

Chapter 4: The Pool!

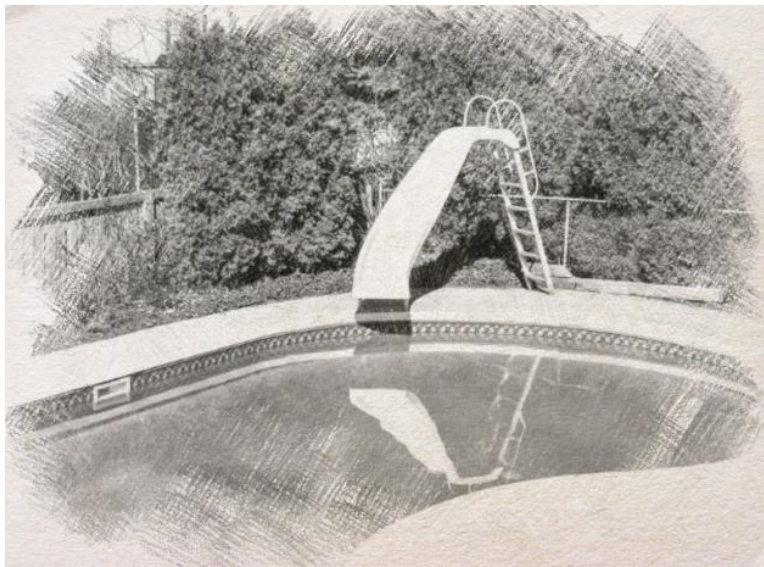
The Northhampton pool is a private pool built in 1963 when Lorene was eleven and her sister, Carla, was nine. Their parents and many other parents in the Northhampton and Patrician Manor neighborhoods got together to plan the construction of the pool.



Today Chris and Bobby were excited to go to the pool for the first time with their cousins and family. They'd heard some cool stories about it from their mom over the years and were excited to be able to go.

Carla decided to put off her work and go with them, along with their Uncle Kenny, Aunt Lynn, and Aunt B.J. Their dad, Uncle Larry, and Uncle Gary stayed behind to help with the painting and final touches needed for the house.

Bobby watched Aunt Carla from the back window as she was getting things out of their pool shed for the trip to the pool. He looked at their pool and thought it was pretty cool. It had a fun-looking slide.



When she came in from the backyard, Bobby pointed to the float in the pool, “Can I take that float to the pool?”

Aunt Carla closed the back door behind her, “No,” she answered, “they don’t allow floats in the pool,” she continued, “but you may play on it later in our pool.”

Bobby seemed satisfied with that. “How long before we go?”

“In a few minutes,” she said pointing to the items they were taking to the pool. “Why don’t you take these things out to the truck for me?”

“Can I help?” Kelly asked as she tried to lift the picnic basket and found that it was too heavy, so Bobby picked it up and Kelly followed him out to the front door.

Bobby struggled to get the basket and beach bag into the truck until Chris saw him. “Gimme the basket, dork,” and they loaded everything into the back of the truck.

Lynn pulled into the driveway with B.J., Danny, and Brad. Carla and Kenny came out of the house and Kenny put Curtis in the car seat in his mustang as they were going to following them to the pool.

“You kids climb in the back,” Carla yelled out as she put some things in the back of the truck. She saw Kelly and said, “you ‘re riding up front with us young lady.”

“Kelly made a face,” and Danny lifted her out of the truck.

“I also brought some food,” Lynn said opening her basket, “that food at the pool is so expensive.”

“I know,” Carla agreed, “but, you know they gotta have some of that pool pizza too – it’s the best!”

“Yeah,” she agreed, “but I’m gonna stick with my tuna fish sandwich.”

It wasn’t far to the pool. They turned onto the long private road that led to the pool and when the pool came into view, the kids hooted.

“Wow!” Chris said with excitement, “that pool is huge!”

“Yeah,” Bobby pointed out, “look at that diving board!”

Carla parked the truck, and everyone piled out and grabbed their things. Kenny went ahead to the entrance and signed in everyone as guests.

