

This is a Jixemitri CWP#11 submission. This particular version is the "Innocent Version" and contains 17 of the required elements, including the song, as well as carryovers from all previous CWPs. The password-protected "Sex Fiend Option" version of this story uses the remaining four elements from CWP#11 in a "bonus" epilogue and is password protected. The title comes from the Vanessa Carlton song of the same name. A very special thank you to a special person for editing this portion of the story—the fabulous Susan!

A Thousand Miles

by Dana

"I can't believe I'm graduating next week!" Di Lynch exclaimed as she bit into a fry. "Mmm," she murmured. "Wimpy's has the *best* fries."

Mart smiled at his girlfriend. "Indubitably," he agreed. "But even better than the fries is the fact that I am home for the summer, and, when I leave to go back to Cornell, you'll be coming, too!"

Di's violet eyes sparkled. "I know. I can't believe it! I missed you so much this last year."

"I missed you, too," Mart said candidly. "But, with you down the street at Ithaca College, we can be together all the time next year."

"Well, not *all* the time," Di said with a mischievous glint in her eye. "I might have to study *sometimes*."

"Or practice for your sorority Jell-O wrestling match," Mart returned wickedly.

Di's eyes widened. "What?"

"The Greeks," Mart began, using the term that college students frequently used to collectively describe fraternities and sororities, "hold a Jell-O wrestling tournament the Saturday before finals each spring term. It's a great way to blow off steam while studying for finals, *and* it raises money for charity."

"Oh. Well, if it's for charity, I suppose I'll just *have* to participate!" Di laughed as she sipped her thick chocolate malt with a healthy dose of Reddi-Whip whipped cream. "After all, it's what we Bob-Whites do."

Mart, not to be outdone, looked at Di with mock innocence. "Did I mention that the girls wear edible underwear?"

Di reddened. "They do not!"

Mart laughed. "You're cute when you blush. But you're right—they don't. Just regular t-shirts and bathing suits."

"College sounds so fun!" Di burst out. She was anxious to begin her freshman year at Ithaca College as an art history major. "I had so much fun last March when I was there," she said, referring to her official college visit following her acceptance to the school. She had been busy during the Saturday open house for incoming freshman, but Mart had managed to spirit her away from her parents during the evening and had introduced her to the Cornell social scene. Between her experiences at Ithaca College that day and with Mart that night at Cornell, Di had been fascinated with college life.

"And just imagine how much fun we'll have without your parents around," Mart said with a suggestive lift of his sandy eyebrows.

Di smiled shyly. "You know, I've been thinking about that."

Mart's heart stopped for a moment. "About your parents not being around?"

"Yeah," Di said, suddenly nervous. She had thought about this a lot—a *lot*—but now that the subject was broached, she was suddenly tongue-tied. This was *much* more nerve-wracking than the first grade

A Thousand Miles

play when she had called Benedict Arnold, “Arnold Benedict” from the first scene to the last. “We’ve been dating almost two years now and—”

Mart interrupted with a tender smile. “Two years this Saturday. Happy anniversary, three days early.”

Di smiled warmly. “Happy anniversary, Mart. This has been the best two years of my life.”

“Me, too. But, you were saying?”

“You and I have been together a long time, and you know that I love you.”

“I love you, too, my fairest Diana,” Mart said tenderly, his bright blue eyes reflecting his feelings.

Di’s smile lit up her face. “I’m graduating high school, I’ll be 18 soon, and we’re going to be together next year, so—”

Mart’s heart started pounding. It was pounding so hard that he was sure that Diana could hear its tattoo. *Is she going to say what I think she’s going to say?*

Di felt suddenly breathless and paused as she tried to screw up the courage to say what had been on her mind for weeks. No, for months. No, truth be told, for years, actually. In the end, encouraged by the sexy combination of love and lust on Mart’s face, she just blurted out, “I want to be with you. On graduation night.” She knew her cheeks were bright crimson.

