Black helmet with two signature red streaks on the side. I stared at it

Live for a thrillhe said. As if I hadn't almost drowned in a lake, been

mauled by a brown bear in a forest and attacked by a biker gang at

My arms wrapped around his waist, helmet strapped on tight. We

raced through the streets on the back of his motorbike. It roared

louder than my busted car's engine. My legs squeezed against his

The ocean came into view before the beach did (image above). We

drove down into the valley and parked by the Surfside Shack. It was

Jake held the door open for me. The Shack was crowded with seniors

from our high school. They were hanging out around the bar, using

just like I remembered. Surfboards against the blue building and

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Chapter 35: Not My Friend

"Live for a thrill," he o ered me a helmet.

and slowly, reluctantly, took it in my hands.

the very place we were going to now....

sides until he asked me to loosen up.

people strolling in from the beach.

My B.

"Sure," I smiled sweetly, "Let's live on the edge."

I was apparently constricting his blood circulation.

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their fake IDs for drinks. The back doors opened out onto the beach and people spilled outside, to watch the sunset.	å
Jake guided me to the restaurant part of the Shack. He slid into a corner booth and put his arm around the back of my headrest.	á²
"It's too crowded over there," he said, scanning the menu. I nodded, trying to act chill. Nothing about this situation was chill.	ਰਾ ਰਾ
Chad was the loudest guy here and I noticed him the minute I walked in – hanging out with Luke and Austin and half the girls' volleyball team. I hope they hadn't noticed me, even though others had. Other people were staring at us, wondering what Jake was doing with a	
nobody like me. **	a ²
"Who's the new girl Jake's with?" Omi asked, noticing Luke had sti ened when they walked in.	374 Ö
"A nerd. He's probably using her for homework," Bianca guessed, "Why is he over there anyway? Jake should be hanging out with us." "Who?" Austin asked, turning to the girls with a drink in his hand.	198 a
"Who?" Austin asked, turning to the girls with a drink in his hand. "Jake and" Bianca struggled to remember the girl's name.	a a¹
Austin lost interest and started to chug his drink. "Millie," Luke answered coldly.	a ⁸
Austin spat into his glass. The girls stared at Luke, surprised he was paying attention to their	13K
conversation and even more surprised that he remembered a girl's name. Meanwhile, Austin choked on the side. "Millie?" he wheezed, setting his glass down.	478 491
"Do you know her, Luke?" Omi asked, confused how there was a new girl she didn't know about.	đ¹
Luke ignored the girls and walked towards the booth. " Whatjust happened?" Bianca seethed.	as as
Austin now tried to subtly back out of this without being noticed. Bianca's beautiful face contorted. She turned to her minions and snapped, "Who is that?"	167
They all looked at each other. They had no idea who the nerd was, and why both the school's hottest boys knew her. "Find out," Bianca dictated, "And we'll make her life misery. No one	ď
disrupts our system." "We have first dibs on our men," Omi reminded them. Bianca laughed, "She has no chance of that."	a ^{4K} a ³⁹
"We'll have the brown butter to ee milkshake and" Jake stared at the menu again, "Want to share the watermelon wave?"	a¹ a³²
I nodded enthusiastically. I had wanted to try that last time. Jake handed our menus back to the waiter and, a er the waiter le,	₫
he draped his arm over my headrest again. I blushed. He saw how uncomfortable I was. I didn't mean to be, but I could still feel the eyes of other seniors' staring at the back of our	ේ ⁷
could still feel the eyes of other seniors' staring at the back of our heads. I felt like a parasite. And I didn't want the attention. I really didn't want attention.	å
"Sorry," Jake apologized, "Is this too much for you?" He thought he was making me uncomfortable. I felt guilty, since he	449 A
was everything but that. It was the others; how they were judging us. I was about to respond when a famous face dropped in on us.	ď
"Am I interrupting something?" Luke asked, looking between us like we were guilty of something.	12K
I looked up at him, remembering how I'd pushed him out of my shop and how he le me at Austin's party to be with the coach's daughter. "Someone le your cage open?"	a5 448
Jake sat back in surprise and stared at me like I was a di erent person. In a way I was. I was shy around Jake. And nice. But Luke	u
brought this out of me. "Aha," Luke chuckled, "Missed this."	a [™]
He leaned forwards, arms crossed over the booth, as he looked down at us like we were little kids. His eyes narrowed on Jake's arm, draped over my headrest. He slapped it.	1.9K
Jake retracted his arm, glaring down at our table. "Here we are!" the waiter cheerily returned, carrying a tray of our	₫
order, "One brown butter to ee milkshake and a watermelon wave." He placed the items on the table between us, alongside spoons for	a ²
Jake and I to share. "Where's the whipped cream and cherries?" Luke asked, "Isn't that how you like it?"	a 1.2K
He was right - I totally would've ordered double chocolate with all the toppings. But Jake had ordered for us.	a :
I glanced at Luke whose mischievous look betrayed that he knew me. Luke was a smart guy. And he was way more perceptive than I gave him credit for.	
Luke feigned surprise, "Did youorder for her? Wrong move, buddy." "No one invited you here," I told Luke, not pleased with how he was	a ⁶
treating Jake. "Do I need to be invited?" he smirked, with a bar full of his friends	ä ⁶
behind us. To be fair, if anyone was expected here - it was him. We were the	a ^r
intruders. Well, just me. I stuck to my point, "For this booth, you do. Friends invite friends. They don't just show up."	ਕ 219
Where was all this anger coming from? Luke had unlocked so much passion in me. I felt brave around him and it was coming out in this	u
aggressive form. "Well you don't want to be my friend and heis definitely not my	a ⁵
friend." What did Luke mean by that? I looked between them now. How did they even know each other?	361 38
There was an awkward silence. Were they enemies?	đ
I stared between them, expecting one of them to speak. I didn't even want to dwell on the part of Luke's sentence when he said 'you don't want to be my friend'because that was also news to my ears. It	368
"OK, one of you speak." I told them, my curiosity breaking the silence. "What's going on -why aren't you two friends?"	
"What's going on -why aren't you two friends?" "Jake isn't my friend," Luke repeated, dragging this out and enjoying it. Jake squirmed in his seat. "Jake isn't my friend. Because he's my	a ්
brother."	a ^K a⁵
	a a
My jaw dropped. "She always looks like this," Luke said to his brother	25°
I swear I'm not crazy. They don't look super similar at all. "B-b-brother?" I stuttered.	a⁴ a³
"Yes, well done for catching up Millie," Luke slow clapped, "OK, I'm done here. Enjoy your little picnic."	332 d
Luke lost interest in us. He'd already caused enough damage. He leaned over and took a chocolate flake out of the watermelon wave. watched him put it between his lips before he snapped it in two.	l å
He doesn't even like chocolate. Then Luke le . I looked at Jake, still stunned.	a æ⁵ a°
"I didn't realize it would a ect you Millie. To be honest, I didn't think you knew my brother. It doesn't really seem like you two were in the	
same social circles." I could have laughed at that. Boy was he right.	a ³ a
"It's not your fault Jake," I said. Poor Jake. His brother comes in, drops a bomb, and then leaves Jake	å

