryn yells out, "there is nothing wrong with Charles! Your sons just keep bullying him day after day! They are the reason he failed gym class!" It's actually Chuckie who's the bully but, for some reason, Kathryn, a bully herself, cannot see that. And, Mr. Frazier's decision to fail Chuckie in gym class had absolutely nothing to do with Eddie or Mark.

Mrs. Black then adds, “and, don’t think that I don’t know that Eddie and Mark did everything they could to keep Charles off the track team last year.” Mariana tells Kathryn, “that’s right. They get the girls to beat up the Chuckie now, so he can’t try out for the team. The guys just put the girls up to it. And, if it looks like the Chuckie is winning, the guys step in and break it up.” Kathryn exclaims, “I knew it! I just knew Eddie and Mark were behind that!” Mariana tells Nina, “wow! She’s finally figured it out! She’s smarter than she looks.” Mariana tells Kathryn, “you should hear some of the plans Mark has made for harassing Chuckie next year. He has it all figured out.” Kathryn tells Nina and Mariana, “I’ve heard enough! I’m taking this to the principal next year! You just watch!” Mariana sighs, and replies, “I can’t wait.”

It’s not hard to see how Mark got his sense of humor. Mariana just took care of Kathryn in the same manner that Mark takes care of McCutchen before a race. Kathryn moves on, feeling once again like she’s been run over by a truck just conversing with Nina and Mariana. Nina and Mariana have a good laugh, and go on their way again. Nina and Mariana will meet up again in a few days, hopefully not seeing Kathryn anytime soon.

Mid Summer arrives, so Kathy and Paula preregister for their classes over at the University. Being on scholarship, they get to register early, guaranteeing themselves the classes of their choice. Students on athletic scholarship are allowed to register before the other students so they can get classes that do not interfere with their practice sessions. But, registration for a first semester freshman could be a little frustrating, so they go to the school together to register.

Although Kathy and Paula graduated summa cum laude, things like administrative paperwork, applying for a learner’s permit, and buying cars stress them out. Being able to run 100 yards in about ten seconds is easier than wrestling with paperwork for Kathy and Paula. Since they are in the same major, they plan to register for some of the same classes. Many of their classes are core classes, such as English, history, math, and other stuff all the students have to get out of the way. Getting in the core classes together should be easy enough.

Kathy and Paula each arrive in their own car at the campus, and meet Barbara in the gym where registration is being held. Before they begin registration, they all go outside and Barbara gets her first look at Paula’s Jeep CJ. Seeing the CJ, Barbara now wants one, but who wouldn’t. Being able to drive around with the top down is appealing to anyone who likes the outdoors. Barbara is impressed with the CJ, and tells Paula that she did well in getting it.



Kathy decides she wants to take classes that coincide with the high school hours, so she can spend more time with Eddie. Hearing Kathy's idea, Paula also decides to do the same. Barbara tells them that it would be easy to do. Kathy and Paula have to choose classes held at or after 10:00 a.m., since their two-hour track practice begins at 7:00 a.m. There really isn't a problem getting the classes they want. The problem is getting whom you want, as in the professor teaching the class. No one wants a professor who reads the textbook to the class, or would rather be somewhere else. Some professors make the classes unnecessarily difficult, and students try to avoid them. Other professors make the class very interesting, making it difficult to get into their class.

Kathy and Paula get their registration forms and, fortunately for first semester freshmen, the process is actually quite easy. You just register for a specific section in your major, and the classes are bundled together. Kathy and Paula pick the same section that begins in mid morning, but Barbara notices a problem. The section they picked has Dr. Hutchinson for English class. Barbara tells them to delete that particular class, and replace it with the class taught by Dr. Thompson. They make the change, and get in line to turn in their forms.

Kathy asks Barbara, "so, what's wrong with Dr. Hutchinson?" Barbara explains, "well, the first thing he will do is ask the class, 'does anyone here know how to sharpen a pencil?' If anyone dares answer him, he will make the person stand up in front of the class and demonstrate how to sharpen a pencil. Then, he'll find some little tiny flaw in the way it was done, and tell the class that whoever it was doesn't know how to sharpen a pencil. Then he'll ask the class if anyone else knows how to sharpen a pencil. No one will dare answer. Then, he'll tell the class, 'what? No one here knows how to sharpen a pencil? How did all of you ever get into this University?'" Kathy replies, "wow! We definitely don't want that guy." Barbara continues, and tells them, "it doesn't stop there. He'll make you do these stupid assignments, like writing out the instructions for tying your shoes. Oh, and he takes attendance every day." Paula exclaims, "geesh! I'm glad you warned us about him!"

