

I Like It Like That: A Gossip Girl Novel Study Guide

**I Like It Like That: A Gossip Girl Novel by Cecily Von
Ziegesar**

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Plot Summary

"I Like It Like That, A Gossip Girl Novel" by Cecily von Ziegesar is a book in the series of books about the Gossip Girl and her friends. Gossip Girl is an unidentified member of a circle of wealthy and privileged teenagers who live in Manhattan, New York. Gossip Girl has a blog on the Internet where she posts messages to her friends and readers. In this story, Gossip Girl talks about the latest subject that is on everyone's mind. The high school seniors in the crowd are all worried about where they will be going to college and more importantly, if the colleges of their choice will accept them. Everyone is making the dreaded visits to the mail box to see if "that" letter has arrived yet. Gossip Girl sympathizes with everyone and tries to bolster their moods.

Of course, until that letter comes they have plenty of distractions to keep their mind off taking that first step toward adulthood. There's shopping for the latest couture creation, there are the parties and doting parents to take up their time but most of exciting of all, it's Spring Break and everyone is heading for a fabulous week away from the usual grind of the life of a spoiled teen in Manhattan. Gossip Girl has a Q&A on her blog. Users ask for her sage advice and she offers up her wisdom on a variety of subjects. The juiciest part of her blog is her "Sightings" section in which she posts the latest movements of her circle of friends, identifying them by first initial only.

Blair Waldorf is not happy with her home life. She doesn't like her step-father. The fact that her fifty-year-old mother is seven months pregnant and has redecorated Blair's room for the little sister who will soon be arriving is just too much! Blair is also not happy at all that the family plans to spend Spring Break in Hawaii on the North Shore so her brother and step-brother can surf.

Serena van der Woodsen is waiting on the steps of the Metropolitan Art Museum for her friend Blair who walk always walk to their exclusive private school together. Serena is depressed. Her boyfriend just broke up with her and she isn't happy with the latest image of herself in a perfume ad that just passed by on a bus. Serena is rich and a supermodel but is feeling unloved. Of course, most boys who have ever seen her fall in love with her immediately but she wants someone she can love.

After Blair tells Serena her tale of woe, Serena invites Blair to move in with her and go on spring break with her to Sun Valley to ski and party. Blair enthusiastically accepts the invitation. When they get to school, the glamorous Serena and the stylish Blair evoke all kinds of jealous comments from the other girls. But Blair and Serena are too wrapped up in themselves to care. After school, Blair moves in and encounters Erik, Serena's older brother who's been away at school for an extended period. She is at once attracted to Erik and thinks he may have been her dream man all along. She used to be hung up on Nate Archibald but that's all over.

Heartthrob Nate Archibald is practicing with his Lacrosse team in central park but the coach won't make Nate team captain because of a little problem Nate had with pot and



the cops. He had to go to rehab where he met his current girlfriend of a few weeks, Georgie, who has severe addiction problems.

As it turns out, all the main characters wind up at Sun Valley. Georgie and another boy get a little too drunk and get arrested. Blair gets cozier with Erik and the entire Dutch snowboarding team is fascinated with Serena. Some of the kids in this circle of kids remain in Manhattan and have their own unique adventures, which are mostly centered around fun and romance. Gossip Girl chronicles every move made by the kids during Spring Break.

Although she promises to reveal her identity to the boys in the circle, Gossip Girl goes back on her word and remains anonymous. It still remains undecided as to what schools each of the characters will be attending. But the most important things to the young people - love and romance - are settled at least in the short term by the story's end.



Pages 1 through 42

Pages 1 through 42 Summary

The gossip girl sends a message to everyone who attended her party. She thanks everyone for coming even if they didn't know who she was. She appreciates the gifts, especially the caramel poodle. The gossip girl is not ready to reveal who she is just yet. She likes being mysterious. But the party was nice - better than waiting to hear about college acceptance. Of course there are plenty of diversions - couture clothes, Upper East Side apartments with staff, limitless credit cards, hot cars, and doting parents.

She saw "s" walking up Madison Avenue drawing mustaches on her face in Les Best parfum ads. Saw "b" indulging in her show fetish. Saw "d" smoking on the subway platform. Saw "j" with her new boyfriend "e." "v" and her big sister were dumping garbage or maybe it was "d's" dead body. Gossip Girl is sorry for the last comment.

Gossip Girl gets a few messages asking about her identity but she's happy to stay anonymous for the time being. Another message tells her she better be hot because if she's not and everyone finds out who she is, they'll figure she's just a jealous ugly girl. Gossip Girl responds that she is the definition of "hot."

Gossip Girl ends her message by bringing up the subject that everyone is worried about: "To go to college a virgin, or not?" She ponders whether she should take care of that with a boy she's known for years? Wait for spring break or college? For some girls, the question is no longer an issue.

Blair Waldorf and her mother Eleanor Waldorf Rose are sitting in Blair's bedroom. Eleanor is seven months pregnant and is trying to decide how to re-decorate Blair's room for the baby girl she is going to have. Blair is not thrilled with a new baby sister or with the fact that the family is going to Oahu on spring break. She wants to go somewhere else but the boys are excited about surfing on the north shore and they're already buying surfing gear for the trip. She applies some Chanel lip gloss.

Blair grabs her Dior saddle bag and storms off as Eleanor is crawling around on the floor looking for electrical outlets that she'll have to make safe for the baby. She stomps past Aaron's room where he and Tyler are shopping on line. Aaron is her seventeen-year-old step-brother and Tyler is her twelve-year-old brother. They ask if she wants to order any surfing gear. Suddenly Cyrus Rose, her obese step-father is heading right for her, waving a pair of orange trunks in his hand. She is just about ready to cry thinking about seeing HIM in those orange shorts on a surf board in Hawaii making a fool of himself. Blair rushes out. She hopes Serena can do something to make her happy. Anything!

Serena van der Woodsen is sipping on a latte and perched on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She sees her own image go buy on a bus. She looked



good with her blond hair billowing around her and her yellow sun dress blowing up between St. Barts-tanned legs. She didn't like the tears in her navy blue eyes. But Le Best had named his perfume "Serena's Tears" so she had to go with the flow, literally. There are tears in her eyes right now because Aaron Waldorf who she was sure she'd been in love with had broken up with her. She needs to have a boyfriend, one that really loves her and showers her with attention. Every boy that she's met totally loves her but. . . she needs to be in love with the boy, too. She takes a cigarette from her Cacharel bag. She smiles when she sees Blair rushing towards her.

Blair tells Serena her tale of woe. Serena's own problem of needing someone to love her doesn't seem so important in comparison to Blair's problems. Blair's parents had divorced because her father was gay, her mother is pregnant, her step-brother had come on to her and then to her best friend and dumped them both and now she's being forced to move out of her room. She invites Blair to move in with her. She can get away from her family and can go skiing in Sun Valley with her family for spring break. Blair accepts and wants to move in right after school.

They arrive at the Constance Billard School for Girls. Another group of girls watch them arrive. Rain Hoffstetter tells the other girls that Serena got a modeling contract and will be bringing her baby back from France. "All the supermodels have babies." Laura Salmon heard that Serena and Blair were going to get an apartment together. Kati Farkas says that their parents will disown them.

They wave at Blair and Serena as they pass by. Rain says, "Cool shoes!" Blair has the best clothes and Serena always looks beautiful which is plenty of reason for the girls to hate them.

Nate Archibald and Charlie Dern are playing lacrosse in Central Park. Nate pulls up his shirt to wipe his green eyes and reveals his perfect abs. He looks better than the hottest model in the Abercrombie & Fitch catalog. The girls from Seaton Arms are watching on the sideline and giggle with excitement. One girl says he must have worked out in prison. Another girl says his parents are going to send him to work in a tuna cannery in Alaska to keep him from dealing drugs again. Another heard he had a bad heart and had to smoke pot. The girls melt when Nate smiles at them.

The boys are on their best behavior. Coach Michael hasn't appointed any team captains yet. Nate takes a break when his cell phone rings. It's Georgina Sparks, his girlfriend of a few weeks. He didn't want to miss her call. She's in rehab in her hometown in Connecticut. Nate had met Georgie at rehab when he was sent there after being caught buying a bag of weed in Central Park. He missed her last call and she went on a bender. They found her on the roof chewing Nicorette gum and sniffing nail polish remover.

Georgie tells Nate that she's getting out on the weekend. She asks Nate to go with her family to their ski condo in Sun Valley for spring break. Coach Michael tells Nate that he is not going to make him a captain because of the pot incident. Nate tells the other boys



that the coach offered him the captain position but he turned it down and told him to give it to a junior.