“Be with me?” Mart parroted, feeling like a moron for not saying something more intelligent, but the words he loved so much had suddenly failed him.

“Yes,” Di whispered. “I want my graduation to be special. I want our first time to be special. I don’t want it to be some romp in the backseat complete with upholstery burn, or something equally heinous, that we regret later.”

Mart put the burger down that he had forgotten he was even holding. He reached over and enfolded both of Diana’s hands into his.

“Diana Marie Lynch. I love you more than anything on earth. You are too special to me to *ever* be just a romp in the backseat. If you’re sure you’re ready, then I would be honored to make love to you,” Mart stated, carefully lowering his voice and glancing around to ensure that none of Wimpy’s other customers could hear him.

Diana caught her breath. At Mart’s words, a sudden, inexplicable wave crashed over her. Unexpectedly, she felt a peculiar flip-flop in her stomach and almost dizzy as the impact of Mart’s words hit her. An unfamiliar heat filled her to her core.

“I’m ready,” her voice came out in a ragged whisper.

“Would I...would I be too forward to suggest that I make reservations at the Hamilton Inn in Croton?” Mart was so nervous, he wondered if he even sounded coherent.

“That sounds wonderful, Mart,” Di said.

As the song “Afternoon Delight” came on the old jukebox in Wimpy’s, Di and Mart ate their burgers and fries while planning their special night following Di’s graduation.

The plans were finished by the time they had finished their dinner. As Di reapplied her cherry lip gloss, she glanced around the small diner. The owner was thinking of expanding, to accommodate more booths and a pool table, but Di thought the old train car was quaint and perfectly perfect as it was. She hoped he didn’t change a thing.

A Thousand Miles

Satisfied that she and Mart had come to the right decision about taking the next step, she clasped his hand, and the two headed out of the diner.

~*~*~*~*

Two days later, in the kitchen of Crabapple Farm, Helen was preparing for a Friday night picnic, in honor of the three graduating Bob-White girls. The Beldens were hosting a full complement of Bob-Whites that evening, and Mrs. Belden was simultaneously trying to boil potatoes and chop eggs for potato salad, form burger patties, and finish up an apple pie.

As she leaned down to take the pie out of the oven, ten-year-old Bob entered the kitchen at the same the phone began to ring.

"Moms, can I please keep the class gerbil for the summer?"

"I don't know, Bobby. I can't get the phone with this pie in my hands. Can you, please?" Helen sounded slightly flustered.

"Sure, Moms," Bob said cheerfully as he crossed the sunny red and white kitchen to the phone. "Belden residence...Oh, hi, Miss Trask. Moms is a little busy right now, but she...Oh, no, it's not inconvenient right now," Bob chirped innocently, while Mrs. Belden rolled her eyes and thought otherwise. "Hang on." He turned to his mother, who had set the pie down and was currently removing her oven mitts while turning the burner down on the stove.

She looked at her youngest child, holding the phone out to her, his blue eyes angelic, and she couldn't help but smile ruefully.

"Thank you, Bobby," she said as she took the phone. "Hello," she said into the receiver as Bob scampered off into the family room to play with Reddy.

"Hi, Helen. Did I catch you at a bad time?" Margery Trask asked in her smooth, crisp voice.

"Not at all," Helen fibbed smoothly. "I was just preparing for tonight."

"That's why I'm calling. Are you sure we can't provide more?"

"I think fried chicken and rolls should round out the menu nicely. I can't think of anything else."

"What about dessert?" Miss Trask questioned.

"I baked an apple pie, Di is bringing cupcakes, and Dan's bringing Mr. Maypenny's famous donuts. Even for this crowd, that should be plenty!" The two shared a laugh over the appetites of the group of teens they had watched grow over the years.

"Sounds like you have everything under control, Helen. Just as you always do," Miss Trask complimented the accomplished homemaker.

