

Best Friends Forever

By Tabitha

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I would just like to say that this is the whole story. There will be some grammar and Spelling mistakes because I have dyslexia. Please be honest but there is not much need to point out spelling and grammar. I have a number of other stories but I have been told by reviewers that this is my best story.

Best Friends Forever

Introduction

Anastasia looked herself up and down making sure her school uniform looked perfect. It was her first day at senior school. A number of different emotions were running through her head. She was nervous but was also excited. It might be her first day in the senior school but her best friend Frankie would be there. "Anna your sister has already left. Are you meeting Frankie at the end of the road?" Mrs. Jones called up to her recently turned eleven year old daughter. "Anastasia Jones! You had better not be walking to school with Francesca and two boys! I like Francesca but not the boys she hangs out with. Remember no make up till you are at least a teenager!" Mr. Jones yelled making himself as clear as possible.

Frankie stood at the end of the road waiting for her best friend. She knew Anna was probably just adjusting her hair or trying to hide her make-up in her school bag. She didn't mind waiting she was already waiting for her twin brother and his best friend. She secretly hoped that Jerry her twin brother's best friend would arrive before her brother. He was after all her male best friend. Charles her twin brother was an annoyance. Anna was her best friend and had been for just over six years.

Caitlyn stared out the back of her mother's car as she was driven away from her old life. She had been dragged out of the house so quickly she had barely had a chance to get dressed let alone grab any of her possessions. After all it was only eight in the morning. She didn't understand why they had to leave so early her father wouldn't be back for at least another four hours. "Mum why are we leaving so early and with none of our clothes?" Where are we going anyway? Caitlyn asked from the backseat. It was weird her parents were not together anymore but they still lived together.

Belinda sat at the table listening or at least half listening to her parents. They were telling her that in a week she would be started senior school. It had something to do with her current school not working her hard enough. Belinda didn't believe this for two seconds. The real reason she was changing schools was because her parents had fallen out with the head teacher. She started to eat her breakfast as her parents started talking about the school uniform.

Now that the characters are introduced I can start writing chapter one which should be up sometime next week I hope. Please R&R. And if you can R&R my other stories as well. These four characters are based on my friends so if you are my mates please try and guess which one you are. Thank you.

Chapter One

Anastasia didn't even bother to answer her father's question. She also ignored the fact that he had called Frankie, Francesca. Glancing at her wrist watch she saw that it was nearly ten past eight, muttering a swear word under her breath she grabbed her lip balm and stuffed it into the side pocket of her school bag before running down the stairs. As she reached the bottom of the stairs she noticed her father was standing by the front door. "Anastasia, I asked you a question. That means you are to answer me. Do you understand?" Mr. Jones said with a very annoyed look on his face. "Dad come on you know I walk to school with Frankie, Jerry and Charles. Jerry is starting at the new boarding school that is just down the road from school. Charles goes to the school across the road from ours. If it makes you happy though dad I will not speak to either of the boys." Anastasia finished giving her father a quick peck on the cheek and leaving the house before he could say anything.

As she walked down the road she started to think about what being a senior would mean for her and Frankie. For years the two had not really had a very good time at school. Although Anastasia felt it was worse for her. After all her big sister was popular and bad. Whereas Anastasia always tried to keep out of trouble and do her home work. This didn't exactly make her popular at school or at home.

Her older sister Claire who had just recently had her sixteenth birthday was considered by their parents to be a perfect little angel. She never got into trouble and as far as their parents knew she had never had a boyfriend. Claire was only interested in her studies and getting straight A's. They had never questioned why Claire was so popular but Anastasia knew. She had tried telling her parents once that Claire was a very bad girl around her friends and boys. Her good side was just for the adults. She had expected for Claire to get grounded or yelled at but it never happened. She was grounded for two weeks for spreading lies and she was only five years old at the time.

Clearing her mind of all bad thoughts she began to think about the good thing she and her sister had done together. She thought with all her might but nothing came to mind and so she thought about the benefits of being in senior school. There was when she thought about it a lot of good things that went with being in senior school. One of the best things in her opinion anyway was that they could hang out with the boys at lunch time. Spending time with boys meant she got to spend more time with Charles her secret crush of the last twelve days. The second good thing about senior school was new teachers and potentially new pupils which could mean new friends. She came up with many other good things about starting senior school and the only negative side she could think of was that her sister had yet to leave the school.

Francesca stood at the end of the road glancing at the time. She was used to Anastasia running late but

they were meant to be at school by half eight. As she glanced at her watch she saw it was nearly quarter past eight and if she didn't get here soon Frankie just knew they would be late. She began to pace partly to keep warm and partly just so she had something to do. As she paced she heard footsteps. They weren't light so they couldn't have been Anna's. She turned her head towards the sound and saw Jerry running towards her with Charles just slightly behind.

She lowered her head so that Jerry wouldn't think she had been staring at him. As he came closer she felt her cheeks heat up and so did the only thing she could think of. She walked away from him towards her brother and ignored Jerry when he followed her.

“Charles maybe you should go on ahead? I have to wait for Anna and I don't want to make you late as well.” Francesca told her brother before walking back to the end of the road and her school bag. “Francesca your friend will be here soon and we are not late yet. So don't worry about making your brother late.” Charles told his sister deliberately using her full name just like she had done.

Francesca looked at her brother as though she was going to argue but saw the determined look in his eyes. “Fine but don't say anything to Anna. Also neither of you is to call her Anastasia.” Francesca gave her brother the same look. While waiting for Anna to show she started to think about her older brothers and where they might be. Having five older brothers it was hard keeping track of all of them.

Mark her thirteen year old brother was either at school or on his way. He wouldn't come the same way as her and Charles. He was now too old to hang around with his baby brother and sister.

Simon her fifteen year old brother was most likely with his friends already at school. He was a bad boy who got detention at least once a month. However he enjoyed doing school work and that was just one of the reasons he had to do their home work.

Richard her seventeen year old brother would be at work. He worked in a book store and would often bring a book home for Francesca. He enjoyed working in the book store because he was near his older twin brothers Jason and Sampson.

Jason and Sampson the nineteen year old twins who had always looked after Francesca and Charles were in the restaurant they worked at. They had both left early so hadn't got a chance to wish Frankie and Charles good luck with their first day at senior school. To make it up to them one of them would greet them after school.

Caitlyn looked at her mother just waiting for an answer that she was sure was not going to come any time soon. When she was proven right she signed as loudly and dramatically as she could. She knew it wouldn't work but she tried anyway. She decided to try a couple more times just to try and get her mother's

attention. By the fourth time she wasn't really trying to get her mother's attention but just something to say. Caitlyn I understand you have questions. I promise I will answer all of them when we stop for lunch. That should be within the next half an hour or so. I am hungry as you but we have to find a place to eat. Mrs. Summers said to her daughter.

She wanted to tell her daughter more but the car was no place to discuss such things. She was going to tell her daughter everything once they found a restaurant or small cafe. It wasn't the best place to tell her daughter that she was going to be starting a new life.

It was over an hour later when they finally found a restaurant. They were sitting at a small booth by the window. Outside it had begun to rain. Caitlyn started at her mother while sipping her diet coke and waited. After ten minutes of just staring at her mother and her mother just staring back Caitlyn broke the silence.

Mum is you going to tell me why we had to leave the house before eight and why we left without telling dad. I know you guys are always arguing but he is my father and he does need to know where his daughter is. Basically please tell me what is going on and why we are sitting in a restaurant. I mean I should be at school and you should be at work right. Caitlyn asked her mother using her stern voice that meant she wanted an answer and the truth.

Caitlyn the situation with your father is complicated. We left the house early because we are moving. Your father is not coming with us because of the situation. We will not be seeing him for a while. I understand you love your father but he is not my husband anymore and I can't continue to live with him. I found out recently that your father has another child. We were not together at the time. We are going to be living with your half sister and her mother. We will get our stuff back I promise. You are just going to have to trust me on this. Mrs. Summers said to her daughter who was wide eyed by the end of her speech.

Mother and daughter sat in silence for a bit and then the food came. After a while they began to talk about other things until the subject of school came up. Caitlyn found out that she would be starting her new school in about a week. Mum I understand moving school. I even in a way understand moving away from my father, what I don't understand is us moving in with my half sister. Caitlyn asked her mother hoping she would get a straight answer. Caitlyn we are moving in with your half sister so you can get to know her. Also her mother is an old friend, and we are not in their house exactly more in the same apartment block.

Belinda finished her breakfast and began to clean up while her parents discussed boys. Figuring that her parents could have the conversation without her she left the room. She headed for her computer in the study and logged on. For the next five days she would be very busy and that meant she wouldn't have time to speak to her friends.

She realized sending her friends and email to say she was moving school was not very nice. However she didn't really have a choice. The way she figured it she would be making new friends soon enough. Once she was done with the emails she spent the rest of the day researching her new school.

As she stared at the computer she thought back to what her parents had said when she had been washing up. "Boys!" Belinda exclaimed out loud there were boys at her new school. That couldn't be right her would never agree to send her to a mixed school. Pulling up the website she noticed that there would be boys around just in a separate building. She liked the idea of being around the boys but not during lesson time.

Sighing she turned the computer and went back downstairs hoping her parents would have begun a different conversation. When she got downstairs there was no sign of her parents. Ignoring a sense that she had been abandoned she went upstairs and started working on her homework. She knew there wasn't much point in doing it but she wanted to stay caught up.

Chapter Two

Anastasia and Francesca walking to school behind Jerry and Charles found themselves talking about the senior school. "Anna my older brother told me last night that once you reach the senior school, that there are two classes for each year group. Do you think it's true or what?" Francesca asked her friend adjusting the straps on her backpack. Anastasia looked at Francesca and then said. "It could be true. But then again it might just be for the boys. I mean they do seem to have different rules to us. Why do you ask any way?" Francesca looked at her friend with the smallest hint of a smile on her face. "Actually Anastasia I was thinking if there are two class rooms for each group we might get separated. That is a downside to having two class groups per year." Francesca said and then seeing Anastasia's eyes begin to water she started talking again. "When there are downsides there are also positive sides. The positive side to having two classes is that we might get separated from Mercedes. Or as you call her the stuck up cow." Francesca finished. Anastasia smiled at the way Francesca could be so care free about their dislike of Mercedes.

Jerry having said goodbye to Charles, Francesca and Anastasia a couple of minutes ago was on his way home. His family were a lot richer than Charles and his family. This didn't stop their friendship in a way it helped it. Jerry and Charles were so different but both enjoyed breaking rules and getting into trouble.

As he walked home he started to imagine what his new school would be like. Starting a new school he knew he knew should be a terrifying situation. He was scared about starting a new school but the scariest thing about starting a new school but the scariest thing about starting the new school was that it was a boarding school. He was looking forward to going to boarding school because he wanted to get away from his family. There was also the fact that every male member of his family had gone to the school. He couldn't deny that he wouldn't miss his old school.

It wasn't so much the school he would miss rather than the pupils. The pupils he would miss the most was Charles after all he was his best friend. He would also miss Francesca although he wasn't going to admit it out loud. He knew that he would still be able to see the twins at the weekend and school holidays but that didn't mean he wouldn't miss them.

Charles having started to run was nearly at the school. To begin with he kept close to his twin sister and her best friend Anastasia. Seeing that they were not going to speed up he told them he had to run on ahead and he would see them at lunch. Seeing the school gates his mind went back to his sister and Anastasia who were still somewhere on the road. He knew though that if they ran the last part of the journey they would make it with time to spare. In the past he had often waited for Francesca and Anastasia. Today though was the first day of senior school and if he was late he would get into a lot of trouble not only at school but at home as well.

Inside the big hall of Mrs. Morrison's school for young ladies, there were about fifteen girls. Their ages ranged between those who had yet to turn eleven and those who had already had their eleventh birthday. Standing in a corner at a distance from the other girls but still close enough to show they should still be there stood three girls. The tallest and obvious leader of the three was talking and her companions nodded with everything they said.

The leader of the three had blonde hair that is just longer than shoulder length. As she looks around the hall she takes note that her enemy Francesca had yet to appear. Her eyes a dazzling sea green looked at her friends in turn waiting for them to say something. When neither of them does or even seemed to acknowledge that she wants them to say something she begins to fiddle with her necklace.

At last they seemed to notice her bright pink necklace with a golden chain. The golden chain shows that she is the leader of the group and so she makes the rules and no one argues with her. Well that is no one in the group argues with her. Francesca has been arguing with her since their kinder garden years.

The two girls standing either side of her had long light brown hair and no one could mistake them for anything but identical twins. Most people can't tell them apart and sometimes even their own father gets them mixed up. This is because they dress identically all the time apart from their necklaces. The girl standing on her leader's right has a bright yellow necklace with an M engraved into it. Her sister standing on their leader's left has a bright orange necklace with a P engraved into it.

Chapter Three

Heads turned as the doors to the big hall opened and Francesca and Anastasia entered the hall.

“Hey Mercedes look who has just entered the hall. You going to say something to them.” Mulan said

looking at her leader with a questioning gaze. Her twin sister Paris stared at her sister and then at Mercedes trying to figure out what Mulan was talking about. Mercedes looked at her friends and then at the doors and who had just entered. She started towards Francesca planning on saying something rude. Out of the corner of her eye she saw a teacher walking onto the stage platform.

“Girls if you would please take a seat. Nearly all of you were in the junior school and so you know most of the teachers. You will not know who I am however. I am a new teacher who is going to be year seven’s class tutor. This just means that I will see you all in the morning and for History and English. Before we take a tour of the senior department you need to know that we will have two new pupils in a couple of days. If you can get into pairs we will start the tour.” Ms. Johnson said and then realising she hadn’t told the girls her name she said. “My name is Ms. Johnson.”

Charles sat in his classroom trying to see if there were any new faces to get to know. He felt it was unfair that the boys had to start work on their first day and the girls started a week later. He turned his head to his left and saw that a boy had taken the seat next to him. He looked at him wondering if he knew the boy and then exclaimed. “Hey James. How are you? Can you believe the girls are on the tour of their school and we are about to start some lessons.” Charles said. “I’m fine. How about you? Well at least they have some work.” James replied. The boys were going to say more but a male teacher entered the room and all the boys fell silent.

Jerry reached his house staring up at the gates. For as long as he could remember he had not liked inviting Frankie and Charles over. It wasn’t that his family didn’t like his friends, it was more the fact that he was so much richer than them. Although neither Charles nor Francesca had ever held it against him. Pushing thoughts of Francesca and Charles to the back of his mind he pushed the buzzer to open the gates. He walked up the path to his house opening the door and walking straight up the stairs to his room. It would be over an hour before his parents even realised he was back. He looked around his room and realised he was going to be very bored very shortly. Exiting his room he walked into his private study turning on his computer. Once his system had booted up he began to play one of his new games. Soon he was engrossed in the game and spent most of the day playing it. Only getting up for lunch and snacks.

“Girls if you would please follow me inside and then I can show you the Biology classroom.” Mrs. Johnson said stepping further into the classroom. Mercedes pushed her way to the front just so she could have the best view. Her followers, Paris and Mulan although Mercedes called them her friends pushed their way to stand either side of her.

Near the back of the queue, Francesca and Anastasia were standing on tip toes to try and see over the top of the girls heads. “Frankie what are we going to do I can’t see into the classroom.” Anastasia said. Francesca looked at her jumping up one last time and then said. “Don’t worry Anna it will be fine. As long as we know our way to each classroom we should be fine.” Anastasia was going to tell Frankie that it was nice to see she was so confident but was stopped from saying a word when the teacher ushered them from the room.

Throughout the day they walked around the school visiting every classroom. Not only did they see every classroom but they met every teacher. By the end of the day all the girls were exhausted from doing nothing at all day.

Francesca and Anastasia walked out of the school together with a plan that Anastasia would come back to Francesca's for a bit. They were laughing and joking about how silly they had been to worry about entering the senior school. Mercedes watch the two friends a hatred for Francesca burning inside her chest. She decided then and there that she would devise a plan that would make Anastasia Jones one of her followers and Francesca Barns the loneliest and depressed girl in the school. She had always known that Francesca and Anastasia should never of been friends to begin with. Calling Mulan and Paris to her sides she started to walk home a plan already beginning to form.

Caitlyn looked from her mother to the time flashing on the cars clock and back to her mother, she could not believe it had taken all day to get to her new home. Although how she could call this place a home was beyond her. It was a two bedroom flat with a kitchen combined with a dinning room and a very small living room. She walked around the small flat shock and disgusted clearly showing on her face. She didn't fully understand why her mother had decided that they needed to move nor why it seemed to be so important for her to get to know her half-sister. However she knew her mother and was therefore certain that moving away from her father was for the best.

Belinda would you please come downstairs. Your dinner is ready. Also your father and I would like to talk to you about your new school. Mrs. Roberts called to her daughter. She had just got off the phone to the headmistress of Belinda's new school, a women by the name of Mrs. Evans who it seemed the school was named after. She had been informed that Belinda would have to begin school before nest Monday or she would be far behind the rest of the girls. They had talked and decided that Belinda would begin on Wednesday the day after tomorrow. Mrs. Roberts wasn't sure what Belinda would think of starting her new school so quickly. There would be no arguments about the situation after all there was nothing either of them could do.

Belinda hearing her mother calling for her to come and get her dinner and something about the school she straightened her hair. She came down the stairs to find her mother and father already sitting at the table waiting for her. Belinda grab your plate and then sit down before the food begins to get cold. Don't just stand there hurry up your mother needs to tell you something. Mr. Roberts yelled angry that he had to wait to start his meal till his daughter was at the table.

Belinda sat down not wanting to anger her father any more than she already had. Sitting down she began to eat her dinner of fish and chips with beans on the side. For a while all was quite at the kitchen table the only sound being made was that of knives and forks scrapping against the plates. Mum you wanted to tell me something about my new school. Is it about the boys and because of them I no longer have to change schools. Belinda asked with just a hint of a smile gracing her lips.

Mrs. Roberts looked at her daughter almost laughing at the way Belinda had asked the question. "Actually Belinda I was going to tell that you are to start at your new school on Wednesday of this week. Tomorrow the two of us will be going shopping for school supplies and the school blazer. It seems that there is not actually a school uniform just a blazer they are required to wear to and from school. So what do you think about all I have told you Belinda?" Mrs. Roberts asked her daughter.

Belinda looked at her mother and then at her father wondering what kind of an answer they wanted from her. If she was honest with herself she wasn't really that upset about starting so quickly. The sooner she started the school the sooner she could make some friends. Deciding she had to say something that was slightly positive she cleared her throat. "Well it would be nice to go to school with out a uniform. It might also be nice to meet the other pupils with all the new girls rather than being on my own." Belinda told her mother hoping that she had given the right answer.

Mrs. Roberts began to smile very happy that her daughter hadn't become angry and started to yell. Satisfied that Belinda wouldn't begin an argument either today or tomorrow morning, she began to eat her supper. Belinda followed her mother's example and began to munch on her food not wanting it to get any colder. Mr. Roberts who had already eaten having eaten while his wife and daughter were talking stood up. Picking up the paper from the table he walked into the sitting room and began to relax. He was going to be very busy over the next couple of days with work and driving Belinda to school on her first day.

"Just what are you still doing here you were meant to meet Frankie and Charles after school to walk them home." Sampson called to his twin brother from the kitchen. "I was going to get them but I took an extra shift because I thought you were going to get them." Jason yelled back to his twin brother.

Chapter Four

The next day was a Tuesday and all four girls found themselves to be very busy. Anastasia Jones and Francesca Barnes found themselves sitting in the classroom sorting out class times and which rooms they would be held in. normally this would only take half an hour because all the classes were held in the same classroom. The different teachers would all come to the room. With new teachers and the prospect of having to go to different classes for every lesson, it took nearly two hours for everyone to write up their classes for the coming terms.

Anastasia and Francesca were sitting next to each other discussing why everyone seemed to think being popular was important. All of Francesca's brothers either had or were very popular. Being popular was just not important to Francesca. It was though slightly important to Anastasia

Mercedes Chambers sitting in between Mulan and Paris telling them that she was popular and because they were her friends they were popular as well. Now that they were in senior school it was even more

important to get people into their little group. They were though of course rules to being in her group and the number one rule was that you had to be rich. That was really the only reason she wanted Anastasia in her group. It would she knew be good to have Francesca in her group but she hated her too much and she could be such a boy. If Francesca did join her group she knew she would have a better chance of snagging Charles as her boyfriend.

Time went by very slowly for Mrs. Johnson's Year seven class. Mrs. Johnson was just slightly nervous of teaching a class that had a reputation. This reputation was not a good one especially with one of the pupils. She was just grateful that she wasn't teaching in the boys part of the school. Soon it would be time for lunch.

Belinda spent the day with her mother buying everything she would need for school. In the dressing room while trying on some new clothes and her school blazer, she met a girl about her age. They began to talk and she found out that her new friend was going to the same school as her.

The two new friends could have talked for the entire day but both heard their mothers yelling for them. "Belinda time to go and get some lunch." Mrs. Roberts called to her daughter. "Caitlyn we have to go now! Hurry up and grab your things!" Mrs. Summers yelled to her daughter. They said a hurried goodbye and ran off in different directions to find their mothers.

The bell rang for lunch and the classes began to empty while the dining hall began to fill up. Anastasia grabbed an empty chair while Francesca stood in line and waited for her brother.

"Hello Anastasia, I see Francesca has decided to abandon you. How nice of her and yet you call her your best friend. If it was me I would yell at her and tell her that I am important not just her twin brother." Mercedes Chambers said taking the empty seat beside Anastasia absolutely positive that her plan would work.

Anastasia looked at Mercedes and then at the lunch line where Francesca and Charles were standing. It was true she was saving the table for herself and the twins but yesterday she had gone up with Charles. It gave them both a chance to be alone with him and Anastasia didn't mind the twins doing stuff together. "Mercedes I have not been abandoned by Frankie. She is getting out lunch and her brother just happens to be standing with her. Now please go away I am saving these seats for Frankie and Charles. Look Mulan and Paris are waiting for you." Anastasia said indicating that Mercedes should leave and go and find her friends.

Mercedes looked at Anastasia angry that the first part of her plan had failed. She knew the only option left was to lie and make Anastasia hate Francesca. The only lie that could make two best friends hate each other was to make them turn against each other. Standing up she walked away from Anastasia and back to her friends Paris and Mulan. As they ate their lunch they thought up as many nasty lies as they

possible could.

It was actually Mulan who came up with the idea of how to stop Anastasia and Francesca from being friends. However Mercedes said it was her plan all along and so they began part B of their plan to turn Anastasia Jones against Francesca Barnes. Once Anastasia hated Francesca she would be forced to join Mercedes group. What Mercedes and her friends realise was that Francesca would get her friend back. They also didn't realise that stopping the friendship between Francesca and Anastasia would cause a chain reaction.

“Mercedes what about Charles I mean you just told Anastasia that Francesca puts him first.” Paris said silently praying silently in her head that her sister would back her up. After all they were sisters and they were always backing each other up. “Also even if Francesca and Charles are not really that close, he will never date you. Not when you hate his sister so much.” Mulan said not really certain that she should of said anything at all. But if she did that then Paris would be mad at her for not sticking by her sister. Going against Mercedes though would be dangerous. If she made Mercedes angry then she might end up being kicked out of Mercedes gang.

Mercedes looked from Mulan to Paris wondering why either of them would say such things. Some of the things that the twins had said were true. It was also true about her crush on Charles and that he would never date her while Francesca and her were still enemies. However she could always try to turn Charles against Francesca. As the ideas began to form in her brain an evil smile crossed her face.

Mulan looked at her sister who stared straight back at her, both were very grateful that they were on the same side.

Francesca was standing next Charles half listening to him complain about school. She was far more interested as to why Anna was talking to the stupid bitch Mercedes. Neither of them liked her and as far as she was concerned never would. The only time it was ever acceptable was when they were partnered for a school project. This though hadn't happened since they were seven years old. Her first thought was to go over to Anna and make sure Mercedes wasn't being horrible. Taking a step towards her friend she felt a hand grab hold of her arm pulling her back.

Charles sensing that Francesca was going to yell at Mercedes held her back. If Francesca yelled at Mercedes she would be in a lot of trouble. “Frankie come on the line is moving and you will only get in trouble. I am sure Anastasia didn't begin the conversation with Chambers. You will not make me carry your food and mine as well as your mates. I don't have that many arms.” Charles said turning his back and dragging Francesca next to him.

Anastasia watched Mercedes walk away followed by Mulan and Paris. It was very strange that Mercedes had even spoken to her. They hadn't spoken since their first day of pre-school. That day Anastasia could

have become one of Mercedes friends but she had also met Francesca and later Charles. It was a day she would never forget no matter how many years past.

As Anastasia thought about the day she met both her best friend and worst enemy , she realised that she hadn't met Mulan and Paris until her first day at Junior school. That was a day she longed to forget and yet she couldn't because of the positive thing that had happened that day. Francesca had become her official best friend. It was also the day she had begun to hang out with Charles and Jerry.

Thinking back to her nursery days brought a smile to her face.

About six years ago to the day Anastasia was carried into Miss. Winter's Pre-school. As she was placed on the mat she noticed there were boys as well as girls. Never being a shy child even at the age of five she walked over to a girl with blonde hair and a gold necklace. This surprised her a lot because not even her big sister Claire was allowed to wear jewellery. And she knew for a fact that Claire was her parents favourite child and could get away with almost anything.

Walking over to the girl with blonde hair she realised that she was arguing with two boys. Or at least at first glance they looked like two boys. As she moved closer she realised that one of them was a girl. "Hello my name is Anastasia Jones. What are you fighting about?" Anna said holding out her hand for the two girl and the boy to shake.

The blonde looked at this girl wondering what the girl was doing. "My name is Mercedes Chambers. This loser is Francesca Barnes. Hey I know the name Jones. Your dad is some big bank manager or something right. Would you like to be my friend? If you stick with me you will be popular for a very long time." Mercedes said staring at Anastasia.

Francesca looked between Mercedes and Anastasia and started to laugh. The boy standing next to her Charles said "First of all Mercedes you are not very popular. The most popular girl in the Junior school is Claire Jones. So you really need Anastasia rather than her needing you. Frankie stop laughing!"

Anastasia looked at Frankie and Charles and then started laughing as well. Mercedes furious that someone would laugh at her walked away not looking back once. If Francesca had not laughed at Mercedes they never would of become friends. It was weird even after all these years she didn't know what exactly the argument was about.

Coming back into the present she realised that Francesca and Charles had joined her at the table. Charles was talking to Francesca about some boy of football. Anna wasn't sure which because Frankie was trying to get her attention. They settled down to their lunch and began to talk about school and the new pupils. As they sat there talking the dinning hall went silent and as the three of them turned to the

door they realised the reason for the silence.

Chapter Five

Claire Jones walked into the dining hall and was pleased when the hall went silent. From the age of seven although it might have been younger she had a way of getting people to do what she said. She looked around the hall and noticed her sister and the Barnes twins. If she wanted to get a note to her boyfriend she would have to talk to Francesca. This was something she shouldn't do not when she is the most popular girl in the school. "Helen, I need you to do me a favour. It's very important that you do this for me. After all you are one of my best friends right." Claire said walking to an empty table followed by her many followers.

Anastasia, Francesca and Charles were not the only eleven year olds who noticed that Claire had entered the room. Mercedes, Paris and Mulan looked up when the door opened. "Mercedes what do you think we should do? I mean you want to be popular don't you. Do you think we should go and speak to her. I mean you are the most popular girl in our year." Paris said looking again at her sister to agree with her.

Helen looked at Claire wondering what her leader wanted her to do. Normally it was something that would get her into trouble but she would still do it no matter what happened. "Claire what would you like me to do? Would you like me to pull a prank on your sister and her friend? I mean just because you are sleeping with Francesca's brother doesn't mean you have to be nice to her does it?" Helen said looking around the table to see if she could figure out what the others were thinking.

Anastasia looked at Francesca and wondered if what Mercedes had said was true. Francesca did spend a lot of time with her twin brother. Especially on her birthday, Anastasia always saw her the next day but never on the day. She never really questioned it till Mercedes had told her that Charles was more important than her. She knew all about siblings but she didn't really like her sister so why should Francesca like her brothers. It really made no sense that she never spent her best friend's birthday with her best friend. "Frankie after lunch we need to talk in private." Anna said with a voice that hinted on a lecture. Frankie knew what this hint meant and was going to say something when Helen came over and took the empty seat next to Francesca.

"Francesca I need you to come with me and talk to Claire. She wants you to do a favour for her. Also Anastasia or whatever your name is you need to cover for her. If you argue your sister says she will do something to make you regret crossing her. So what do you say Francesca? Will you help Claire with this?" Helen finished saying hoping just for her sake that the female Barnes twin would say yes. Mainly because she didn't want to walk back to Claire without Francesca.

Mercedes was in shock that one of the most popular girls in the school would rather talk to Francesca than her. It really was stupid that someone would actually want to talk to the freak Francesca. She looked

at Paris and Mulan but they were both too busy to tell her that Francesca was in dead a loser. The twins were far too busy watching Simon and Mark Barnes. Mercedes rolled her eyes and continued to think that Francesca was a loser although her twin could never be called a loser. He could be called a hottie and other names to go with how nice he looked but never ever a loser. The only person well make that only girl who would call him a loser to his face was Francesca.