Daniel Humphrey didn't linger outside Riverside prep school but headed toward the Plaza Hotel to meet his agent, Rusty Klein. He asks her if Mystery is coming. Mystery, Rusty tells him, is on a world-wide book tour. Five-hundred thousand copies of her novel have already been sold in Japan. The last time he saw Mystery was at the Rivington Poetry Club. They performed improv on stage and almost had sex right there. But the pale, yellow-toothed poetess pulled herself together that night and he hadn't seen her since. Mystery had written a memoir in less than a week. He'd sold it for her to Random House for a six-figure amount with a film deal attached.

Dan had just written a poem about missing his dead dog but people had to figure out it was a dog he wrote about and not a girl. His poem "Sluts" had just come out in the New Yorker. Rusty bluntly tells him that Mystery's writing is preferred over him for several reasons. He knows why - he writes about death and Mystery writes about sex. And there was the bio. Mystery was an orphan raised by prostitutes. He lives on the Upper West Side in a posh apartment with his father. Rusty makes a call to Red Letter. She's determined to get Dan a job there. Red Letter is the most prestigious literary journal in the world. Rusty knows the owner, German poet Sigfried Castle. Sigfried agrees to let Dan try out. Dan tells him he can work during spring break but after that can only work after school.

Vanessa Abrams rushes out of Constance Billard and rushes to buy the health food items that Ruby wants. Vanessa has a shaved head and wears boots with steel toes. She wants to get home before her parents come in case she left any evidence of her film making that they might find. She runs right into Dan, her former boyfriend. Dan had cheated on her with Mystery and sold out to become famous. He is waiting for his sister, Jenny to tell her he got a job. Her parents are coming to town, she tells him, which she's not thrilled about.

Vanessa rushes off to catch the subway to Williamsburg. She had wanted to tell him more, like how her partner kept reminding her that they were "artists." Her parents didn't know that she was making films and didn't know that she'd been accepted to NYU. She is dreading their two-week stay. She had no idea what she'd do on spring break. . . unless she found someone to hang out with.

Jenny runs out of school to see her boyfriend, Leo, tall and blond and the best artist she every knew. Jenny Humphrey is tiny, the smallest girl in her ninth grade class but she has the biggest boobs in the world. She greets Leo Berensen, a boy she met online. Dan is annoyed that he's not going to get to tell her about his job. Jenny's friend, Elise, suggests they go somewhere warm. The four head for the bus. Jenny tells Leo that her dad is dying to meet him. Elise sits next to Dan on the bus. She asks to read some of his poetry. Jenny smiles thinking that Elise is flirting with her brother. Leo notices that a woman has on a J. Mendel fake fur. She wonders how a guy like Leo would know that.



Gossip Girl blasts another email. She reiterates her love of being incognito. She's not going to reveal who she is. She's having too much fun. She might reveal herself to a certain boy she likes. And she might kiss and tell.

She saw "n" with his buddies in the park lighting up—could be a myth. She saw "g" buying ski equipment. "d" was in the literary journal section of Coliseum Books. "v" was filming pigeons roosting outside her bedroom. Two more days before break and a party tomorrow night.

Serena tells Blair that she can stay in Erik's room. He moved everything out. When Blair unpacks her Louis Vuitton bags and is putting her clothes in the closet she spots a notebook in a shoebox. Blair reads a page of Erik's diary, which reflects his fear about going away to school. Blair looks at a photo of Serena and Erik wondering why she hadn't noticed how handsome he was before. She asks Serena if Erik has a girlfriend. Serena picks up her cell phone and calls him. She tells him she and Blair are going to a charity thing at the Frick that night then hands the phone to Blair who asks if he minds that she's staying in his room. Erik is fine about her staying in his room. He heard she screwed up her Yale interview. He told her not to worry. He screwed up his Brown interview and it turned out okay. He asks if she was coming to Sun Valley for spring break. After a little convincing, she says she would come.

Nate leaves lacrosse practice and heads to the ski shop before he has to get ready to go to the benefit at the Frick that night. He's attracted to the sales girl at the ski shop but he resists. She smells like pot, his favorite scent. He's got a girlfriend, he reminds himself. However, he has been horny ever since he stopped smoking pot.

Pages 1 through 42 Analysis

Gossip Girl's taunting note on her email blast reveals that she had a big party. She doesn't say where but probably at her parents' house. Surely they weren't home! She is keeping her identity secret but let's everyone know that she is watching them and will report what they are doing to everyone else. She may not be vindictive and is just having fun - but then she does kind of wish that someone was dead.

Blair Waldorf isn't happy at home. She is apparently going away to school. She feels hurt that her mother, who is pregnant, is redecorating her room before she has a chance to move out. She hates the fact that she has to go to Hawaii on spring break with her family. It seems she'd rather do anything than be with them. It seems that the biggest focus of her dissatisfaction with her family is her step-father, Cyrus Rose, who she thinks is a big buffoon. It is obvious that the young people in this story are very spoiled and privileged.

Serena is quite self-absorbed. She needs some one to love her but she has to love the boy, too. Of course, every boy that sees the gorgeous supermodel loves her. Blair is the clothes horse and Serena, the gorgeous model. Both are detested by the other girls at school. Blair's had quite an upset in her life and isn't adjusting well. When Serena



invites Blair to live with her, she jumps at the chance. But Blair is seventeen. She just can't decide to move out of her house so she will have to say that it's just a temporary arrangement. However, it sounds that life in New York City isn't exactly the same as in mid-America so maybe Blair will be able to move out without objection. Blair and Serena don't seem to know that they are hated by the other girls - but they probably don't really care.

Nate Archibald is heartthrob who got caught with a little plot. It seems he's "legend." The girls all have a crush on him and think he went to prison when he just went to rehab. But the girls are so giddy over him that they don't care what he did. It's probably not a good thing that his girlfriend has a drug problem, too. It seems that handsome Nate is heading to Sun Valley just where Blair and Serena are heading. Serena is looking for someone to love her. And Blair is an emotional mess. Will Nate hook up with one of them? Nate is embarrassed that he wasn't offered the captain position on the lacrosse team and lies to his friends to cover up. Nate has a little maturing to do.

Dan is a poet who hasn't been discovered yet. Of course, he's still a high school boy - but he's a high school boy with an agent! He and Rusty make references to "Mystery." Could she be the gossip girl? But if she is, she's not very attractive which recalls to mind the warning that she better be good looking or else she'll be thought of as a jealous ugly girl. Dan is a privileged kid and probably knows the other kids in the story. It is a good chance he will meet up with them.

Vanessa is bitter over her break-up with Dan. It was Dan's fault. He was cheating with Mystery. Dan seems like he'd like to make up with Vanessa. He probably came there to run into her. She still likes him but she was hurt by the break-up and she is too proud to act like she cares.

It bothers Jenny that Leo knows about women's fur coats. She doesn't seem to think it's very manly of him but she doesn't dwell on it. This could be foreshadowing that Leo is gay.

Blair suddenly realizes that there was a hot guy right under her nose. Why hadn't she thought about Erik before? Maybe because he's her best friend's brother and maybe because she is maturing and looks at him in a different way.

Nate is destined to meet up with Blair and Serena before the ski trip. He's very vulnerable to girls since he stopped smoking pot. He resists the girl in the ski shop. Will he be able to resist more sophisticated girls?



Pages 43 to 84

Pages 43 to 84 Summary

Gossip Girl complains about having to go to the benefit at the Frick. At least she won't be alone in her misery because everyone's parents are going to drag them there. She likes parties but she likes them without parents. At least everyone's parents will leave them alone because they'll be trying to impress each other.

Rufus Humphrey yells at everyone to take their seats as he puts dinner on the table. He wasn't home the day before when Jenny brought Leo and Elise home to meet him. He felt guilty and invited them for dinner the next night. Elise, wearing pink J. Crew clogs, assures Leo that Rufus isn't really as scary as he seems. As soon as Rufus sits down, he pulls a poetry pop quiz. Jenny pleads with him to drop it but he plows right ahead. The only one who knows the identity of poet who wrote the lines that Rufus recites is Dan.

Jenny is dying by inches when her father puts Leo's school down. Rufus toasts Dan's success in getting a job at the Red Letter. Dan is having the writing career that he always wanted to have. Rufus is proud of his son. Leo gets up abruptly and says he has to leave. Jenny tries but can't talk him into staying. Jenny is upset with her father and goes to her room. Elise stays at the table with Dan. In her room, Jenny recalls the first time she saw Leo which was before she met him on line. He was in the cosmetics department of Bendel's. She wondered at the time why he was looking through the make-up bags.

