

11 | Warning Labels

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Much love

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Chapter 11: Warning Labels

4

"Are you the girl living with Luke Dawson?"

101

"Oh my god, it must be torture for him."

375

"He'll have to carry the team. You're an uncoordinated nerd. Poor Luke."

773

If they weren't insulting me, I would've laughed at that. Anyone who knows Luke Dawson would never pity him. He has enough of an over-inflated ego to lift an air balloon.

67

Weird to think I might be in the category of people who know him. He's the most talked about guy at camp, at school, wherever he goes. People idolize him, fantasize about him... but they love the idea of him. Who genuinely knows him?

248

If I think about it, in all the time I've spent with him, he hasn't revealed anything about himself.

33

He's mysterious and guarded and I don't know why.

182

I returned to our little oasis in Apple Cabin. Far away from the critical looks and mean gossip. Nowadays, I was either completely ignored or at the butt of most jokes. Khloe had spread the news that I was Luke's co-counselor and some people had seen us talking on the baseball pitch.

54

I replayed his words in my head, you're going to let something good slip through your fingers.

223

Maybe that's something I should learn from him. How to push for what I want.

56

I stepped into the cabin and took my shoes off by the door.

7

"Our comedic muse is back."

365

I blinked once. I blinked twice.

44

Austin Taylor was in our kitchen. He was sitting in a wooden chair with a charismatic grin on his face, entertained by my presence. He liked the chaos I caused at The Surfside Shack, but I didn't expect this warm greeting. I've met people many times before they even remember my name.

177

"Austin, what are you doing here?"

6

"You broke Luke's laptop," he said and held up a box with a Lenovo Yoga logo.

283

Luke's sparkling new laptop delivery.

2

I glanced over at Luke, who was leaning back against the kitchen counters, his arms crossed over his strong chest. A black shirt hugged the muscles around his torso and his blue eyes were a striking contrast.

35

He saw me looking and smirked. "Millie and I are still settling her debt."

9

"We're working on it," I muttered.

7

One bizarre favor at a time.

38

I walked to one of the cupboards to see if our camping bags were there. Mr Woodhouse had given an announcement this morning about our camping trip tomorrow and I wanted to get ready. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail and, right now, that likelihood is like 100%.

64

Maybe that should be my warning label.

1

Luke's is **too hot to touch**.

38

Mine is **100% likely to fail**.

14

"Woah, woah, where you going Millie? I just got here. You not gonna hang?"

226

I stared at Austin, surprised that he wanted to hang out with me. Austin Taylor has many friends. Did he really truly actually truthfully enjoy having me around? Maybe it was to laugh at me.

201

I glanced over at Luke. I'd gotten comfortable around him, he was like my compass for what I should do in these situations. It's silly I know, but I'm not used to 98% of all social scenarios. And he was.

58

"You packing for the trip?" Luke asked, seeing through my intentions, "Why don't you do it out here?"

107

That was a good idea. If I was focused on something, I wouldn't act as weird as I usually do. The camp had provided us with bags, a tent body, poles and other so materials relating to the tent.

26

While Austin and Luke were catching up, I noisily dragged all these items into the kitchen – per Luke's idea. I dropped the poles and they clanged loudly against the floor. I tripped over my sleeping bag and I got so caught up in the tent body it almost suffocated me.

236

Every time I dropped-tripped-skipped-fumbled, Luke and Austin would glance over to check that I was still alive. Two arms, two legs, OK... and then they would continue talking.

722

"She said I was emotionally unavailable," Austin shrugged, "So I told her she was right, but that I can be physically available."

753

"Generous."

83

"I thought so too, man. She said I was the best she ever had, and I said why use the past tense when I can be very present?"

364

Please let me unhear this conversation.

178

I dragged my empty camping bag to the kitchen and emptied two boxes of protein bars into it. I felt Luke's eyes on me. Ignoring him, I stuffed a fleece jacket and pants on top.

18

Austin continued, "She tried to color coordinate our outfits. Why do girls do that? Can-"

149

"One second," Luke interrupted his friend.

42

He stood up and came over to me, grabbing the bag out of my hands, "That's not how you pack. Don't put the protein bars at the bottom."

208

"Why not?"

109

"They'll be crushed and hard to reach." He turned the bag upside down and emptied the entire thing. I watched all my work dissolve in a pile on the floor.

120

He grabbed my clothes and started to do it for me. "Put so gear at the bottom to create shock-absorption for your back. Then the bulky items in the middle," he told me, his hands moving slowly as he packed, "it's a stable center of gravity. Things you need to access easily go on the top, like the protein bars."

675

He glanced up and saw my stunned face.

10

I'm not going to lie. I was surprised.

53

Surprised by how capable he was and surprised that he would care to show me. I think he realized that too because he then said, "You can do the sleeping bag yourself. It's got a separate compartment."

29

He handed me the bag and went back to his chair. Austin gave him a weird look, but the look Luke shot him back ended any comment before it was spoken. A firm 'don't go there' and Austin dropped it. He went back to discussing his love life.

111

"I still have my eye on Miss McKinney," he said.

152

"Our English teacher?"

229

"She's engaged," I commented, hoping as I tried to roll my sleeping bag into a tiny ball and stuff it into my backpack.

84

I didn't realize I said that out loud. I wasn't a real part of their conversation, though I'd been listening the whole time.

100

The boys stared at me.

63

You know, packing is not easy. I pushed the sleeping bag down with all my might until it fit. Finally, I zipped the bag shut and stepped back, victorious, onto one of the poles – almost falling back like a cartoon animal sliding on a banana peel.

66

Luke stared at me, still focused on what I had just said. "You go to our high school?"

2.4K

Yes, Luke Dawson. We've been in the same class since kindergarten.

895

You never noticed.

1.4K