Anastasia stared at Helen not really believing a word she had just heard. Her big sister was asking her friend who wasn't just her friend but her best friend to do her a favour. "So Francesca what do you say? Are you going to help Claire which will help you and wants her name?" Helen asked hoping the answer would be something polite and not sarcastic.

"Fine I will see what Claire wants from me. This is not a yes." Frankie said to Helen and then turned to Anastasia and Charles. "Charles, Anna I'll see you later. Don't worry Anna we can talk tonight or I am back it shouldn't take me very long. Whatever you do don't have an argument while I am gone." Francesca said getting up and following Helen back to Claire's table.

Chapter Six

Claire watched as Frankie left the table which sat her sister and a potential brother-in-law. She was actually surprised when Frankie walked towards her instead of towards her older brothers. "Hello Francesca I am very happy that you decided to join my table and hear me out." Claire said in a sweet voice that she hoped didn't sound sarcastic.

Frankie took the only empty seat which to her great disgust was right next to Claire. As she sat down, she felt certain that she was going to do this favour whether she really wanted to or not. "So what do you need me to do?" Frankie whispered hating herself for doing something that would definitely get her into trouble just two days into the school year. Her parents would be so proud of her NOT! They had been telling her for years that she didn't need to be like her brothers. She could be a good girl who did her homework and didn't get detentions nearly every day.

"Now Francesca this is very important. I would never make you do something that would get you into trouble. What am I saying I mean get me into trouble." Claire laughed at her own joke before continuing. "As you must already know I am dating your older brother Richard. I need you to run along to his shop and give him a message. Normally I would just text him but then someone might read it and I'll get into trouble. I have written the message and sealed it so don't even think of reading it. Just hand the note to him and come back to school. It really is very simple." Claire finished.

Frankie looked at Claire with a very confused look. She didn't understand why she had to sneak out of school to deliver a stupid love letter. Why couldn't Claire get someone else to hand her brother the message. But as she thought this she realised she already knew the answer to the second part. Neither

Claire nor her brother could risk other people finding out about their relationship and by other people she meant both sets of parents. If either her parents or Claire's parents found out they would be in a lot of trouble. Sighing and mumbling some things under her breath she held out her hand for the letter. Once it was safely hidden in one of her pockets she stood up and said "Just so we are clear I am not doing this for you. I am doing it for my brother. If I get into any kind of trouble Richard will dump your fat ass." With a smile on her face she walked away and out of the dining hall trying to think of a way out of the school. This though would be a lot harder without any of her older brothers to help her.

Charles had been watching his sister the whole time ready to jump to her defence if he had to. When he saw her leave the dining hall he knew she was doing something she might later regret. Standing up he ran out of the room intending to find Francesca and either help her or stop her.

Anastasia couldn't believe that both Francesca and Charles had both left her on her own. She could understand Charles leaving her all by herself, after all she was always walking off and leaving her alone with Francesca. However Francesca had always come to her before going off and she always said where she was going and when she would be back. She was very mad that she had been abandoned by her best friend.

"Mercedes look Anastasia is on her own again. Do you want to go over to her. She might be easier to manipulate." Mulan said.

"Yeah you could make her join our group. With Francesca out of the way you could make her hate the loser." Paris concluded.

The twins looked at her both wanting her to say something mean about Francesca or to laugh. Instead she just sat there making it near impossible to find out what she was thinking.

Mercedes had been watching Francesca talk to Claire and when she walked out she knew something was up. Her theory was confirmed when Charles ran out after her. Standing up a smile began to form on her lips. She moved towards Anastasia she pretended to be unhappy.

"Anastasia why are you on your own again? Where has Francesca disappeared to this time? Let me guess she is in the lunch line or maybe she has gone to the little girls room. Well are you going to tell me or not. I mean I really like you always have." Mercedes said taking the vacant seat next to Anastasia all the while a song was playing in her heart.

Anastasia looked at Mercedes wondering if what she had heard was correct. Mercedes Chambers had just said that she liked her and always had done. "So you are telling me that you to be my friend and Francesca's. I thought you hated us." Anastasia said staring at Mercedes trying to keep her voice a

friendly as possible.

“Look you are on your own so why not come and sit with me and my friends. Paris and Mulan are discussing Mark and Simon. They can’t decide who has the nicest eyes. You and I can talk about Charles. I heard from a friend that you have a huge crush on him. So what do you like about him.” Mercedes said standing up and grabbing Anastasia’s tray and started to walk away.

“Who told you that I have a crush on Charles. They are lying I don’t like him like that.” Anastasia

Caitlyn watched as her mother searched the room for the fifth time in about three minutes. “Mother why do you keep looking around? Who are we meant to be meeting? Let me guess we are meeting my half sister, that’ll be a hell of a lot of fun.” She said before standing up and sitting down almost straight away.

A woman had entered the café followed by a girl who could only have been a couple of years older than Caitlyn. The girl looked at Caitlyn and then at the floor. It was as though the girl had recognised Caitlyn which was impossible because they had never met before.

“Caitlyn I need you to be polite. I want you to get to know your half-sister. Her name is Stephanie and she is fourteen years old. She goes to the same school as you, she has come out of school for an hour during lunch. You will get to know her later on. For now could you just be polite and answer any questions that are asked.” Mrs Summers said.

“Hello June, Caitlyn my name is Jessica and this is my daughter Stephanie. May we sit with you. Sorry we are late it’s hard work having a teenage daughter. Especially when you are on your own.” Jessica said taking a seat before June could give an answer.

June looked at Jessica not really sure what to say. I mean what do you say to your ex-husband’s old girlfriend. Taking a deep breath and remembered she was the one who had invited Jessica and Stephanie to lunch.

“Hello Jessica thank you for coming. I would also like to thank you for telling me about the apartment. I just hope the girls can get along.” Jane said not sure how else to start the conversation.

Stephanie looked at her mother and realised she would have to be the one to start the conversation. “So Caitlyn you are my sister. I have always wanted a sister but I guess I never thought I would get one who looked so much like me. My make-up is no longer safe.” She said laughing a bit at the last part.

Caitlyn knew that Stephanie was trying to be polite, but that might just have been because both their

mothers were present.

“Yeah guess it would be nice to have a big sister. Although not really into make-up just yet. So your make-up should be safe well at least until I am a teenager. I guess I should ask about the school and everything but well its school.”

Stephanie looked at Caitlyn and was rather surprised by the girls bluntness. The girls in her year were hardly ever this blunt. Well unless they were just in a really bad mood.

“eso what exactly do you need to know about school. I could tell you about the teachers and lessons but that’s kind of boring. I can tell you the name of the most popular girl in your year mainly because she is a bitch. You might want to stay away from her. I am not saying that you have to its just a suggestion.” Stephanie said looking down at her hands near the end of her speech.

Caitlyn wondered if she was meant to be annoyed by what Stephanie had just said. She wasn’t angry with Stephanie she was actually happy that Stephanie was looking out for her. She had never had anyone close to her own age looking out for her best interest.

“Don’t worry about what you said. I thought it was well sort of sisterly to tell me to stay away from the bitch. Although I would like to make up my own mind about whether she is a bitch. So who would you say are the nice girls in my year. It’s just I would like to know if there are any girls who I might end up being friends with.” Caitlyn said hoping that she could be friends with Stephanie.

When she had first heard about having a half-sister, she didn’t know anything to do with her. Now though she wanted to get close to her sister. She didn’t care about the fact that they were only half-sisters. As far as she was concerned they were sisters.

Chapter Seven

“Mum I am really enjoying the bonding and everything but I better get going. If I am late then I am so likely to get a detention and that would be bad. Caitlyn why don’t we talk later on tonight or tomorrow at school. See you tonight after school. Bye mum see you later. Goodbye June hopefully I will see you as well.” Stephanie said standing up grabbing her schoolbag. She walked out of the café and made her way back to school.

“Belinda could you hurry up and finish your lunch. We still have school supplies to get. And what are you

looking at. I don't want you to be exhausted for your first day at school. Once you have got all of your school supplies we can go to a shop you want to go to. I realise you will want to see your friends but they are at school. Mrs. Roberts said.

Belinda didn't look up from her plate of food until she was done. "Mum I am finished and I was just thinking about the stuff we need for school. They are in different shops right, well I was going to suggest that you take one shop and I take the other. You are very good at finding the right text books and I can go and get pens and stuff. I mean you do want to cut short our little shopping trip. If I need more stuff then I can always go shopping over the weekend hopefully with new friends." Belinda said following her mother out of the restaurant. She knew what she had said had a lot of logic to it.

"If that's what you really want to do then ok. Here I'll give you some money. Lets meet by the car in an hour and a half. That should give you enough time to get any stationary you might need and still go to one of your shops that you enjoy visiting. You will see your new friend tomorrow I am certain of it. Come on your father will want us to be home before him." Mrs. Roberts said walking towards the shops that sold text books. Belinda walked into a stationary store.

"Francesca slow down will you. Tell me where exactly are you going? I need to stop you from doing something incredible stupid." Charles called after his twin sister as she ran around the science building. Hearing her brother and knowing that he would continue to yell she slowed down and waited for Charles to catch up with her. "Charles I have to go and deliver a message to our brother Richard. Did you know he is dating Claire? You stay here at school and make sure no one finds out that I am gone. Look I am only going to the end of the road then I am passing the message onto Jerry. He said he would take the message the rest of the way. I should only miss one class or none at all if you just let me go. You can yell at me later or tonight." Francesca told her brother before walking off.

Normally Charles would of gone after her but he knew that Francesca could handle herself. He also knew that if they both went they were more likely to be caught and then there would be a lot of trouble. Turning around he headed back to the dinning hall and was so preoccupied by his twin sister that he didn't notice Paris. If he had he probably would have chased her and done something but instead he just made his way towards his classroom deciding that there wasn't enough time to go to the dinning hall.

Paris ran all the way back to the dinning hall. Mulan greeted her outside the doors to the dinning hall and as they looked through the window they saw Mercedes and she saw them. Waving at them to hurry up Mulan started to open the doors but saw that Paris was walking away. She tried to question her sister but Paris just told her to go to Mercedes and lie about where she was going. Mulan looked at her sister

nodding her head slightly and walked into the dining hall trying not to think how angry Mercedes would be when she found out she had been lied to. She took her seat next to Mercedes mumbling something about Paris having needed the loo and would be back soon.

“Mulan tell me again where Paris went?” Mercedes said turning to Mulan wanting an answer. Paris had been gone for nearly ten minutes. Mercedes didn’t believe that Paris had just gone to the toilet. She had been gone for too long to begin with. For another Mulan was not very good at lying even when it involved protecting her sister.

Paris walked into the dining hall spotting her sister and Mercedes and walked over to them. “Hey Mercedes I need to talk to you. It’s very important that you hear what I need to say.” When Mercedes just continued to stare with a blank look on her face Paris decided that another approach was needed. Grabbing Mercedes by the arm she dragged her away from Mulan and Anastasia towards the doors leading out of the dining hall.

“Paris what do you need to tell me? And why couldn’t you tell me in front of Mulan and Anastasia?” Mercedes said her voice on the verge of yelling.

Paris lowered her eyes so she wouldn’t have to look into the angry eyes of Mercedes. “I just wanted to tell you that Francesca has left school grounds. Chances are she might miss a lesson or well you know the lecture where the teacher tells us what books we need.” Paris said a small smile crossing her lips.

The two girls looked at each other seemingly coming to some sort of agreement without saying a word. Paris walked back to her sister and Anastasia telling them that Mercedes needed to phone her mother or something like that. Mulan was certain something was going on but knew better than to say something at all.

Anastasia didn’t know whether to believe Paris or not. But she couldn’t think of any reason that Paris would lie. Trying not to think about being betrayed she turned her attention back to her food. The three of them talked for a while and then the bell rang to symbolise the end of lunch. The three girls stood up leaving the dining hall with the rest of the pupils. They saw Mercedes waiting outside the classroom. Walking in together Anastasia noticed that Francesca had yet to return. This was worrying because although she had promised to lie she was well aware that she wasn’t very good at lying.

Ms. Johnson walked into the classroom not looking very pleased at all. Just a few minutes ago she had been talking to one of her new pupils about a certain pupil. Although she was new she had heard about Francesca Barnes and her family. Some of the other teachers had warned her about the boys in her family.

“Everybody please sit down. When I call your name please raise your hand. Sophie Andrew, Melissa Amber, Francesca Barnes. Wait does anyone know where Francesca Barnes is. Yes Mercedes do you know something?” Ms. Johnson said when she realised that Francesca had failed to raise her hand.

“I was just going to say that Anastasia is Francesca’s best friend. If anyone knows where she is it will be Anastasia.” Mercedes said in a voice that sounded as though she was trying to be helpful.

“Well Anastasia do you know where Francesca has gone. I do not tolerate pupils being late for my class.” Ms. Johnson said turning to Anastasia waiting for an answer.

It seemed to Anna that the entire class was waiting for an answer. Taking a very quick look at her watch she saw that Francesca was nearly five minutes late. Trying to think as quickly as she could she opened her mouth and said the first thing that came to her mind. “I saw her talking to her twin brother Charles, and then I believe she went to the toilet.” She just prayed that no one would say anything to contradict what she had just said.

“Did anyone else see Francesca either with her brother or heading towards the loos?” Ms. Johnson said and when no one said anything she was beginning to believe Mercedes. “Class I will be right back. Don’t talk about being noisy. I am just going to make sure Francesca has not become lost on her way back to class.” Saying this Ms Johnson stood up and left the classroom. She was going to have a lot of fun thinking up a punishment for Francesca Barnes. As she walked down the steps she noticed the Head teacher.

Mean while at the bottom of the road Francesca was trying to convince Jerry that she wouldn’t get into any trouble. “Frankie you will get into trouble I just know it. Why did you insist that we meet down the road rather than at the school. At least that way you wouldn’t have gotten into trouble. Jerry said trying but failing to sound very angry.

Francesca found herself just staring at Jerry at first not really sure what to say to him. Then a great comeback at least in her opinion came to her, “technically speaking I have not gotten into trouble. So don’t worry about it. If I get into trouble I get into trouble.” Francesca said hitting him in the arm before running back to the school. As she ran she checked her watch and saw she should have been in the classroom nearly three minutes ago. Running into the school she headed straight for the girls loo. Hearing Ms. Johnson calling her she flushed the loo and came out and then began to wash her hands.

“Francesca Barnes registration started nearly five minutes ago. What have you been doing?”

“I am really sorry Ms. Johnson but I needed the toilet. I was just on my way up to the classroom.” Francesca answered trying to sound as innocent as possible.

“I should really give you a detention but as it is only your second day of senior school I will let you off this one time. If you do this ever again you will get a detention. In fact I will be calling your parents and we will decide on a punishment together.” Ms. Johnson said taking Francesca by the arm and leading her towards the classroom.

As Francesca walked into the classroom she noticed that everyone was watching her. Ignoring the stares and a few glares she took her seat beside Anastasia. “Hey Anna, what’s wrong? Do you know why Ms. Johnson came looking for me? I thought you were going to cover for me.” Francesca said in a whisper so that the teacher and the other pupils couldn’t hear.

However Mercedes and her friends Mulan and Paris had all heard what Francesca had just said. The three of them were actually quite shocked by what they had heard. It was incredible rare for Francesca to yell at Anastasia but she had never once basically bitten Anastasia’s head off.

Mulan hearing this didn’t really think that it was anything they could use. Paris had heard the two of them but just like her sister hadn’t really thought anything of it. Mercedes though knew just how to use what she had heard to her advantage. Not bothering to tell either of her friends she began to form a plan that would make Anastasia doubt Francesca. She also hoped it would also make Francesca accuse Anastasia of being the one who told the teacher on her.

Chapter Eight

“Hey Anastasia what was it you said to this new teacher. It’s just I am sure the teacher knew what I was doing.” Francesca whispered to Anastasia.

“I told the teacher exactly what you told me to tell her. She just somehow knew that you were not in the toilet.” Anastasia shot back getting angry with every passing second.

“I don’t want to argue with you especially not on the second day of school.” Francesca said trying to raise her voice in order not to get the teacher’s attention.

Ms. Johnson noticing that most of the pupils had begun to talk cleared her throat. Once she had their attention back to went over the school rules again but first she split the class into groups. She had already told them the school rules but she wanted to go over them again and have the pupils write them down.

“Mulan can you believe that Anastasia rated out Francesca to the teacher.” Mercedes asked her friends as loudly as she could.

“Really and I thought they were such good friends.” Mulan replied.

“Mercedes didn’t you say you knew the reason Anastasia would try and get her best friend a detention? Paris said joining in although she wasn’t really sure what they were doing. It just seemed like a fun game they were playing with Anastasia and Francesca.”

“Well I do know a lot because I am brilliant. If you don’t want to know the reason then I guess I will just have to keep it to myself.” Mercedes said trusting that her friends would say the right thing.

Mulan and Paris looked at each other for once not sure what they were meant to say. Normally during a scheme Mercedes would tell them exactly what to say and how to act. They were all surprised when it was Francesca who began to speak.

“So why exactly did Anastasia tell the teacher on me?” Part of her didn’t know why on Earth she was listening to her enemy. The other half of her realised that Mercedes didn’t always lie it was just most of the time. She couldn’t believe that she was actually considering that Anastasia would betray her.

“Francesca I don’t think you should listen to Mercedes. You do remember that she hates you.” Jane, another member of their small group decided to give her opinion. She really didn’t know why she was butting in. she wasn’t friends with either Francesca or Mercedes but she knew what Mercedes was like. There was also the fact that Mercedes was pretty much a bitch.

“Look Jane I really don’t understand why you care so much. I know you hate Mercedes nearly as much as I do. Personally I don’t really care that you hate her. What I do care about is why you are butting in. I need to know if I was indeed betrayed by my best friend and why. If she is lying I am sure I will be able to tell. I mean it’s Mercedes I don’t really trust her and most likely never will.” Francesca said turning from Jane and back to Mercedes. As far as she was concerned it was just her and Mercedes in the classroom.

Jane, Mulan and Paris looked from Francesca to Mercedes and back to Francesca again. They were all positive that there was going to be a massive fight. It was a surprise when Mercedes just started talking normally and Francesca answered in a normal way.

“So you really want to know why your best friend decided to betray you.” Mercedes said being very careful not to raise her voice.

Anastasia was unaware of what was going on with her best friend she was happily sitting with her group. They were meant to be talking and discussing the school rules. Instead they were discussing Charles and who was the most likely in their Year to become his girlfriend. The five other girls at the table were all

sure that it would be Anastasia because she was so close to Francesca.

Anastasia was in a small group just like Francesca and so both friends were completely blind as to what the large group was discussing.

Mr. Johnson had split the class into three groups. The two smaller groups had six girls each. The larger group held nine pupils. The class has told Ms. Johnson that they were normally split into threes or fours. She had curtly told them that as their form tutor she would split them into groups her way.

The nine girls were sitting going over the rules and discussing what had happened in East enderâ€™s last night. As they were talking they noticed that Paris was coming towards them. Lucy nudged the people next to her and the table turned to see Paris nearly at the table.

â€œHey girls mind if I sit here for a moment. Donâ€™t worry I will not stay long. I was just wondering if you heard about Anastasiaâ€™s crush and about how she rated on Francesca. No wonder Francesca told me about who Anastasia has the hot for.â€• Paris said taking the empty seat between Lucy and Lauren. Having gotten the tables full attention she tells them who Anastasia is crushing over. Once she was sure that they would indeed spread the rumours she walked back to her seat whispering something to Mercedes.

Mercedes seemed to smile at whatever it was she had just heard . Lucy didnâ€™t see the smile she just saw Paris whisper something. Getting up she walked over to Anastasiaâ€™s group and just caught her saying how much she hated Charles. Anastasia you do realise that you are a really bad liar. I just heard from Paris who got it from Francesca that you really like Charles. I mean it is really quite obvious if you think about it. Although I really donâ€™t see why you had to tell the teacher on Francesca. It seems a bit low to get your best friend a detention just so you can be with her brother on the walk home.â€• Lucy said so the entire group could hear and then walked back to her group. She had no idea that she had just fallen for one of Mercedes lies. Even if she had known that part of what she had been told was a lie it was unclear if she would have cared.

Anastasia just sat there not sure what she could really say or do. She didnâ€™t want to believe that Francesca had told everyday about her crush on Charles but she wouldnâ€™t put it past Francesca. Especially if she thought that she had been betrayed first. There was nothing she could do until the end of the day.

Francesca had listened to the reason Anastasia had apparently betrayed her for her own brother. She knew Anastasia had a massive crush on her brother and really wanted some alone time with her. However she had always hoped that her friend would have asked. Especially as the crush wasnâ€™t even two weeks old. Normally she wouldnâ€™t have believed a word Mercedes said but nobody at the table was able to help. They couldnâ€™t tell her that Mercedes was a liar or how she somehow knew about Anastasiaâ€™s crush on Charles. She already knew somewhere inside her that Anastasia might actually be so mad at her that she would tell on her.

It probably wasn't even about Charles when she thought about it, more likely to be about the fact that her sister had chosen her to deliver some message. She wished she knew now that she had refused and told Claire to take a flying leap. She knew though that she would never have said anything like that. In fact she had agreed to taking the message not because they said they would do things to Anastasia, she had taken the job to be alone with Jerry. Coming to the same conclusion as Anna she decided to wait till the end of the day.

"Class I have decided that as it is such a lovely day outside we should go out. I realise that none of you have any sports gear with you so we will not be playing any sports. Instead you will all be doing laps around the school." Ms. Johnson said hoping it might stop the girls from talking so much. Tomorrow would be a proper school day and she would be able to teach and deal out punishments.

The girls all stood up forming a line behind Ms. Johnson all happy at being allowed out of the stuffy classroom. The class had years ago well really only two years ago found away of doing laps but never too many. This made it easier to still talk to one another.

Chapter Nine

The day ended with Francesca storming out of the school gates. She stopped only when she was halfway down the road. Getting out her mobile she text first Charles and then Jerry. After that she just kept walking until she came to the McDonalds on the street corner. She walked in only ordering a small portion of chips and a large coke.

When the price came up she began to look through her purse and realised she just didn't have enough. Just as she was starting to wonder what she could afford, the boy behind handed over a five pound note. As soon as she was handed her tray of food she ran to find a booth.

"Do you mind if I sit with you?" A boy with bright blue eyes asked Francesca.

Francesca looked up and saw the boy who had paid for her food. She opened her mouth to say something but nothing came out when she looked into his eyes. When he asked again all she could do was nod her head. She walked as he slid into the booth opposite her.

For the first ten minutes neither of them said a word to each other. As the time slipped by Francesca had eaten the food but had not really touched her drink. When it became clear that he wasn't going to talk, she realised that she would have to talk.

"Thank you for buying me my lunch. If you wait for a while my brother can give you the money. First

would you mind telling me your name. I am Francesca Barnes.â€• Francesca said holding out her hand for the boy to shake.

He looked at her a small smile gracing her lips. â€œI really donâ€™t mind about the money. You can re-pay me by meeting me again this weekend. My name is Michael. I have to go but here is my number.â€• He said leaving his number on the table and pausing at the exit to see Francesca pick up the number.

Francesca watched as her new friend left McDonalds. The only thing that really came to mind when thinking about Michael was that he was better than Jerry. All she did while they were talking was stare into his eyes. When he left his number she had already made the decision that she would meet him. The only problem was how to get passed her parents and brothers. When she looked up Jerry was standing waiting for her by the exit. All thoughts of Michael almost completely vanished as she ran to Jerry and they started to walk to her house.

Anastasia had seen Francesca leave but was far too angry to even think about going after her friend. Any part of her that had trusted Francesca had disappeared when Francesca had left the school. She wasnâ€™t just angry because of Francesca telling everyone about her crush. What she was furious about was the fact that it was obviously Francesca who was in the wrong, that and how she and her brother always did things together without her. As all these thoughts were moving through her mind, she didnâ€™t notice Mercedes came up behind her and tap her on the shoulder.

Jumping nearly a foot in the air, she turned around to see Mercedes staring at her. This nearly made her jump all over again but she just managed to stop herself. The worst thing she knew she could do was to show weakness in front of Mercedes. Knowing this she stood up trying to show that she was not intimidated.

As she made her way towards the school gates, she was certain that she was being followed. Turning around she saw Mercedes and her friends coming towards her.

â€œAnastasia would you like to come back to mine? It would seem that your friend has abandoned you.â€• Mercedes said as she walked towards Anastasia.

Anastasia looked at her having no idea what she was meant to say in response. For one she could not tell whether Mercedes was being sarcastic, or for once was being genuinely kind. Not wanting to walk home on her own she saw no other option but to go to Mercedes house. One of the reasons she knew that she was going was to anger Francesca. What Mercedes had said was true, she had been abandoned. Ringing Charles had not exactly helped. He had simply told her that he was staying to play football with his friends.

The four of them walked almost half the way without saying one word. This was strange for all four of the girls. When Anastasia was with Francesca, a lot of the time she found it very hard to even shut up. They walked passed McDonalds none of them seeing Francesca talking to a strange boy.

“Mercedes would it be ok with your parents if I ring home. They like to know where I am.” Anastasia asked as they turned another corner.

“Yeah it’s fine. My parents will still be at work but don’t worry about that. The look will be there. The folks you are eating dinner at my house. I mean we are friends now. I only have one rule and that is that that you are not to speak to Francesca unless it is to be rude.” Mercedes said before walking up her driveway followed by Mulan, Paris and after a couple of seconds Anastasia.

Belinda walked from one room to the next not knowing what else she could do. In the morning she would be going to a new school. It really didn’t matter that she had known for a couple of days already. If anything it just made it worse. Having a couple of days just gave her time to think about all the different ways her first day could be a disaster. Each scenario was worse than the previous.

All the different ways begin to cloud her mind and she has to remained herself that she will not be the only new girl. This makes her smile, and she thinks about the girl who she just met just two days ago. It helped to remained her that Caitlyn would be new and would be there for her. Even knowing one person would not make a huge difference. The only thing she could hope for was that she would make friends quickly and with the right people. Moving school finally gave her a chance to be popular again.

Caitlyn climbed out of the small life and followed her mother into what she was told was one of the larger apartments. This she couldn’t believe for even a second. To her it seemed like her mother had gotten one of the smallest apartment that she could possible get. There was nothing that she could do and so walked around the small space she decided that it wasn’t as bad as she first thought.

“Caitlyn I am going to be gone for a couple of hours to get some of our things. I want you to stay here. Don’t answer the door to anyone.” Her mother called as she left the apartment.

Caitlyn looked at her new home and just knew she would have to get used to the space. Not having anything else to do she walked into the bedroom and looked around. The room was bigger than she had expected it to be. To keep herself busy she began to arrange the room so it was more to her liking. First she closed the door so that she wouldn’t be able to hear the door.

Indigo Barnes looked from her mother to father wondering if she has heard correctly. They had just told her that she would be going to a new school but not the same one as Francesca. This upset her but when she heard which school she would be going to she became angry. There was no way that she would be

happy in some posh school full of bitches. She knew her cousins school had bitches but it also had Francesca in it. When she had asked how the school bill would be paid, she saw her step-grandmother and grandfather for the first time. They looked at her and it was all she needed to know that they were paying.

“Daddy please tell me that I will not be boarding. I am the youngest can’t you just punish Violet Lavender instead of me. I am sure one of them has done something wrong. I am not the only one who can get into trouble.” Indigo almost yelled but kept her temper when she saw her step-grandmother watching her. Turning away from her step-grandmother she had to stop the shiver that had started to make its way down her spine.

Her father looked at her wondering what she had meant by saying that one of his older daughters had done something wrong. If they had then as their father he would know and they would already have been given their punishment. He was just about to point out to Indigo all of this when Lavender followed closely by Violet made their way down the stairs. They were whispering so softly that Peter could not make out any of the words.

Lavender was the first to notice that they were no longer alone. At fifteen she was the oldest of the three girls and in charge whenever they were alone. The first thing she noticed was that Indigo was having an argument with their father. Having no need to get involved she made her way down the rest of the stairs. Seeing that her way was blocked she looked up and was suddenly face to face with her step-grandmother. Moving past her step-grandmother she made her way to the front door but stopped, when her step-grandmother began to speak.

“Lavender where do you think you are going? No granddaughter of mine is going to walk the streets looking so cheap. You can’t go anywhere as you have to help your sister. She will be living with your cousins until she settles at her new school.” Salina said, and then pointing with her finger she indicated that lavender should march herself back upstairs.

Indigo had watched in silence as her step-grandmother belittled her sister. She wanted to yell at her and tell her she had no right. What she did was turn to her mother hoping that she could help.

Matilda looked from her eldest daughter to her youngest daughter. “Lavender, Violet and Indigo please sit down on the sofa. As your grandmother has just said we need all of you to help. Indigo I want you to go upstairs and start picking out your clothes. Violet I would like you to go and help her. Yes Lavender what is it that you would like to say.”

“Mum I would really like to help but I have to get to work. I am meant to be babysitting. They will be here at any moment to come and pick me up. I realise that this is a family thing but I can always catch up with Indigo later.” Lavender said standing up when she heard the hoot of a car horn.

“You can go but I want you to ring Indigo tomorrow.” Matilda said, watching as Lavender ran from the room and out of the house.

Indigo stood up as if to make her way up the stairs and then to her room. She only stopped when she heard her name mentioned a number of times. She was about to keep walking up the stairs when she heard her mother calling again. “Indigo you don’t need to pack a lot. Just enough for two weeks. Your school uniform will be delivered some time during the week. Your new school is a boarding school but we have decided that you will not board at least not to begin with.”