The second night of her parent's visit, they takes Vanessa and her sister, Ruby, to the gallery where their "found art" exhibit is showing. Arlo and Gabriela even have a live horse in the exhibit that the museum attendant has to clean up after quite often. There is a display of metal cheese graters on the wall. Vanessa's parents both have long gray hair and are dressed oddly - Gabriela in a caftan and Arlo in a dusty black wool Peruvian cape and ankle length skirt made of hemp.

Vanessa thinks to herself about the morbid, dark films she is making, sure that she'll never let her parents see them. Gabriela wants to get going. Friends of theirs had invited them to the benefit at the Frick and they are going to drag their daughters along.

The Frick had been the New York residence of Henry Clay Frick, who was a industrial era steel magnate and advocate of the arts. After he died, his mansion was turned into an art museum. The Virtue vs. Vice benefit is being held in the large Living Hall. The guests are dressed in their best - the men in tux and the women in couture gowns. Titi Coates and Misty Bass gossip about Serena's perfume ad as they watch Serena and Blair enter the gathering. Blair is wearing Serena's dress and Serena is wearing Blair's black strapless Donna Karan dress. Serena's dress is too tight on Blair and Blair's dress is too big on Serena. Blair swears she will leave if they don't have Ketel One vodka.



Blair's mother gushes to Mrs. van der Woodsen about their daughters being such close friends. Mrs. van der Woodsen averts her eyes. She used to be friendly with Eleanor but a baby at fifty? Downright vulgar!

Misty Bass is sitting with her son, Chuck, as Eleanor and Mrs. van der Woodsen head their way. Misty asks Chuck what his friend, Blair, thinks of her mother being pregnant. Chuck makes a snide comment that it probably made Blair throw up - everyone knows she has bulimia. Misty heard that Blair was going to rehab for her problem. Chuck thinks back when he Blair rejected him when he tried to seduce her. After that, he decided to have a gay relationship just out of boredom. Chuck's attention turns to Nate who just entered. Nate hadn't seen Blair since she stalked him all the way to rehab. She attended one session where she was forced to admit her problem aloud. After Blair saw that Nate was interested in Georgie she retreated her advances toward him and never returned to rehab.

Nate spots Blair and Serena drinking and smoking and walks over to say hi. He looks gorgeous in his tux. He feels awkward around Blair who is not very friendly. He tells them that he's out of rehab but that his girlfriend is still there. Serena tells Nate that she and Blair are going to Sun Valley for spring break. Nate responds that he's going there as well. Blair is uncomfortable, downs her drink and heads to the bathroom. Serena tells Nick they'll have a blast at Sun Valley. He spots Chuck staring at him and looking very gay.

Vanessa knew it would be a mistake to go to the benefit with her father wearing a skirt and all. And she's still wearing her uniform! How embarrassing. Chuck Bass spots them and asks his mother who the strange people are. Titi Coates recognizes them as the artists from the museum. Roy and Pilar Rosenfeld, who had invited them, greet Arlo and Gabriela. They had all gone to art school together when they were young. Pilar introduces her son, Jordy, to them. The Rosenfelds are both in real estate law and are no longer into art. Jordy is in law school at Columbia. Vanessa thinks Jordy is attractive, even though he has a long nose, and flirts with him even though she's virtually bald. Jordy asks where she's going to go to school. Vanessa claims she doesn't and Ruby remains loyally quiet about Vanessa's acceptance at NYU.

Chuck tries to get Serena or Blair to dance with him. They are not interested and grab their drinks to escape. As they do Blair's dress rips all the way down the side and Serena's dress gets caught on the back of her chair and yanks it down to her waist revealing her bare chest. The girls rush out to get their coats and leave. Jordy dances with Vanessa who forgets that she still has her uniform on although no one else does.

Gossip Girl doesn't think the party was as bad as she thought it would be. She moves on to her favorite subject: sex. She talks about the rumors and gossip about who has done it and who hasn't. She writes about her fantasies of doing it on a washing machine with Jake Gyllenhaal. She has a second thought because it would be very uncomfortable and what if the maid came in to do a load of laundry?



One writer thought she was the bald-headed girl at the party. She tells the writer he was wrong. One noticed that "s" and "n" were into each other. Gossip Girls responds that "s" and "n" are just friends.

Both "s" and "b" streaking from the party. "v" skipping out with that boy with the long nose. "n" looked dashing. "j's" new boyfriend "l" showed up with Madame T., the famous arts benefactress.

Nate and Georgie are in Sun Valley in a taxi looking for Georgie's mother's condo. Nate can see skiers on Mount Baldy in the distance. She is still groggy from the sleeping pill a guy on the plane gave her. She snuggles up to Nate and tells the driver to keep driving. For some reason, she's dressed inappropriately for skiing, wearing Miu Miu sandals and a flimsy halter top. All she can remember about the house is that her and her nanny made a snowman and borrowed her mother's Fendi purse for the snowman to hold on its stick arm.

Suddenly, she yells for the driver to stop in front of a sprawling ranch house. There are seven Mercedes SUVs parked outside. Nate learns that her mother isn't there. She always goes to Venezuela or somewhere south for the winter. They enter and see a bunch of people in the hot tub on a deck off the living room. There are seven naked people in the tub which matches the number of Mercedes. Chuck Bass was one of them. The other were the blond Dutch Olympic snowboarding team.

Nate refuses to participate. He goes upstairs and gets rid of all the drugs in the bathroom to keep Georgie from taking them. He decides to call Serena and Blair at the lodge. He decides that he and Georgie should hang with them. Who better to entertain them than the girl he's lusted after all his life and his vicious beautiful ex-girlfriend?

Blair is in her bedroom at the lodge when Erik pops in. He just got out the sauna and is just wearing a towel. He is flawless! She sits up and sticks her chest out. Erik smiles - he's used to the reaction he has on girls. He hasn't seen Blair in two years. She's turned into a real hottie. They make plans to ski together in the morning. Blair pops a Godiva truffle in her mouth and washes it down with a sip of Veuve Clicquot champagne. She sees the phone flashing indicating that they have a message. It was Nate asking to meet in the morning to ski. Erik leaves to get dressed. He'll meet the girls downstairs in a half-hour. His parents are doing their own thing. He'll help Blair rent ski equipment in the morning.

Jenny and Elise are stalking Leo. They hide in a cleaner's shop when they see him coming. He's carrying a coffee and a white bag. Jenny wonders if it's a bagel or a gun or someone's hand. After he passes they follow him. Jenny became curious when he told her he couldn't hang out with her. He never told Jenny where he lived. She knew where his favorite coffee shop was and pulled Elise out of bed early and made her go with her. Leo goes inside a posh apartment building. Jenny is going to wait until he comes out. Elise is cold and doesn't want to wait for him. Just as they are debating about what to do, Leo emerges from the building leading a large white mastiff on a red leash. The dog is wearing a Burberry plaid coat and pink leather boots. The girls follow him at a



distance. Elise read about a guy who sounded a lot like Leo who attended come fancy benefit.

Pages 43 to 84 Analysis

Gossip Girl is going to the Frick benefit, too. Will anyone know who she is? Will her identity be revealed to the reader?

The meeting between Jenny's father and Leo did not go well. Rufus seems to think the Leo isn't very bright because he doesn't know his poetry. Rufus is proud of Dan. He is living vicariously through his son because he's having the career that he wanted to as a young man.

Vanessa and Ruby and her parents are also heading for the Frick benefit. Her bizarre parents will stick out like a sore thumb and might embarrass her and Ruby. But Vanessa dresses strangely herself so perhaps it won't matter to her that much.

Blair had it bad for Nate. She followed him to rehab where he rejected her for Georgie. So there is bad blood between them. This entire circle of acquaintances - including the adults - gossip about one another quite a bit. They are attending a benefit probably for a charity but no one seems interested in the charity. They are all self-absorbed in their problems or how they look. Blair suffers from bulimia which is a serious condition that she seems to take lightly. What's wrong with throwing up a few times? Having a best friend as a slender supermodel probably doesn't help her self image. There had been a long-standing attraction between Nate and Serena but it never went anywhere. But now that Serena is looking for someone to love her, that could change. For being high school kids, they do a lot of drinking and smoking and right in front of their parents which shows a rather laissez-faire attitude on the part of the parents.

Vanessa was right that her parents would gain unwanted attention but she doesn't seem very upset. She seems to be captivated by Jordy and ignores everyone else. The Rosenfelds have grown away from who they were when they were in art school with Arlo and Gabriela. But Arlo and Gabriela seem to be stuck in the past and have never progressed. But they seem happy and certainly they don't seem to care what anyone thinks.

Gossip Girl is obsessed with sex. She is quick to reject a writer's suggestion that Serena and Nate were into each other. And, she thought Nate looked great. Maybe Gossip Girl is the one who is into Nate. Leo came to the benefit with an older woman who is an art benefactress and obviously very wealthy. Another sign he might be gay? Or, maybe he's trying to use Madame T. to advance his art career. Jenny probably doesn't know that Leo attended the benefit.