Kathy's turn in line comes, and she hands the administrator her paperwork. The administrator gives Kathy an unusual look. Kathy's initial impression is that she may have done something wrong in filling out the forms. The administrator asks, "are you related to Dr. Karakova?" Kathy replies, "yeah. He's my dad." The administrator smiles, and replies, "I figured you must be related. There's not a whole lot of people with your last name." The administrator pulls a bunch of cards out of a box, adds them to Kathy's paperwork, and adds it to the stack. She hands Kathy a copy of her schedule, and tells her, "okay, you're all set." Kathy replies, "wow! That was really easy."

Paula is next, and the process moves along just as easily. While Paula is registering for her classes, Barbara tells Kathy, “one good thing about college is you have a lot of free time. You’ll be in class about twenty hours a week.” Kathy looks at her schedule, and replies, “wow! I can see that. Five hours on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, three hours on Tuesday, and one hour on Thursday!”

Barbara asks, “so, what are you going to do on Thursdays?” Kathy replies, “work out and homework, I guess.” Barbara tells Kathy, “and, you don’t have to worry. We don’t have a Mr. Crum around here to make your life miserable.” Kathy suddenly tells Barbara, “I know exactly what I’ll do! I’ll go to the high school and throw discuses at Mr. Crum on Thursdays!” Barbara tells Kathy, “I heard about what you said during graduation! That was so good! I wish I was there to see that!” Kathy, who said quite a lot during graduation, asks, “what did I say?” Barbara reminds Kathy, “about Mr. Crum being in the red zone during graduation.” Kathy replies, “oh, yeah! The final score is in, and I won!”

After registering, Paula joins Kathy and Barbara. When Barbara brought up graduation, it reminded Kathy of something new that she learned. Kathy tells Barbara, “oh, and do I have some news for you!” Barbara replies, “uh oh. This is going to be good. I know you, girl.” Kathy, sounding like the queen of gossip, tells Barbara, “I found out how Mr. Zunde gets away with everything, and how he does whatever he wants to do!” Paula mentions, “yeah, this is good! It couldn’t get any better.”

Kathy tells Barbara, “get this. Dr. Noreen Brooks, the superintendent of schools, is Mr. Zunde’s cousin.” Barbara exclaims, “no! You’ve got to be kidding me, girl!” Paula replies, “seriously! He is!” Kathy adds, “and now, Eddie, Mark, and everyone else knows it. So, next year, no one is going to put up with Mr. Crum’s bullshit.” Barbara mentions, “this is really going to get interesting.” And, best of all, Barbara, Kathy, and Paula will all be there to see it. During the track season, they all will be interns working with the team again, as they were when Eddie and the rest of the tribe were freshmen.

Barbara then tells them, “the only other thing you have to do is to get your parking permit. Oh, and you’ll also get a faculty parking permit for the high school, since you’ll be an intern.” Paula mentions, “I would have never thought of that.” Kathy, almost predicting the future, says, “that old Crum will have a shit fit when he sees us parked in the faculty lot.”

They all go over and get their parking stickers together. Paula mentions, “I don’t think I’ll need a parking sticker. The beach patrol should be able to park wherever they want.” Kathy tells her, “you might get away with that if it wasn’t for your ‘Beach Girl’ plate on the front.” Barbara points out to Paula, “at this school, it’s not going to take long for

everyone to recognize your Jeep. It's really going to stand out." Paula replies, "good. It won't get stolen then." They get in line for their parking stickers, which is the easiest thing they've done all day.

Registration went easier than Kathy and Paula ever expected. Life will certainly get simpler for them. Mr. Crum made their senior year, which was supposed to be fun, as difficult as possible. In college, there are no hall monitors, no dress code, no detentions, and no Mr. Crum around to try to suspend you if you are wearing the wrong type of shirt. Now, they can leave campus whenever they want, eat whenever they want, go to the gym between classes, and have a life. Best of all, today, they actually had fun registering together.

Later that week, one day after work, Paula takes a trip to the Jeep yard to find a new hood. She goes by herself, since Mark and Eddie are working. She finds the Jeep yard, which appears exactly as Angelo described. There are more than 100 Jeeps in the yard in various stages of disassembly. Two large metal buildings, with who knows what in them, house even more parts. Paula drives up, seeing that the place is mostly deserted. Most of the Jeeps she sees in the back appear to have most of the parts removed. Some of them are not even recognizable as Jeeps.

