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CHAPTER 1

APRIL LOGAN

LUSTING OVER YOUR BEST FRIEND'S GIRLFRIEND SUCKS.

First off, there's the awkward factor. As in, it's really fucking awkward. I can't speak for all men, but I'm pretty sure that no guy wants to leave his bedroom and bump into the girl of his dreams after she's just spent the whole night in his best friend's arms.

Then there's the self-loathing element. This one's a given, because it's kind of hard not to hate yourself when you're fantasizing about the love of your best friend's life.

At the moment, the awkwardness is definitely winning out. See, I live in a house with very thin walls, which means I can hear every breathy moan that leaves Hannah's mouth. Every gasp and sigh. Every thump of the headboard smacking the wall as someone else screws the girl I can't stop thinking about.

Fun times.

I'm on my bed, flat on my back and staring up at the ceiling. I'm not even pretending to scroll through my music library anymore. I popped the earbuds in with the intention of drowning out the sounds of Garrett and Hannah in the other room, but I still haven't pressed Play. I guess I'm in the mood to torture myself tonight.

Look, I'm not an idiot. I *know* she's in love with Garrett. I see the way she looks at him, and I see how they are together. They've been a couple for six months now, and not even I, the worst friend on the planet, can deny they're perfect for each other.

And hell, Garrett deserves to be happy. He plays it off like he's a cocky sonofabitch, but truth is, he's a goddamn saint. The best center I've ever skated with and the best person I've ever known, and I'm comfortable enough with my hetero status to say that if I did play for the other team? I wouldn't just fuck Garrett Graham, I'd *marry* him.

That's what makes this a trillion times harder. I can't even hate the dude who's tapping the chick I want. No revenge fantasies to be had, because I don't hate Garrett, not in the slightest.

A door creaks open and footsteps echo in the hallway, and I pray to God that Garrett or Hannah doesn't knock on my door. Or open their mouths, for that matter, because hearing either of their voices right now will only bum me out even more.

Luckily, the loud knock that rattles my doorframe comes from my other roommate, Dean, who waltzes inside without waiting for an invitation. "Party at Omega Phi tonight. You down?"

I dive off my bed faster than you can say *pathetic*, because a party sounds like a fan-fucking-tastic idea right about now. Getting wasted is a surefire way to stop myself from thinking about Hannah. Actually, no—I want to get wasted *and* screw someone's brains out. That way if one of those activities doesn't help me with my don't-think-about-Hannah goal, the other can serve as backup.

"Hell yeah," I answer, already fumbling around for a shirt.

I slip a clean T-shirt over my head and ignore the twinge of pain in my left arm, which is still sore as shit from the bone-jarring body check I took at the championship game last week. But the hit was totally worth it—for the third consecutive year, Briar's hockey team secured another Frozen Four victory. I guess you can call it the ultimate hat trick, and all the players, myself included, are still reaping the rewards of being three-time national champions.

Dean, one of my fellow defensemen, calls it the Three P's of Victory: parties, praise, and pussy.

It's a pretty fair assessment of the situation, because I've been on the receiving end of all three since our big win.

"You gonna be the DD?" I ask as I throw a black hoodie over my T-shirt and zip it up.

My buddy snorts. "Did you really just ask me that?"

I roll my eyes. "Right. What ever was I thinking?"

The last time Dean Heyward-Di Laurentis was sober at a party was *never*. Dude drinks like a fish or gets higher than a kite every time he leaves the house, and if you think that affects his performance on the ice in any way, then think again. He's one of those rare creatures who can party like past-day Robert Downey Jr. and somehow be as successful and revered as *present*-day Robert Downey Jr.

"Don't worry, Tuck's the DD," Dean tells me, referring to our other roommate, Tucker. "The pussy's still hungover from last night. Said he needs a break."

Yeah, I don't exactly blame him. Off-season training doesn't start for another couple of weeks, and we've all been enjoying the time off a little too much. But that's what happens when you're riding a Frozen Four high. Last year after we won, I was drunk for two weeks straight.