"Luke and I are half brothers," Jake explained, "It's a long story but

I didn't say anything. Family issues were private and I was not about

Jake picked up the spoon and dropped it into the milkshake. He

"Our father was married to my mother when he had an a air with

Luke's mother," he said, his eyes closing at the pain of the story,

"Both women got pregnant at around the same time. When my

Minneapolis. A er a couple years, dad married Luke's mother."

"My mother's life is... complicated right now. So I decided to try living

Jake smiled when he saw me trying to contain my giggle. I don't

know why I found that funny, but I did. I was trying to keep it hidden

"Go ahead," Jake encouraged, "Laughter is medicine for the soul."

I laughed and he picked up the to ee milkshake, drinking half of it in

I always thought the sex god next door was Luke. But now that Jake

was living in the same house, he was next door too. Which one was

mother found out, she divorced him and took me to live in

with my father," Jake said, "And his assh*le kids."

because I didn't want to detract from the sad story.

One of his kids is an assh*le. That's definitely true.

one gulp. A man with a sweet tooth to rival my own.

A/N: A little plot twist. Gotta keep things spicy.

sighed and leaned back, his black leather jacket rubbing against the

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to clear everything up.

we're not fully related."

leather booth.

What do you say to that?

Jeez.

The One?

to pry. I wish I had known sooner!