Violet was still sitting silently on the sofa. “Mum what school does Francesca go to? Also what is the name of Indigo’s school and why isn’t she staying at the same school as me and Lavender?” Violet suddenly At thirteen she was the middle child and worked hard to be close to her sisters. As she waited for an answer her phone began to ring. When she clicked the phone shut she turned around to her mother and said. “Mum that was Mrs. Ward. She just asked if I can come over for a couple of hours and look after the quintuplets. Can I go mum please. She says she is only asking for me because Lavender is unavailable.” Her mother nodded and before she could say anything Violet was out of the house and running down to the end of the road.

“Indigo it’s time for us to leave. I would like you to put your bags in the back of the car. Then you can say goodbye.” Salina told her grandmother before walking out of the house and climbing into the car. Her husband Brian had not said one word the entire time he had been in his sons house. When his wife left in the house he said his goodbyes and joined his wife in the car.

Peter walked his daughter to the car and helped load the cases into the boot of the car. They said a quick goodbye and Matilda came out after a bit to say goodbye to her daughter. They told her to be on her best behaviour. She agreed to all the rules that her parents gave her although part of her really wanted her parents to be driving her. This she knew was not going to happen because they had to be home when Lavender and Violet came back from babysitting. She did understand all of this but she still hoped.

Salina walked into her step-sons house using the key under the mat. As she walked into the sitting room she saw her granddaughter sitting on one of the sofas with a boy. They had their arms wrapped around each other. Indigo stepped forward and was going to say something but Salina beat her to it.

“Francesca what do you think you are doing.? Boy I suggest you get out of this house.” Salina yelled at the boy.

Jerry looked at Francesca and then waited for her to nod. As soon as he saw her nod. Standing up he left the house only stopping to pick up his bag.

Chapter Ten

Francesca looked at her step-grandmother with fury in her eyes. She couldn't believe that Salina would just barge into her parents house and kick out their guest. Standing up she walks right up to her step-grandmother. "What did you do that for!" Francesca yelled before attempting to walk away. She stopped when she felt the hand on her shoulder and was made to face her step-grandmother once again.

"I sent the boy away because you are eleven years old. It is not right for you to be alone in this house with a boy. As your grandmother I will not allow you to disgrace our family name. I suggest the next time you speak to me, you show me more respect." Salina said tightening her hold on Francesca.

"That boy is one of my best friends. He also happens to be Charles's best friend. He came over to wait for Charles to come back from football practice. I don't see how I could disgrace the family name when I am in my own house. Also you are not my grandmother. You are just the women who married our grandfather." Francesca yelled removing Salina's hand from her shoulder, she then walked out of the sitting room and up to her room.

Indigo had been silent, as her step-grandmother and cousin argued. When Francesca had run from the room, she really didn't know what she was meant to do. Her step-grandmother had been very bitchy towards Francesca. And, Francesca had been very brave and stupid to yell at Salina Barnes. Not liking the way her step-grandmother was looking at her, she ran from the room and up the stairs looking for Francesca's room.

"Francesca where are you? I can not remember which room is yours." Indigo called out to her cousin. There was no spoken answer but a bedroom door did open. She walked into the room and saw Francesca sitting on the top bunk. She didn't say anything as she walked into the room. Not knowing what else to do she sat down on the lower bunk.

After maybe ten minutes had passed Indigo thought she might try to talk to her cousin. "Francesca I don't want you to yell at me. But, could I please ask who the boy was that grandma threw out the house?"

"Why would I yell at you. Right because I yelled at the step-bitch you think I will yell at you. That just will not happen. At least not over Jerry. I will tell you something about Jerry if you really want to know." Francesca replied sitting up and putting her legs over the side of her bed.

"Francesca that was why I asked you about him. So his name is Jerry. How long have you known him? So where you really doing nothing on the sofa with him? When I came into the room I was sure he was your boyfriend." Indigo said climbing off the bed and looking up at Francesca.

Francesca started to laugh at what Indigo had just said. She was laughing so hard that she fell off the top bunk, landing on the floor with a thud.

Indigo ran to Francesca and helped her up and onto her feet. The whole time trying to apologize for saying something so funny. She was shocked when Francesca began to speak.

“I have known Jerry for years. I’ll introduce you to him properly over the weekend if you want. I just can’t understand why you think he was my boyfriend. Jerry is just a friend who happens to be a boy. Don’t worry it was not your fault that I fell off the bunk bed.” Francesca was going to say more when the front door opened and there was a lot of noise coming from the kitchen.

Indigo and Francesca ran out of the room to see what was going on.

Belinda had finally stopped going from room to room, and was sitting in her bedroom by her computer. Not one of her friends had emailed back and so she was playing one of her computer games. It was a game that her father didn’t really like. But she knew that was only because he couldn’t work out how to play.

“Belinda can you please come downstairs. I want to go over and check that you have everything you need for tomorrow. I have not been given your time table but there is no harm in having all your books with you.” Mrs. Roberts called up the stairs putting the books into subject piles.

Mrs. Roberts was very worried about how Belinda’s first day would go. She knew her daughter had already meet another new girl. This however did not make her feel any better. She knew though that Belinda did need to go to a different school. Mrs. Evans school for girls would not have been her first choice. However Guinevere school was full up and Belinda would have been on the waiting list for over six month. Going to the hall she found her daughters brand new school bag and walked back to the kitchen.

Belinda walked into the kitchen and started to pack her pencil case. When her mother came back in she helped her pack her new school bag.

“Belinda are you looking forward to starting your new school. I hope you don’t think that your father and I pushed you into going to this school. We did this for you and I hope you understand why we did all of this for you.” Mrs. Roberts said putting a couple of exercise books into the bag.

Belinda looked at her mother and carefully thought about her answer. “I guess I am looking forward to tomorrow. I mean I will not be the only new girl. Do you remember I told you about Caitlyn. Well she is

starting at Mrs. Evans school for girls as well. Mum I am not upset about starting the new school. Itâ€™s not like I will never see my old friends again. I have promised to keep in touch via email and text.â€• Opening one of the side pockets she thought that nearly everything she has said was the truth. The only thing that was a lie was that she was not at all upset about moving schools.

If Mrs. Roberts noticed the lie she didnâ€™t say anything about it. They talked for about another half an hour until the house phone began to ring. Mrs. Roberts left her daughter at the table.

â€œHello, Mrs. Beth Roberts speaking. Hello David, no I have not put dinner on just yet. I understand, that you have to work. I will see you later. Yes I will tell Belinda that you send your love and wish her good luck. Goodbye.â€• Mrs. Roberts said putting the phone back on its stand.

Belinda watched her mother trying to see if everything was alright. When her mother turned around and smiled she was sure that everything was alright. â€œMum, would you like me to get out the food from the fridge or the freezer? Will dad be here tomorrow morning? I know he can not take me to school but he will be here to wish me good luck right.â€• Belinda asked not being able to stop herself from asking the question.

â€œI am afraid your father will not be home until very late tonight. He says to tell you good luck. And also that he will try and be up early to say goodbye to you. He is very sorry but it canâ€™t be helped. Lets talk about happier things like what you would like for dinner. Why donâ€™t we go out for a meal. It is still early for us and we can eat and still get you back in time for your bed time.â€• Mrs. Roberts said walking out of the kitchen and into the hall grabbing a coat and car keys.

Belinda ran after her mother pausing to put on her shoes and to collect her coat. She climbed into the car and told her mother that she would like very much to go to a new place. Her mother agreed and told Belinda to look up cafÃ©s and restaurants in the area.

Caitlyn looked at her room admiring her work. Finally satisfied that her room was more to her like her own, she left the room. Having left the room she looked around her new home. It was so different from the house she had been brought up in. Trying not to think about her old home she looked to the future.

Her stomach made a rumbling sound and she began to search the kitchen for a snack. As she was eating her second apple there was a knock at the front door. Remembering that her mother told her not to answer the front door she walked to the front door and looked through the peep hole. Seeing that it was just Stephanie she opened the door.

â€œHey Caitlyn, sorry to just drop by like this. I know I should have phoned but I wasnâ€™t sure if your phone was working. My mother has gone to work and I was sure your mother would be out. Not that I donâ€™t like

your other. I was just hoping that the two of us could get to know each other a bit better without our mums breathing down our neck. So what do you say, can I come in.â€• Stephanie said looking at her half-sister.

â€œYeah sure come on in.â€• Caitlyn said moving aside to let Stephanie pass. She followed her sister to the sofa and sat down next to her. Before they began to talk Caitlyn went to get two packets of crisps and two drinks. Sitting back down on the sofa she handed her sister her crisps and drinks.

â€œWell I suppose I should start as I am the older sister. Do you know how you are getting to school tomorrow?â€• Stephanie asked her little sister taking a sip from her can of diet coke.

Caitlyn looked at her sister wondering why it was taking her so long to answer a simple question. â€œI suppose my mother will drop me off at the gates. Why how do most of the pupils get to school. I donâ€™t want to be made to look like some kind of loser on my first day.â€•

â€œYou will not look like a loser. It is fine for your mother to take you to school on your first day. However I donâ€™t think you should have her pick you up. Iâ€™ll walk you home tomorrow if you want. Donâ€™t worry a lot of girls walk home with older siblings. A lot of them also walk to school in groups. Tomorrow your mother can walk or drive you to school. I can then walk you back home. That is if your mother agrees. Why donâ€™t we talk about something else. What do you say sis?â€• Stephanie said taking a sip from her drink when she paused to catch her breath.

Caitlyn had let her sister speak and wait until she was certain that Stephanie was done. Taking a large swig from her can of sprite. She cleared her throat and blushed when Stephanie gave her a weird look. â€œMy mum would be very happy for you to walk me home. She will be very happy that we are bonding as sisters. I think it would be very nice for us to walk to and from school. At least until I know the area a bit better and have some friends of my own. That way you will not be one of the siblings complaining to their mother that they are always stuck looking after their little sis. So what would you like to talk about.â€• Caitlyn said.

Stephanie had been silent as Caitlyn spoke. She had been a bit annoyed when Caitlyn seemed to repeat what she had just said. Trying to ignore this, she took a deep breath and began to speak. â€œWell I came round to get to know you. The best way to do that is ask all the normal questions. So would you like to go first or should I start asking the questions.â€• Stephanie took another swig from her coke and started to eat her handful of crisps while she waited for Caitlyn to say something.

â€œI think you should go first because you are the oldest. Also you seem to have some idea about which questions to ask. At the moment my mind is a complete blank.â€• Caitlyn said getting up to get herself another drink. â€œStephanie would you like another drink or another bag of crisps or anything. We have some chocolate if you would prefer.â€•

Stephanie got up when Caitlyn asked her about food and drink. "Before we get to know each other would you mind if I use your bathroom?" Stephanie asked looking rather embarrassed.

"Sure it's the third door on the left." Caitlyn said getting herself another drink and for Stephanie decided that it was better to get the drink out just in case Stephanie got thirsty. Caitlyn sat down again waiting for Stephanie to come back.

"So little sis I suppose it is time for the questions to begin. Are you ready?" Stephanie said sitting down next to her sister.

"Bring it on big sis." Caitlyn said laughing and almost spilling her drink.

"Well if you say so. Question number one, what is your favourite colour? Second question did you have any pets before you moved here? Third question are you happy?" Stephanie asked looking very serious as the questions came to her mind.

Caitlyn looked at Stephanie wondering why she had become so serious, and if they really were the questions people asked to get to know one another. "My favourite colour I would have to say is purple. No I have never owned a pet. I guess I am happy. Never really thought about it." Caitlyn answered.

Stephanie and Caitlyn spent the next couple of hours getting to know each other better. They took it in turns asking and answering the questions. With each round the questions seemed to get weirder and weirder. The game came to sudden end when Mrs. Summers came back. She told Stephanie it was getting late and that maybe she should go home. Stephanie got up at once embarrassed and left saying a quick goodbye and that she would see Caitlyn tomorrow at school. Caitlyn ate her tea and went to bed early because of the extra early time she would be getting up the next day.

Anastasia walked into the hall straight for the telephone on the wall. "Hello mum, I have gone round to a friend's house. No I have not gone round to Francesca's. I have gone round to Mercedes' house with Mulan and Paris. Mercedes has invited me to stay for dinner. May I stay for dinner. It will be served in about an hour. Would it be possible for you or dad to come and pick me up at around seven thirty. Thank you I will see you at seven thirty." Anastasia said placing the phone back on the stand. Turning into the sitting room she found Mercedes, Mulan and Paris waiting for her.

The first thing Anastasia noticed when she walked into the room, was that her new friends were all drinking hot coco. Taking the empty seat next to Mercedes she turned to her new friend. "So Mercedes who do you normally do now?" Anastasia asked hoping that someone would say something.

Mercedes looked at Anastasia for a long time. "So Anastasia, would you like a cup of hot coco? If you go to the kitchen, the cook will get you what ever you want. While you are in there could you tell the cook to bring in some snacks, order whatever takes your fancy. You will also have to tell the cook what you want for dinner." Mercedes said shoving Anastasia to make her move.

Anastasia did not need to be told twice and left the sitting room and made her way to the kitchen. She was so happy to be hanging out with the rich girls that she didn't even think that they could be using her.

"Mercedes why did you send Anastasia away." Mulan asked joining Mercedes on the sofa.

Her sister Paris glared at her and then joined the two of them saying. "Mulan how can you be so dense. Mercedes sent her away. So that we could make more plans. Also you do remember it is just the cook today." She smiled as she came to her conclusion knowing that without a doubt that she was right.

Mercedes came to her own conclusion when the twins stopped talking. And, it was that she was the brains and beauty of the little group. As she looks at the twins she also believes that she is the most grown up as well.

Anastasia came back into the sitting room and is going to sit down on one of the chairs, when the three of them move up on the sofa and so she sits down next to Paris.

The four girls just sat in silence for just over ten minutes. At last the cook came in and placed a tray with four mugs of steaming hot coco and a number of biscuits next to them. She didn't stay for long because she had a lot to do. None of the girls looked up as she left the room. When the cook had gone Mercedes stood up and declared.

"Anastasia as you are new to the group we are going to spend time getting to know you. And, in turn you will get to know the three of us. Tomorrow you can come back again and we will do what we normally do. You can ask Paris or Mulan about that tomorrow. The three of us will take it in turns to ask you questions. I will go first."

Anastasia just nodded not wanting to cause an argument.

"First things first. Tell me about your family and if you have any pets." Mercedes asked looking over Paris and straight at Anastasia.

"My father is called Nathan. My mother is Veronica. They both work long hours. My sister Claire is older than me and most of the time she is a bitch." Anastasia said not really sure if she had said the right thing.

“Who is your sister dating and how long has it been going on for? Also who would you like as your boyfriend?” Mulan asked dipping her chocolate biscuit into her coco as she spoke.

Anastasia had no idea how this question was meant to make them get to know each other better, but she knew she would have to answer them anyway. “I really do not know who my sister is dating. She doesn’t really tell me anything, and she would never tell me who she was dating. If I had to guess it would be someone our father would hate. There are a number of guys who I like. The main guy though is Charles, but you know that because Francesca told you.” Anastasia said getting angry as she spoke but not at her new friends.

She was angry at Francesca for betraying her.

Paris waited a couple of minutes for Anastasia to calm down before she asked her questions. “What is your favourite TV program? Who is your favourite actor either in a movie or on TV?” Paris said and was going to say more but she saw the look Mercedes was giving her.

Anastasia was starting to feel hungry and just wanted to get the questions over with. “My favourite program is either Holby City or Casualty. At the moment I can’t really decide. My favourite actor is Tom Felton. You know the guy who plays Draco Malfoy.” Anastasia answered.

Mercedes was going to ask more questions, when the cook came in and told them that dinner was ready. The four of them walked into the dining room and sat down to eat. They spoke as they ate about what they would be doing in school the next day. After dinner they went up to Mercedes room and read magazines.

Nathan Jones came to pick his daughter up, wanting her to have an early night. She complained about having to go home so early. He just told her that she could stay later on Friday. When she got home she noticed that Claire was not home yet. She asked each of her parents where Claire was but all they would say was that she was out.

Chapter Eleven

The sound of running water woke Indigo from her deep sleep. Climbing out of her bed she noticed at once that Francesca was already up and about. Indigo looked at the floor trying to stop the memories of last night. This though didn’t work and everything came flooding back.

Charles came home at six thirty over two hours after school had finished. He had been playing football with friends as he had told Anastasia, and time just got away from him. As he walked home he received a text message from Jerry saying that he had been thrown out of the house by some crazy old bitch. Charles knew at once who he was talking about. That was when Charles had begun to run.

By the time he got home Salina was furious and ready to take her anger out on anyone. Before he had even placed one foot inside the house he had been yelled at for letting his sister be alone with a boy. He had yelled back saying that Jerry was not just his friend but Francesca's as well.

Francesca had run down the stairs to defend her brother. Salina did not like this at all and slapped Francesca around the face causing her to fall over. Charles rushed over to her and stood in front of her so that Salina could not strike out again.

When the shouting had started Indigo had raced to the landing. Indigo froze though when she saw her step-grandmother strike Francesca. Her brain was yelling at her to run down and help her cousins, her legs though would just not listen to what she was saying. She was saved when the rest of the boys came home.

Mark was the first to come through the door. Although he could be just like his older brothers, when he saw Francesca on the floor all his courage just seemed to leave him. Even so he ran to make sure she was ok. Charles gave him one of his pleading looks but he just didn't know what to do. All he could do was stand by his little brother and sister as best he could.

Simon walked in and knew that he would have to take charge until the older boys came home. "Salina I think you should leave now. You have dropped off Indigo and our parents will not be home for hours. Jason and Sampson will be back in less than an hour. I can handle the house until they get back. Granddad must be wondering where you are." Simon said putting himself in front of Charles and Mark.

"I will go but you have to get Indigo's crap out of my car. You are three strong boys and I demand that you help me." Salina replied walking out of the front door.

As soon as Salina was out of the house Francesca had run up the stairs and into her bedroom. Charles, Mark and Simon had brought in her things. After that Indigo couldn't really remember what had happened.

"Indigo, come down for breakfast please." Grace Barnes called up the stairs to her niece.

"I'll be down in just a bit." Indigo called back. When her aunt had called her. She had come out of a dream like state. Putting on her dressing gown and slipping on her slippers she ran downstairs. It surprised her when she saw Francesca, Charles, Mark and Simon sitting at the table. Taking a seat next to Francesca she picked up a bowl and poured some cereal.

“Indigo I am sure your parents told you but I will tell you again anyway. Your school does not open its gate until Monday. Richard, Jason and Sampson all work and we can’t leave you on your own. Therefore you will be spending the day with grandmother. I am hoping that on Friday one of them will get the day off.” Grace said handing her daughter the milk.

“Indigo before you spend the day being tortured. You want to meet Jerry. Charles and I normally walk to the end of the road to meet him. Then you can either walk with us to school or Jerry can walk you back home. So what do you say Indigo.” Francesca asked as she got up and started to thought through her school bag.

Charles walked out of the room saying he needed to get his school bag. Mark and Simon called out that they would be leaving in just under ten minutes. Normally they would have left over an hour ago. Their mother though had told them that they were to walk Charles and Francesca to school.

“Hey Frankie why didn’t you tell Indigo about your friend. I mean we always meet up with her. Did you guys have a fight or something.” Charles asked with Indigo just behind them. Indigo was looking forward to meeting Jerry but she didn’t understand why she had to spend the day with her grandmother. She would much rather be at school than spend the day with her grandmother.

Francesca awoke and climbed straight out of bed and straight to the shower picking up her clothes on the way. Her phone beeps just as she is getting into the shower but she ignores it. Once she is dressed and ready for school she notices that she has two more messages. Deciding that the message can wait until at least after breakfast she goes and sets the table, only remembering at the last second to set an extra place for Indigo.

It had been very strange for Francesca to share a room. Having her own room was really the only good thing about having such a large family. Well that and her own bathroom. With Indigo in the house, she was going to be forced to share everything. The only thing she wouldn’t be sharing was her make-up. And, that was only because she didn’t really have any. There were ups to having another girl in the house and, was that she would have someone on her side. At home but not at school. As far as she knew she hadn’t gotten a text from Anastasia.

“Hey Frankie, how are you? Did you sleep well with Indigo in the room with you.” Charles greeted his twins sister as he sat down.

“Charles I am fine. Just eat your breakfast. You know Mark and Simon will eat just as much as you.” Francesca replied not looking at him while she spoke. There was a small mark on the side of her face from where Salina had struck her. She wasn’t worried about it though because no one ever noticed what she looked like. Taking her seat next to Charles they both began to eat not saying another word until Mark and Simon came into the room.

They both ignored Charles and Francesca being far too busy arguing with each other. They had just been told that they were to walk the little ones to and from school. Simon had argued that it was not his job, but their father had just simply told them that it was to protect Francesca. That had put a stop to the argument or at least with their father. It didn't mean that they were going to stop fighting each other.

“Look Mark I am older and so I am in charge. You can tell Francesca that she has to walk home with us. Not to mention that we have to walk her to school.” Simon said walking to the fridge and getting out the orange juice.

Mark watched his brother and just really wanted to punch him. “Simon why do I have to tell Francesca. Is this because you are scared that she will yell. It doesn't matter who tells her, she will still yell at you.” Mark yelled shoving Simon out of his way and grabbing the apple juice.

Francesca had watched her brothers as they walked into the kitchen and began to shove each other. They stopped when they saw Francesca watching them. When she rolled her eyes, they quickly took their seats and began to eat their breakfast.

The four of them sat in silence until Indigo came down the stairs. Francesca suggested that Indigo walk to the end of the road and meet Jerry. Mark was not very happy when Francesca mentioned Jerry's name. He wasn't going to say anything but he never liked the guy. He was certain that the guy had a thing for his sister. The last thing he wanted was for the guy to get a thing for his baby cousin as well. He really wanted to say something but he couldn't because Jerry was Charles's friend.

Half an hour later Francesca was walking to school with Charles and Indigo. Mark was walking in front of them with Simon bringing up the rear. Charles had just asked his sister if they would be meeting up with Anastasia. Francesca's response was to walk in front of Mark with Indigo close behind.

The two girls were in a deep conversation when they reached the end of the road. Jerry was waiting for them and seeing the new girl he introduced himself. He was surprised when Indigo was shy around him. For as long as he had known Francesca she had always been very calm around him.

He tried to ask about Francesca just changed the subject. She told him that he was to walk Indigo home. He wanted to question Francesca about yesterday but Mark and Simon stepped in.

The six of them walked to school, Francesca and Indigo at the front whispering and giggling. Charles and Jerry were walking just behind play fighting. Mark and Simon were watching at the ready to break anything up.

Anastasia sat at the dressing table applying the last touches of make-up to her face. Checking her appearance one last time she stood up. The make-up was not very obvious unless you looked very closely. The challenge would be getting out of the house without her father noticing. If she was caught they she would be grounded for a very long time. Getting grounded would really screw up her plans for the next couple of days, and hopefully the weekend. Standing up and walking out of the room she realised that she had no one to walk to school with. Not being able to bring herself to text Francesca, she decided to walk to school with Claire. It would be hard work trying to get Claire to talk to her but that really didn't bother her.

Once she was at school then she could spend her time with Mercedes, Mulan and Paris. After all she was still very mad at Francesca. If she spent all her time with Mercedes she was sure that Francesca would tell her how sorry she was.

As she walked to her sisters room she wasn't sure that she was going to forgive Francesca. Knocking on the door she waited for Claire to answer. It was still early so she was sure that Claire would be in her room getting dressed. When there was no answer she knocked again and then opened the door and walked in.

The room was empty and she was just going to leave the room when Claire walked in.

“What the hell are you doing in my room. How many times do I have to tell you, stay out of my room.” Claire yelled shoving Anastasia back out of the room.

“Hey Claire, I just wanted to ask if I could walk to school with you. It will only be for today. Tomorrow I can meet Mercedes and the others, half way or something.” Anastasia said storming down the stairs and out the front door only stopping to grab her school bag.

Claire rolled her eyes and simply closed her bedroom door. If she had been dressed she might have gone after her sister. There was much higher chance though that she would have just ignored her sister. In ten minutes or so she would be leaving the house herself. It would not be very hard at all to catch up with Anastasia.

Anastasia walked down the road furious that she had let her sister get to her. Normally when her sister was a bitch to her she could just ignore her. This time Claire had just really gotten to her. It was she told herself because she was still upset about her fight with Francesca.

As the thought crossed her mind, she shook her head at how silly she was being. Francesca was a loser and she knew that for a fact. Whereas Mercedes was the most popular girl in Year Seven. Everyone wanted to be one of the rich girls who got to hang out with Mercedes. As of yesterday she was one of those

girls. And, as of today she was part of Mercedes group.

This just brought a smile to her face. For years she had been an outcast like Francesca. Finally she was popular and she began to run to school. As she came to the end of the road she stopped. In the distance she could see Francesca with a girl she didn't recognise. It annoyed her like hell but she tried to ignore the feeling. Getting out her mobile she sent a text to Mercedes and then one to Mulan and Paris.

She asked them to meet her by the school gates. Anastasia was not at all sure if they would agree to meet her. Part of her wasn't even sure if yesterday had been a joke. Watching Francesca walk round a corner with what looked like a new friend really made her pray that it had not been a joke.

"Anastasia why are you just standing there? I have to get to school and so do you. I think someone just sent you a text." Claire said bringing her sister out of her day dream and walking off.

In under two minutes Anastasia was running to catch up with her while, trying to read the texts. There was one from each of her new friends telling her to hurry up, and that they wanted a good view of the new girls. In Mercedes it said that one of the new girls might just be rich enough to join their group. Anastasia was happy about this because she wanted someone in the group with whom she could speak to. Mulan and Paris just really spoke to each other. But as she told herself it had only been one day, and not really even a day, only a couple of hours.

Belinda had woken up with a smile on her face. She had been certain that her father would be joining her to meet her new head. As it turned out she should have known better. She found herself sitting next to her mother waiting to be called in to see her new Head Mistress. The only thing she really wanted was to have her father with her.

Across from her sat Caitlyn with her mother. They had not said a word to each other. She was just standing up to go and speak to her when Mrs. Evans came out of her office.

"Belinda Roberts if I could see you and your mother first." Mrs. Evans said, holding the door open for Mrs. Roberts and Belinda. "Please take a seat. I promise this will not take very long at all."

Mrs. Roberts took her seat and indicated that Belinda should also sit down. Belinda took the seat not wanting to start any arguments. It was only when Mrs. Evans sat down that Belinda noticed that there was another girl in the room.

"Anastasia Jones I want you to meet our new girl Belinda Roberts. I would like you to show her around the school at least just until the end of the week." Mrs. Evans said looking at the two girls and just

knowing that they would be friends.

Mrs. Roberts thanked her and told Belinda that she would pick her up at four. She walked out of the room followed closely by Belinda and Anastasia. Mrs Roberts hugged her daughter goodbye and said thank you to Anastasia.

The two of them waited until Mrs. Roberts had left before they even tried to speak.

“So Belinda we have half an hour till the first class of the day. What do you want to see first.” Anastasia asked not really that into showing the new girl around the school.

Belinda watched the girl who was to show her around the school. At her old school the first thing you would ask a new girl was how rich they were. Things were very different in this poor school. Deciding not to be rude she answered the question as best she could. “I really don’t mind. I suppose the best place start is our main classroom.”

Anastasia was happy with the answer and so started to walk away. After just a bit Belinda decides to follow not really having anything better to do. As they walk Belinda notices that Anastasia is texting someone. Not wanting to be rude but feeling very curious she decided to ask.

“So who are you texting?”

Anastasia came to a sudden stop almost sending the uncompleted message. Turning around she looked at Belinda and wondered if she was rich as well. Not seeing any harm in it, she answered and then kept walking.

“I am texting Mercedes, Mulan and Paris. They all want to meet the new girl.”

“I am not the only new girl. Don’t your friends want to meet her as well. I mean I met her yesterday and she seems very nice.” Belinda replied running to catch up with her new friend.

“Yeah I know that there is another new girl. Thing is I got to chose who to show around the school and well I chose you.” Anastasia yelled back hoping to keep the conversation going.

“So why exactly did you chose me over Caitlyn.” Belinda replied as they walked into the classroom

“Well you see new girl, one of you is very rich. The other is very poor. My group is full of rich girls. Does

that answer your question.â€• Mercedes said as her way of introducing herself.

â€œWell I guess you all know that I am the rich girl. So what are you called, and who are your friends?â€• Belinda said realizing that she was with a group of bitchy girls.

â€œI am Mercedes, and these are my friends Mulan and Paris. Welcome to the group. Rule number one do not talk to Francesca. Rule number two no talking to the new girl whatever her name is.â€• Mercedes said.

The five of them wondered off to find seats. They were telling Belinda who was who. They also told her the reason why Francesca and Caitlyn were not cool and so not part of Mercedes group.

â€œCaitlyn I realise it is early but you need to get up. We have a meeting with your new Head Mistress. It may not be the best school but I still donâ€™t want you to be late on your first day.â€• Mrs. Summers said from the doorway of her daughters room. Walking back into the kitchen she went to make breakfast.

Caitlyn lay in her bed until the smell of the bacon cooking woke her up. Climbing out of bed she walked into the kitchen and started to eat. As soon as she was finished she made her way to the shower wanting to feel fresh on her first day.