I'm not looking forward to the off-season. Strength and conditioning and all the hard work it takes to stay in shape are exhausting, but it's even more exhausting when you're working ten-hour shifts at the same time. It's not like I have a choice, though. The workouts are necessary prep for the upcoming season, and the work, well, I made a promise to my brother, and no matter how sick to my stomach it makes me, I can't renege on it. Jeff will skin me alive if I don't fulfill my end of the deal.

Our designated driver waits at the front door when Dean and I come downstairs. A reddish-brown beard devours Tucker's entire face, giving him a werewolf vibe, but he's been determined to try out

this new look ever since a chick he met at a party last week told him he had a baby face.

"You know that Yeti-beard doesn't make you look more manly, right?" Dean says cheerfully as we walk out the door.

Tuck shrugs. "I was going for rugged, actually."

I snicker. "Well, it's not that, either, Babyface. You look like a mad scientist."

He flips up his middle finger as he heads for the driver's side of my truck. I settle in the passenger seat while Dean climbs into the pickup bed, saying he wants some fresh air. I think he just wants the wind to mess up his hair in that tousled, sexed-up way girls drop their panties for. FYI—Dean is nauseatingly vain. But he also looks like a male model, so maybe he's allowed to be vain.

Tucker starts the engine, and I drum my fingers against my thighs, itching to get going. A lot of students in the Greek system piss me off with their elitist attitudes, but I'm willing to overlook that because...well, hell, because if party-throwing was an Olympic sport? Every frat and sorority house at Briar would be a gold medalist.

As Tuck reverses out of the driveway, my gaze rests on Garrett's black Jeep, all shiny in its parking space while its owner spends the night with the coolest girl on the planet and—

And *enough*. This obsession with Hannah Wells is really starting to mess with my head.

I need to get laid. ASAP.

Tucker is noticeably quiet during the drive to Omega Phi. He might also be frowning, but it's hard to tell considering someone shaved off all of Hugh Jackman's body hair and pasted it on Tuck's face.

"What's with the silent treatment?" I ask lightly.

His gaze shifts toward me to offer a sour look, then shifts right back to the road.

"Oh, come on. Is this about all the shit we're giving you about the beard?" Exasperation shoots through me. "Because that's like the

first chapter of *Beards for Dummies*, bro—if you grow a mountain man beard, your friends will make fun of you. End of chapter."

"It's not about the beard," he mutters.

I wrinkle my forehead. "Okay. But you *are* pissed about something." When he doesn't respond, I push a little harder. "What's going on with you?"

His annoyed eyes meet mine. "With me? Nothing. With *you*? So much I don't even know where to start." He curses softly. "You need to stop this shit, man."

Now I'm genuinely confused, because as far as I can tell, all I've done in the past ten minutes is look forward to a party.

Tucker notices the confusion on my face and clarifies in a grim tone, "This thing with Hannah."

Although my shoulders stiffen, I try to keep my expression vague. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

Yup, I've chosen to lie. Which is nothing new for me, actually. It seems like all I've done since I came to Briar is lie.

I'm totally destined for the NHL. Going pro all the way!

I love spending my summer as a grease monkey in my dad's shop. It's great pocket money!

I'm not lusting over Hannah. She's dating my best friend!

Lies, lies, and more lies, because in every one of those instances, the truth is a total bummer, and the last thing I want is for my friends and teammates to feel sorry for me.

"Save that bullshit for G," Tucker retorts. "And by the way? You're lucky he's distracted with all this lovey-dovey stuff, because if he wasn't? He'd definitely notice the way you're acting."

"Yeah, and what way is that?" I can't stop the edge in my voice or the defensive set of my jaw. I hate that Tuck knows I have feelings for Hannah. I hate even more that he finally decided to bring up the subject after all these months. Why can't he leave it alone? The situation is already shitty enough without having someone call me on it.