Georgie is out of control. She can't even take a plane ride without drugs. Nate seems very caring but she needs serious help - not just boyfriend help. Nate seems like he is sincere about staying out of the drug world. He decides that getting together with Blair



and Serena would be a good idea. It seems that Georgie, who is fragile and insecure, will not hold up well against the two girls. Nate admits that he lusts for Serena.

Blair has designs on Erik and the feelings seem to be mutual. Nate will be with Georgie. How long will Serena be happy being with no one and being the fifth wheel? The young people are on their own. Erik's parents won't be in their way very much. Blair is already drinking champagne.

Leo is leading a secret or double life. He has never told Jenny where he lives. Jenny and Elise follow him to a posh apartment building where only rich people live. He never seemed rich or snobbish before to Jenny. He may be walking Madame T's dog. Is he living with her or just doing errands for her? Jenny is determined to find out even if it means that she and Elise freeze to death.



Pages 85 through 125

Pages 85 through 125 Summary

Gossip Girl asks why boys play video games when they're stressed and girls clean closets. At least girls are more productive. How to get the boys' attention? Girls can take half their clothes off.

Someone writes that he goes to school with the boy "j" has been seeing. No one knows anything about him.

Gossip girl points out "j" peering down Park Avenue, disguised in a hat and sunglasses. "b" is in Sun Valley trying on bikinis and buying condoms. "n" driving a bunch of drunk guys to a Mexican restaurant in Sun Valley.

Dan is wearing a new suit and buzzing the intercom at the Red Letter office, trying to get in. He is buzzed in and enters the office and just stands there ignored. He finally identifies himself to a young man, dressed in either Armani or Gucci. He tells him he's supposed to see Siegfried Castle. He's his new intern. The young man stands up. It's Siegfried who tells Dan to call him "sir." He looks at the others in the office who are all staring at him. There is a bottle of San Pellegrino mineral water on each of their desks.

Siegfried shows Dan the fax and copier machine and to a desk that has nothing on it, not even mineral water. Dan offers to mail a letter he sees in Siegfried's out basket. Siegfried tells him to pick up some caviar - not beluga - after he mails the letter. He pulls out a hundred dollar bill and hands it to Dan. He can't find a post office. While he is standing on pier overlooking the Hudson and smoking cigarettes, he releases the letter and it goes swirling down onto the water and a few seconds later, it disappears.

At the food shop, Dan runs into Elise. She had brought cookies to him at his office. She is buying French bread for her mother and she has flour on her face. He wipes it off and kisses her cheek. She and Jenny are going to watch movies at his house. Maybe she'll see him there. She hails a cab as he begins walking back to the office. Elise is only fourteen. But at least she's around unlike Mystery Craze.

Vanessa is out with her parents looking for "art" on the streets. They find an old sled, a blue plastic fishbowl and a white chef's hat. Gabriela is looking for something profound. She asks Vanessa about Dan. Vanessa tells her mother that Dan stopped being nice. Vanessa thinks Jordy is nice. Gabriela says his glasses probably cost more than their car. He should have used the money for a nose job. Vanessa shakes her head. Even her peace-loving hippie freak mother can't resist gossiping.

When Dan returns everyone is in the conference room. They had eaten all his cookies. Siegfried didn't seem to want the caviar after all. In the middle of the table was a German version of Mystery's book. Everyone at the table gushes about how brilliant Mystery is. He takes the label off the tin and throws the tin in the waste can. He gave



Dan a stack of poetry submissions to throw away and then orders him to get out. At his desk, Dan goes through the poems and finds a few good ones that he sets aside. He writes a short poem inspired by his encounter with Elise. After returning from the bathroom, the poem is gone from his desk even though everyone is still in the conference room.

Jenny and Leo hold hands all during the movie. She's hoping that they'll go to his apartment after the movie but he suggests they go to the Guggenheim Museum for a special night viewing. She asks if he has any pets and he responds that he doesn't. They kiss as they enter the museum.

Just before Ruby's band, SugarDaddy, is ready to play, Vanessa spots Jordy standing in the doorway of the crowded Five and Dime club. Vanessa's parents are sitting at a table. Vanessa motions to the bartender to get Jordy a Baileys Irish Cream. Gabriela spots the tag sticking out of Jordy's turtleneck. "Made in China." Gabriela asks if he knows that his shirt was made by victims of mass trade. The band begins playing with Ruby as a back-up signer. Vanessa moves her chair closer to Jordy and tells him she's going to kiss him. Finally, she does and he smiles.

Erik helps Blair attach her ski boots to her skis. He promises he won't let her fall down when they ski. Blair is growing impatient waiting for Nate. Pretty soon she's going up hill alone. There's plenty of cute guys who will admire the cut of her turns. Nate and Georgie show up. Serena thinks Georgie looks cuter than she remembered when she last saw her at Hanover Academy boarding school when they both got thrown out. Blair makes sure not to react to Nate and Georgie. Chuck Bass glides in on his ski board. He has an instructor's pass and they can go to the front of the long line waiting for the ski lifts. Blair is hoping that the fur hat Georgie has on catches fire and she falls to the ground in a big flame. She puts that out of her mind and concentrates on Erik. She is sure she will soon be losing her virginity to Erik.

Gossip Girl is going to dig in and find out what happened at Hanover Academy when Serena and Georgie both got thrown out.

A young girl asks if she should lose her virginity to a guy that will be going to school in New York while she'll be at UC Berkeley. Gossip Girl tells her to wait and see if they plan to meet again.

Gossip girl points out "j" is still stalking "l" who is buying ladies leather gloves at Bendel's. She notices how "b" is sitting on "e's" lap and how "s" and "g" are getting along.

Jenny and Leo are making brownies at her house. He says his mother makes brownies sometimes. Jenny tries to picture his mother making brownies when the maid's off. Elise comes over and sees Dan. She comes on to him and he grabs her, kisses her and pulls her shirt up. She backs up and looks shocked. What was wrong with him? She is fourteen and he is eighteen. She wants to kiss him again but he turns his back on her. He's ashamed of himself. Elise leaves quietly, upset.



Vanessa meets Jordy at an Italian restaurant called Bubba's. Jordy asks her about her old boyfriend. She tells him she broke up with her boyfriend because he cheated on her. She gets a little emotional. He tells her he was being selfish asking her about her ex-boyfriend because he really likes her. Vanessa admits to herself that she is still in love with Dan.

Pages 85 through 125 Analysis

Whoever Gossip Girl is she is everywhere. She sees Jenny stalking Leo in New York but she also sees Blair and Nate in Sun Valley. Was she in both places or does she have an accomplice working with her? The author is definitely trying to throw everyone off the trail of the Gossip Girl.

Looks like Dan's big job as a poet is really going to be one as an errand boy. Siegfried is very arrogant and snobbish. Dan has to call him "sir!" Dan doesn't like his job and it's only day one. He might be reluctant to quit since his father is so excited about it and proud of him. What was in the letter that went into the Hudson? There could be some serious ramifications if the letter was important. Dan dropped the letter into the water on purpose. It was a passive-aggressive act. He is beginning to look at Elise as a possible love interest although she's very young. Mystery's name is Mystery Craze - has to be a pseudonym.

Vanessa barely can tolerate her scavenger parents looking for discarded "art" on the street. She learns that no one is above gossiping.

Dan seems to have a very low boiling point even though Siegfried is rude and abusive towards him. Someone steals Dan's original poem from off his desk and doesn't seem to feel any anger or resentment which would be a normal reaction.

Leo apparently doesn't live in that apartment building that Jenny and Elise saw him enter. He says he doesn't have a pet so he must not live there. Jenny likes him but he remains a mystery.

A relationship is blooming between Vanessa and Jordy. Vanessa finds Jordy extremely attractive and is the aggressor. Gabriela continues to be her embarrassing self but Vanessa is so transfixed on Jordy that she barely notices.

Blair plans to lose her virginity to Erik that week. Serena still is unattached but had mentioned the cute guys on the trail. She probably won't be alone too long. It's a reunion for Serena and Georgie. They went to boarding school together and were both thrown out. No one was sure why. Maybe that will be revealed later.

Gossip Girl is going to get to the bottom of the incident at the boarding school between Georgie and Serena. Whatever it is, Gossip Girl will probably send it out in an email and possibly embarrass the girls.



Elise is too immature to handle a relationship with an eighteen year-old boy. Dan feels ashamed of himself for messing with a child. The two are probably not a good match for each other.

Jordy's sincerity and caring makes the usually tough Vanessa vulnerable and emotional. She admits something that she knew deep down all along - she is still in love with Dan.