B.J. pointed to an empty table near the kiddie pool, “We’re gonna sit here by the kiddie pool so we can watch the kids.”



Lynn helped Kelly and Curtis shower off, then helped them over to the kiddie pool.

“I’ll keep an eye on them if you wanna go in the pool,” B.J. offered to Lynn.

“That’s OK,” Lynn answered, “I’ll sit here with them for a while.”

Carla stopped Bobby and Brad who were just about to jump into the pool, “Y’all gotta take a shower before you go in the pool,” she said pointing them to the showers.

They took their showers quickly then jumped into the shallow area where some other kids asked them if they wanted to play Marco Polo. Chris and Danny went to the diving board area. The adults settled down at the table to relax.

Bobby played Marco Polo for a while but Brad saw the guys at the diving area, so he got out of the pool and joined them at the deep end.

“The pool still looks the same,” Lorene said as she laid out her towel on the chair, “I’m so glad to see that they’re still keeping it well maintained.”

“Yeah,” Carla answered as she came over to sit down at the table. “They have a lot more events and fun things for the kids too,” she pointed to the basketball court and game tables.

“This is great!” Chris said to Danny as he climbed up on the ladder behind Danny, until the lifeguard blew his whistle at him to get off the ladder.

Danny looked down at Chris from the top, “ya gotta wait until I’m off the diving board before you can climb up.” So, Chris waited for Danny to dive off.



Brad climbed up on the low dive and looked at Chris, “Watch this!” Brad pulled off a flip.



“Cool,” Chris said and climbed up the stairs after Danny dove in.

Chris dove in and swam to the side of the pool, then Danny climbed up and was looking down at him as he was getting out of the pool. “Wanna see me do a flip?”

“Sure, go for it,” and Chris climbed out of the pool and stood there waiting for Danny to do a flip.

Danny ran to the end of the board, kicked up his right leg to get some height, then came down hard on both feet and bounced up even higher and flipped around feet first into the water.



“That was great!” Chris said, “show me how to do that.”

Danny climbed out of the pool, “Ya may not get it right the first time, so maybe you should try it on the low board first so if ya do a belly flop, it won’t hurt as much.”

“What’s a belly flop?”

“It’s when you don’t pull off a complete flip and you end up landing on your belly, and it stings like heck.”

Brad showed him how to do it on the low board. Chris climbed up on the low board and tried it and almost made it, but at least he didn’t

do a belly flop. Chris practiced a few more times until he got the feel for completing the flip.

“OK, I’m gonna try it on the high dive now.”

“All right, but remember that you gotta pull off the flip a little slower since you’re so much higher.”

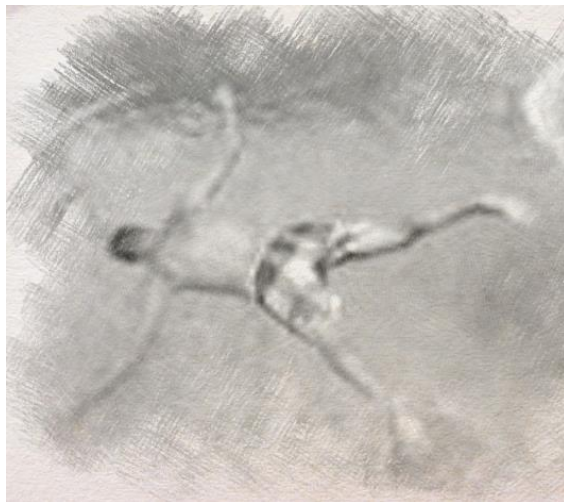
The closer Chris climbed up to the high dive, the more he was regretting this. When he got to the top, he looked around and could see everywhere, the back yard of the pool, the woods, the school across the street, all over. He walked to the end of the board and looked down.



Everyone at the deep end, including the life guard was watching, so he couldn't chicken out now.

"Common Chris," Danny yelled up at him, "it's nothing. It's better if you back up half way, run, and bounce on the end, so you can get more height."

