First Day

Ella

I smooth down the front of my new navy blue skirt and adjust my crisp white shirt for what was probably the fourteenth time. This was actually not a bad uniform, and I am particularly thankful for the lack of a school tie which I had always loathed at my last school. It was rather tted for a school uniform, highlighting a small waist I had never noticed I had, before. I brush and meticulously thread my long hair into a french side plait while Freya moves around in the room behind me.

"Have you ever tried a bit of eyeliner?" she suddenly asks, peering over my shoulder and into my face in the mirror. I stare back at her awkwardly.

"Uh...no, not really," I reply, shrugging my shoulders a little, "I've tried it once or twice but I just couldn't get the hang of it. I'm not particularly good at makeup. I don't really wear it unless it's a special occasion."

Freya turns me around to face her and looks at me a little excitedly.

"Okay, hold still, close your eyes...and just trust me" she commands. I hesitate for a moment but then close my eyes. Aside from getting poked in the eye, what was the worst that could happen?

"You have really unusual eyes. They're really pretty and this will juuuust make them pop a little more," she says, sweeping liquid eyeliner effortlessly across both of my eyelids. She turns me back around to face the mirror. I lean forwards and look at myself in the mirror in surprise. I have to admit, she is right. The black eyeliner really does make my eyes stand out a lot more.

"Wow...it really does. But I don't think I'd ever get the hang of it myself, though. My hands aren't steady enough," I say quietly, ashing her a thankful smile.

I start trying to apply a coat of mascara, which was usually my upper limit with makeup. Now there was eyeliner on my eyelids it would look daft without some mascara. Makeup wasn't generally my thing, but after seeing everyone at dinner last night, I was feeling a bit more of a social expectation to try and look a bit more mature, even if I couldn't manage it in the same way as the other girls. I knew it was silly, that I didn't want to feel the need to conform, but everyone looked so put together, that I was starting to feel very plain. Perhaps this was a normal time in life for getting self esteem issues? I didn't think I was that person but apparently I was indeed like any other teenage girl after all.

Maybe I should nd some comfort in that?

I turn around and started putting bits and pieces into my satchel; everything I'd need for a morning of biology and chemistry. I was relieved to nd out that Freya would be in my biology class too, so at least I wouldn't be going to my rst class on my own.

Freya and I walk down to the main hall together for breakfast. I wasn't sure what to expect at rst, but I am not disappointed by the full English and continental spread on offer. All the essentials of a cooked breakfast, pastries, pancakes, muns, waes, even French toast...Wow.

I'd never seen so much food, but it was a big school and the dining hall was huge and looked like it could seat at least ve hundred people at one time.

We sit down with our food and I start tucking into some poached eggs on toast.

Freya's friend Annabelle joins us once again and we chat about the classes we are going to have this morning.

"You guys do know college level bio class dissects a frog on the rst day, right?" she says, slicing an egg and watching the yolk pour all over her bacon.

"Gross, I hope not," Freya replies, wrinkling her nose and making a repulsed face, "hopefully just a myth spread by the older kids."

I take a mouthful of coffee as whispering begins to get stronger within the general din of the hall. I look up, wondering what the whispering is all about.

"So, Freya, how is he doing?" Annabelle asks quietly, her eyes tracking the movement of someone across the hall behind me.

"Oh, he'll be ne. Okay, so he's more than a little bummed out, but he's a guy, I'm sure he'll be over it soon enough," she shrugs, her gaze somewhere further behind me. I assume she is talking about her brother. I recall her mentioning she was going to see him after dinner last night, and that his girlfriend had dumped him. I wasn't sure if he was older or younger, but Freya denitely gave me older sister vibes with the way she acted, though.

"Well, that is going to get very annoying, very quickly," Freya huffs quietly, pointing her fork subtly toward a group of pretty, well manicured girls on a nearby table who were gossiping and giggling. I had a group of those at my last school too. They suddenly get up as a group, leaving their belongings at the table and wander off. I turn to watch where they are headed and I see them descend on a table of guys, soon blocking our view of the table entirely.

"Oh come on Freya, you can't really blame them, can you?" Annabelle jokes with a c****d eyebrow, earning herself a scowl from Freya. I laugh at her expression. I wasn't sure what Annabelle was implying right now but I patiently wait for more information.

"What, why look at me like that? Like it or not Freya, he got a hotter over the summer since he started training a little with Ollie. Plus that aloof attitude of his now makes him seem all mysterious to girls like them."

