

Solitary Confinement Series of Excerpts

Chapter 1: The Arrival

What had started out as a normal day degenerated into a day full of confusion. Like most kids my age, I had started out at school. I arrived at 8:00 like I normally do. Let's just say that the day took a weird turn right before I headed to the cafeteria for lunch. Right before lunch, I had taken a really complicated math test, and I was worried that I had failed it, which would be unacceptable. Failing a test would mean that I had disappointed my parents. They would say to me something like, "Jack, education is the most important part of a young man's life," and yes, I would agree that education is important, but really? Did I have to be lectured about this every single time I failed a test?

Okay, back to the weirdness. I was at my locker, gathering the materials I'd need for my next class when I noticed that the inside of my locker was glowing. That was a little unusual. I'd never even *heard* of a locker that glowed before. Unfortunately, my curiosity got the best of me and I reached out to touch the light. BAD IDEA. It's never a good idea to try to touch a mysterious blue light. As soon as my hand made contact with the light, my head started spinning. I immediately felt nauseous and light-headed. I thought I'd explode. My locker sucked me in, and suddenly I was in a whirlwind. I kept spinning and spinning.

When I stopped spinning, I found myself on a desert island. In the middle of the island was a sign that read:

SOLITUDE ISLAND

Population: You

Number of People: 0

Rooms Available: 1

WELCOME JACK MONTGOMERY. YOU WILL REMAIN HERE FOR ETERNITY

Yeah, that was a little creepy. I had no idea how this place knew who I was. And yes, I realize I was a fifteen-year-old boy who was claiming that an island can know who people are. Also, were there really no other people there? Was I really alone? For some reason, the thought of that was terrifying. I'd never liked solitude. I preferred being around other people since I was a very social person. Being around people brought me joy. I couldn't comprehend the idea that I would be completely alone on the island. No friends. No family. That sucked.

As soon as I thought of my friends and family, I started panicking. They probably had no idea where I was. When I didn't show up at lunch, my friends probably started searching all over for me. They'd have no idea that my locker had swallowed me up and spit me out at a place where I had to be alone for eternity. I had no idea how I would survive being on the island.

Chapter 2: The Dwelling

The first order of business was to find the room that the sign was talking about. If the sign was to be believed, there was only one room available. The fact that it was called a room concerned me. Would I not have a roof over my head? That was hard to fathom. But I needed

shelter, so I tried to see if there was any sort of shack or cottage in plain sight. I started moving in order to locate the shelter mentioned on the sign. As time passed, I started to be overcome with despair because the shelter still refused to show itself. Wait, that didn't make sense. How could a shelter choose to appear? Anyway, I started to think that I would never find the shelter when I finally caught sight of a hut right near a grove of banana trees. That was a pleasant surprise. However, that wasn't what made me stare in wonder. The inside of the hut was vastly different than I thought it would look like.

Honestly, I had assumed that a hut on a desert island would be completely devoid of anything useful. To my complete surprise, the hut was fully equipped with everything and anything I could possibly need. In one of the rooms, there was a wardrobe as well as a king-sized bed. There was also a kitchen fully stocked with a plentitude of fruits and vegetables. I also discovered a pantry with other useful goods. There was rice and pasta and beans and a variety of sweets. Someone had obviously taken the time to prepare for my stay. Of course, that didn't make much sense. How could anyone possibly have known that I was going to arrive here? But then again, someone must've made sure that my locker would transport me here. But who?

Who would want to purposefully transport me to an uninhabited island? Someone obviously thought I had done something so terrible that I needed to be stranded here for eternity. I was honestly stumped. I didn't remember doing anything that would warrant the action taken against me. I had always tried to get along with everyone.

Since I had obviously been here for quite a while, I knew that my friends and family back home had probably started worrying about me. Well, since the sign stated that I'd be here for eternity, I figured I'd better alert my friends and family to the awful situation. So I hunted around the hut for a pen and a piece of paper and started drafting a letter.

Dear Mom, Dad, and Maggie,

Due to unforeseen circumstances, I am now stranded on a desert island with no other inhabitants. Fortunately, I have stumbled upon a lovely hut where I will remain for the duration of my stay. Upon my arrival, I noticed a sign that mentioned that the place I am currently residing at is called Solitude Island. Also, I'm apparently supposed to remain here for all eternity. The one thing that caused me to freak out was that the sign also said, "Welcome Jack Montgomery." Isn't that a little weird? Someone obviously planned to place me here. The fact that someone had me transported here is a little creepy, and frankly, I think this matter should be dealt with at once. It's probably dangerous here. Come immediately.