Half an hour later she was sitting in the back seat of her mothers car, sitting next to Stephanie. Caitlyn was really embarrassed not only for herself but for Stephanie as well. It was bad enough that she had to be driven but Stephanie always walked. She knew that Stephanie had only agreed to be driven to be polite. It had also been the only way that Stephanie had been allowed to walk Caitlyn home from school.

â€œThank you for letting my mum drive you to school. It is probably very lame to have an adult drive you to school.â€• Caitlyn said as her mother turned another corner.

â€œYou are my little sister. I might end up getting to school very early but it is really no big deal. Anyway we are walking home together right.â€• Stephanie said giving her sister a very quick one armed hug.

Mrs. Summers watched the two girls happy that they were getting along. It felt strange to have two girls in the back seat but she was willing to get used to it. Turning into the school parking lot, she found a space and stopped the car.

Stephanie climbed out of the car thanking Mrs. Summers, and telling Caitlyn that she would see her at lunch. Looking around she saw the Barnes family walking into school. They were in the building before she had a chance to catch up with them. Hearing someone calling her name she ran to find her friends.

“Caitlyn come on. Everything is going to be just fine.” Mrs. Summers said opening the car door and climbing out. Giving her daughter some time she walked on ahead.

Caitlyn took a number of deep breaths before she climbed out of the car. She heard her mother lock the car and then ran to catch up with her. They walked into the building together. They took their seats opposite Belinda and her mother. It seemed to take forever until they were called into see Mrs. Evans.

“Caitlyn I would like to welcome you to your new school. Francesca here is going to show you around the school. I understand that your half sister is Stephanie Matthews. At lunch we like the students to keep their years. However you are allowed to eat with your sister for the first three days. Francesca you can show Caitlyn around the school now.” Mrs. Evans said standing up and showing the girls and Mrs. Summers out of her office.

The next three days went by slowly and quickly. For the girls the hours at school dragged by and yet the time they spent together just whizzed by.

Belinda enjoyed being popular yet again. It was hard not being the head of the group. But that was something she could get over and handle. The most important thing was that she had friends and was enjoying her new school.

Caitlyn was not popular but she did have a new best friend. It also seemed that Stephanie was spending more time with her. This she knew had something to do with Francesca older brothers. She didn’t mind at all and was just happy to have her sister around.

Soon enough it is the weekend and all the girls have plans.

Chapter Twelve

Mercedes climbed out of her king sized bed, waking Mulan and Paris as she left the room. Not bothering to wait for them she made her way into the kitchen. Taking out her mobile she checked the time and saw that it was still early. This brought a smile to her face and she started to text Anastasia and then Belinda.

Mercedes was giving them orders to come to her house, and she would not be pleased if they did not show up. Happy with what she had written she waited for Mulan and Paris to join her.

They came down the stairs looking a lot happier than she would have liked. It had only just gone eight and two of her best friends were laughing away. It made her sick just knowing that they were happy.

“Girls I have already texted the newest members of our little group. They are going to be here at ten and no later. We are going to spend the day watching movies and we might go shopping.” Mercedes said as her friends sat down.

“I thought we were going to go swimming today.” Mulan said taking her seat next to Mercedes.

“Are you sure it is a good idea to have both Anastasia and Belinda over. You haven’t even told them about the tests. I realise that you are in charge but they are not really even part of the group are they.” Paris said always happy to give her opinion. Even when most of the time it would be easier for her to just keep her mouth shut.

“Both of you listen to me. I have invited them over because they think we are all friends. They need to trust us and once they do they share secrets. Anyway they have passed the first test. They are both rich. Over the next couple of weeks we will be testing their loyalty. If they pass that test then and only then will they learn about the other tests. They will be here soon enough lets get everything ready.” Mercedes said standing up and leaving the room.

Mulan and Paris looked at each other and then followed their leader back up to her bedroom. The three of them changed in silent and then each of them chose three DVD’s each. Once they were done they waited for Anastasia and Belinda to arrive.

“Anastasia it’s time for you to get up. It may be the weekend but you still have homework to do. I want you down in no more than half an hour. I expect you to be dressed and ready to begin your homework as soon as you get down here.” Nathan Jones called up the stairs to his youngest daughter.

Anastasia rolled her eyes as she climbed out of her bed. She couldn’t believe that her father could be so lame. Looking over at her bedside table she saw that someone had sent her a text. Ignoring what her father had just said, she simply read the text and sent a message saying she would be there. As the message sent she realised that she was going to have to find away of convincing her father to let her go.

Packing a small bag with what she thought she might need, she left her room and made her way downstairs. As she came to the last steps she noticed that her dad was waiting for her.

“Where do you think you are going? I told you that you have homework to do.” Nathan Jones tells his daughter.

Veronica Jones walked into the hall and for once took her youngest daughters side. “Nathan I think you should listen to where Anastasia is going before you jump down her throat. Well Anastasia do you mind

telling us where you are going at such an early hour on Saturday.â€•

Anastasia looked first at her mother and then at her father. It always made her nervous when either one of her parents was being nice to her. â€œMum, dad I have been invited to go round to Mercedes for a while. That is ok right. I mean Mercedes is one of my best friends. So may I go please daddy, I promise there will be no boys.â€• she said trying to get past her father.

â€œYou can go but you will be staying in all day tomorrow. If you can wait ten minutes Iâ€™ll drive you there myself. Before we go just please tell me again who is going to be at Mercedes house while you are there.â€• Nathan said wondering if his daughter was going to lie to him.

â€œDaddy you worry way too much. Mulan, Paris and Belinda will be there.â€• Anastasia said sitting on the bottom step and waited for her father.

Belinda read the text for the second time and knew she had no choice. If she wanted to stay in the group then she would have to go to Mercedes house. It was a lot of work to be friends with Mercedes but she did like hanging around with Anastasia. While getting dressed she thought of what she was going to tell her parents. They had been happy enough when she told them that she had made new friends. It had been three days and still there had been no word from any of her old friends.

â€œBelinda itâ€™s time for breakfast.â€• Mr. Roberts yelled up to his daughter. It was he knew normal for his daughter to want privacy. But since she had started her new school she was sure that she was different. His wife had told him that there little girl was just growing up. He was sure that Belinda was different from the girl she used to be.

Belinda came down the stairs and found both her parents waiting for her. This surprised her because her mother normally worked on the weekend. Her parents looked at her with shocked expressions. They had never seen their daughter up and dressed so early on a Saturday.

â€œMum, dad would it be alright if I went round to Mercedes for the day. I will spend all of tomorrow catching up on homework. It is very important that I go round to Mercedes house. If you want to know why I need to go to my friends house I will tell you. If not I need to leave soon if I am to get to her house for ten.â€• Belinda said taking her seat in front of her parents.

Mr. and Mrs. Roberts looked at their daughter wondering why she had to grow up so quickly. Then looking at each other they nod at one another and then at Belinda. â€œYou may go to your new friends house. But there are some conditions.â€• Mrs. Roberts said and turned to her husband.

“When you get to the house you will phone us to say that you have arrived. You will ring home at six to ask to come home. When you get home you will start on your homework until dinner. Then on Sunday just like you said you will do the rest of your homework. Do I make myself clear.” Mr. Roberts said.

“Yes daddy I understand and thank you very much. I just need to grab some DVD’s and then I will be out.” Belinda said walking into the sitting room.

Jerry picked up his mobile and checked again to see if Francesca had text him back. He had been texting her all week asking her if she was alright. And so far she hadn’t written back. Normally this wouldn’t worry him because she would talk to him on the way to school. The last three days she had not said a word to him and that did worry him.

Once again she saw that Francesca had failed to reply. This made him decide to take another course of action. Scrolling down his context list he found Charles’s name and began texting him asking him what he was up to and if he wanted to come over. Before pressing send he re-read the text and was sure that Charles would invite Francesca as well. He just hoped that she would come and talk to him.

Charles sat up in bed as his mobile phone began to ring, getting louder with each note. Grabbing the phone he read the message and before his brothers could be woken up. Climbing out of his bed he left the room sending a message back to Jerry. He couldn’t understand why his best friend was hinting that he should bring Francesca when he came over.

Knocking on his sisters door, he didn’t wait for an answer before he just walked in. He was very surprised when he saw that both Indigo and Francesca were up and dressed. Charles asked them what they were doing with there day. He directed the question at Francesca but it was Indigo who answered. She told him that they were going shopping and meeting Francesca’s new friend at the end of the road. Not really happy with the answer but guessing that his sister was not very happy with him he left the room.

Mark sat at the dinning room table deciding which subject he should begin with. His brothers would laugh at him for doing his homework and so early. This didn’t bother him because they were always teasing him about being a good boy. As he sat there he noticed that nearly all of his family seemed to be going out.

His mother and father spent most of their time working. They didn’t even get the weekends off, because they were spending all their time working to support their large family. Mrs. Barnes kissed each of her sons goodbye and left the house getting into her car and driving into work. Mrs. Barnes hugged Francesca yelling goodbye to his sons as he left for work.

Caitlyn walked into the kitchen finally happy with what outfit she was wearing. Just like they had talked

about Stephanie was waiting for her. Seeing her sister she walked over to her and greeted her.

“So you ready to go? I have to say the outfit really suits you.” Stephanie said jumping down from her bar stool.

“I am ready, but I am not meeting Francesca and Indigo till I get a text. So why is your mum here as well. Did she find out who will be walking Francesca into town or something.” Caitlyn said looking first at her mum and then at Stephanie’s.

Stephanie looked at her sister and then at the two grown ups. She was just going to say something but was stopped when her mother began to speak..

“So Caitlyn I hear you are going to meet Francesca Barnes. I have to say that I am happy that you decided not to befriend Mercedes Chambers. I may be old but I still know the kind of things that girl would do. I hope you enjoy your day. Stephanie who are you meeting again.” Mrs. Matthew said first looking at Caitlyn and then at Stephanie.

“Mum I told you I am meeting up with the girls for a bit. We are thinking of eating lunch out. That is ok right. I promise not to let them take me to anywhere expensive. I have babysitting money so you don’t need to worry.” Stephanie said looking at her mother hoping that Caitlyn would not say anything. To her surprise Caitlyn actually kept her mouth shut and just kept her eyes on her phone.

Mrs. Summer looked at her new friend and smiled, their daughters were getting along. Even better than that they were acting like sisters. “Girls I realise you are not meeting your friends for a while. But Jessica and I were hoping to talk. I don’t think I mentioned this before but we used to know each other. It was a long time ago but it would be nice to catch up.” She said looking mainly at her daughter.

“Come on Caitlyn a walk will do us some good. You can text Francesca and ask if we can meet up sooner rather than later. They are not likely to mind. The Barnes family are normally up early on a Saturday. The three eldest should all be at work.” Stephanie said leaving the flat with Caitlyn following.

Indigo looked over at Francesca and wondered who she was texting. She had asked her but Francesca hadn’t said anything back. It had hurt when her cousin had just ignored her. She tried again speaking louder to see if that would help. It didn’t and she knew that the reason was simply because she could not be bothered.

Feeling ignored she tried to figure out why she had lied to Charles. When he had asked what they were doing, she had told him that they were meeting Caitlyn at the end of the road. They were it was true

meeting Caitlyn. They were not meeting her at the end of the road. The three of them were all going into town so Francesca could show them around.

She did not live that far away from Francesca but she didn't really know her way around the town. Watching Francesca again she knew that Frankie was nearly ready to go. Looking at the clock she wonders why they are ready so early when they are not meant to leave for at least another hour. Not wanting to start an argument she applied the finishing touches to her make-up and followed Francesca out of the room.

Francesca is so busy texting Michael that she does not hear Indigo speaking to her. If she had she would have been able to make something up. Instead she just made it seem like she was deliberately ignoring Indigo. Sending the text she turned around to see that Indigo was waiting for her. Walking out of her room she waited on the landing, before going down the stairs and heading for the front door.

As she walked down the stairs the only thing she could think of was how she was going to meet Michael. There was no way she could stop the shopping trip, but she could definitely speed it up. Once the shopping bit was over she would have to find away to get Indigo to go home alone. As idea came into her head and she smiled sure that it would work.

Walking out of the house her mobile vibrated and she realised that Jerry had sent her yet another text. For the last three days it seemed that Jerry had been texting her almost every hour. She couldn't understand why Jerry was suddenly so fascinated with her. They were very good friends but they didn't normally talk to each other every day. Next weekend she promised herself that she would make an effort to talk to Jerry.

“Francesca, Indigo would you two please slow down. Where are you going and in such a hurry. I have been calling after you for over ten houses.” Simon called to his little sister and cousin. He had been following them since they had left the house. His older brothers were all out of the house. The twins Jason and Sampson would be at work. Richard had snuck out of the house before anyone was even up. Mark was on his own in the house doing nothing but homework.

“Simon why are you following us? Do you not have your own friends, who you can annoy.” Francesca said hiding her mobile in her pocket.

Indigo looked at Francesca wondering why she was being so grumpy. “Francesca you don't need to yell Simon. We are going to meet Caitlyn Summers. The new girl at school. Her half sister is Stephanie Matthews is going to walk her into town as well.” Indigo said trying to keep the peace between brother and sister.

“I thought I might walk you two into town. I don’t really have anything better to do.” Simon said walking not really caring if Indigo or Francesca followed.

Indigo didn’t even bother to look at Francesca as she ran to catch up with Simon. She spoke to him as they walked into town with Francesca trailing behind.

Stephanie and Caitlyn were waiting for them just outside a clothes shop. Indigo introduced herself to Caitlyn and Stephanie almost introducing Simon. Francesca simply told them that she was going to the book shop next door. Walking off she knew that Indigo and Caitlyn were following her.

This left Stephanie and Simon alone. They were looking at each other not really sure what to say. Stephanie knew Simon from around school but they had never actually spoken. It made it hard for Stephanie to think of anything to say. Almost every guy in her year had a crush on the guy.

“So who are you again. Sorry not very good with faces.” Simon said almost smiling.

“My name is Stephanie Matthews. So which of the Barnes boys are you?” Stephanie said even though she had known instantly that he was the middle Barnes boy.

Simon looked at her the shock clear on his face. How could this girl not know who he was. Everyone knew the Barnes boys. More importantly they could tell them all apart. He stared at her trying to tell if she had been joking but her face was blank and so he told her who he was holding out his hand for her to shake.

Instead she just looked at him smiling and then running to join her group of friends. None of her friends were looking at her and she really didn’t mind. This would give her something to tell them. As she reached her friends they crowded round her and the questions began. Ignoring them to begin with she just kept walking until they finally got the answers they were looking for. Not that there was really much to say.

In a small café not very far from the bookshop. Richard was sitting with Claire. They had a booth in the corner of the café where the light were not working very well. It was too early for them to be eating lunch and too late for them to really be eating breakfast.

“Richard why did you want to meet so early.” Claire said moving closer to Richard. She loved being close to him and rested her head on his shoulder. She was starting to get upset about keeping her relationship a secret. As far as she was concerned they had been hiding it for far too long.

They had been friends since they were very young. She had kissed him on his ninth birthday saying that she didn’t know what else to get him. From that moment she had proclaimed that they were dating. He

had agreed and it really became official after her eleventh birthday. All of her friends knew who she was dating and knew not to go anywhere near him. If her parents ever found out then they would be furious with her.

“I just wanted to see you that was all. We couldn’t meet at my house because Mark will be there all day thought it might be nice to see you somewhere that none of our friends will come to.” Richard said relaxing with his arm around Claire.

Chapter Thirteen

The weekend passed with Anastasia, Belinda and Caitlyn spent their time catching up on their homework. Indigo though had no homework because she had yet to start her new school. This she knew wouldn’t last for very long. Once Monday came round she knew that she would have plenty of homework. That was why Indigo spent her Sunday talking to her sisters. Francesca was meant to be doing her homework but instead she went to meet Michael. She had told her parents that she just wanted to go for a run. They only allowed this because they believed that she had done all her homework.

Anastasia looked up from her homework and smiled. She had finally finished her homework. It had taken her most of the day to get through just four subjects. Her parents had refused to let her out of the house until her homework was complete. Getting up she grabbed her homework and, walked downstairs not understanding why her parents needed to see her work. Sitting down at the kitchen table she waited for her mother and father to take their seats.

Mr. Jones was the first to sit down picking up the Math and History exercise book. He didn’t put the books down until her was done. “Anastasia you seem to have worked very hard. I say that it is fine. Please hand me the other two thank you.” Mr. Jones said as his daughter handed over her English and Chemistry exercise books.

Anastasia looked at her father as he nodded at what she had written. When he was done and had given her books back she decided to voice her question. “Daddy, why are you the one looking at my English and Chemistry? Normally mum looks at English and Chemistry. Has mum gone out?” Anastasia said worried that something was going on. It had not escaped her notice that Claire was nowhere to be seen. She had also not seen her mother since she had first woken up.

“Anastasia your mother and Claire have gone shopping. You would have gone as well but you had too much homework. They will be back after supper. You can do what you want now.” Mr. Jones said getting up and leaving the room.

Belinda swore as Mercedes sent yet another text message. Over the past ninety minutes Mercedes, Mulan

and Paris had been sending her texts every ten minutes or so. Her phone was on silent so that had helped her not reply straight away. She had to do her homework or risk being banned from going out all week. That was an option she didn't really want to face. If she was banned from going out during the week then she would be in a hell of a lot of trouble. That was something she couldn't do. It was very important that she stayed part of Mercedes group.

"Belinda are you nearly done with your homework." Mrs. Roberts called up the stairs.

"Daddy I just have to finish my English homework and then I am done for the day." Belinda yelled back down the stairs.

"Belinda please do not yell. You are a young lady." Mrs. Roberts yelled.

Caitlyn sat in her kitchen with Stephanie sitting on her right. Her mother was at the table with Miss. Matthews. They were talking in low voices and Caitlyn didn't really mind. She was far too busy concentrating on her homework to be bothered by what her mother was doing.

Indigo sat in the sitting room talking to both her sisters. She has asked both her aunt and uncle if she could go home for the day. They had told her that it would be best if she waited till half term to see her family. Indigo wanted to argue but she understood the logic of what they were saying .

"So Indigo how has your week been?" Violet asked.

"I have had to spend my week with grandmother. Do you realise how many dresses I had to try on. And that was only on Wednesday." Indigo said happy that she was finally able to complain to someone. She had tried to talk to Francesca but she just always seemed busy.

"Indigo you really shouldn't complain so much. I mean you haven't started your new school yet. Once you has started you will have a lot to complain about." Lavender said trying to help out.

"Lavender you are not helping." Violet said wanting to stop her sister from worrying too much.

"Please don't argue. Why don't we change the subject. What did you guys do yesterday?" Indigo said getting upset that her sisters were fighting.

"Well Indigo yesterday I spent my day looking after the quintuplets. I had to take them to the park. That was a lot of work." Violet said.

“You think your day was hard. What about mine!” Lavender said before Indigo had a chance to talk about her day.

“Well are you going to say what happened or not.” Indigo said happy that her sisters were being normal again.

“Violet may have had to look after five six year olds. But I had to look after a nine year old two six year olds and three four year olds. The only good thing is the money so baby sis tell us what you did on Saturday.” Lavender said and waited for Indigo to tell them.

“I enjoyed my Saturday even if you two didn’t. I went shopping with Francesca and her new friend Caitly. The only strange bit was when Francesca left us for just over an hour. She wouldn’t say what she was doing or where she was going.” Indigo said as Francesca came running down the stairs in gym clothes.

“Mum, dad I am just going out for a quick run. I’ll be about two hours. Before you ask yes I have done my homework. I did it Friday night. There really wasn’t very much to do.” Francesca called out as she made her way down the stairs and towards the front door, passing the sitting room. As she walked past the sitting room she didn’t bother to look inside. She already knew that Indigo was in the room talking to her sisters. If she looked into the room then Indigo would get off the phone and ask to come with her. This was something she could just not allow.

Francesca left the house before any of her family members could call her back. As she left the house she wondered if meeting Michael again really was a good idea. Then she remembered that she had barely any time with him on Saturday. No matter what all logic told her she still wanted to go and see him.

She walked into the small café they had agreed to meet in. Michael was waiting for her and seemed very happy to see her again.

“So Francesca you came.” Michael said as he showed her where they would be sitting. It was only then that Francesca realised they were the only customers in the café.

They spent over two hours in the café chatting and getting to know each other. Francesca saw the time and ran the whole way home. When she got in her father and brothers were waiting for her. She ignored all of them and walked up to her room

Chapter Fourteen

By Monday morning Indigo and Francesca are talking to each other like Sunday never happened. Indigo

makes sure she does not mention that Francesca was gone for most of the day. She really wanted to say something when Francesca got a text and just left the table and headed straight for the front door. She didn't say anything though because it would start an argument and she just didn't want another

“Indigo, who just left the house? It is still early not even Mark has left.” Charles called as he walked into the kitchen.

“That was Francesca. Why is it weird for her to leave early. It is possible that she is just meeting Caitlyn early. So she can do her homework before school begins.” Indigo replies still wanting to protect Francesca even though she is angry at her.

“That can't be right. Francesca did her homework on Friday night. That was the reason mum and dad allowed her to go out on both Saturday and Sunday. And on Saturday she was showing you and the new girl around.” Charles said getting angry that Indigo was lying about his sister.

“Look Charles why don't you just ask Francesca when you get to school. I have to go and get ready for my new school. So are you going to wish me good luck.” Indigo said getting up and leaving the room heading for the bedroom she shared with Francesca. She was happy when Charles decided not to follow her. Ten minutes later her uncle was driving her to school. He told her that she would have to learn how to get to school by the end of the week. She agreed not wanting to cause an argument.

Indigo climbed out of the car and told her uncle it was fine for her to see the head mistress on her own. Her uncle was happy about this because he really needed to get to work. He wanted to be there for Indigo but work was very important at the moment.

Mrs. Robbins the head teacher of Guinevere's school was standing in her second floor office looking out the window. Almost instantly she noticed Indigo walking through the school gates. Over the years she had become very good at spotting the new girls. From the way Indigo was walking and, looking around there was no doubt in her mind that Indigo was a new girl. Moving away from the window and towards her desk, she waited for the new girl. She was secretly hoping that the new was nothing like her grandmother.

Indigo took two deep breath before knocking on Mrs. Robbins door. The receptionist had told her to knock and wait to be called in. Ten seconds later the door opened and Mrs. Robbins ushered her inside and invited her to take a seat.

“Indigo, could you please tell me about yourself and your old school. When your grandmother came to me she did not give me very much information.” Mrs. Robbins said wanting to say more but knowing it could wait until after Indigo had told her something.

Indigo looked at the head mistress wondering why her step-grandmother had been mentioned. As far as she knew her grandparents were only involved in paying the school fees. She had no idea that her step-grandmother had spoken to her new head mistress. "My full name is Indigo Barnes. I am eleven years old and I have two sisters. Their names are Lavender and Violet. They are both older than me. Before I was enrolled in this school, I was a pupil at St. Catherine's High. Both of my sisters still go to St. Catherine's High. I am sorry but I don't really know what else I am meant to say." Indigo said looking down at the floor and avoiding having to see Mrs. Robbins face.

"Thank you Indigo that was a bit of the information that I was looking for. I was also hoping you could tell me how you coped with school work in your old school. I have your file which tells me your grades and such, but I would like to hear from you." When Indigo just looked at her with a blank expression. Mrs. Robbins continued, "for example what was your favourite subject at your old school? Do you think you had a subject which excelled in and if so which one."

Indigo had to think very hard before she even thought about answering the question. If she said something like English then she might be thought of as a nerd. It was going to be hard enough being the poor new student, without the added pressure of being called a nerd as well. Taking a deep breath she began to speak, "I don't really have a favourite subject at the moment. The teachers at my last school believed that I was good at Art."

Mrs. Robbins looked at Indigo and was certain that Indigo was holding something back. However she didn't have the time to get any more information from her. "Indigo before I send you to your first lesson need to tell you, Guinevere's school has for over twenty-five years only allowed the daughters of the very rich to become our students. The rule has not really changed even now twenty-five years later. We only normally take the daughters of rich parents because our fees are very high. Your parents are not rich enough to afford our rates, this is why your grandparents are paying. I am telling you this because the other girls will notice. This might make it hard for you to make friends. I am sorry if I am being blunt but I feel that I need to warn you. Once you have made some friends the school will not be as bad. Your first class is double math. There is a girl waiting for you just outside my office. She will be showing you around for the next couple of days." Mrs. Robbins finished her speech by standing up and opening the door to her office.

On the other side of the door there was a girl who looked just slightly older than Indigo. Her hair was jet black with some pink highlights. When she saw Indigo she didn't offer a friendly smile, instead she looked her up and down and sneered at her.

Mrs. Robbins didn't see any of this because the phone in her office began to ring. Leaving the two girls together she walked back into her office and closed the door.

Melissa the Year Seven form captain was not very happy that she had been forced to show the new girl

around. She had tried to get the deputy form captain to show the new girl around. This failed because Mrs. Robbins had asked that she be the one to show Indigo Barnes around the school. "So new girl why did you move schools. Your family is poor right. So why exactly would you come to such a posh school. I will show you around the school. But don't speak to me." Melissa said walking off.

Indigo had been told by a number of different people that the girls of Guinevere school could be very bitchy. However she hadn't realised just how cruel the girls of her new school could be. And the worst this was that she had only met one of them. She followed Melissa into the math classroom and was sure that it was going to be the lesson from hell.

"Melissa please take your seat. Thank you for brining the new girl to the right class." Turning to face Indigo she continued, "Indigo please take the empty seat at the front of the classroom. Normally the new girl is told to stand up and tell the class a bit about herself. You are going to be able to get off easy. I hope this will help you make friends. Class today we are going to be studying fractions. For at least the first hour." Mrs. Black said walking to the white board and writing some figures on the board.

During the lesson Indigo tried to talk to the girl sitting next to her. This didn't go as well as she had hoped. The girl had long dark red hair that went down below her shoulder blades. When Indigo introduced herself and asked who she was. The response she got was a hiss and told to leave her alone. From that moment she gave up trying to make friends. She decided that for the moment she was just going to give up on trying to make friends.

The rest of the day was spent by herself trying to make herself invisible to the other girls. This worked for most of the day although it seemed to make the day go by very slowly.

As she climbed into her uncles car she had hoped hat someone would have spoken to her. It turned out to be a stupid thing to hope for. There was not one girl in Year Seven who would dare to speak to the new girl. This was because Melissa had told the year that Indio Barnes was poor and therefore a loser. As form captain she was in charge of the year and no one dared to argue with her.

When she got home she tried to go straight upstairs. This didn't work out when her uncle called her into the kitchen. He asked her how her first day had gone. Not wanting to worry him she told him that it did not go as badly as every one said it would. Happy with the answer he sent her upstairs to do her homework. She sat at the desk in Francesca's room and began her homework.

The Excalibur School just two roads away located on Arthur Avenue, had also opened its school gates for the new term.

Jerry Dawson climbed out of his limo and locked up at his new school. It was much bigger than his old

school and this one seemed to have a full uniform. He had already told himself that this wouldn't worry him and that it really was no big deal.

The driver had already been given instructions to take his belongings up to his bedroom. Thanking the driver he picked up his school bag and headed towards the main building. He had been given a letter over the weekend explaining that he would have a roommate. At the end of the day he would find out who he would be sharing the room with.

Walking through the main building he saw a number of boys who he recognised. They started talking and walked to their first lesson of the day which was double Biology.

"Jerry you will never believe how many new boys there are. Well joining Year Seven anyway." Jason said as the two boys sat at the back of the Biology lab.

"Jason will you just tell me." Jerry said laughing at how silly he had been for even being slightly nervous.

"There are only two new boys. You and some other guy." Jack said joining the conversation for the fun of annoying his friends.

Jason looked a bit more than annoyed but Jerry smiled saying "well this new guy better hurry up unless her wants a detention on his first day."

Jack and Jason looked at Jerry both wondering why he was bothering about the new boy. Neither of them knew his name but the rumours going around school was that he had been kicked out of his last school.

"Jerry I really don't think he will mind getting a detention." Jack said wanting to give his friend as much information as everyone else had.

"Yeah I mean he was kicked out of his last school." Jason said although like the other boys of the year he didn't know the reason.

Jerry looked at his friends and just like them wondered how the new boy had gotten into Excalibur school, if like Jason and Jack said he was such a trouble maker.

He was just going to voice this question when the Biology teacher entered the room. The teacher had short light brown hair and a very stern expression on her face, the class knew straight away that their

Biology teacher was not a friendly person.

Dr. Thursday watched as the boys ran to find their seats. She let herself smile happy in the knowledge that these boys were not going to cause any trouble. Looking at each row she noticed that there was only one seat empty. The best way she knew of finding out if someone was skipping, was simple to take registration.

“Michael Lingkon. Has anyone seen Michael Lingkon. He is the second new boy.” Dr. Thursday called out three times when no one said anything the first time. She was not really surprised that only one of the new boys had turned up. Michael Lingkon was a boy who all the teachers had been warned about. The lesson needed to start with or without Michael.

Two hours later Jerry was on the playing field with most of the year. They were playing five aside football changing players every few minutes. This was the only way that half the year was able to play football. During the game the second new boy made his appearance. He was wearing ripped jeans and a black t-shirt. As he walked into school a smile appeared on his face when he realised that people were watching him.