Freya glances at me and I must look confused and lost, as she then decides to explain.

"We are talking about my older brother, Austin. His girlfriend left him last night for another guy in their year, a guy called Chase," Freya says, nodding towards the table of guys. I turn back around to see that the giggling girls are now heading back towards us, looking disappointed a possibly a little annoyed. Now I could see the four guys that are sat at the table.

"Which one is your brother?" I ask as I look at them all individually. I realise quite quickly who he must be, clocking the same dark brown hair, thick dark eyebrows and the same piercing green eyes that were so visible even from twenty metres away.

At a distance he looked like yet another winner of the genetic lottery. The three other guys on the table were laughing at him for some reason and he looked a bit embarrassed. The other guys on the table, much like the rest of the school it seemed, also seemed to be in serious shape.

"It's easy, just look for the cutest guy at the table," Annabelle says teasingly with a little laugh. I turn back around to see her waiting for Freya's reaction to her words. Freya groans and puts her face in her hands, and I laugh at their exchange.

"Just accept it, Freya. Embrace it, even, because you're the female equivalent with your long legs, lush hair and killer smile," Annabelle laughs with a slight eye roll.

I turn to watch the guys on the table joking around again. I had to silently agree with Annabelle. The longer I looked at him, I could see that he really was really quite handsome.

He had a sharp, masculine jaw and a pair of full lips. His facial features were all together were just so striking. I can't tear my eyes away for a moment. He smiles broadly at something one of his friends says and I can see he has perfect teeth, too. His hair is short, dark and wavy with a rather casual beachy appearance to it. He really did have the whole package. Not surprising, as Freya is an absolute stunner herself. I wonder if their parents are models or in show business or something. I turn around at the same moment Freya decides to click her ngers in front of my face and I snap my head backwards in surprise.

"NO," she exclaims bluntly, her face serious. I frown a little, for I am rather confused.

"No?" I ask, wondering what she is talking about.

"No. Just, no. Don't go there. Please, just trust me, you'll only end up getting hurt," she mutters, looking down at her breakfast. After a few seconds I realise what she is getting at and I wonder what is so wrong with her brother for her to say that to me.

"Oh...okay, what's wrong with your brother?" I laugh nervously. She frowns at my question and her expression turns serious.

"Nothing. He's the absolute best, any girl would be very lucky," she says immediately in his defence before realising how counterintuitive her comment is.

"Look, I can't really explain it to you, but...it's probably best for you to avoid every guy at that table...and perhaps quite a few others..." she says awkwardly, looking down at the table. I frown at her advice, which seems rather odd.

I turn and look back over at the group and now wonder if Freya is subtly telling me I am not good enough for any of them rather than trying to protect me for some reason. She would probably be right. They all looked like tens, her brother a clear twelve, and I was probably...a six?

I turn back around and smile meekly at her.

"Don't worry Freya, I'm just here to study, guys are the last thing on my mind," I say truthfully, nishing my coffee and getting up from the table.

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The biology lab is denitely one of the most well provided science classrooms I have ever been in. I was really impressed. The lab stations are arranged in a U shape around the room with the teachers station in the centre. There is the latest model in high-tech electronic whiteboards mounted on the wall behind, and every lab station had its own sink, gas outlet and power plugs....and much to our horror, on each station is -

"Oh no, we are dissecting frogs!" Freya groans behind me as we select a station of our own to sit at.

While the class is getting settled our teacher arrives and does the typical teacher thing of clapping their hands together and rubbing them with teacherly glee.

"Good morning! Welcome to the rst year of A-Level Biology. I am Mr Swithun, but most of you probably already know that. I can see a few new faces dotted around the room. Welcome. As you may have noticed, we are truly going to dive right in today and start to get an appreciation for basic anatomy and physiology!" the teacher says, rubbing his hands together yet again in mock excitement at the task before us.

A few groans are heard around the room.

It was good to be back at school. I for one am pretty happy to get stuck in with this activity.

We put on some gloves, aprons and protective glasses before staring down at our frogs, tentatively picking up the scalpels from our lab tray. Over the next twenty minutes, we are guided through the dissection by Mr Swithun via video link that appears on the whiteboard which was apparently also a high denition screen. Exton was impressive.

"Now, we are going to make the smallest cut just here to remove the kidney," he says, demonstrating on the video feed.

