

Cookies and Cheddar

“Real guys go for real, down to Mars girls.”

—OUTKAST

“Jayd, is that a Mercedes Benz, SL 500 over there?” Nellie asks, pointing to one of three cars lined up against the wall.

“Yes, I believe it is. And, that there is a CL 600, my dream car,” I say. These dudes ain’t playing when it comes to money. If the cars alone tell their families’ income, they must be balling out of control. There are ten cars that I can count in the dim light and the basement must be the size of the entire house. I don’t know what Matt’s dad does, but he’s rarely ever home. And, his mom is always home, but never around. Being the only child in this house must be heaven.

“Matt, can I use your bathroom?” I ask, trying not to inhale the smoke or scratch up the cars. Nellie’s looking around in awe.

“Sure thing.” Matt leads me through the crowded room to the back where there’s a separate office area with a bathroom inside. When I turn on the lights, I see this is no ordinary bathroom.

“Damn,” Nellie says, following me into the black and silver marble bathroom. “This is the baddest bathroom I’ve ever been in.”

“It’s just a place to crap. Enjoy,” Matt says, turning around and closing the door behind him.

“Jayd, do you see this?” Nellie says, playing with the automatic brass faucet.

“Nellie, you act like you ain’t never been nowhere before,” I say, looking for my MAC Lipglass. I haven’t seen Jeremy yet, but when I do, I want to be as cute as possible.

“Hold my backpack while I freshen up,” I say, handing my heavy Jansport to Nellie.

“Jayd, what do you have in this bag, girl? KJ’s ego?” she jokes, practically dropping the bag on her foot.

“That was a good one, Nellie,” I laugh while carefully applying my Chestnut liner before coating my lips with gloss. “Be careful. My purse and charm bag are in there.”

“It feels like you got the whole damn winter Coach collection in here. How the hell you suppose to look cute with his thing on your back?” She’s got a good point. But, I don’t have anywhere else to leave my bag while I socialize.

“Where’s your backpack?” I ask, noticing for the first time that she only has her purse.

“I left it in my locker,” Nellie says, totally unconcerned.

“How are you going to do your homework?” I ask, stunned at my girl’s lack of interest in her education. She cracks me up sometimes.

“What homework? Girl, it’s Back to School Night and the first week of school. You got homework in your classes?” she asks while taking my lip gloss from my hand and applying some to her bottom lip.

“Yes, I have quite a bit of homework,” I say, slightly resentful at the huge difference between A.P. and General Ed. courses. There’s got to be a happy medium between the two.

“Hey, do you think his dad is a lawyer? Who else could

bling like this?" Nellie asks while checking herself out one last time.

"I don't know. But, whatever he is, he ain't hurting for nothing," I say, momentarily envying Matt's life. Why couldn't I have been born with rich parents?

"Well, my family ain't hurting either, but we ain't rolling like this. This, Jayd, is OG." Nellie opens the bathroom door to return to the gathering, but I stay behind to finish up my business.

"I'll be right there. I still have to pee," I say, closing the door behind her.

"Hurry up. I don't know any of these people," Nellie says.

"Well, just wait a minute and we can walk in together," I say through the door.

"What's up?" I hear a male voice say to Nellie. "Talking to yourself?" he asks.

"My girl's in the bathroom. I don't think we've met. I'm Nellie."

"Hey, I'm Jeremy." And, there he was, my future baby daddy, outside chatting with my girl while I'm squatting on the fanciest toilet ever.

"Well, I've certainly heard a lot about you," Nellie says, about to blow my cover. Just then, I flush the toilet to shut her ass up. I wash and dry my hands on the pretty silver towels hanging from the beautiful brass towel rack. Mama would have a heart attack if we used the good towels to wipe our hands. Those towels are for guests only. And, here I'm the guest.

"Hey, Jeremy," I say, rushing out of the bathroom.

"Hey, Jayd. I heard you were here. How's it going?" he asks while squeezing past me to get to the bathroom, almost brushing his chest up against mine. Damn, he smells good.

"Excuse me," he says, smiling down at me.

"You're excused," I say, returning his smile and wishing I could just hug him up right now.

"I'll see you in the other room," I say, not wanting to leave. But, the boy has his own business to handle.

When Nellie and I return to the main room, the lights are on and the door leading to the backyard is open. People are hanging out by the pool and going in and out of the pool house. How big is this place? Nellie and I take a seat on the couch opposite the door, next to my Benz.

