

## 21 | Photo

oreocamclub, KaniahH, omgthatisrandom, honey\_bunches20 for the great catch, moonbeam78 - thank you!!

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### Chapter 21: Photo

137

Blue lips un-kissed.

1

My lips were blue from the cold lake. And un-kissed because they had been so close to his but just missed .

4

Someone I had mistreated by not trusting - by falling for stereotypes instead of falling for him.

22

Someone so hot it hurt.

6

"Here you go," Tamara handed me a hot cup of tea.

890

I thanked her, confused by everything that had happened. Stacey was taking care of all our campers, settling them in to bed. Alicia and Dupree had taken hot showers and were dressed in warm pajamas and socks.

22

Tamara walked towards Luke, offering him a cup of tea as well. He shook his head and she reached out to touch his arm.

1

"Why is she here?" Tony pointed up at Stacey, as he was being ushered to bed by her.

112

The kids knew why Tamara hung around, but Stacey was new.

6

"Malik asked her to dance," I said. And she'd used it as the perfect excuse to come over and see Luke.

8

Luke's head raised. "Stacey?!" he asked Malik directly, "That's the girl you like?"

299

Welcome to the party, Luke.

95

We probably should've asked that before helping him approach a girl twice his age. Stacey beamed, hoping that Malik's crush on her would make Luke envious.

892

I stared at her like she was insane.

8

She may actually be insane.

48

He's 8-years-old. And Luke is a grown man.

137

"Hey Malik," I whispered, while all the attention was on Stacey, "Come over here."

3

Malik padded over to me in his thick socks.

6

I whispered into his ear, "Can you count to 60 and then distract your girlfriend for a few minutes?"

69

He grinned and nodded. He didn't ask any follow-up questions. Rare

9

A lot of weird things had happened tonight – Dupree's obsession with fishing, Alicia not listening when I asked her to stay at the dance,

Malik's crush on Stacey, Tamara acting like an angel post their near-death experience – but one mystery remained bigger than all.

40

Why Luke broke up with Tamara because of me.

61

Something about a photo.

304

I sipped my tea as I walked over to the sink. Stacey was by the kitchen counter now, listening to the conversation around her while she absentmindedly scrolled through Instagram. Her phone was on the table and her manicured nail tapped the screen.

22

"In all this madness," Tamara declared, "is anyone going to ask why an 8-year-old was fishing in the middle of the night?"

157

She had a point.

3

It was my fault. I should've let him stick to his iPad. Two kids almost drowning is what I get for trying to be a proactive counselor.

1

"57 mississippi, 58 mississippi, 59 mississippi, 60," Malik counted a little bit louder than I expected, "Stacey! Can I show you the camper's leaderboard? I got 4 stars this week for winning games."

218

She looked up and smiled at Malik, agreeing to see the leaderboard on the other side of the room.

22

"Do you also want to see it Luke?" she asked flirtatiously.

89

He's seen it. He lives here. Keep moving, girl.

293

She left her phone by the counter as Malik lead her over. Before the phone could lock, I slid across to where she had been and quickly double tapped the screen.

44

I accidentally liked a picture of a cat in toilet paper.

278

I clicked out of her Instagram, and slid the phone on the counter. I turned my back on everyone else as I opened her camera roll. This was sneaky I'll admit, but Stacey had covertly taken a photo of me that she was planning to use for extortion/humiliation/defamation of character.

9

The photo had been taken on the camping trip yesterday so it couldn't be too far back.

1

I underestimated Stacey's fondness for selfies.

1

There were 25 from today only.

70

And then...

1

I found it. I stared at it. My instinctual reaction was to scream. But I contained myself. I knew it was the one as soon as I came across it.

5

It was a picture of me.

51

That night on the camping trip, after the bear had mauled my bag with my clothes inside, I didn't have anything to change into at night.

So I wore a fleece over my bra and slept like that. The girls had unzipped my sleeping bag (which is why so many bugs bit me) and unzipped my fleece so that my body was bare, and my bra was showing.

1.6K

They then took a photo shoot of me like that.

46

They put a \$1 bill in my bra and captioned the photo about me being a stripper. A comatose stripper.

1.1K

I felt mortified and harassed. Nothing about this environment felt like a safe space anymore.

44

With shaky fingers, I deleted all the photos of me. I didn't care if Stacey found out I was in her phone. I didn't care if she already had backup. I wanted it gone from my view. I wanted to yell at her.

261

My eyes stung with unshed tears. I put the phone back on the counter and leaned over the kitchen sink. I took a deep breath to steady myself emotionally and turned around.

174

Blue eyes were on me.

155

I felt them sink into me and as I looked up, I locked gaze with Luke from across the room.

8

His jaw clenched. He knew.

287

"Everyone out," he growled, "Thanks for the help but get out."

249

The girls were surprised but he walked to the door and held it open for them. They said a few words of goodbye, leaving tea cups on the counter as they left. He closed the door behind them. Malik slipped into his room, the last of the campers to go to sleep.

6

I locked the front door behind the girls.

5

We were alone in the room now; Luke and I. Blankets were discarded over chairs and empty mugs were left on the table.

5

"You saw it?" Luke's voice was a shell of its usual self.

276

I nodded. I didn't really have the words. I was so embarrassed.

8

He let me take my time. I wrapped the blanket tightly around my shoulders, "I'm sorry."

1

"Why are you apologizing?" His blue eyes stared deeply into mine, "It's not your fault."

28

He closed the distance between us in two long strides.

24

"I reacted quickly against you. I judged you wrong."

42

I remembered how quickly I had insulted him. I told him he used girls... when really he was protecting one. Me.

32

The blanket slipped from my shoulders and he caught it, wrapping it securely back around me.

125

"You didn't," he said, "I'm exactly what you said I was. I avoid relationships and I hurt girls by doing that."

56

It's funny how he avoided the word player because that's exactly what he was describing.

89

"I just wasn't doing it this time," he smirked.

1

"You're feeling smug about that aren't you?"

2

"It's not every day you apologize."

3

"Don't get used to it."

4

"Too late."

8

I couldn't help but smile. There it was again. Luke's ability to take me out of any bad mood.

210