Brad's Diary

BRAD

07/09/1980, Martha's Vineyard

her gaggle of friends.

a brutal business, but I think it suits me.

I'm moving to Manhattan.

Bonnie's has the best ice cream in the world!

That's today. I'm going to pick her up in a few hours.

always tell. Maybe because I comb my hair.

understood, since she's their guest and all.

We had a long walk to the ice cream shop, which suited me fine.

mine were just the same. I had never thought about it before, but it was true.

Eventually, the sun went down, and she told me she should be getting back.

wanted to take next semester.

to mine for dinner sometime.

back at me as she said goodbye.

thinking about Amelia.

vodka, or two.

I was Xavier Knight.

was the fucking matador.

buddy-now-stepmother was hugging me.

What a fucking insane thought that is...

"We what?" I asked.

Xavier?"

My mind reeled.

Those numbers were unheard of.

to remind him that he could lose it..."

"Not bad," I finished lamely.

agreeing to any of it.

It was all Penny.

I was distracted.

I needed to get my shit together.

Penny smiled, swelling with pride.

Her voice trailed off as she stared at me.

Eighty?

Impossible.

I can't believe that bitch Amelia beat me in the Regatta.

I remembered her immediately. The girl I met in Central Park! But I couldn't believe I was seeing her here.

I have to admit, when I saw her standing on the dock, I didn't even think she was in the competition.

legs and brown hair that she wore down, swinging around her waist.

But then they fired the gun—we all took off. She was always just ahead of me, so I had to watch her pull the ropes with

So when I saw her climb onto her Sunfish, my first thought was: well, hopefully she's single.

those tan, oiled arms that shone in the sun, her agile little body as it bent suddenly at the waist or the knees *Needless to say, I wasn't paying the best attention to my own boat. She's a damn good sailor, too. She came in first place,* with me a close second.

I climbed up onto the dock after her, and I put aside my pride in the hope of getting a date.

She didn't pay me much attention, though.

While I congratulated her, whipping off my sunglasses, she looked at me like she already knew the likes of me: cocky, rich, and expecting to win the competition.

I didn't even have time to ask her how long she'd be on the island, let alone if I could take her out, because her little friends came running and screaming, jumping up and down. Then came Walt and Joe and Tommy from Yale to congratulate me, but mostly to take a closer look at the girl sailor and

I called out to ask if they'd be going to the party later on. Her silly friends said they wouldn't miss it, but Amelia didn't say anything.

All of us guys went to Tommy's to celebrate before the party. We were drinking his dad's whiskey and talking about starting on Wall Street.

I'm lucky 'cause I can go right in with my dad. Oil will be all right, but even Dad knows I want to start something of my own once *I* get my feet on the ground.

I have my grand plan, which is to work my way up at Knight a few years before going my own way. Dad says hospitality is

Anyway, later that night was the party at the yacht club. Mom was there, and her friends fawned over me like they always do, but Dad took me aside and demanded to know why I

got second place. What could I tell him? That some cute girl had distracted me? I'd never hear the end of it. After wiggling out of that one, I helped the guys make a fire on the beach and then all the young people came down.

I was drinking beer and waiting for Amelia. Finally, she showed up, wearing this short white dress with a collar. Her

She was surrounded by her friends. I wanted to speak to her, but then Walt passed me a joint and I got shy. Finally, eventually, I went and sat next to her on a log of driftwood.

outfit was even more distracting to me than the shorts she wore on the sailboat.

When I asked, she said she went to school at Vassar and studied art history. I told her I just finished at Wharton and that

I asked her if she had been to Bonnie's yet and she said no, and I said, well your friend isn't a very good one then, because

Turns out she's here in the Vineyard with her college friend. Her family summers in Cape Cod.

I was thinking about how close Vassar is to the city, but I didn't say that, of course.

So I told her I could take her the next day if she wanted, and she said sure.

She looked at me like she knew I was going to come sit by her, like it was just a matter of time.

She knew where I was going with all that, and she just smiled. She has this way of showing you everything and nothing with her smile.

07/10/1980, Martha's Vineyard *Last night was my first date with Amelia.*

When I came down into the kitchen in the afternoon, Mom asked if I was going out to meet a girl. Somehow she can

I told her yes, but I wouldn't say who. But if tonight went well, maybe I'd ask her over for dinner sometime.

That made Mom really happy.

the sun.

