

I like it like that
a gossip girl
novel

by
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No gossip ever dies away entirely, if many people voice it: it too is a kind of divinity.

—Hesiod, ca. 800 B.C.



Disclaimer: All the real names of places, people, and events have been altered or abbreviated to protect the innocent. Namely, me.

hey people!

Thank you one and all for coming to my party last week. I would have written sooner but honestly, it's taken me this long to recover. I realize it *was* a little crazy to have a party on a Monday night, but didn't the week *zoom* by afterwards?! I'm pretty sure you're all still trying to figure out if I was the skinny blond girl in the emerald green Jimmy Choos or the tall black guy with the amazing sapphire-blue fake eye-lashes. And it was so sweet of you to bring me gifts—especially the adorable caramel poodle puppy—when you didn't even know who I was! The truth is, I kind of like being an international woman of mystery, so for now I'm going to keep my identity to myself, frustrating as that may be. Think of it as a diversion from the *endless* days of waiting to find out if we got into college, a distracting puzzle to piece together while we endure the stress and boredom of these bitter March weeks.

Not that we really need diversions. We've got plenty to entertain ourselves with—gorgeous couture clothes, huge Upper East Side apartments *with staff*, various “country” houses and holiday retreats, limitless credit cards, pretty diamonds, hot cars—although most of us don't even have our driver's licenses yet—and doting parents who let us do absolutely whatever we please as long as we don't embarrass the family. Plus, spring break is just around the corner, giving us lots of free time to get *busy*.

Sightings

S walking up **Madison Avenue** drawing mustaches over her face in those gorgeous poster ads for **Les Best's** new perfume,

Serena's Tears. **B** in **Sigerson Morrison** on **Prince Street**, indulging her shoe fetish. **N** depositing a shopping bag filled with rolling papers, roach clips, bong, pipes, and lighters into an East Eighty-sixth Street waste bin. **D** smoking a cigarette on the subway platform at Seventy-second Street and Broadway late at night, challenging the transit cops to arrest him and provide him with some much-needed new material for his poetry. **J** with her new best friend, **E**, and boyfriend, **L**, poking around the Chelsea art gallery district—pretty darned sophisticated for a bunch of ninth graders. Wait, I think he might actually be in tenth—does anyone really know *anything* about that guy?? **V** and her rocking big sister dumping garbage bags on the sidewalk outside their Williamsburg apartment building. Spring cleaning? Or maybe **D**'s dead body all cut up? Ew! Sorry, that was nasty.

Your e-mail

Q:

Dear gossipgirl,
so I'm getting frustrated that ur like never going to tell who u r. r u? cuz i'd really like to meet u in person. who knows, maybe i already have! so far i think u have basically admitted that ur a senior girl who goes to constance. right?
—qrious

A:

Dear qrious,
I'm not going to go ahead and give you my home address right here and now or even tell you what grade I'm in. If you were cool enuf to be at my party you might have seen me, although usually I'm so completely surrounded by my . . . entourage, it's hard to even get a glimpse. Stay curious, though. Eventually you might find me out.
—GG

Q:

Dear GG,
Are you hot because if you are not it's going to be really tough for you once everyone knows who you are. Like, she was just some jealous ugly girl!
—wise



Dear wise,
You don't even know the meaning of hot until you've met me,
which you most likely never will.
—GG

**Now about that *thing* that's been secretly nagging more
than a few of us . . .**

To go to college a virgin, or not?

Do we do something about it now, with a boy we've known for years? Do we get rid of it over spring break? Over the summer? Or do we settle into our dorm rooms just as we are, bold but innocent, and ready to lose it with the first campus player to say, "Come hither"? Maybe we should just listen to our mothers and older sisters and "wait till the time is right," whatever *that* means. Of course some of us girls nipped this particular issue in the bud long ago, opting to spend our college years focusing on more important things, like geology and Freud. *Not*. Face it, even if you're not a virgin anymore *now*, you're going to feel like one all over again the minute you step on campus. And that's a good thing.

Thanks again for my presents! Big smoochies—you rock!

You know you love me.

gossip girl

there's no place like home

“What island are we going to anyway?” Blair Waldorf asked her mother. Eleanor Waldorf Rose was perched on the edge of Blair’s bed, watching her daughter get ready for school while they discussed spring break.