Paula walks inside one of the buildings, and the owner, Rocky, walks up and asks, "what can I help you with today?" Paula tells Rocky, "Angelo sent me here. My CJ needs a new hood." Rocky tells Paula, "let me take a look at it." They walk outside, and Rocky takes a look. Rocky asks Paula, "hail storm?" Paula replies, "yeah." Rocky tells Paula, "come inside, and let's see what we got."

On the way in, Rocky asks, "how do you know Angelo?" Paula explains, "I went to Northside, and some of my friends know him." Rocky tells Paula, "Angelo is a nice guy, and probably the best mechanic around. You won't find a better mechanic anywhere." Paula was certainly glad to hear that.

Rocky takes Paula to the back of the building, where the CJ hoods are all lined up, sorted by year. Rocky tells Paula, "hail storms. That's why all the hoods and fenders are in here, and not out in the yard." Rocky looks through his collection, and gives Paula some good news, telling her, "you're in luck. I actually have one in your color." He takes it out and shows it to Paula. Paula looks it over, and sees that the hood is in much better shape than hers, and has no dings. She asks how much it is, and Rocky gives her the price. Paula tells him, "I'll take it." Paula pays Rocky for the hood, as Rocky instructs his employee to bring the hood up front.

Rocky and his employee load the hood into Paula's back seat, making sure it is tied down well. Rocky instructs Paula, "take the side streets

back, and don't get on the parkways. Try to drive slow. When you get the old one off, bring it by if you want. I'll give you a few bucks for it. And, if you need any other parts, stop by." Rocky doesn't talk a whole lot, but he delivers. Paula thanks Rocky and drives off.

Paula takes the hood over to Vinnie's, so she can have him paint a yellow sun on the hood. She drives up and walks into the office. Vinnie yells out, "hey! It's the Jeep girl!" Paula tells him "yeah! That would be me! Thank you so, so, so much for the plate on the front! That was really nice of you. Everyone loves it!" Vinnie tells her, "I'm glad you like it." Paula tells Vinnie, "you really didn't have to do that, you know." Vinnie tells Paula, "I know, but you're Italian. You get the red carpet treatment around here."

Vinnie asks, "so, what can I do for you today?" Paula tells him, "I bought a new hood. Can you paint a sun on it for me?" Vinnie replies, "sure. No problem." Paula thinks to herself that this is really getting almost too easy. Vinnie asks, "is the hood here?" Paula tells him, "yeah, it's outside."

Vinnie goes outside with Paula, and sees the hood in the back of the Jeep. Vinnie tells her, "oh good. It's not on your Jeep yet. That makes it easier." Vinnie tells Paula, "I'll be right back." Vinnie goes into the shop, and gets Anthony. Vinnie tells Anthony, "hey, get the Jeep girl's hood out of her Jeep and put it back in the shop." Anthony unloads the hood, and brings it into the shop while Vinnie talks with Paula.

Vinnie asks Paula, "what do you want the sun to look like?" Paula tells Vinnie, "I want a sun with rays coming out of it. Like really deep yellow in the center and lighter yellow rays, like a combination of the two if you know what I mean." Vinnie replies, "got it. We can do that. How big?" Paula replies, "as big as you can get it without having it wrap around to the sides of the hood."

They go into the office, and Vinnie asks Paula to draw a rough picture of what she wants. Paula draws a sun, with curvy rays coming out of it, in a wavy pattern. Vinnie tells her the price, and she tells him to go ahead with it. Vinnie tells her that he will have the work done in a week. Paula asks, "isn't there any paperwork?" Vinnie tells her, "no. You're the Jeep girl. I know you."

Paula is quite amazed that, when working with the right people, everything goes very smoothly. Angelo was right. There is no reason to be stressed. Buying the hood was about as easy as it could be. Getting the sun painted on the hood was equally as easy. It's just like working with Mr. Zunde, where everything goes smoothly. Mr. Zunde plows through Mr. Crum's roadblocks and obstacles like a runaway train, leaving

a trail of carnage that has Mr. Zunde's signature on it. The right people in any industry get things done quickly, avoiding any red tape.