"Hey, girls. Can I offer you a drink?" Matt says, gesturing toward the wet bar on the other side of the room.

"No, I don't drink," I say, feeling a little awkward.

"You don't drink water, Coke, Dr. Pepper, or juice either?" he says, trying to be funny. "We also have hot tea, coffee, and a cappuccino maker. Just let me know and I'll get it for you," he says, turning toward Nellie.

"And, how about you?"

"I'll have a Vodka Cosmopolitan up, please," Nellie says, like she's on *Sex and the City*.

"You got it," Matt says, slightly amused by Nellie's ghetto boujie attitude.

When Matt leaves, I call her on her order. "Nellie, you don't drink," I say, pinching her in the arm.

"I know that. But I don't want to stick out like a sore thumb, like you do," she says, pinching me back. "Besides, I've always wanted to order a martini." And she's right. I'm the only one here that's not drinking or smoking something. I'm inclined to take a hit of someone's Newport, but I don't want to start that filthy habit. Almost everyone I know smokes, except for Mama. She says she can remember picking tobacco as a little girl back in New Orleans and would be damned if she's gone give them one cent of her money after all that labor she basically did for free.

"Are you ladies enjoying yourselves?" Jeremy asks, taking

us both by surprise. “Matt said this belongs to you,” he says, handing Nellie her drink.

“Yes, I am. Y’all White boys sure know how to throw a party,” Nellie says, looking around for any available boys to flirt with.

“I love coming over here, but I’ve never been in the basement before,” I say, publicly acknowledging that I’m not a full-fledged part of this clique either.

“Yeah, this house is phat,” Nellie says, still scoping the scene. “I think I’m going to take a walk outside,” she says, suddenly becoming bold. She gets up and leaves me alone with Jeremy.

“I’m glad you decided to come down here and kick it with us. We’re not so bad, are we?” he asks, taking a sip of his Guinness.

“Well, I don’t know about all that. But, I’m glad I came too,” I say, scooting over so he can sit down next to me.

“How do you like the cars?” he asks, spreading his legs to make himself more comfortable on the tiny couch. He’s got to be at least 6 feet 4 inches.

“They’re nice,” I say. My grandfather would be in heaven.

“I saw you at the mall today,” he says. “I tried to walk over to where you were, but there was some sort of commotion, and I needed to get back here, so I’m sorry I didn’t say anything,” he says, like he just lost my favorite pen. Why is he apologizing to me? I didn’t even think he saw me, or would have gone out of his way to speak, for that matter.

“I saw you too. But, I don’t think you owe me an apology for not speaking.”

“Yes, I do. We’re friends now, right? It’s rude not to speak to your friends,” he says, putting his beer down on the table next to the couch.

“Oh, so we’re friends now, right?” I say, challenging his intentions. This White boy thinks he got game. He doesn’t

know I'm being schooled right now by KJ. I can top any game he brings.

"Yeah, we're friends. Everybody here is friends in some way," he says, looking past me and out the door, toward Nellie.

"Well, I can see you've made yourselves comfortable," Nellie says, coming back in from the pool with the same amount of drink in her glass she had when she left the room.

"Nellie, why don't you just put that down. You haven't touched it since Jeremy gave it to you," I say.

"Jayd, like I told you before, it's the look that matters, baby, the look," she says, bringing the glass to her face and pretending to take a sip. She's so silly; that's why she's my girl.

"So, guess what I just heard from Mickey?" Nellie says, like an international spy committing espionage.

"She called. What did you hear?" I say, teasingly.

"I heard that Trecee's only sleeping with KJ because he had a better car than the dude that she just broke up with over the summer," she says, tapping on my legs like she always does when she gets excited.

"KJ's car ain't all that. Her old Negro must've had a Pinto," I say, laughing at how girls can be so ridiculous sometimes. The girls in my hood rate guys according to three things: their gear, their hair, and their ride. That's how they decipher a dude's character: by how much cheddar he has.

"Well, ever since he tweaked his ride out last year, girls have been dropping the cookies in his lap like he's the cookie monster," Nellie says, putting her fist out for dap, for which I leave her hanging.

"Nellie, all girls don't care about material things," I say, refusing to put myself anywhere near Trecee's category. I'm nothing like that girl.

"But, you got to admit," Nellie says, focusing her energy

toward Jeremy, “girls like the cars with the booming systems, right Jeremy?”