“Oahu, dear. I thought I told you. We’re going to that resort on the North Shore, so the boys can learn to surf.” Eleanor cupped her hands around her almost-seven-months-pregnant belly and frowned at the cream-colored walls as if trying to channel the baby’s preference about wallpaper. She was due in June, and Blair would be off to college soon afterwards. Today Eleanor and her decorator would discuss her plan to turn Blair’s room into a baby girl’s nursery.

“But I’ve already *been* to Oahu,” Blair wailed dramatically. She’d known for weeks that they were going to Hawaii for spring break, but until now she hadn’t thought to ask where. She kicked her antique mahogany dresser drawer shut and stood in front of the full-length mirror on the back of her closet door, primping. Her close-cropped brown hair was neatly tousled; her white cashmere V-neck was just deep enough to suggest a hint of cleavage without her having to worry about being sent home by Mrs. M, the headmistress,

for dressing like a slut; and her new turquoise Sigerson Morrison flats looked so excellent with bare legs, she decided not to put on tights, even though it had been an unusually frigid March and she was going to freeze her ass off. “I want to go someplace *new*,” she added, pouting into the mirror as she applied a second coat of Chanel lip gloss.

“I know, sweet pea.” Her mother slid off the bed and squatted down to eyeball a particularly dangerous-looking electrical outlet in the skirting board near the window. Once the decorating was finished she would have to hire someone to babyproof the entire house. “But you’ve never been to the North Shore. Aaron says the surfing is the best in the world.”

To Blair’s dismay, her mother was wearing beige velour track pants with the word *juicy* on the butt.

Hello, inappropriate?!

“So do I like not exist anymore?” Blair demanded. She dragged her baby blue shearling Dior saddle bag out of the closet and dumped her school stuff into it. “First you’re kicking me out of my room, and now I have no say about where we go for vacation?”

“The boys are buying some surfing things for our trip right now. You might want to have a quick look on Aaron’s computer. See if there’s anything you want,” her mother answered distractedly. She was on her hands and knees now, circuiting the room, checking for any dangers that might be lurking from a baby’s point of view. “You know, I *was* thinking apricot for the color scheme—so it’s girly, but not too pink? But now I’m thinking maybe a greeny-yellow might be even nicer. *Endive*.”

Blair had had enough. She didn’t want to go to the North Shore of Oahu, she had no interest in buying surfing equipment, she didn’t want to talk about color schemes for the

stupid baby's nursery, and she certainly didn't need to look at the word *juicy* on her mother's wide-load, pregnant ass for a moment longer. With a final spritz of her favorite Marc Jacobs perfume, she left for school without even saying good-bye.

"Yo, Blair. Come here a minute!" her seventeen-year-old stepbrother yelled from his room as she stomped by.

Blair stopped and poked her head into the room. Aaron and her twelve-year-old brother, Tyler, were sharing Aaron's natural-fiber desk chair—all brotherly—while they ordered surfing gear online with Cyrus Rose's credit card. Tyler had stopped combing his hair in an attempt to grow dreadlocks just like Aaron's, and he looked as if he had some sort of foul hair fungus. Blair could hardly believe this was the room she was going to have to live in until she went off to college. Aaron's hemp bedspread and natural sea-grass carpet were littered with old reggae album covers, beer bottles, and Aaron's dirty clothes, and the room stank of his herbal cigarettes and those revolting soy hot dogs he was always eating—*raw*.

"What size are you?" Aaron asked. "We can order you a wet shirt. It keeps the board from chafing."

"They come in cool colors," Tyler added enthusiastically. "Neon green and stuff."

Like Blair would ever be caught dead in neon green, let alone a neon green wet shirt.

She could feel her lower lip trembling with a mixture of horror and overwhelming sorrow. Here it was only seven forty-five in the morning and she was already on the verge of tears.

"Found 'em!" Cyrus Rose, her eyesore of a stepfather, boomed from behind her. He waddled down the hallway

from the master bedroom, wearing only a red silk bathrobe tied with a dangerously loose knot. His bristly gray mustache needed a trim, and his fat face was red and oily. He waved a pair of enormous orange swim trunks at Blair. They had little blue fish printed all over them and would have been kind of cute on anyone but him. “Love these. Boys are going to order me a wet shirt to match!” he announced happily.

The idea of spending Easter break watching Cyrus make a fool of himself on a surfboard wearing his orange swim trunks and a matching orange wet shirt was enough to drive Blair to real tears. She slunk away down the hall to the foyer, yanked her coat out of the coat closet, and hurried off to meet her best friend. Hopefully Serena would think of something—*anything*—to cheer her up.

As if that were even possible.

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