"OK, here goes," he ran to the end of the board, kicked up his right leg to get some height, bounced both feet on the end of the board, then up in the air he went, a full flip - and a half, landing on his belly - *flop!* Everyone laughed.



He came up from the water and yelled, "Ooh that hurt." As he was climbing out of the pool rubbing his belly, Danny bent down and

said, "*Slower,*" he reminded him, "I said ya gotta flip *slower,*" Danny said again and laughed, "not bad for the first time though."

Chris, Danny, and Brad hung out in the deep end on the diving boards and they showed Chris how to do other dives, like the pike, the swan dive, back dive, and they especially liked getting the girls wet lying next to the pool with their cannon balls.

Bobby was getting bored playing Marco Polo, so he got out of the pool and watched Chris at the high dive and saw him do a perfect flip. "Wow, I wanna try that!" So, he walked over to the diving area, while the others continued with the Marco Polo game. On the way, Bobby saw some people playing a game on the pavement they called shuffleboard. He stopped to watch for a bit.



Bobby then headed for the diving area. To the left of the diving area, he noticed a large building that was partly underground with steps up to the roof where a bunch of girls were bathing in the sun. Then, out of curiosity, he decided to check out the steps that led down to the entrance to the building. He could hear a loud roaring sound coming out of the building as he walked slowly down the steps and looked around to see if anyone was watching him. *This is a little creepy* he thought. It gave him the creeps, but his curiosity was inching him closer and closer towards the roaring sound. The closer he got to the

entrance, he could see it was dark with a huge motor-like sound coming out of the middle.

Bobby felt someone come up behind him and he jumped when he said, “What ya doin’ down here boy?” It was a lifeguard. “You kids aren’t allowed down here, you could get hurt, so get going.”

“Sorry,” Bobby said as he quickly ran back up the steps and over to the diving area. He couldn’t shake that eerie feeling he had about that place.

By now, the diving area was pretty crowded, and more kids wanted to show off their skills to the new guy. Especially a blond-haired girl named Debbie. She was a pretty good diver. Chris noticed that she made sure he was looking when she pulled off her back flip, then a swan dive, and finally a one and a half.



Chris was impressed, but he didn't say so.

"Where ya from?" she looked down at Chris from the high dive.

"San Diego," Chris said, "hey, you're pretty good."

"All the way from California?" Debbie said and Chris nodded.

Debbie smiled and tossed her hair as she readied herself for the next dive. A perfect swan dive! Hardly a splash.

Chris was now on the high dive and Debbie looked up to watch what he was going to do. Another flip, this time he nailed it! Feet pointed and together and straight into the water.

“Not bad California,” Debbie said as she walked back over to the ladder to wait in line.

“Name’s Chris,” he said as the guys came over.

She flipped her hair, turned around and took another dive.

“Hey Chris,” Brad yelled out, “we’re gonna play horseshoes,” pointing to the horseshoe pit behind the pool in the grassy area, “wanna play?”

“Yeah sure,” he said and waved goodbye to Debbie.

“See ya later California!” Debbie waved as she did another swan dive.

Bobby came to the diving area just as Chris was leaving.

“We’re gonna play horseshoes Bobby,” Danny said as he was drying off with his towel. “Wanna play?”

“Sure, but I wanted to learn how to do some of those dives you guys were doing.”

“Later, come on,” Danny led them out to the horseshoe pit.

They walked to back of the pool where there was a large grassy yard. The horseshoe pit was empty, so they played for a while.

“Here Chris,” Danny said as he gave Chris his horseshoes, “you and Brad against me and Bobby.”

So, they played horseshoes, shuffleboard, then laid out on the warm concrete to dry off.

“You boys must be hungry,” Aunt Lynn said waking them up from their sunbathing. “We have lunch out over at the table if y’all are hungry,” then walked back to the table.

“I’m hungry!” Bobby yelled out!

“Me too,” Brad agreed.

They all gathered around the large table and Lynn handed out sandwiches.