“Yeah, I think girls like dudes with nice rides. But, it’s up to the girl not to equate herself with the car,” he says. I’m surprised by his comment. For some reason, I didn’t expect him to be as smart as he seems.

“Well, Jeremy. It sounds like you have a little experience in this department,” I say. “So tell me then, why is it that dudes are never satisfied with one girl? It’s like they get these cars or tweek out the ones they already have to attract as many girls as possible. What’s that about?” I ask, just knowing he can’t answer my question.

“Well, it’s all a game,” he says, reaching for his beer. “Dudes at this age just want to have sex. Period. And, if you can do it while playing with a fine toy such as a car, why not?” he says, taking a huge gulp of his beer.

“Are you joking?” Nellie says. I know better than to take him seriously. I’ve already got Jeremy pegged as an instigator. He likes to have his fun.

“No, I’m not. Think about it; how many guys do you know with shitty cars who still have girls jocking them?” He’s got a good point. If it weren’t for KJ, Del, and C Money wouldn’t get any play and they’d be at the bus stop with me.

“That doesn’t make it acceptable,” I say, ready for a good challenge. “You sound as if you’re advocating the use of a vehicle to lure girls into bed.”

“Not at all. I’m just saying girls like dudes with nice cars and guys like to have sex. It’s an even exchange,” Jeremy says with a very cunning smile on his face. This boy thinks he’s got me right where he wants me.

“So, you wouldn’t be hurt if a girl left you for a guy with a better car?” I retort.

“Not at all. But, finding a dude with a better car than me

would mean that I know the dude because he would be me,” he says, proud of his wit.

“What the hell does that mean?” Nellie says, lost in translation. I think she must’ve got a contact high when she went to the pool house. I’m sure they’re smoking up a storm in there. I’ll stick with the secondhand cigarette smoke in here. That way Mama won’t be suspicious when I come home. Cigarette smoke is as common as homeless people at the bus stop.

“That means he thinks his car is the hottest shit around,” I say, giving her my quick version of his cocky words. “And, I agree; your car is nice. But the driver of any of these cars in this room would have a better chance at getting my cookies before you,” I say, really kicking my flirting up a notch.

“Is that right?” he asks, readjusting his position to face me directly. “Funny, you never struck me as the type to exchange her cookies for cheddar,” he says, looking me up and down, slowly waiting for my comeback.

“Well, you’re right. But that doesn’t mean that a guy can step to me with anything less than what I’m offering, understand?” I say, returning his strong gaze. I love his confidence. Just as Jeremy’s gaze turns more flirtatious than challenging, Chance walks over, messing up the whole vibe.

“J man, they’re waiting for you in the pool house. Reg and them brought the six-footer dude. Kristy and Leslie are taking turns and it’s funny as hell. You gotta go see, dude,” Chance says, pulling Jeremy up by the arm and exchanging places with him on the couch next to me.

“It’ll have to wait, dude. We’re in the middle of a very stimulating conversation,” Jeremy says, trying to pull Chance back up.

“Nah, man. I’ve had enough. I need to sit down for a minute. The room is spinning,” he says, putting his head on my shoulder.

“That’s what you get for partaking in illegal behavior,” Nellie says, in her original self-righteous tone. “It’s not natural for your head to spin unless you have a fever. Do you have a fever?” Nellie asks, putting her hand up against Chance’s head.

“Get your hands off me, girl,” he says, playfully shooing Nellie back into her seat.

“All right. I’ll be right back,” Jeremy says, walking out the door toward the pool house.

“So, what’d I miss?” Chance asks, stretching his legs out across the couch, comfortably positioning himself across my lap.

“Well, just make yourself at home, why don’t you?” I say, smacking him in the forehead. He’s lucky he’s my boy. Otherwise, his ass would be on the floor by now.

“I know Jeremy would like to make himself at home right here,” he says, bracing himself for my impending blow.

“Boy, shut up,” I say, smiling because I’m glad he thinks so. If it’s one thing I’ve learned from living in a house full of men, it’s that dudes talk as much as we do.

“What did he say about my girl?” Nellie’s always asking the important question.

“He thinks you’re fly, like everybody with good taste,” he says, making me blush. These White boys know how to make a girl feel good, even if I’m just a friend.

“Really? How did he say it?” Nellie pries, unsatisfied with his simple answer. It was enough for me because I feel the same way about Jeremy.