From, Jack

So then, I had to find a way to get this letter to my mom, dad, and sister Maggie. One issue. I was STRANDED on a DESERT ISLAND perhaps FOREVER with no way of getting the letter anywhere. I looked around hoping to find a... I don't know, a mailbox? Or a post

office? No luck. I sighed with the realization that there was no way for me to communicate with anyone as there wasn't a phone or computer or any electronic device with me on the island. It completely sucked.

I checked the time and was astonished to find out that it was almost dinner time. I didn't think I had been on the island for six hours, but perhaps the walk to find the hut took longer than I thought. I opened the refrigerator and noticed a container of roast chicken. It smelled delicious, and I was starving, so the roast chicken became my dinner. After I had finished dinner, I headed to my bedroom to get situated.

To my surprise, there was a thick folder on the bed. The front of the folder read:

JACK MONTGOMERY, AGE 15

MISSION: To stay at Solitude Island forever

SIBLINGS: Maggie, 15

FATHER: Carter Montgomery

MOTHER: Annabelle Montgomery

This struck me as a little odd. Someone was behind this. Of this, I was certain. There was no other way for this file to appear on this bed. Unless it was magic. I laughed out loud. "Oh, Jack," I thought, "thinking about the possibilities of magic." I knew I wasn't thinking rationally. I opened the file and this is what I read:

Dear Jack,

My name is Clara Anderson. I am responsible for your placement on Solitude Island. I know this has probably come as a bit of a shock to you, but I assure you that it's for the best. It had come to my attention that your friends were quite annoyed with your over-the-top behavior. They felt that your actions were frivolous and distracting. I was called upon to give advice to a highly secretive Committee called How to Deal with Teenage Drama. The leader of the group, Maribel Porter, said that your case was highly unusual and didn't know what to do. Her sister Lotta said that you hadn't done any serious harm and you should remain at your school. Maribel told Lotta that you had infuriated a bunch of people at school and at camp. That's when Lotta suggested that we just silence you, but Gianna Silvestre said that that was a cruel and unusual punishment. Since we couldn't silence you, we decided on a compromise. The compromise was that you'd be sent to Solitude Island for the rest of your life. Lotta agreed on the condition that we

let you communicate with your parents, sister, and your three best friends Cassie, Lillie, and Zak only. Maribel agreed because it meant that you wouldn't cause problems for the other kids. Gianna agreed because it just meant that you'd be alone for a while. I'm sorry you have to deal with this, but I think you'll agree that this is for the best.

FOOD

1. The meals you will eat will be in a sealed container in the refrigerator. Of course, you are welcome to help yourself to any of the other fruits and vegetables and pantry items if you want.
2. To prevent you from overeating, there will be a one hour time frame for each meal. After that, you will be given an activity to do. Also, the refrigerator and pantry will be locked when it is not a meal time.
3. After some time, we will expect you to make your own meals. At that time, you will find cookbooks with recipes that you should be able to follow accurately.

BOOKS

1. In a closet across from your bed, you will find a multitude of books. It is recommended that you read the books we provide for you.
2. Since you will be here for eternity, you will obviously not be attending school, so we have found a solution. Every Monday through Friday, you will be given a lesson to complete. Failure to complete an assignment will result in double the work the next day.
3. You will be expected to keep a journal about your studies.

ACTIVITIES

1. If you ever want to play a board game or a video game, all you have to do is ask.
2. There will be a limited time available for fun. On the weekends, you will have the liberty to do whatever you want, but on the week days, you must complete your lessons before you can move on to games.

Chapter 3: The Second Day

The moment I woke up, I noticed a letter on my bed.

Dear Jack,

I hope your first day was good. I know the adjustment will be hard. Just know that Maribel, Lotta, Clara, and I are here. We want you to

succeed. If you have any questions, contact us immediately. We know your friends {especially Lillie} are annoyed with what we have done. I'm sorry about that but I hope you agree that this is the best option for you. Good luck.