Mrs. Belden smiled as she cradled the phone between her neck and her ear and began to cut lemons for the lemonade. "Oh, I don't know about that," she said modestly. "But we are set for tonight."

After a few more minutes of pleasant chat, the two hung up, and Helen immediately drained the potatoes.

"Bob!" she called. "Can you come here, please?"

"Oh, Moms!" Bobby called in an exasperated voice. "*King Kong* is on!"

"*Robert!*"

A Thousand Miles

Bobby suddenly appeared in the kitchen. When Moms used *that* voice, she meant business. "What do you need, Moms?"

"Can you please shuck the corn for tonight's picnic?"

"Okey dokey," Bobby said amenably as he opened the refrigerator and began to pull the ears of corn out. He settled himself down at the table and began pulling the husks on the corn. His hand hovered over the floor, ready to drop the green husks on the shiny linoleum.

Helen turned a shrewd eye on her youngest child. "You're going to put that *where*?"

Bob's guilty blue eyes met his mother's knowing ones. "Uh, I was just getting up to get the trash, Moms," he said sheepishly.

"I'm sure you were," she said dryly as she returned to juicing lemons.

The kitchen was quiet for a few moments. Helen was just about to ask Bob about his earlier question of his class's pet gerbil, when Bobby himself suddenly spoke up.

"Moms?"

"Mmhm?" she said rather absent-mindedly.

"What's Viagra?"

Helen's head shot up. "What?"

"Those commercials on TV. They talk about something called Viagra, but they never say what it's for. They just show all these married people in parks and stuff, laughing and hugging. John McCurdy says it has to do with sex, but I can't figure out what sex has to do with parks. I mean, Dad told me about the birds and the bees a few months ago, and he didn't say anything at all about having sex in parks," Bobby finished his monologue with the innocence of a small-town-raised ten-year-old.

Meanwhile, Helen was desperately trying to hide the mixture of astonishment and amusement she was feeling at her youngest son's frank words. When she had finally composed herself, she turned to Bob and said, "Your friend John is correct in that Viagra helps...relations between men and women. As for the rest with parks and all, you can ask you father tonight when he gets home."

Bob beamed at his mother. "Thanks, Moms! I knew you'd know!"

A smile played on Helen's lips as she measured sugar for the lemonade. *Peter's going to kill me for this one!*

~*~*~*~*

The picnic was turning out to be a great success. The Bob-Whites and Peter, Helen, and Bobby had a grand time as they laughed and joked and teased their way through Moms' famous burgers, potato salad, and corn-on-the-cob, the Wheelers' cook's unbeatable fried chicken and fresh-baked rolls, and Di's delicious pasta salad. Dan had even surprised everybody with a mean guacamole.

Upon listening to the Bob-Whites' groaning about eating too much, Peter Belden suggested the teens go for a walk to help digest their food before they tackled dessert.

The Bob-Whites agreed this was a superb idea and immediately paired off and headed in various directions. For once, Brian didn't feel like the seventh wheel, because it was time for him to go pick Lexi up from the train station for her weekend visit. As Peter noticed his daughter going off in one direction with Jim, his second son heading off in the opposite direction with Di, and Honey and Dan heading off in

A Thousand Miles

yet a third direction, he wore a chagrined look, as if he hadn't expected the younger generation to take *separate* walks. Helen laughed aloud at the comical look on his face.

Mart and Di held hands as they walked toward the Beldens' crabapple orchard. The crabapple trees were at their peak of blooming, their soft white and pink blossoms a perfect backdrop for a romantic evening walk.

The couple smiled secret smiles at each other as they disappeared into the orchard, feeling as though they were the only two people on earth, hidden among the fragrant blossoms of the trees the Belden homestead was named after.

Mart gently kicked one of last year's crabapples, moldy with age, out from underneath a particularly fragrant tree so that he and Di could settle down beneath the canopy of leaves and petals. They immediately embraced each other and began to kiss.