“He just said it,” Chance says, repositioning his head on my lap. “So, for real, y’all seemed in deep conversation when I walked up, or were you just playing Truth or Dare? If so, I pick Dare. Truth always gets me in trouble.”

“No, fool,” I say, pulling the bottom of my shirt from

under his head. "You need to get up. You're getting hair gel all over my shirt."

"You're going to have to get used to this. I think Jeremy uses the same kind," he says, rubbing his head on my shirt and jeans.

"Chance, you're a punk, you know that?" I say while pushing him and his sticky hair to the floor.

"I like this girl; she's got spunk," Jeremy says, walking back in from the pool house, obviously stoned. When KJ and his boys get high, they say stupid stuff too. That's why, unlike Nellie, I'm cool being the designated sober person: My mouth already gets me into enough trouble as it is.

"That was quick," Chance says, dusting himself off and taking a seat in the chair next to Nellie.

"Yeah, that was kinda short," Nellie says.

"How would you know? You've probably never even seen a bong, let alone know how long it takes to use one," I say, once again blowing her cover.

"Why you all up in my business?" Nellie says, sounding a little embarrassed. I didn't mean to put my girl on the spot, but sometimes she fronts a little too much.

"So, how was it?" I ask, redirecting my attention to Jeremy.

"It was what it was," he says with a big, goofy ass smile on his face. I notice that he never really answers a question. Instead, he gives incomplete answers that really annoy me. But, I guess I'll have to get used to that too, I smile to myself.

"Anyway, back to the subject at hand," Nellie says, getting us all back on track. "I believe the topic of debate was cookies for cheddar: Is it really an even trade?" Nellie says, sounding like Barbara Walters. "I think it was your turn, Jeremy. Can a sistah's milkshake be bought with dough?" she asks, using her martini glass as a microphone.

"Why are money and sex always equated to food?" I ask, annoying the hell out of Nellie.

“That is so not the point here. Stay on track, Ms. Jackson,” she says, again pointing the glass at Jeremy. But, Chance beats him to the mic.

“Hell yes, it’s even,” he says, while Jeremy finally reclaims his seat next to me. Just the fact that he’s in the same room with me gives me chills. Now that he’s sitting next to me again, I feel an entire cold front coming on. “Okay look, I don’t know about where y’all are from, but where I’m from, the bigger the chain, the more girls you catch,” Chance says, showing off the diamond and platinum chain around his neck. Even the Notorious B.I.G. would be envious of his bling. That’s the thing about rich White boys into hip-hop: They have the money to mimic their idols to the tee; pimp, players, and all.

“Dude, now you know it takes a lot more to get a girl than that overpriced piece of metal hanging around your neck,” Jeremy disagrees. “Like I said earlier, women need to respect their value. If the woman equates what she thinks she’s got to give with material shit, then that’s her bad,” Jeremy says, looking at me with blood-red eyes. He can’t be that high: Nobody can be this insightful while intoxicated.

“I agree. Can a sistah get dinner first?” Nellie says.

“Maybe, if she’s nice,” Chance says, flirting with Nellie.

“Oh no, White boy. I need a man with a much better car than that old thing you drive,” she says, shooting down his advance. Nellie would be caught dead first before she’s seen with someone in a car like Chance’s. Even if he’s balling, he’s still got to show it through his ride so that our neighborhood sees it. And, that means he needs to roll a Chrysler or an Expedition at the least. Not a Nova, no matter how classic it is.

“Damn, girl, do you see this bling around my neck? Do you know I had this handmade in Italy and the diamonds shipped from Africa herself?” he says, putting his chain directly in Nellie’s face.

“I don’t give a damn if your daddy owns the diamond mine,” she says, getting up in his face to make her point completely clear. “It’s the looks, baby. If you pick me up in that old-ass car, people are going to think you’re a mechanic or something. And that’s not enough for me.”

“Well, what’s the price? Maybe we can make an even trade,” Chance says, playing with his chain and Nellie at the same time.

“See, that’s the type of thing I’m talking about,” I say, getting frustrated with their behavior. “She can’t be bought, Chance. Besides, what good is that chain going to do her?” I ask.

“Yeah, do I get a matching one?” Nellie asks, enjoying the game with Chance.

“It’s not funny,” I say, trying to get my girl back on my side. I think she’s been blinded by the ice hanging from his neck.

“Why are you getting so upset, Jayd?” Chance asks, backing up from Nellie and turning his attention toward me. “If two consenting young adults want to make a fair exchange, what’s the problem?” he asks, sounding less high and more serious.

