

13. ALL'S WELL

“What’s a beautiful girl like you doing by yourself?”

Cheryl’s heard it a thousand times.

“I’m by myself. That’s all there is to it. Quit trying to make a big deal out of it,” she tells them all.

In the back of her mind, she thought that she’d get engaged to Brian while still in college. Even if they weren’t engaged, she was sure that they would get married soon after. But that dream never materialized. She left college without the requisite candidate for a husband.

When she started to go out with Robert, she felt that he was the suitable replacement for Brian. And her college dreams were effortlessly transformed in her post-college dreams. But once her problems started with Robert, she had to give up the whole fairy tale wedding dream.

Even her attempt at a reconciliation with Brian only made matters worse. For the time being, wedding bells don’t seem to be in the cards. So she has to deal with being alone and not letting in hurt.

When she looks at herself in a mirror, she can’t imagine what is wrong.

“Maybe you’re just too choosy!” The words echo in her head.

There’s not much that she can do about it. She could have hardly stayed with Robert or Brian. No marriage is a million times better than a bad marriage.

Cheryl has chosen to stay in the night before. When she wakes up, she’s surprised that she doesn’t feel more refreshed. There’s a mugginess in the air. As she runs to her car she can already smell the rain. When she finally decides to check for her umbrella, it is too late. She hopes that she can beat the storm. As she pulls in to work a couple of giant drops fall on her windshield. She tries to get as close as she can do the door. She barely misses the deluge. She has still been pretty soaked by the rain.

He stands by the door while she comes in. He seems mesmerized by her presence. He has never seen anything as fresh and new. The rain gives her a special magic. She seems to light against the gloom. Even though she is wet, she seems so full of life.

He feels invigorated by her. The rain makes her seem electric, almost heavenly. He hesitates. She notices him staring. She pauses. Then she speaks, “Do I know you?”

She feels this almost uncanny premonition. She is sure that she knows him.

He trips over his words. She can only smile. His name is Jimmy. He works in accounting. There is an almost elemental poetry in their meeting. She feels as if she is in a scene in a movie.

Then it all makes sense. He has been waiting for this moment for a long time. He is lost in his gaze. She obliges him. She wants to be part of his dream. It gives her purpose. As if all this wasted time was just a preparation for this encounter.

“It’s you.”

“What do you mean?”

“You sent the flowers, didn’t you?”

His shyness almost seems to be a pose.

“Yeah, it was me.”

She has never really noticed him before. It has always been important to keep her work

life and her social life separate. But she is already drawn into the romance.

He has a great smile.

“Thanks.”

He is trying to maintain his composure, “I’m glad that you liked them. I’ve seen you so many times. I kept planning to say something. I could never get up the nerve.”

She agrees to meet him for dinner in a couple of days. They exchange cell phone numbers.

“Call me and we’ll set a time,” she suggests.

“Thanks.”

Cheryl wants to savor this moment. She is trying to dry off as she prepares for a long day of work. She shakes her hair out. Then she runs her fingers through it to set it back. She checks herself in the mirror to make the adjustments.

Her clothes aren’t that wet. She lets them dry as she goes through some papers on her desk. She is living his romantic vision. And she enjoys being part of it. She is floating on her chair. None of this seems real.

For the next few days she takes it easy. She doesn’t go out in the evening. She makes plans with Jimmy. When they finally meet, she can hardly contain herself. He seems so impeccable. He knows what he wants for his life. But he is a dreamer. He has vision. And she wants to be part of that vision

She never felt this kind of magic with Robert or Brian. They always seemed so rooted on the ground that they never took a chance. She finds Jimmy’s imaginative side somewhat unusual for an accountant. But that no doubt grounds his flights of fancy. She loves that about him. He isn’t afraid to take a risk.

Through dinner she lets him do most of the talking. He seems so motivated. She wants to be cared for. All her time with Robert forced her to be too self-reliant. Sure, she’s always wanted her independence. But if a man can’t offer his support in times of trouble, what good is he? Robert only made more problems with her.

She can’t imagine Jimmy standing her up for the weekend. He seems too caring not to realize the effect that he might have on her. Of course, she is cautious.

She tries not to focus too much on her past. She only mentions Robert in passing.

Jimmy tells her, “I always thought that you were unavailable. That you’d never actually go out with me.”

“What made you think that? I don’t act stuck up, do I?” she wonders. She doesn’t want him to have a bad impression of her.

“No, it’s not that at all.”

He can barely believe that she is sitting right there in front of him. Even as he eats, he feels a little nervous. He is afraid of saying the wrong thing.