"It's always so hard to be around you when our families are around," Di said softly as the kiss ended. "All I can think about is when we're going to be alone again so that we can do that!"

Mart grinned. "I think I'm in touch with that emotion."

"You are, are you? And here I thought you'd be distracted by all of the food," Di teased.

"You are my only distraction, my fair Diana," Mart murmured as he leaned toward Di for another kiss. The sounds of a country evening filled the air, but Diana and Mart were completely oblivious to their surroundings for quite some time.

"It's getting dark," Diana finally whispered. "Maybe we should head back."

"I suppose that would be the prudent thing to do," Mart sighed ruefully. "Do you really have to go see your grandma and grandpa tomorrow?"

"I do. They're too frail to travel to my graduation, so Mummy promised them that we would all visit this weekend. It was Dad's idea to spend the night there, so you can blame him for *that* brilliant plan!" Di stated. "But I'll be back Sunday night."

"But then you'll have to study for finals," Mart complained good-naturedly.

"I know. And I would ask for your help, but I have a feeling that I wouldn't get anywhere near enough studying done!"

"You're probably right," Mart said wickedly, lunging forward to kiss Diana to prove his point. Di laughed and moved away quickly, and Mart ended up kissing the trunk of the tree by mistake.

"I'll get you for that," he sputtered as Diana's laughter rang out through the quiet twilight that surrounded them.

Di kissed him softly. "There. All better?"

"Almost," he said huskily as he pulled her in for another soul-searching kiss.

"Mmmm," Di said as she pulled away. "I would much rather be here in Sleepyside with you this weekend instead of dealing with my grandpa's stinky cigars, but at least I have our special night to look forward to."

Mart smiled. "I can't wait. Don't worry about a thing; I've got it all planned out, right down to room service."

A Thousand Miles

Di looked at him skeptically. "You're not going to order a dozen raw oysters or anything weird like that, are you?"

"Don't you worry, my little purple galumpkie. I will not need to order any aphrodisiacs," Mart joked.

Diana burst out laughing. "Little purple galumpkie? That sounds rather dirty, Mr. Belden."

"Nonsense, Miss Lynch. It's the phrase all of us mature, sophisticated college men use," Mart said loftily.

"I bet!"

The two kissed and cuddled for a few moments longer, until they realized that they had better get back to the picnic, as dusk was well upon them. The two strode back to the Beldens' yard, arriving just as Trixie and Jim, hand-in-hand, appeared from the general direction of the clubhouse, and Honey and Dan materialized from the direction of the Wheelers' game preserve.

"We were just about to send a search party out for all of you," Mr. Belden said sternly, but nobody missed the twinkle in his eye. "Are you all ready for dessert?"

The group agreed that they were. After indulging themselves with Moms' apple pie, Di's cupcakes, and Mr. Maypenny's donuts, the group was absolutely decimated and decided to call it a night.

There was much laughter as the party broke up and promises were made to call each other the next day. Di found a moment in the confusion to sneak behind the side of the house to give Mart a quick kiss and a promise to call him Sunday night as soon as she returned.

~*~*~*~*~

After a quick call to Mart on Sunday night when she returned from her grandparents' house, Di sequestered herself in her dad's study, curling up in his leather chair to try to understand the complexities of trigonometry. She briefly considered turning on the heating element in the chair, as the air conditioning seemed to be on overdrive, but she thought that the briskness of the air might actually help her concentrate.

Di also had a government final the next day, but she had been doing well in that course and only needed to brush up a bit. It was her trig class that was worrying her the most. The rest of her finals would be much easier. Best of all, on Wednesday, the day of graduation, she had no scheduled finals at all. Her final in both of her art classes, one in drawing and one in painting, had consisted of turning in a portfolio of assigned portraits of various subjects. She had turned both projects in the week prior and only had to worry about her math, government, English, and biology finals.

