

*Jackson Jacks*

**SLIGHTLY AWKWARD  
ADVENTURES**

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Consequences

Sometimes we make plans, and everything works out well then there are what I like to call most of the times when those plans knock us down, point and laugh. About three weeks ago I went with my sister Jane to see a college she wanted to go, and all hell broke loose when someone thought my Mid-American Gamers Association hat was a hated Trump hat. I somehow made someone angry and started a riot ending in about ten-thousand dollars in damages. They decided not to press charges or charge me for the damages but that might have something to do with a student threatening me with a knife but who knows. A lot happened on that trip, and I didn't know then just how much of that would follow me back. The most eventful part of that trip was spending two days in a hotel room with my girlfriend. At least I think she's my girlfriend.

The trip back was quiet with a lot of thoughts racing around my mind. Jane kept talking about how she really wanted to stay and how she couldn't wait to graduate, but all I could think about was what happened in the room. Jane woke me up asking, "*so did you two do anything I shouldn't know about?*" I tried my best not to sound suspicious while I asked, "*do you really want to know?*" She pulled to the side of the road and said how I should think long and hard about what I do. How actions have consequences and those consequences build as you get older. I heard myself say we used protection, but I don't know how those words got out of my mouth. Her jaw dropped a little bit then she started to laugh. She said, "*you little fucking pervert. You know I didn't even think about you two going at it but dam what the fuck..... I mean really what the fuck?*"

We made it home to a quiet house and a note telling me to stay home. Jane said how she didn't tell them anything. I went to bed and lay there thinking about the last two days and just maybe how we went too far too soon. I woke up and did my usual morning routine. I came down to the kitchen where my mom was fixing breakfast. She saw me and turned her head. I went up to her, and she put her hand up saying, "*I just can't talk to you right now. Get your stuff and go to school we will talk tonight and by the way, your grounded until further notice..... Just go.*" I left with no breakfast and the dread of an angry mother when I saw dad in the driveway with the

car idling. He gave me a lift to school, a very quiet lift until about three blocks away. Dad stopped the car and asked, "*what were you thinking?*"

I almost said, "*I was thinking sex.*" Dad asked why I would start a riot on a college campus. I was so happy I didn't say sex that his question didn't make any sense. I told him what happened on that day leaving out the sex in the shower and hotel room. I finished by saying, "*just ask Jane or Brittney, those people came after me for my hat.*" Dad said, "*well you better come up with an answer your mother will believe because that story is unbelievable. Just be prepared to face the consequences of your actions.*" I thought about Jane and just how much she was like dad.

I had about an hour before my first class, so I went to speak to my guidance counselor. Yes, we still have such a person. Ms. Johnson saw me and saluted. She has made no pretense in her hatred for my plans to join the army. Some days she calls me a pawn and others she calls me cannon-fodder. School had just started, and I had some time to change classes if I desired and I did want to change. When I told her my new plan, her face turned from mild disappointment to almost happy. I say almost because I'm just not sure what happy looks like on her face. She warned me that journalism is dead, but I said how the need for truth was bigger than any safe space. Ms. Johnson called the head of our student newspaper Mrs. Johnson a four-foot-tall Japanese woman that most people are afraid of and together they helped me plan a new schedule. This included a chance to write for the paper and the blog. She even told me if I wanted, she would help me set up a school vlog. The rest of the day I spent in my new classes trying to get caught up and forgetting about the question mark that was waiting for me back home.

In one class I saw her. Tianna was in the front row of my third class. She smiled when she saw me then she lost her smile as I passed by. The voice that lives in the back of my head screamed, "*oh shit she hates us.....no, no, no this can't be.*" I made notes, and the teacher told me she would give me a makeup assignment and help me find a tutor. About a second after Ms. Grace said, Tutor Tianna said, "*I'll help him..... he lives almost next door to me, and I know his*

parents.” Ms. Grace said, “*OK whatever I don’t need a resume or directions.*” We met at the door in what had to be the most awkward talk I have had with a girl since one pulled a knife on me on a college campus. We tried to act like we barely see each other while we spent two days getting to know almost every part of the other. I almost leaned in and kissed her, but she backed up in a way telling me to stop. Kissing is an automatic suspension or worse they call the police.

