

Sample Chapter From

SUMMER CAMP

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Costantino

That night, a dance had been set up with Camp Butterfly, an all-girls camp from across the lake. The boys were all excited, but a little nervous. They each arrived at the hall, followed by a large group of girls several minutes later. The latter slowly filtered into the boys and began mingling. Jeffrey and Tyler had met a couple of girls.

"You guys twins?" one of them asked.

"Yeah, except I'm faster, stronger, funnier and better looking," Jeffrey stated.

"Notice he left out smarter," Tyler added.

Meanwhile, another girl walked up to Ryan and Chris. "Hello, boys!"

Ryan responded in kind, but Chris was staring at her, moving his mouth, but no words would come out. She waited for him to say something but, after several seconds, she gave up. "Well, I gotta go. See you boys later."

As soon as she was out of earshot, Ryan looked at Chris. "Smooth!"

"That is the most beautiful creature I have ever seen. I think I'm in love." He had stars in his eyes.

"What are you talking about? You didn't say a word to her."

Chris was distraught. "I tried to talk but no words would come out."

"Well, you're in luck. You have me – a wealth of information on the finer sex – as a friend. I'm going to educate you on talking to girls. First, you have to actually talk to them. Girls tend not to like guys that just stare at them with their mouths hanging open."

"Are you going to help me or make fun of me?"

"A little of both," Ryan smirked. "Okay, you're going to go up to her and say hello. Then, you're going to ask her to dance."

"But, I can't dance," Chris objected.

"No problem. Come with me." Ryan led him outside, behind the dance hall.

"One crash course on dancing, coming up. Take my hand. I'll be the girl."

Chris started to say something, when Ryan interrupted. "If you say anything, you're on your own. Now, put your hand on my back and I'll put mine on your shoulder. Good. Now, step forward, step back, step forward, step back."

He went through the elementary steps of dancing and Chris caught on quickly. As they were finishing their lesson, Adam walked out of the hall and saw them dancing.

"Aw – aren't you a cute couple," he said, smiling.

Ryan and Chris immediately separated. Chris spoke first. "He was just teaching me to dance. There's a cute girl in there that I want to dance with."

Adam was still smirking. "Ya, sure." He walked away, laughing.

Ryan turned back to Chris. "You ready?"

"As ready as I'll ever be. Let's do it."

They returned to the party and walked up to the girl and her friend. "Sorry about before. My name is Chris and this is my friend, Ryan."

She smiled. "I'm Emily. This is Angela."

Ryan nudged Chris in the ribs. Taking the hint, he invited Emily to dance. They made their way to the dance floor, followed by Ryan and Angela. Much to Ryan's surprise, his student seemed very adept at dancing. After the song ended, Chris glanced at Ryan, who made a drinking motion.

"Would you like some punch?" Chris asked.

Emily smiled. "I'd love some." They made their way to the refreshment table, where Chris poured Emily a cup, then got one for himself. Ryan noticed them standing side by side in an awkward silence, so he made a talking motion with his hand.

"So," Chris started the conversation. "What do you like to do for fun?"

"Well, I like computers and other electronic stuff." Chris immediately felt more at ease. "Really? Me too. Wow – you don't find many girls that are in to those kinds of things. They're mainly into clothes and dolls and stuff."

"I used to like those things – then I turned twelve. I have many mature interests. This dance is a snooze – let's get out of here."

"What did you have in mind?" he inquired.

"How about a walk? Show me around your camp."

He shrugged his shoulders. He was a little apprehensive about leaving the comfort of his tutor, but decided to wing it. They snuck past the counselor at the front door and began the tour. He showed her the lunchroom, the stables and the tennis courts. When they walked by Maverick, he pointed it out to her.

"I wanna see," she said, as she grabbed his hand and drug him to the door. They went inside and looked around. "Which one is yours?"

"The one by the window," he said, pointing. Satisfied, she left the cabin and continued the tour, ending back at the dance hall.

"Thanks for the tour," she said and kissed him lightly on the lips. She went back to the dance, leaving Chris standing there, grinning.

Seeing Emily arrive alone, Ryan went outside to look for his friend. He found him, standing outside the door with a goofy look on his face.

"What happened to you?" Ryan inquired.

Chris just stood there, staring off into space.

"Hello? ... Earth to Chris... Come in, Chris!"

He snapped out of his stupor. "She kissed me!"

Ryan patted him on the back. "Way to go, bud. My work is done here! I'll send you my bill."

They went back inside just in time for the last dance. Chris walked up to Emily and put his hand out. "May I have this dance?"

She grabbed his hand and led him onto the dance floor.

Chris was sound asleep when he was awoken by a tapping on his window. He slid back the curtains to reveal Emily, pointing to the door. Looking around, he verified that everyone was asleep. He quietly crept to the door and let himself out.

"What are you doing here?"

"I couldn't sleep. I wanted to see you again. Come on." She grabbed his hand and led him off into the woods.

"But, but, I'm in my pajamas," he objected.

"So, what's your point?"

"Where are you taking me?"

"It's a surprise." She led him to a clearing, where she had set up a blanket, a couple lanterns and a bag of food. "Voila – I thought we'd have a picnic."

"But – it's the middle of the night."

"So. You got anything better to do?"

He smiled. "Can't think of a thing." He sat down on the blanket and Emily handed him a cookie.

"I smuggled these out of our kitchen," she admitted. While they ate, they got to know each other better. She lived in Boston and was in the same grade as Chris. She was also considered to be a "geek" for her computer and electronic skills. They exchanged addresses and phone numbers and promised to keep in touch when they returned home.

When they arrived back at Maverick, Emily gave Chris another kiss on the lips. "Thanks," she said. "I had a great time. Sweet dreams."

She disappeared into the woods. Chris continued to the cabin when he was blinded by a flashlight in his face. The holder lowered it revealing his identity.

"Crap!" Chris thought to himself when he saw Sam. "And where have you been, young man?"

Thinking fast, he pretended that he was sleepwalking. He rubbed his eyes and yawned. "Huh what? ... Where am I?"

Sam wasn't buying it. "Sleepwalking, eh? That's a new one. Nice try, though."

"Alright – you got me. I was with a girl from the camp across the lake. She woke me up and we had a picnic."

"At two in the morning?"

Chris shrugged. "Chicks?!?"

"All right – go back to bed. We'll talk about this more in the morning."

They woke up and, after breakfast, Bear Bait went to the archery range. Sam asked Chris to stay behind. They went back to the cabin to talk.

"First of all, as your friend, congratulations on the kiss."

Christopher blushed.

"But, as your counselor, you can't be running off in the middle of the night. I was worried sick about you."

"I'm sorry. It wasn't planned – she just showed up."

"I'll make you a deal. I'll keep this infraction to myself IF you promise no more sneaking away in the middle of the night. Deal?"

Chris smiled as he was expecting a punishment.

"Deal!"

Sam cracked a wry smile. "First kiss?"

Chris smirked. "She kissed me at the dance. That was my first."

"Congratulations. I still remember my first kiss. Of course, the fact that it was last week may have something to do with it."

"Last week?!?"

"Just kidding!"