"Seriously? Do you want me to list it off for you? Fine." A dark cloud floats through his eyes as he begins to recite every fucking thing I've felt so guilty about. "You leave the room whenever the two of them enter it. You hide in your bedroom when she stays over. If you guys *are* in the same room, you stare at her when you think nobody is looking. You—"

"Okay," I interrupt. "I get it."

"And don't get me started on your man-whoring," Tucker grumbles. "You've always been a player, but dude, you've hooked up with five chicks this week."

"So?"

"So it's *Thursday*. Five girls in four days. Do the fucking math, John."

Oh shit. He first-named me. Tucker only calls me John when I've *really* pissed him off.

Except now he's pissed *me* off, so I first-name him right back. "What's wrong with that, *John*?"

Yup, we're both John. I guess we should take a blood oath and form a club or something.

"I'm twenty-one years old," I continue irritably. "I'm allowed to hook up. No, I *should* be hooking up, because that's what college is all about. Having fun and getting laid and enjoying the fuck out of yourself before you go out in the real world and your life turns to shit."

"You really want to pretend all these hook-ups are just some rite of passage in the college experience?" Tucker shakes his head, then lets out a breath and softens his tone. "You can't screw her out of your system, man. You could sleep with a hundred women tonight and it still wouldn't make a difference. You need to accept that it's not going to happen with Hannah, and move on."

He's absolutely right. I'm well aware that I've been wallowing in my own bullshit and bagging chicks left and right as a distraction.

And I'm equally aware that I need to stop partying myself into

oblivion. That I need to let go of the tiny little sliver of hope that something might happen, and simply accept that it *won't*.

Maybe I'll get started on that tomorrow, though.

Tonight? I'm sticking to my original plan. Get wasted. Get laid. And to hell with everything else.

GRACE

I STARTED MY FRESHMAN YEAR OF COLLEGE AS A VIRGIN.

I'm beginning to think I'll be ending it as one, too.

Not that there's anything wrong with being a card-carrying member of the V-Club. So what if I'm about to turn nineteen? I'm hardly an old maid, and I'm certainly not going to be ashamed of still having an intact hymen.

Besides, it's not like I haven't had opportunities to lose my virginity this year. Since I came to Briar University, my best friend has dragged me to more parties than I can count. Guys have flirted with me, sure. A few of them straight up tried to seduce me. One even sent me a picture of his penis with the caption "It's all yours, baby." Which was...fine, it was super gross, but I'm sure if I'd truly *liked* him, I might have been, um, flattered by the gesture? Maybe?

But I wasn't attracted to any of those guys. And unfortunately, all the ones who *do* catch my eye never even look my way.

Until tonight.

When Ramona announced we were going to a frat party, I didn't have high hopes for meeting anyone. It seems like every time we go to Greek Row, the frat boys just try to sweet-talk me and Ramona into making out. But tonight I've actually met a guy I kinda sorta like.

His name is Matt, he's cute, and he's not giving off any douche-bag vibes. Not only is he somewhat sober, but he also speaks in full sentences and hasn't said the word "broski" even once since we started talking. Or rather, since *he* started talking. I haven't said much, but

I'm perfectly content to stand there and listen, because it gives me time to admire his chiseled jawline and the adorable way his blond hair curls under his ears.

To be honest, it's probably better if I don't talk. Cute guys make me nervous. Like tongued-tied total-brain-malfunction nervous. All my filters shut off and suddenly I'm telling them about the time I peed my pants in the third grade during a field trip to the maple syrup factory, or how I'm scared of puppets and have mild OCD that could possibly drive me to tidy up your room the moment you turn your head.

So yeah, it's better if I simply smile and nod and toss out the occasional "oh really?" so they know I'm not a mute. Except sometimes that's not possible, especially when the cute guy in question says something that requires an actual answer.

"Wanna go outside and smoke this?" Matt pulls a joint from the pocket of his button-down and holds it in front of me. "I'd light it up here but Mr. President will kick me out of the frat if I do."