I carefully try to make the cut but my arm slips on the table. I feel the scalpel slice cleanly across one of the gloved ngers that I was using to hold my frog in place. Blood immediately blossoms everywhere as I stand up in a hurry and peel the glove off my injured hand. Freya looks startled and very soon everyone has stopped to observe the commotion, as Mr Swithun hastily comes over to check on me.

"There is always one!" he chuckles, wrapping my hand in a sterile towel he already had to hand, and begins to apply pressure to my ngers. After a minute or two he unwraps my hand to see how bad the cut is.

There are large patches of blood on the towel, but there was no sign of any wound. Nothing.

"How peculiar..." Mr Swithun mutters. I stare down at my hand and nger in disbelief, turning it over and inspecting it several times. Had I imagined it?

But, I couldn't have, as where had all the blood come from if not from me? I stare at my hand once more before putting a new glove on.

"Let's get back on track everyone," Mr Swithun says as I notice Freya looking at me with a strange expression on her face.

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The September sunshine is in full effect as lunchtime comes around, after a rather boring introduction to chemistry class. Freya, Annabelle and I had arranged to meet outside with it being so sunny, and I now found myself on the very well maintained patio off the main hall with a view of the back elds, carrying my lunch tray. It featured a number of round wooden tables, with a modest sized fountain in the middle. The fountain is impressive, and depicts three large golden wolves in what looks like some sort of battle, water owing gracefully out of each of their mouths.

I am the rst to arrive, so I take a seat at one of the free tables with my lunch tray, looking out across the grassy eld. There must've still been a class or sports practice on still or something, as I can see around thirty guys running around with brightly coloured sports vests on.

Looking at them, I still can't believe they are eighteen or under, as they are so tall and so well-built. I decide that perhaps I just needed to accept that the boys I'd gone to school with last year perhaps weren't as healthy as the lads at this school were. Country living denitely worked well for the male population here. Really well.

"Checking out the upper sixth form lads there, Ella?" I hear Annabelle say in a teasing tone, sitting down next to me with a strangely large plate of sandwiches. I feel my cheeks warm a little; I have been caught.

"Trust me, I get it, it just so happens to be one of my favourite hobbies. I call it...hottie watching," she continues casually, sounding oddly proud of herself, "I do enjoy a display of testosterone, especially when they're wearing those little shorts..."

I hear footsteps approaching as we both continue to stare out at the eld.

"Oh AB, you do love a rugby player...or a football player...golfer...cricketer...lacrosse player...or just any guy playing a sport, really. Can't say you're at all picky!" pipes up Freya with a laugh from behind us. She sits down and plucks some sandwiches from Annabelle's plate. We sit there in silence for a few minutes, eating sandwiches and watching what was apparently an aggressive game of rugby. I nd myself bizarrely transxed while watching them. Soon, as with any sport featuring hot-headed teenage lads, there is an even angrier scue, some loud shouting and a whistle sounds several times as the coach tries to mediate between two of the tallest players. I was watching the dark-haired one in particular, when Annabelle breaks my reverie by talking.

"So. Tell us more about yourself, Ella," she says. I look back at my new 'friends' and swallow my mouthful of sandwich, because things are about to get pretty boring, for them.

"Umm...okay well, there isn't much to say, really. I was born about eight miles from here, but I have lived in London with my parents since I was six. No brothers or sisters. My parents are international human rights lawyers, and they have to go out of the country a lot. Therefore, boarding schools have always been my deal. I'm the national sprinting champion for our age group with a few records under my belt and that's basically my one and only ex. I'm not going to be running competitively anymore, though, as I really need to focus on my studies. Otherwise, I am pretty boring," I reply, anxiously biting my lip afterwards. I didn't really want them to nd me boring, I quite liked them, but...there really isn't much to say about me. I was boring. Give me a biology book and I am pretty happy.

"So...your parents are just lawyers? Any weird family history?" Freya asked. I frowned a little at her strange question. What did she mean by that?

"Yep...just a pair of very well educated lawyers. Although, my dad has defended a celebrity or two in court a few times," I offer. Freya doesn't seem particularly satised with my answer and continues to look at me oddly.

"Honestly, I'm very boring, no interesting family history. I'm just...Ella," I assure her with a vague smile.

"Well, Ella, sometimes...boring is great," she replies, sounding convincing, but still somehow looking at me like I was a strange puzzle for her to solve.

"Do you have any other siblings aside from Austin?" I ask Freya, wondering if there were more dark-haired, green-eyed models loping around the school. She chews her sandwich and nods.

