

The Shoe Diaries by Darby Baham

EXCERPT

Friendship

Bright and early on a Saturday morning, I found myself in a swanky gym locker room, less than a fifteen-minute walk from my apartment. Robin, Jenn and I had spent the past week sitting beside Christine's bed more than anywhere else, but in desperate need of a distraction, I'd agreed to join Rebecca at a morning spin class at our local gym. And while I'd jumped at the chance to do something, anything really, other than think about Christine's drip-drop slow recovery, it dawned on me not too soon after I met up with her that there was one small problem with me agreeing to the class: I hated spin.

Like, literally hated everything about it. It wasn't that I didn't think it could help; I knew a lot of people who swore by its health benefits, and certainly knew I'd be guaranteed to have an hour off from worrying. But over the years, spinning had become almost cult like with its many variations, such as Soul Cycle, Trap Cycle and how could I forget the one that claimed it felt more like working out in a nightclub? Beyond even that, the thing I disliked most about spin was the way my butt felt during the class. Everyone always said that eventually your butt gets used to the feeling of the bike, but when I'd tried it before...nah.

Regardless, there I was, putting on my spin sneakers on the wood-grain floors, marveling at the rotation of women coming in and out of the doors, looking like the exact models you might expect to see in spin class ads: blond hair tied in either a loose high ponytail or twirled in an up-do that took thirty minutes to do, but seemed effortless; Lululemon workout gear, S'well water bottles and enough sweat that they glistened, but not so much where they were actually drenched. I glanced up to see if Rebecca looked as nervous as I felt.

"Are you sure we're ready for this?" I asked, trying to give us one last shot at running away.

"Ha, yes, I'm sure." She paused. "I mean, kind of sure."

I could sense her hesitation. Maybe she, too, was worried that we weren't really the duo that fit in with the rest of the spin-bots before us? Even if we did have some things in common with them.

"You know our butts are going to be on fire afterward, right?" I asked, anxiously making sure the pink Velcro on my turquoise-and-white sneakers was fully snapped closed so that the shoes didn't become a death trap for me on the bike pedals.

"Yeah, I know." Rebecca's once assured voice had been replaced with a nervous chuckle, and I remembered exactly why we were friends. Neither of us felt entirely comfortable where we were, but we were going to try it together. "But we've tried other things before, and it worked out. I'm sure this will be fine. Remember when we did Zumba this summer for a couple months? That was fun!"

"Zumba was fun—wait, why did we stop going there again?"

"Umm, great question," she said, walking over to the water fountain to fill her own S'well water bottle. "Honestly, I think it's because we just didn't make the time for it. Who wants to go to Zumba when there's happy hours, right?"