I shift awkwardly. "Ah...no, thanks."

"You don't smoke weed?"

"No. I mean, I have, but I don't do it often. It makes me feel all...loopy."

He smiles, and two gorgeous dimples appear. "That's kinda the point of weed."

"Yeah, I guess. But it makes me really tired, too. Oh, and every time I smoke it I end up thinking about this Power Point presentation my dad forced me to watch when I was thirteen. It had all these statistics about the effects of weed on your brain cells, and how, contrary to popular belief, marijuana actually *is* highly addictive. And after every slide he'd glare at me and say, *do you want to lose your brains cells, Grace? Do you?*"

Matt stares at me, and in my head there's a voice shouting *Abort!* But it's too late. My internal filter has failed me once again and words keep popping out of my mouth.

"But I guess that's not as bad as what my mom did. She tries to be the cool parent, so when I was fifteen, she drove me to this dark parking lot and pulled out a joint and announced that we were going to smoke it together. It was like a scene out of *The Wire*—wait, I've never actually seen *The Wire*. It's about drugs, right? Anyway, I sat there panicking the whole time because I was convinced we were going to get arrested, and meanwhile my mom kept asking me how I was feeling and whether or not I was 'enjoying the pot.'"

Miraculously, my lips finally stop moving.

But Matt's eyes have already glazed over.

"Uh, yeah, well." He clumsily waves the joint around. "I'm gonna go smoke this. I'll see you later."

I manage to hold in my sigh until he's gone, then release the heavy breath and give myself a mental slap on the wrist. Damn it. I don't know why I bother trying to talk to guys. I go into every conversation nervous I'm going to embarrass myself, and then I end up embarrassing myself because I'm nervous. Doomed from the start.

With another sigh, I head downstairs and search the main floor for Ramona. The kitchen is full of kegs and frat boys. Ditto for the dining room. The living room is packed with very loud, very drunk guys, and a sea of scantily clad girls. I applaud them for their bravery, because the weather outside is frigid and the front door has been opening and closing all night, causing cold air to circulate through the house. Me, I'm nice and toasty in my skinny jeans and tight sweater.

I don't see my friend anywhere. As hip-hop music blasts out of the speakers at a deafening volume, I fish my phone out of my purse to check the time and discover that it's close to midnight. Even after eight months at Briar, I still experience a teeny sense of glee every time I stay out past eleven, which was my curfew when I lived at home. My dad was a real stickler for curfews. Actually, he's a real stickler for *everything*. I doubt he's ever broken a rule in his life, which makes me wonder how he and Mom managed to stay married as long as they did. My free-spirit mother is the polar opposite of

my stuffy, strict father, but I guess that just proves that the whole opposites-attract theory has some merit.

"Gracie!" a female voice shrieks over the music, and the next thing I know, Ramona appears and throws her arms around me in a tight hug.

When she pulls back, I take one look at her shining eyes and flushed cheeks and know she's drunk. She's also as scantily clad as most of the other girls in the room, her short skirt barely covering her upper thighs, her red halter-top revealing a serious amount of cleavage. And the heels of her leather boots are so high I have no clue how she can walk in them. She looks gorgeous, though, and she's drawing a ton of appreciative stares as she links her arm through mine.

I'm pretty sure that when people see us standing side by side, they're scratching their heads and wondering how on earth we could possibly be friends. Sometimes I wonder the same thing.

In high school, Ramona was the fun-loving badass who smoked cigarettes behind the building, and I was the good girl who edited the school newspaper and organized all the charity events. If we hadn't been next-door neighbors, Ramona and I probably wouldn't have known the other existed, but walking to school together every day had led to a friendship of convenience, which had then turned into a real bond. So real that when we were looking at colleges, we made sure to apply to all the same schools, and when we both got into Briar, we asked my father to speak to the residence office and arrange for us to be roommates.