He looks so young to her. He’s only been out of college for a couple of years. She feels there’s maybe a difference of four years in their ages. She does sense the difference. That partially accounts for his shyness.

He talks about a girl that he went out with since high school. But in college, she felt her prospects were better and started to wander. He took it hard at first. He tried to adjust by meeting other girls. But he never wanted to lose his real focus, school. In some ways, Jimmy’s

sense of purpose reminds Cheryl of herself. But she just can't imagine him letting loose at the Anchor. She considers taking him there, but decides differently.

He walks her to her car. She can tell that he wants to come back with her. But she doesn't want to ruin it. She doesn't want to rush things. He runs his hand along her back until it is resting on her hip. She looks up at him and gazes in his eyes. There is an incredibly long hesitation with the two of them staring at each other. Then he moves forward to kiss her.

She cannot imagine a kiss that affected her with such resonance. She feels the world quake around her. She pulls him closer.

Cheryl doesn't want it to stop. She finds the moment delicious. She can feel herself surrendering herself. She can't hold back. There is nothing to steady her. She tries to catch her fall. She squeezes him tighter.

The night air has some of that heaviness from the daytime heat and humidity. It pierces their souls. She feels that she has nowhere to go but to stay with him. She can't lose herself. She is trying to awaken from the dream. It is all too oppressive. She is drowning.

She gently pushes Jimmy away. She is a little faint. This is not like her to go head over heels over a man. But she likes the experience. This is positively wonderful. She has trouble containing herself. She feels giddy. She has hardly had anything to drink at dinner. But she feels intoxicated.

He doesn't want her to go. He has waited all this time for his dream to become real. He is afraid of it all vanishing.

The next day she feels a little uncomfortable when she sees him at work. She give him a big hello. She wants to grab him and give him big hello, just pull him into an office and start to make out with him.

"Are you free tonight?"

She doesn't want to seem too eager, "I have to meet my friends. I am free tomorrow."

They agree to meet on a Friday. Cheryl usually doesn't like to give up her Fridays. But this is so important.

Amy is waiting for her at the Anchor. Cheryl wonder if she should say something about Jimmy. She decides to say nothing. She doesn't want to ruin the surprise.

"You haven't come out for a while, Cheryl."

"It's been busy at work. I needed to take a weekend off. Maybe it's time."

"Yeah, I guess it's hard for your friends to get away with their husbands."

Cheryl is thinking again about her friends and their husbands. It seems like a weird coincidence, but Diane walks in the door. She seems a little perturbed about something. She quickly downs a shot before heading for the table.

Cheryl asks her, "I didn't expect you to be here. Where's Chris?"

"I don't think that there's going to be an Chris after this week."

"I thought that you were getting along."

"We were. But then I woke up from the nightmare. I don't know what possessed me. There was nothing to our marriage. I finally realized that we have nothing in common. Nothing at all."

The wedding never made sense to Cheryl. She always felt that Diane was more concerned about not living up to her reputation than really wanting to get married. That was all

so silly. It only gave more credibility to the cheap gossip.

Diane feels more embarrassed than anything. She doesn't want to think about. It is easier to pretend that nothing has happened. Maybe Chris will just go away for good.

"I feel like I'm going to take some kittens to get drowned."

"It's not that bad, Diane." says Cheryl.

"Oh, but it is!"

All that she can think about is his sad eyes as she left the house.

Cheryl affirms, "It takes two to tango. You didn't force him to get married."

Diane answers, "But this is all there is in his world. I can't take it anymore. I can barely go to work."

"He works too."

"Yeah. He's a graphic designer. He's always at home doing freelance work. And then he lost some major clients. He is going down fast." "

Cheryl inquires, "You don't sound very sympathetic."

"He needs a mother not a wife. Someone to hold his bib."

Cheryl has this weird picture in her head of Chris in a high chair.

"Is he going to move out?"

Diane maintains, "It's my house. The mortgage is in my name. I've made the payments. Of course, he's going to move out."

"He may claim community property."

"I already took care of that. I'm stupid. But not that stupid."

She smiles. Amy had been listening to all this and drinking.

"Diane, you know Amy don't you? I feel like I'm being rude."

Diane defends Cheryl, "I know everyone here. Amy and I are friends."

"Yeah, we know each other," agrees Amy.

Diane is ready for some serious drinking. This is going to be her night. Cheryl doesn't want to go along. She has a lot of work tomorrow. She hardly feels the same way that Diane does. She is still believing her own romantic illusion. She doesn't want Diane's trouble to burst her bubble.