Pages 126 to 164

Pages 126 to 164 Summary

After skiing, everyone goes to happy hour. Georgie challenges Serena to a chugging contest but Serena sees Nate's dissatisfaction and refuses. Georgie asks everyone to come back to her place and get in the hot tub. Serena senses that Nate wants time alone with Georgie so she declines as do Blair and Erik.

Leo takes Jenny with him to the posh apartment. They take the elevator to the penthouse where Daphne, the mastiff, is waiting for him. They take her for a walk. Jenny tends to the dog while Leo goes inside a store and buys hairspray for "Madame." She wonders why he calls his mother "Madame." He tells her he still has to do some chores and has the doorman get a cab for her. A block down Jenny gets out of the cab and follows Leo again to a brownstone. He opens the door with a key and goes inside. Jenny doesn't know what to think.

Dan continues to dump outgoing mail in the Hudson. One letter is addressed to Mystery which gave him great pleasure. He thinks back about the girls he'd been involved with - Vanessa, Mystery, Serena and Elise. When he goes away to school, he'll bring the memory of those experiences with him. He knew what he was going to do with his life - be a writer. Yet, he felt a little lost. Like something was missing. He buys a pink plastic UFO toy from a street vendor. It was something Vanessa would like. He buys some rice paper that Siegfried wants and heads to the post office. He mails the toy to Vanessa for next day delivery.

Nobody wants to hang with someone they meet on vacation after vacation ends. The perfume model and Connecticut heiress were fast friends at Hanover in their junior year but had a big fight over a boy in France the summer before they were kicked out. There's more to come.

Gossip girl sees v" picking up trash with her parents. "d" recycling bag filled with unopened San Pellegrino water bottles. "b" taking off her skis on a ski run in Sun Valley to get a certain boy to help her. "s" and "g" playing kissing games with Dutch Olympic team.

Serena is growing tired of Blair flirting with her brother. She hasn't had a chance to even talk to him. She and Blair have a few words. Blair says she'll move out as soon as they get back. Jan, one of the Olympic snowboarders, sees Serena in the lobby and says he would like to escort her to the party. She doesn't seem interested. Blair comes down to the lobby looking fabulous. Erik is overwhelmed.

Nate wants to go upstairs for some alone time with Georgie but she rushes to answer the doorbell. It's a deliveryman with a crate of Stolli vodka.



Jenny decides to confront Leo. She is going to find out once and for all who he is. She decides to send him an email, inviting herself to his house which she now thinks is the brownstone. Jenny tells Elise it wouldn't work between Dan and her. She didn't tell Elise but thought to herself that the reason it wouldn't work is that he's still in love with Vanessa. Elise is going to send Dan an email herself and tell him what a jerk he is.

Jenny tells Leo she knows he's hiding something from her. She knows where he lives and is coming over the next evening. In her email to Dan, Elise basically tells him what he already knows. He's a jerk and he's still hung up on Vanessa.

There's a big party at Georgie's. When Serena and Blair enter, Georgie's in the hot tub with some of the snowboard team. Nate is sitting by himself in the living room. Serena goes to find Georgie. Blair is tempted to talk to Nate but drops the idea when Erik brings her a drink. When Erik wanders off to the hot tub, Nate comes over and says hello to Blair but she is cold toward him. Nate and Blair never do join the others in the hot tub. Eventually, Erik gets out and he and Blair go upstairs with a bottle of champagne.

Late that night, Georgie, Chuck and Serena, all naked, go outside and take a toboggan off one of the cars. Georgie straps Serena into the toboggan until she can't move. Chuck and Georgie tug on the toboggan's harness and pull it along, playing reindeer. They run off the driveway and onto the road. Serena begins hollering for them to stop but they don't listen. Suddenly they're illuminated by car headlights. Serena hears people in the car making remarks to Chuck and Georgia. Another set of lights comes over the toboggan but this time it's the cop. Suddenly, Serena sees blue and red flashing lights. Chuck and Georgie take off running and the toboggan goes sliding off the road and crashes into the ditch. It turns over and leaves Serena in a freezing cold slushy stream. The police don't know anyone is in the toboggan. She can't move and calls for help.

Blair gets into bed with Erik. He asks her if she'd done it before. She lies and says "yes." He asks her if she's nervous because she keeps pushing him away with her knees.

Nate comes back to Georgie's after a long walk in the snow. Walking along the shoulder of the road he hears a tiny voice calling for help. He sees the toboggan and Serena strapped inside. He rushes over and gets her out. He wraps the blanket around her and carries her to the house. Nate runs a hot bath for her and goes into the master bedroom to get some clothes for her. When he opens the door, he spots Erik and Blair in bed. After Nate leaves, Blair confesses that it is her first time and that she's not ready. Erik tells her she is ready. But he's not the right guy. It is obvious who

Pages 126 to 164 Analysis

Nate and Serena are able to communicate without words. There seems to be a closeness between the two, something he doesn't have with Georgie. Nate has an almost protective attitude toward Georgie, like he's responsible for keeping her from



getting into too much trouble. But she seems to be determined to be a wild party girl who Nate so far is putting up with.

Jenny hasn't figured out that Leo is working for "Madame" and that she is his employer not his mother. Why Leo is so secretive about it is not clear. She feels hurt by his secrecy. Perhaps that hurt will lead her to confront him.

Dan realizes he still has feelings for Vanessa. He has no confusion about his future as far as a career is concerned. But he feels like something is missing in his life. He's beginning to realize that it's Vanessa and he wants to get her back.

Gossip Girl is getting to the bottom of the problem between Serena and Georgie. Not surprisingly, it involves a boy. But she is digging further and will report in again.

Tensions grow between Blair and Serena. Serena would like a little time with her brother and she resents that Blair has taken him over. Serena is not interested in Jan, the Olympic team member. The relationship between Nate and Georgie is not going well. She is mostly interested in feeding her addictions. How long will he put up with it?

Things are getting closer to resolution for Jenny. She is going to confront Leo and invite herself over. Jenny is aware that her brother is hung up on Vanessa.

Jenny is taking the bull by the horns. She's taking a risk. She will either make their relationship stronger or end it.

Blair is still taken with Nate but she is determined to lose her virginity to Erik during the spring break. Nate remains a mystery. He doesn't seem to be that into Georgie and doesn't have much to do with her. Yet he doesn't stand up to her about her dangerous behavior.

Georgie is getting the wild party that she wanted but she's getting more than she bargained for. Perhaps Chuck and Georgie are so drunk that they don't think about Serena being stuck in the toboggan but it is obvious whose skins they were the most concerned with saving. They are spoiled and self-centered.

Maybe it was destiny that Nate found Serena and saved her. Maybe they'll save each other. Blair can't continue with Erik. It is ironic that the boy she really loves, Nate, is the one who interrupts her and Erik and stops her from doing something she isn't ready to do. Erik is right - he isn't Mr. Right. Blair knows who that is. But how does Nate feel? He potentially as three girls who want him. Who or what does Nate really want?



Pages 165 to 202

Pages 165 to 202 Summary

Spring break is almost over. Acceptance letters are due in everyone's mailbox. She assures any girls who are going to college as virgins won't be the only ones because she just knows. It's not a federal offense to drop mail in the river unless you work for the post office. Here are other federal offenses: to not answer a girl's email when all she wants to do is make up; receive a gift and not say thanks; and, to run naked down a public road. "g" and "c" got arrested for indecent exposure and were flown home by private jet. Also "s" just escaped arrest.

Jordy is visiting Vanessa when she receives the package from Dan. Vanessa is fascinated by the toy he sent. Her parents and Jordy gather around. Vanessa gets her video camera and takes a shot of Jordy next to the toy. Vanessa tells Jordy he can leave. She pulls on her jacket and tells Ruby that she's going "out."

Dan's missing poem is written on the bathroom wall. Underneath it are the words: "Note to self: See above for how not to write." (171) Siegfried asks him if he mailed his letters over the week. Rusty hadn't received a check so she couldn't send Mystery any expense money and as a result she is stuck in Helsinki. Dan tells Siegfried to get himself another slave and quits. Rusty wants to smooth things over between Dan and Siegfried but Dan rejects the idea. He doesn't need an agent. He calls Vanessa's cell and leaves a message.

Leo is standing in front of the brownstone when Jenny arrives. He brings her inside his apartment. It's not very nice. He introduces Jenny to his parents who are quite old. She's mad at herself for being disappointed that he's not some millionaire's son. He shows her a gorgeous painting he's doing on the computer. He invites her to stay for dinner but she says she has to leave. Elise had told her to figure out if the real Leo is someone she could like. She has the answer and it's ugly.