Jerry knew at once that the new boy was going to be a lot of trouble. This didn't mean that he wasn't going to make school more fun. In fact he might be able to make school interesting. If school could ever be made fun or interesting.

The bell went for the next lesson and Jerry found himself sitting next to Michael. They didn't speak to each other. Jerry did the work that was set. Every so often he would look over at Michael and started to say something. He always stopped when he saw Michael's expression. Jerry knew then that he was not going to like Michael. The rest of the day he did everything in his power to avoid Michael. Throughout the day he was able to notice that the boys who had befriended Michael were all bad news. They were also mainly older boys with only two boys in the year seemingly bad enough to join his group. Jerry knew that was just one of the reasons to stay away from Michael.

By the end of the day Jerry and Michael had gotten into a number of fights. The first fight had been when Michael had offered to pay Jake to do his homework. Jerry found this very insulting. Jerry had told him as much and Michael's response had been to shove him and tell him to get lost. Jerry shoved him back and Michael was about to punch him when a teacher appeared.

“Year Seven it is finally the end of the day. I am pleased to say that you all managed to survive. It is now time for room assignments. A lot of you will be sharing rooms. If you will look at the board you will see your name and room number. At least half of you will have more than one roommate.” Mr. Wilson the form tutor of Year Seven told the year.

Jerry walked up to the board and saw that he was going to be sharing with Michael. This didn't annoy him half as much as it pissed off Michael. Before he even had a chance to say something Michael had stormed out of the room. The class saw that Michael had gotten out his mobile phone and was yelling at someone.

At just gone eight Michael was waiting for Francesca at the bottom of Arthur Avenue. He had less than an hour until he was due to be inside the school gates. He wasn't worried about being late for school because it really didn't matter how late he got into school. Michael knew that not one teacher at Excalibur school would dare say anything to him. As the thought circulated around his brain he was sure he heard footsteps.

“Michael sorry I am late. My cousin was telling me about her weekend. So why did you want to meet. I thought you were starting your new school.” Francesca said as her way of greeting Michael.

“Francesca I really don't need to worry about my new school. Like I told you if I am late my dad will just donate a hell of a lot of money. Come on lets go and get some breakfast. My treat.” Michael said walking away from his new school and towards the more expensive part of town.

She followed not knowing what else to do. Francesca was certain she was going to be late to school but at that point she didn't really mind.

They spent over an hour and half in the restaurant eating breakfast and laughing. When they were done Michael went to the left telling Francesca he would text her later. Francesca ran to the right saying that she really needed to get to school.

Michael decided to walk slowly back to school, still not worried about time. Someone from his fathers staff would have already dropped off all his things at the school gate. He arrived at the school gate at just gone eleven. The gates were locked and bolted.

Not even thinking about it he took out his mobile and phoned the school secretary. Within a minute a teacher was opening the gates and leading him past the playing field. Michael smile as he saw the other boys looking at him.

It was later that Michael walked up to Jake and told him, that he would pay him for doing his homework. When Jerry had become involved a fight almost broke out.

“Hey I am having the bed by the window. If I have to share a bloody room with you then, the least you could do is let me have a nice bed. Also move your crap out of my side of the room.” Michael said shoving

Jerry out of the room and walking over to the bed by the window.

Jerry rolled his eyes but didn't say anything. It had been a very long and tiring day. Getting his mobile out he cleared the room of his stuff and sent a text to Francesca. He had been texting her every chance he had but had not gotten a reply.

Michael was also texting Francesca and he had been getting replies. If he had known that Jerry was a friend of Francesca's he would have rubbed it in his face, that Francesca liked him more. He didn't know and so was spared being punched in the face.

Anastasia walked into school behind Claire and her friends. Not one of them had bothered to say anything to her. She might have been hanging out with the most popular girl in Year Seven. This seemed to mean nothing to the popular crowd of Year Eleven. Breaking away from the group she made her way to the Year Seven form room and waited for Belinda.

They had arranged last night to meet early before Mercedes and the Tyler twins came into school. It was hard to say whose idea the meeting was because if they were ever found they would blame each other.

Belinda was running a bit late. That morning she had tried to leave extra early. Her mother had stopped her demanding that she ate her breakfast before leaving the house. She had tried to argue but her mother put a stop to this by locking the front door.

"Hey Anastasia I am so sorry that I am late. My mother insisted that I eat breakfast." Belinda said as she came running into the classroom.

"Don't worry about it. You didn't see Mercedes or the Tyler twins on your way up. That's good." Belinda said sitting down at one of the desks.

"So what do you want to talk about." Belinda said taking a seat next to Anastasia.

Anastasia looked at her new friend and already knew what she wanted to talk about. "Over the weekend we just seemed to get to know Mercedes, Mulan and Paris. I just wanted to get to know you without Mercedes, Mulan and Paris watching us."

"You are making sense. So what would you like to know." Belinda said becoming serious.

"Well let's start with family and go onto money." Anastasia said looking at Belinda.

“I am an only child. My father works during the week and does very well. My mother only works during the weekend in a charity shop. We have enough money so that my mother does not need to work.” Belinda said answering before Anastasia could really ask a question.

“It’s my turn. Well I have an older sister who is sixteen. The most popular girl in Year Eleven and most likely the bitch girl in our whole school. My father is extremely successful at his job and my mother doesn’t believe she needs to work. Like your family we have a lot of money. A couple of years ago we won over three million on the lottery. We were never poor though. I mean we are still not as rich as Mercedes or the Tyler twins.” Anastasia said giving as much detail as she felt was necessary.

The two of them spoke about other things until ten to nine. They stopped talking when the door to the classroom opened and Mercedes walking in followed closely on either side by Mulan and Paris.

“Hello my little bitches. Don’t you just hate Mondays.” Mercedes said as her way of greeting the her friends. She had started calling them bitches on Saturday after watching one too many films.

The lesson began at nine o’clock on the dot. Fifteen minutes later Caitlyn walked into the room. “Mrs. Summers would you mind telling me, why you are late for my lesson.” Mrs. Jenson said as Caitlyn tried to find a seat without being seen.

“I am really sorry Mrs. Jenson but I over slept and I had to run all the way. I am still getting used to the area.” Caitlyn said, and most of what she said was true. Looking around she noticed that Francesca was missing from the room. This didn’t worry or surprise her, because two hours before she had received a text message from Francesca. It had still not explained why Francesca was going to be late only that she was going to be late.

“Miss. Summers please just take your seat and we can get on with the lesson.” Mrs. Jenson said annoyed that one of her pupils were late. Another one had failed to show up.

During the first half an hour of the English lesson Francesca walked into the room. “Miss. Barnes would you mind telling me why you are so late. In fact see me after class. Miss. Summers it seems you were late for Geography this morning. I want you both to see me after English.” Mrs. Evans said realizing that she was going to have to give both Caitlyn and Francesca a detention.

She wasn’t actually able to speak to the two girls until the end of the day. Caitlyn and Francesca sat at the front of the classroom with Mrs. Evans behind the desk.

“Caitlyn, Francesca you were both late to school. I realise Caitlyn that you were only fifteen minutes late

but I still have to punish you. Your Geography teacher Mrs. Jenson did not like how you spoke to her this morning. This is why you will have your detention tomorrow night. Francesca what you did is a little more serious. You managed to come to school over two hours late. I really do not have any choice but to give you a detention as well. One of the teachers will meet you after school.â€• Mrs. Evans told them handing over two letters.

Caitlyn was forced to walk home on her own. This gave her time to think about how she was going to tell her mother. She knew her mother would be angry but hopefully she would understand.

Walking into the flat she noticed her mother was already home. She handed over the note and waited for the lecture.

Francesca had a different way of letting her parents know about her detention. She left the letter on the kitchen table knowing that her parents would see it.

Chapter Fifteen

Anastasia brushed her hair counting to a hundred on each side of her face. She had learnt this little trick from Mercedes on Saturday. Once she was done with her hair she started on her make-up. She knew she had to be very careful with make-up because her parents had been checking her face for the last few days. Even on Saturday when she had gone round to Mercedes parents had checked her bag before they would allow her to leave the house.

â€œHey Anastasia move your butt. I am leaving in no more than ten minutes. Remember I am not walking you home.â€• Claire yelled up the stairs as she packed her school bag. She didnâ€™t in anyway want to walk Anastasia to school again. As far as she was concerned walking Anastasia to school on Monday had been bad enough.

Anastasia ignored her sisters yelling and continued to apply her make-up. It really didnâ€™t matter if Claire left the house without her. She was meeting Mercedes and the others outside the McDonalds near the school. She knew that she would be texting her new friends all the way. So being on her own really didnâ€™t matter to her.

Belinda walked out of her house calling out goodbye to her mother over her shoulder. She had left the house early because her parents were arguing. Knowing that she would be very early to the meeting she decided to take her time.

As she walked down the road her phone began to vibrate. Not bothering to check she knew that the first

message would be from Mercedes. The mobile began to ring once and then twice. Again she didn't look because she knew the second and third text messages would be from Mulan and Paris. When she was half way down the road her mobile vibrated yet again. The last text would be from Anastasia.

Caitlyn climbed out of her bed and got dressed as quickly and quietly as she possible could. More than anything she didn't want to wake her mother up. That would just cause another argument and she really didn't want another one. Walking out of her room she headed straight for the front door.

"Caitlyn you can't go yet. You are going to have a very long day, so I think you should eat some breakfast. Stephanie is going to walk you back home. While you are in detention, Stephanie will be in the library. After detention you will come straight home. I do not want you going out for the rest of the week." Mrs. Summers said from behind the kitchen counter.

Francesca sat on the sofa while her father and brothers looked down at her. For a reason she could not understand. Every single one of her brothers had, had their fair share of detentions. In fact all six of them were always in trouble. Jason and Sampson had been expelled from several different schools. Richard just decided to leave school. Simon, Mark and Charles had their brothers reputation to live up to. Francesca though was the girl and so according to her father that meant she was the good child.

"Are you going to tell us why you were two hours late for school." Mr. Barnes yelled at his eleven year old daughter. He could not understand why Francesca had suddenly gone from being slightly bad to very bad. She had been in trouble before but she didn't skip school.

"Francesca why did you skip school?" Jason said mad as hell at his little sister.

"Jason you moron, don't yell at her. Look I promise not to get mad at you. Please tell us why you were late to school. Or just tell someone." Sampson said praying that by sticking up for Francesca she would tell him something.

"Francesca are you even listening to what we are saying." Simon yelled finally losing his cool.

Mark looked at his older brothers and then at Francesca. "I'll wait after school for you. So don't worry after school." Mark said seeing no logic in yelling at Francesca.

Charles was furious at his twin. How could she skip two lessons and not say anything. Before senior school she had always told him everything. "Francesca I really don't see any point in yelling at you. You don't even care that you got yourself a detention and are in a lot of trouble."

Francesca looked at her twin and then at each of her brothers in turn. They all looked very angry and as though they all wanted to say much more. She avoided looking at her father because he was the only one with the power to make her feel any guilt over her detention. "Daddy can I go to school now. I promised the teachers I would get to school early." Francesca said not looking at her father. She knew this was the best way to make him feel guilty and let her go.

Indigo had listened to her aunts advice and stayed in the kitchen while Francesca was being yelled at, she tried very hard not to listen to her uncle but then the yelling started. Her aunt didn't do anything even though Indigo could tell she wanted to. Hearing the front door slam she got up grabbing her backpack and ran after Francesca.

The day went by very slowly for Mercedes and her friends. Her group could not understand it but she seemed to be in a very good mood. Mulan and Paris could only see this as a good thing. Belinda and Anastasia were not so sure that a happy Mercedes was a safe Mercedes. Indigo wished that her day could go faster, and then she would be home with people who liked her. Francesca and Caitlyn just wanted the day to slow down. Every hour that passed brought them closer to their detention. The end of the day finally came, Caitlyn and Francesca made their way to detention room 215. Mercedes invited all her friends back to her house and they said yes.

Mercedes walked up her driveway with Mulan on her right and Paris on her left. Anastasia and Belinda followed at a distance. They were still not sure just how safe Mercedes was, especially when she was being nice.

"Mum, dad where are you? I want you to meet my new friends." Mercedes yelled out as she walked through the front door her friends close behind.

"Darling we are in the dinning room." Mrs. Scarlet Chambers called out.

"Mulan, Paris hello." Mr. Mathews Chambers called out.

"Hello Mr. Chambers." Mulan and Paris said together following Mercedes into the dinning room.

After a while Belinda and Anastasia followed and got their first view of Mr. and Mrs. Chambers.

The five sat down opposite Mr. and Mrs. Chambers. They were asking Mercedes if she wanted to have a party during half term. Mercedes said she wanted a big party. Mr. Chambers though said it was more sophisticated to have a dinner party. Mercedes didn't argue because her parents would be away, and so wouldn't be there to oversee the part.

Caitlyn and Francesca spent their detention doing their homework. They also complained about their parents and they had said.

Chapter Sixteen

“Year Seven I would like you all to listen to me. As you are all aware it is the last week of school before half term. Silence! This does not mean that you can mess about or think that I will go easy on you. Then you are all very much mistaken. During this week you will be working very hard, if I find out that any of you are slacking off I will give you a detention. Miss. Barnes I really think you should listen to what I am saying. You have had a number of detentions over the past few weeks. If you receive any more we will need to ask your parents to come in.” Mrs. Johnson said before dismissing the class and waited for her next class to enter the room.

It was during the first break that Mercedes began to hand out the invitations to her party. The year had heard that Mercedes was planning on having a party the Monday of half-term. It was only when she began to hand out the invitations that the party was confirmed.

“I am inviting each and every one of you to my party. There will be adults at my party but not my parents. I advise that you do not tell this to your parents that is if you want to come.” Mercedes said as she stared at her classmates.

Mulan and Paris stood either side of Mercedes as she made her speech. They didn’t say a word as she ordered the year what to do. Belinda stood next to Mulan while Anastasia was at Paris’s side. Both of them wanted to say something but had learnt over the past few weeks to keep quite when Mercedes was giving one of her speeches. They were busy listening to Mercedes that they didn’t notice Caitlyn and Francesca slipping away.

“Francesca where are we going? I thought you wanted to listen to Mercedes. Are we not going to go to the party or something.” Caitlyn said as they moved away from the group of Year Sevens.

Francesca continued to move away from Mercedes and her audience only stopping when they were near the small hall. “I think we have to go to Mercedes party. Even if she and her friends are going to be bitches to us the whole time. But I think I have a way to stop us from being there all night.” Francesca said looking at Caitlyn and waited for her to say something.

Caitlyn looked at Francesca wondering how they were supposed to get out of Mercedes party early. She was going to question Francesca but the bell for the next lesson began to ring. Seeing that Francesca had already started for the classroom she ran to catch up with her friend.

“Belinda do you think your parents will let you go to Mercedes party.” Anastasia asked during their history lesson.

Belinda looked at her friend and was at once suspicious. “Why are you asking about me. I would think you would be more worried about yourself. I mean your parents don’t exactly like Mercedes.” She said happily when she saw Anastasia’s face.

“My parents will let me go to the party because they will think it is just the five of us. Any way at the moment they are too busy with Claire to worry about me.” Anastasia said knowing that her parents were likely not to even notice that she was gone.

Belinda though was very worried. Her parents really did not like Mercedes and they hadn’t even meet her. It seemed her parents had just heard things from other parents about Mercedes. Deciding there was not need to get into an argument she changed the subject.

“Why are your parents suddenly so busy with Claire. You are always saying how she is the perfect daughter and can’t do anything wrong. Has she finally been caught doing something your parents do not approve of.” Belinda asked wanting to know some dirt before Mercedes. She was sure that if she could tell Mercedes something then at some point she might be able to become Mercedes second or at the most third.

“Wouldn’t you like to know.” Anastasia said feeling sure that Belinda was looking for dirt. At that though she didn’t really care.

“Yes Anastasia I would that is why I asked.” Belinda said rolling her eyes. Sometimes she just didn’t understand her.

“Well about four days ago mum and dad came home early. They walked into the living room and Claire without her blouse on. That wasn’t even the best part. Richard Barnes was with her. Well really he was on top of her topless as well.” Anastasia finished.

The two of them decided to tell Mercedes as a team and both earn points. Once Mercedes had heard the news about Claire and Richard it wasn’t long before the whole school was talking about it. When the rumour made it to Claire she simple refused to comment. Throughout the day she questioned people about who had started the vicious rumour. It was nearly the end of the day when she heard the name Mercedes Chambers. She vowed to get the little bitch back and anyone who called themselves Mercedes friend. It didn’t matter to her that one of those girls was her little sister. She would get her revenge even if she had to hurt her own sister.

On Deception Close Indigo was not having as good a day as Francesca. It had been nearly three weeks since she had started her new school and she had still not made any friends. She knew that this was all down to the form captain Mellissa. During the lunch break she found herself on her own again. She was just going to give up and go to the library when she heard footsteps coming from behind.

“It’s Indigo right. Hey my name is Jerry. You don’t recognise me do you. that’s ok I am Francesca and Charles’s. could you tell me who the head is and where I can find her.” Jerry said walking straight past the other girls and heading towards Indigo.

“First of all Jerry I did recognise you. I was just not expecting someone to talk to me. Especially not from a boy because this is an all girls school. The head of this school is Mrs. Robbins. Her office is on the second. I’ll take you its not like I have any friends waiting for me.” Indigo said standing up and heading towards the main building. Jerry followed not saying a word, although he did notice that a lot of girls were watching him.

Mellissa had been watching the new girl talk to Jerry Dawson. He was one of the new boys at the Excalibur school. But she had met him a couple of times before at the club. Deciding that Indigo actually knowing Jerry was a very good thing she got the class together and when to find Indigo and Jerry.

“Hello Indigo who are you waiting for.” Mellissa said with a number of girls from her year behind her. They had found Indigo outside Mrs. Robbins office.

“Mellissa I am waiting for my friends Jerry. Well he is really more my cousin’s friend.” Indigo said rather surprised that people were talking to her. And they were actually being nice.

“So is Jerry your boyfriend?” Mellissa asked looking straight at Indigo.

“No he is not my boyfriend.” Indigo said rather shocked how blunt Mellissa could be.

“So can I ask him out then?” Mellissa said sure that Indigo would say yes. After all it did seem the best way to make friends.

“No you may not ask him out!” Indigo said surprised at her bravery to stand up to Mellissa.

“So is he going out with someone. And who is this girl?” Mellissa said getting angry. She couldn’t believe the new girl of all people was standing up to her.

“You could say that.” Indigo said and really wanted to say more but the bell went for the next class.

In the back room of Andy’s café Jason and Sampson Barnes were on their second break of the day. For most of the day the two of them had barely spoken to each other. They were still fighting about the change in Francesca’s behaviour.

“Jason are we actually going to talk or are you going to sulk all day.” Sampson said finally fed up with his twin giving him the silent treatment.

“First of all I am not sulking. And secondly talk about what.” Jason said getting angry.

“About Francesca and how many detentions she has been getting over the last few weeks.” Sampson said.

“We have talked about Francesca and we have tried to talk to her. She will come to us when she is good and ready. I don’t think there is anything else we can really do.” Jason said.

“There is a whole lot of things we can do. I mean we are her big brothers. If she is hanging around with the wrong crowd then we have to put a stop to it. As the oldest it is our job to lay down the law. Jason she is our only sister and she is changing. It has been nearly three weeks since she last spoke to Anastasia. She is even having more fights with Charles.” Sampson said hoping he was getting his point across.

On Tuesday evening Michael and Jerry were discussing their half term party. They were not being nice to each other but they were keeping the conversation polite. They were each sitting on their separate beds.

“Michael have you told anyone about our joint party. First would you mind telling me why we are having a joint party. I mean we don’t like each other. Actually I am certain that you hate me.” Jerry said sitting on the edge of his bed. He didn’t understand why they were even having a party. He had wanted to spend his half term with Francesca and Charles. Knowing his luck he would be stuck cleaning his house for most of the half term.

“We are having the joint party because we are the new boys. Also for some strange reason we are being forced to share a room. You are right I don’t like you. But I think this party will be good for the both of us. Who would I tell about the party. I mean we have yet to make a decision about dates, and if we really are going to have a party.” Michael said laying his head down on his pillow. He knew he was lying about not having anyone to tell about the party. As soon as someone had mentioned that two of them should throw a party, he had sent a text to Francesca. Deciding the party was going to happen even if it was just going to give Francesca an excuse not to go to Mercedes party. She had been texting him for the past two weeks warning him that her rival was going to have a party.

“Well I did tell someone about our joint party. He was a little surprised when I said who I was sharing the party with. My friend might have told his twin sister. They normally share everything.” Jerry said wondering if Michael actually cared if he told someone about the party.

“That would be your friend Charles and his twin sister Francesca.” Michael said before he could stop himself. He was not meant to know who Charles and Francesca were.

“That’s right but how do you know who I am talking about.” Jerry said very confused that Michael knew the names of two of his best friends. He was certain that Michael didn’t know the names of half the boys in their year.

“I have heard the name Charles mentioned by your friends and around school. A lot of boys in our year and the one above have mentioned that he has a twin sister. They also mention that she is just as tough as her twin and older brothers.” Michael said thinking on the spot. He wanted to say more but knew that he had to keep his friendship with Francesca a secret.

“I guess I can believe that. So how big is the party going to be. And who are we going to invite.” Jerry said standing up and walking to his school bag, and taking out a pad of paper and a pen. With paper and pen in hand he walked back to his bed. “Look why don’t you and I make some plans for the party. I mean you will want to invite very different people. But I am planning on inviting Charles and his twin sister.” Jerry concluded happy to feel in charge even if it was only for a bit.

“Jerry I think we should have a very big party.” Michael said from his bed.

“A very big party. Ok I guess. How many people will be coming if it is going to be a very big party.” Jerry said not sure why he was agreeing and so quickly.

“The whole Year from school. Hopefully all the girls in Year Seven from Guinevere

school, and a few extras.” Michael said sitting up and looking at Jerry.

“That seems fair enough. Lets try and get some sleep. I don’t want Jason and Jake to think that I bonded with you.” Jerry said.

“Yeah I don’t like you.” Michael said leaving the room.

The Tyler family were the second richest at Mrs. Evans school for girls. It was one of the main reasons

that Mulan and Paris had become part of Mercedes group. It seemed to help that Mr. and Mrs. Tyler were already very good friends with Mr. and Mrs. Chambers.

The Tylerâ€™s were sitting down for a family meal. Frank Tyler was sitting at the head of the table with his daughters either side of him. His wife was watching him and his daughters seemed to be having a private conversation.

â€œDaddy Mulan has something to ask you.â€• Paris said smirking at her twin.

â€œThanks a lot Paris. You said we would ask together.â€• Mulan said getting angry.

â€œGirls donâ€™t fight. You are young ladies and young ladies do not fight.â€• Mrs. Rose Tyler said not looking from her salad.

â€œMulan if you want to ask me something please do. Paris you can ask me as well.â€• Mr. Frank Tyler said looking at each of his daughters in turn.

â€œWell Daddy I just wanted to ask if we could go to Mercedes party on Monday. She has also asked that we stay for the rest of half term.â€• Mulan said looking to Paris for some help with their father.

â€œDaddy please say yes. You are always saying how much you like Mercedes. We will do our homework after the party. So is it cool if we go to the party and stay for the rest of the week.â€• Paris said thinking as quickly as she could.

â€œGirls you are not going to Mercedes party this half term. We have plans over the half term. donâ€™t argue with me.â€• Rose said certain that the matter was closed.

â€œRose the girls can go to the party. I have to work for the next two weeks. I am flying tomorrow very early. You can stay all week with Mercedes.â€• Frank said and that really did end the matter leaving no room for anyone to argue with what he had just said.

The next day was a Wednesday and the talk around Mrs Evans school for girls was Mercedes half term party.

â€œHey Simon have you heard about this stupid party Mercedes is throwing for the whole of Year Seven.â€• Claire said grabbing hold of Simons arm.

“I think everyone has heard about the party. Your sister is now one of her best friends. I just hope Francesca goes to that party rather than the other one.” Simon said giving up on his plan to walk away and took the empty seat next to Claire.

This does not go unnoticed by Stephanie and her friends.

“Simon what are you talking about? There is only one party. Well at least for the Year Sevens. I mean there is the party I am throwing or at least thinking of throwing. Tell me about this other party.” Claire said as soon as Simon was seated.

“Yeah there is only one Year Seven for the pupils of our two schools. The rich school Excalibur is also having a party. Two of their pupils Jerry and Michael are throwing a joint party. Francesca was invited and her friend Caitlyn and our cousin Indigo.” Simon said not noticing the stares he was getting from the rest of the school.

“So Mercedes and the idiots she hangs out with do not know about this party. That is very interesting.” Claire said with a glint that was not hard to miss.

“You just called your sister an idiot.” Simon said shocked that Claire was being so vicious about her own sister.

“Anyone who hangs out with Mercedes Chambers is an idiot. I mean she actually thinks that she rules this school. I will not let some stuck up eleven year old steal my crown. You can go and sit with your loser friends now. I have all the information I need thanks to you.” Claire said shooting daggers at Simon if he even tried to protest or say anything.

Outside on the playing field Mercedes Chambers was holding a meeting for the whole of Year Seven.

“As you all know I am hosting a party on Monday. I have invited all of you because I am such a nice person. The party will begin at six o’clock on the dot. I expect you all to come to my party. After all this will be the party that everyone is going to talk about for years.” Mercedes told the Year Sevens.

“Francesca where are we going?” Caitlyn said running after Francesca and away from Mercedes and her friends.

“Paris tell Mercedes that Francesca and Caitlyn are up to something and I am going to find out what it is.” Mulan said following Caitlyn as she walked round a corner.

“Caitlyn we have been invited to another party. Jerry and some other guy are holding a joint party and we have to go to the party. It will be so much more fun than Mercedes. So are we going to go to the party or not.” Francesca said when she was sure that they were far enough away.

“Well I don’t even want to go to Mercedes so count me in.” Caitlyn said.

Mulan had heard everything and ran back to report to Mercedes. When she got back Mercedes was waiting for her looking very angry. One of her best friends had walked off during one of her speeches without saying a word. It was just not acceptable in her books.

“Mulan where the hell did you run off too. And you better have a bloody good excuse.” She yelled glaring at Mulan.

Paris, Anastasia and Belinda watched Mercedes yelling at Mulan. They didn’t say anything because they did not want Mercedes anger to be focused on them.

“Mercedes I followed those two losers Francesca and Caitlyn, when they walked away from your speech. And it is a good job I did.” Mulan shot back taking herself by surprise with her bravery. The whole time she was speaking she didn’t look at her twin. She had told Paris to explain everything to Mercedes. Although she was not really surprised when her twin had let her down.

“Well are you going to tell me what you found out or not.” Mercedes said putting a little distance between herself and Mulan.

Mulan knew that the information she had obtained was very important, and would keep her as Mercedes number one friend. “I am your best friend and I was planning on telling you. And I am still going to tell you. Like I said Francesca and Caitlyn left during your speech and so I followed them. Francesca was telling Caitlyn about another party. The party is being held by Francesca’s friend Jerry and one of his friends, Francesca and Caitlyn are planning on going to the party. I don’t think they are going to go to your party at all.” Mulan said smiling that she had got on up on Mercedes.

“That can not happen. To have fun at my party we need those two losers there. Tomorrow and Friday we will do everything possible to make them come to my party. I hope I make myself clear.” Mercedes said walking back into the school.

Anastasia and Belinda looked at each other and then followed Mercedes. They knew that Mulan really wanted to speak to Paris. Paris was just about to walk away when Mulan called out to her.

“Paris wait a minute. I need to speak to you about something.”

“Mulan what do you want to talk about.” Paris asked coming to a stop but staying away from her sister.

“About you not telling Mercedes where I was going.” Mulan said trying to stay calm. It wasn’t as easy had hoped. After all she had just been betrayed by her own twin sister.

“That thing? What is the big deal. I just forgot to tell her that’s all. It’s not like you got into any trouble. Look we better catch up with Mercedes.” Paris said taking off at a run to catch up with her friends, leaving her sister just standing there.

Mulan swore at her sisters back and then began to run. There was no way she was going to lose her spot as Mercedes right hand girl.

On Thursday afternoon Francesca was fed up with Mercedes. All day Mercedes had been bugging her about coming to her party. In the end she got so fed up that she left the school grounds twenty minutes early.

Caitlyn left as well having become annoyed with Belinda. She called out a goodbye to Francesca but didn’t get reply. She wasn’t worried or upset by this because Francesca was busy texting someone.

Mercedes watched Francesca and Caitlyn leave in opposite directions. Her first reaction would normally have been to tell on them, but she needed them to come to her party. Walking away from the window she sat back down.

Mulan and Paris looked at her and then took their seats either side of her. They refused to look at each other and for most of the day had not spoken. Mulan was still angry at Paris for getting her into trouble with Mercedes. And Paris she was annoyed that she had not become Mercedes right hand girl.

Anastasia and Belinda were sitting behind Mercedes, Mulan and Paris. They had both spent the day trying to get information about the second party from Caitlyn. This had not really gone very well because she refused to say anything at first. After two hours she had told them to ask Jerry if they wanted information.

Indigo stood by her school gates waiting for Francesca to come and pick her up. Normally she would walk home alone but Francesca had sent her a text telling her to wait. She had been waiting for a good ten minutes and was just going to ring her cousin when she heard Mellissa yelling something.