With such a short schedule, finals flew by quickly for Di, and before she knew it, she was standing in front of her mirror in her white graduation gown, adjusting the maroon and white tassel hanging from her mortarboard. Her twin sisters sat on her bed and stared at her in awe.

"You look so pretty, Diana," Rachel cried in delight.

"Pretty *and* smart," Cassie added loyally.

Diana turned and smiled at her siblings. "Thanks, guys. You always know what to say to make me feel so good."

"I can't wait to graduate from high school," Rachel exclaimed.

"Me, too!" Cassie echoed.

A Thousand Miles

"Time flies so fast, before you know it, you will be!" Veronica Lynch smiled at her daughters as she entered the room, camera in hand.

"How do I look, Mummy?" Diana turned and modeled her cap and gown in a comical manner, causing her mother to laugh through the tears that had gathered in her eyes upon seeing her eldest child standing before her in her graduation finery.

"Absolutely beautiful, as always," Veronica said. "How about I get some pictures of you girls together?"

The three Lynch girls laughingly obliged and hammed it up for the camera. Veronica then shoed them downstairs to take some pictures outdoors, with the lush greenness of a Sleepyside early summer as the backdrop. Di's father and younger twin brothers joined in the festivities, too. Just as Di was starting to get bored with all of the pictures that her mother was snapping, Mart appeared in the Bob-White station wagon.

"Your chariot awaits, milady," he greeted his girlfriend with a kiss. "You make even that silly mortarboard and tassel look good, my love."

Di blushed. "Thanks, Mart," she said and then turned toward her parents.

"Mummy, I'll see you after graduation, okay?" Di said, giving her mother a hug. "You too, Daddy," she said as she turned to give her father a hug as well. "I'll find you both on the football field after the ceremony!"

"Be safe. We'll see you after the ceremony!" The Lynches called as Di smiled and climbed into the passenger seat of the station wagon.

"I can't believe I'm done with high school!" Di exclaimed as they headed down Glen Road back toward Crabapple Farm. Mrs. Belden had insisted on getting pictures of the three graduating girls together with the crabapple trees as a backdrop.

"It's hard to believe that we'll *all* be in college next year," Mart agreed. "I can't wait!"

Di smiled in agreement, as Mart turned into the Beldens' lane. The couple could see Honey and Trixie, in cap and gown, already posing for pictures together. When they saw Di exit the car, they shrieked and ran for their friend.

"We're graduating! We're really graduating!" Trixie chanted as she and Honey swooped Di up into a big three-way hug.

Reddy excitedly jumped up and down, barking, demanding to be involved in the hug. Mrs. Belden laughed and snapped a few pictures, enjoying the sight of her exuberant daughter celebrating with her two best friends.

After the picture-taking had wound up, Trixie had a thought. "I wish I could take a picture of me in this get-up with Susie. Speaking of Susie, we've neglected the horses terribly with finals. I hope Regan isn't mad at us!"

"He's not," Honey assured her, glancing over to where her boyfriend was talking to Mart. "I rode Dan this morning, and Jim and Regan exercised the rest of the horses."

Trixie and Di looked at their friend, amused. Honey, suddenly realizing what she said, looked horrified and immediately turned bright red. "I mean, I rode *Lady* this morning."

Just then, Dan and Mart strode up in time to hear the last part of Honey's sentence.

"What did you do this morning?" Dan asked.

A Thousand Miles

Honey managed to turn a deeper shade of red, while Trixie and Di grinned at Honey's boyfriend.

"You mean you don't know, Dan? I was sure you were there!" Trixie laughed.

Dan looked confused. "Where was I?"

"Never mind," Honey managed to say. "It was just something goofy I said."

"Slip of the tongue," Di said wickedly.

Dan finally laughed. "You girls are just as crazy as you were the day I met you!"

Trixie snorted. "You're the crazy one. A leather jacket? In June?"

Dan looked down at his jacket. "What's wrong with it? Honey likes it!"

Helen and Peter joined the laughing teenagers then.

