

18 | Sidechick

Settle in with a cool drink, this chapter is a long one. Enjoyy 177

Chapter 18: Sidechick

188

Things were tense between us. We've had a lot of fights in our short time together, but this one was real. Luke had turned back into the unapproachable Greek god that I used to watch from the house next door.

175

"Are you sure you don't want to stay?" I asked Austin, as he was getting into his car, "We need an ombudsman."

187

New word... it's going in all my school essays. Henceforth, the ombudsman...

151

"You managed to mess things up right after I told you not to underestimate him."

176

"What are you talking about?" I asked.

131

"I'm telling you not to judge before you know the whole story. With the way Luke acts, it's easy to think he doesn't have feelings. You hurt him."

203

"How? He doesn't even like me."

242

"You two make a good team. He had your back, didn't he?" Austin asked me.

80

Austin didn't know about the grizzly bear or our late-night convos, but he knew Luke well enough to guess something like it. And what Austin didn't say - but what was le in the air between us - is how I didn't have Luke's back. I should have.

14

"We're having a party for the campers tomorrow night. If you're free, you should come," I invited him.

12

"Sounds incredibly lame," he said, reminding me of our difference in social status.

144

He goes to parties with people our own age.

13

It made me wonder whether Luke was going to attend. As counselor, he was meant to. But as Luke... one never knows.

15

Austin's characteristic smirk returned as he fired up the engine. "You'll figure it out, Millie. You'll pull something crazy out of the bag and Luke will cave."

191

I was grateful for Austin's faith in me, but I wasn't sure if I had acted wrong. Luke dumped Tamara. That's the only fact I had. It sounded like she really liked him, and he didn't seem too hung up over their break up.

119

I've seen a lot of girls go in and out of his house over the years. So I am not convinced of Austin's version of the truth.

61

He talks a good game, but I'm watching how Luke plays.

27

**

14

It was night time and I'd turned the lights off in the campers' room, so they would fall asleep. After all the drama today, I wished I was 8-years-old again. When everything was clear cut and morals were clearly defined.

94

The bad guys were bad and the good were... Disney princesses.

279

I was about to turn in myself when I heard noise from the campers' room. I turned the lights back on and saw Malik jump under the covers. Alicia ran to her bed but didn't make it before the lights turned on.

165

"What's going on here?" I asked, "You should be sleeping."

1

A girl giggled. A couple others followed.

1

"Malik is learning how to dance," Tony told from his bunk bed.

160

The kids sssshed him. Tony didn't say more.

11

Then I felt a tall, strong body behind me. "Tell us why."

150

The giggling and sssh's stopped as soon as they heard Luke's voice.

13

Us.

155

I liked the way it sounded. And I really liked how he still said useven when he's mad at me.

53

"Nothing," Malik said at the same time as Alicia revealed, "He likes a girl."

195

A pillow flew across the room and landed on Alicia's bed.

10

She ignored it, "Malik wants to ask her to the dance tomorrow, but he doesn't know how."

135

"Everyone go to sleep," Luke said, "Malik, come over here."

293

Malik crept out of his bunk-bed as nine pairs of eyes watched him. He joined us at the door. Luke switched the lights off and brought Malik into the living room with us, while the rest of the campers went to sleep.

74

Both Luke and I had seen the older boys bully Malik for trying to play sports with them. That's why I agreed with what Luke was about to do. Or at least, I think I did. I wasn't exactly sure what he had in mind.

1

"How are you going to ask her out?"

16

"I get too nervous to speak with her," Malik answered, looking between Luke and me.

194

"How will she know you like her if you don't speak to her?" I asked.

10

He shrugged and stared down at his shoes. "I don't know. I've tried to every day, but I don't have the words."

99

"You don't need words," Luke answered and opened the front door, "Come on"

91

"You can't go out," I argued, "He doesn't have his shoes and it's past his bed-"

110

The pleading look Malik gave me was enough to silence me. I let him go with Luke and I went over to the window to see what they were doing. I guess if anyone could show him how to get a girl, it would be Luke.

51

Outside, a half moon hung in the night sky. Luke knelt down to Malik's height and was saying something to him. Then he pointed at the bushes and Malik walked towards them.

66

Malik inspected the different flowers and finally pointed at a rose. I looked back at Luke and was surprised that, this whole time, he was looking at me. His blue gaze hit me like a bolt of lightning. I was suddenly grateful for the distance - the window - in between us.

671

Malik pointed and called out Luke's name, which pulled him out of his fixed gaze. Luke went over to Malik and I had to look away. I didn't like where my emotions were taking me. We were supposed to be helping Malik express his feelings... not work on building mine.

18

**

70

"Dupree, is there anything you could do instead of play with your iPad?" I begged.

55

New morning, new argument with Dupree. He was glued to his electronics.

16

"Fish."

51

I stared at him. He'd said one word, while his fingers continued to tap the screen on Llama Spit Spit! It's a game about a spitting Llama.

188

"Fish?" I repeated, "Are you hungry?"

10

"I can fish."

13

I was so desperate for this boy to participate in anyactivity, that I ran out in search of a fishing rod and bait. Returning with the equipment, I let him fish by the lake near our cabin where I could keep an eye on him. While Dupree settled on the dock tonight. I did too, choosing to wear a dress for the first time in months.

118

When the time came, I led them down the wooden pathway to the middle of camp. They were excited for the dance. And Luke was nowhere in sight.

14

**

69

It was no surprise that a barn hall dance organized by Mr Woodhouse would look like something out of a 1980s high school movie. There were pastel colored balloons and a disco ball hanging from the ceiling. Girls sat on the benches while the boys stood awkwardly by the punch bowl.

160

I didn't know who to speak to. Everyone looked so pretty, dressed in their nicest outfits. I felt uncomfortable in my dress, like I was trying too hard to be something I'm not. Pretty.

174

I escaped to the bathroom. No one was inside, so I picked a stall in the middle. I was sitting on the toilet when I heard two girls walk in and speak in hushed tones.

1

"Stacey, you can't post that."

10

"Why? They've broken up because of it. This photo has hurt everyone except for the person it was meant to."

139

"You swore to Luke that you deleted it."

10

"I lied. He won't know. You could post it for me."

14

"Are you crazy? The last thing I want is for Luke Dawson to get a er me."

1

"Liar. You want him to chase you."

1

"Yeah, to sleep with me, not to end me. You saw what he did to Tamara when he found it on her phone."

184

"Sssh, someone's coming. This convo isn't over by the way. Not until the summer starts going in the way we planned it to. I want to start senior year as Luke's side chick."

122

"You could be his main chick now that Tamara's out of the picture."

18

They stopped talking as soon as a group of girls entered the bathroom, oblivious to their conversation. I heard the bathroom stalls bang open and then a knock on my door.

13

"Someone's in this one."

1

"Coming," I said. I quickly flushed and stepped out.

60

I thought Stacey and her friend had le ...

1

But I was wrong.

1

They were standing there, waiting to see who had listened in on their entire conversation.

15

I was so screwed.

191

A/N: Dramaaa. Please don't be a silent reader - comment/vote! I put a lot in and would love the feedback. I'm so grateful for every one who does. Because of you, I made this chapter extra long xxx 187