Your friend {hopefully} Gianna Silvestre

I smiled after reading their letter. They wanted me to succeed. It was an amazing feeling. For breakfast, I had a mushroom and pepper omelette because that was what was in the container. After I finished eating, I headed back to my room to see what my assignment would be.

I found a book entitled *The Amazing Route for Love* written by someone named Gabriella Schneider. There was a note on top of the book.

For Jack,

Please read this entire book and then write a play based upon the central theme of the novel. Good luck, from Lotta.

Really? I had to read this entire book? That was totally uncool. How was I supposed to read an entire book and write a play based on the plot in one day? I think they expected too much of me. I'm not that fast a reader.

Dear Jack,

Don't worry. You have until 10 PM to complete the assignment and since you have nothing else to do, you should be able to complete the assignment with little difficulty. Better start reading, Lotta.

That wasn't much of a reassurance. I still didn't think I could complete the assignment. But I figured I'd better complete it in order to avoid double work tomorrow. I took a look at the book and read a quick description of what it was about. Apparently, *The Amazing Route for Love* was a toxic love story between Carolina Simmons and Gabriel Thomas. Carolina and Gabriel had been dating for four years without Carolina realizing that Gabriel had been taking advantage of her. She cried to her older sister Marcy that she didn't know how she was supposed to continue her life.

Well, at least the theme was easy. It was just about a toxic relationship. Maybe there was a chance I could skip the reading part of it. As soon as I thought of that, a message appeared.

Jack,

Nice try. We know exactly what you're thinking and doing. You must read the entire book before you write the play. We will also know when you finish the book. It is now 9 am. You have three hours until lunch time. Get reading.

Maribel

Well, that settled it. Apparently, the ladies knew exactly what I was up to. That was a little unsettling.

Oh, and don't think about asking anyone for help on the assignment.
Maribel

Great. I was basically trapped. I sighed and picked up *The Amazing Route for Love* so I could get on with my life and finally have some fun. It was time to see how Carolina responded to Gabriel's harsh treatment. The first thing I did was check the amount of pages this book had. 511. I'll repeat it. 511! They expected me to read all that and write a play by ten this evening. Great. Well, I'd better get started.

By the time lunch time came around, I had only finished 189 pages.

Dear Jack,

Don't get discouraged. You are doing great. We have shortened your lunch time to half an hour to give you more time to finish the assignment. Only ten more hours to go! We believe in you.

Clara Anderson

After lunch, which was mushroom pizza, I settled back in to finish the book. I finally finished at 4:56 PM. That was just great. I had a little over five hours to write an entire play and that included dinner.

Well, at least the plot was simple. All I had to do was write about a toxic relationship. I wracked my brain and finally an idea came to me. I was going to write about a young girl named Isabella McCain who falls head over heels in love with the most popular guy at her school named Bobby Fluster. Isabella gains the confidence to ask Bobby out and he agrees because he knows that she doesn't know the real him. As time passes, Bobby makes Isabella do a lot of chores that she doesn't feel like doing. When Isabella suggests that they should stop seeing each other, Bobby says that no one will love her if she breaks up with him. Suddenly afraid, Isabella asks her parents to transfer her to a different high school. They agree, but Bobby learns from Isabella's friend Margaret that Isabella has transferred. He transfers to her school and learns that she is now dating a boy named Nicholas Risen. Bobby spreads the rumor that Isabella is only dating Nicholas because being with him wasn't enough. Enraged, Nicholas breaks up with Isabella and she becomes so heartbroken that she drops out of school and becomes an artist instead.

After a dinner of macaroni and cheese, I went back to work and worked as fast as I could. By the time it was 9:45, I had written 68 pages and picked up the pace. Before I knew it, I had finished. It was ten on the dot. I placed the script on my bed and sighed with relief. I had finished the first assignment.

Chapter 6: The First Signs of Despair

Okay. I have been on this island for three months already. You'd think I'd have learned to love this place, but the opposite of that has happened. I HATE this place more than anything.

The solitude is literally driving me insane. I can't live without talking with people. I need my friends and family and I need to get out of here. Of course, I can't admit that to ANYONE. They can't know what I'm going through, and frankly, they wouldn't understand. They keep telling me to find my way, but guess, what? I can't find my way on this barren island. By now, everyone has settled into their normal routines without me. That honestly really hurts. I thought I was important but it seems like nobody really cares about me.