Diane hope that Chris will be out by the time that she gets back. She doesn't want to deal with problems anymore. But Cheryl is a little more cautious. She feels that Diane's devil-make-care attitude only made things worse.

Diane offers final consolation, "At least I'm out of the running for Sara's prize. I think that I'd rather just drink here than own it. At least I don't have to be reminded of all my mistakes."

Cheryl can't tell if Diane wants to be funny. On all accounts, she knows that things are as pleasant as she thought that they might be. And the Anchor is always there to get her in the swing of things. It's just that she can't imagine going back to what she was before.

As Cheryl watches Diane, she starts to think about Trish and Stevie. How long will it be before the cracks start to show in their marriages? Cheryl feels helpless to do anything. Her last attempt to influence Trish to stop seeing Eddie only ended in disaster. So she's just going to let the chips fall where they may. She still has her fingers crossed. But really it's to no avail.

Cheryl admits that it's great to have Diane back. Sure she was rooting for her marriage to

succeed. But she had no illusions about Chris. Only a fool would have told Diane to go back. And it is now way too late for that.

On her way home, Cheryl is thankful that she didn't party too much. Even Diane didn't over do it. It would have been the worst spectacle to have Diane crawling around on the ground after all her troubles. Her maturity did teach her some restraint. It would have been just as bad to scoop a guy off the Anchor floor for a night of private revelry. Diane realizes that she needs time to heal.

It is remarkable that Cheryl is remaining so calm about everything. She has her own worries. She's tried to keep Jimmy off of her mind. But Cheryl knows that she is falling for him. She feels as if he's swept her off her feet. She puts her head on the pillow and absorbs that lovely feeling that anticipates love. This helps her sleep restfully. In the morning, she feels completely rested.

Cheryl doesn't see Jimmy at work. He has promised to pick her up at her place around 7. She gets home with enough time to take a shower and rest. When Jimmy finally arrives, she is a little on edge with all the excitement. She remembers the kiss from the other night. He gives her a hug. He has even brought flowers, his trademark.

During the meal candlelight reflects off her face and makes her seem even more lovely, like a goddess in Renaissance painting. There is something almost eternal about the encounter. He finds himself staring. She can only smile.

She can feel the wine works its way to her head. She feels all warm inside. And the feeling radiates with more and more intensity. Even with his gaze, she can now feel him touch her deep inside. She longs for his touch.

As she relishes the sweet morsels of dessert, she feels more and more drawn to him. The lights are spinning all around. She can barely stay conscious it is all so hypnotic. She feel like she will disappear as it is all so overwhelming. She needs to take a breath just to remain collected.

When they go out to car, there is a light humidity in the air. It is hard to concentrate. She can barely focus. She feels herself giving in.

The moon is almost full. The light is soft and gives her a ghostly appearance. He feels the spirit penetrate his being. He can't make sense of any of this.

When they kiss, he balances himself against the car. This only makes him want to venture out farther. This is what he has thought about for months. And now it is real. He doesn't want to make any mistakes. He doesn't dare rush things.

She entirely follows his direction. She has again entered his fairy tale world. She is too deep inside to turn back. She can already feel herself panicking. This really has little to do with her desires. But it has all been so comforting for her. She wants him to kiss her deeply, just to take her away from all this.

None of this can happen fast enough. She is already having second thoughts. He seems clumsy. The experience has none of the romantic elements that he hoped for. He has to make something happen quickly or the bubble will burst.

He doesn't realize what is going on. It is outside of his control. This never would have worked with Brian and Robert. It has no more hope for Jimmy. He seems too eager. She just loved the idea of love. But never really with him.

When he again kisses her, it seems so brutal. She feels as if he is trying to take something from her. She is hardly ready to surrender herself. As he falls prey to his own spell, she pulls back. Now she is struggling. And he is trying not to let go.

They lock hand in hand and are face to face. Neither one can move. They know what this means. It is over before it has even begun. He feels like it is so tragic.

She wanted romance. She saw her friends, and she knew what to expect. It couldn't have been better planned. In the end, it was only something artificial.

"I have to go," she is severe.

"I'll drive you home."

"I need to get a ride from one of my friends."

"No problem at all."

She ends up calling Diane. She hates to put Diane out at such a desperate moment in her own life. But it makes her feel like she's part of the gang again.

"Cheryl, do you want to go to the Anchor?"

"Not tonight."

She tells Diane the story.

"At least you didn't marry him."