“Who the hell is Jerry talking to! And why is he hugging her! This really sucks!” Mellissa yelled.

Indigo knew immediately who Jerry was showing so much affection to. There was only one person Indigo had ever seen Jerry hug and that was Francesca. Picking up her school bag she ran across the road interrupting the many hugs Francesca seemed to be getting.

“Francesca I have been waiting for ten minutes. You can hug Jerry later right now I want to go home.” Indigo said. She had planned on saying more but Mellissa interrupted her.

“Jerry you never told me that you had a girlfriend. My name is Mellissa and you are?” Mellissa said in what was meant to be her friendly voice. But to the others standing with her it seemed rather bitchy.

Francesca moved away from Jerry and looked at Mellissa. She was sure they had met before she just wasn't sure where. Ignoring this feeling she decided to introduce herself.

“My name is Francesca Barnes. I am Indigo's cousin. Why do you think that I am Jerry's girlfriend just his friend. Tell her Jerry.” Francesca said turning to Jerry as she spoke, the anger was very clear in her voice.

“Mellissa I do not have a girlfriend. Francesca is like my best friend. I have known her and her twin brother for well ever.” Jerry said hoping it was enough to keep Francesca happy. He still wasn't sure if she was happy when she left ten minutes later with Indigo running after her. If it had been the last day of term her would have gone after her. Grumbling about how unfair life was he said goodbye to Mellissa and her friends before walking back to his school.

Mellissa and her friends waved goodbye to Jerry as he disappeared around the corner. Then they walked back into school having a lot of homework to do and then were not meant to leave school because they were boarders.

Claire Jones sat in a small café waiting for her boyfriend, Richard Barnes to finally arrive. She had been waiting for almost an hour and could not understand what the delay was. She had told him that she had something to tell him. And it had been his idea to meet at the café. Getting out her mobile she was just about to send him a text telling hi to hurry up when she saw, Simon Barnes and Stephanie Matthews enter the café. Wanting to know what they were doing she stood up and walked over to them.

“Claire what are you doing here?” Simon ask as Claire sat down at there table.

“I think the question you should be asking is what are the two of you doing here?” Claire said looking first

at Simon and then at Stephanie.

“It’s none of your business what we are doing here. Mind your own business.” Stephanie shot back g
very angry.

“Stephanie, Claire both of you calm down.” Simon said getting upset with the fighting. He was going to
start yelling at the two girls when he saw his brother walk in.

“Claire come on lets go and find another table. I think Simon and his friend want to be alone.” Richard said
helping Claire to her feet and guiding her to another table.

“Why can’t we sit with Stephanie and Simon. I like your brother Simon he can help me tell you about r
news.” Claire said looking at Richard and making her lip tremble.

“Well if you really want to go and sit with them ok. But I don’t even know the girl.” Simon said stand
and walking back to sit with his brother and the strange girl. Claire smiled as Richard walked away
because once again she had gotten her way. Standing up she walked over to sit with her boyfriend his
brother and her new friend.

The four of the sat in silence for over five minutes. Stephanie sat next to Simon not knowing what to say
or do. She had hoped it would have just been the two of them. Claire had her head on Richards shoulder.
Richard and Simon were rolling their eyes at each other.

“So Claire what is this big news. Wait its good news right.” Richard said after getting pissed off with all th
silence.

“Well it might be good news. How about I tell you and then you decide.” Claire said smiling

“Ok so just say what the new is.” Stephanie said annoyed at the way Simon was staring at Clair

Before Claire could open her mouth to say something Simon was already speaking.

“Are you going to tell him about the other party that Francesca has been invited too.”

“Well that and something else.” Claire said looking innocent and putting Richards arm around her
shoulder. She always did this to get him in a good mood. Mainly because when he was in a good mood
then he would agree with everything she said.

“Francesca is going to Mercedes party and no one else is throwing a party. What was the other thing you wanted to tell us.” Richard said going from furious to kind in ten seconds flat.

“Well I just wanted to find out if you guys knew about Francesca’s new friend. That though is no longer important. Richard when are we going to talk to our parents about us. I mean they caught us in a very weird situation. I mean I am throwing a party and you will be there. The folks will also be there so we need to talk to them.” Claire said.

“I thought you wanted to keep us a secret. Like how Simon is trying to keep who he is crushing on a secret.” Richard said and continued by saying, “If you really want to tell people then we could announce it at the party. So do you want to go out on Friday.”

“Would you like to go out on a date on Friday and then go to Claire party together on Monday.” Simon asked.

“Well lets make it a double date. I mean I will have to get to know Stephanie at some point.” Claire said.

At the Barnes home Francesca was in the kitchen getting herself and Indigo a can of coke each. Walking into the room she saw indigo reading her texts. Dropping the can she stormed over and grabbed her phone back.

“What the hell do you think you are doing? Stay away from my stuff.” Francesca yelled.

“I am so sorry. Someone sent you a text and well I opened it by mistake.” Indigo said.

“Look just stay away from my stuff. I agreed to share my room with you. I did not agree to share my mobile with you.” Francesca yelled again storming out of the room.

Indigo ran after her and was just in time to see the front door slam. She was running after her but Charles stopped her.

“what the hell was that all about. Why are you and Francesca fighting. I mean the two of you have never had a fight. Tell me right now why the two of you could ever find anything to fight over. She thinks of you as her sister. What could you possibly have done to her.” Charles said getting angrier with every word. He just couldn’t believe why indigo would upset Francesca so much.

“Ok first of all why is it all my fault. Your sister is the one who over reacted. Anyway if we are like sisters

then it is logical that we would fight. Don't worry she will get over it. And I don't see why you are so upset. I mean she is mad at me not you." Indigo yelled right back. She was not going to be yelled at by anyone other than her sisters and Francesca.

"So are you going to tell me why you were fighting. She is my twin and I don't like it when she is unhappy. Please tell me why she was yelling at you. Where the hell did she run off to." Charles said trying his best to calm down. He didn't understand why Indigo would just not answer his simple question.

Indigo looked at Charles and knew there really was only one thing she could do. Turning her back to Charles she walked back into Francesca's room. Just to make her point she slammed the door shut and locked the door.

Charles rolled his eyes and walked downstairs to find his brothers. They had probably heard the argument and would want to know why the girls were fighting. "Mark, Jason and Sampson where the hell are you?" Charles yelled down the stairs. He walked from the sitting room to the dining room and finally into the kitchen. Only Mark was there. It seemed that the twins and everyone else had gone out. He sat down and was going to complain to Mark how it was like having two sisters instead of one. Mark though silenced him by getting out his books and starting on his homework.

By the next day Friday Indigo was certain that Francesca would have forgiven her. She wasn't that lucky though because when she got up in the morning Francesca had already left. Not wanting to show that she was upset about the fight she left the house not saying a word.

Francesca walked to school on her own reading a text from Michael. She was so shocked by what she had read that she nearly walked into a lamp post. She was only just saved by someone grabbing her and pulling her out of the way.

"Francesca you really should look where you are going. If you get hurt on your way to school then your brothers will kick my ass. Come on I'll walk you to school but don't tell your brothers." Adam and Simon said.

Francesca looked at him and nodded. She was far too embarrassed to even try and speak. Normally she would have been over the moon about walking to school with a fifteen year old. But this time she was far more interested in how she was going to go on her date. Seeing Caitlyn waiting for her she said goodbye as she ran off.

Mercedes climbed out of the car and saw Adam waving goodbye to Francesca. This gave her an idea as to how to get Francesca and Caitlyn to go to her party. Walking up to Francesca she looked her square in the eyes and said. "Francesca you and your loser friend Caitlyn had bloody well better come to my party."

If you don't come to my party I will tell your brothers that you kissed Adam. And don't think I won't I so will. I mean I really hate you.

Francesca looked at her and felt generous. "Look you stupid bitch I was going to come to your idiot party. Caitlyn is coming as well." Francesca said and then walked off. Caitlyn followed not saying anything.

That evening Richard and Claire were sitting in a corner trying not to be seen. Well at least Richard was trying not to be seen. Claire though was looking forward to the double date.

"Hey Claire you look really nice." Stephanie said sitting down next to Claire.

Simon sat down next to his brother not saying one word. He had not wanted the double date in the first place.

"Thanks Stephanie. You look very nice to. Simon tell Stephanie that she looks nice." Claire said yelling the last part at Simon.

Richard and Simon looked at each other and then said together. "Stephanie, Claire you both look beautiful. Wait is that Francesca with a boy. Why is Francesca with a boy."

Francesca had just walked into the restaurant with Michael holding his hand. He lead her to one of the nicer parts. Neither of them noticed Richard and Simon watching them. They sat down next to each other and couldn't take their eyes off each other.

"Richard what are you doing?" Claire yelled as she followed Richard.

"I am going to find out what the hell my baby sister is doing with a boy." Richard said storming right up to Francesca and Michael.

"Richard leave them alone. I think it is really sweet that your sister is on a date. It really proved that Francesca is a girl." Claire said trying to pull Richard away.

"Richard I am not on a date. Michael is just a friend who happens to be a guy. Hey Claire I am really happy you decided to date my loser brother." Francesca said turning away from her brother and looking at Michael.

"My family also happen to own the restaurant. So you really should be nice to me if you want a free meal."

Michael said ignoring the looks Francesca was giving him.

“Simon, Stephanie we are going to be sitting over here now.” Richard yelled sitting next to Francesca.

The six of them sat together with Richard and Simon trying to get Francesca and Michael to leave. This was only unsuccessful because Claire and Stephanie wanted them to stay.

“Richard, Simon stop being idiots. If you keep being mean to my friend I will make your lives miserable. Richard I will tell mum and dad that you lost your job. Simon I’ll tell them the real reason you have been late everyday for a week.” Francesca said getting up and leaving the restaurant.

Michael feeling very weird stood up and left telling the waiters first that the meal was on him. He didn’t want Francesca to get into trouble with her brothers.

“Stephanie how would you like to have a girly night. I have tons of ice cream to get through. Its very good for when you are mad at your boyfriend. We really need to bond cause one day we might end up related. It will be very cool. I can just see our joint wedding.” Claire said as she got up and left the restaurant.

Stephanie looked at Simon shrugged her shoulders and followed. She really didn’t want to spend her evening with a stuck up bitch but she really liked the idea of ice cream.

“Richard this is all your fault.” Simon yelled at his older brother.

“My fault. You are the idiot who decided to date the older sister of our sisters friend.” Richard yelled right back.

Chapter Seventeen

The weekend passed and it was finally the Monday of half term.

“Caitlyn you have to help me with Francesca. She is still not speaking to me. I don’t understand why she is still angry at me.” Indigo said as she opened the front door.

Caitlyn looked at Indigo not at all sure what she was meant to say. Francesca had not once mentioned her fight with Indigo. Now though she really did wish that Francesca had said something to her. If she had then she might have been able to think of something to say. Instead she just stood there staring blankly at Indigo.

“Hey Caitlyn don’t just stand there come inside. My cousin seems to have forgotten her manners. After she is far too busy arguing with Francesca.” Charles said pushing Indigo out of the way to allow Caitlyn to access into their home. Charles then walked back into kitchen.

Caitlyn walked into the hall and felt rather strange. Although she had known Francesca and Indigo for over three weeks, this was her first time at Francesca’s house. “So where is Francesca then?” Caitlyn trying to sound like she was taking sides.

“Come on I’ll show you to the room I have to share with Francesca. She is in there trying to find the perfect outfit for Mercedes party. But she wants your opinion on Jerry’s party.” Indigo said leading the way to the stairs and up to hers and Francesca’s room.

Francesca was inside her wardrobe swearing that she had nothing to wear. Hearing her bedroom door open she called out a hello to Caitlyn but continued to ignore Indigo. Finally giving up she climbed out of the wardrobe and turned to face Caitlyn and Indigo. “So what is the plan going to both parties?” Francesca asked.

Neither Indigo nor Caitlyn could figure out who Francesca had asked the question to. This Caitlyn realised made it much easier to force Francesca to listen to Indigo.

“Francesca we haven’t yet thought of a plan. That was why you invited Caitlyn over early. The two of you were meant to form a plan over the weekend but you both had to start on your homework.” Indigo said praying that Francesca would not ignore her like she had for the past four days.

“Right yeah I forgot about that.” Francesca deciding to acknowledge Indigo for the time being. She was still very angry about how Indigo had betrayed her, but for the moment she had more important things on her mind.

“Indigo are you going to come to Mercedes party. I am sure we can get you into the party. I mean you go to Guinevere school. Mercedes should be over the moon to have you at the party.” Caitlyn said mumbling a number of times and only stopping when Francesca and Indigo looked at her.

“Yes I am going to Mercedes party. We are only going to be at Mercedes party for an hour, two at the most. Then we are making our way to the second party. Francesca knows more about that though.” Indigo said sure that everything was going well.

“I just got a text from Michael. He is the guy sharing the party with Jerry. They have decided to rent a hall rather than trash either house. Because we don’t know where it is. He is going to have his driver pick us

up. Donâ€™t look so worried Jerry and Michael will be in the car. Any way their party does not start until at least eight.â€• Francesca said, not at all put off by the looks her friend and cousin were giving her.

Caitlyn looked at Francesca wondering who this Michael was. Indigo though had an idea who this Michael might be, but could not afford to rock the boat. The two of them looked at each other and then at Francesca, they were daring each other to be the one to ask the question. Francesca looked at them and knew what they wanted to ask but wasnâ€™t going to let on.

The three of them just stood staring at each other. Caitlyn was trying to make Indigo ask the question. Indigo was staring at Francesca trying to get her to open up. Francesca was looking at Caitlyn daring her to ask something.

Eventually both Indigo and Caitlyn became annoyed with Francescaâ€™s silence. They looked at each other and nodded their agreement.

â€œFrancesca please explain who this boy Michael really is.â€• Caitlyn said and looked to Indigo for some help.

â€œHe canâ€™t be someone who just sent you a text. I mean I read the message. On Friday Richard and Sim were having a go at you about a boy named Michael.â€• Indigo said staring at Francesca and hoping she would answer. It had been a risky move to speak so bluntly to her. But she had to know what was going on with her cousin.

Francesca looked at them and thought about telling them the truth. But they wouldnâ€™t like Michael and they certainly would not trust him. This left her with only one option and that was to lie her ass off. â€œOk so Michael is not just some guy who sent me a text about the party. He and Jerry donâ€™t really get along at all. When I saw Jerry a couple of weeks ago at his school Michael was watching me. So after I had said goodbye to Jerry I spoke to him. We came to an agreement. He would back off from being horrid to Jerry and his friends. In return I agreed to go for a meal with him and I agreed to at least three dances at the party.â€• Francesca said hoping they wouldnâ€™t question her too much about it.

â€œSo lets get on with our plan then.â€• Caitlyn said stopping a Indigo from questioning Francesca and causing a fight. That was just something she couldnâ€™t handle.

â€œWhy donâ€™t we sit down and discuss the two parties and how we plan to go to both of them.â€• Indigo taking charge for the moment. She sat down on the floor and waited for Caitlyn and Francesca to join her.

Caitlyn was the first to join Indigo on the floor. She sat down next to Indigo and looked up at Francesca

who was just standing there. "Francesca why don't you join us." Caitlyn asked looking at Francesca.

Francesca looked down at Indigo and Caitlyn but made no attempt to sit down. She walked over to the desk and found a pen and notebook. It was only once she had them that she sat down next to the bunk bed.

"I was thinking that we should get to Mercedes house for just after six. We can walk with Charles and his friends. I don't think it will do for the three of us to walk into Mercedes house alone. She likes to be horrible to us, we don't need to give her any more ammo. Plus it will really piss Anastasia off if she thinks that Charles has befriended a new girl." Francesca said grinning as she looked at Caitlyn and Indigo.

Mercedes sat in her sitting room flicking through a magazine. She was bored out of her mind waiting for Mulan and Paris to arrive. They were late and as the time ticked by she became more and more annoyed. She hated it when people were late for meetings that she herself had set up.

"Miss. Chambers your friends Miss. Mulan and Paris Tyler are at the door. Would you like me to show them in." The butler asked keeping her voice very steady. Even though he despised the Chambers girl. The whole of the staff could not stand her.

"Tell them that I will meet them in my room. Wait, before you go. Did Mulan and Paris have bags with them." Mercedes asked not moving from the sofa as she spoke.

The butler stopped and turned around. "Miss. Chambers your friends had a bag each. They also had a large trunk. I didn't ask what was in the trunk." Then he walked out of the room to deal with Mulan and Paris.

Mercedes waited ten minutes before standing up and walking up the stairs to her room. Mulan and Paris were waiting for her. Normally the two of them would be standing next to each other whispering to one another. When she walked into her room they were on opposite sides of the room not looking at each other. Mercedes knew instantly that the two of them were still fighting. This couldn't have made her any happier. With them fighting it kept them on her side rather than siding with each other.

Anastasia sat in her bedroom doing her English homework. She had been studying all weekend but that wasn't good enough for her parents. They wanted her to have finished at least half of the homework before they would even think about letting her to go to the party. She was concentrating so hard that she didn't hear her bedroom door opening.

"Hello Anastasia, how are you today? I hear mum and dad are actually going to let you go to Mercedes

party. So you and Mercedes gang didn't get invited to Jerry's party. You do realise that your ex-best friend Francesca Barnes has been invited. Not only her but Caitlyn and Indigo. Claire said sitting down on her sister's bed and making herself comfortable. She had come into the room to upset her sister and was happy when she saw how easy it was.

Claire get out of my room. I thought mum and dad grounded you for having sex with Richard on the sofa. I don't know why you are going on about Jerry's party. So Jerry is having a party. I really don't know what the big deal is. Mercedes has already found out from Jerry that the party is only for the rich girls and boys. Francesca and Caitlyn and this Indigo are only going because Francesca was invited and told she could bring friends. Not get out of my room. Anastasia said standing up to try and make her point. This though didn't work because Claire never listened to her little sister.

Ok first I was not having sex with Richard. We were just making out. The folks actually think we were rehearsing for a play. Don't you just love mum and dad. Well I have to go and get ready for my party. Have fun at your very lame little party. Claire said getting up and leaving the room just to piss her sister off.

Anastasia watched her sister leave her room and thought about what her sister had just said. She just couldn't understand why her sister could get away with anything. It was just so unfair that she got into trouble, even when it wasn't her fault. Giving up on homework she decided to ring Belinda.

Belinda waited for her parents to give her their answer. She had asked them on Saturday if she could go to the party. They had told her that they would think about it and give her their answer on Monday. The time had come for Belinda to finally get her answer. Not understanding anything to each other or to her.

Mum, Dad are you going to let me go to Mercedes party. It will be just a simple party and Mercedes really wanted me to come. Daddy please say that I can go to the party. Belinda begged sure that it was the only way her father would let her go to the party.

Belinda you Mother and I have been discussing this all weekend. We have heard that Mercedes is not the nicest of girls. However I know Anastasia's father and she seems like a very nice young lady. That is why we are going to allow you to go to this party. There are though a few conditions to you going to your party. The first condition is that you do not stay the night at Mercedes house. Instead you will phone me no later than ten thirty. I will come and pick you up and if you want Anastasia as well. She can either stay the night here, because I hear her older sister is having a party. If she does not want to stay I would be very happy to drop her home. Mr. Roberts said.

Belinda hugged her father and then ran out of the room answering her mobile on the second ring.

Chapter Eighteen

Mercedes waited until all her guests had arrived before turning the volume to its maximum volume. With all her guests having finally arrived the party could truly begin. Seeing that no one was dancing she took control of the situation. Walking right up to Charles she dragged him onto the dance floor. She started to dance to the music and after a second or two Charles joined her. Signalling her friends with a nod and a wave to do the same.

Mulan was the first to obey her leader. Moving away from Anastasia she chose a boy at random and moved him to the dance floor. Grabbing the remote she chose a slow song and joined her partner on the dance floor, she put her arms around his neck and began to move from side to side.

Hating that her sister was out doing her she grabbed two boys. Changing the music to something faster she danced her way onto the dance floor. Seeing Belinda and Anastasia just standing there she moved back to them. Taking them by a hand each she got them to join hands. The three of them moved onto the dance floor moving with the music. They were soon joined by Mulan and Mercedes. The five of them moved in a circle encouraging people to join them.

There were only three people who refused to join in with the dancing.

Caitlyn, Francesca and Indigo stood to one side. All three looked very board. They had not said a word to each other since arriving almost ten minutes late for the party. Caitlyn still sensing the tension between Francesca and Indigo she moved away. Indigo was the first to follow her hoping that Francesca would follow. She didn't realise that Francesca had been called over by Mercedes.

“Everybody listen to me. When I say everybody that includes Caitlyn and your friend. I am sure you are all having a very good time. Well after all it is my party. If anyone wants to you are free to use the indoor pool. Now if you will all excuse me. I need to speak to Francesca.” Mercedes said walking out of the room with Francesca following.

Mulan and Paris closed the double doors and stood guard. Belinda and Anastasia caused the second lot of doors and stood in front of them. Mercedes had not told them why she wanted to speak to Francesca only that she needed to do it alone. They knew it was their job to stop Caitlyn and Indigo trying to help their friend.

“Mercedes what do you want. I am at your party.” Francesca said leaning against the wall. She just couldn't understand why Mercedes wanted to talk to her. As far as she was concerned the two of them being enemies worked. Trying to be friends with Mercedes just made no sense at all.

“Yes you are at my party. But you brought along a friend, who is she and why is she at my party.” Mercedes said poking Francesca with every word.

“Indigo is my cousin so just stay away from her. She goes to Guinevere school and I invited her cause I know you wouldn’t like it. Can I go back to the party.” Francesca said enjoying the look of frustration on Mercedes face.

Mercedes looked at Francesca smiling and knew she had to punish her enemy. Patting Francesca on the shoulder she walked away to think of some way to hurt Francesca.

Francesca ignored the feeling of dread as Mercedes walked away. She would later regret letting down her guard but she was more worried about Caitlyn and Indigo. If she had been paying attention she might have looked where she was going and not walked into the swimming pool.

She began to sink instantly, and when her feet touched the bottom she pushed herself back up to the surface. As she came to the surface she noticed that someone had turned on the lights, not only that but everyone was staring at her. Swimming over to the side she tried to pull herself out but just didn’t have the strength.

Caitlyn and Indigo pushed their way through the crowd and walked over to Francesca. They held their hands and together started to lift Francesca out of the pool.

It was then that Mulan and Paris made their move pushing both Caitlyn and Indigo into the pool.

“Francesca, Caitlyn and Indigo what are you doing in the pool. Boy you guys bring a whole new meaning to the term loser.” Mercedes said laughing and stared at her friends.

Anastasia, Mulan, Belinda, and Paris all started laughing along with her. Still smiling she turned and walked back into the sitting room her friends following.

The guests looked at the three girls in the pool but none stepped forward to help.

“Michael I thought we were picking the girls up in an hour. It isn’t even seven.” Jerry said following Michael to the car.

“There has been a change of plan. Mercedes made them all fall in the swimming pool. Francesca just wants to get them out of the house.” Michael said buckling himself in.

The car began moving as soon as Jerry had closed the door.

“How do you know all of this.” Jerry said, confused that Michael knew more about what was going on than him.

“Very simple really. I read your text. Just to give you a heads up she seemed very angry. Yeah she also phoned you but you were busy so I took the call.” Michael replied making himself more comfortable.

The boys arrived at Mercedes house and found Francesca, Caitlyn and Indigo waiting for them on the steps.

“Francesca, Caitlyn, Indigo are you guys ok? Come on the limo will be warm. You guys must be frozen. This is Michael a friend of sorts.” Jerry said helping Indigo and Caitlyn up. Francesca stood up ignoring the two boys. She did accept the jumper Michael handed to her.

When they were in the car Jerry gave Indigo and Caitlyn a blanket to share. They were very cold but had decided to change when they got to the second party.

Chapter Nineteen

Anastasia lay on her bed thinking back on the events of last night. She was feeling very different and a bit guilty. It felt very different to get kissed for the first time in front of so many people. But is also felt good to have kissed a boy finally, and he was not just any boy but one of Charles Barnes good friends. Mercedes had told her afterwards that this was a very good thing in case they went on double dates. Just thinking about double dates made her smile and jump for joy. Then she remembered why she was feeling guilty.

If she has still been speaking to Francesca, then she would have spent almost an hour on the phone to her, and then another this morning. That was not the only reason she was feeling guilty. What had happened to Francesca, Caitlyn and their friend, had not been as much fun as she had made out. There had been a part of her that really wanted to help her old friend. A bigger and stronger part told her that Francesca had betrayed her and it was not worth losing her new friends by helping someone like Francesca.

“Anastasia would you please come downstairs. We need to talk about what your plans are for today. It would just help if you would speak to both your mother and me.” Mr. Jones called up to his young daughter.

Mrs. Jones was standing next to him giving her husband a look. “Claire you are not to move. Your father

and I need to talk about your boyfriend. You do remember the rules no dating anyone your father and I do not know." she said without turning her head. Since the events of last night she had found out a number of things about both her daughters. She was stunned when she heard that Anastasia and Francesca had not spoken for weeks. When she had found out though that Claire was dating, she was furious. How could her sixteen year old daughter be dating someone and not tell her. Before last night she had always thought that she had a good relationship with Claire. Now though she realized she needed to work on her relationship with both her daughters.

The good thing was that her husband also needed to work on his relationship with his daughters.

"Mum, dad you both know Richard. He is the seventeen year old brother of Francesca and one of my oldest friends. Therefore I did not break any rules by dating him." Claire yelled not moving from her seat at the kitchen table.

"Don't argue with us. You are in a lot of trouble. We may know Richard but neither of us trusts the pair you together, especially alone." Mr. Jones said as Anastasia entered the kitchen.

"Anastasia I am glad you have finally decided to join us. Please sit down next to your sister. Before you go out with your friends your mother and I would like to ask you a few questions. After that you are free to do whatever you want with your friends. Just as long, as you tell what you are doing and who your friends are." Mr Jones said as Anastasia entered the kitchen.

"First did you know that your sister was dating Richard Barnes? Second Claire did you know that Anastasia is no longer friends with Francesca." Mrs Jones asked first Anastasia and then Claire. There were many more things she wanted to ask, first though she needed to find out the answers to her first few questions.

"Mum and dad how can you even ask that. I don't know anything about Claire's life, let alone her life. We are not close in anyway and I like it like that." Anastasia said looking at her father the whole time. She thought he was the better option to get out of the house.

"Sure I knew Anastasia and Francesca are no longer speaking. They have not said a word to each other in weeks. They had some argument and are both too stupid or too stubborn to speak to each other. They are eleven what are you going to do. Can I go now I need to speak to Richard?" Claire said not looking at either of her parents because she already knew it wouldn't help. As far as her parents were concerned she was now the bad daughter.

"Claire you are not going to be leaving this house for a very long time, and you can speak to Richard when he comes over with his parents later. I am sure they are just as mad about the situation as we are." Mrs

Jones said not missing the look that Claire gave her little sister.

“Anastasia don’t think you are off the hook. Tonight after we have dealt with your sister and her choice of boyfriends, we will be speaking to you. Francesca has been your friend for far too many years to let it all go. Now tell us who you are going out with, where you are going and when you are coming back.” Mr Jones said trying not to yell even though he was furious. He just couldn’t understand why his daughters would keep things from him. He had always thought that he had a good relationship with his daughter Claire. He knew that he had a lot of work ahead of him to become close to Anastasia but he was willing to make the effort. And he was going to start by getting Anastasia to talk to Francesca.

“Daddy I am going out with Belinda, Mercedes, Mulan and Paris. We were all thinking of going to the woods and having a picnic. I mean it really is a nice day. Plus we have been going shopping like every weekend. So we thought we would do something different. I can go to the woods, please say yes. I am not sure how long we will be. I could ring home when we are ready and you could decide what to do from there. That is fair right.” Anastasia said getting up but not leaving the room until her parents gave the ok.

“Before you go anywhere, tell us which wood you are going to. Then we might let you go for your picnic. If we do not approve of the woods you intend to visit then you will just have to spend your day shopping. To stop you and your friends from complaining lunch will be on me. But don’t think you can go overboard.” Mr Jones said looking at his daughter.

“From what we discussed last night, the five of us are going to Ineoties Woods. You have taken me there before and before Francesca became a really big loser, we used to go there together. So can I go please, I promise I will not go near Raven’s wood. Anyway that place gives me the creeps. I don’t think anyone goes there except maybe much older teenagers. So what do you say best daddy in the whole wide world. Can I hang out with my cool new friends? I need the answer soon because Mercedes is expecting me to ring her with my answer.” Anastasia said looking her father straight in the eye.

“You and your friends may go to Ineoties woods. When it is time for you to come back, and this will be before it gets dark. You will ring me and I will come and pick the five of you up.” Mr Jones said.

“Thank you daddy, you really are the best.” Anastasia said running up to her father and giving him a big hug before running up to her room.

Belinda looked at her mobile phone as it began to vibrate again. Over the last half an hour she had been sent a text by each of her friends. Each of the texts informed her that she needed to call straight back. She had ignored the first four texts, now though her phone was ringing and she had no choice but to answer it. Checking the caller ID she saw that it was Mercedes. Taking a deep breath she picked up the phone.