Dear Jack,

Everything is starting to calm down. Nobody asks about you anymore. It's finally peaceful. I no longer have to explain why I don't know what's going on with you. Sure, it's hard, but we'll get through this and so will you.

Maggie

Jack,

Good news! We're putting on The Toxic Relationship of Bella and Bobby next semester. The kids are really excited about it. I hope to play Isabella McCain but Cassie is also hoping for the part. Honestly, I think Emma or Kit might get the part. Obviously, without you here, Tommy's going to play the part of Bobby Fluster. It's strange to think that nobody realizes you're the author of the story. They keep saying things like, "that Jack Montgomery is such a great author. What other plays has he written?" They think you've written hundreds of plays and novels. Well maybe not hundreds but a lot. You're part of this world, though.

Lillie

Chapter 8: The End of the Year

I have been on this island for an entire year now. I don't know how I haven't lost my mind. I think it's just my letters to and from Lillie that have kept me going. I would've lost my mind if it weren't for her. She's been keeping me posted on everything that's been happening at school.

Chapter 10: Letters between Jack and Lillie

Dear Jack,

I'm the lead in your play. Tommy plays the love interest, but it doesn't matter because I know it's acting. I can just pretend he's you. That's the way it has to be. I wish you could see the show but maybe Maggie could take pictures for you and send them to you. Or maybe not. Things are getting easier. I spend a lot of time at your house with Maggie. We talk about you. Maggie is sorry about your solitude and is glad we have this relationship.

Lillie

Jack,

I think your parents know that we're in a semi-relationship because they keep sighing when they look at me. They know this relationship is doomed.

Lillie

Chapter 11: The End of the Assignments

Dear Jack,

CONGRATULATIONS! Now that you have turned eighteen, Clara, Maribel, Gianna, and I can no longer give you assignments. You have completed all of them on time and they have all been accurate. We encourage you to keep writing. Apparently, you have made quite a name for yourself. You are talented and if you continue to pursue your craft, you will get far.

Lotta

My heart leapt as I read Lotta's letter. I was free from doing pointless assignments that didn't teach me anything. I had been on the island for over three years and I was amazed I hadn't lost my mind. Writing to Lillie definitely helped and keeping up with Maggie also gave me determination. Lillie and I faithfully wrote to each other as often as we could. She kept me posted on everything. Zak and Emma went to prom together and Cassie realized that Zak and Emma were perfect for each other. The Theatre Club that Lillie and Maggie created turned out to be quite a success and dozens of girls joined. It brought them closer than ever before and they continued auditioning for all the plays.

Anyway, the news of not having to do any more assignments was great. I had longed for this day for quite a while. It meant I was able to focus on my writing and have other theatres put on my masterpieces. Lotta felt bad about people not remembering me, so she convinced Maribel, Gianna, and Clara that other people should write to me. So I was permitted to communicate with my parents, Maggie, Lillie, Cassie, Zak, Emma, Kit, Tommy, Lila, and Jessie.

Chapter 12: Letters Through the Years

Dear Jack,

I am trying to convince Maribel, Gianna, and Clara to eventually let you off the island. I knew that you and Lillie were fond of each other, so I made sure that you'd be able to write with her. Initially, Clara shut the idea down because she said Lillie wouldn't want to be miserable. I convinced her by saying that you needed friends to talk to. I didn't tell them that I assumed you and Lillie were more than friends because I knew they would stop the two of you from communicating in an instant. When Clara,

Maribel, and Gianna found out about your feelings for Lillie, they wanted to stop it. But, I saw how much you and Lillie cared about each other, so I made sure you'd be able to communicate with her. I know that Lillie is hoping you can get off the island so that the two of you can have a real relationship and I am working on it.

Lotta

Dear Lillie,

Lotta says she will try to convince Clara and Gianna to let me off the island in ten years. Maybe I will be able to see you again. I miss you like crazy some times.

Jack

Chapter 13: Off the Island

Fifteen years ago, I arrived on Solitude Island. I was fifteen then. Now I am a grown man and I am desperate to get off this island. Ten years ago, when I was twenty, Lotta Porter promised that she'd convince Maribel Porter, Clara Anderson, and Gianna Silvestre to let me off the island ten years from then. Maribel, Lotta's sister, agreed right away. It was harder to convince Clara and Gianna, but two years ago, they wrote to tell me that I would soon be able to leave. The only thing missing was how I was supposed to get off this island.