“The problem is multifaceted. First of all, you can’t equate my cookies with that chain. Ever. That chain can’t push a baby out of it, now can it?” I say, vexed that we’re even having this conversation.

“Uh-oh. Here’s the Jayd I know and love,” Chance says, getting excited, like he’s about to witness a good fight, which may not be far from the truth in a couple of days. “You should see her in action when she’s really pissed,” he says, hitting Jeremy on the leg.

“You know what, forget it. I can see my energy is being wasted on y’all anyway, including you, Nellie,” I say, playfully kicking Nellie’s Candies boots.

“That’s why I don’t engage in too many debates: It’s fu-

tile,” Jeremy says, again adding his enlightened two cents. “People are going to do what they want anyway, car or no car, bling or no bling,” he says, pulling his baseball hat low onto his face, sinking down into the couch and closing his eyes.

“My boy J here is right,” Chance says, leaning back in the oversized leather chair, identical to Nellie’s, revealing his flawless custom-made Tims. “If the girl wants to give it up, it’s all on her. What are we going to do, say no?” he adds.

“That’s not exactly what I said, but close enough,” Jeremy says, giving Chance a slight nod.

“I think you’re both wrong,” I interject, ready to kill this sexist conversation. “Yes, it’s a sistah’s responsibility to value her body; I totally agree. But, the dude has some responsibility too. He has to respect and value his body as well as the girl’s. Why is it always on the girl? And, why are men so obsessed with sex and money?” I say, really wishing I could ask KJ that question. It’s not like I’d expect an honest answer from him, but still: I should’ve asked.

“Okay, y’all are bringing me down,” Jeremy says, sitting straight up and bending over, placing his elbows on his knees. “We’re both wrong. We’re both screwed up for even referring to sex the way we do. Jayd made a good point earlier that wasn’t addressed: Why do we equate these things with food?” he asks, displaying his good listening skills. He’s capable of holding an intelligent conversation and he’s a good listener. Can the boy be any more fly?

“When I was little, my auntie Ron use to give me oatmeal cookies and cheddar cheese as a snack. I never thought it would one day be a substitute for sex and money. That said, I think it’s because they’re both necessities, like bread and butter,” I say. “Both girls and guys need to act differently if we want different results,” I say, supporting my soon-to-be man.

“Well said,” Jeremy says, giving me a nod in agreement.

“No, not well said. That statement assumes that dudes want different results, and we don’t, or at least I don’t. I’m very satisfied with having my sweet ass ride and honeys coming in and out, know what I’m saying, J?” Chance says, raising his hand to Jeremy’s for a high five.

“I’m going to have to leave you hanging on that one, man. I don’t like a bunch of different girls in my ride. Too much drama,” he says, smiling at me. What does he know about drama?

“This looks like a party for the Debate Club, not the thespians,” Matt says, interrupting our private vibe.

“Hey, Matt, this is some shit right here. These girls are something else,” Chance says, shaking his head like he’s been defeated.

“I believe it,” he says, looking more stoned than Jeremy and Chance combined. “Oh, yeah. The first sober shuttle is here, if you ladies have somewhere to be,” he says, leaning onto Nellie’s chair for support.

“What the hell is that?” Nellie asks, still holding her full drink.

“It’s our designated driver shuttle. We always have one with our parties. We like to live wild, but still live, know what I mean?” Matt says, putting a smile on Nellie’s face.

“These cats have style,” Nellie says, holding her glass up in salute.

“Was there something wrong with the drink?” Matt asks, noticing she hasn’t touched it. “I can have the bartender make you another one before you go.”

“She doesn’t drink,” I say, completely busting her cover. Nellie’s face falls and she gives me the evil eye. “Come on, Nellie. It’s time for us to roll,” I say, not wanting to leave, but knowing that it’s way past my play time. I feel like the streetlights are on and Mama’s standing on the porch, waiting for me to come inside.

“Leaving so soon?” Jeremy asks, gently grabbing my hand. “I was looking forward to talking some more. I promise I’ll go easy on you this time,” he says, revealing his perfect smile.

“Funny, I thought I was too hard on you,” I say, releasing his hand and getting up, grabbing my backpack on the way.

“Wow, did you feel that?” Chance says, looking around the room. “Was that an earthquake, or did y’all just create some serious seismic energy up in here?”

“Good-bye, stupid,” I say, socking Chance in the shoulder.