The next weekend, Kathy decides that she wants to go to a beach somewhere. She asks Eddie, "do you think the portal will take us to like a beach, say, like somewhere if we don't know exactly where?" Eddie replies, "I don't know. We've never tried it." Kathy tells him, "I was looking at a map, and there are these islands off the Georgia and Florida coast. I wonder if any of them have a portal." Eddie jokes around, and tells her, "maybe the portal will make a really loud laughing sound if it doesn't understand." Kathy laughs, and replies, "oh, it will not!"

Kathy shows Eddie a map, and asks, "how about Amelia Island? It looks like it's a nice place. And, they have things to do, like boat rides and shops." Eddie replies, "okay. Let's go." Kathy mentions, "I wonder if Paula and Mark want to go." Eddie suggests, "we can call and ask." Kathy calls Paula, and asks if they want to go. Paula, answering for both her and Mark, replies, "yeah! We're definitely going. Mark has been working way too much. He needs some fun." Kathy asks Paula, "how is it that Mark is working so much this Summer?" Paula explains, "he feels like he's falling behind. He needs a truck, so he has to make some money before school starts."

They all decide to go to Amelia Island, and everyone gets their stuff together. Organizing the trip took Kathy and Paula only a few minutes. Even they can make something seem ridiculously simple if they put their mind to it.

They all meet at the portal this time, bringing money, water, and Gatorade, but no food. They figure they'd have lunch at one of the local eateries. Kathy also brings a map of the area, hoping that her map will still be reasonably accurate in the future. Kathy suggests, "how about 30 years in the future?" Paula replies, "it's as good a time as any." Mark mentions, "if we go in our time, and find someone we know, there could be trouble." Eddie remarks, "that's a good point. I never thought of that." They all walk into the portal with their bicycles, and Kathy raises her right arm, and says, "Amelia Island, 30 years from now."

They arrive in the middle of a park, with little indication of exactly where they are, or where they should go. Kathy tells everyone, "okay, we're going to need a landmark for this one. Everything around here looks the same." Mark locates two trees next to each other, where one has fallen into another. Kathy tells everyone to take a good look. Eddie mentions, "the two trees are across the road from the water."

They then head in the direction that appears to lead to the exit. When they get to the main road, Eddie sees a sign that says "Fort Clinch State

Park”. They are now confident they can find their way back. Now knowing where she is, Kathy checks her map and, from the looks of things, all the action is to the right.

About a mile and a half down the road, they find a village lined with shops and restaurants. Kathy exclaims, “this is what I was hoping for!” At the very end of the road they find a marina, and a place that does boat tours of the area. They all decide to take the boat tour around the island before they eat lunch. They buy their tickets, and ask the attendant where a good place to lock their bicycles would be. The attendant tells them to lock them to the fence, and that she’ll watch them. She assures them that their bicycles won’t get stolen.

They walk around a bit, picking up brochures for the local attractions. The boat begins to board, so they get in line. Kathy tells Eddie, “this is going to be so much fun!” They find a seat, and the captain goes over a few things before they leave, like where the life preservers are. The captain reassures the 50 passengers that he has driven a boat once before. He also mentions that the boat didn’t sink, so there is no need to worry. They quickly find out that the captain has a good sense of humor. The boat leaves the dock and the morning cruise is underway.

On their way out, they pass a few shrimping vessels on the water. The captain tells the passengers that the shrimp served in many of the restaurants on the island is caught the same day it’s served. As they head out, the captain points out a dolphin on the port side of the boat. Everyone takes a look, and the dolphin actually follows the boat for a while. Paula tells Kathy, “this is a really great place to come to.” Eddie mentions, “this is the first time that I’ve ever been on a boat.” They all then realize that this is the first time any of them have ever been on a boat.

The captain points out Fort Clinch, and explains that it was originally built by the Spanish in 1736. He also explains the history of the fort. The captain mentions that the United States seized the fort in 1847, and how it was used in various wars. Kathy mentions, “wow! This is way better than history class! You actually get to see the history, instead of reading it in a book.” Eddie agrees, and states, “it’s a whole lot better than Mr. O’Brien’s class.”

They enter Saint Mary’s River, and the captain points out a Naval facility in the water that demagnetizes submarines. The captain mentions that the Russians can track a submarine if it has a magnetic signature, so submarines must be periodically demagnetized. He also points out that there is a satellite over the Earth that is watching the area, and that the officials in Washington, D.C. can see the boat right now. The captain also tells everyone that, if there were a quarter on the deck of the ship, the

folks in Washington, D.C. can tell whether it's heads or tails. He then tells the passengers to wave to everyone in Washington, D.C.