“Well it’s about time you picked up. I have sent you like three texts. What were you doing? I thought I explained last night that I was going to ring. I am still angry with you for leaving my party so early last night. Now I forgive you because you are not only my friend but new. You still don’t know all the rules and so I let you off. But I have to warn you that if you don’t come out today then you will only get one last chance. Then that is it.” Mercedes said down the phone.

“Mercedes I am very sorry, I explained last night that it was my dad. He has been strict lately; don’t worry about today I will figure something out. Just tell me where you want to meet I promise I will get there.” Belinda said moving the phone from her right to left hand.

“Good now remember the next time the phone ring, pick the bloody thing up.” Mercedes yelled before slamming the phone down.

Belinda listened to the dial tone for a couple of minutes, and then she put the phone down. She couldn’t understand why she allowed Mercedes to talk to her like she was an idiot. As the same time she knew the reason and that it was a very stupid one. Putting her mobile on her bedside table she climbed off her bed. Deciding that the best thing to do was to get dressed she left her bedroom and went to have a shower.

Half an hour later she was sitting with her parents eating breakfast. She was waiting for just the right time to ask her parents. The only problem was she was running out of time.

“Mum, dad if you don’t mind I was thinking of going out to Ineoties woods. Don’t worry my friends are going as well. The five of us were thinking of having a picnic. No boys or anything. Just five female friends spending some time together. It is going to be so much fun. Please say I can go. I promise to finish my homework and every day after that. Mercedes is going on holiday at like eight this evening. Today is the last chance to see my friend before she goes off. At least during half term. Everyone else will be going, so like can I go. I promise that I will only be gone for like six hours or so.” Belinda said looking at her Mother then her Father as she spoke. She knew that she was going to have to beg to get her parents to let her go.

“Belinda I really don’t think it is such a good idea. You have been spending a lot of time with Mercedes, Mulan and Paris. I have been talking to some of the other Mothers. They have not been very positive about Mercedes or Mulan or Paris. They tell me the three of them are bullies. Maybe you should just ask your Father.” Mrs. Roberts said.

“You Mother is right I really don’t want my daughter hanging out with bullies. You are to choose your friends more carefully. Why don’t you spend the day with some of your old friends? I must say that I liked them a lot more than your new ones.” Mr Roberts said getting up and leaving the room. He was angry that his daughter would hang out with bad girls. When he was finished working her would have a very long talk with her about who she was allowed to hang out with.

“They are not bullies in anyway. It’s just that we are the five richest girls in the whole school. It is not our fault that the other girls are jealous of us. If anyone is a bully it is Francesca Barnes. Ask the other mothers about her. They will tell you that over the past three weeks she has been getting a detention every day. She has loads of brothers and from what I have heard the three eldest were all expelled. So is it ok if I hang out with my friends.” Belinda asked again. She had exaggerated what she was saying. But knew the most important thing was to go and find her friends.

“You are not going anywhere with those girls. I have to go shopping. Now you can either come with me and shop, or you can call up your old friends and spend the day with them. It is your choice.” Mrs Roberts said to her daughter.

“Before you make your decision Belinda I want you to know all the facts. I will be going out as well. I have a lot of work to do and I can’t do it here. You and your friends will be on your own if you decide to stay. I want you to promise that you will not make this house a mess.” Mr Roberts told his daughter as he came back into the kitchen to grab a cup of coffee.

“Don’t worry dad everything will be just fine. I’ll just invite Dawn and Carla over. They are no trouble, or I could go round to Dawn’s she lives very close by.” Belinda said already forming a plan on how she was going to meet Anastasia and the others.

“I would feel much happier if your friends came here. That way I know where you are at all times. If you do go out with your friends you are to ring me or your mother.” Mr Roberts said leaving the house and heading for his car. Just as he reached the car he called out a goodbye to his wife and daughter.

“Darling I promise not to spend too much. Just enough to make me feel special and a few things for Belinda.” Mrs Roberts called to her husband as he climbed into his car and drove away.

“Belinda you are sure you don’t want to go shopping with your mother. We could have a lot of fun. You always used to love coming shopping with me. What has changed? You can tell me anything, you know that right.” Mrs Roberts asked her daughter.

“Mum I know that I can tell you anything and I do tell you almost everything. But I am eleven years old. I am in senior school and more than anything, I really want to just hang out with my friends. Don’t worry it will just be Dawn and Carla. And I promise that if I leave the house that I will ring or send you a text. Now I need to ring Dawn and Carla.” Belinda said heading up the stairs and to her room.

“Well ok darling, I will see you later. I might catch up with a couple of friends so you will have to make your own lunch. Goodbye Belinda.” Mrs Roberts called up the stairs to her daughter as she left the house.

Belinda didn't call back because she was too busy talking to Mercedes. She didn't bother to explain what was going on, there was really no point in telling Mercedes anything at all. Seeing her Mother pull out of the driveway she started to pack a small bag. The others were expecting her to bring blankets and any kind of food and drink she could find. Picking up the bag she left the house, pocketing her mobile phone. As soon as she reached the end of the road she phoned Anastasia and found out where she was meant to meet the others.

Caitlyn opened her eyes as the door of the bedroom opened and then closed. It was too dark to see who had just left the room. It didn't really matter anyway, there was a very high chance that whoever had just left the room had only gone to use the bathroom. Closing her eyes she drifted off back to sleep, telling herself it was far too early to get up.

Half an hour later Caitlyn woke up again when she heard the sound of a car's engine being turned on. Sitting up she saw that it wasn't as dark. This helped when she stood up and walked over to the window. She watched first one car and then the second drive away. She had thought that when Mr and Mrs Barnes went off to work she would be scared. But it was kind of cool that the oldest teenager was fifteen year old Simon. And she knew that he would be nice to her because he was trying to get Stephanie to agree to become his girlfriend.

Looking at her wrist watch she saw it had just gone eight. Seeing that Indigo was fast asleep she climbed up the ladder to check on Francesca. But the top bunk was empty. It didn't even look like the bed had been slept in. Jumping down she left the room looking for Francesca. She didn't even think about waking Indigo.

Reaching the bottom of the stairs her phone began to ring. Taking it out of her pocket she pressed the green phone button and said hello.

"Hey Caitlyn, sorry to ring so early. I just thought I would check up on my little sister. So how was Mercedes party? I still don't understand why you even went to her party. I told you when we first met that she was bad news." Stephanie said down the phone.

"If you are going to give me a lecture I will cut you off. It is far too early to get a lecture from you." Caitlyn shot back, getting annoyed very quickly.

"I am not going to give you a lecture. I am sure your mum is going to give you one. The party I was at got out of control. Boy did my mum yell at me. But you went to Mercedes party and from what I heard it was rather wild. So what about the boy's party. How was that? Tell me there names again would you." Stephanie said trying to calm the situation down. She really didn't want to fight with her sister over the phone. At the same time she had to make sure her sister was happy.

“Mercedes party was not that bad. Well except when Indigo and I were pushed into the swimming pool when we tried to help Francesca. She didn’t pull us in. Mulan and Paris shoved us in and it was definitely not an accident. The three of us left after that. Francesca called Jerry to come pick us up. The other boy Michael came with him. They are not friends but they stayed polite around the three of us.” Caitlyn said trying not to give too much away. After all last night, she had made a promise with Indigo that they wouldn’t tell anyone about what they had seen. The only time they would tell is if something bad happened.

“So what about these boys Jerry and Michael. Please tell me you didn’t kiss either of them. You are far too young to be kissing boys. Especially Michael. He has a bad reputation and I mean a very bad reputation. He has been expelled from a number of schools. Jerry though from what I heard is very close to Francesca.” Stephanie said trying to keep the conversation on what had happened at the two parties.

“Who told you about Francesca and Jerry? They are just really good friends. I mean Jerry normally just hangs out with Charles. Francesca has only just started speaking to Jerry again.” Caitlyn said not sure how much she was allowed to say.

“A couple of girls from Gwenevere’s have told me about Francesca and Jerry. Don’t worry I didn’t tell Simon about the rumours. I know what Simon and his big brothers would do. So don’t you want to know what happened at claries party?” Stephanie said wanting to tell her sister everything that had happened.

“Sure go ahead that way I can tell Francesca and Indigo. If the rumour is good enough we can spread it around both schools.” Caitlyn said sitting down on the sofa knowing she was in for a long speech.

“Ok so the party was normal to start with. Well except that I went to the party with Simon. It was nice to be an honoured guest. I can’t say I like Claire, I don’t think anyone can really say they like her. Well except for Richard he really seems to love her. Which is nice and all but what did he have to pick Claire. Not that I would pick him over Simon. But back to the party. Nearly two hours into the party Claire decided to make this announcement. I don’t think she even knew her parents were still there. After that everything went wrong.” Stephanie said and tried to say more but Caitlyn interrupted her.

“What do you mean by everything went wrong. Are you ok? Did anyone get hurt? What exactly did Claire tell her parents?” Caitlyn basically yelled down the phone. She couldn’t believe that Stephanie had not told her straight away that something had happened. It was really annoying how much of a teenager her sister seemed to be.

“Well all that happened was a bunch of gate crashers. They didn’t do anything much except total the place. There were just so many of them and they really didn’t like out school at all. But once the cops came everything just seemed to work out. I mean more or less. I have to go mum is yelling at me to get off the phone.” Stephanie said before hanging up. She was already in enough trouble.

Caitlyn put her phone back in her pocket. She couldn't understand how her sister could just hang up on her. Telling herself that there was no point in getting angry. The most important thing was that Stephanie and everybody was alright.

Hearing footsteps she was surprised to see Sampson and Jason running down the stairs. They both stopped when they saw Caitlyn staring at them.

"Caitlyn why don't you go back to bed for a bit. Simon will make breakfast for all of you. If he does anything, I wouldn't worry because Francesca will yell at him. And he is dating your sister so that means he has to be nice to you." Jason said as Sampson took out his mobile phone.

"Thank you, I am really sorry but I can't tell the two of you apart." Caitlyn said sounding embarrassed. She couldn't believe she had said something so stupid.

"Don't look so worried. I am Jason and the ass over there is Sampson. We have to go to work now and Richard will be leaving soon. If Francesca decided that you guys are going to go out please make sure she tells Simon. If he has gone out as well then get her to phone either me or Sampson." Jason said as they heard a car honk outside.

"Come on Jason you can suck up to Francesca's friends later. We have to get to work unless you want to get fired." Sampson said grabbing his twin by the arm and dragging him out of the house. They ran up the path and climbed into the car waiting for them.

Caitlyn waited until the car had driven out of site. Closing the front door she went back upstairs to tell Indigo that Francesca was missing.

Francesca woke with a start. Checking the glow in the dark clock that was hanging on the wall she saw that it was seven thirty. Slipping out from under the covers she jumped down to the floor. Once on the floor she walked out of the room only stopping to put on her slippers. She closed the door behind her and made her way into the kitchen.

"Francesca you are up early." Richard said handing his little sister a glass of juice.

"Am I not allowed to be up early. I mean it might be the school holidays but I have a long day ahead of me." Francesca said taking the juice and sitting at the kitchen table. Her plan had been to go outside and check her phone for messages. Richard being down in the kitchen had really messed up her plans.

"So Richard how was last night?"

“Last night? Right claries party. It was very interesting. What about the two parties you decided to go to.” Richard said changing the conversation back to Francesca. He was trying to see if he could get Francesca to open up. And if it meant talking about Jerry then he would just have to put up with it.

“You mean Mercedes and then Jerry’s. They were both fine. Well Mercedes was a bitch as always but other than that it was fine. The important thing is that Indigo and Caitlyn had fun.” Francesca said trying to keep the conversation away from Jerry because then she would think about Michael. If she started to think about Michael that she would remember the kiss.

“So fav little sis why did you go to Jerry’s party? I mean Charles didn’t even go. I just presumed that two of you would go together. After all you are always telling Jason and Sampson that Jerry is just a friend. He is just a friend right?” Richard said getting worried that his eleven year old sister had a boyfriend. If he did find out that it was true he would be very upset. As far as he was concerned Francesca was too young to have a boyfriend, and if she didn’t have so many brothers he would stop her from hanging out with so many boys.

“Jerry is just a very good friend, and yeah he is much closer to Charles but he is my friend as well. And Richard I went to Jerry’s party because I was invited. Charles didn’t go to the party because it would have been rude to Mercedes. Anyway big brother Indigo was invited as well. If you want to give a lecture give one to her.” Francesca said attempting to leave the kitchen via the back door.

“Francesca please don’t walk away. I want to talk to you before I have to go off to work. I think we are very close. You can tell me anything and I promise not to get angry unless it is something very bad. So is there anything you wish to tell me because I am all ears.” Richard said placing his hand on Francesca’s shoulder causing her to sit back down.

“There is nothing to tell. I went to two parties with my friends and we had fun.” Francesca said not wanting to talk to Richard about what had happened the night before. If she had to tell one of her brothers then it would have to be Charles. She knew that he would tell the others eventually, but hopefully by then she would be old enough to date.

“Richard you need to get a move on. Your father is giving you a lift and can’t wait all morning.” Mrs H called into the kitchen not noticing that her eleven year old daughter was up and about.

“Coming dad!” Richard yelled and then turning to Francesca he said. “We will talk about this when I get back from work. I want to know all you know about the new boy that Jerry has befriended.” Then he ran out of the kitchen patting Francesca on the head as he left the room. He ran from the room and then out of the house and into the car.

“Jason, Sampson do either of you need a lift. I am leaving in about two minutes.” Mr Barnes called up to his twin nineteen year old sons.

“We are getting a lift with George.” Sampson yelled back not caring that his younger brothers and sister were asleep.

“But thank you for the offer.” Jason said trying not to say it too loudly.

Francesca waited until both her parents and Richard were far away before sneaking out into the back garden. Leaving the door slightly ajar she made a dash for the tree house. It wasn't the nicest place to go, but she knew that she would be able to get a bit of privacy.

Climbing the rope ladder she pulled herself up into the small wooden house. Sitting in the centre of the tree house. Sitting in the corner of the tree house she took out her mobile phone and switched it on. While it started to load, she wondered if Michael had sent a text. Placing it on the floor she waited for it to vibrate or beep.

When the phone did finally beep, Francesca had started to fall asleep again. The beep woke her right back up. Looking down she saw that the message was from Michael. She smiled as she read and re-read the message. All he had really said was that he hoped she enjoyed the party and that they needed to get together soon.

She quickly sent a text back saying that she wouldn't be free till after the half term. And that he was not to call today, because she was having a girls day out.

Waiting until she was sure that the text had been sent and delivered. Francesca climbed back out of the tree house and into the house. She stopped when she heard Jason and Sampson talking to Caitlyn. She just couldn't help but smile that at least one of her brothers was sucking up to her friend. She was not really surprised though that Sampson had basically ignored her friend. Over the past three weeks he had been ignoring everyone but Jason. Trying to ignore that this meant something was wrong, she waited until Caitlyn had gone upstairs and was in her bedroom before following her up.

Indigo opened her eyes and watched as Francesca left the room. She told herself that it was nothing to worry about. That Francesca had just gone to use the loo and would be back in under two minutes and then two went by. When over ten minutes had past she started to get worried. Turning onto her side she was soon fast asleep again.

Waking up with a start she saw Caitlyn leave the room. Waiting for just over a hundred seconds before

getting out of bed. She walked out of the room and was heading down stairs when she was dragged into the room Simon shared with Mark and Charles.

“What are you whack jobs doing? You scared the shit out of me.” Indigo yelled as Simon let her go.

“Indigo there really is no need to swear. You are a girl.” Simon said keeping his voice calm and even.

“And what is that supposed to mean.” Indigo said looking right at Simon the anger momentarily visible in her eyes.

“What he means it we are sorry if we scared you. Simon, Charles tell her that you are sorry.” Mark yelled taking charge.

“Yeah sorry Indigo. We were not trying to scare you.” Charles said looking at Simon.

“Right sorry Indigo.” Simon said.

“Ok it’s fine. Just tell me why you dragged me into your room.” Indigo said starting to get up.

“We want to ask you so questions about the two parties you went to last night.” Simon said taking charge once again. As the oldest in the room he felt it was his job to keep everyone on track. And he wanted more than anything to find out what was going on with Francesca.

“Sure ask away.” Indigo said sitting cross legged on Charles bed and made herself comfortable. She had already decided how much she was going to tell the boys. The one thing she was not going to tell that was about Francesca dancing with that boy.

“First why did you go to Mercedes Party? I don’t mean to be horrid but you don’t go to Mrs Evans for Girls. I just thought that the party was only for the Year Sevens of Mrs Evans School for Girls.” Simon said standing in front of Indigo.

“Second who is this boy Michael?” Mark said voicing the one question that all of Francesca’s brothers wanted an answer to. It was also the one question that Indigo didn’t really know how to answer.

“Thirdly tell me you and Francesca have finally made up.” Charles said sitting down next to Indigo. As Francesca’s twin he really needed to know what was going on. He was very worried that Francesca was keeping something very important from him.

“Well that is a lot of questions. At least you didn’t ask at the same time. I went to Mercedes party because Francesca invited me. I don’t really understand why she agreed to go to the party. It might have been to prove something. Don’t ask what it was meant to prove.” Indigo said and when Simon opened his mouth to question he she continued. “All I know is that me being at the party really pissed Mercedes off. Michael is a boy who goes to school with Jerry. As the new students they had to throw a party. I am sure Jerry told all of this to Charles. And Charles you will be happy to know that Francesca and I are like Beaches.” Indigo said and then seeing there looks she quickly continued. “Like in the movie. Never mind if that is all, I am going to go and find Francesca and Caitlyn.” Indigo stood up to move but was stopped by Simon.

“We have more questions for you. Please sit back down. You can find Francesca and Caitlyn afterwards. They are probably asleep somewhere.” Simon said hoping he sounded far more confident than he really was. Hearing that Indigo was looking for Francesca was worrying.

“Fine if you need to ask more questions go ahead. But then I really need to find Francesca and Caitlyn. We have things to do today.” Indigo said sitting back down on the bed. This time though she didn’t cross her legs but she did cross her arms to show she was mad.

“Please tell us how close you think Francesca and Michael are. As her brothers it is up to us to make sure she is protected.” Simon stated crossing his arms over his chest to show he was just as annoyed.

“They are not very close. Michael only knows Francesca via Jerry. She didn’t really speak to him last night except to be polite. What more is there for me to say. Francesca knows a number of boys. She is allowed to speak to them. If you are worried that she is kissing boys, I don’t advise you ask her about it. I don’t have brothers but I would not want to talk to them about it. Talk to Lavender or Violet and get them to talk to Francesca. If there is something to tell them she will feel much happier talking to them.” Indigo said again trying to leave the room.

“Tell us everything that happened at Jerry’s party.” Mark said before Charles or Simon could

“Mark how am I mean to remember everything that happened. It was a party with music and dancing. Looking if you were all so worried about what was happening Charles should have come with us. After all he was invited but he wanted to stay with Mercedes. Why don’t you question Charles’s about his k” Indigo said before getting up and leaving the room before she could be stopped.

Simon and Mark let her go and turned to their little brother.

Ineoties Woods is the second wood in the town of Equalton. It is in the South Side of town where it separates the rich from the poor. Or at least that is what it was meant to do. Being the only safe wood in the town rich and poor teenagers had started to hang around the wood. The wood was large enough so the rich and poor teenagers didn't have to hang around together.

The Johnson River which runs all through town makes a bend turning into a stream which runs through Ineoties woods. Although it is a stream it is very fast flowing and only the bravest dare swim in it. The stream ends in the middle of the Woods where it forms a lake. The lake is known as Nimueh's lake. This was because, a hundred years ago a young man had thrown a sword into the lake. From that day it was Nimueh's lake. Although there were very few who would swim in the stream, nearly every child in town by the time they were nine had jumped into the lake.

Mercedes walked down the street her friends following her. A plan had been forming in her mind since five that morning. She was going to have a lot of fun messing with Francesca. And if Francesca got hurt then it was even better.

"Girls hurry up. So you girls what did you tell the old people. I doubt that they would be happy if they knew the five of us were going to go swimming in Johnson stream." Mercedes said knowing that her four friends did not look very happy. If they could see her smiling they would not be amused.

"Mercedes you know Paris and I agree with basically everything you say, but you can not be serious. The Johnson stream may be called a stream but it is more like a River. You have made us do some very crazy things but come on." Mulan said coming to a stop in front of Mercedes. She could not believe that even Mercedes would do something so dangerous. As she looked at her friend she suddenly saw that Mercedes was laughing.

"Mulan it was a joke. I would never jump into Johnson Stream. Come on would you ever jump into Johnson Stream." Mercedes said her voice dripping with Sarcasm.

"Actually if Paris fell in that Stream then I would definitely jump in." Mulan shot back and was surprised that she had just said it. And she had meant every word she just said.

"Wow, Mulan I never knew how much you cared." Paris said standing next to her twin.

"Well yeah, you are still my sister. I care for you even if you are a major pain in the ass." Mulan said giving her twin a one armed hug.

"Stop being dumb twins!" Mercedes yelled becoming annoyed at her two friends. It was only then that she

noticed Anastasia and Caitlyn. "Ok lets get going. We are going to have so much fun messing with that stupid bitch." Mercedes said turning to each of her friends.

Anastasia had to force herself not to step away from Mercedes. She had never heard so much hatred in someone's voice. But she was also grateful that the hatred was not aimed at her. When Mercedes was this angry the best thing to do was keep her on side.

Having said her piece Mercedes stormed off into the Woods. Mulan and Paris followed. Anastasia looked at Belinda who shrugged and ran to catch up. After hesitating Anastasia followed knowing there was nothing else to do.

The five of them walked in single file heading in the direction of the Stream. None of them said a word not wanting to annoy Mercedes. It took only ten minutes to find the stream. Mercedes came to a complete stop and her friends managed to stop just before crashing into her.

"Girls we are here! Spread out and hide. Now we wait." Mercedes said a malicious glint in her eye.

Francesca moved ahead of her friends. She could tell that Indigo and Caitlyn were both confused. Coming to a stop she saw that both of them were looking at her with worry in their eyes.

"Indigo, Caitlyn what are you two looking at." Francesca said trying to keep the annoyance out of her voice. She was certain that her friends wanted to question her about last night. And part of her really wanted to tell them, but she did know, that they would not understand.

"Well we were just wondering why we came here. Not that it is not a nice place. And I guess Caitlyn has never been here but isn't there a chance that Mercedes will be here." Indigo asked not really sure how her cousin was going to respond.

"It doesn't matter if Mercedes and her band of losers are in the woods. I think the woods are large enough for the eight of us to be here." Francesca said having no idea that there were three more children inside the wood. If she had known that her brother, Jerry and Michael were in the woods she might have turned back. But it had never really been in her to walk away especially from a fight.

"But didn't you piss her off. Last night she was rather annoyed when Jerry and Michael came to rescue me." Caitlyn said sure that Francesca and Indigo would both have a come back.

"Francesca being alive pisses that girl off." Indigo said laughing at her cousins face.

“Look we don’t have all day.” Francesca said and started to walk again. If Indigo and Caitlyn asked questions about what had happened the other night, she had decided to just think of something. Either that or change the subject. She still hadn’t made her mind up.

“So Indigo are we going to ask her about last night.” Caitlyn asked in little more than a whisper. She was worried that if she spoke any louder that Francesca would hear.

“Well we could but you just know she is going to lie.” Indigo whispered back.

“That just means there is something to hide.” Caitlyn said effectively ending the conversation. Or at least she thought she had.

“Are you guys going to keep talking to each other. You do realise I am still here right. If you want to ask about last night just go ahead.” Francesca said bending down and climbing under a fallen log.

Indigo and Caitlyn realised they were falling behind and ran to catch up with Francesca.

“Francesca would you please slow down. Caitlyn has never been in these woods and we are no longer following the path. I hate to say this but I think we might be lost.” Indigo said running even harder to catch up with Francesca, dragging Caitlyn with her.

Francesca looked over her shoulder and saw that Indigo and Caitlyn were falling behind. Coming to a stop she waited for Indigo and Caitlyn to catch up.

“Are you really going to tell us about last night.” Caitlyn asked leaning against a fallen log.

“Yeah Francesca you never do anything you don’t want to do.” Indigo said moving so she was standing next to Caitlyn.

“I never said I was going to tell you about last night. All I said was that you could ask.” Francesca said moving so she was standing in front of Indigo and Caitlyn.

“So you are not going to tell us anything.” Indigo and Caitlyn asked together.

“Never said that either.” Francesca said laughing at her friends expressions.

“Come on you two we are nearly there, then you guys can question me as much as you like. I promise you it is really not that far.” Francesca said starting to walk again.

Caitlyn shrugged her shoulders and started to follow Francesca. She had a lot of questions that she wanted to ask but she guessed that they could wait.

Indigo though had different ideas. “Francesca it is all very well you saying we don’t have far to go, but where are we going. All you did this morning was tell us to get dressed. When we asked where we were going you said the woods. And in case you have forgotten there are two woods in Equalton.” Indigo said moving so she was standing on Francesca’s right.

“We are going to my brothers hide out. Jason and Sampson built it when they were eleven. And it should still be here. Both of you can climb trees right.” Francesca asked praying they would just say yes and not ask why they needed to be able to climb trees.

“Yeah I guess I can climb trees.” Indigo said not at all sure why she needed to be able to climb a tree.

“I don’t know, I mean I have never had to climb a tree. And my father would never have approved of me climbing trees.” Caitlyn said enjoying the fact that they were no longer running.

“Well as long as you can try. My brothers hideout is sort of a tree house. Come on it’s just over this log around the corner.” Francesca said taking off at a run with Caitlyn and Indigo right behind her.

“Charles explain again why we are in the Ineoties woods. I thought you said Francesca was spending the day with Indigo and Caitlyn.” Jerry asked following Charles deeper into the woods.

“I’ll explain when you explain why you dragged your new friend along.” Charles shot back the anger in his voice.

Michael didn’t say anything as he followed the two boys.

The three of them were heading for the lake.

“Francesca you never said the log we had to climb over, was over Johnson Stream.” Indigo said coming to a stop, just behind her cousin.

Ignoring what her cousin had just said she climbed onto the log and started walking. Stopping when she

was half way she called out to Indigo and Caitlyn. "Look I will go round this way and you can use the bridge. It's just a bit down the stream."

Mercedes had been listening and was furious that Francesca was showing off. Climbing out of her hiding place she walked forward shoving Indigo and Caitlyn out of her way. Ignoring everyone she climbed onto the log and made her way towards Francesca.

"Get out of my way Francesca." Mercedes said poking Francesca with every word she spoke. When this didn't make Francesca move she shoved her.

Francesca had not been expecting the shove and tried to move. But as she moved to the left she realised at the last second that she was no longer standing on the log. She fell so quickly that she didn't even have a chance to scream.

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Chapter Twenty

The small clock just above the Barnes kitchen door began to strike midday.

"Kevin are you sure it is a good idea to invite your father and step-mother over. You know they are still angry at Francesca. I am just grateful that she decided to go out. The boys are going to be hard enough to control." Grace Barnes told her husband as she prepared the roast lamb.

"Grace you know we need to get back on their good side. And if making small talk helps then that is what we will do. Did you ask Peter and Matilda to come over. My step-mother wants to know how well Indigo is doing in school." Kevin Barnes was telling his wife. When he saw her coming towards him he continued. "Don't worry about tidying up the boys and I will do that. And I am certain that Lavender and Violet will help with Francesca's room. After all if it is a mess then their sister gets in trouble as well." Kevin finished picking up the phone and calling each of his sons telling them they all needed to come home. The only son he didn't call was Charles because he knew that Charles was with friends keeping an eye on Francesca.

"Lavender and Violet I want you to promise that you will be on your best behaviour. This means no arguing with each other and especially no arguing with your grandmother Salina. This dinner is to try and patch everything up." Matilda told her daughters from the front passenger's seat.

"Dad please don't tell me we will be the only teenagers there. I mean Mark and the others will be there right." Violet asked worried that she and Lavender would be Salina's main focus if no one else was around.

“Violet it will be far better for us if they are all there. But you have to remember Grandma Salina is still very angry at Indigo and Francesca. If getting a lecture helps those two out then we have to do it. Indigo is our little sis and Francesca is our only female cousin.” Lavender said.

“You know Lavender I think for once you are right. I would listen to Salina go on about anything if it would help Indigo and Francesca. I really hope they have gone out. It will be much better for those two.” Violet said and was going to say much more but her father started talking.

“Indigo and Francesca have gone out to Ineoties Woods. Charles has also gone out I believe to the same place but I am not sure. Your uncle Kevin would like you to take a look at Francesca’s room. If it is not very clean then maybe you could try and tidy it a bit. This is just in case Salina and Brian want to see it.” Peter told his daughters as he drove the car round the corner.

In just over twenty minutes they would be arriving at his brother Kevin’s house. He just hoped they got there before his father and step-mother.

Salina stepped out of the car and made her way up the small driveway, not bothering to wait for her husband. She wanted to make sure that she was the first into the house.

Stepping up onto the doorstep she rang the doorbell and waited. When she didn’t hear footsteps she slammed her fist against the door at the same time she rang the doorbell.

While she was slamming one fist against the door and the other against the doorbell, her husband came to join her.

“Salina you don’t need to be so aggressive. I am sure Kevin and his wife are on their way to open the door. For once in your life do you think you could be patient.” Brian yelled at his wife just as the door opened.

