Swim Coach (Chap 1)

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First chapter in my autobiographical love story. No sex.

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I think back to my days on my swim team with a great deal of fondness. It was a magical time in my life, with the triumphs and tragedies of my teen years seeming to be captured by what was happening on the swim team. My best friends were on the team and we became young women and men during those years and experienced all the pains and all the joys of that time together. It is often only in hindsight that one can see the magic associated with a certain time in one's life and as I drove my daughter to her first day of practice I found myself experiencing a flood of memories that compelled me to write one small part of my story. Perhaps on the day when she drives her daughter to her first practice I'll share my story with her.

I discovered two of the most important things I learned as a young woman on the team. The first was that most things in life have more to do with desire than skill (providing you have at least a modicum of skill). The second thing I learned was love. So this is my story about love and I hope to tell it as truthfully as I can.

I grew up outside of Chicago, in a well-to-do suburb with a stay-at-home mom, a dad who worked long hours and tried to give us the attention we sought, but who ended up being a distant figure in my childhood. We attended a public school, a good one however, and were always busy with a million extra-curricular activities: camp in the summer, family vacations in our blue station wagon, water skiing with the neighbors on their boat. I did ballet, swimming, tennis, and a theatre group, while my brother participated in the more boyish events: football, baseball, basketball, and summer track and field. We had a dog, a cat, goldfish that died on a seemingly monthly calendar, and a nice 3-bedroom house on a tree-lined street. Nothing could have been more perfect, and in hind-sight, nothing could have been less interesting.

My father had been a swimmer at Duke in the early 60s - not a great swimmer, but good enough to make the team. It was because of his influence, or maybe a desire to gain more of his attention and love, that I'd chose to swim. I learned early and took lessons until I became old enough to join our high school's youth swim team "The Dolphins". My motivations for joining originally came from my desire to please my father, but I quickly internalized them after I found myself in possession of a

goodly amount of talent and a keen desire for competition. I loved to win, and I loved the attention that the coaches, Sally, Matt, and Will would lavish upon me when I was doing well and trying hard.

I also loved the companionship of my teammates. While swimming is an individual sport you find yourself growing very close to people who you spend that much time with. I met my best friend (to this date!) on the team, Beth, who swam shorter distance sprints (I specialized in the longer distances where concentration and determination could often beat a better conditioned or more skilled opponent). We spent the first few years on the team giggling like school girls and laughing at the older swimmers, the coaches, and just about anything else that struck us as silly.

I was taller than Beth when we started and would always carry a few inches on her. She had a somewhat thicker, more muscular body than I did, which worked well for her in the sprints. My lanky body, long legs, and long arms worked well for swimming, but my thin, flat, body, broad shoulders, and boyish hips plunged my self-esteem to near hopeless lows.

I was never truly depressed about it - I had a great deal of love and support from my mom, Beth, and other friends. Sure, my ass-hole brother wouldn't make things easy, but much of that was retribution for the pain I'd been inflicting on him for almost a decade. My father was essentially missing in action and I rarely saw him. I would often feel pangs of longing for a better quality of male attention, but didn't have any real idea of how to find it.

I was constantly hoping that my body, wonderful for swimming, would begin to fill out, so that I might start attracting the attention of the older boys on the team who were always ready to scope out and flirt with the older girls who's bodies were by that age most certainly feminine. I'd watch them in the showers after practice growing less and less confident with myself as their busts increased and hips filled in. It wasn't as though I'd actually wanted the boys, more that I wanted the boys to *notice* . I was utterly naive about love and boys and had only the most basic understanding of what sex was.

I was pretty in an all-American girl way: short auburn hair, straight and simply cut. I had light green eyes, dimples, a button nose, good skin, but basically I looked like every other girl on the team. I think that my dedication to working out on the swim team, which left me with very little body fat, kept me from developing as early as most girls. Even after I filled out, I'd never have a large bust (a B-cub to this day), my waist and hips would be a better asset but I'd never be a sexy-curvy woman.

My first years on the team went by quickly and my times dropped steadily so that by the time I was a sophomore I was ranked second in two of the four events I routinely swam. Because I swam distances I often spent a large portion of my practice alone, face down, thinking about life, or homework or the latest pop-song that Beth and I would dance to during our Friday night sleepovers. The older I became, the more I started thinking about guys. At first it was the older boys on the team,

then some of the boys closer to my age.

My interest in the swimming boys, however, waned a bit over those years as I realized how silly, insecure, and immature they were (little did I realize that non-swimmers were the same, but I just didn't see them everyday). Beth had gone out with one (she'd been first to fill out) on a pizza date and had told me all about the single-mindedness of the boy during their date at the mall "lets go make out", "why don't we kiss", "I like your butt". She described him as an octopus and we giggled to no end about his laughable attempts and needless to say she never spent another Saturday afternoon with that guy.

I had a similar experience with a boy two years older and felt completely confused by the experience. I wanted the same things he did but his clumsy, brutish attempts, forced upon me within two hours of the beginning of our first date just left me scared and down hearted. There had been no emotional connection what-so-ever.

On my 16th birthday the team threw a surprise party for me after practice. It was so wonderful to eat that cake and laugh with all of my teammates. We goofed off and ended up throwing the last half of the cake at each other while the coaches pretended not to look. The girls on the team had all pitched in and got me a very snazzy new athletic bag and a new warm-up robe, in our school color purple, to wear at meets with my name, 'Amy' sewn in block letters on the back. The boys, in all of their juvenile wisdom, got me the tiniest pale-orange-colored bikini I'd ever seen in my life - it basically consisted of 4 teeny triangles connected by thin strings. I blushed terribly after unwrapping it as the boys hooted and called on me to model it. Instead I stuffed into my new bag and flipped them off, the act that sparked the cake fight. The boys gag gift did get me to thinking that I had started filling out a bit in the last year, with small a-cup breasts and hips that were just beginning to push out past my waist.