Kathy remarks, "wow! Things have come a long way!" Eddie comments, "yeah, and we're not supposed to be here right now. And, they're seeing us on the satellite." Mark points out, "we could be waving to some of our track buddies. They'd probably recognize us." Kathy then comes to an interesting realization. She mentions, "what happens if Paul Mahoney cleaned himself up, and he's monitoring the satellite and sees the four of us together? That would be a trip right back into the sanitarium!" Everyone laughs, as Mark mentions, "if he saw us, he'd never get out of the sanitarium again." Mark then comments, "maybe McCrutchen is watching us." They come to the realization that the portal is better technology than the government can ever dream of.

Their trip continues around the island. They also pass by Cumberland Island, and see the wild horses that inhabit the island. They learn that the island is, for the most part, preserved in its natural state. The captain gives them a history of the island, and tells them that only a few hundred people are allowed on the island on any given day.

On the trip back to the marina, they sit back and relax and enjoy the scenery. Kathy thumbs through a travel brochure that she picked up while they were waiting for the boat, and found what she thinks will be the perfect place for lunch, and begins to mention it to the group.

The captain tells Kathy, "you, in the French blue shirt. You look way too relaxed. Come up here." Kathy is wondering why she got singled out. After all, everyone else looks just as relaxed as she does. Kathy walks up to the helm, and the captain tells her to pilot the ship as he continues to give his discussion about the area's attractions and points of interest. Kathy is now at the wheel, with the captain standing next to her. As they approach the river, the captain tells Kathy to slowly turn to the right. The captain assures Kathy that she is doing well.

The captain tells the passengers that they have just crossed from Georgia back into Florida, and informs everyone about a war that they may not have heard about. The captain tells everyone, "back about 75 years ago, there was a war in the region that not a lot of people are aware of. It was called the Georgia-Florida War." Paula mentions to Eddie and Mark, "I've never heard about it." Mark replies, "me either." The captain continues, "the residents of Georgia were throwing hand grenades over the border. The residents of Florida were pulling out the pins and throwing them back." Most of the passengers laugh at the captain's joke. Some of the passengers don't get it, perhaps because they do not know how a hand grenade works.

As they approach the dock, the captain tells everyone to give Kathy a hand. Everyone claps for the first mate, who brought them all back safely. Kathy takes her seat again with Eddie. The captain docks the boat, and thanks all of the passengers for joining him. Everyone agrees that the two-hour boat ride was awesome.

As they disembark, Kathy asks the captain, “did I really look that relaxed?” The captain replies, “yeah. You did. But, you looked like the happiest and most cheerful person on the boat, so I picked you.” Kathy tells him, “thank you so much! Driving the boat really made my day!” Kathy and the rest leave the boat, as the captain tells them to come back again someday.

While they are unlocking their bicycles, Eddie asks Kathy, “you mentioned that you found a good place to eat. Where was that?” Kathy replies, “oh yeah. That’s right. I was going to ask you guys, but then I got to drive the boat.” Eddie asks, “well?” Kathy replies, “it’s on Seventh Street. I guess it’s a few blocks away.” Eddie, prying for information, asks, “does the restaurant have a name?” Kathy replies, “all restaurants have names. And, they have food there too.” Eddie laughs, and remarks, “okay, a restaurant with food. That’s a good start.” Paula, knowing Kathy well, knows Kathy is up to something.

Mark interjects, “she’s answering questions like Akinmola.” Paula comments, “you got that right.” Kathy asks the group, “can we just ride there and look first?” Trying to get the name of the restaurant, Eddie asks “ride where?” Kathy replies, “to the restaurant.” It is clear that Kathy, for some reason, is not going to tell them the name of the restaurant. So, they all ride a few blocks to search for the mystery eatery.

When they arrive at the restaurant, Kathy announces, “here it is. Lu Lu’s Bra and Grill.” Paula questions her, asking, “Bra and Grill? Not Bar and Grill?” Kathy replies, “yeah. Bra and Grill. There’s the sign.” Sure enough, the sign reads “Lu Lu’s Bra and Grill.” Kathy asks, “is this okay, or do we want to look for somewhere else?” Paula replies, “this is okay. But, I wonder why they call it the Bra and Grill. This should be like really interesting.” Mark mentions, “let’s go for it.” They walk in, and they are told by the waitress to sit anywhere, inside or outside. Kathy leads the way, finding a seat under a large covered patio.