“Why the abuse? I’m on your side,” he pleads, pretending to be hurt. “You don’t have to be so hard on me too,” he says, like a wounded puppy.

“We’ll see y’all at school tomorrow,” I say, following Nellie back up the stairs toward the kitchen.

“It was a pleasure, boys,” Nellie says, giving a Hollywood wave from the top of the stairs.

“Believe me, the pleasure was all ours,” Jeremy says, looking right at me. I turn back around and walk up the stairs, speechless for what must be the first time in my life. This boy is something else.

When we get outside, the same girls and guys are hanging around, plus about twenty or so new faces. The sober shuttle is actually the school’s Drama Club van. I’m sure they worked it out that this party somehow fits into official club business. I’m just glad they have the good sense to have a sober van, even if the designated driver, Seth, has questionable mental stability without being under the influence of anything.

“Hey, En Vogue. Aren’t you short a member?” he says, acknowledging Mickey’s absence.

“Just shut up and drive,” Nellie says, already irritated with him. She has little patience for people she don’t know making small talk with her.

“Hey, Seth. Please don’t drive like a maniac and get us

back to Compton safely,” I say, taking a seat right behind him, directly across from my girl. We’re the only ones on the van. I guess everybody else at the party is just getting started.

“No problem, Lady J. One, nonstop direct ride to the CPT coming right up,” he says, pushing the button, closing the automatic sliding door. As we pull out the driveway, heading back east toward home, I wonder if Jeremy misses me already, as I do him. After all this mess with Trecee and KJ blows over, maybe we can talk some more. I haven’t been that attracted to someone and stimulated by their mind in a long time.

“Hey, girl, what you wearing to school tomorrow?” Nellie asks.

“I don’t know. I was thinking about wearing my jean miniskirt and a big off-the-shoulder shirt. But, I’m not sure yet. Why?” I ask, not really caring. I’d rather daydream about Jeremy some more than snap back into the reality of having to face another day at Drama High tomorrow.

As we cruise down 190th, listening to Seth sing along with the Black Eyed Peas, the scenery quickly changes from big houses with lush lawns to a busy industrial area. There’s really no direct way to get from this part of the South Bay to Compton. So, going down 190th until we’re able to hit Artesia, which merges with the 91 freeway, is the best way to go. Mickey comes this way, too.

“Who gets dropped off first?” Seth asks in between songs.

“I do. Just drop me off at the bus stop on Alondra. I’ll walk the rest of the way,” I say.

“Jayd, why don’t you let the boy take you all the way home?” Nellie says, putting her iPod down and looking at me. “It’s getting late. You shouldn’t be walking around by yourself anyway.”

“I’ll be fine. Besides, I don’t want him knowing where I live,” I say, playing with Seth. He’s dropped me off after plays

before, so he already knows my address. It's really Mama asking questions I'm worried about.

"Yeah, you never know what I might do," Seth says, playing along. "All right, Jayd, here you go. Be careful," he says, waving at me as I get out of the van, leaving Nellie in his care.

"Get my girl home safely, man," I say. "Text me when you get to the crib," I say to Nellie.

"All right, Jayd. And, don't wear that miniskirt yet. I'm going to wear mine next week and we can match," she says as they pull off. My girl, my girl. The truth is I don't have much choice. I only have a certain amount of stuff at Mama's. Everything else is at my mom's. I would wear the skirt on Friday, but I might be scrapping and I don't want all my goods showing. So, I'm saving my other pair of jeans for then.

"Hey, girl. Where you coming from?" Bryan says, sneaking up behind me. He must be coming from his part-time job at Miracle Market.

"I had a meeting," I say, knowing he ain't buying my lie. But, it's what I'm sticking with.

"If you say so. How's the KJ drama going?" he asks, pulling out a joint from his backpack, putting it behind his ear. As he slips his bag over his shoulder, his phone rings and he doesn't answer it.

"Dodging the honeys again, I see," I say, pulling his chain. "Why do guys have to be dogs?" I ask him, not really expecting him to answer.

"Girl, you don't know? Cookies can make a man crazy. And, vice versa for the girls and whatever they want from the man. It all makes us do some strange things, like dodging girls that call you every hour on the hour," he says, erasing the phone number from his inbox. He's right; this whole day was strange. And, this situation with KJ was even stranger. Maybe Bryan can give me some advice on how to handle KJ, and a little insight on Jeremy too.