Uncle Kenny sat down at the table with a slice of hot pizza.

“Where d’you get that Uncle Kenny?” they asked looking at it then at their sandwiches.

“This pool pizza is still *really* good,” he said and took another big bite.

“Can we have some?” they all chimed in.

“This one’s on you Kenny,” Carla said and laughed.

“OK, OK” Uncle Kenny said and got up and walked over to the snack stand with all the kids trailing behind.

“Pizza for everyone,” he ordered.

“This place is great!” Chris said out loud, “wish we had a pool in our neighborhood.”

“You have the beach!” Brad reminded him. “That’s way better!”

“Yeah, but the pool is fun too,” he said as he looked around, “there’s so many things to do here.”

“Dad’s gonna take us to Virginia Beach before we leave, maybe you guys can come, and I’ll show you how to surf.”

“Can we Uncle Kenny?” Brad asked.

“Maybe,” he said, “we’ll see.”

“I did a flip on the high dive Uncle Kenny,” Chris said, “did you see it?”

“I sure did, pretty good too.”

Bobby asked, “how long before we leave?”

Another couple hours, but you guys gotta wait at least thirty minutes after you eat before you can go back into the pool, or you might get cramps.

“Let’s go play some more horseshoes,” Danny said looking at Chris.

“Sure,” then he and Danny headed for the horseshoe pit. “Coming Bobby?”

“No, me and Brad are gonna play shuffleboard.”

“Did you go in the water yet, Lynn?” Carla asked.

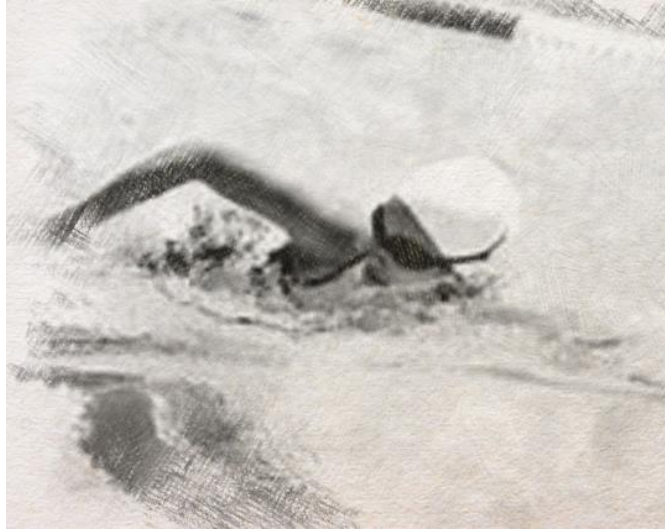
“No, I don’t wanna get my hair wet cause we’re going out to dinner tonight with Vera and CD. Besides, I wanna watch the kids.”

“I’m going back in,” B.J. said, “you wanna come in?”

“Sure,” Carla said, “I actually thought about doing some laps,” she put on her swimming cap, “it’s been a long, long time since I did laps in this pool.”

“Larry said you were all on the swim team,” Lynn said, “that must have been fun.”

“Yeah, some great memories. I still have all my ribbons too,” she smiled and walked over to the pool, dove in, and started swimming her laps. She even did a flip turn at the end of each lap.



Everyone had fun for the next couple hours, but then it was time to leave.

“Let’s go,” BJ went around and gathered up all the kids.

As they were packing up to leave, Bobby said, “Mom?”, then he pointed to the building he was told to stay out of, “what’s that building over there?”

“That’s where the pool filter is,” she said, “why”?

“Just wondered, it’s kind of creepy.”

“Yeah,” mom agreed, “I always thought it was kind of creepy too. One time I went in there when I was a kid, and an older boy locked me in and wouldn’t let me out.”

“For real?” Bobby said wide-eyed.

“Yeah,” she continued and remembered, “but Larry heard me yelling and came over and pushed the guy away from the door and let me out.” She paused remembering it, “I never went in there again.”

Bobby thought about that and decided he wasn’t going near there again either!