"You had better get moving. You're supposed to report to the school in about ten minutes, girls," Helen reminded them.

There was a flurry of last minute hugs and well-wishing before the five Bob-Whites climbed into the station wagon, with Mart at the wheel.

"Where's Jim?" Dan asked Trixie.

"I didn't see any point of him coming early and just hanging around, so he's driving in with Honey's parents. Brian went to pick up Lexi and should be on his way back from the City by now," Trixie explained.

"Lexi's coming?" Honey said in surprise.

"Yeah, I told her not to, since she's in the middle of her summer term at Columbia, but she said she really wanted to be there for me."

"That's nice of her," Honey murmured faintly.

"This is your stop, ladies," Mart said as he pulled into the student parking lot at the side of the school. He leaned over and gave Diana a kiss. "Knock 'em dead, gorgeous."

Trixie was already out of the car and hopping back and forth on each foot as Honey leaned over to kiss Dan.

"See you after the ceremony," Honey said softly.

"You bet, beautiful," Dan said. Honey smiled and soon was walking with her two friends toward the gym where all graduating seniors were to meet to line up in their orderly rows for walking out to the football field, where graduation was to be held. The gorgeous weather that Sleepyside had been experiencing held, much to the relief of the seniors, their families, and the faculty of Sleepyside Junior-Senior High. It was always a stressful affair to move the graduation to the gym in case of rain.

Now, the faculty's biggest worry was getting the crowd of excited seniors to line up into some semblance of order. Miss Bennett, the botany teacher, chased down Jerry Vanderhoef and demanded that he replace the candy cane that dangled from his cap instead of the traditional tassel. Jerry laughed and immediately pulled his tassel from his pocket.

Amy Morrissey was looking at Jamie Kenworthy skeptically, refusing to believe his announcement that he was wearing nothing under his maroon cap and gown except a bow tie. Mr. Stratton was weaving through the crowd, resplendent in maroon and white, looking for Mark Nixon, the class valedictorian.

A Thousand Miles

Diana watched it all as if in a dream. She was barely aware of Trixie and Honey standing next to her and giggling. As happy as she was to be graduating, her mind wasn't really on the upcoming ceremony, either. All she could think of was the special night she had planned with Mart. She had been in love with Mart for so long and had dreamed of this night so often since they had started dating, that she couldn't believe it was finally here. It was to be a celebration of their anniversary, a celebration of her graduation, but most of all, it would be a celebration of their love.

Diana suddenly realized that Honey was speaking to her. "Earth to Di!"

Di smiled. "Sorry, I was just thinking that I can't believe this day is here already!"

Trixie smiled knowingly. "You didn't look that dreamy about graduation. You were thinking about my brother!"

The dark-haired beauty smiled. "Guilty as charged," she admitted.

Just then, Mr. Stratton called for attention, and the crowd quieted. "It is time for you to line up in your rows to walk out to the football field. Please try to remember your position from rehearsal the other morning."

There was happy confusion as the members of Sleepyside's latest graduating class scurried about, trying to remember to which row they had been assigned. Diana headed to the middle of the crowd and finally found Ruthie Kettner and Jane Morgan, between whom she was to sit. From where she stood, Diana could see Trixie in the front between Chuck Altemus' younger sister, Allison, and Mary Brendan. With a quick glance behind her, Diana spotted Honey in the back row between Jerry Vanderhoef and Bill Wright.

Once the seniors had organized themselves, Mr. Stratton and Miss Bennett released them, row by row, to march out to the football field. Once the first row stepped on the field at the back of the end zone, the student band began to play "Pomp and Circumstance."

Upon hearing the strains of the song, tears jumped, unbidden, into Diana's eyes. *I'm really graduating!* she said to herself for the thousandth time that week. She stood tall and walked proudly with the rest of Sleepyside's senior class as they all crossed the field and seated themselves in their assigned seats.