I had arrived here by way of a mysterious blue light emanating from my locker. I guess the most logical explanation for how to get off this island would be to find another glowing blue light. But where should I go?

The reason I have been so desperate to get off this island is because of my friends. I haven't seen them for fifteen years since the only communication I have been able to make has been by letter. That just isn't the same thing. Also, I'm in love with my friend Lillie and the thought of seeing her again in person has kept me going for the last fifteen years. Lillie has been waiting patiently, but I am worried if I'm stuck on this island any longer, she will move on. The thought of that devastates me. Last year, Zak and Emma got engaged. I really want to make it to their wedding which is in three months. Tommy and Kit are also engaged and their marriage is in six months. I need to see them again and I need to see my twin sister Maggie again.

I miss Maggie so much. We've depended on each other a lot throughout the years. Maggie befriended Lillie while I've been missing. I want to see my friends and family again. But first, I have to figure out how to get off the island. Then it hit me. Maybe I only have to retrace my steps. I look around at what had been my home for the past fifteen years and I sort of feel sad that I have to leave it. I smile as I think of all the writing I've done here.

My favorite play I've written here was the first one titled "The Toxic Relationship of Bella and Bobby." My high school even put that one on. At first, Maribel, Lotta, Clara, and Gianna made it so that people would forget about me, but they eventually realized that that was too cruel, so they released it. Now I am famous back home, but I don't even care. I don't write because I wanted fame and fortune, I write because I like it. I say goodbye to the hut and head outside.

I walk and walk until I come to the sign that I saw when I had first arrived here. Except this time, the sign is changed. The last time I was here, the sign read:

SOLITUDE ISLAND

Population: You

Number of People: 0

Rooms Available: 1

WELCOME JACK MONTGOMERY. YOU WILL REMAIN HERE FOR ETERNITY

This time it reads:

SOLITUDE ISLAND

Population: None

Number of people: 0

Rooms Available: 1

GOOD BYE JACK MONTGOMERY. ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

I smile when I read the sign. It is finally time to go home. I walk past the sign and suddenly, I am in a whirlwind. This time, I know what it is. It is taking me back to where I was before.

When I eventually come out of the whirlwind, I find myself in a modern-looking café. I don't know where I am. I sigh and sit down at an open booth. A server comes by and brings me a glass of water and a menu. It is good to be back where I belong. A minute later, I notice a young woman enter the café. I feel a jolt of recognition. She glances my way and shock covers her face. Her eyes widen and I knew she recognizes me.

Before I know it, she is walking towards me. It has been fifteen years, but I recognize her. Lillie. She comes faster and before I know it, she is beside me. She is beautiful. Her eyes are glowing and so does her glossy, brown hair.

"Hi, Lillie. Long time no see," I say casually.

"Jack Montgomery. You're finally back," says Lillie.

And then she kisses me. I guess I had been expecting that. I wrap my arms around her and it's clear that we will always be together. She eventually pulls back with a huge grin on her face.

"You have no idea how long I've wanted to do that," says Lillie.

"I'd say fifteen years, give or take," I say.

Lillie laughs. Her laugh is music to my ears. I missed her so much.

"Everyone will be thrilled to know that you've returned," says Lillie.

"I know. I've been waiting forever," I reply.

"You're a fantastic writer, Jack. You're a celebrity now," she says.

"I know. You've been telling me everything," I say.

"Only because I care," she tosses back.

"I've thought about you a lot," I say.

"And I, you," she says.

I smile. It's time for my confession.

"I love you, Lillie. It's been that way for a long time," I say.

"I love you, but you already knew that," says Lillie.

“Lillie?” I ask tentatively.

“Yes?” she asks.

“Will you marry me?” I ask.

Lillie’s eyes widen. She looks at me like I am crazy.

“Are you kidding me, Jack Montgomery? Of course I will!” she says.

I know now the real reason I had been put on Solitude Island in the first place. I had never truly cared about much before this. But now I know the meaning of love. I know how much people care about me. I know that my time on Solitude Island hadn’t been for nothing. I am ready to start a new life. With Lillie.

THE END