Everyone looks around, and Paula mentions, “well, now I can clearly see why they call this the Bra and Grill.” Eddie remarks to Kathy, “and, now I know why you were doing all that Akinmola talk back there.” Hanging from the patio ceiling and the posts are almost a hundred bras, as decoration.



Mark, looking at all the bras, comments, “wow! No two of them look alike.” Eddie comments, “you know how women are. They can’t be caught wearing the same dress. Why would bras be any different?” Paula remarks, “bras are different.” Mark replies, “that’s exactly my point. They’re all different. I’m glad you agree.” Paula tells Mark, “that’s not what I meant, and you know it.” Kathy tells Paula, “now, you’re sounding like Mr. Crum.” Paula comments, “moving right along.” Paula does not want to be accused of sounding anything like Mr. Crum.

The waitress, interrupting their conversation about bras, comes to take their order. Kathy asks her, “is the shrimp caught daily? The boat captain told us it is.” The waitress tells her, “it sure is. We got our delivery this morning.” Kathy decides to get shrimp, which she likes, but rarely gets. She could always get Shrimp Scampi at the pizzeria, but she, for some reason, always gets pizza instead. Everyone follows suit, also getting a shrimp dish.

Before the waitress leaves, Mark asks, “so, do you hear a lot of bra jokes?” The waitress replies, “nearly every day. I think I’ve heard them all, and then some.” Paula asks the waitress, “what’s your favorite one?” The waitress tells her, “it’s not really a joke, and it’s actually kind of stupid.” Paula tells her, “tell us anyway.” The waitress replies, “well, this is a restaurant, so the best one that I’ve ever heard is, ‘if your cup is only half full, you probably need a smaller bra.’” Kathy finds that particularly funny, but it takes a moment to register with the guys.

After their wonderful lunch, they find a place to lock up their bicycles and walk up and down the main road. They find shops along the road ranging from clothing to jewelry stores, and a few dessert shops. Each shop is quite unique. They go into a few of them to check out what’s inside. There are also many eateries in and around the downtown village. They’d have to stay for more than a week to eat at them all.

While in one of the shops, Eddie hears a song that he likes. The song Eddie hears sounds like a reggae version of *Angel of the Morning*. While Kathy and Paula are browsing through the shop, Eddie asks the cashier, “hey, do you know who does that song that’s playing?” The cashier listens, and tells Eddie, “yeah. That’s *Angel*. It’s done by Shaggy, with a Jamaican reggae artist.” Eddie asks the cashier, “can you please write that down for me. I’ll forget it.” The cashier replies, “sure,” and writes it on one of the store’s business cards for Eddie. Eddie thanks the cashier, and places the card in his pocket. He then rejoins Kathy, who is finished looking around this particular store. They hang around the downtown area for a while, and then head back to the portal.

Heading back to their time and place, they have the whole day ahead of them. Before they ride home, Eddie asks Kathy, “can we make a side

trip?” Kathy asks, “how do you mean?” Eddie replies, “I heard a song I want to get. I want to go to the record shop 30 years into the future and get it.” Kathy, replies, “sure. We can do that. What song is it?” Eddie takes out the card, looks at it, and tells Kathy, “*Angel*, by Shaggy.” Kathy mentions, “I’ve never heard it.” Eddie assures her, “yeah, you have. It was playing when we were in one of the shops.” They reenter the portal, traveling to a time 30 years into the future.

Arriving at the record shop, Eddie asks the clerk, “hey, do you have *Angel*, by Shaggy? I need it in the vinyl 45.” The clerk replies, “yeah, I definitely have that. For some reason, that’s been selling a lot this Summer.” The clerk returns with the record, a 45-vinyl single. They check out at the counter, and head back again to their time. This time, it’s Eddie who’s taking a piece of the future back with him.

Since they didn’t get to go to the beach during their trip, they all decide to head to the pool and get a workout in. After all, McCutchen could be running down the beach barefoot with his track buddies, dodging pieces of glass and jellyfish tentacles. Or, perhaps McCutchen is sitting home, worrying about what other dangers are lurking on the beach. Mark likely scared McCutchen and his buddies out of running on the beach ever again. But, to stay ahead of the competition, they all head back to their houses to get their swimsuits and towels. Paula volunteered to pick everyone up at their homes, and drive to the pool. Paula is certainly enjoying being the Beach Girl.