Blair's mother is glad she's home. Blair is kind of glad to be home. Her father is on the phone and asks if she heard from Yale yet - his alma mater. He wishes her luck and tells her to be nice to her mother. Eleanor asks Blair to name the baby. Aaron met a girl in Hawaii named Yael. He suggests they name the baby Daisy. Blair likes Yale.

Serena invites Nate over. She comes onto him wanting to take their relationship to the next level. But it's not to be. Deep down Serena knows that he is hung up on Blair. She tells him that Blair didn't have sex with Erik. Nate is relieved. Serena knows that she and Nate will always be close but that a deep romantic relationship between them isn't to be. They could always get together and she could steal a few kisses from him, that is until she found her true love - if that ever happens.



When Vanessa returns home her parents are still there. They hadn't left yet because they were watching all her movies. She sees that her dad is crying. But they were tears of joy. Arlo and Gabriela are proud of Vanessa because she is so talented and such an artist. Jordy wants to spend the summer with them. He's very impressed with their "art." They hope Vanessa doesn't mind. Ruby interjects that she won't mind at all because she likes Dan a bit better.

It's great to be back! She has a message for all the boys. As soon as school lets out tomorrow, she will be lying on a red blanket in Sheep Meadow. It's a "boys only" invitation.

Gossip Girl points out how "c's" parents had to bail "g" out. "n" staring up at "b's" building. "c" has a new exotic little friend.

Back at school, Serena and Blair have tea together in the cafeteria and settle their differences. The other girls are all gossiping. Rain heard that Serena and Nate got arrested for "doing it" on the ski lift. Kati heard that Serena was getting married to a member of the Dutch Olympics snowboarding team and moving to Amsterdam. Isabel said that Blair and Erik are "totally in love."

A group of younger girls come to the table including Jenny and Elise. Elise tells the older girls that Jenny is upset that a boy she liked who she thought was from a wealthy family is just an ordinary guy. Suddenly Blair asks the girls if they can knit. She stands up and tells everyone to follow her. They will buy yarn and then go to her house and knit booties. Everyone is puzzled. On the way home, Blair decides to get a blanket so she and Serena can meet in the meadow.

A bunch of boys are in the meadow. They're taking bets on whether Gossip Girl is going to show. Nate is throwing a Frisbee around with some other guys. Soon the area is jammed with school boys all pretending they just happened to be there. Chuck was sitting cross-legged with a small white monkey on his shoulder. It was a thank-you gift from Georgie's parents for bailing her out. Serena and Blair throw their blanket in the grass a short distance away. They are surrounded by younger girls, including Jenny and Elise. Dan joins the boys and then spots Vanessa on a red blanket playing with the toy he sent her. Nate asks Dan if he thinks Vanessa is Gossip Girl. Dan says "no way." More girls show up. The boys figure that Gossip Girl is sitting there and it could be any one of them.

Gossip Girl Message

Gossip Girl apologizes to the boys for getting punked! But she figures they like not knowing who she is. She can remain the girl of their dreams. Will "n" and "b" get together? Will "s" find true love? Will "v" and "d" forgive each other? What about "g"? Will "c" come out? Will Gossip Girl come out? Right now, all GG is worried about is acceptance to the school of her dreams. She worships at the altar of the Saint of College Admissions that she will be accepted. But even if she doesn't get the school she wants, she won't be a loser! None of the kids will be!



Pages 165 to 202 Analysis

Gossip girl seems to know everything. As the story is nearing its conclusion, perhaps there will be more about who she really is. Of course, it could also be kept a secret so that the mystery continues.

Vanessa knows exactly who sent her the package. It's obvious that she still loves Dan. She leaves Jordy without a second thought and is on her way to see Dan.

Dan finally reaches his boiling point. What puts him over the edge is the insult on the bathroom wall regarding his writing ability which shows what really means the most to him. He has revenge on Siegfried and on Mystery in the passive-aggressive way his "mailed" Siegfried's letters which included an expense check for Mystery. Dan and Vanessa are in sync - they both want to get back together.

The time that Blair and her family spent apart seems to be good for the family. Eleanor is glad to see Blair and Blair is actually glad to be home. Eleanor made Blair feel included in the new baby by asking her to name the baby. Hopefully, she doesn't name it "Yale."

Nate has known all along that Serena, as beautiful and alluring as she is, is not for him. He loves her - but he loves her like a sister. Georgie's just too far gone for him. It's been Blair for him all along. He just had to go through a few experiences to really realize it. Nate's been confused but seeing Blair in Erik's arms brought clarity to what his real feelings for Blair were.

Vanessa didn't have to hide who she was from her parents. When the artistic side of Vanessa is revealed, Arlo and Gabriela are moved to tears and couldn't be more proud of her.

Gossip Girl is going to reveal who she is, at least to the boys - or so she says. Could be just a ploy. She has too much fun be anonymous.

Although Serena and Blair are showing real signs of maturing, the younger girls are still hung up in idle gossip that is wrong and mean-spirited. Blair proves to be a leader by ignoring the petty complaints of the younger girls by refocusing their attention. Blair is thinking about her baby sister with her references about knitting booties - showing her acceptance and happiness at the prospect of having a new baby in the family.

Whoever Gossip Girl is made sure that she wasn't the only girl in the meadow. It was Blair's idea to meet in the meadow. Vanessa was the girl on a red blanket. The ending is left in an enigma as far as GG's identity which adds interest and intrigue for the next episode. But GG in essence is really symbolic of all the kids and society as a whole that takes up time and confuses and hurts people with a lot of words that are a bunch of untruths.



Gossip Girl had no intention of revealing herself. In fact, there may be more than one identity to Gossip Girl. Just like anything else on the Internet, a user never knows for sure that someone he or she meets on line are exactly as they present themselves. Gossip Girl continues to gossip but as the kids mature, her appeal will naturally decline. She does show that she has some good values when she leaves the message that even if the kids don't get into the school they want, they are not losers.



Characters

Beth Waldorf

Blair Waldorf is a wealthy, privileged girl who lives in Manhattan and attends an exclusive private school. Blair will be graduating and has interviewed at Yale but feels she did not do well at her orals. Her future lies in the balance. She has no idea if she'll be accepted at Yale or, for that matter, anywhere else. She is not happy at home. She doesn't like her step-father and her mother is seven-months pregnant with a little girl which Blair finds embarrassing.

Since Blair will be away at school, her mother starts redecorating Blair's room for the new arrival without even discussing it with Blair. Blair is hurt by her mother's disregard for her feelings. And, she is not happy that her family is going to Hawaii for Spring Break. Serena invites Blair to move in with her and to go to Sun Valley and ski for Spring Break week. Blair accepts and although she's still hung up on Nate Archibald, the local heartthrob, Blair is excited at being at the lodge with Serena's older hunky brother, Erik, for a week.

Blair spends a lot of time with Erik on the slopes but keeps a watchful eye on Nate and his new girlfriend, Georgie, during the week. Although she is not in love with Erik, she decides to chose him to enter into the first adult relationship of her life. In the end, Blair breaks it off with Erik which suits Nate just fine.

When Blair returns home, she is greeted by her mother who really missed her. She gets a call from her father who encourages her about school. And, she learns that Nate is still hung up on her. Things are looking up for Blair who still doesn't know about school but whose life is taking a turn for the better at the end of this episode of Gossip Girl.

Serena van der Woodsen

Serena van der Woodsen is a high school senior and a supermodel. Ads featuring Serena promoting a new perfume are posted all over New York. She is depressed because her boyfriend broke up with her. She is looking not so much for someone to love her - most boys do as soon as they see her - she is looking for someone she can love. Serena is surprisingly down to earth and seems to be unaware that the majority of her peers at the exclusive Constance Billard School for Girls are envious of her and resent her.

Serena invites her best friend, Blair, to move in with her because of family issues that Blair is having. They go to Sun Valley for Spring Break where they stay at an upscale lodge where her brother, Erik is also staying. The Dutch Olympic snowboarding team is also in town and they are fascinated by the beautiful Serena but she is not interested. She is looking for that special boy and none of the team members fit the bill.



Serena is close to her brother and resents it when Blair and he begin to cozy up. She had wanted to spend time with her brother who's been away at school for an extended period of time but all of his time is being taken up by Blair. Serena gets drunk in Sun Valley and winds up naked in a toboggan that veers off in an icy ditch. She barely escapes being arrested. Serena and Blair end their vacation in a spat over Erik but when they return to New York, they settle their differences and remain best friends.

Nate Archibald

Nate Archibald is the heartthrob of the group of youngsters. He was caught buying pot and had to go into rehab. He is a lacrosse player and is dating Georgie but his heart belongs to Blair.

Erik van der Woodsen

Erik van der Woodsen is Serena's older brother. He returns from an extended stay at school and captivates Blair's heart during Spring Break.