After we cleaned up and most of the others had left I asked Sally, the distance coach, if I could spend an extra half hour in the water before going home. I had a lot of energy after all that attention and my parents had told me that we would be celebrating my birthday on the weekend. Sally frowned a bit telling me I worked too hard, but told me it would be ok as the head coach, Matt, would be around for at least that long.

I quickly ran to the locker room to stow my presents. As I stuffed the locker full with my presents Beth, dressed in her sweats and ready to go home, came over and gave me hug, wishing me a happy birthday. She asked to see the bikini that the boys had gotten me. She laughed as she held it up to her sweats-covered body, telling me it was obvious that the boys had started to see me in a new light. I blushed but told her I wasn't interested in any of them. Then she suggested I put it on and see how it looked, and said that if I looked good in it she'd get one too and we could wear them to the beach in summer, only a few months away.

So I stripped off the sleek black one-piece racer that we all wore to practice and tied on the little bikini (not without some trouble trying to figure out the top from the bottom and back from front). It stayed on by tying the thin strings together on the sides of my hips and one in back for the top. My boobs didn't really fill out the small cups, but the bottoms looked good, showing off my legs and my butt. Beth told me that I looked great and went really well with my eyes. Laughing, I did my fake model pose pushing out my hips and trying to make my lips look pouty. We both laughed at that and then I began to undo the strings to the bikini to replace it with the one-piece. Beth asked what I was doing and I told her that I was going to stay a bit longer and swim some laps - to which she asked, "Well why don't you just swim in that, there's nobody here besides Matt. And I bet Matt would love to see you in that!"

We both blushed at the thought. Matt, our head coach, was a former collegiate swimmer who had won a couple of championships during his senior year. He never went beyond that in competition and had been coaching and teaching ever since. All the girls on the team had a crush on him - he was cute, blonde-haired, and most importantly a warm-hearted, kind, and caring coach. He was always supportive and was there to console us when we lost, celebrate with us during our victories, and motivate us during our practices.

"He won't even notice me, he'll be in the office working on the workout schedule for next week. And you know it Beth."

Beth nodded, knowing I was right, and gave me another hug before she skipped out of the locker room. I looked down at the cold and wet one-piece and decided that I'd give the bikini a try - it wasn't like I was being timed or anything and there was little or no chance that anybody, even Matt would see me before I finished.

I stuck my head out the locker room door, making sure no boys were left at the pool, then, when the coast was clear left the locker room and immediately dove in to the nearest lane. I kicked to the surface and at the far wall stopped to make sure the flimsy thing was still on. It was, and I started to swim a 1500 free at a good pace. I don't remember how far I'd gone, I completely zoned out after awhile when I got a tap when I hit the near wall. I stopped, pushed my way to the surface and pulled down my goggles. Coach Matt was there with his Purdue sweatshirt and usual baggy pants.

"New swim suit, Amy?" He smiled.

I turned beet red. Pulling myself to the wall for some cover I replied, "I just wanted to try it out and didn't think anybody would see it. I'm sorry."

I wanted to throw up.

He chuckled.

“Well I haven’t really seen it yet so I guess you were right. Anyway...” he said as he knelt down by the lane marker, “I was talking to Sally about your progress and we both think its time for you to swim in the number one spot in the 1500 free. It’s your best race and we think that the added competition may force you to turn it up a notch and we know you’ve got that notch and probably a few more after it. Whatcha think, kiddo?”

I was elated. The best present I could have asked for. “Really?”

“No, I’m just joshin’ ya..... of course REALLY. You’re a great girl and a fantastic swimmer. This is your first big chance.”

His eyes looked at me with such respect and kindness. I’ve only met one man since Matt who could look at me like that (my husband).

I couldn’t contain myself. I pushed outta the water quickly and in my excitement went to give Matt a hug. Matt was tall, at least 6’4”, which made me feel short although by this time I was 5’10”. The hug took him completely by surprise mostly because I was still dripping wet. I think he was embarrassed by it, because he didn’t really return the hug, just kinda patted me on the back.

“You and Sally are the greatest coaches, thank you so much!” I said squeezing him.

“Ok, Ok, kiddo, now let me go towel myself down.” He said.

I stood there and must have been beaming, completely unaware of myself in the skimpy little bikini. As Matt took a step back I saw him look me up and down and that look changed my life. It was the first look I ever remember getting as a sexual being, as a woman. And that Matt had been the one to look me over gave me a tingle I’d never felt before. Years of his respect and kindness made that glance at my body feel good and appropriate, not immature and clumsy as it felt like when the guys on the team did it. I felt my nipples harden and a pulse of energy rush into my crotch like I’d never felt before. In fact I’d never even masturbated before that time. I’d started menstruating a year earlier, but hadn’t really figured out that I could pay myself some attention down there. I wondered if the ‘once over’ was nothing, or if Matt might have really taken an interest in me. In fact by the time I stopped paying attention to the flush of my reaction he was already most of the way back to the office.

I decided I was done swimming for the day, headed back to the locker-room, showered and dressed

to go home. I combed the tangles out of my hair easily and thought about how plain-Jane it looked. I decided to get a more sophisticated, adult haircut this week; as a young woman I thought I deserved to start looking the part, instead of looking like an overly tall girl.