When they get home from the pool, Kathy gets her diary of portal locations that she is keeping. Eddie asks, “hey, while you’re doing that, can we listen to my song?” Kathy replies, “yeah. I want to hear it too.” Kathy plays the song Eddie brought back, as she begins to work on her map and secrets of Amelia Island. Eddie sits back on the sofa, and listens to his song.

While they are listening to *Angel*, Kathy draws a map of Amelia Island, making note of the vague location of the portal. Drawing a picture of a boat, she marks the location of the marina where they took their boat ride. And, for Lu Lu’s Bra and Grill, she draws a picture of a bra, and a grill. Kathy, who is getting very artistic, doesn’t use any words, just drawings reminding her of what they all did when they were there.

While she is drawing her map, Kathy tells Eddie, “that is a really interesting version of that song! I love it!” Eddie replies, “when I heard it while we were in one of the shops, I had the cashier write the name down for me.” Kathy plays the song again, this time they sit back and listen to it more carefully. As Kathy continues to draw in her diary, Eddie notices something interesting. Eddie discovers that the bass line of *Angel* is the

same as the song *The Joker*, by the *Steve Miller Band*. Eddie also notices that the melody is that of the Merrilee Rush song, *Angel of the Morning*.

Kathy really likes the reggae style of the song. So does Eddie, which is why he wanted to buy a copy. When she is done, Kathy plays the song a third time and, this time, they get up and dance to Eddie's song. When the song is over, they then head out back to Kathy's pool, and relax for a while.

The next week, Paula decides to check back with Vinnie to see if her hood is finished yet. After all, no beach patrol Jeep could possibly be complete without a golden sun painted on the hood. She drives into Vinnie's shop, and walks into the office. Vinnie hears the door chime, and comes out of the shop to meet the Jeep girl. Seeing Paula, Vinnie says, "hey! It's the Jeep girl! I got your hood all finished. You're going to love it! Come on back, and we'll take a look at it."

They walk back to the shop, and Vinnie shows her the hood. Paula exclaims, "wow! That's so awesome! That's a whole lot better than I ever expected! It's beautiful!" Paula's new Jeep hood has a deep golden yellow sun painted in the center, with curvy rays coming out of it, just like she wanted. Vinnie airbrushed the sun, so there are varying shades of yellow throughout the design. Vinnie tells Paula, "I used metallic paint, so it will reflect nicely in the sunlight." Paula is intrigued by Vinnie's artwork. She keeps telling him, "it's so beautiful!"

Vinnie tells Paula, "give me your keys. I'll get Anthony to put it on." Paula questions Vinnie, telling him, "I didn't know you were going to put it on too." Vinnie tells her, "it will only take fifteen minutes. I'd hate for something to happen to it." Paula gives Vinnie her keys, and he drives her CJ into the shop where Anthony installs the new hood. Paula pays Vinnie for the job, then watches as Vinnie goes into the shop to help Anthony.

Twenty minutes later, Vinnie drives the Jeep out of the shop, and parks in the front parking lot, making sure the Jeep is in the sun. Vinnie tells Paula, "take a look at what it looks like in the sun." Paula, seeing the reflective golden sun on her hood, exclaims, "wow! That's really something! It's awesome!" The metallic paint really makes a statement. Vinnie and Paula both stand back, and take a look at her Jeep. The doors say "Beach Patrol". There is now a golden sun on the hood. And there is the decorative "Beach Girl" plate on the front. Vinnie tells Paula, "your Jeep is really looking nice." Paula replies, "yeah, I'd say. That is so awesome!"

Vinnie tells Paula, "if you want, I could paint a smaller version of the sun on the doors, in the center of the "Beach Patrol" logo." Paula replies, "really? The same sun?" Vinnie tells her, "yeah. But, you'd have to leave

your doors here for a few days.” Paula tells him, “that would look really cool! I’ll have to find a time when I won’t need my doors for a week.” Vinnie tells Paula, “take a good picture of the sun on the hood before you bring the doors in, and get it blown up to eight by ten for me. This way, I can get the sun just right.” Paula tells Vinnie, “yeah! We’re doing that next.” Paula thanks Vinnie again, and drives away in her CJ, looking more like the official beach patrol than before.