"Yep, I have two younger sisters. Serephina and Serena. They're twins and they're ten years old. They'll be coming here next year, of course," Freya says proudly.

"Yeah, your family always needs to keep a Landry in school at all times!" Annabelle laughs at Freya. I turn and stare at Freya, opening my mouth in surprise.

"Wait...Landry? As in HEADMASTER Landry?" I inquire. She looks a bit sheepish for a moment. Perhaps this wasn't something she liked to boast about.

"Yeah, Freya here is Exton royalty. I am surprised she didn't tell you yesterday when she introduced herself!" Annabelle says, giving her friend a surprised look.

"Well, it's not something I usually lead with...and everyone already knows anyway," Freya mutters. She turns back to me and explains, "umm, so my family founded the school, a very long time ago. Every headmaster or headmistress has always been a Landry."

I nod in acknowledgement and decide not to press further.

"How about you, Annabelle? What's your story?" I ask, saving Freya having to talk more about her family and the school. Her eyes brighten up at being asked about herself, almost as if it doesn't happen that much.

"WELL," she begins dramatically, "I, am a classic only child, trust fund brat, and I am proud of it. My dad runs a super-successful company, my mum is usually on holiday somewhere hot and expensive, and I'm basically hoping to become a physiotherapist or something else, just so I can meet a jacked national squad rugby or football player and not have to work another day in my life."

Annabelle rattles this all off with a shrug, looking absolutely serious. I snort with laughter immediately.

"Wow...you've got it all planned!" I joke, and we all laugh.

In the distance, we then hear the long sound of a whistle being blown.

"Ohhh! Ladies, brace yourselves, they're coming..." Annabelle says dramatically, shifting around on the bench a little and biting her lower lip. I chuckle and Freya laughs loudly, shaking her head in mock disbelief at her thirsty friend. The players slowly trudge over to raid the water fountains on the patio.

"Now that Chase is off the market, a girl has to keep her options rmly open. "But, don't worry, Freya, Aus is far too much like a brother for me to even consider going there," says Annabelle, throwing a wink and a smile at one of the players. Freya rolls her eyes and laughs lightly at Annabelle.

If, in the future, I had to pick the moment in my life that I felt particularly affected by guys for the rst time, this was probably going to be it.

With their tall stature, well-dened arm and leg muscles, chiseled jaw lines and bronzed skin shining with sweat under the midday sun, they all looked seriously hot. They denitely didn't make guys like this at my old school, and I hadn't even seen guys like this in the shops at Oxford Circus back home. I shut my mouth when I realise it has fallen open, a little intrigued by the effect they've all had on my heart and respiratory rate. Apparently, it wasn't just my eyes that were being affected by them.

Maybe this was indeed the effect country living had on people? I'd seen movies before when the boys who grew up on a farm were always tall, strong and very masculine. Perhaps there was some truth to that after all? The scientic side of myself is pretty curious.

But then...this school was a little weird, this wasn't normal, was it? This isn't a movie, no matter how much it looks like one. Or maybe there was just something wrong with the boys in London? Did six-formers usually look like this?

Surrounded by so many gorgeous people right now, I hug my arms around my chest, suddenly feeling more than a little self-conscious.

"Which one is this Chase guy you both keep mentioning?" I inquire, trying to distract myself from all the bronzed skin and muscle. Annabelle subtly nods to the tallest of the players. He had thick, sandy blonde hair and blue eyes. Typically, like most of the lads I'd seen at this school over the last twenty-four hours, he was incredibly handsome. I watch him for a minute or two. The way he carries himself, and how he interacts with the other people on the patio, tells me he is very aware of the fact that he is handsome, and that he enjoys the attention. I couldn't say I had ever found that to be an attractive quality in someone. Handsome as he had immediately seemed, I am not bothered by him at all, now.

My eyes drift away from Chase on their own accord, over to the second-tallest player, and I immediately meet the strangely erce gaze of Freya's older brother Austin.

I freeze.

Up much closer now I was more than a little taken aback, particularly as he was looking fully at me. His thick, dark and wavy hair is rather unruly after playing a round of rugby, his lips are ushed and full, and his green eyes seem like they are piercing right into my very soul. I feel a jolt in my stomach and my breath hitches in my throat, and I suddenly feel very exposed at that moment; like I wanted to hide from his gaze. Yet, at the same time, I am absolutely transxed. His eyes widen slightly as he continues to stare at me and I hastily drop my head, feeling a warm ush creep across my cheeks. I begin busying myself again with my lunch, remembering Freya's words to me that morning. I zone back into the discussion she and Annabelle are now having, and soon enough the walking distractions have nally disappeared into the building, much to my relief.