I walked up the long driveway to the Seymour house. I took the stairs onto the porch and knocked.

She was quiet at first, in the driveway. It was just the sound of her flip-flops and my boat shoes. I got nervous that we wouldn't have a good time together.

But then when we'd been walking a few minutes, we got talking about sailing, and her dog at home, and the classes she

When I finally slipped outside, it was one of those perfect days where the clouds were big and fluffy but never blocked out

Amelia opened the door and then closed it quickly behind her, as if she didn't want to make a scene with my being there. I

Then we were at the ice cream shop, and I treated her of course. I got a hot fudge sundae and she just got a chocolate

She got kind of thoughtful or sad for a minute, which made me nervous. It was hard for me to understand her. Maybe she was thinking about how different we were, when I didn't think we were so different at all.

But the moment passed, and we were having fun again. We walked to the harbor, and I held her hand. It was warm.

We talked about college while we ate. She said her friends from school were different from her friends at home. I said

On the walk to her place, I was thinking of when I could kiss her. Her door was the obvious choice, but she had been so quick on the way out, I worried she would rush inside.

I decided on the mailbox, but then the mailbox came and went. As we neared the house, I asked if she'd like to come over

She gave me that knowing smile again and said OK.

Sure enough, her friend was there on the porch when we got back. I definitely couldn't kiss her, and Amelia hardly looked

XAVIER

I walked home looking at the stars and feeling a little uncertain. I don't know what it is, but today, too, I can't stop

I was so worked up, even after my long lunch break, that I took the stairs back up to the office.

In my defense, my stomach was full of oysters and snow crab.

headed father would not have stood for such anarchy. In his own office, no less!

I tried to remember this alleged game plan that Penny had mentioned.

When had I ever agreed to close a deal side by side with her?

That, or I may have had one too many vodka seltzers at lunch.

No, I couldn't stand by while Penny destroyed what we worked for!

Manhattan skyline. She seemed to be just getting off the phone.

"How *dare* you ..." I began with a growl, my hands hardening to fists.

"Eighty-twenty," she beamed proudly. "In favor of us, of course."

Well, I took the stairs for the first eight floors, and then I got on the elevator for the remaining twenty.

I tried to figure out how my dad would've reacted. He would've been proud of me for taking an hour to cool off, I knew. But I eventually resolved that even my level-

After Penny blew the *goddamned* Switzerland deal, I needed to get out of the office before ~I~ blew a gasket.

I'd gone to the seafood restaurant my dad had always loved, thinking of him as I slurped down the raw bivalves

...and a

I *never* needed help. The more I thought about it, the more convinced I was that Penny was just messing with me.

The elevator opened, and I charged out into the office of Knight Enterprises like a bull seeing a red cape. And Penny

Had I seriously been distracted enough to agree to something that outlandish without even realizing it?

But before I could really let loose, she jumped up with joy and came rushing in for a hug.

"Xavier!" She boomed, her voice echoing out through the spacious room. "We did it! We closed the deal!"

My muscles tensed up, the anger I felt disappearing from pure shock. I could just barely register that my ex-fuck-

I burst open the door to Penny's office without knocking, finding her standing by a window, gazing out at the

She waved her hand in front of my face, then snapped a few times for good measure. "The details?" I choked out, unable to form a complete sentence.

"The Switzerland deal! We did it!" She stepped back to look at me, her face lit up with pure excitement. "Um, hello?"

No sane businessman would agree to such terms. But apparently...

"Joseph's such a softy." She laughed. "I could tell he really wanted the deal to happen too. He just needed a little shock

"No," I said. "No, that's—" *Really fucking good already.*

Maybe because I was staring at her like she was a crazy person.

"Um," she hesitated. "Should I have tried for eighty-five percent?"

I frowned.

The old Xavier Knight would've seen the possibility right away.

She'd made a better deal than I had. And it bugged the *fuck* out of me.

She kept insisting that we did this together. That this was a plan we'd made. But I couldn't remember for the life of me

"And it sets a new precedent too. We can open with eighty percent as our starting point from now on." She spun

around and walked to the window, staring out at the commanding view of New York.

"I'm so glad I can finally put my degree to use." She sighed. "We make a great team, Xavier."

I was getting soft. "Right," I said. "Well, I'm just glad your plan didn't fuck us over."

With that I left her office. When I got back into my own, I stood with my back against the door, sweating.

Or else Penny was going to take Knight Enterprises from right underneath my nose.