What clue has enabled her to wake up? The Sleeping Beauty again casts off the curse.

The next day Cheryl gets a call from Stevie.

"I need you to stop by the shop after work."

When she arrives, Stevie has the most bizarre look on her face.

"What's going on, Stevie?" Cheryl expects that she might be pregnant. She has already talked about having a baby.

Stevie begins to relate her story, "Josh and I wanted to become pregnant. He took me to see my doctor. I just wanted everything checked out before I tried. And everything went so smoothly. I was excited. I came out of the doctor's office into the waiting room, and my husband was sitting there. I took one look at him, and I knew."

"What are you ever talking about?"

"I knew that he had been sleeping with the receptionist. I've seen that look in my customers. When they want something. But it's more than that. When they've already bought what they want, and they are so self-satisfied. And he had that look. When we got in the car, I told him as much. And he told me that I didn't know what I was talking about. That only made me want to believe it more."

She continues, "I was sure. The more that he denied it, the more I knew. He was so clumsy at lying. I started catching him at it. Evenings that he claimed to be at the office. I was still trying to figure out how he first met her. I had been having some problems before. I felt that they might interfere with having a baby. That's why I first went in for a check up. He had been with me. When I got to the car that day, he told me that he had to go back for his umbrella. But he came back without the umbrella. I told him that was strange. He claimed that it was a simple mistake. The umbrella has been at home all the time."

Cheryl interrupts, "Did it look like rain that day?"

"It did. That's why I thought nothing about his story at the time. But that must have been when he first made contact with her. I knew that something was strange even then. I could see it

in his face. But later on it all made sense. And this hasn't been the first time."

Cheryl says nothing about her own experience. She doesn't want to add to Stevie's pain.

Stevie has more to tell, "I caught him red-handed. But my only evidence was my suspicion. And he put on this innocent look. He tried touching me that night. But no way. I had him sleep in the den. I wanted to forgive him. I've been waiting to have a baby for so long. The store's been going so well. It seemed like the perfect time."

Cheryl can't say much. She keeps listening intently, "I never would have known." Cheryl worries that Stevie is so perceptive that she might accuse Cheryl of something out of the blue. Stevie says nothing.

"Last night, I told him that I wanted a divorce. I told him that the trust was over. Period. I know that he wants us to reconcile. But I started to think about things. Everything is making sense. There's been stuff like this all the time. I wish that my friends could have warned me."

"I didn't know what to look for," Cheryl offers an excuse.

"I was blind. I closed my eyes to all of it. I wanted to pretend so badly. And I did my utmost to cover it all up. Until it all blew up in my face. That's what love makes you do. It makes you see what you want to see, not what's really there. And you create this rosy scenario in your mind, while the world is falling apart at your feet. I don't feel like I wasted my time. I got the store. For now, that's my baby. Things will improve with time. I know they will."

Cheryl realizes how Stevie has grown in all these years. Sure Josh has done her wrong, but she is no longer the helpless girl that Cheryl first knew. When she worked at the Anchor, she would come apart at the least thing. Over the years, she has become the rock of their group. She has nothing to be ashamed of. It's not a failure at all. She has learned, and she has grown.

That night three Anchor girls are out. Amy is working.

Cheryl speculates, "Where's Trish?"

"Maybe it's better that she's not here," says Diane. "At least, she's got a marriage."

Stevie wonders, "I don't know for long with out track record."

Cheryl doesn't want to jinx things by saying what she knows. Instead she offers a positive spin, "I hope that all is well with her. My fingers are crossed."

Amy brings them all *lemon drops*. "You need some sunshine in your lives."

Cheryl smiles, "We're not doing so bad. We have each other."

Cheryl starts to wonder if the contest is behind all of this. Since it's started none of them have been able to stay with one man. She just feels like throwing in the towel. But she doesn't say anything about the curse.

She thinks about her mother's influence. All her life has been a preparation for marriage. Cheryl reacted against that attitude when she worked so hard to get her own career. She takes her success as a denial of her mother's view of the world. But at this moment, she is feeling it hard. Stevie's and Diane's failures have been her own. Stevie stuck to her dream at all costs. Her marriage helped her acquire the store. And Diane wanted something so bad that she just took the greatest risk.

At first Cheryl wondered if Stevie might have trouble with the store. But Josh has already been paid back. He's hardly going to drag her through court with the suspicions of his infidelity.

Cheryl knows that Josh would complain about them all hanging out together at the

Anchor. But his complaint would only fall on deaf ears. Stevie has always been above board. Even before their marriage.