“Brian you just remember why we are here. I will not have you getting distracted.” Salina whispered to her husband, and then to Grace she said. “Hello Grace how are you? Why don’t we girls go into the kitchen and let the boys talk in the living room. That way the boys can talk about male stuff and your sons. Us girls can talk about Francesca and my other granddaughters.” Salina said walking into the house with Brian close behind her.

“Jason move your fat head. I can’t see the TV.” Sampson yelled shoving his brother out of the way.

“Hey I am not the one making all the noise. If Richard could get off the phone for more than five minutes, we might be able to hear the show.” Jason shot back pushing the blame onto Richard.

Neither of the twins could understand what Richard saw in Claire. They hadn't even understood how Richard and Claire had ever been friends. They knew that Claire could be very cruel and most girls called her a bitch. But there was nothing they could say to stop their brother from liking Claire.

"Jason, Sampson would you guys shut the hell up. I am trying to talk to Claire. And she really doesn't want to hear you bitch like an old married couple." Richard said moving to the furthest corner of the room. He was trying to explain to a very upset Claire that he couldn't come over because the step-bitch and her husband has come over to ruin his life.

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Mark and Simon were meant to be clearing their room but had gotten into a very stupid argument. Now they were sitting on their own beds ignoring each other.

Simon was doing his History coursework praying that Salina and Brian wouldn't be staying for too long. He had a lot of work to get through and he really didn't need his grandmother distracting him.

Mark turned the last page of his book and let out a sigh. Climbing off the bed he went to the bookcase and looked through the books. Just like Simon he had a lot of homework but was happy to leave it to the last minute. He preferred reading to doing homework. The thing was he could get straight A's but that was Simon's thing. Picking a book at random he went back to his bed and started to read.

"Lavender you don't think Indigo and Francesca have gotten into a fight." Violet asked putting a couple of Francesca's jumpers.

"Why would you ask something like that." Lavender said almost dropping the soft toys she was holding.

"Well I heard Simon and Mark talking about some argument the girls had. They also mentioned a boy and Indigo basically telling them to butt out." Violet said right back sitting down on the lower bunk.

"Violet we have nothing to worry about. Francesca probably just made a new male friend and Indigo has a crush on him or something. Simon and the others are just protective of Francesca. I mean do you remember my first boyfriend." Lavender asked as she sat down next to her sister.

"You mean Adam. Yeah he was cute." Violet said going slightly red.

“Yeah Adam. Do you remember what Simon did to him.” lavender said trying to sound serious

“Yeah he beat him up and told him to stay the hell away from you. Then you dumped him for being a baby.” Violet said laughing at the memory.

“Well it’s not as though Simon is the tough one. So imagine what they would do if Francesca ever got a boyfriend.” Lavender said. This time being very serious.

Violet stopped laughing at once and shook her head saying, “now I feel very bad for Francesca. Though a lot worse for the boy. He would have to be very brave or stupid to go up against all of them and us.”

“So Matilda tell me how Indigo is doing at her new school. I hope she is bringing home some good grades.” Salina asked in her politest voice. Although her daughters-in-laws knew she was trying to find some fault in their parenting skills.

“She is doing very well and has started to make some friends. Although I am sure she would have preferred Mrs. Evans School for Girls.” Matilda said not really in the mood to play games. Her baby girl was miserable at her new school and had not made a single friend.

“I don’t think I know that school.” Salina said her voice staying very calm.

Grace knew this was a warning sign but someone had to say something. “Mrs. Evans School for Girls is Francesca’s school. I am sure what Matilda meant was that if Indigo had gone to that school then she would already know someone.” Grace said and was going to say more but the doorbell rang.

Meanwhile in the living room Brian was having a very heated argument with his sons.

“Kevin, Peter I want you to listen very carefully. Lavender, Violet, Indigo and Francesca will be spending next summer with me and Salina. We both think that it is about time that they come to the club. At the club they might actually meet some decent young men, whom your mother and I would find suitable for them.” Brian said raising from his seat to make his point.

“Dad first of all Francesca is only eleven years old, and next year she will still only be twelve. Secondly she has never spent more than two days away from Charles. I am sorry but I don’t think it is possible.” Kevin yelled just as loud. He had no intention to send his sweet Angel to that god awful club.

“Kevin makes a very good point. Indigo is younger than Francesca. And as for Lavender and Violet they

will have Summer jobs next year. I just think they will be too busy. Maybe in a couple of years.â€• Peter said and by a couple of years he really meant never and no way in hell.

Brian is just going to try and make his point when someone outside rings the doorbell.

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Chapter Twenty-One

Itâ€™s eight thirty on the Monday after half term, and the whole of Equalton is talking about the near drowning in Ineoties Woods.

Mothers and Fathers alike were shocked that anything so terrible could happen in the Woods that were considered safe. They decided among themselves and in groups that when sons and daughters came home from school they would be shocked by what their parents had decided. After all once a child became a teenager he or she was expected to go to Ineoties Woods on their own and some were even younger.

The most worried of all the parents were Kevin his brother Peter and their wives Grace and Matilda. They were not so worried about the rumours but with how Francesca, Charles and Indigo were coping. Not one of them had said a word about the accident no matter how many questions were thrown at them.

Grace had been horrified when Francesca had told her that she was going into school. Grace had tried to argue with her daughter but in the end, she decided that the safest place might just be at school, after all she and Kevin had to get to work and she was not going to leave Francesca on her own. She tried to put this to the back of her mind as she walked into work and waited for the morning rush.

Kevin and Peter briefly spoke to each other before going in opposite directions towards their own places of work. Matilda waved to them before walking to the local bank where she worked as a teller, and when the money was very tight as a cleaner as well.

With the adults of Equalton at work or on their way, the children of Equalton made their way to school after a very fun half term.

Anastasia left her house and made her way down the road. As she reached the end of the road she realised that she had not gone this way to school since her fight with Francesca. A large part of her was still very angry at her friend, but the more mature side told her that she needed to make sure Francesca was ok, and why she hadnâ€™t told anyone how it had all happened. And the worst thing was, she wasnâ€™t e sure why she need Francesca to keep her mouth shut, after all she didnâ€™t push Francesca, she had just run

off with Mercedes and the others.

She pushed the guilt to the back of her mind and continued with her journey to school, saying a silent prayer that she would bump into Francesca before she met up with Mercedes. She promised herself that if she saw Francesca she would say something nice and not sarcastic. As she turned the corner she noticed Belinda waiting for her, this meant that Francesca would just have to wait.

“Hey Bell, how was the rest of your half term? Did your parents find out that you snuck out of the house?” Anastasia said as she ran to greet her friend.

“There you are. My half term was rather uneventful, what with Mercedes away. No my parents didn’t find out. All they wanted to know was if I knew Francesca. The way they asked I actually thought she might have died. What about your parents, I mean you used to actually like her, for whatever reason. Did they question you at all?” Belinda asked as they made their way towards, Mrs. Evans School for Girls.

“Well they did ask if I had heard that Francesca was in the hospital. They also asked if I had seen anything but I told them that we had already left for the shops. But they didn’t really seem to be listening.” Anastasia said liking that she felt comfortable telling Belinda, but at the same time still keeping things back in case they were repeated to Mercedes or the clones as she had started calling them in her head.

“Anastasia you never answered my question, as to why you used to like Francesca. Also you might want to stop calling me Bell, I mean Mercedes hates it when anyone calls you Anna. I think you should just call me Belinda. Neither of us want to get on the wrong side of Mercedes.” Belinda said as they walked through the school gates and looked around for Mercedes, Mulan and Paris.

“Francesca and I used to be friends mainly because of Claire and Richard. They had been friends for years before I was even introduced to Francesca. But before we went our separate ways we used to be very good friends and for a long time. Lets not talk about it right now. If Mercedes overhears us talking about Francesca, she might get the wrong impression and then we will be out of her group.” Anastasia said pointing out Mercedes among a large crowd of girls.

“It looks like she is going to give a speech and we don’t want her to think we don’t support her.” Belinda started to move towards Mercedes, Mulan and Paris. She did not want to anger Mercedes, the image of Francesca falling in the River would be forever in her brain.

Mercedes looked at the girls of Year Seven and cleared her throat. She had decided that if there were going to be rumours spread around the school then she was going to be the one to do it. She also wanted her fellow Year Sevens to think that she cared about Francesca. That way no one would ever suspect that she was to blame for the accident.

“Year Seven would you please listen.” Paris yelled trying in vain to get her classmates to actually listen.

That was when Mulan tried to help her twin sister. Ever since Francesca had nearly drowned, Mulan and Paris had been helping each other. “Would you all please be quiet. Mercedes has something very important to tell you all.” Mulan yelled trying her very best to sound cruel.

“ALL OF YOU. SHUT THE HELL UP!” Mercedes yelled causing the whole playground to become eerily silent.

“Look this only concerns the girls of Year Seven. It was one of us who nearly drowned, and I for one think we should support her. That is why I make this promise, that for the next two months, I will try my very best to be her friend.” Mercedes told the girls of Year Seven and was happy when they seemed to believe her. It was she realised very easy to trick people.

Indigo walked to school with Francesca and Caitlyn. She wanted to ask her cousin if she was ok. But when she saw Francesca's expression she changed her mind. It would be stupid to get into an argument on the first day back after Half Term. Turning away from Francesca she looked at Caitlyn who still hadn't really said a word.

“Here we are at my fabulous school. So will I see you at home or do you want to meet half way. Or if it is easier I could always come and meet you at school. So what do you think.” Indigo said deliberately not looking at either Francesca or Caitlyn. She was sure that Francesca would look annoyed and Caitlyn, well she wasn't really sure.

“How about we decide a bit later. Frankie or I could text you later. Caitlyn said hoping that Francesca might say something. She was just really grateful that no one had mentioned Ineoties Woods, but she knew that eventually somebody would. And when that happened she wasn't sure how Francesca would react, all she knew was that she would stand by her friend no matter what Francesca might say or do.

“Indigo we will see you after school at these gates. If any of those girls act like bitches towards you, well just remind them that you know Jerry. That should shut them up or have them sucking up to you. It might also be helpful if you lied about last week.” Francesca said turning around and heading towards Mrs. Evans School for Girls.

Caitlyn said a very quick goodbye to Indigo before running to catch up with Francesca. She wondered if Francesca was going to say anything on the way to school. Part of her wanted Francesca to speak but at the same time she wasn't sure if talking was the right thing.

Indigo watched until Francesca and Caitlyn had walked around the corner. With her cousin safe at least for now, she took a deep breath and walked to the great hall where an emergency assemble was meant to being held. She wasnâ€™t really sure if there was any point in going because she already knew the topic.

She walked into the hall and sat down with the other girls of Year Seven. She could feel all eyes on her but was saved from any questions when Mrs. Robbins walked into the hall.

â€œSo Jerry how was your half term?â€• Jake Simpson said as soon as he saw Jerry enter through the school gates.

â€œJake donâ€™t be so dam dense. Didnâ€™t you hear what Jerry and Michael did.â€• Jason Starke said to his friends.

â€œAre you going to tell me or are you just going to be a dick.â€• Jake said glaring at his friends and punching him in the arm.

â€œHey look guys itâ€™s a bunch of Year Sevenâ€™s gossiping like a bunch of girls. So what you girls talking about?â€• Ralph one of the toughest boys in Year Nine said shoving both Jake and Jason out of his way.

â€œRalph asked you a question you bloody well answer.â€• Geoff yelled pushing Jason to the floor.

â€œThey are talking about the incident in Ineoties Woods last week. See a friend of Jerryâ€™s fell in the River. And well Jerry and I rescued her and her twin brother. Though that was more Jerry than me. You donâ€™t have to be dicks to them. After all Jerry and I out now friends. Right jerry.â€• Michael said appearing out of nowhere.

â€œYeah Michael and I are now extremely good friends and room mates as well.â€• Jerry said not really sure what he was saying.

â€€

Chapter Twenty-Two

Mrs. Johnson walked into the Year Seven classroom, and was pleasantly surprised when the girls ran to their seats.

Once everyone was seated and the room was silent, (for once) Mrs. Johnson began her speech.

“Girls of Year Seven I want you to listen to me very carefully. During the half term, Mrs. Evans school for girls and Mr. Evans school for boys, each nearly lost a pupil. I am sure your parents have told you some of what happened. And the rest you probably heard by gossiping. But this is something you should not be gossiping about. This is a very real situation. Francesca Barnes and her twin brother Charles could have died.” Mrs. Johnson yelled when she sensed that Mulan Tyler was not paying attention.

The girls became silent again when they sensed, Mrs. Johnson was in one of her don’t mess with me kind of moods. With the class silent again Mrs. Johnson continued speaking.

“Nearly all of you have known Francesca and Charles since they were seven. Now I realise I am a new teacher but I am still a citizen of Equalton. In one way or another we all know each other.”

Looking at each other of the girls she decided that the class did not look sorry enough. It was then that she decided to question her pupils. She didn’t really care if Mrs. Evans just wanted her to tell the pupils that Ineoties Woods was off limits to the children of Equalton. She wanted to make sure that these girls understood the seriousness of the situation.

“Why don’t each of you tell me how you know Francesca and Charles. I don’t want you to feel nervous because Francesca is in the room.” Mrs. Johnson said and when no one said anything she kept speaking.

“Amy why don’t you go first. Then you point and say the name of the person you think should go next.” Mrs. Johnson said glaring at Amy.

“I have known Francesca and Charles since the first day of junior school. Also I think Jason and Sampson used to look after me. Jen why don’t you go next.” Amy said turning to her friend.

“Thank You so much for that Amy.” Jen said before continuing “I meet Francesca when we were about It was in Dawson Park, my parents were fighting and didn’t notice some older boys coming towards me. Francesca though, I don’t know, just knew that these boys were no good. She placed herself in front of me and told the boys to back off. At first they laughed until Frankie started screaming for her big brothers. Those boys just ran away crying for their mummies. I meet Charles like Amy on the first day of junior school.”

Nearly every girl had the same story. They had either met Francesca and her brother on the first day of junior school or through an older sibling.

When all the girls had explained how they knew Francesca and Charles, Francesca raised her hand to ask a question.

Mrs. Johnson looked at Francesca surprised that she would have anything to say. Not one of the girls had said anything that was horrid or mean, and she had expected Mercedes and her group of friends to at least be sarcastic.

“Francesca what is it you want to say. And please keep it polite or you will be getting a detention.” Mrs. Johnson said indicating that Francesca should stand up and address the whole class if she was determined to speak.

“Well I was just wondering why everyone is acting as though I died. I mean why do you need to know when we all met. Also you know nothing about what happened in the Woods that day. The only people who know what happened are the people who were there at the time.” Francesca said sitting down after first glaring at Mercedes, which did not go unnoticed by the teacher and pupils.

“You are very right Francesca. Only yourself, Caitlyn and your cousin know what really happened. And from what the other teachers have said you haven’t really said a word. Do tell me how your twin almost drowned as well, because from what I have heard, he and his friends were in a different part of the Woods. So why don’t you tell the class what really happened.” Mrs. Johnson challenged determined to be the first grown up and more importantly, at least to be the first teacher. She would tell the other teachers but she would lie about how she got the information.

Francesca looked at Mrs. Johnson and said just loud enough for the teacher to hear. “I am sorry but I don’t know.”

“How can you not remember what happened. You were the one who fell in the River and was swept into the lake. Do you remember your brother and two other boys jumped into the lake to save you.” Mrs. Johnson yelled making the first row of girls jump in their seats.

“I don’t remember Mrs. Johnson because I was unconscious as soon as I hit the water. All I know is what Indigo and Caitlyn have told me. And that is not very much. They tell me that it’s because they didn’t do everything. The three boys haven’t really said much. My big brothers have not let me speak to the boy who saved my life. I haven’t even been able to thank Jerry, who saved my brothers life.” Francesca said not moving from her seat.

“Mrs. Johnson it’s true. Francesca was unconscious for hours even after Michael had pulled her out of the lake. It’s just like you said she nearly died. The doctors don’t understand why Charles fell unconscious. Mr. and Mrs. Barnes, that is Francesca’s parents think it’s because they are twins.” Caitlyn said loud enough for the whole class to hear. She was very shocked at her own bravery. Normally she didn’t speak at school except with her friends. But she knew deep down that this was not a usual situation.

“Caitlyn did I ask you to speak. No I did not. Next time speak when you are spoken to, and not before. Do I make myself clear.” Mrs. Johnson yelled that she was not going to get a full story.

Caitlyn looked at Mrs. Johnson and for a couple of minutes she found that she was speechless. When Mrs. Johnson just kept looking at her she snapped back to reality and quickly said “yes I understand.”

“Francesca why don’t you tell the class what you do remember. I mean you do remember something. If you don’t tell the class something then one of them will just make something up. Before you know it the whole school will be talking about it. So it is up to you. Either tell the truth and have the Girls of Mrs. Evans school help you, or say nothing and have the girls saying the wildest and untrue things about what happened. The choice is yours, but if I were you I would think very long and hard before you voice your decision.” Mrs. Johnson said smiling as she spoke.

“I don’t need to think about it. I am not going to tell anyone anything. After all it has nothing to do with them.” Francesca said matching Mrs. Johnson’s stare. She was determined not to tell anyone anything.

Mrs. Johnson was furious that Francesca was being so dam stubborn. “As I said it is your decision. However I don’t think it is a very good one. But there is nothing I can do to change your mind and your first lesson of the day is about to start.”

The girls stood up and grabbed their things before making a quick exit.

“Francesca come see me at the end of the day. We need to talk.” Mrs. Johnson called out as Francesca was leaving the room.

Mr. Evans looked around the assembly hall as he walked through the door. It was only as he walked into the hall, that he realised just how many pupils were actually at his school. He had always thought that his school just like his wives was small. At least compared to the two rich schools. Looking around he noticed that Charles Barnes was in the very middle of the Year Seven boys. Mark Barnes was with the Year Nines and Simon Barnes was sitting with his friends in Year Ten. He tried to very hard to communicate the three brothers but none of them seemed to be looking in his direction.

“Could everyone please take their seats and listen to Mr. Evans.” Mr. Lawson told the boys of Mr. Evans school for Boys, before taking his seat.

Mr. Evans climbed the stairs and stepped onto the stage, and taped the microphone to make sure it was working.

“I realise you are all wondering why I have called an assemble on the first day after half term. But this is not a normal assemble. Due to the incident that happened during the half term I had no choice but to call this emergency assemble. I am not sure how much all of you know. There will be those who know a lot more than others but that doesn’t matter. It is my job as the Head Master to tell all of you what happened. Just because you know what has happened does not give you the right to ignore me.” Mr. Evans said and cleared his throat when he heard some of the Year Nines whispering.

“Now you have all heard of Ineoties Woods. For a very long time it has been a very safe Wood. Or at least as safe as a Wood can ever be. You all know Charles Barnes and during the half term, he and his sister nearly drowned. Thanks to two brave boys from Excalibur’s school for Boys, both Charles and his sister are now both doing very well.” Mr. Evans said looking at the clock at the back of the hall, he saw that his speech had gone on a lot longer than he had intended.

“I have just realised that your first lessons of the day, started almost half an hour ago. Instead of trying to do work now, you will all have the rest of the first lesson free. But I ask you all before you do that, you don’t question Charles and his family about what happened. Please tell the girls of our sisters school the same thing. Now you are all free for the next half an hour. None of you are to be late for the second lesson of the day. And from now on the school gates will be locked at the beginning of the day and only opened at the end of the day. This means you will not be allowed to leave school grounds. You are now free for the remaining twenty or so minutes.” Mr. Evans concluded and stepped away from the microphone.

Indigo walked across the road with not only her fellow Year Sevens, but every girl from her school. She didn’t really understand why Mrs. Robbins was moving the girls to the boys school just to give a speech.

“So Indigo was it really your cousin who fell in the River.” Melissa Adams asked as she moved up the line until she was standing next to Indigo.

“Actually two of my cousins nearly drowned over the half term. But they are both fine. Thanks for asking.” Indigo said trying to walk away.

“Don’t leave just yet. Tell me who saved your cousin. I heard from Deb, who heard it from Alice whose sister Rose is dating Mark and he told her that Jerry and Michael were involved.” Melissa said taking hold of Indigo’s arm.

“Yeah Michael and Jerry were there.” Indigo said trying very hard to avoid the question.

“Look tell me what happened or I will just make something up. And believe me you do not want that.” Melissa said giving her best evil glare before starting to walk away from Indigo.

Indigo grabbed hold of Melissa realizing she would have no choice, but to tell some of what happened.

“Melissa I can’t tell you now. But I promise that I will tell you today at lunch. Just as long as you let me with you and your friends, and none of you are to interrupt me. Fair.” indigo whispered to Melissa as they walked onto the large playing field in the middle of Excalibur’s school.

The two schools became silent as Mrs. Robbins and Mr. Scott walked onto the playing field. It was almost as though the girls of Guinevere school and the boys of Excalibur’s school knew that their respective heads were going to say something very important.

Mrs. Robbins stepped forward with Mr. Scott right behind her.

“Boys of Excalibur I want to introduce Mrs. Robbins the Head Mistress of Guinevere’s school for Girls. My name is Mr. Scott and I am the Head Master of Excalibur’s school for Boys.” Mr. Scott said turning to Mrs. Robbins indicating her to continue.

“We have joined our two schools together for an hour. This is so we can host the emergency assemble together.” Mrs. Robbins said looking at Mr. Scott to start speaking.

“Thank you Mrs. Robbins. This emergency assemble has been called because of a near tragic event that occurred during the half term. But among the tragedy is some very good news. Two boys from Excalibur’s school for Boys risked their own lives to save Francesca and Charles Barnes. Later on in this assemble this two boys will be named and given a certificate as well as a medal.” Mr. Scott said moving back so Mrs. Robbins could speak using the microphone.

“You may or may not have noticed that the school gates have been locked and bolted. From now on every school in Equalton will have to lock their school gates at the beginning of the day. This is for your own protection.” Mrs Robbins said stepping away from the microphone.

“From this day on Ineoties Woods is off limits to every child in Equalton. If anyone of you is found near Ineoties Woods you will be driven home by the police. There will be daily and nightly patrols.” Mr. Scott said happy that soon they would be getting onto the good news.

“Could Michael Lingkon and Jerry Dawson please step forward. Mr. Scott and I would like to present you with certificates and medals for bravery. Don’t be shy. Please come and stand next to Mr. Scott. You can tell everyone what happened and who you rescued. I am sure it is a very interesting story. Then either Mr. Scott or myself will tell the story of Raven’s Wood, which also happens to be a wood you are all now banned from.” Mrs. Robbins said laughing at her own joke.

Michael moved away from his Year Nine friends and walked up to Mr. Scott. He didn't really notice Jerry following him. When he saw Indigo he waved and smiled when she blushed.

Jerry noticed the way Michael was looking at Indigo and it made him furious. He didn't want Michael taking all the credit. And even though they had bonded after nearly dieing, he still wasn't sure how much he trusted the guy. Trying to ignore this he stood next to Michael and waited for Mr. Scott to talk and hand him, his certificate and medal.

“Jerry Dawson please come here. I present you with this certificate to show that you saved the life of a girl, and you did a good deal for someone less fortunate. Do you have anything to say.” Mr. Scott said handing over the certificate and placing the medal around Jerry's neck.

“Thank you sir, but I didn't save Francesca. That was definitely Michael. When my friend Charles started to have some difficulty, I had no choice but to help him and I knew Michael would not let Francesca drown.” Jerry said quickly walking away from the two angry teachers and tried to hide himself among his fellow Year Sevens.

Michael took his certificate and medal from Mr. Scott and without a word walked back to join his friends. He really didn't like the look Jerry's friends were giving him. Not that he would ever let it show. He had grown up around far too many people that thought emotions were a weakness. And he would never let anyone think he was weak, and not only because he was sure it would somehow get back to his father.

“Before you all start to leave Mrs. Robbins is going to tell the story of Ravens Park. From this day on it will be a tradition to hear the story on the first day back after Half Term.” Mr. Scott said and walked back to take his seat among the other teachers.

“If you could all sit down and try to remain silent for the next half an hour. I am sure you all know that the story of Ravens Park is not the shortest story.” Mrs. Robbins said and waited until everyone was sitting before she continued.

“Now Ravens Wood was known as Ravens Park almost thirty years ago. It became Ravens Wood after the incident. Don't stand up Ms Barnes I have not finished the story.” Mrs. Robbins said waiting until Indigo had sat down again.

“Thirty years ago Equalton only had two schools. One for boys and girls aged five to ten. The second was a senior school for girls and boys aged eleven to sixteen. Both these schools were owned by the Mr. and Mrs. Evans of the day.”

The whole junior school was scheduled to go on a field trip to Ravens Park. Due to something that is still not known by all, by this I mean no one really knows why only two classes ended up going to Ravens Park rather than all four. Luckily it is common knowledge as to which classes did go to Ravens Park. Mrs. Robbins said taking a deep breath before she continued.

Year Four and Year Six were the only two years, who went to Ravens Park that fateful day. Amongst many girls and boys who went to the Park were the Benson sisters. It is very common knowledge that these sisters were very close, despite the two year age gap. Mrs. Robbins said pausing for effect and to catch her breath.

Rachel the older of the sisters was just ten years old and Sophia her little sister was eight. They had been told by the teachers not to wander off too far. But there were over forty students and only two teachers. Some of the older girls decided to start a game of tag. Sophia joined in not wanting to be separated from her sister. This did not go exactly how she had prayed it would.

Sophia was running and not looking where she was going. She ran onto the rickety old bridge and slipped. Rachel and at least ten friends saw that girl fall to her death. Now Rachel tried to run after her sister but was stopped by her friends.

And that is the story of Ravens Park. I am not telling you this story to scare you. I am telling you this story because Sophia Benson died, but Francesca Barnes survived, and it is a miracle. If it was not for Jerry and Michael then we would not be here today. Instead the schools of Eualton would be closed and we would all be mourning the loss of a child at such a young age. Thankfully Francesca was seen and two boys risked their lives to save her. Now the speech is finally over. Girls of Guinevere please stand up and follow me back to school. Mrs. Robbins said just stopping herself from crying. She still remembered the day Sophia Benson lost her life and Rachel Benson lost the will to live. And she Salina Robbins had lost her best friend. It was a day she would always remember and wonder if what she saw was really what she saw.

Melissa Adams and her friends were not sitting in the dining hall, when Indigo was called over to tell her story.

Indigo you haven't been trying to avoid me have you. Because that would be an incredible dumb thing to do. Now sit down next to me. The Year Sevens and I are really looking forward to hearing what really happened. I mean Mrs. Robbins didn't really tell us anything. All of us really want to know how traumatizing it really was for you. Now you want some friends in this school, that will never happen, unless you tell me what happened. Melissa said looking Indigo right in the eye.

Indigo was slightly shocked at just how bitchy Melissa was being. She had thought that thanks to Jerry and knowing Michael was actually going to help her fit in this horrible school. With Melissa's words

ringing in her ears she wanted more than anything to be at Mrs. Evans School for Girls.

“Fine Melissa I will tell you what happened, but I don’t want any favours. I want you to remember that you are a major bitch and I hate you nearly as much as I hate Mercedes Chambers. During the half term, from what I remember it was a Tuesday. Caitlyn, Francesca and I went to Ineoties Woods, mainly because Caitlyn had never there. Anyway Francesca lead us deeper and deeper into the Woods wanting to show us her brothers fort. She climbed onto a fallen log and I don’t know, I gues she just lost her balance.” Indigo said stopping not thinking she really had to say much more. And she was still very confussed that Francesca had made her promise not to mention who else was in the Woods that day.

“You can’t stop there Indigo. I mean how did the boys save her and who called for help.” Jude asked, the nicer girls of Year Seven.

“You have to explain how you felt when your cousin fell in that river and what you feel for the boy who saved her.” Kim said not really that interested that someone, very close to her age had nearly lost their life. The only thing she was even the slightest bit interested in was, what emotions were shown and how she could exploit that person. It was probably one of the main reasons that she was such good friends with Melissa and Donna.

“Well ok I’ll tell you more. Though personally I really don’t see the point. Let me see where was I Francesca had fallen into the river and both Caitlyn and I began to scream. Pulling out myself together I told Caitlyn to phone the police, ambulance, anyone really just as long as they could help. That was when I began racing for the lake, I knew I had to get to the lake and try and swim out to Francesca. When I got to the lake the three boys were already swimming towards Francesca. Everything happened very fast after that, though goodness know why.” Indigo said not really wanting to go over the whole thing again.

“The three boys went in one ambulance while Caitlyn and I stayed with Francesca. I have no idea what Michael and Jerry were thinking. When we got to the hospital I tried to stay with either Francesca or Charles, I know my mother and father would not have wanted me to leave them alone.” Indigo finished standing up and walking away. She was not going to give these girls any more reasons to gossip about her cousin. She was so busy praying for the end of the day that she didn’t notice Jade running to catch up with her.

The weeks passed by very quickly and before anyone realised it was the week before the Summer holidays.

Francesca was sitting with Violet, Lavender and Indigo listening to their step grandmother.

“I have spoken to your parents and they agree with me. The four of you will be spending your summer

holidays with me and Brian. Now you can complain but you really donâ€™t have any say in the matter.â€• Salina Barnes told her four step granddaughters. Salina had to smile when she saw four angry looks.

Anastasia and Belinda were very excited, that Mercedes had invited them to spend the summer holidays with her at her summer home. They just hoped that Mercedes would not try to test their loyalty again.

Caitlyn was happy to spend her summer getting to know her half sister Stephanie.

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