Paula gets home and wastes no time taking the picture of the newly painted sun on the hood. Wanting her Jeep finished before school starts, she only has a few weeks to get this project done. She couldn’t get a straight-on shot with the camera, so she parks her Jeep under her second story bedroom window over the garage. Looking down at the hood, she takes a few pictures through the open window. Removing the half-exposed roll of film, Paula drives to the camera shop to get her film processed. Paula saw how fast Angelo, Vinnie, and Rocky effortlessly got things done. She has just figured out that, to get something done, you have to get moving, and get moving fast. Sitting around and waiting for something to happen just doesn’t work.

Eddie has his MGB all finished. All of the minor details have been finished, and the car is deemed completed, at least for now. Knowing Eddie, the MGB will never be technically finished. There is always something that can be improved or modified. But, for now, it’s as finished as it’s going to get. Well, except for the decorative plate he is working on for the front bumper. Seeing Paula’s decorative “Beach Girl” plate, which was made by Vinnie, motivated Eddie to make his own decoration for his front bumper. Eddie’s plate, however, will not say “Beach Girl”, It will have the words “Eddie, The Mechanic” on it, letting everyone know who is behind the wheel. He’s also thinking of an idea for a decorative plate for Kathy’s Porsche. He doesn’t have the final plan yet, but he’s getting close.

Eddie and Kathy spend most of the latter half of the Summer working out, and swimming at the pool. Eddie is not about to let Tessa beat him next year in the rematch. Eddie, Mark, and the rest of the track team have significantly raised the bar in track and field competition. If the other teams are to be competitive, they cannot allow their runners to sit on their bottoms all Summer long. Seeing McCutchen and his team members running at the beach is only the tip of the iceberg. The other teams have got the message, and are acting on it. Kathy, with her scholarship, or bodyship as she calls it, must stay in top shape since she is now on the college track team.

Eddie must also stay in top shape. Eddie reasons to himself that, if he wants to run faster, running against resistance should be a good way to train. But, running against resistance poses a bit of a problem. Unless

you are running into a 30 or 40-mile per hour wind, it is difficult to find a good way to run against resistance. Eddie could run up hills, but he has found running up hills is not quite the same as running on level ground. Running up hills is a great quadriceps workout, but Eddie wants to focus on working the muscles he uses when sprinting on level ground.

Taking a trip to the hardware store, Eddie grabs a few pieces of steel angle iron, and a few nuts, bolts, and washers. He also picks up a thick rope, and a few D-rings. He asks the clerk if they have a shoulder harness. The clerk points out a harness that is used for climbing a roof using a safety cable. Eddie goes ahead and adds the harness to his items, checks out at the counter, and heads home.

Spending two hours, Eddie builds a sled that he can weigh down heavily with his weights. Eddie designed the sled with some steel cross members that will increase the drag when it is pulled across the ground. A short vertical piece of angle iron will hold the weights. He attaches the sled to the rope and the rope to the harness. Eddie's thinking is to take the sled and harness apparatus to the beach or the sand track at the University. Wearing the harness, he would drag the weighted sled in the sand as he runs. This would provide a good amount of resistance.

Since Eddie now has a car, he can get around more easily. The ride to the beach is not only a lot faster, but Eddie can carry a lot more stuff to the beach, including the training sled he just built. Carrying such a piece of equipment on his bicycle is pretty much an impossibility, even for Eddie. Eddie loads up his car with the sled, and 50 pounds of weights from his barbell set. He then heads to the sand track at the University, since it is a little closer than the beach.

Arriving at the University, Eddie unloads his new invention, which he named "Eddie's Training Sled" for now. Setting up his new invention on the sand track, Eddie starts with 25 pounds of weight on the sled. He puts on the harness, and tries sprinting for about 100 yards. At the end of the 100 yards, Eddie knows, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that he is on to something. After taking a short break, Eddie sprints back to the starting line. Raising the weight to 50 pounds, Eddie sprints for another 100 yards. After another break, Eddie sprints back to the starting point. Making a few more runs, Eddie can definitely feel that he is getting an awesome workout.

Having a good workout, Eddie loads his invention back into his trunk, and heads back home. On the way, he stops at the hardware store to pick up more steel, and a few more nuts, bolts, and washers. When he arrives home, he adds additional steel cross members on the bottom of the sled to increase the drag in the sand. Eddie reasons that, if he can increase the drag of the sled, he can use less weight. Once he has the design

perfected, he'll take it down to Angelo's Service Station and have Angelo weld it together. Over the next few weeks, Eddie will perfect his training sled, thereby perfecting his training.