But even though our friendship started off strong this year, I can't deny that we've drifted apart a little. Ramona has been so obsessed with hooking up and being popular. It's all she ever talks about, and lately I'm finding that she kind of...annoys me.

Crap. Even *thinking* it makes me feel like a shitty friend.

"I saw you go upstairs with Matt!" she hisses in my ear. "Did you guys hook up?"

"No," I say glumly. "I think I scared him off."

"Oh no. You told him about your puppet phobia, didn't you?" she demands, before heaving an exaggerated sigh. "Babe, you've gotta stop revealing all your crazy up front. Seriously. Save all that stuff for later, when you're in a relationship with the guy and it's harder for him to run away."

I can't help but laugh. "Thanks for the advice."

"So are you ready to go or should we stay a while longer?"

"I wouldn't mind going now," I admit.

"Yeah, I guess I'm cool with it too."

I raise my eyebrows. "Since when are you cool with leaving a party before midnight?"

A frown puckers her lips. "Not much point in staying. Someone already beat me to him."

I don't bother asking who she's talking about—it's the same guy she's been talking about since the first day of the semester.

Dean Heyward-Di Laurentis.

Ramona has been obsessed with the gorgeous junior ever since she bumped into him at one of the campus coffeehouses. Like seriously obsessed. She's dragged me to almost all the Briar home games just to watch Dean in action. I have to admit, the guy is hot. He's also a major player, according to the gossip mill, but unfortunately for Ramona, Dean doesn't date freshmen. Or sleep with them, which is all she really wants from him anyway. Ramona has never gone out with anybody for more than a week.

The only reason she even wanted to come to this party tonight was because she heard that Dean would be here. But clearly the guy isn't fucking around with that no-freshmen rule. No matter how many times Ramona throws herself at him, he always leaves with somebody else.

"Let me just use the washroom first," I tell her. "Meet you outside?"

"Kay, but be quick. I told Jasper we're leaving and he's waiting in the car."

She darts off toward the front door, leaving me with a prickle of resentment. Nice that she asked me if I wanted to leave when she'd already made the decision for us.

But I swallow the irritation, reminding myself that Ramona has *always* done that, and that it never bothered me in the past. Honestly, if it wasn't for her making decisions and forcing me to step out of my comfort zone, I probably would've spent my entire high school career in the newspaper office, writing the advice column and offering life tips to students without having ever experienced life myself.

Still...sometimes I wish Ramona would at least *ask* me what I thought about something before deciding that we should do it.

The downstairs bathroom has a long line, so I weave through the crowd and head upstairs to where Matt and I had been talking before. I'm just approaching the bathroom when the door swings open and a pretty blond saunters out.

She jerks when she spots me, then offers a smug little smile and adjusts the bottom of a dress that can only be described as *indecent*. I can actually see the crotch of her pink panties.

As my cheeks heat up, I avert my gaze in embarrassment, waiting until she's at the stairs before I reach for the doorknob. I barely get my hand on it when the door opens *again* and someone else walks out.

My gaze collides with the most vivid blue eyes I have ever seen. It only takes a second for recognition to dawn on me, and when it does, my face burns hotter.

It's John Logan.

Yep, John Logan. A.k.a. the star defenseman of the hockey team. I know this not just because Ramona has been stalking his friend Dean for months, but because his sexy, chiseled face was on the cover of the school newspaper last week. Since the team's championship win, the paper has run feature interviews with all the players, and I'm not going to lie—Logan's interview was the only one I paid any attention to.

Because the guy is smoking hot.

Like the blond, he looks startled to find me in the hallway, and like the blond, he recovers quickly from his surprise and flashes me a grin.

Then he zips up his pants.

Oh my God.

I cannot believe he just did that. My gaze involuntarily drops to his groin, but he doesn't seem bothered by that either. He cocks a brow, shrugs, and then walks away.

Wow. Okay.

That should have icked me out. Forget the very obvious bathroom hook-up. The zipper move alone should have placed him directly in douchebag territory.