I got home to an empty house. Jessie had karate club, and Joan was in her gymnastics club. Jane came in then went back out on her way to a friend and hours of study. I sat at the study table set up in the family room and spread by new books and papers around hoping to make sense of this new reality. I didn’t hear my mother come in behind me until she said, “*I hope you have an explanation why my alma mater is calling you a terrorist?*” I bit the bullet and told her the truth. Well, I told her the PG version of the truth, and I ended it with a copy of the vlog. A friend of my mother who was also a professor at the college called her when the college wouldn’t press charges and went after the real person that started the riot. She told a story of me walking into a safe zone and verbally assaulting the first woman I saw. The more she spoke, the more she realized that wasn’t me, and just maybe her friend was full of shit. I say full of shit because that is what she later said to me how she was full of shit. Before she left the room, she saw my new books and asked, “*what’s with all this?*”

I said, “*after walking or well running around that campus I realized I might want more than what I thought I wanted.*” Mom in her own unique way said, “*cut through the crap what are you up too?*” I said, “*I want to go back and take journalism classes.*” She stood there with this half stunned, half vacant look on her face and eventually said, “*that sounds nice.*” She looked at the books and all the papers then in what was an almost movie level comprehension moment she asked, “*so no army?*” I said, “*while I could go and earn money to pay for college, I think I should just go now.....so.....no.....no.....no army.*” She didn’t say a word we just had a seven-course dinner including mom’s favorite five-layer chocolate fudge cake from Lozano’s Italian Eatery. She even gave me a glass of red wine.

The next day after a challenging day of school I met with Tianna to study and yes, we studied. Well, she talked while I stared at her. About an hour before my parents were supposed to be home, Tianna said, *"I don't know if this will work for us."* I just stared as my heart stopped. She went on saying, *"I think we went too far way too soon and I think just maybe we should try and hit the reset button..... you know go back to our last save point and restart from there."* I asked, "I'm not following you?" She said, *"I think we shouldn't have sex for a while."* She said sex but what my mind heard was each other. I asked, *"I don't understand do you want to break up?"* I guess I should explain what we were doing as we started to talk. We were in my bedroom on this old love seat. We were both shirtless, and I had a hold of her left breast while she had her hand in my lap. We were about twenty seconds from doing what she said we shouldn't. While she didn't move my hand or her hand she did say, *"what we are doing has consequences, and the longer we go, the more consequences there are. I don't want to screw our futures away..... Wait did you say break up?"* When she said break up her light touch became a firm grip in a part that was almost exposed. I said, *"I thought you were saying, but I see your point."* She looked down and said, *"I see more than your point."* I guess we'll have that almost sex relationship tomorrow.

Two days later Tianna met me in class with this stunned look on her face. She showed me a pic of a test she took. Not the kind of test you take in school. My sister called her sister, and she told Tianna to take one of the pregnancy tests from her room. She peed on the stick, and it turned blue. I saw myself telling my parents they were going to be grandparents, then I saw me digging ditches for the rest of my life. I remember my dad saying when he gave me the talk that underage fathers dug ditches to support their families. What we both didn't know was the test was fake. A knockoff Brittny had bought as a joke she was going to use when she came home during winter break. Tianna stayed for dinner and about ten minutes before we ate Jane told us the truth then gave Tianna a real test that thank god she failed or would that be pass..... Either way, she wasn't knocked up. Dinner went well until mom asked, *"so are you two using protection?"* Dad snickered. Because there always consequences mom went on, *"I mean you two spent two days in a hotel room together alone. I know because they called us saying what they found in the room. All the condom wrappers."* Suddenly the army felt like a safe option.