As Di sat listening to Mark Nixon, captain of the swim team and senior class valedictorian, speak of graduation not being an ending, but a beginning, about spreading your wings and following your dreams, even as you remained grounded in all that Sleepyside High had taught you, she wondered if every graduation speech since the beginning of time was essentially the same. She couldn't even blame Jane for giggling with Patty Morris, who sat on the other side of Jane. She herself wished she was between Trixie and Honey and the three of them were giggling and gabbing.

When a former alumnus of the high school, now a respected journalist, took the stage to give his "welcome to the world" speech, full of many of the same themes and analogies as Mark's, Di finally tuned out completely. She turned to look into the bleachers, hoping to catch a glimpse of Mart, but she knew it was futile attempt. The faces were just a sea of flesh-colored blurs.

Di turned her violet eyes back to the podium and began to daydream. In her dreams, she was a successful member of Ithaca College's freshman class. Her grades had dramatically improved, because she cared about the classes she was taking. She made the Dean's List her first semester as a result. She was a popular member of a sorority. Her art technique was improving rapidly under the expert guise of her art professors. She also dreamt of an active social life, with Mart always by her side.

A Thousand Miles

Thinking of Mart lead her to fantasies about the coming evening. What would it feel like? Would she feel like a woman? How much closer would she and Mart be after giving themselves to each other?

Lost in her daydreams, she slowly became aware that the distinguished alum had finished his speech, and Mr. Stratton was calling the names of seniors as they crossed the stage to receive their high school diplomas. Di clapped loudly when it was Trixie's turn to claim her diploma. Di smiled, thinking back to the eighth grade and the problems they had both had in math. Trixie had been tutored, and Di secretly thought she might have needed some tutoring, too. But she had squeaked by and, as a result, had not had to endure Brian and Jim's torture on the Bob-Whites' Christmas trip to Arizona that year.

And now, here she and Trixie were—graduating!

Di stood with her row and started toward the stage. When she heard the name "Diana Marie Lynch," she proudly stepped forward and shook hands with Mr. Stratton. As she received her diploma, she realized that she had never felt prouder or happier in her life.

Soon, Honey was announced as "Madeleine Grace Wheeler," and Di was cheering loudly again. Soon after Honey's name was called, the last student crossed the stage. Once the entire class was reseated, Mr. Stratton instructed the seniors to move their tassels from the right side to the left and pronounced the most recent senior class of Sleepyside Junior – Senior High School officially graduated.

With a heartfelt whoop, the entire class happily threw their mortarboards in the air, causing a shower of maroon and white against the blue summer sky.

Suddenly, Di didn't find Mark's or the alum's speeches corny, for she honestly felt as though the best *was* yet to come.

~*~*~*~*~

Final notes: Ossining High School's colors are maroon and white. According to the 2005 Ossining High School online graduation picture album (no longer available), the men wear maroon caps and gowns, while the women's are white. I decided to use this for Sleepyside High's graduation ceremony. (2020 update: According to current OHS pictures at SmugMug, beginning in 2016, all students wear maroon.)

Carryovers were: #1 – sex in a park; #2 – Viagra; #3 – moldy piece of fruit; SA#1 – anniversary mentioned or celebrated; #4 – a kiss by mistake; #5 – King Kong; SA#2 – leather clothing; #6 – "I rode Dan" (which doubled as the R-rated Freudian slip); #7 – Jell-O wrestling; SA#3 – heated leather chair; #8 – cigar; #9 – creative use of a candy cane; #10 – cupcake.

Jerry Vanderhoef, Ruthie Kettner, Jane Morgan, Patty Morris, Amy Morrissey, Jamie Kenworthy, Chuck Altemus, Bill Wright, Mr. Stratton, and Miss Bennett are the creation of various KK's and, like the Bob-Whites, used without permission. Mark Nixon is my creation.

Trixie Belden® is a registered trademark of Random House Books. These pages are not affiliated with Random House Books in any way. These pages are not for profit.