Instead, knowing he'd just fooled around with that girl in the bathroom evokes a rush of jealousy I don't expect.

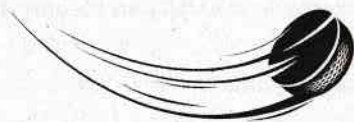
I'm not saying I want to have a random hook-up in a bathroom, but—

Fine, I'm lying. I *totally* want that. At least with John Logan, I do. The thought of his hands and lips all over me unleashes a flurry of hot shivers that shimmy up my spine.

Why *can't* I fool around with guys in bathrooms? I'm in college, damn it. I'm supposed to be having fun and making mistakes and "finding myself," but I haven't done jack shit this year. I've been living vicariously through Ramona, watching my bad girl best friend take risks and try new things, while I, the good girl, stand there clinging to the cautious approach to life that my father drilled into me when I was still in diapers.

Well, I'm tired of being cautious. And I'm tired of being the good girl. The semester is almost over. I have two exams to study for and a psych paper to write, but who says I can't do all that and still squeeze some actual fun in there?

There are only a few weeks left in my freshman year. And you know what? I plan on making good use of them.



CHAPTER 2

LOGAN

I'VE DECIDED TO EASE BACK ON THE PARTYING. AND THAT'S NOT just because I got so trashed last night that Tucker had to haul me over his shoulder and cart me upstairs to my bedroom because I was too dizzy to walk.

Though that *was* a major factor in the decision-making process.

So now it's Friday night, and not only did I turn down a party invite from one of the guys on the team, but I'm still nursing the same glass of whiskey I poured more than an hour ago. I also haven't taken a single hit off the joint Dean keeps shoving in my direction.

We're hanging out at our place tonight, braving the early-April chill as we huddle together in the small backyard. I take a drag of my cigarette while Dean, Tucker and our teammate, Mike Hollis, pass around the joint, and I'm only half-listening to Dean's incredibly raunchy recap of the sex he had last night. My mind keeps wandering back to my own hook-up—the sexy-as-sin sorority sister who'd lured me into one of the upstairs bathrooms and had her way with me.

I might have been drunk and my memory might be a bit hazy, but I definitely remember fingering her until she came all over my hand. And I *absolutely* remember being on the receiving end of a

pretty spectacular BJ. I don't plan on telling Tuck about it, though. You know, since apparently he's keeping a tally of my hook-ups. Nosy bastard.

"Wait, back up. You did what?"

Hollis's exclamation jars me back to the present.

"I sent her a dick pic." Dean says this as if it's something he does every day.

Hollis gawks at him. "Really? You sent her a picture of your junk? What, like some kind of fucked-up sex souvenir?"

"Naah. More like an invitation for another round," Dean answers with a grin.

"How the hell will that make her want to sleep with you again?" Hollis sounds doubtful now. "She probably thinks you're a douche."

"No way, dude. Chicks appreciate a nice cock shot. Trust me."

Hollis presses his lips together like he's trying not to laugh. "Uh-huh. Sure."

I flick my ash on the grass and take another drag. "Just out of curiosity, what constitutes a 'nice cock shot'? I mean, is it the lighting? The pose?"

I'm being sarcastic, but Dean responds in a solemn voice. "Well, the trick is, you've gotta keep the balls out of it."

That gets a loud hoot out of Tucker, who chokes mid-sip on his beer.

"Seriously," Dean insists. "Balls aren't photogenic. Women don't want to see them."

Hollis's laughter spills over, his breaths coming out in white puffs that float away in the night air. "You've put a lot of thought into this, man. It's kinda sad."

I laugh too. "Wait, is that what you do when you're in your room with the door locked? Take photos of your cock?"

"Oh, come on, like I'm the only one who's ever taken a dick pic."

"You're the only one," Hollis and I say in unison.

"Bullshit. You guys are liars." Dean suddenly realizes that