Vanessa Abram

Vanessa Abrams shaves her head and wears combat boots. She wants to be a filmmaker but has to deal with her hippie parents who scavenge the streets of New York for new additions to their "recycle" museum.

Georgie Sparks

Georgie Sparks is Nate's girlfriend. They met in rehab. While Nate's recovery is successful, Georgie keeps having relapses and isn't taking her problems seriously.

Jenny Humphrey

Jenny Humphrey is a freshman and is "in love" with a new boy, Leo. He's a little mysterious about where he lives and what he does. She gets her friend Elise go with her and follow him around the city to learn more about him.

Dan Humphrey

Dan Humphrey is a budding poet and writer. He gets a job with a prestigious literary magazine called the Red Letter. To get back at his boss who is a tyrant, Dan dumps all the letters he's supposed to mail into the Hudson River.



Leo Berensen

Leo Berensen is a high school student and an artist. He isn't rich like the other kids and picks up money walking dogs and doing other chores for a rich woman who lives on Park Avenue.

Gossip Girl

Gossip Girl has an on-line blog. She is one of the members of the socially elite group of young people that is the focus of the story. She posts gossip about her friends in her blog. She never reveals her identity. She could be one girl, two girls or guy.



Objects/Places

Manhattan

The story is about a circle of well-heeled kids who live in Manhattan in New York City.

Blair's Apartment

Blair is upset with her mother, who is seven months pregnant, who is redecorating Blair's bedroom for the baby that she is expecting.

Serena's Apartment

Since Blair is upset with her home life, Serena invites Blair to move in with her. Blair winds up staying in Erik's room who is away at school. Erik is Serena's older brother and Blair's crush for a short time.

Sun Valley

A lot of the kids go to Sun Valley to ski and party during Spring Break. Nate and Georgie stay in her mother's sprawling condo. Blair and Serena stay in a upscale lodge.

Frick Museum

A charity benefit is held at the Frick Museum. The women are dressed in couture ensembles and the men are in tuxes.

Park Avenue Penthouse

Jenny follows her boyfriend, Leo, to a Park Avenue penthouse where she thinks he lives.

New York Brownstone

Jenny's boyfriend, Leo, works for a woman who lives in the Park Avenue penthouse. He actually lives in a rundown brownstone some distance away.



The Red Letter

Dan Humphrey, who plans on being a writer, gets a job as an apprentice at the offices of the prestigious Red Letter literary magazine.

Hudson River

Dan shows his passive-aggressiveness when, upset with his boss, he tosses the letters he's supposed to mail into the Hudson River.

Guggenheim Museum

Leo Berensen takes Jenny Humphrey to a special night-time showing at the Guggenheim museum.



Themes

Coming of Age

"I Like It Like That, A Gossip Girl Novel" by Cecily von Ziegesar has a strong coming-of-age theme that is symbolized by the transition that many of the kids are making from their carefree and privileged life in Manhattan, New York to university life. Even rich kids like the characters in the book go through the angst and uncertainty of the teen years as they evolve from child to adult.

Blair, the protagonist, is a sensitive young girl and is literally being replaced at home. Her mother is seven months pregnant and is redecorating Blair's room for the new baby. She figured that Blair wouldn't care because, after all, she will be away at school most of the time. Blair's mother is literally pushing Blair out of the nest. In a not so subtle manner, she is telling her that she is no longer a child and needs to make a life outside her family's home. Perhaps Blair wasn't ready, but she will have no option to dither about moving on.

Serena is depressed about her latest photo shoot. The make-up artist put a fake tear on her face. Of course, that doesn't seem like something that would be that upsetting but probably only a supermodel would understand. She is also upset that her boyfriend broke up with her. For her it was an unheard of eventuality. But even teen supermodels have a rude awakening as they transition to adult supermodels.

Their love-life and partying is more important to these kids than their education. But Nate who just returned from rehab because he was caught buying pot, has decided that he doesn't want to go through rehab again and resists relapsing into his old patterns. Vanessa hides the fact that she wants to be a film maker from her parents. When they accidentally find her films and watch them, they are moved and proud of her artistry. Vanessa learned that her parents supported her choices and that she could be an adult and talk about her hopes and dreams with them.

Jenny is only fourteen and is madly in love with her new boyfriend. But when she learns that he is not rich and has old parents and lives in a dump, she realizes she doesn't really love him. For Jenny, her "coming of age" obviously still awaits her in the years ahead.

Abandonment

The young people featured in "I Like It Like That, A Gossip Girl Novel" by Cecily von Ziegesar, are from wealthy and privileged families. They are spoiled and have everything they want including the latest designer and couture clothes. What they don't have are parents that pay very much attention to them. They are high school students who openly drink and smoke and and experiment with drugs and sex.



Blair, the protagonist of the story, is especially hurt when her mother, who is seven-months pregnant by Blair's step-father, begins redecorating Blair's room for the new baby. She doesn't discuss it with Blair but just assumes that Blair won't care because she's going away to school. She apparently doesn't have much contact with her biological father. Near the end of the story, she is surprised and moved when her father calls her and gives her a pep talk about college. Reading between the lines, Blair who pretends to be very tough and uncaring, has been very hurt by her father's absence in her life.

For Spring Break, Blair and Serena along with other boys and girls all take off for Sun Valley to ski and party. They stay at a lodge with her brother but her parents are nowhere in sight. The kids drink to excess and smoke pot. Nate stays at the condo owned by his girlfriend Georgie's mother. But her mother is south of the border where she stays all winter. The kids have the place to themselves and one night a party devolves into a drunk-fest. Georgie and Serena and bunch of boys are all naked in her hot tub. Georgie, Serena and Chuck all go outside naked in the freezing snow and are caught by the police. Georgie is perhaps the saddest figure among the kids. She has been in and out of rehab numerous times. Her parents gladly pay the cost of the expensive rehab centers but fail to give her what she really needs - some time and attention. Couture clothes aren't capable of giving anyone advice.

Another girl, Vanessa, is a budding filmmaker. Her parents are left-over hippies from the sixties. They have a "recycle" museum. They are so caught up in doing their thing that Vanessa never feels she can tell her parents about her desire to be filmmaker thinking that they won't approve. When they accidentally watch some of her films one night, they are surprised and moved by what an artist their daughter is. Had the parents been more involved in their daughter's life they would have known about her plans and desires for the future and she would have had more trust in them and shared her dreams with them. While Vanessa's parents were doing their hippie thing, they didn't give any thought to what their daughter might be planning to do with her life. They were wrapped up in themselves and had abandoned her as parents.

Abandonment can occur both when a person is physically absent and when a person is present but is absent emotionally.

Communication

One of the main themes of "I Like It Like That, A Gossip Girl Novel" by Cecily von Ziegesar is, as the title suggests, communication. And as the title also suggests, communication isn't always a positive part of the human experience. There are several aspects of the communication theme that are part of this Gossip Girl book.

As everyone in the civilized world is aware of, the Internet is the premiere venue for a means of reaching a vast audience in the most rapid manner ever known to man. Gossip Girl has a blog in which she posts the "latest" word on the hot topics of the day and on the activities and relationships of a circle of wealthy, privileged teens of which



she is a member. Her remarks and inferences about her friends who are the focus on the blog, undoubtedly make them feel like big brother is watching. Gossip Girl fails big time in her own communication skills in that she refuses to reveal her own identity. She has a one-sided megaphone and is not vulnerable to any retaliation from the subjects and kids about whom she writes.

Blair and her family has a communication problem. Blair is hurt that her mother, who is seven-months pregnant, is redecorating Blair's room for the new baby. Instead of first talking to Blair about it, her mother just assumes that Blair will be away at college and won't care about her old room. In reality, Blair feels hurt over what she considers as an insensitive move by her mother. Serena is a supermodel and Blair is the best dressed girl at school. The other girls whisper and gossip about them, sharing the latest rumors about them which all happen to be distortions of the truth! A total communication breakdown to be sure. But the youngsters follow the model of their parents who all gossip about each other at a charity benefit they all attend.

The young people all struggle with relationships - a main focus on the book. Dan's boss is rude and demeaning to him. Instead of confronting his boss, Dan throws all the mail that he's supposed to be taking to the post office into the Hudson River. Jenny who is dating Leo, follows him around town because he's been secretive about his home life. Again, rather than just asking Leo about his family and home, Jenny takes a circuitous route and draws some erroneous conclusions from what she thinks she sees.

The book is one in a series of Gossip Girl books. As the story ends, some relationships are healed - at least temporarily - but the gossip, misinformation and poor communication skills continue on to live another day and for the next Gossip Girl book.