The girls are doing what they do best, loving each other. There is nothing that compares with their time together. They don't have to get drunk to have a good time. Sure, a drink now and then gets things started. But what the girls have is inside. No man will ever take that away from them.

Over the years they have all matured. They have careers. They have saved money for their houses or their retirement. They are all young. They are happy.

Stevie has seldom been this tipsy. But it is a pleasant moment. She hasn't drunk all that much. She will be OK at work tomorrow, more or less. The girls are in a circle holding hands. They have their eyes closed.

Diane is talking, "This is for all of us. We've seen it all together. And we are going to forge on."

Afterwards Cheryl repeats the wish for Trish, "She should have been here."

"She'll come in good time," says Stevie.

Cheryl isn't sure what she means. The girls all get water. They are coming down. Tomorrow is going to be a long day. It is going to be a good day.

When Cheryl gets home, she thinks that things aren't so bad for her. She never gambled as much as Stevie for a man. She has held back herself for that right moment. And she is glad. Sure she has experienced heartache. But she has never completely given herself away. She can feel good about that as she settles in for the night. She is her own girl.

In a strange twist of events, Trish decides to confess to Greg. She knows the probably outcome. But she can't hold back any longer. She tells about her meetings with Eddie. She spares no detail.

Greg has his own answer, "I knew that something was going on with you. I just was afraid to say something."

"What do you want me to do?"

Greg states, "What you've always done. Make excuses for your behavior."

"I know that you hate me. I'm sorry."

She can feel the venom. He remains calm. It is more effective that way. "I don't know why you're sorry. You made every effort to conceal things from me. You could have done half as much just to control your behavior."

"It's not that easy," Trish want to explain. "I just got a power by doing it. It made up for the pain that I've felt. I'd been fucked over a few times, and I wanted to get back."

Greg is not taken in, "None of it had to do with me. Why did you choose me to be mean to?"

"It's not you. You were just there."

He is angry. But there is little that he can do. He wishes that he could read down a list of accusations and that would make him feel better.

For her part, she tries to pretend that he's been to busy with work. Just the fact that he saw nothing is reason enough to blame him. She is getting good at doing just that. She knew that this day would come. She almost welcomed it.

"You know the worst part of it, Trish. I don't even know if you can be loved." He turns

the knife in deep. She tries to shake it off. She goes to mirror and looks at herself. She feels like one hot babe. She lets his insult slide off that part of herself.

She wants to tell him that he was lucky to have such a hot number as herself. She rubs her fingers along her lips. She feels incorrigible.

Down deep, Trish knows something is wrong. But she will not let the heartache hit. She has already dumped Eddie. She is irrevocably alone. It's not as if she wants to rush off to the Anchor. She just wants to be alone.

She gets in her car and starts driving. She doesn't even have a destination. The night is fast approaching. It only adds to the urgency. She puts her foot on the gas pedal. She is now speeding along. She hopes that she doesn't draw any cops. But she is blazing into the darkness. She won't stop for anything. This is a race for her life.

Night has made itself known. The full moon has been waning a couple of days. There is that evident sense of incompleteness. She doesn't let it bother her. Nothing has really changed. She never was really with Greg. She just used him for her own security. That was really stupid on her part.

She wonders why she confessed. It would seem to embolden him more to stand in her way. On the other hand, it underlines the total desperate quality of his situation. He had made every effort to be with her. She never gave him a chance.

Now she is hopelessly lost. She took a couple of turns and the surrounding countryside has swallowed her up. She is groping in the shadows. The roads have taken her this far. But she doesn't know how they will take her back. She feels as if she could just die out here. She wants to get home. She wants some peace.

It takes her hours. But she finally makes it back to the house. Greg has cleared out of her life for good. He has taken a lot of his stuff. She has never known her solitude to be this black. The Anchor is already closed. She settles in for bed with this hollow sensation.

When Trish wakes the next day, she puts part of her life away. The adventure has taken her nowhere. There has been little damage. It just never really did anything useful for her. She looks at herself in the mirror. She can sense the toll. But it doesn't show. She needs to put on a happy face.

It is slow getting ready for work. Her game with Eddie has cost her the edge that made her such a good salesperson. Today she is going to start all over. She is going to make up for what happened.

By the weekend, the Anchor girls are all together again at their favorite bar. All the action seems to go on in spite of their presence. They are above it all watching from their mountain vantage point.

Diane is first to acknowledge the change, "I think that the Anchor made us feel invincible. Now we're all walking on the earth."