"...I just really need new school shoes. I don't know why I didn't get any during the summer. Probably because I spent too much time sunbathing and swimming. We denitely need a shopping trip this weekend. I know it's the rst weekend, but the blisters are already ridiculous. Did you want to join us, Ella?" Annabelle says. I am shocked, as I am not used to being invited anywhere, let alone on girls' shopping trips. Shopping was something I had only done with my mum, or online. I stare at her stupidly for a few seconds.

"Wow...yeah, that sounds like fun. I mean, I don't have anything I can wear to this winter formal I keep seeing posters for," I reply.

"Perfect. You denitely need some more shoes too, honey. You have only two pairs. That is just...criminal," Freya says. She glances at her watch and turns to Annabelle, "ugh, it's probably time for us to head to English."

Freya and Annabelle get up from the table, grabbing their bags, and they shortly head inside the building. I notice that Freya has left her timetable behind under her lunch tray. I pick it up and have a quick glance at it.

"Lycan Law?" I read quietly, utterly bewildered. I didn't remember ever seeing that as an option on the curriculum.

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*** Austin ***

I know it was stupid...but I just couldn't help going in for a hard tackle with Chase during the rugby game.

Both being alpha heirs, we hadn't always seen eye to eye, but we usually had enough respect for each other to get along just ne.

Today was a little different, though.

It had been just a little over sixteen hours since he'd come up to Ava and I at dinner, and virtually stole her from me in the most innocent and mystical way possible.

To be honest, I thought he had gotten off easy.

I knew it wasn't his fault at all; it was just the way things happened sometimes. But, my still very raw feelings teamed with a surge of testosterone from playing sport, truly hadn't been a good combination. The coach wasn't impressed, but it did make me feel a lot better, not that my other coach in life agreed with me. Atlas was pissed. Chase is now holding his nose and a few drops of blood drip down onto his blue rugby vest. It was more than a little satisfying, particularly as he will heal fast.

Looks like you broke his nose. Are you satised now? That was NOT like you, Atlas growls at me with evident disapproval.

Yes. You know what? It did help a little. I know you aren't happy with me, but just give me this one thing, I reply in response.

Fine, but pull yourself together and focus, this is NOT how a true leader conducts himself. You need to close this chapter with Ava and move on from it.

Atlas was right, this wasn't something I would usually do. I did need to check myself. But I was a bit peeved he felt I should be moving on from it so quickly. It happened less than a day ago.

Coach thankfully blows his whistle just as my stomach growls; it is denitely lunchtime. We all slope off toward the school, aiming for the water fountains on the patio. On the way across the patio, I feel my concentration pulled to one table in particular. The table where my sister is sat with Annabelle, and with who I presume is her new human roommate, Ella.

Ollie was right, like he usually was.

Freya had not mentioned how pretty she was, not that Freya would have mentioned that, I guess. She has seriously long, light blonde hair, which looked so bright under the sun. Her light blue eyes twinkle, and she has an adorable amount of freckles across her sunkissed face. She looks so very different to the other girls in the school, and she is sitting there so demurely with her arms around her chest in a somewhat protective way. Not the body language a lot of girls here would adopt. As I drink from the fountain I wonder what it must be like to join this school at a later stage; no wonder she looked a little uncomfortable. A breeze blows past her toward me and I catch her scent, feeling Atlas go on immediate alert.

Interesting...she smells human, but with a hint of something else. Something familiar...I am quite intrigued, Atlas remarks to me, his interest piqued for some bizarre reason. I guess now it was time for Atlas to act out of character; today was a strange day.

What do you mean, familiar? Freya did say she smelled a bit different to other humans, I reply.

Ella suddenly looks right at me with her unusual blue eyes and I feel a strange jolt hit my stomach. She holds eye contact with me for several seconds before her cheeks ush, and she immediately drops her gaze back to the table. She nervously tucks some loose hair behind her ear and starts ddling with a sandwich.

She is denitely very shy, a trait I am now nding to be oddly endearing. Exton girls are usually the absolute opposite; wildly condent and highly tenacious. I become acutely aware of how gross and sweaty I must look, so I quickly head indoors to shower and change.