Style

Point of View

"I Like It Like That, A Gossip Girl Novel" by Cecily von Ziegesar is written in the limited, omniscient, and third-person narrative. This style allows the reader to be privy to the thoughts and motivations of the main characters of the story. Writing from this perspective provides insight into personalities of the characters and how they react to events and to their environment. The reader does not have insight into the Gossip Girl who is supposedly an unidentified member of the privileged, elite circle of friends that she gossips about in her on-line blog. However, the author uses the Gossip Girl blog to slip in a few facts about the characters and plot that shed additional light on how the story is working out.

This book is one in a series of Gossip Girl Books. As such, regular readers will be already familiar with most of the characters, their relationships and how they interact with one another. However, there are only limited references to prior events that were contained in other books which makes this entry a stand-alone story that is understandable and enjoyable without having read one of the other books.

The Gossip Girl series is obviously targeted to middle and late teenagers. It is sometimes referred to as "Sex and the City" for teens. Its many references to smoking, underage drinking and explorations into drugs and sex all of which makes it too mature for pre-teens. A popular TV series is based on the Gossip Girl books.

Setting

"I Like It Like That, A Gossip Girl Novel" by Cecily von Ziegesar takes place in several locales. The story opens in New York City in Blair Waldorf's Manhattan apartment where her mother, who is seven months pregnant, is redecorating Blair's room for the little sister who will soon be arriving. Blair meets up with her friend, Serena, who is waiting on the steps of the prestigious Metropolitan Museum of Art. They walk together to their school, the exclusive private girls' school, Constance Billard School for Girls.

It is spring break time and Blair's family is heading to the North Shore of Hawaii to catch some optimum waves. But Blair decides to go with Serena to Sun Valley for the week to do some skiing and, of course, partying. Heartthrob Nate Archibald is practicing Lacrosse in Central Park. Nate decides to go to Sun Valley for the week, too. He'll be staying at the condo his girlfriend Georgie's family owns.

Ski valley is gorgeous. Nate spots skiers off the in distance on the slopes of imposing Mount Baldy. Georgie's condo is rambling and opulent and has a hot tub just off the living room. Georgie loves to party and has a big party during the week. The condo is crowded with friends and people no one knows. Georgie and another friend get drunk and wind up getting arrested for being naked in public. They strap the also-drunk



Serena in a toboggan and pull her, reindeer-like, down the snowy road. When they see the cops coming, they run off allowing the toboggan with Serena to veer off into a frozen ditch.

Some of the kids stay behind in Manhattan. Jenny follows her mysterious boyfriend around the streets of New York to find out where he lives. She first sees him enter a posh apartment on Park Avenue but later follows him to a rundown brownstone where he really lives. Dan has a new job working for an arrogant tyrant who has him mail his letters for him. When he doesn't find a post office right away, he takes the letters and throws them into the Hudson River.

Most of the kids are all wealthy and privileged and the places they live in and visit are upscale and even opulent including a benefit they attend at a posh museum and the clubs that they enjoy partying in Sun Valley.

Language and Meaning

In "I Like It Like That, A Gossip Girl Novel," the author Cecily von Ziegesar creates a world of the wealthy and privileged with just brand names and the names of posh locations. The story opens with a message from Gossip Girl. She tries to calm everyone's nerves over waiting for their acceptance letters from the colleges they have applied to. She reminds the kids that they have things to distract them like shopping for haute couture clothing. They have a lot to be thankful for like apartments with staff, country houses and holiday retreats. They have limitless credit cards at their disposal, pretty diamonds and hot cars - even though a lot of the kids don't drive yet.

Blair is upset with her mother and puts on Chanel lip gloss and storms out with her Dior saddlebag. Her friend, the supermodel and high school senior, Serena is waiting for her on the steps of the prestigious Metropolitan Museum of Art. While she waits, Serena takes a Gauloise cigarette from her Cacharel bag. The girls attend an exclusive all girl's school called Constance Billard. When Blair moves in she unpacks her Louis Vuitton bags. When they go to a party, Serena borrows Blair's Donna Karan dress. Elise is wearing her pink J. Crew clogs. Blair has the option of going to the North Shore of Hawaii or Sun Valley for Spring Break. They attend a charity benefit at an elite museum. The kids are applying at schools like Yale and Brown. Several of the kids spend time in an exclusive and expensive rehab center.

The author uses images and brand names to portray the elite and privileged lifestyle that the kids enjoy. She does not have to go into great detail or descriptions about their surroundings. She accomplishes this in a very efficient and streamlined manner. The author doesn't provide many descriptions but she gets her point across in this unique way.

Humor, sarcasm and youth-speak are used throughout the story and help to tell the story and set the mood. There is a good dose of hyperbole. The kids of this circle live such charmed lives that when one of the girls decides to write a novel she completes it

in a week, sells it the next day for an amazing advance, and has a movie deal attached to it.

Structure

"I Like It Like That, A Gossip Girl Novel" by Cecily von Ziegesar, is one of a successful book series. It has an unusual structure. In its over 200 pages, it has approximately one-hundred separate small chapters that are not numbered but designated by titles. Also distributed intermittently throughout the book are messages from "Gossip Girl," an unidentified person who has a blog on the Internet. In the blog, Gossip Girl does as advertised - she gossips about her friends who are the characters in the book. She portrays herself as being in this circle of very privileged, wealthy teens who live in New York City. Since she does not identify herself, she could be any of the girls, one of the boys or several people sharing duties on the blog.

Each of Gossip Girl's messages are identified by an icon of a pair of lips and the website address, "gossipgirl.net." She begins each message with "Hey people!" Each blog posing she writes includes a gossip update and some advice or personal philosophical view from Gossip Girl. There is a Q&A exchange with readers asking for her advice. And there is a section entitled, "Sightings." In this section, she provides specific sightings of what the kids in this circle have been spotted doing. She identifies them merely by their first initials. For example, "V walking from Manhattan to Williamsburg, picking up trash with her parents" and, "N with his buddies in the park, lighting up. A myth, we think."

The author keeps the reader in suspense throughout the book as to her identity. Near the end she promises to reveal who she is but doesn't keep her promise, which keeps the intrigue going for the next episode of the series.



Quotes

"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" (p. 1).

"Not that she [Serena] didn't love almost every boy she'd ever met, and not that every boy in the world didn't totally love her. It was impossible not to. But she wanted someone to love her and shower her with attention the way only a boy who was completely in love with her could. That rare sort of love. True love. The kind of love she'd never had" (p. 9).

"Charlie Dern..lifted his shirt to wipe the sweat from his glittering green eyes, and even the pigeons roosting in the trees nearby cooed with pleasure at the sight" (p. 13).

"Three years ago, Erik had had no idea who he was or what he was doing or who he wanted to be, but now it was three years later and he'd definitely figured it out. Just the thought of sleeping in his bed tonight was extremely comforting. She might even wear one of his old shirts to bed for added atmosphere" (p. 38).

"Aha! Was it a gun? Jenny wondered. Someone's hand? A boring toasted plain bagel with cream cheese" (p. 80).

"Dan liked how unembarrassed she was about her ignorance" (p. 119).

"I think your parents are amazing," he said. "I mean, it takes a lot of effort and courage to be that...out there" (p. 122).

"You're not, like, hiding something from me, are you?" He laughed. 'Like what? I'm really Spider-man'" (p. 131).

"But next year he'd be off to Brown or U. Mass or whatever college would take him, and he'd have four very different experiences with four bizarrely different girls to carry with him always" (p. 135).

"Maybe it was Nate - her Nate - who she'd been meant to be with all along. Her knight in shining armor. The love of her life" (p. 163).

"But I guess I'm not ready.' She looked up at Erik, her blue eyes round, hoping with all her heart he couldn't be too mad. Erik's adorable lips curled up in a half smile. 'Nah. You're ready. I'm just not the right guy, that's all.' And it's no secret who is" (p. 164).

"Aaron only turned up to see if Blair was the girl everyone was making such a fuss over. For all he knew, it could have been any one of them. 'You never know,' more than one of the boys in the meadow observed. That's right. You never know" (p. 201).



Topics for Discussion

How does "gossip" play a role in this story? How can gossip hurt? Who are the gossips in this story?

Why does Blair feel unwanted? What do those feelings of being abandoned possibly impact her behavior and choices?

How do the experiences of the main characters impact them? How did the characters change from the beginning of the story to its conclusion?

How can Dan's actions in throwing the mail in the Hudson be characterized as passive-aggressive? Why is the relationship between Dan and Siegfried unhealthy?

What role do parents play in this story? What blame can be levied against parents in the actions of some of the young people?

What pressures, real or just perceived, do the kids feel weighted down by? How could parents or teachers have helped alleviate some of that pressure?

Who is the Gossip Girl? What evidence proves this?