Stevie adds her philosophy, "I don't think anybody notices us now."

"We used to be stars. Now we're in the penalty box," admits Cheryl.

Trish admits to a worse punishment, "I'm more in the dog house." She barks for everyone. They laugh.

Sara approaches the table, "I see that it's really the Anchor now that all my girls are together."

Diane offers a summary, "I think that we failed you. None of us have succeeded at staying married."

Sara has a rejoinder, "Are you happy? That is the important thing."

Trish comments, "I feel so numb. I thought that I could be married and still live my old life style. I wasn't willing to sacrifice."

"I think that we all became too good at what we did to let go," says Cheryl.

Sara has her own version of the events, "But you're all a little wiser for the experience."

Stevie objects, "None of us can claim the prize."

"Wisdom is more than money can buy."

Trish contradicts Sara, "I'm not sure that I just won't do the same thing if the situation arises."

Sara informs her, "That's your own doing. You have the gift. It's your turn to use it."

The girls have all won in their own way. The lesson is too brutal for them to admit. But they can still carry on. They can learn. It's still the Anchor girls. But they are not as off the hook as in their hay day.

Diane stares at a drink, "Maybe we can do some shots."

Trish begs off, "Not tonight. I'm drinking soft drinks."

"It's Friday night. None of us work tomorrow," says Cheryl.

"I need to work on myself," admits Trish. She feels as if it's going to be a long road back.

Diane teases her, "I think there's a cute guy watching you over there,"

"No!" Trish hides her face.

Cheryl gets up to dance to "Roxanne" by the Police. She is very enthusiastic. She actually does a couple of twirls. She notices that some guy is staring at her. He seems to trace every move on her part. She gets more excited knowing that she has an audience. She raises her hands in the air. She is proud of herself.

As the song ends, he waves at her. She waves back. He gets up and starts to walk towards her. She is breathless. As he comes closer, Cheryl realizes that he is not making his way to their table at all. He has seen a friend. He walks over and hugs her. Cheryl feels embarrassed. She tries to take back her wave.

Diane smiles, "We're losing our touch."

Stevie affirms, "We're still the hottest things out here."

"Maybe the Anchor has cooled off. We need another place to hang out." Trish sounds a premature death knell.

"No way! This place is ours. We rule here!" Cheryl is emphatic. She is not going to give in this easily. "Shots of Jager for all of us!" They laugh. They are ready to conquer the world.

The bar is going to close soon. The DJ is playing "Don't You Want Me" by the Human League. All four girls are up and dancing. They sing the first line forcefully, "You were working as a waitress in a cocktail bar when I met you..." This is their story. They are all proud. They are jumping up and down. The whole bar has gathered around them and are singing along. Everyone loves to dance.

It is their moment. No one can take away the Anchor from them. It is their bar.

“Hi, my name is Peter. I love watching all you girls dance. I’ve never had so much fun in my life.”

Cheryl asks him, “You’ve never been here before?”

“It’s my first time here. I just moved from West Virginia. This is great.”

Cheryl agrees, “This is our home away from home.” She puts out her hand and shakes his. “Welcome to the Anchor, Peter.”

His smile opens wide, “I have a feeling that I’ll be spending a lot of time here.”

She looks at him. He seems almost naive to the world. She already likes him. “I hope that you’ll spend a lot of time here, too.”

Cheryl keeps talking to Peter until close. When the lights come on, there is that uncomfortable moment. She wants to keep talking to him. She doesn’t want him to get away. But she can’t throw it away for the hope of quick romance.

They exchange number and agree to meet here on Saturday night.

“It’s going to be even crazier tomorrow. I think that we’ve all got our swing back. You’ll see us in full form tomorrow, she tells him.”

He hugs her. She squeezes him tight. She wants him to kiss her. But she doesn’t want to rush thing. There will be time. She waves as he walks out.

The girls stay as the bar closes. It is only the four of them and the bartender and the waitresses. Everyone else has gone home.

Sara lets them stay until 4:30. Then she ushers them on their way.

“We have to close up for good now. I’ll be seeing you all tomorrow.”

Diane speaks for the group, “Of course you will.”

Cheryl fears that she might regret the revelry, “I’m going to have trouble waking up tomorrow.”

Stevie invites them all, “I hear it’s going to be a sunny day. Let’s have a pool party.”

Trish screams, “Yeah.”

There’s only a few more hours of darkness left in this night. Just time enough for them all to get rested for another fun day tomorrow. When they hit the Anchor tomorrow night, watch out. The girls are back!